



Curriculum Design Pattern

Global Learning by Design

Name of pattern

Guided Role Play

Quick look

The Guided Role Play involves a short issue/problem based scenario being role played by the teacher and students. The teacher develops the role play and plays the main character of the scenario and controls how the scenario unfolds, based upon student responses. The students engage in the role play to draw on their knowledge to manage and resolve the scenario issue. Those students not directly involved in the role play observe and analyse the role play and provide feedback.

Rationale

This activity develops application of theory in a simulated environment, decision making and, issue or conflict resolution skills. It also promotes student empathy and understanding of others.

Learners/Context

The size of the group that this activity is suitable for and the context will be dependent on the way in which you choose to structure the role play (as a whole class activity or small group work activity). It should be structured and conducted in way that ensures the activity is manageable and where optimum participation can be achieved by all group members.

Related patterns

Online role play (fishbowl).

Related category

Experiential learning, role play.

Alignment

Students have the opportunity to analyse a scenario based on key concepts and construct real-life meaning and application relevant to the theory.

Instructions/Process

Prior to class:

1. Develop a role play scenario based on key concepts learnt. The role play should be inclusive of various roles. The teacher should be the main character in the role play in order to model best practice, direct scenario proceedings, provide scaffolding and maintain control over how the role play unfolds to ensure the required outcomes are achieved.
2. Use a dilemma, conflict resolution situation, or the need to address a specific issue or problem, as the basis of the role play, for example:
 - a. dealing with an aggrieved client at a certain point in the legal process to achieve a defined outcome
 - b. participating in the negotiation process
 - c. conducting a client interview
 - d. undertaking the investigation process.
3. Determine how the scenario will unfold in the role play. Ensure the role play contains sufficient detail, context and credibility to engage students and enable them to perform in roles that truly simulate real-life situations.

In class:

4. Establish context for the role play and advise students of the situation or problem and instruct them as to the various roles.
5. If appropriate, distribute role play scenario notes and questions to role play observers.
6. Select participants for the role play. Either select students and assign them to specific roles or ask for volunteers.
7. Before commencing the role play, advise students of the 'rules' of the role play:
 - a. Students should act out their roles in a manner in which they think someone faced with the same situation in real life would respond.

- b. Participants have three 'Ask The Audience' options (like 'phone a friend') where they can stop the role play at any point and ask the audience for advice about how they think they should proceed.
 - c. Students who do not participate in the role play should act as observers and provide feedback.
 - d. Duration of the role play.
- 8. Conduct the role play, and guide the proceedings to ensure the desired outcomes are achieved.
- 9. Conduct debrief: Both role play participants and observers should analyse and evaluate the role play to discuss what happened and why and to link the role play process and outcomes to theory and key concepts learned. Debriefing questions may include, for example:
 - a. How did you feel about the role play and the issue that it focussed on?
 - b. How did you feel about the various roles? (You can focus on obtaining feedback on specific roles if necessary.)
 - c. Did you feel that the role play was realistic? How was it similar or different from (i) theory learned; (ii) what could occur in real life?
 - d. Was the issue / problem solved? If not, why?
 - e. What could have been done differently to achieve a different outcome? What other outcomes may have been possible?
 - f. What did you learn from this role play activity?

Conditions

A detailed, well-structured role play scenario that contains sufficient detail, context and credibility to engage students and enable them to perform in roles that truly simulate real-life situations.

Participation in role play by teacher and direction of role play proceedings to achieve learning outcomes.

Resources/Technology

Douglas, K. & Coburn, C. (n.d.) 'Students Designing Role-Plays: Building Empathy in Law Students?', Journal of the Australasian Law Teachers Association, 55-63

(<http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/journals/JATTA/2009/6.txt/cgi-bin/download.cgi/download/au/journals/JATTA/2009/6.pdf>)

Developing a role playing case study as a teaching tool

(http://division.aonline.org/im/images/teaching/ccls_developing_a_roleplaying_case.doc)