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Beyond Traditional Methods: Utilizing a Hybrid SIRe Model for Optimal Counselling Skill Development in Practicum Courses

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This study aims to introduce a new Hybrid SIRe (simulation and reflection) Model for instructors to improve counselling skills of counselling students in the practicum course. The Hybrid SIRe Model of teaching is used by instructors, which is a combined approach involving simulation techniques (demonstration and role-play) and reflection techniques. Counselling instructors can utilise this model to establish competency and build self-confidence while conducting counselling sessions with the students.A total of seven counselling students (three males and four females) were selected from the practicum course to test the model. A mixed-method approach was used in this study. The Counselling Self-Estimate Inventory (COSE) by Larson (1992) was employed to measure a mastery level of counselling skills among counselling students. Data were gathered from the counselling instructor's field notes and counselling students' reflections. Then, the obtained data were analysed using thematic analysis to explore the experiences of a new teaching method by the counselling instructor. The results showed a significant difference between the initial and final assessment of the COSE by comparing means . In conclusion, the Hybrid SIRe Model of teaching has an excellent benefit for counselling instructors to ensure that the practicum students can master counselling skills, which in turn develop their competence levels, help grow their professional identity and promote a better service in the future.

Keywords: simulation, reflection, counselling students, counselling skills, practicum

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INTRODUCTION

Counsellors are becoming increasingly noticeable and well-known in the helping profession. Counselling instructors have the critical responsibility to promote hte highest levels of competence among counselling students, with the goal of achieving desired outcomes for clients in the therapy session (Rust, Ruaskin & Hill, 2013). The effectiveness of a counseling instructor in fostering the competency of counseling students lies in their ability to model not only sound theoretical knowledge but also exemplary teaching practices. A good teaching instructor creates an environment that encourages active engagement, critical thinking, and hands-on application of counseling skills. By integrating real-world scenarios, providing constructive feedback, and emphasizing ethical considerations, the instructor contributes significantly to shaping well-rounded and competent counseling professionals. In the counselling program, practicum is a core course that provides the first opportunity for counselling students to gain experience working with a client (Boylan & Scott, 2009). Counselling students under practicum courses also can be considered beginner counsellors (Ronnestad & Skovholt, 2003). Practicum course heavily relies on elements of practicality that require students' self-confidence and mastery levels, as well as standard of competence in applying their knowledge and skills with real clients (Ikonomopoulos, Vela, Smith & Dell' Aquila, 2016). In a practicum course, counselling students are also expected to demonstrate advanced levels of helping skills, conceptualising cases, doing clinical evaluation and handling ethical conflicts (Van Lith & Voronin, 2016). At the early stage of becoming professional counsellors, they may experience numerous challenges, such as anxiety, dependency and vulnerability in their practice. They are also worried about potential problems they would encounter by being too emotionally invested (Hill, Lystrup, Kline & Gebru, 2013). These challenges collectively shape the early stages of a counsellor's career and highlight the need for guidance and support in developing the skills essential for their future practice. Thus, counselling instructors play important roles in introducing teaching methodology to maintain competency and efficacy levels, particularly for core courses that develop counselling skills.

Theoretically, counselling practicum students are mastering skills they learned in the classroom and peer practice in the placement setting, receiving feedback and refining them as necessary. This process does not only include classroom instruction and lectures, assigned readings, observation and personal counselling but may also involve simulation techniques and role-play activities with peers. Role-play could enhance students' therapeutic and communicative skills (Ronning & Bjorkly, 2019), besides promoting equality between counsellor-client, as well as encouraging students' involvement, self-efficacy and empathic abilities in helping professions (Ronning & Bjorkly, 2019). Further, a demonstration is considered an important pedagogical tool in courses aimed at teaching students how to conduct counselling (Slonim-nevo, 2017).

In other words, counselling instructors should be creative in delivering course content that combines theoretical and practical elements to help counselling students develop well in this profession (Schimmel, Daniels, Wassif & Jacobs, 2016). One of the most significant issues in teaching practicum courses is meeting the diverse needs of counselling students. As is well-known, counselling students come from diverse

backgrounds and have unique needs and challenges. Thus, counselling instructors may struggle to meet the needs of all their students and provide effective support and feedback. Therefore, the use of transformative teaching methods is in dire need to improve the mastery of counselling students in counselling skills after taking pre-practicum courses in the counselling training program.

To address all these challenges and better support counselling instructors in teaching practicum courses, a new teaching method that is innovative, evidence-based, and tailored to the unique needs of counselling students and instructors is imperative. This new teaching method should incorporate the use of effective methodologies to enhance student outcomes in mastering counselling skills. Furthermore, this teaching method should provide counselling instructors with the necessary training, resources, and support to effectively teach practicum courses while balancing their clinical workload. Determining such needs to restore life and vitality to the profession, the Hybrid SIRe Model of teaching offers a strategy to find an engaging approach to teach counselling skills, which may develop counselling students' qualities to become self-confident, self-determining, optimistic and ready to work with vicarious experiences of the real world. The identification and exploration of potential research gaps in the development and implementation of a new counselling education model, such as the Hybrid SIRe Model, are essential. Investigating the model's efficacy, adaptability across diverse educational settings, and its impact on student performances can provide valuable insights to address any uncharted areas and optimize the model for enhanced effectiveness in preparing counselling students for real-world challenges. In this study, the Hybrid SIRe model of teaching was tested in terms of a valid skill assessment utilising appropriate research procedures. The learning and teaching experiences were evaluated qualitatively by the counselling students and the counselling instructors. The development of Hybrid SIRe requires a better understanding of the struggles faced by counselling instructors in teaching practicum courses and the effectiveness of current teaching methods. Therefore, there is a need for a comprehensive study aiming to identify the challenges faced by counselling instructors in teaching practicum courses and assess the effectiveness of current teaching methods. The results of this study can inform the development of an innovative teaching method addressing the struggles faced by counselling instructors and better support counselling students in their practicum experience.

Literature Review

In teaching counselling, the counsellor usually emphasises several essential aspects, including counselling theories, skills and processes (Corey & Corey 2020; Gladding, 2018). According to Akos, Wasik, McDonald, Soller and Lys (2019), the process of learning counselling knowledge is not a problem for counselling students, but mastering the practical aspects and applying counselling skills is a challenge for them. Counselling skills outline active listening, communicating, building relationships, reflection, structuring, leading, interpretation, minimal encouragement, paraphrasing, formulating, empathy, coping with silence, checking perceptions of confrontation and giving feedback to the clients (Nelson-Jones, 2016: McLeod & McLeod, 2011; Tanana, Soma, Srikumar, Atkin & Imel, 2019). Mastering counselling skills requires a lot of

practice and concurrently receiving feedback from professionals to improve therapy sessions (Corey & Corey, 2020). Besides the skill challenges, some counselling students were reported to have limited knowledge and understanding (Hatcher & Lassiter, 2007), resulting in basic problem-solving, thus ignoring the concrete level of detail (Truax & Carkhuff, 2017). The students also tend to spend less time planning and more time implementing solutions than experts do. Jenning et al. (2005) elucidated that developing an expert-level competency requires counselling students to move from only theories and skills to reflecting and observing patterns.

According to Teyber (2016), counselling students undergoing counsellor training often experience anxiety about self-efficacy, lack of focus, impatience, lack of self-confidence and fear if they make mistakes while conducting therapy sessions. In addition, fear and anxiety in communicating and interacting occur in counselling students due to the lack of communication skills and training, expectations of other people's evaluation, as well as a lack of self-confidence (Kurtyilmaz, 2015). In one study, Lamprecht and Pitre (2018) emphasised that students in counselling training face anxiety and self-efficacy issues. This challenge may exist due to a lack of understanding and exposure to real therapy sessions. Consequently, the counselling students were unable to obtain real experience on how to deal with clients in an actual setting. Moreover, the counselling instructors were still using a traditional approach to teaching methods and strategies.

According to Wells and Dickens (2019), the creative approach by counselling instructors is also very important to develop proficiency and professional standard of practice. Creative learning refers to teaching students to use strategies for representing and processing new information in a way that leads to the real issue. According to Mayer (1989), creative orientation in teaching acts to teach instructional techniques that are intended to assist students in learning new skills and knowledge to allow them to transfer what they have learned to a new situation. Several approaches can be implemented in teaching and learning processes, which refer to alternative teaching approaches such as problem-solving, pair work and role-play (Bradely & Berg, 2018). These approaches can be incorporated into the development of a new teaching method for practicum courses that better addresses the struggles faced by counselling instructors and better supports counselling students in their practicum experience.

In addition, Practice-Based Education has become among the good alternative approaches to enhancing student achievement especially related to practical courses. This Practice-Based Education has been applied in education that emphasises practical aspects involving reflectivity and simulated practice-based learning (Tarev, 2015). Reflective refers to a constant assessment of student activities including student evaluation of education activities. In addition, simulated practice-based learning is related to practical activities, which focuses on creating a practical environment, role-plays and peer learning. According to Rashid and Qaisar (2017), role-play is one of the effective approaches that can stimulate students' critical thinking and enhance their understanding. In a role-play scenario, students immerse themselves in simulated situations, taking on specific roles and engaging in interactive and dynamic exchanges.

This method not only encourages active participation but also requires students to think critically and apply their theoretical knowledge in practical contexts.

Role-play serves as a bridge between theory and practice by allowing students to embody the roles they may encounter in real counselling scenarios. This experiential learning technique promotes a deeper understanding of how counselling theories and skills can be practically applied, fostering a more holistic grasp of the counselling process. Moreover, role-play enhances students' interpersonal and communication skills. It provides a platform for them to navigate complex interactions, respond empathetically to diverse perspectives, and adapt their counselling approach in real-time. This not only prepares students for the challenges of real-world counselling but also contributes to the development of essential competencies such as cultural awareness, active listening, and effective problem-solving.

Based on the literature, many scholars and educators promote the importance of creative teaching methodology in students' learning environments. However, current studies are far from complete to paint a clear picture of how creative methods can be used for skill development courses concerning competency, performance, and efficacy. Therefore, there is a need for counselling instructors to focus on enhancing student skills in learning using role-play and simulation approaches to develop their confidence, competence and ethical sensitivity in working with real clients. Counselling instructors should prioritize role-play and simulation approaches as integral components of teaching methodologies. These approaches offer a multifaceted learning experience that goes beyond traditional instruction, nurturing the development of essential skills, ethical sensitivity, and cultural competence among counseling students.

Based on the literature reviewed, various teaching methods and approaches have been employed by instructors to teach counselling skills, including problem-solving activities, reflection and simulation. However, there is currently no standardised method for teaching practical courses, whereas students have expressed the need for more practical simulation in class, especially in counselling session demonstrations. To address this gap, a new model of teaching suitable for the Malaysian population known as the Hybrid SIRe model was developed in this study. Additionally, there is a lack of qualitative studies that explore important aspects of the interpersonal, unique approach and professional interaction involved in teaching counselling skills. Therefore, this study postulates the Hybrid SIRe Model of Teaching and provides evidence of its ability to strengthen counselling skills and enhance competencies among counselling students during their practicum course. Teaching counselling skills is made even more effective with a model like SIRe, which combines simulation and reflection. Simulation, or the practical practice of skills in controlled scenarios, provides a hands-on approach. This allows students to apply counselling techniques in a safe environment, promoting real-world readiness without any risk to actual clients.

Reflection is a crucial part of the Hybrid Model SIRe of teaching, where students think about their simulated experiences. It's like a mirror that helps them analyse their performance, identify strengths, and pinpoint areas for improvement. The SIRe model bridges theory and practice, creating a dynamic learning cycle that reinforces cultural

competence, decision-making skills, and the integration of counselling theories into practical application.

In essence, the Hybrid model SIRe provides a structured framework for the symbiotic relationship between simulation and reflection. Together, they enhance the learning journey for aspiring counsellors, making it more experiential, thoughtful, and impactful in preparing them for the challenges of the counselling profession. While the SIRe model offers a promising framework by integrating simulation and reflection in teaching counselling skills, there exists a notable research gap concerning its specific impact, adaptability, and potential limitations. Further investigation is needed to understand how effectively the model translates theoretical knowledge into practical competency.

Introducing the Hybrid SIRe: A Model of Teaching

The Hybrid SIRe Model of teaching is a unique framework that combines simulation techniques (demonstration and role-play) and reflection techniques in the teaching and learning process for the counselling practicum course. The acronym 'SIRe' stands for simulation and reflection, while the word 'hybrid' means a mixture of both methods. In the operation of the simulation technique, the Video Simulated Recall Technique (VSR) was used to provide an overview of what the counselling looks like in the actual setting. Then, the reflection methodology was used to explore the views and opinions of the counselling students.

Video Simulated Recall Technique (VSR)

For the demonstration/simulation component, two videos have been professionally produced by two counselling instructors (Licence Professional Counsellor). This session purposely intended to provide the counselling students with an understanding of the outline of counselling skills and an actual situation in the therapy session. This type of educational video illuminated the use of macro and micro counselling skills throughout the counselling session. The development of the video involved counselling instructors and clients who were volunteering to participate in this study. The video's content was kept confidential and was only used for educational purposes. The video was also professionally validated and approved by a group of expert panels in the counselling field.

Role-Play Activity

A role-play technique is a simulated experience between one or more individual's playing roles and communicating within a controlled environment (Woodhouse, 2007). For the Hybrid SIRe Model of teaching, the role-players will be assigned to play the role of a counsellor and a role as a client. The primary purpose of the role-play is education. A counselling student may grasp from a first-hand experience by participating in a role-play or learn vicariously by observing other students perform a role-play in the therapy. Role-play may be used to create awareness, practice a new skill, or help sensitise students to an unfamiliar environment (Fulton et al., 2019). Counselling instructors may assign the role to the students and gain feedback from them.

Reflection Technique

For counselling instructors, this reflection approach is verbal. This reflection is utilised by the counselling students based on three main dimensions: behaviour, ideas and emotion, which is based on observations from demonstrations and role-plays performed in the classroom. For counselling students, this technique would equate to successfully mastering a learning objective based on feedback from a professor, supervisor or peers (DeCino, Waalkes & Givens, 2020). Successful experiences raise mastery expectations while repeated failures lower them. Vicarious experience (seeing others perform and learning from it) can also impact self-efficacy based on one's inference from observing someone else perform a task as well as observing the consequences to that person or other people (Losey & Norman, 2016). Counselling students learn vicariously by being present during the performance and providing feedback to other students in class, particularly when seeing others receive feedback for a counselling session. In this technique, the counselling instructor could use the primary orientation by Losey and Norman (2016), be polite and affirming, reflect only on what has been discussed, observed, not observed, focus on the positive aspects of the client, be speculative, tentative and not the expert, multi-perspective, use positive connotation, use a common language and approach problem non-strategically.

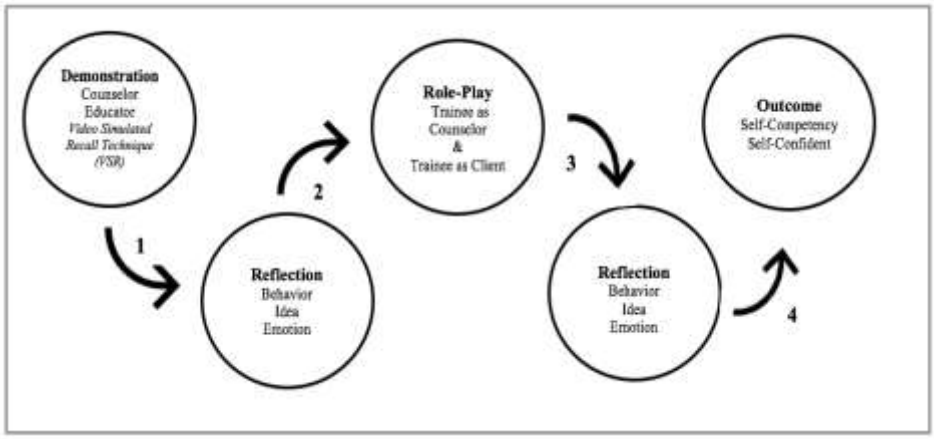


Figure 1
Explanation of the steps and procedure of using a Hybrid SIRe Model of Teaching in the classroom

The Steps and Procedure of the Hybrid SIRe Model

In the Hybrid SIRe Model of Teaching, there were four main steps followed by the counselling instructors.

1. The first step was a demonstration of counselling sessions using the VSR technique. In the video recording, the counselling instructor acted as a counsellor while the student played the role of a client in a counselling session. The video recording included the presentation of counsellor instructors who demonstrated counselling skills, applied

theory and facilitated the counselling process. Purposely, all counselling students would get a clear picture of the counselling session and learn the skills required in the session.

2. The second step involved reflection techniques. This technique involved opinions and feedback by counselling students after watching the video. The counselling instructor identified and evaluated the counselling students' behaviours, ideas and feelings for future improvement.

3. The third step involved a role-play activity with the counselling students. This role-play fully involved the role of the counselling students in playing the role/character of a counsellor and as a client in the counselling session. The counselling instructors only performed observations over the role-play. This stage enabled counselling instructors to identify counselling students' comprehension, ability, competency and confidence levels.

4. The fourth step was a reflection technique from the instructors and peers on the role-play activity demonstrated by selected counselling students. At this stage, counselling instructors provided comments (if necessary), suggestion and feedback on the session. In addition, the role-play session was opened for peer reviews and opinions. Eventually, a further discussion took place in the classroom involving students and counselling instructors.

METHOD

Design of Study

The design of this study is a sequential mixed method in which the researchers expand their data using one design with another design (Cresswell, 2018). This research involves: (i) a qualitative design utilised to explore counselling instructors' and counselling students' perspectives on the use of the model based on a series of interviews with the students as well as field notes by the counsellor educator's reflexibility. (ii) A quantitative method was used to measure a change in the counselling skill levels of mastery by using questionnaires for counselling students. (iii) Finally, the triangulation method using multiple data sources was used to gain a deeper understanding and find supporting evidence.

The analysis of qualitative data, derived from interviews and field notes, will be conducted through a rigorous thematic coding approach. This involves systematically identifying, organizing, and interpreting patterns within the data to derive meaningful themes. Triangulation with quantitative data obtained from the COSE (Counselling Self-Estimate Inventory) will be achieved by employing a mixed-methods approach, allowing for the convergence of insights from both qualitative and quantitative findings. Integration of these data sets will provide a comprehensive understanding of the Hybrid SIRe Model's impact. To assess the model's effectiveness, quantitative data will be subjected to statistical analyses, such as regression or correlation, to discern patterns and relationships. Moreover, qualitative insights will be crucial in providing context and depth to quantitative findings, enriching the overall interpretation. This multifaceted approach ensures a robust analysis, offering a nuanced perspective on the Hybrid SIRe Model's outcomes.

Sample Selection

Participants for this study were (i) final-year undergraduate students in the counselling program, and (ii) counselling instructors from one public university in Malaysia. The students involved in this study have enrolled in the practicum course in 2021. A Practicum course is a training course for counselling students before undergoing an internship. This course introduces the students to real clients and requires them to practise basic theoretical concepts and counselling skills. Counselling instructors in this study were the lecturers who have taught counselling courses. In conducting this study, a random sampling approach was employed to select a fair and unbiased representation of participants from a compiled list of student and counselling instructor names. The process involved establishing inclusion criteria, specifically targeting current practicum and final-year students who had completed most counselling courses. Subsequently, 10 students and 2 instructors were randomly chosen, ensuring equal opportunities for every individual in the list. Prior to selection, criteria verification was conducted to confirm that participants met the outlined prerequisites. Importantly, all selected individuals expressed a genuine interest in the study and voluntarily committed to participating in all learning activities. This methodological approach aimed to enhance the study's external validity by including a diverse and representative sample of individuals who fulfilled the defined criteria. Participants were informed of the confidentiality of this study in the consent form to assure them that no one other than the researcher can link their identity to an assigned code name for personal information. Also, participants were made aware that the actual report and results will not include any individual identification of them. The study takes ethical considerations seriously, addressing potential participant risks through robust confidentiality measures. Procedures for obtaining informed consent were clearly outlined, emphasizing voluntary participation, the right to withdraw, and the sensitive handling of information. These measures underscore the study's commitment to participant well-being and adherence to rigorous ethical standards.

Instruments for Measuring Level of Counselling Skills

The questionnaire used in this study was Counselling Self-Estimate Inventory (COSE), a self-report inventory. This questionnaire has been used twice in pre and post-test. This questionnaire has also been back-translated into the Malay version by two experts in counselling.

Counselling Self-Estimate Inventory (COSE)

Counselling Self-Estimate Inventory was developed by Larson (1992) to measure counselling self-efficacy. The questions include counselling skills, micro-skills, counselling process, difficult client behaviour, cultural competence and awareness of values. The reliability of the inventory is Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of .93, indicating excellent reliability, while the reliability for five subdomains include .88 (micro-skills), .87 (processing), .80 (difficult client behaviour), .80 (cultural competence) and .78 (awareness of values). The score ranges from 37 to 222 with a high total score representing a high perception of counselling self-efficacy.

The scoring procedure for the COSE to assess counselling self-efficacy, involves participants rating their perceived competence in various counselling-related domains. Responses are typically given on a Likert-type scale, with higher scores indicating greater self-perceived efficacy. Following completion, scores across relevant items are summed to derive a total score, providing an overall measure of the individual's perceived effectiveness and confidence in counselling skills. The scoring procedure allows for a quantitative assessment of counselling self-efficacy, facilitating the interpretation of participants' confidence levels in different aspects of counselling.

Research Procedure and Stages

Initial Stage (Investigating the Issue)

The first stage involved identifying the counselling students' problems in mastering the counselling skills. The problems were identified from students' responses in the online courses' evaluation at the end of the semester. The instructor for the practicum course was aware that for the past few years, similar responses were obtained from students, stating that they need more practical simulation in class to understand more about the demonstrations of counselling sessions. At this point, the researcher was confident that the data is saturated and had enough information to develop a comprehensive model for this practicum course. This ensures that the model reflects the experiences and perspectives of the students. As a result, Hybrid SIRe Model was developed. Before introducing this model, the Counselling Self-Estimate Inventory (COSE) was distributed to measure mastery levels of counselling skills and competency of counselling students as a preliminary data analysis in this study.

Middle Stage (Introducing the Model)

The Hybrid SIRe Model of teaching was introduced in the classroom. This technique was used after the third week of class, where the counselling students had a clearer picture of the situation and type of clients at the practicum placement. This stage is vital as an early exposure to a new teaching methodology for counselling students. Next, the model approach involved the execution of demonstrations followed by a systematic reflection from the counselling students. Subsequently, the counselling instructors conveyed instructions for the implementation of the role-play activity. The students were also reminded to apply the skills they learned in the lectures throughout the activity. Counselling students were required to act as counsellors for at least five counselling sessions with their counselling skills being assessed. At the end of each activity, the students were interviewed on their actions, ideas and emotions. The interview protocol is provided below. The interview questions are structured questions.

1) In your opinion, what are the basic counselling skills that you can learn from the simulation recording?
2) Based on your observation, to what extent does this recording help your understanding in conducting the counselling session in the future?
3) Overall, did this recording session help your understanding of the counselling session (e.g; the process and skills)?

The interviews commenced with an introduction to the study's purpose and assurances of confidentiality. Participants shared their experiences with the Hybrid SIRe Model, discussed the integration of COSE data, and provided insights into challenges, benefits, and potential improvements. The protocol concluded by thanking participants for their time and offering an opportunity for additional comments or concerns.

Lastly, at this stage, the instructors need to write down their reflections after completing all the sessions with the students. The reflection questions are as followed:

1) In your opinion, do you think the students can learn basic counselling skills from the simulation recording?
2) Based on your observation, to what extent does this recording help your students in conducting the counselling session in the future?
3) Overall, did this recording session help your understanding of the counselling session (e.g; the process and skills)?

Working Stage (Testing the Model)

In the working stage, the Hybrid SIRe Model of teaching was tested to observe the effectiveness of the model. The application method and approach were similar to the middle stage, except that improvements were made by the counselling instructor through feedback from the students. This working stage was an actual field test as the researcher assumed that the counselling students might be in the process of adjusting the new model of teaching, specifically by watching a video recording of the VSR technique and encouraging reflection in the classroom.

Final Stage (Evaluating & Data Gathering)

The final stage was the evaluation and data collection to obtain information on the model's effectiveness. There were three methods of data collection. Firstly, the use of the COSE for post-test assessment. Secondly, the reflection by the students and lastly, the reflection by the counsellor instructor.

FINDINGS

A total of seven individual counselling practicum students were asked to complete the COSE assessment and be interviewed. All comments and feedback were recorded, transcribed, coded and analysed. Participants involved three males and four females aged between 23 and 25 years old. Participants' academic achievement was above a 3.00 Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA). Their races were Malay and Chinese.

Table 1
Summary of participant demographics and characteristics

Name	Age	Gender	CGPA	Race
Participant A	24	Male	3.45	Malay
Participant B	24	Male	3.33	Malay
Participant C	23	Male	3.46	Chinese
Participant D	23	Female	3.85	Malay
Participant E	23	Female	3.35	Chinese
Participant F	23	Female	3.58	Malay
Participant G	25	Female	3.51	Chinese

Measuring Mastery Level of Counselling Skills (Initial Stage and Final Stage)

Data analysis was performed through the COSE assessment to identify the changes in basic counselling skills. The mean analysis demonstrated a significant change in the counselling skills used by the counselling students. The t-test showed a significant mean score difference in the mastery of counselling skills for counselling students after using the Hybrid SIRe Model of Teaching. Meanwhile, the analysis indicated that the mean score of the basic skills level of counselling had increased by 7.90 from 8.80 (initial stage) to 16.70 (final stage). This value suggests that the use of the model increased the mastery level of the counselling students.

Table 2
Comparison between the COSE scores for initial and final assessments

Test	Num.	Mean	Mean. Diff	SD	t-value	Sig.
Initial	7	16.70	7.900	2.47	10.115	.00
Stage	7	8.80				
Final Stage						

*Significant level at 0.05

Reflection by Counselling Students

Based on the thematic analysis, several themes emerged from this study; (i) easy to understand and interesting, (ii) increasing self-confidence, (iii) assessing self-efficacy and (iv) translating knowledge and theory into practice.

i) Easy to Understand and Interesting

The counselling students involved in the study recognised that the techniques used by the instructors can form an understanding of the counselling skills, particularly in the sessions that took place. According to Participant A:

> "The recording of this session helped in my understanding of the counselling process and skills during the session. This is because the process was systematic."

Participant A's statement was similar to the statement made by Participant G in terms of gaining knowledge in skills and towards case resolution. Participant G mentioned;

> "This helps me in increasing my knowledge in questioning clients to obtain the necessary information to assist clients in resolving issues faced by the clients."

Participant C also added that the session helped her understand the process and skills to be used in the session, besides being interesting and easy to understand. According to Participant C;

> "Overall, I find this technique helpful in the process of developing counselling skills that need to be present during the counselling session. This is understandable where the counsellors must have knowledge about the client so that the client feels that he is always welcome. I guess it is an interesting approach."

In addition, Participant C also stated in the reflection that this video helped him to understand specific skills such as rapport-building and structuring processes.

> "From the process, I can also learn how to do the rapport process, structuring and also end a counselling session. I think this video is very useful for trainee counsellors in understanding what counsellors should do during the session."

ii) Increasing Self- Confidence

Accordingly, the Hybrid SIRe Model of teaching assisted in developing students' confidence to become professional counsellors. Participant D, in her statement, reported that demonstration and role-play activities helped her prepare to become a certified counsellor in the future. Participant D stated that;

> "Many of the counselling skills used in this video can be used as preparation for me to make sessions in the future."

In addition, Participant E stated that this method was more structured and appreciated the feedback from the instructor regarding role-play activity and reflection on the learning experiences. Participant E added in her statement that;

> "This method is very helpful. It was very organised, and I could see the whole journey of the session going on. The role-play gives me self-confidence and challenges me to do better in the future."

iii) Assessing Self-Efficacy

Participant F found that this model helped her assess her ability to use counselling skills as this was her final year in the counselling program.

> "All the counselling skills used in this module are the best techniques when conducting interventions with clients. Counsellors initiate therapeutic skills or relationship-building skills intending to create a comfortable atmosphere for a counsellor as well as a client. I am also comfortable with peer feedback on what I did in class."

Apart from that, Participant B added peers' comments and feedback as a reflection for himself to make corrective actions in the next session.

> "Peers reflection is good and helps me in identifying issues and problems faced by clients since the clients present are diverse and unique in all aspects of thought, feeling and experience."

Participant A shared the same input as Participant B.

> "This reflective technique helps counsellors to learn techniques and processes in counselling and also correct deficiencies in terms of counselling skills or the counselling process itself."

Participant D also admitted that this class's assessment through rubrics could develop expectations for making the best role-play as a counsellor in class.

> "Rubric evaluation in role-play sessions and reflection indirectly helped me to be better prepared for the aspects that the instructors want to see. I see my classmates focusing on this aspect of assessment to move forward and master these skills."

iv) Translating Knowledge and Theory into Practice

In examining the feedback, the students also felt that this model assisted them in translating counselling theory into actual practice in the therapy session. Participant E stated:

> "So far, the emphasis of teaching is more theoretical and very less focused on practice. This is a good opportunity for us to conduct sessions with the guidance of experienced instructors."

Participant D also acknowledged that this activity provided challenges in understanding theoretical knowledge to be embodied in the form of counselling service.

> "Simulation and role-play activities from our classmates help to understand the explanations and materials presented in the classes. I feel the actual practice is much more challenging than understanding theory alone."

Reflection by Counselling Instructors

The counselling instructor involved in this study was a part of the research member. As one of the instructors who actively participated in the research, there is acknowledgment of the potential for subjective bias in both data collection and analysis. To mitigate this risk, measures were implemented, including transparent reporting of the researcher's involvement and potential biases. Additionally, the study design incorporated elements like blinding during data analysis and peer review, enhancing the objectivity and credibility of the research findings. These steps were taken to ensure the research's integrity and rigor, providing transparency about the potential for bias and the strategies employed to address it.

Additionally, the inputs were taken from field notes. Among the benefits and inputs derived from the model of teaching were effective teaching aids, avoid performance anxiety, tool review for improvement, the use of other skill development courses, and consider class size and capacity:

i) Effective Teaching Aids

Based on the development of the video recording, the counselling instructors agreed that it was a new teaching tool in the counselling field where the method of simulation and reflection are used altogether in the practicum course. Video roles, role-play and reflection activities may serve as useful models for teaching counselling skills. In the learning process, most of the teaching materials and video examples are from Western Countries and in English. Construction of the video using a national language and local product can provide an accurate understanding among counselling students in training in terms of culture and normalisation.

ii) Avoid Performance Anxiety

Role-play in the early stages was quite challenging to implement as the students were shied and feared being evaluated (performance anxiety). However, the counselling instructors who conducted this practicum course played a vital role in instilling enthusiasm and optimism for the students to do well in the therapy session.

iii) Review the Session for Improvements

Through the reflection technique, the counselling instructor should take the time to process each feedback, view and idea from the students. Most of them viewed this reflection method as a space to express opinions and views regarding the counselling process and skills. It benefits in building a medium for improvement that can be made in future sessions. For example, ineffective structuring processes, inaccurate paraphrases and formulations. Therefore, instructors can provide immediate support and guidance according to the student's performance.

iv) Use of Other Skill Development Courses

The use of video examples, role-play and reflection can also be used in the teaching of counselling in group, family, and couple settings (couple counselling). In a setting involving small groups, a good facilitator and leadership skills are required. These skills can be mastered by counselling students through the model as well. Group skills such as cutting-off, drawing-out, dyad, spinning off and shift the focus demonstrated by the instructors in advance are believed to give an idea of the role in creating a safe environment and effective interaction in the group setting. Reflections can be processed in a group of students after a role-play activity. It can also impact the student's self-understanding and confidence to gain the experience of handling the real session.

v) Consider Class Size and Capacity

The learning of counselling skills is preferable for a small number of students in the class so that the instructor can be fully attentive to the development of the skills learned by the students.

DISCUSSION

Based on the COSE scores assessment, the Hybrid SIRe Model can strengthen counselling skills among counselling students. The findings were well-supported by developed themes from the qualitative analysis. Counselling students perceived that the model of teaching accommodated them to understand counselling skills better, gain self-confidence, learn about their self-efficacy and apply theory to practice. Undoubtedly, a combination of demonstration/simulation and role-play activities can work well to benefit counselling students in mastering counselling skills. Constructive criticism and comments provide a well-prepared student to conduct counselling sessions more effectively in the future while identifying challenges and self-barriers that can hinder the counselling students' career development in the future (Sapora Sipon, 2008; Muhammed, Olayinka & Olamilekan, 2019).

Counsellors' self-efficacy can also be assessed through self-reflection and rubric assessment while in the role-play activity. This is also the role of counselling instructors and peers in creating a safe environment and mutually assisting skills improvement to be practised in the classroom. Also, students' ability can be measured through mastery of counselling skills and the student's critical analysis through reflection. This can be a topic for discussion that might relate to case conception as well as gaining psychological support from instructors while dealing with multiple clients. Counselling

students also agreed that the model of teaching brought them to the real world of being a counsellor and professional helpers. They acknowledged all struggles and challenges in translating theoretical knowledge into action.

The traditional methods of counselling education like lectures and role-play may be inadequate for students to develop a deep understanding of the nuances of counselling. Meanwhile, the Hybrid SIRe Model allows students to learn and practice counselling skills more interactively and dynamically. This approach provides students with real-world scenarios and challenges they may encounter when working with clients. Furthermore, the Hybrid SIRe Model can also be used as an assessment tool for counselling instructors to evaluate the progress of their students. The model provides a clear and structured way to assess students' performance in counselling sessions and identify areas for improvement. This way, the model not only provides a new approach to teaching counselling but also helps instructors to ensure that their students are meeting the required competencies. Overall, the Hybrid SIRe Model represents a significant advancement in the field of counselling education. Providing a new paradigm for teaching and assessing counselling skills empowers both instructors and students to develop the competencies necessary for succeeding as professional counsellors.

In addition, counselling students often experience '*performance anxiety*' where they are worried about making mistakes and want to look perfect. Through this model, the students can emulate counselling sessions conducted by professional counsellors, which illustrate a standard of competency and professionalism. From the findings, the strength of the reflection technique could help counselling students reflect on actions and thoughts about the session. The students can then develop observer skills over clients' attitudes, character style, tone of voice and non-verbal behaviours (Nova Erlina et al., 2018). Moreover, the counselling instructors suggested that the model of teaching can also be applied to other courses such as group, couple and family counselling. The instructors recommended that similar methods in the Hybrid SIRe Model of teaching be used in other courses, particularly professional skills development.

For the effectiveness of these counselling skills teaching sessions, this technique has been effectively used in appropriate class sizes, considering the number of students in the classroom (Kirk-Jenkins & Evans, 2022). Usually, the total of counselling students in a single classroom is quite large. This technique will be more effective if it can be scaled down to open up feedback space to each counselling student who performs role-play and processes each reflection expressed by the students. Furthermore, the appointment of a co-instructor to facilitate the class with a large number of students can add to the effectiveness of this model, thus allowing close monitoring of each student to be implemented.

The counselling students' performances using the Hybrid SIRe model of teaching are closely associated with the reflections of counselling instructors. Instructors note the model's efficacy as an effective teaching aid, facilitating a dynamic learning environment. The model helps alleviate performance anxiety among students, encourages regular tool reviews for continuous improvement, complements other skill

development courses, and prompts instructors to consider optimal class size and capacity for enhanced engagement and personalized learning experiences.

The Hybrid SIRe model of teaching propels skill development through active learning, engaging learners in dynamic simulated scenarios to apply theoretical knowledge practically. By incorporating timely feedback mechanisms, the model provides constructive insights that empower individuals to refine their counseling skills iteratively. Furthermore, the reflective component fosters increased self-awareness, guiding learners to understand their counseling styles, strengths, and areas for improvement, contributing to ongoing personal and professional development. İt is also help a self regulation learning and a positive educational outcome (Cobbold & Wright, 2021)

The Hybrid SIRe model of teaching for counselling instructors can be seamlessly applied to a broad spectrum of courses beyond counselling, including but not limited to psychology, social work, communication, education, and healthcare. By integrating simulated scenarios, merging theoretical concepts, and fostering reflective practices, instructors can enhance the learning experience across a diverse range of subjects and disciplines. This adaptable approach underscores the potential for the Hybrid SIRe model of teaching to promote active learning and critical thinking in various educational settings and academic domains.

The future direction of the study involves an exploration of the long-term impacts and scalability of the SIRe model. Further research will focus on assessing the sustained effectiveness of the model in improving learning outcomes and skill retention over extended periods. Additionally, the adaptability of the SIRe model will be investigated across different educational contexts and disciplines, exploring its potential to enhance diverse learning environments. Collaborative efforts and partnerships may be pursued to implement the SIRe model on a larger scale, with the aim of contributing valuable insights to educational practices and curriculum development.

The study's confinement to a specific university and program implies a potential limitation in generalizability to wider settings or populations. However, it's essential to note that while the findings may not universally apply, the study provides valuable insights within its defined context. The focused nature of the data ensures a detailed understanding of the Hybrid SIRe model's effectiveness within the studied environment, offering a foundation for further research and potential adaptation in similar educational contexts, acknowledging this as a limitation of the study.

CONCLUSION

The utilisation of the Hybrid SIRe Model of Teaching has demonstrated a significant improvement in the mastery levels of counselling skills among practicum students. This systematic study was conducted with appropriate research methodology to provide evidence of the effectiveness of this model. The Hybrid SIRe Model not only reinforced the development of counselling skills learned in the classroom but also in their practical application. The approach of this model primarily focuses on enhancing students' performance and teaching methods. With the aid of this model, counselling instructors

can effectively implement transformative teaching, which incorporates principles of active learning, student-centred learning, collaborative learning, experiential learning and problem-based learning. This model serves as a valuable tool for educators to elevate emerging counsellors' competencies and abilities. Future directions for this study may involve integrating technology into the Hybrid SIRe Model to enhance content delivery and conducting a longitudinal study to assess the long-term impact on counsellor professional development.

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