Adaptable HR Training: Embracing Robotics and AI

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IDE 611: Technologies for Instructional Settings

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December 2, 2024

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Hiring the right person can make or break a team, making it critical for managers to master interviewing techniques. Drawing from my experience as the G-1 Sergeant Major for the NCO Leadership Center of Excellence, an organization comprised of Soldiers and Army Civilians, I faced the challenges of recruitment firsthand. When I assumed the position, the absence of a Civilian Director left me responsible for overseeing the hiring process for civilian employees, a role for which I had no prior experience. Navigating the regulations and policies became a trial-and-error learning experience, especially when conducting interviews. Looking back, having access to structured training resources would have been invaluable, equipping me with the tools to execute effective and compliant hiring practices.

This HR training proposal offers solutions for such scenarios by leveraging humanoid robots to simulate job candidates. Through this innovative approach, participants can practice essential skills, such as preparing interview environments, asking standardized questions, and maintaining professional engagement (LinkedIn Learning, 2022). As artificial intelligence (AI) continues to reshape recruitment, tools like automated video interviews (AVIs) are becoming indispensable. Jaser and Petrakaki (2023) highlight how AI-driven interviews streamline hiring, allowing HR professionals to focus on deeper insights into candidates' potential. These same technologies hold immense potential for training HR professionals, helping them refine their techniques while addressing ongoing challenges such as bias in hiring, lack of diversity, and subpar candidate experiences.

The potential of robotics extends beyond hiring practices. Negrini (2020) underscores how robotics can enhance key skills like collaboration, communication, and problem-solving. By

incorporating robotics into HR training, learners gain these critical abilities through dynamic and interactive methods, preparing them for the multifaceted challenges of today's workplace.

Scenario

This corporate training program stands out because it uniquely uses humanoid robots with AI to simulate diverse job candidates. These robots, equipped with natural language processing (NLP), facial recognition, and adaptive learning, are designed to complement, not replace, HR professionals. Imagine sitting across from a robot that smiles nervously, pauses thoughtfully, and responds like a human candidate. This realism forces participants to adapt quickly, creating an immersive and authentic training environment.

Interaction Design with Robots and Robotics

The program actively involves participants in hands-on activities using humanoid robots replicating varied candidate profiles. These robots help participants refine their interviewing skills through realistic practice sessions that become progressively more challenging, fostering growth through experiential learning and collaboration.

Training begins with an introduction to program objectives and the robots' functionalities. Participants explore common interviewing challenges, including identifying cultural fit, addressing biases, and demonstrating empathy. These preparatory sessions build confidence as participants familiarize themselves with the robots' ability to simulate nuanced verbal and non-verbal behaviors. As participants interact with a nervous robot candidate, they quickly understand the importance of adaptability and empathy. Practicing standardized questions in these realistic scenarios helps them fine-tune their techniques. The robots provide real-time feedback on tone, word choice, and facial expressions, enabling participants to identify and

correct mistakes. For example, a robot portraying a shy candidate encourages trainees to adjust their communication approach, fostering rapport.

After each interview, teams collaborate to analyze feedback from the robots, discuss observations, and share strategies for improvement. One participant interviews while others observe and critique, reinforcing teamwork and collective learning. The training intensifies as scenarios grow more complex, mirroring real-world challenges. A confident, overly assertive robot might test participants' professionalism. Later scenarios introduce conflicting priorities or ethical dilemmas, prompting participants to develop diplomatic problem-solving skills. This progressive structure sharpens critical thinking, adaptability, and technical interviewing abilities, ensuring participants are well-equipped for high-pressure recruitment.

The program culminates in a comprehensive interview exercise where participants demonstrate their skills under stress. This final assessment, facilitated by the robots, evaluates their ability to manage empathy, maintain composure, and gather relevant information effectively. Personalized feedback from the robots highlights individual strengths and areas for growth, ensuring participants leave the program with actionable insights.

Justification of How Interaction Activities Related to Learning Outcomes

The program is built on experiential and problem-based learning principles, ensuring participants actively engage with the material, leading to meaningful skill development. As McLeod (2024) explains, Experiential Learning Theory posits that hands-on experimentation and reflection foster more profound understanding.

The constructivist approach, discussed by Anwar et al. (2019), emphasizes learning through active engagement and reflection. By interacting with robots, participants grasp

recruitment strategies and hone their ability to apply them effectively. With real-time feedback, robots help participants improve their skills. Robots' ability to mimic emotions like nervousness or assertiveness challenges participants to connect meaningfully, improving their emotional intelligence. Another important aspect of the training is its various scenarios, which expose participants to varied candidate profiles, strengthening their adaptability and critical thinking for complex recruitment challenges.

The application of Robots in HR Training

Robots offer a unique advantage in HR training, providing consistent, unbiased interactions that human role players cannot always replicate. Their scalability makes them ideal for efficiently training large groups. This reassures participants about the fairness of the training, enhancing their trust in the process. This innovative HR training program, leveraging the power of robotics and AI, has the potential to transform the future of HR training, inspiring a new wave of effective and empathetic HR professionals and offering a hopeful vision for the future of the field.

Reflection

This project provided valuable insights into how thoughtfully designed technology can transform professional training, even in a theoretical context. Developing scenarios where robots mimicked emotional responses, such as hesitation or stress, emphasized the importance of empathy and adaptability in professional interactions. Offering participants a safe, simulated environment to adjust their approaches underscores the value of experiential learning, even as a theoretical exercise, and highlights the program's human-centric approach.

The design process itself presented significant challenges. Striking a balance between the theoretical complexity of the robots and ensuring accessibility for less tech-savvy participants highlighted the importance of user-centered design. Simplifying interfaces while maintaining functionality became a key focus, reinforcing the need to consider diverse user needs carefully. Reflecting on these challenges reminded me of specific moments in my HR career where empathy was crucial, particularly in scenarios involving biases or challenging candidates. Drawing these parallels underscored the theoretical program's potential real-world relevance.

Looking ahead, I envision practical applications of this project extending to areas such as onboarding and global communication training, particularly in addressing the challenges a dispersed workforce faces. However, ethical implications such as over-reliance on robotics would require thorough consideration. Then, there are the cost and training budgets to incorporate such training. While robots offer consistency and neutrality, preserving human connection remains essential in HR practices.

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