



Using Educational Gaming Technology to Prepare High School Teachers in Texas to Identify and Refer Students At-Risk for Suicide

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Agenda

- The need for gatekeeper training in TX high schools
- Overview of Plan
- At-Risk Training Simulation: Overview and Research
- At-Risk Texas High School Version
- Assessment Plan
- Roll-out Plan
- Questions & Answers

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Gatekeeper Training for HS Teachers

The Need:

- Reduce stigma associated with mental illness
- Reduce the number of undetected students in schools
- Reduce the anxiety teachers experience about responding to at-risk students in their class
- Provide assistance to students as early as possible

The Challenge:

- Cost and administrative difficulty to schedule and provide face-to-face training to over 100,000 people in almost 1,500 schools
- How to integrate valuable practice opportunities into the training
- How to rapidly provide training to all teachers
- How to track participation and assess program effectiveness

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Solution: At-Risk Simulation

A online, interactive
and practice-based
training simulation
for university faculty



Reasons for Adopting:

- Web-based
- Reaching more faculty and staff
- Practice talking with virtual students
- SPRC Best Practices
- National Assessment Study

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Collaboration

The Plan:

Adapt Kognito's **At-Risk** product to the needs of Texas High Schools

- Kognito working with MHA of Texas mental health experts
- Planned launch in August 2010
- Posted on the "Via Hope" website
- State-wide marketing campaign
- Assessment plan
- Hosting and technical support to end-users provided by Kognito
- Includes a user management system to track and record usage

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Via Hope

- Created to provide a mental health consumer and family member driven system as part of the Texas Mental Health Transformation Project.
- A collaborative effort between:
 - The Texas Department of State Health Services
 - Mental Health America of Texas
 - NAMI Texas
- Peer specialist training and online training for mental health, addiction, recovery and workforce skills



Link: <http://www.viahope.org>

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Virtual Practice Environments



Workplace Investigations



Performance Feedback

Practice conversations with virtual, fully animated characters that possess memory and emotions. Receive personalized feedback on decisions



Suicide Prevention

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At-Risk for University Faculty



1. Listed on **SPRC/AFSP Best Practice Registry**
2. 40 universities have adopted the product
3. Assessed in a national study at 72 universities + empirical study
4. Upcoming Versions of *At-Risk*:
 - i. Peer-to-Peer for University Students (August 2010)
 - ii. Families of Returning Veterans
 - iii. Conversation with a Returning Veteran Student

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Learning Objectives

Learning objectives derived from best practices allowing faculty and staff to:

1. Learn to recognize the common signs of psychological distress
2. Approach students with greater skill and confidence
3. Effectively refer students to the campus counseling center
4. Learn about their own college specific counseling center and referral process

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Learning Experience



1. Assume the role of a faculty member who is concerned about five of his students, three of whom are at-risk and need to be referred.
2. Analyze profiles of the five virtual students.
3. Engage in simulated conversations with the ones you suspect are at-risk and, if necessary, refer them to the campus counseling center.
4. Training is complete once you successfully identify and refer the three at-risk students.

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Step 1. The Classroom



Users assume the role of a faculty member named Professor Hampton, who is concerned about five of his students, three of which are at-risk for mental distress and need to be referred

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Step 2. Examine Student Profiles

Alberto Salazar

Academics

Behavior

Appearance

Grades

Assignment 1	Group Presentation	Midterm	Assignment 2	Group Project
✗	C+	D		

Cumulative Grade: D

Participation

good

ok

poor

late

absent

2

4

6

8

10

12

week of class

Professor's Comments

Alberto emailed me two days after the first assignment was due, asking for an extension, but he still hasn't turned it in. He did very badly on the midterm.

Professor's Comments

Alberto has several unexcused absences. When he does show up for class, he's usually late and looks like he just dragged himself out of bed - even though the class starts at 1:30. He often falls asleep in class or doesn't seem like he's listening.

Close Profile

FLAG

Talk to Student

A portrait of a young man with dark hair, wearing a dark blue shirt, sitting at a desk. He is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression.

Users can click on any student for more information, such as (1) his academics (grades, participation, attendance)...

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Step 2. Examine Student Profiles

The screenshot shows the 'Behavior' tab for a student named Alberto Salazar. The interface has three tabs: 'Academics', 'Behavior', and 'Appearance'. Under the 'Behavior' tab, there are two sections. The first is labeled 'WEEK 4' and contains the text 'Seems apathetic. I asked when he was going to turn in the first assignment. He said, "It doesn't matter. I'm going to flunk out of school anyway." I told him there was still a chance for him to pass, but he just shrugged and left.' The second section is labeled 'ONGOING' and contains the text 'Doesn't pay attention in class. He often falls asleep in class. But even when he's awake, he just sits there doodling skulls, knives, or what looks like medieval weaponry in his notebook.' To the right of the text is a small illustration of the student, Alberto Salazar, sitting at a desk. At the bottom of the profile view, there are buttons for 'Close Profile', 'FLAG', and 'Talk to Student'.

(2) any troubling behaviors Prof. Hampton has noticed

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Step 2. Examine Student Profiles

The screenshot shows the 'Appearance' tab for the same student, Alberto Salazar. The 'Behavior' tab is still selected, but the content is now focused on appearance. On the left, there is a larger illustration of the student. A red circle with a plus sign is placed on his face, and a tooltip box says 'Dark circles under eyes'. Another red circle with a plus sign is on his chest. To the right, under the heading 'Professor's Comments', the text reads: 'Alberto looks disheveled and sloppy. He always wears dark clothing; he has circles under his eyes; and I think he's put on weight during the semester.' Below this text is a red circle with a plus sign and the instruction 'Roll over the hotspots for more info'. At the bottom, the same 'Close Profile', 'FLAG', and 'Talk to Student' buttons are visible.

(3) and his physical appearance.
They can then decide whether they want to "Talk to Student"

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Step 3. Simulated Conversation



User controls the conversation by choosing what topic(s) to discuss and what specific things to say or ask. Each conversation takes 5-7 minutes to complete

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Step 3. Simulated Conversation



Users receive encouragement and constructive criticism on their decisions from a coach and the virtual student's responses and body language

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Step 3. Simulated Conversation

It's not appropriate or helpful for you to attempt to diagnose Alberto's condition. If you think he has a problem that could be mitigated through counseling, you should refer him to the Counseling Center. There he can meet with a trained therapist for a formal diagnosis.

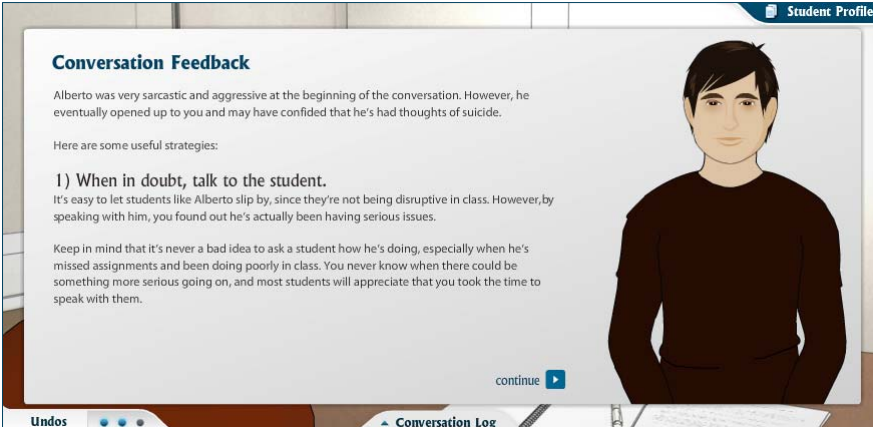
Undo

Start Over

Critical errors by the user leads to immediate corrective feedback as well as the opportunity to undo and correct their behavior.

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Summary Feedback



The screenshot shows a software interface for a simulation. At the top right, there is a tab labeled "Student Profile". The main content area is titled "Conversation Feedback" and contains the following text:

Alberto was very sarcastic and aggressive at the beginning of the conversation. However, he eventually opened up to you and may have confided that he's had thoughts of suicide.

Here are some useful strategies:

1) When in doubt, talk to the student.

It's easy to let students like Alberto slip by, since they're not being disruptive in class. However, by speaking with him, you found out he's actually been having serious issues.

Keep in mind that it's never a bad idea to ask a student how he's doing, especially when he's missed assignments and been doing poorly in class. You never know when there could be something more serious going on, and most students will appreciate that you took the time to speak with them.

On the right side of the text, there is a cartoon illustration of a young man with dark hair, wearing a dark long-sleeved shirt.

At the bottom of the main content area, there is a "continue" button with a right-pointing arrow.

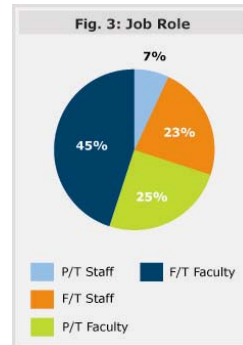
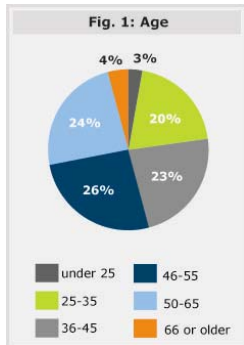
At the bottom of the entire interface, there is a navigation bar with three items: "Undos", "Conversation Log", and a small icon of a notepad and pencil.

Upon concluding each conversation, users receive narrated and animated feedback, which includes an analysis of the student and a review of their symptoms in class and in conversation.

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National Survey Study

72 universities, 1,200 participants, May – December 2009:



91% said they had at least one student in their class who concerned them

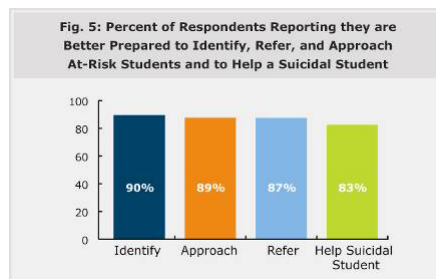
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National Survey Study

Changes in Knowledge and Skill

89% reported they are **better prepared** to identify, approach and refer students in mental distress

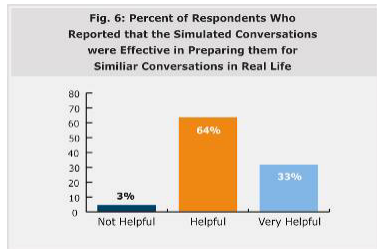
83% reported they are more confident in their ability to help a **suicidal student**.



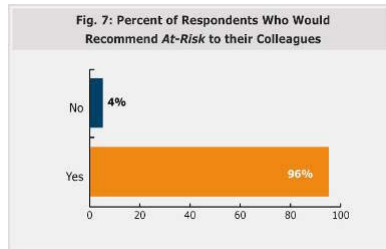
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National Survey Study

Effectiveness of Instructional Approach



97% reported the simulated conversations were **realistic** representations of conversations they had with at-risk students.



96% would **recommend At-Risk** to their colleagues

Download Complete Report at:
www.kognito.com/atrisk/research.html

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Assessment Plan

Assessment of Program:

1. Longitudinal Survey Study: online questionnaire after training plus 6-month follow up survey
2. Usage: number of users, district, position
3. Empirical Study: using control group and situational judgment tasks (still in planning stages and seeking partners)

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Role-Out Plan

Role-Out Program:

1. Target audiences: general, public high school teachers, principals, counselors & student support staff, school systems
2. Promote through web sites, list serves, emails, e-newsletters, conference workshops and exhibits, Texas Suicide Prevention Council
3. Press conference, media release
4. Webinar for educational groups
5. Products: electronic poster, flyer, exhibit
6. Local Suicide Prevention Coalitions work with school districts to include training as part of inservice

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Questions & Answers

Link to Demo of At-Risk for University Faculty:
www.kognito.com/atrisk



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