

Objective

- To describe students' perceptions of the usability of the virtual communication platform and value as an educational tool

Background

- Communication skill development is a vital component of the pharmacy curriculum, identified as one of the AACP Curriculum Outcomes and Entrustable Professional Activities educational outcomes.¹
- Students practice their communication skills with peers in workshops and are assessed during simulations.
- Opportunities for additional practice would be ideal; however, limited class time and faculty workload hinders the inclusion of more in-person practice sessions.
- SimConverse is a screen-based artificial intelligence driven virtual platform for verbal communication practice that provides immediate constructive feedback which could provide additional practice with limited impact on faculty workload.

Methods

- During Spring 2023, first-year pharmacy students enrolled in a patient care lab course completed a patient interview using SimConverse as a homework assignment.
- SimConverse homework was a cough and cold OTC case where students practiced SCHOLAR-MAC interviewing.
- Students received immediate feedback on their skills based on a rubric within the platform.
- This assignment was designed to be additional practice before a high-stakes standardized patient encounter.
- Students voluntarily completed two questionnaires; the first was completed after the homework and the second was after the high-stakes assessment.
- Descriptive statistics were utilized for results.
- Qualitative data were coded into themes.

Results

- 88 students were enrolled in the patient care lab course in Spring 2023.
- All students completed the SimConverse homework exercise as additional practice for a high-stakes standardized patient encounter focused on OTC/self-care recommendations.
- 67 (76% response rate) students completed the first survey which was administered immediately after completing the SimConverse homework assignment. Details are provided in Figure 1.
- 84 (95% response rate) students completed the second survey which was administered immediately following the high-stakes standardized patient encounter.
- Students continued to rate SimConverse highly after completing the high-stakes standardized patient encounter (83%, 80%, and 72% strongly agreed/agreed about usefulness, ease of use, and realism).
- Majority (82%) indicated it would have been valuable to incorporate the platform earlier in the curriculum.

Figure 1: Post-SimConverse Survey (n=67)

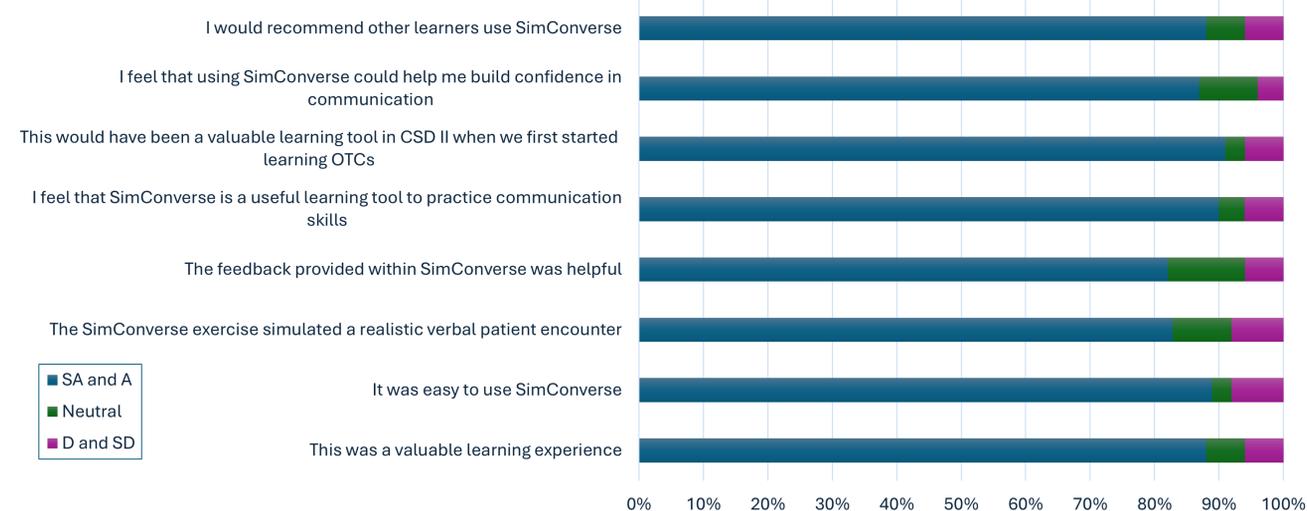


Table 1: Qualitative Data (n=67) What would make this a better learning experience?

Theme	N (%)	Example comment
Operations/ logistic issues/lack of flow in conversation	21 (31.3%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I think some of the phrases that I used weren't picked up properly. In a regular conversation there are nuances with flow and transitions that may be difficult to simulate in this conversation. That made my conversation feel a bit off at times. Sometimes what I said wasn't transcribed correctly so it made the conversation a bit choppy and I had to repeat myself.
Nothing to improve	17 (25.4%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is a really good experience and nothing really should be added to make it better.
Positive feedback/request for more experiences	7 (10.4%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple scenarios for extended practice It feels like you are really talking to someone on the other line. And with the transcript, it helps you see what to improve on especially for me that I may talk fast and can be transcribed differently.
Desire for more feedback	5 (7.5%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annotations on how questions can be better formulated It would help to know if I have been asking things the good/right way or not (i.e. open-ended questions, or not, and some/any feedback on how to improve).
No comment/response	17 (25.4%)	NA

Discussion

- Students perceived that the SimConverse activity was a valuable learning experience and the platform easy to use.
- Some operational/logistic issues with the platform were noted and students expressed a desire for more experiences and feedback.
- Results of the study have supported using the platform earlier in the first-year curriculum for OTC/self-care assessment.

Quarter Description of SimConverse Activity

2 nd Qtr	5 different activities focused on self-care/OTC SCHOLAR-MAC <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Cough and Cold Allergic Rhinitis Back Pain Contact Dermatitis Constipation Each assigned as a pre-workshop activity during the weeks these topics were covered
4 th Qtr	Continued use as described here with an additional Medication Reconciliation Interview incorporated

- Limitations:
 - Students only completed one patient interview as part of the pilot
 - Data reflects a single cohort of students

Conclusions

- Students have favorable views of the usability of a virtual communication platform and its value to learning communication skills.

References:

- Medina MS, Farland M, Conry J, et al. The AACP Academic Affairs Committee's final 2022 Curricular Outcomes and Entrustable Professional Activities (COEPA) for pharmacy graduates to replace 2013 CAPE and 2016 EPAs. Am J Pharm Educ. 2023;100558. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajpe.2023.100558>

Disclosures

Use of the SimConverse platform was provided for free as part of a research grant. Authors of this presentation have nothing else to disclose concerning possible financial or personal relationships with commercial entities that may have a direct or indirect interest in the subject matter of this presentation.