



Curriculum Design Pattern

Global Learning by Design

Name of Pattern

Online Role-play (Fishbowl)

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Author/s

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Abstract

Online role-play 'Fishbowl' method incorporates the fundamentals of role-play and student collaboration. The students are presented with a scenario and actively contribute to the conversations within the role-play as part of their specified role or character. Students then move in and out of character as part of their designated role. When students are not participating in the role-play, they have the opportunity to watch the performance of others as well as test their own skills and knowledge.

The 'Fishbowl' role-play approach allows for asynchronous, performance, observation and reflection. It can be combined with online discussion and collaboration using discussion boards or forums. Online 'Fishbowl' role-plays can be adapted to suit the technology available. It can be implemented as an asynchronous learning experience using Blackboard, Blogs or Wiki's or can be adapted to suit synchronous collaboration using a virtual classroom model. Using an asynchronous approach provides the opportunity for students to discourse on theory and practice as the role-play is taking place. In combination with online discussion tools; students engage throughout the role-play experience.

Rationale

Teaching negotiation, interviewing and other skills can benefit from experiential activities such as role-play. Online role-plays however, can provide the same experience as face to face role-plays while providing flexible learning options and collaboration, regardless of the physical distance between the students. When participating in online role-plays, students take on various characters to solve a problem or create an artefact. Online role-playing provides the opportunity for asynchronous, authentic learning that enhances employability skills.

Learners

This approach was developed in the Juris Doctor program in Graduate School of Business and Law. The program is delivered to both on-campus and online students, and the student cohort is varied, with a range of educational backgrounds, age and experience.

This pattern can be implemented in a variety of contexts to enhance skills, including generic communication skills. It is particularly applicable to work integrated learning, as students participate in experiences to prepare them for industry scenarios.

Related patterns

Blended learning, Video Annotation

Category

WIL, online learning, authentic learning

Outcome/impact

This pattern engages participants in both theory and reflection. The student experience will be enhanced by:

- Applying theory to the active learning opportunity in the fishbowl role-play
- Debating choices made in the role-play
- Gain intrinsic feedback from participating in role-play activities
- Reflecting on theory and practice.

Alignment

The Online Role-play (Fishbowl) pattern has been implemented to support the Work Integrated Learning (WIL) course—Negotiation and Dispute Resolution. This course is directed at OUA students and covers negotiation and mediation techniques. Due to the role-play nature of this pattern, it also has been used to teach legal interviewing in the Civil Procedure course for OUA students.

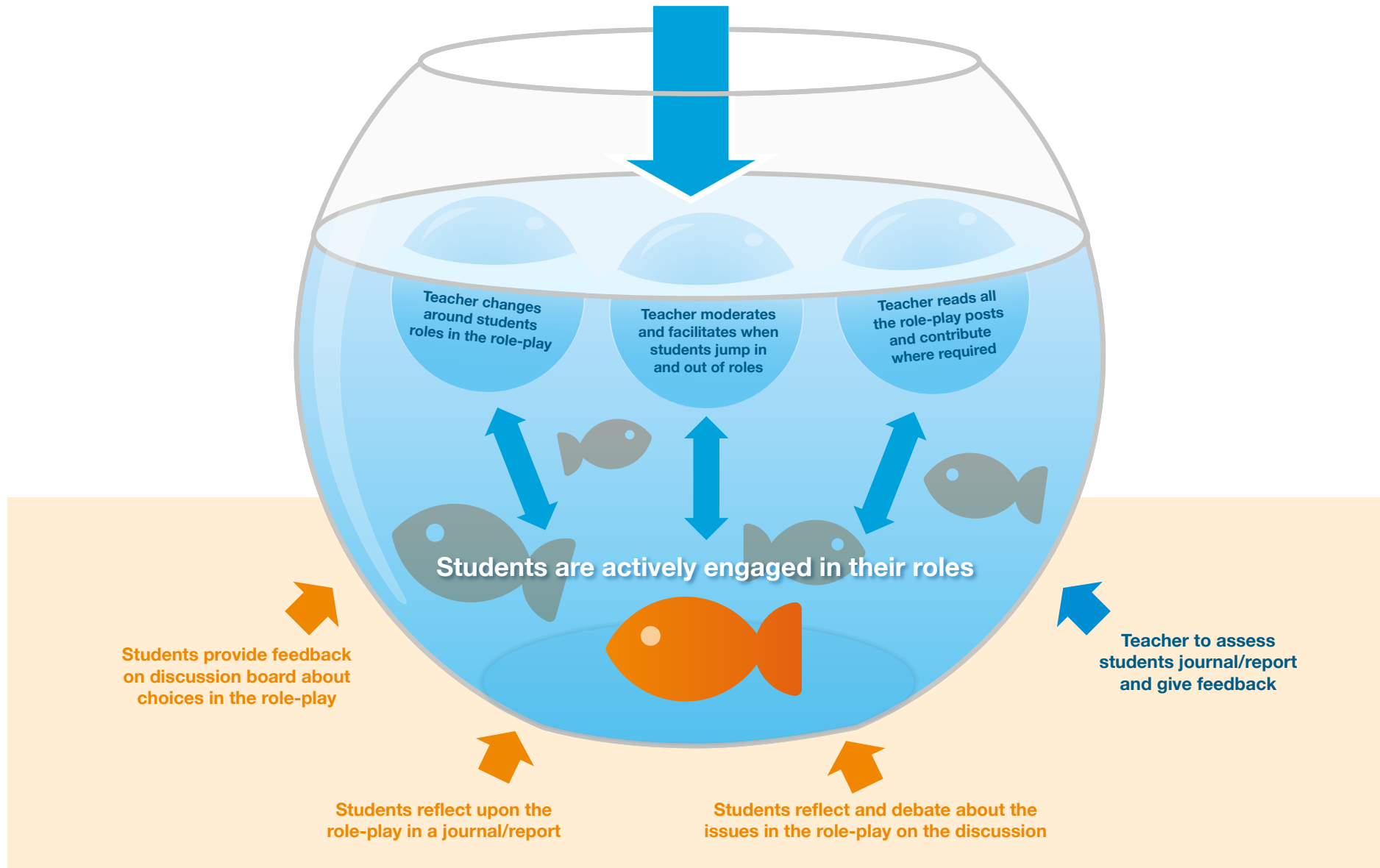
Challenges

A fishbowl role-play requires the teacher to cue students into the scenario when it is their turn; for large student numbers this can be time consuming. Discussion boards used to support collaboration and feedback can sometimes be confusing to students, particularly when large student numbers are actively participating. As a result, additional discussion threads may hinder the students' online experience. It is recommended that the teacher moderates this part of the learning.

Instructions/process

- Develop and write role play scenarios for online use (if required).
- Provide students with access to a discussion board via Blackboard and highlight specific articles on theory relevant to the role-play
- Publish the background for each role-play scenario (generally three scenarios) in Blackboard for students to familiarise themselves with the issues and desired outcome
- A discussion board or virtual environment is established and students are nominated to start the role-play
- Teacher moderates and facilitates when other students jump in and out of roles
- Teacher creates a concurrent discussion board where students provide feedback about choices in the role-play
- Teacher reads all role-play posts and contributes where required.

Teacher highlight specific
articles on the theory relevant to the role-play



- Students are actively engaged in their roles and are encouraged by the teacher to continually reflect and debate about the issues in the role-play on the discussion board.
- Teacher changes students roles in the role-play so students can experience different perspectives
- Students reflect upon the role-play in a journal/report
- Teacher to assess students' journal/report and give feedback.

Conditions

Successful implementation of this pattern requires the co-ordinator to ensure timely organisation of role-play materials and the moderation of student engagement throughout the role-play process.

Resources

Support resources can be accessed via the Google site:

<https://sites.google.com/a/rmit.edu.au/online-role-play-fishbowl/home>

They include:

- Role-play Design Template
- Example of role-play scenario

Reflection

The effectiveness of the pattern will be evaluated by:

- Qualitative feedback from students via CES data
- Qualitative feedback from the staff and industry engaging with the pattern

Acknowledgements

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