



## ROLE-PLAYING

### ADAPTED TO A HYFLEX LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

<b>COMPLEXITY</b>	<b>Effort to Facilitate:</b>	Low	Medium	High
	<b>Effort to Participate:</b>	Low	Medium	High

#### WHAT IS IT?

Role-playing is an active learning strategy in which students assume a role in a hypothetical situation related to the course material. This allows them to explore an issue from a point of not their own, giving them a chance to practice perspective-taking and reflecting on their own positionality. Students' interpretation of a character or concept can be grounded in the course material, their own lived experiences, and/or background readings and other materials provided by the instructor. By doing so, students can bring insights to the activity from sources both within and without the classroom.

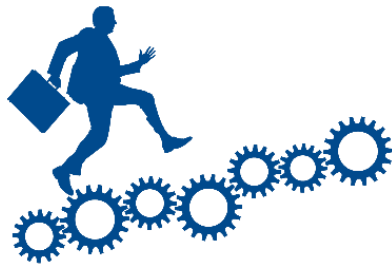
<b>EQUIPMENT</b>	YU Deluxe	YU Regular	OWL	Laptop/Zoom
<b>COMPATIBILITY</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

#### ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

- Develop or source a scenario that is related to your course learning outcomes
  - ✓ For example: in a course for beginner learners of English as an Additional language, you may want students to communicate successfully in a range of everyday situations. To practice this, you might assign them a variety of real-world scenarios such as trying to charge a PRESTO card when the machine is broken, or trying to return an item to a store but not being able to find the receipt.
- Divide students into groups of 3-4
  - ✓ In-class students may move around the room to get into their assigned/selected ('home') group
  - ✓ Online students may be placed into breakout rooms with their home group
- Students are assigned a role in each scenario and prepare for the role play by engaging in introspection and/or engaging with the background readings and other materials provided by the instructor
  - ✓ Depending on the scenario(s), all students can be involved in the role play, or different students and groups may be assigned different tasks (e.g., role-players, observers, note-takers, third-party 'interference' etc.)
  - ✓ Provide a handout with step-by-step instructions for students
  - ✓ Background information on the characters or the situation could be printed on a handout to be distributed to in-class participants and be made available online for online participants
  - ✓ Make handouts available in advance via eClass course site, cloud drive, and/or web page

4. Give students a chance to privately read the instructions and familiarize themselves with the scenario and their character
5. The students act out the scenario
  - ✓ if there are dedicated observers, students may rotate so each student takes turns in speaking versus listening/writing
  - ✓ Observers may provide formative assessment of students who are engaging in the role-play using a pre-assigned rubric (ideally co-constructed with the students in advance)
  - ✓ If there are no observers, assessment may be provided by the instructor
6. After each group completes their role-play, give students time to reflect on their experiences in small groups or in a whole-class discussion
  - ✓ Reflection in small groups is beneficial for students who may feel anxious speaking to larger groups
  - ✓ Each group can designate a “speaker” to present their group’s reflections
  - ✓ Give students the option to write down their contributions on large sheets of paper (in-person) or allow online students the chance to write their responses in the chat/eClass course forum page (this also offers instructors a written record to help assess each student’s individual contributions in the class/participation)
7. OPTIONAL: Students may be asked to reflect on the larger group discussion in the form of a [one-minute paper](#) or other similar debriefing activities.

LEARNING OUTCOMES				
What skills will students gain?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Affective skills	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Verbal comm.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Problem solving	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reflection
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Empathy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Teamwork	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Creative thinking	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Presentation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Experiential	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Observation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Analysis	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Feedback



This activity provides students with an opportunity to explore course-related issues from different perspectives, which fosters their ability to understand and relate to others’ points of view. The immersive nature of the task fosters engagement and is likely to lead to a deeper understanding than other, less active forms of working through the material such as reading a text about it. Working in small groups allows students to explore the topic in a low-stakes environment, reducing stress and allowing them to build rapport with their classmates.

**TIME REQUIREMENTS**

Activity	Time/student	Time/class
Group Formation:		05 min.
Instructions & Preparation (Reading etc.):		05-20 min.
Role-play (Acting):		05-15 min.
Reflection/Debrief:		05-15 min.
<b>TOTAL:</b>		<b>20 to 55 min.</b>

## POTENTIAL CHALLENGES

- Students might feel hesitant about acting in front of an audience
- Depending on class size, it might be difficult to engage with every group's role play in real time
- Instructors may find it challenging to manage breakout rooms
- Online students might feel left out

## HELPFUL STRATEGIES

- To mitigate student hesitancy and issues with timing, provide the option of taping role plays in advance to make the activity less intimidating; think of alternative activities for students who may not be able to participate for various reasons
- If role plays are taped, consider posting recordings on eClass so all students can see each other's role plays
- In case of more complex roles or scenarios, ask students to develop character biographies or scripts for their roles in advance as pre-class preparatory assignments
- Prepare a shared document where students take notes and ask questions collectively to reduce difficulty of managing multiple group simultaneously
- To offer an equitable experience regardless of mode of attendance, consider adding a peer feedback component where in-person students review the role play of an online group and vice versa
- Provide resources that help students prepare for their roles
- Prepare detailed instructions in print and electronically
- Consider using debrief for reflections (how to improve and what to do differently); an interesting question for prompting reflections may be, *"How has your opinion changed about a role (or character, or perspective that was represented) after the role-play versus before it, if at all?"*



## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Barkley, E.F., Major, C.H., Cross, K.P. (2018). *Collaborative learning techniques: A handbook for college faculty*. (2014). San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.
- Bawa, A. (2020). Role-play. In R. Kimmons & S. Caskurlu (Eds.), *The students' guide to learning design and research*. EdTech books. <https://edtechbooks.org/studentguide/roleplay>
- Bender, T. (2005). Role playing in online education: A teaching tool to enhance student engagement and sustained learning. *Innovate: Journal of Online Education*, 1(4), Article 5. <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1184&context=innovate>
- Rao, D., & Stupans, I. (2012). Exploring the potential of role play in higher education: Development of a typology and teacher guidelines. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, 49(4), 427–436. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14703297.2012.728879>
- The K. Patricia Cross Academy (n.d.). *Teaching technique 23: Role play*. <https://kpcrossacademy.org/techniques/role-play/>
- Wills, S., Leigh, E. & Ip, A. (2010). *The power of role-based e-learning: Designing and moderating online role play*. New York, NY: Routledge.

## Would you like to learn more?

Contact us at Teaching Commons for additional resources, handouts, applications, courses, workshops, examples, advice, assistance, one-on-one consulting, and everything else related to teaching and learning. We are happy and eager to assist you!



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