

Simulation

Simulations are very similar to role-plays, however the simulations are usually longer and less spontaneous. During a simulation the students typically act out a scripted scene or scenes based on a specific set of ideas. The simulation is designed to spark discussion and offer different perspectives on the idea.

Appropriate Student Level: Any

Suggested Class Size: 3 – 100+

Ease of Use Rating: Difficult

Activity Description:

Simulations are typically structured presentations that are designed to involve students in a specific situation; they are usually longer and less spontaneous than role-plays. Instructors should assign the roles days or weeks prior to the event to allow students to research the character. Simulations, like role-plays, can be particularly effective in forcing students to examine their attitudes toward other people and controversial subjects; for example, using a simulated debate, students may present opposing sides to a given topic, thus demanding a wider view of the issues.

Simulations should be written by the instructor to mirror real life issues that students may encounter in their field of study. They are usually presented in small groups requiring problem solving skills and social interaction between group members. Unlike the spontaneous role-plays, simulations may have costumes and props to enhance the dramatic effect, although they are not necessary.

The instructor's responsibility during a role-play may vary.

- Provide a script or scenario with background details and specific information about the character or the setting to help create the scene
 - In an example offered by Nathan L Linsk and Kathleen Tunney in “Learning to care: Use of practice simulation to train health social workers”, a detailed script was presented to a ‘simulator’ (the person who would act as the client/patient) and a less detailed brief scenario was given to the student. The simulator would participate in the activity to guide students to meet the objectives.
- Discuss the goals and objectives of the activity to involve the audience and motivate the viewers by creating the need to learn. The involvement may be participatory or could the instructor may simply ask them to critique, assess or comment on the simulation in relationship to the goals and objectives.
- Facilitate and direct the simulation to assure the goals are being met
- Help the audience (students) evaluate and summarize the major factors of the simulation

You can assess simulations in a number of ways. You can evaluate students on their participation in the simulations and subsequent discussion—how effectively they state their position; how well they demonstrate background knowledge, how well they ensure the accuracy of information; and how effectively they defend their position.

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