ROLEPLAY

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WHAT IS IT?

Role play or simulation is a form of experiential learning that allows students to transition from passive to active learners. It is where an explicit situation is established with students playing specific roles, spontaneously saying and doing what they understand their "character" would do in that situation. Role play may result in more in-depth, long-term learning of content as well as the development of new skills, such as critical thinking, leadership, coordination, collaboration and research.

WHY USE IT?

- Evidence suggests that educators and students experience satisfaction with assessment as learning through role play, games and simulation (Russell & Shepherd, 2010).
- Students apply knowledge in practical real world scenarios and develop effective interpersonal skills.
- Useful to evaluate decision making and interpersonal communication skills. Participation encourages students to reflect on their knowledge of a subject while playing their role, to appreciate the relevance of diverse opinion, and empathise with the position and feelings of others.

WHAT COULD I USE?

- vUWS Group tool
- Online tools to allow for reflection e.g. vUWS Journal or Blog tools
- Learning Studio or Collaborative Learning Spaces.

CONSIDERATIONS

- Provide clear and explicit information as to what is expected of students.
- Align the task with the learning outcomes and structure it accordingly.
- Make sure the teams are small enough that everyone participates.
- Ensure that the task is authentic.
- Can be used for formative feedback and summative assessment.

HOW DO I DO IT?

1. Clearly outline the problem or scenario.
2. Ask students to select roles. Involve students in identifying rules of engagement.
3. Consider the practical limitations of playing out the roleplay, and make adjustments to the task design as necessary.
4. Develop student's skills in reflective practice; use a blog or journal during the role play or simulation, and afterwards to assess students' participation and to evaluate the role play or simulation as a learning experience.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

- An anonymous asynchronous web-based role play (ascilite)
- EnROLE Overview (EnROLE - an Australian community teaching online role play in university education.)
- Online Role Play (Learning Designs, University of Wollongong)
- Q&A Program (ABC)
- Role-playing as a tool to facilitate learning, self-reflection and social awareness in Teacher Education
- Role play as a teaching strategy
- Russell, C and Shepherd, J. (2010). Online role-play environments for higher education, *British Journal of Educational Technology*, *41*(6), 992–1002.
- Wills, S, Leigh, E and Ip, A. (2011). The power of role-based e-learning: *Designing and moderating online role play*, New York: Routledge.
- Galea, C. (2001). Experiential simulations: using web-enhanced role-plays to teach applied business management, *Information Technology and Management*, *2*(4), 473-78