



ROLE PLAYING SIMULATION AS TEACHING METHOD IN SOCIAL SCIENCE

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"You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view until you climb into his skin and walk around in it"

Harper Lee

ABSTRACT :

Simulation is a broader concept than role playing. Simulations are complex, lengthy and relatively inflexible, but role playing is quite simple, brief and flexible. Simulations simulate real life situations, while in role playing the participant is representing and experiencing some character type known in everyday life (Scarcella and Oxford, 1992). Simulations always include an element of role play (Ladousse, 1987).

KEYWORDS: *complex, lengthy and relatively inflexible , role-playing simulation.*

INTRODUCTION

The terms "role play" and "simulation" are sometimes used inconsistently or interchangeably. The use of simulations allows for role playing and hands-on learning. Frequently simulations incorporate role play, leading to the term "role-playing simulation". The difference is generally one of degree rather than kind. It provides experiential learning. This type of active learning provides both students and instructors a change from the traditional classroom lecture.

SIMULATION

The word simulation comes from Latin word "Similis" which means to act like or to resemble. It is therefore expected through this method, a situation will be created in which activities are presented as if they are real life. Simulations are learning experiences that enable students to participate in a simplified representation of the social world. This is a simplified model of a real world situation. It is a substitute for reality. It is used where reality is complex, dangerous and changing at a fast pace and as such is difficult to explain. It is usually used for teaching concepts and principles that are not easily observable. A well define simulation simplifies a real world system while bringing about an awareness regarding the complexity of the system. Students learn how the real system operates without spending the days, weeks or years. However, it must be noted that it is important for the teachers who use simulations to have 'debriefing' discussions



during and after the simulation. The debriefing which should be as well planned as any lesson, provides closure for the activity and should focus on the learning contents for the simulation. Simulation is more complex form of role playing. Simulations can be a valuable tool for an instructor to connect the student more closely to the learning process. Learning by doing can encourage them to commit more fully to learning the course material and foster more ownership of the entire

process.

SIMULATION AS A TEACHING TECHNIQUE

Simulation can be very effective technique if we want the students to get acquainted with topics like Gram Panchayat, Parliament etc. For teaching the students about gram panchayat the teachers can create a village like environment for the students and ask various students to play the roles of panchas and villagers and give them a case to solve or argue upon it. So that the students will learn about the functioning of a Gram Panchayat. For the teaching about parliament, the teacher can ask students to organize a 'Mock Parliament Session' and give them a situation like passing of a bill. Then the students will be able to understand the actual working of the Parliament.

Role Play

It is often referred to as 'practice in reality'. It provides practice in how to behave in selected situations'. In role playing students assume the role of another person and act it out. It enables the learner to understand the attitudes, feelings or situations of those persons whose roles they assume. In role play, students are assumed to play realistic social roles. They interact with one another in terms of a common social situation.

Role Play as a teaching technique

In this technique, the teacher puts students in situations about which he wants to teach to the students. He asks them to interact in the way if they were really in those situations. Basically, role playing calls for students stepping outside the accustomed role that he plays in life, relinquishing his usual patterns of behavior in exchange for the role and patterns of another person. This other role may be that of a real person or may be entirely fictitious. Role playing can be a very method in teaching of social science. While teaching some historical event or current event, the teacher may give different roles to different pupils. For example, if the teacher want to teach students about the life history of Ashoka the Great, then the teacher can ask a student to enact the role of king Ashoka in front of the whole classroom. Thus all students will be able to express their views about king Ashoka and the good qualities of king Ashoka can be inculcated in the students. By using the role playing method, various students can be assigned the role of various leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Ravindra Nath Tagore, Moti Lal Nehru.

TWO MAJOR KINDS OF SIMULATION

1: Role-playing simulations: The word 'Simulation' means to imitate exactly. Interest is aroused in the students through, Role playing, while teaching. This skill is used by teachers and students in the class room by playing some role without any preliminary training i.e. without any rehearsal. This way simulation is a form of Role Playing where in student teachers display this skill spontaneously. For example, a mock parliament session. Concepts like morality, democracy, patriotism, leadership can be better understood if demonstrated through simulation activities.

2. Simulation games: These are used for educational purpose. These are commercially sold board games. For example, Monopoly. Monopoly is a simulation of buying, developing and renting of properties. There are other games that can simulate economic operations, election procedures, historic events etc.

Role Playing Simulation

Role Play simulation is an experiential learning method. This provide students an opportunity to learn through playing a role related to real life situation in which students assume real world roles as they solve problems and make decisions. The student can see and discuss the results of these actions within the parameters of the simulated situation. The focus in a role playing simulation is on learning by doing. Role Play simulation is dynamic and lively ways of presenting ideas, problems, issues and realities in our past and present societies. It is an instructional strategy or teaching method that can be used with appropriate

learning material at any level from the primary grades to graduate studies. For example, when students takes on the roles of party delegates to a political convention, they are learning about the election process by simulating a political convention.

STEPS FOR ROLE PLAYING SIMULATION

- 1. Selection of role play situation or the topic:** You may consider a specific topic that is related to the syllabus. You can pre-select the topic to fit the goals of the course, or you may allow the students to select topic that fits the course but it should be of specific interest to them.
- 2. Select participants:** Students can either be assigned roles or the teacher can ask for volunteers.
- 3. Preparation:** Even if there is no advance research assigned, students will need a few moments to look over their characters and get into their roles for the exercise.
- 4. Create the environment for simulation:** simulations require the teacher to relinquish control of the learning environment, and thus allow the process to move in possibly unexpected directions.
- 5. Conduct the role play:** Direct students to act out the role the way they think someone faced with the same situation would act in real life. The teacher should not interrupt the role play; however, if the students need some help in getting started the teacher should assist the students.
- 6. Evaluation:** role-playing needs to be followed by a debriefing for the students to define what they have learned and to reinforce it.

ROLE PLAYING SIMULATION IN SOCIAL STUDIES

The use of role-playing in social studies can help students relate a situation to their own lives. Name of some topics of social studies in which role playing simulation can be used effectively:

- 1. Topic:** Local Government Bodies (LGBs) – Panchayats and Municipalities in rural and urban areas respectively.
- 2. Topic:** Democratic and Authoritarian. The teacher may constitute a mock government in the class, which could be a government 'of the children, by the children, and for the children'. The teacher may allow students themselves to decide the form, content and acts of such a class-government. A group of 15 students may be identified to assume the role of the ruling party while a group of ten may play the role of the opposition. The rest of the class may act as observers and give their comments. The mock government could begin with the process of election and so on performing a play of sorts.
- 3. Topic:** Transacting 'Money and Credit'. This activity will enable students to understand the importance of money and how it evolved. Let some students assume different roles such as that of cobbler, carpenter, doctor, fisherman, artist, cook etc. While others can act as spectators. They are ready to sell their products and services and have to purchase commodities or services in return. Nothing is assumed to have the value of money. Give them different situations to start the exchange. For example: Mohan who is a carpenter falls sick and wants to take the services of the doctor. Dr Gupta does not require any carpentry work at his place which Mohan is ready to offer in return for the doctor's services. Instead the doctor needs services of the cook. The cook, Ramu is in need of utensils for cooking and he is ready to cook food in return. The cobbler is in need of furniture for which he shall give the utensils that he has. The cook and the fisherman are in need of these utensils and are ready to provide food and fish in return.'

The enactment of exchanging in the absence of money helps the students to overcome the difficulty of imagining a situation where money didn't exist and the problems involved in having multiple exchange values, thereby highlighting the importance of money.

Role of teacher in Role Playing Simulation

Teaching through this requires a time commitment and carefully organizational scheme from the teacher. The role of the teacher includes:

1. Designing the simulation to fit the unique needs of a group of students.
2. Selecting the teaching content.

3. Observing students interactions.
4. Monitoring and adjusting the simulation as necessary.
5. Students can either be assigned roles or the teacher can ask for volunteers.
6. Assessing students learning.
7. Teachers need to allow time for discussion.
8. Role of the teacher should be as a facilitator.
9. A as a feedback provider.

ADVANTAGES

1. It improves speaking skills.
2. It develops confidence in students.
3. It trains the students for real life situations in a safe context.
4. It promotes interaction in class.
5. It helps shy students by providing them with a mask.
6. This method gives a better understanding of a subject.
7. More real than theoretical knowledge.
8. Sustain curiosity and excitement of learning in students.
9. Integrating experiential learning activities in the classroom increases interest in the subject matter and understanding of course content.
10. There is increased involvement on the part of the students in a role-playing lesson. Students are not passive recipients of the instructor's knowledge.
11. Role-playing reduces racial prejudice.
12. It gives life and immediacy to academic material that can be largely descriptive and/or theoretical.
13. Simulations promote concept attainment through experiential practice.
14. Create the ability for students to solve problems within a realistic and controlled environment.
15. Simulations encourage motivation.
16. It provides the opportunity for student involvement.
17. This method is more interesting and challenging for pupils.
18. The problems of discipline and motivation can also be reduced.
19. Learning is active and not passive when role-play and simulation are used.
20. In simulation students are exposed not only to theoretical frameworks but also to real world situations where they can gain experience in applying their knowledge.
21. It enhances students' self-efficacy.

DISADVANTAGES

1. It is time consuming.
2. This method is regarded as burden by the students.
3. This requires trained teachers and in the absence of trained teachers, this method will not be effective.
4. Difficult of assuming somebody else's personality.
5. It is costly.
6. Students may retain inaccurate information.
7. Space is also a problem.
8. Putting demands on both students and teachers.
9. This may not lead to satisfactory results. Students may feel that these methods have been sheer wastage of time.
10. It takes a lot of time especially if they include preparation and follow-up work.
11. The lack of space and the large number of students can make the organization of the activities difficult.

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