

Inclusive Conversations: Standardized Patients as Authors, Role-Players, and Educators in a Pharmacy Skills Laboratory

Jared Van Hooser, PharmD¹; Morgan Hoeft, PharmD¹; Lou Clark, PhD, MFA²
1. University of Minnesota College of Pharmacy 2. University of Minnesota M Simulation

01. Introduction

In pharmacy programs, standardized patients (SPs) are often exclusively role-players in simulations.

02. Objective

To design, implement, and evaluate an inclusive conversations pharmacy skills laboratory session where SPs with lived experiences collaborate as case authors, role-players, and educators.

03. Methods

- Skills lab instructors, SP Educators, and SPs with diverse lived experiences collaborated to develop an inclusive conversations lab
- SPs co-authored cases based on personal experiences, role-played the cases they helped develop, and led debriefings
- Cases topics: COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy, gender-affirming therapy, microaggressions, and naloxone stigma
- Students were surveyed on their experiences, and deidentified surveys were analyzed using thematic analysis

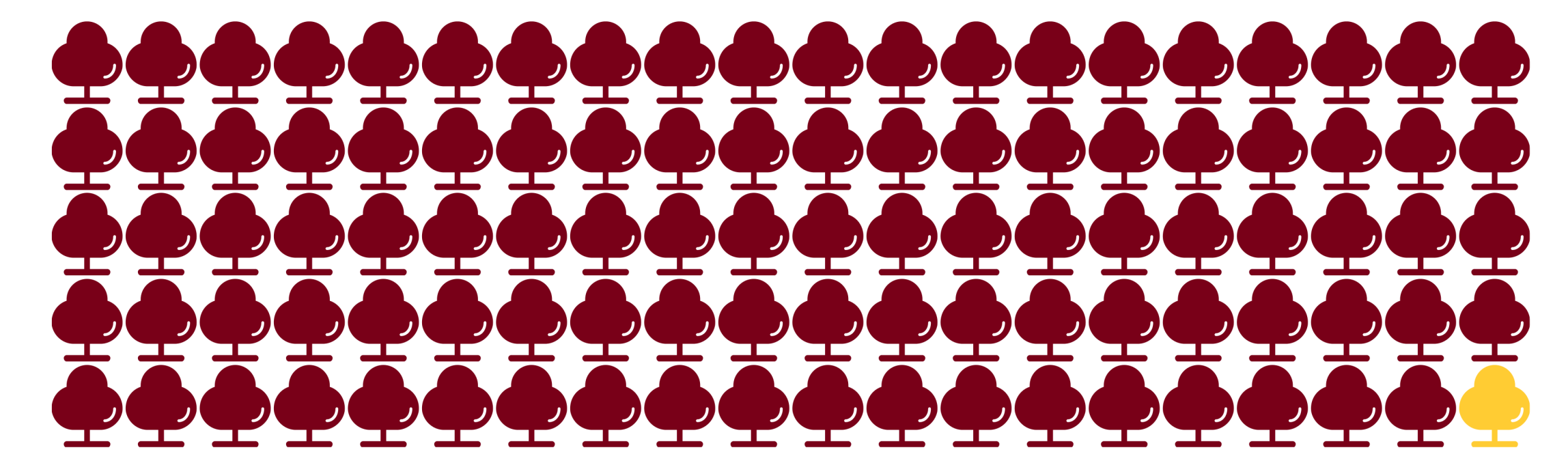
04. Results

Over a 3-year period, 370 students completed the lab, and 345 completed the survey.

05. Themes and Student Quotes

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| Realism and authenticity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In many ways, I had to continually remind myself that these people were, in fact, acting. They exhibited many of the behaviors, asked many of the questions, and represented many of the situations we will, and do, encounter in pharmacy practice, all while enabling the learning we are doing to occur in a safe place. In other words, this was a rich experience that, in total, was much more than the sum of its parts. • I think having standardized patients is very beneficial to our learning in this lab. These patients did an excellent job at pushing us to find new approaches at explanations that maybe we had to dig a little deeper in our knowledge bank for. This is skill that maybe does not come up in any coursework that we have, yet important to have in real world settings. • I found immense value in interacting with standardized patients. There were times during the encounters that I felt uncomfortable and unsure of what to say, but I realized that having such feelings meant that I was learning. I was also grateful to interact with my classmates during the scenarios as well because they helped to enhance my learning by showing me different ways to approach the scenarios. |
| Diversity and inclusion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most significant value that the standardized patients brought to my experience was the recognition that I will encounter a diverse range of patients in my practice. • This experience has been exceptionally valuable for me because, while we learn what to do when dealing with various types of patients, we often don't get the chance to practice. |
| Empathy and connection | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It places us as learners in uncomfortable positions that we may not have been in before and gives us a safe space to learn our way through them. • The most common issue that healthcare workers face is demonstrating respect to people regardless of their religion, race, gender, or age. Today's three scenarios provided excellent practice in showing us how to react to and comprehend specific situations. • I liked that the standardized patients really made me feel emotion. When talking with the TAs they are often just reading from a script, so these patients really allow me to feel like I was really dealing with a patient and I felt real empathy for them. • Never judge a patient or assume anything about them. The value of being nonjudgmental. Showing empathy and care of patients is an essential part being being a provider and it boost happiness and trust in patients. The value of empathy and compassion. Being an ally. |
| Feedback and reflection | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I really appreciated the advice that the standardized patients gave in these situations and how specific comments or statements would make the patient feel. • The feedback was the most important part of this lab. I have worked in retail for a year in the past and I have been met with some of these situations, but I have always had the pharmacist to ask for more help if needed. This made me realize I am the one the patient or the tech will be asking for. • I found it super beneficial especially with the debriefing session after. It allows us to know on what we can improve on in the future from the prospective of the patient. |
| Practise and preparation for real-world situations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It allows us to understand real patient encounters and it allows us to learn how to adapt to patients and their situations which helps us better care for our patients. • Having these simulated patient encounters helps prepare students for difficult real-world situations by allowing them to practice delicate conversations and build confidence. • The use of standardized patients brought a realistic portrayal to counseling and patient interaction that couldn't be replicated with people we already know. In the simulated interactions, I got the opportunity to think outside of the box in order to answer their unexpected questions. I found their immediate evaluation to be helpful as the comments were fresh and conceptualized what went well/what didn't in an unbiased way. |

98.8% of students agreed that adding role-play and feedback sessions with standardized patients/patient educators significantly added to their learning experience



Of 345 responses, 276 students (80%) strongly agreed, 65 (18.8%) agreed, 3 (0.9%) disagreed, and 1 (0.3%) strongly disagreed.

06. Conclusion

- SPs with lived experiences co-writing cases and role-playing enhance the educational experience.
- SPs leading feedback sessions provide valuable insights for effective teaching in health education.