

Step In, Speak Up!

A Longitudinal Study with 1,390 Educators

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PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

Step In, Speak Up! is an online, interactive simulation for middle and high school educators that builds understanding and appreciation for the challenges faced by LGBTQ youth, and prepares users to lead real-life conversations with students to curtail harassment and support those who may be struggling as a result of bullying or isolation. In the simulation, users enter a virtual environment and engage in two role-play scenarios with virtual students and practice how to respond when someone makes a biased comment or expresses prejudice towards LGBTQ students, how to respond supportively when a student comes out as LGBTQ, and how to connect students who may be in distress with campus support services.

A demo can be viewed at www.kognito.com.



Snapshot of Kognito's *Step In, Speak Up!*

“Good role-playing scenarios. Interactive and allowed user to click on suggested responses.”

- Teacher

SUMMARY OF STUDY RESULTS

The study included 1,390 middle and high school educators in 35 districts and schools across 7 states.

Key findings include:

1. Mental Health Skills

The study found a statistically significant increase ($p < 0.001$) in Total Mental Health Skills from pre-simulation to 3-month follow-up. Total Mental Health Skills included the ability to: (1) identify when a student's behavior or appearance is a sign of psychological distress, (2) discuss concern with a student and motivate them to seek help, and (3) make a referral to mental health support services.

2. Approach and Referral Rates

Three months after completing the simulation, participants reported an increase of 27% in the number of students they approached to discuss concerns with and 16% in the number of students they referred to support services ($p < 0.05$).

3. Speaking with Colleagues

Three months after completing the simulation, participants reported an increase in the number of conversations they had with other adults in their school about students they were concerned about due to them being teased, harassed, or bullied (62%), the use of discriminatory language in their classrooms (65%), and how to better support LGBTQ students (73%).

4. Satisfaction with Learning Experience

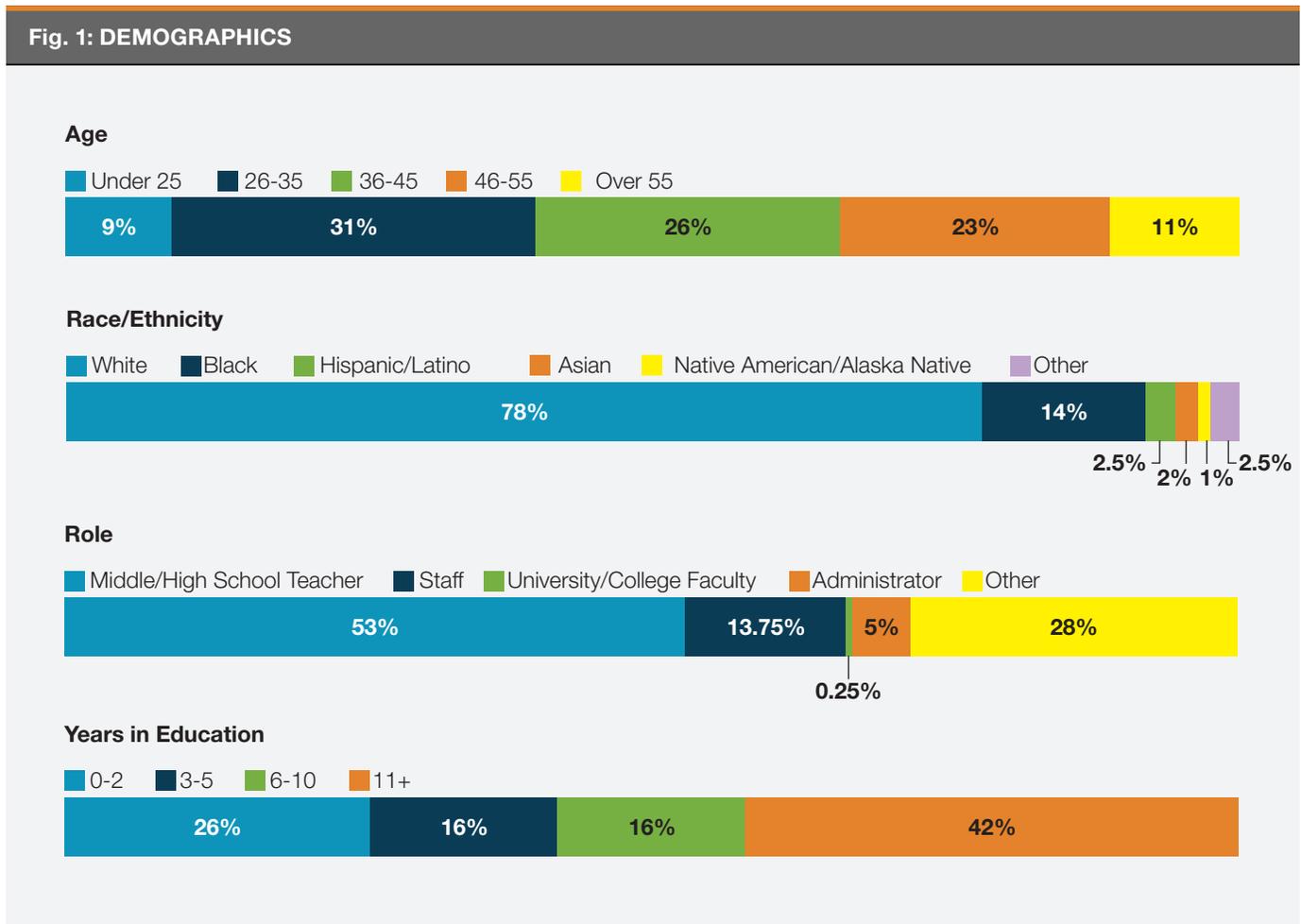
Ninety-eight percent rated the simulation as good, very good, or excellent. Ninety-five percent said they would recommend it to their colleagues.

SUBJECTS AND METHODS

The study was conducted between September 2014 and August 2018 with 1,390 middle and high school teachers and personnel in over 35 schools in 7 states. Seventy-seven percent of participants were female, and 40.7% received prior training in LGBTQ anti-bullying. Additional demographic information is shown in Fig. 1.

Participants first completed a pre-survey (baseline) and then the online simulation, followed immediately by a post-simulation survey. Participants later completed a 3-month follow-up survey. All surveys were conducted online at a

computer of the participant's choosing. Participants were educators in institutions that purchased the simulation from Kognito and chose to have Kognito embed the survey tools into the simulation to assess its effectiveness. Participants had the option to take the simulation and were not compensated; some participants were required by their school administration to complete the simulation. Study results were analyzed using a repeated measures analysis of variance to determine the change in dependent variables across all three measurement points or a repeated measures t-test for those with only two time points.



RESULTS

1. Total Mental Health Skills

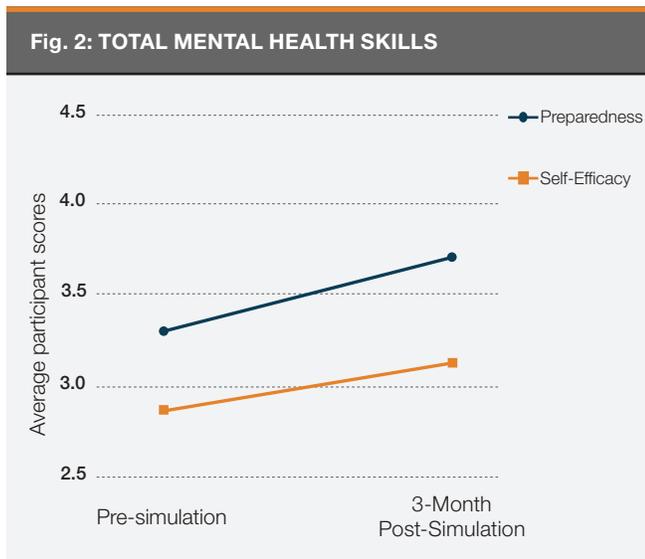
The study found a statistically significant increase ($p < 0.001$) in Total Mental Health Skills from pre- to post-simulation that remained significant at 3-month follow-up (Fig. 2). Total Mental Health Skills included three self-perceived preparedness measures that include the ability to: (1) identify when a student’s behavior or appearance is a sign of psychological distress, (2) discuss concern with a student and motivate them to seek help, and (3) make a referral to mental health support services. Participants reported their preparedness for each measure using a five-point Likert scale from very low (1) to very high (5).

2. Behavior Change and Referral Rates

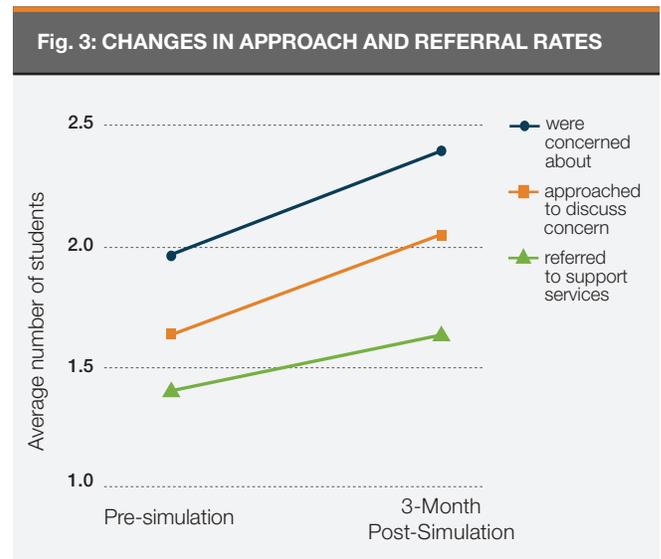
The study found significant and sustainable behavior changes on two levels:

A. APPROACH AND REFERRAL RATES: Study participants reported statistically significant increases ($p < 0.05$) at 3-month follow-up in terms of the number of students they were concerned about, approached, and referred to support services (Fig. 3). Specifically, there was an increase of 27% in the number approached by participants and 16% in the number of students referred by participants to support services (Table 1).

B. SPEAKING WITH COLLEAGUES: The study found that significant percentage of participants reported an increase in the number of conversations they had with other adults in their school about (1) students they were concerned about due to them being teased, harassed, or bullied (62%), (2) the use of discriminatory language in their classrooms (65%), and (3) how to better support LGBTQ students (73%).



Changes in total mental health skills from pre-simulation to 3-month follow-up point



Changes in the number of students that participants were concerned about, approached, and referred

Average number of students that participants...	Pre-simulation	3-Month Post-Simulation	Percent change
Were concerned about	1.95	2.40	23%
Approached to discuss concerns	1.62	2.06	27%
Referred to support services	1.40	1.63	16%

*Only answers by participants who completed the pre- and follow-up surveys at least two months into the academic year were included.

3. Satisfaction and Learning Experience

Participants highly ranked the simulation's learning experience and design. For example, 95% said they would recommend the simulation to their colleagues and 81% said it was based on scenarios relevant to their work with students (Fig. 4 and Fig. 5).

The study also found that after taking the simulation, 99% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that all staff in their facility should take the simulation.

Fig. 4: PARTICIPANT RATINGS

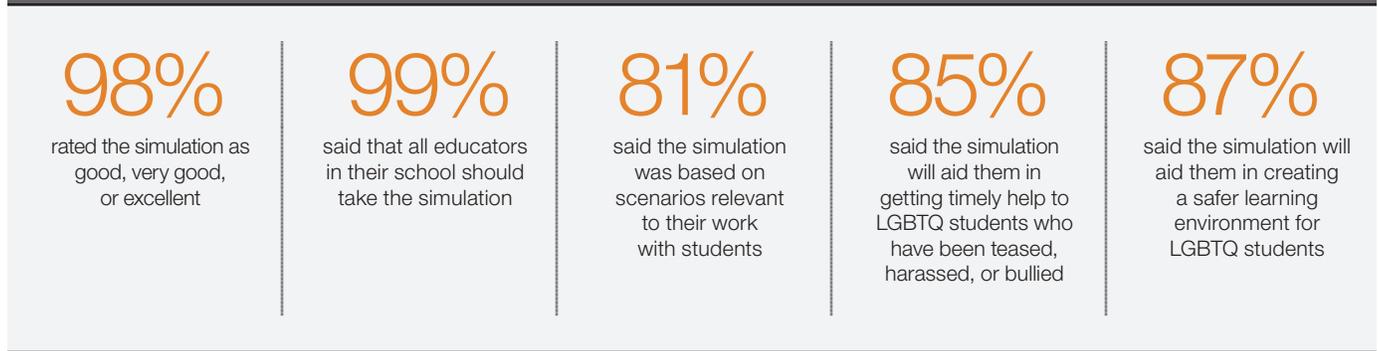


Fig. 5: PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK



Notes:

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