

Quickstart Role-Play #2

Online Role-Play

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Background

This 4-week role-play is run as part of a 13-week postgraduate Education subject about university teaching. It is hosted via the subject's WebCT site. The activity aims to:

- provide opportunity for collegial activity for the academics undertaking the course;
- support skills development in the use of online teaching technologies;
- provide experience in role-play as a learning design;
- explore issues surrounding university assessment.

The four key components (scenario, roles, editor postings and instructions) can be modified for your own teaching area.

Scenario

A situation is described at a mythical university (IDONTGOTO UNIVERSITY) in which a lecturer has used criterion-referenced assessment in a subject and all of the students have received 100%. This has scandalised some of the academics in the faculty and the story has hit the local paper, THE DAILY VIEW. A debate on criterion-referenced vs normative assessment unfolds in the letters to the editor pages.

EXAMPLE: Instructions to students

You have been randomly allocated a role (such as vice chancellor, dean of students, concerned citizen etc). You are able to comment on the scenario by posting responses to the bulletin board as letters to the editor of THE DAILY VIEW. You will not be able to access the role-play except in your character. This is an anonymous role-play so be careful not to sign your real name at the end of your postings.

Since there are 15 of you enrolled in this subject, another role-play group will run concurrently with the one you are involved in. There are 7-8 participants in each group. This is to make the activity more manageable. You will not know which of the other participants is in your group and you will not be able to access the other role-play. At the end of the activity the two groups will compare notes.

You will be sent your role-play group, your role, your login and password in a separate email. I am the only person who knows which role you are playing.

Please remember this is a role-play about a fictional situation at a fictional university in a fictional town. The activity is not intended to portray any staff, students or community members, past or present, so there should be no mention of 'real people' or the University of Wollongong in your postings.

What to do:

- Log onto the ITT web page using your role-play logon and password (supplied by separate email) and go to the bulletin board. Access Role-Play #1 or Role-Play #2 according to the information supplied by the separate email.
- Read the newspaper article and consider how the character you are playing might respond to the norm-referenced vs criterion referenced-debate.
- Under normal circumstances you would read the relevant sections of the Code of Practice - Teaching and Assessment for Idontgoto University but unfortunately this is not available. Fortunately for us however, the Idontgoto University code is exactly the same as the University of Wollongong Code of Practice so please read the UoW code as a substitute. This is included as Reading 1 in Handbook 2.
- Make sure you know how norm-referenced assessment and criterion-referenced assessment are defined and the implications of the use of these. (Read the part in Section 2, Handbook 2 and Reading #3. If you want to read further consider the texts on

assessment on the ITT reading list, some of which can be borrowed from the ITT resource collection in CEDIR.)

- Post your response to the relevant bulletin board as a letter to the editor of THE DAILY VIEW. I suggest you write your response in a Word file first, where you can edit and save it easily. When you have finished it you can copy and paste it to the bulletin board.
- Monitor the bulletin board at least once each week over the four weeks. There will be two additional postings from me (Editor of The Daily View) that you will respond to. As the scenario unfolds you will also be able to respond to your fellow role-players' postings.
- In role-play week 4 you will be asked to post a brief comment as to how the issue should be resolved.
- At the end of role-play week 5 you will be asked to evaluate the role-play by reflecting on a few questions. Your reflections are posted to the Role-Play Evaluation topic. This topic area is set up as anonymous so I will not know who makes which comment unless you sign your name.

Minimum requirements:

- Respond in role to each of the three postings from the Editor. (I will make one posting per week.)
- Post a brief comment in the fourth week as to how the issue should be resolved from the point of view of your role.
- Post your anonymous evaluation on a set of questions about the effectiveness of the role-play activity.

Please note: this role-play is not meant to be time consuming for you so please do not spend time researching your character. Your postings need not be long or complex however they should make a contribution to the discussion through the role you are playing. The forum is the newspaper so there is no requirement to write academically. You might even have a little fun with it.

You may of course make as many postings as you wish in response to the postings of other participants. Some understanding of norm-referenced assessment and criterion-referenced assessment will be needed, however this is already a requirement for module 2.

EXAMPLE: The Roles

- Vice Chancellor Idontgoto University
who is concerned about the university's reputation as a quality university
- Pro Vice Chancellor (Academic) Idontgoto University
who is responsible for ensuring that the quality of teaching is high
- Student #1, Superi Or
a high-achieving, high-distinction, highly competitive student who for the first time has the same grade as everyone else
- Student #2, Medi Um
a previously low-achieving, pass-grade student who for the first time has got a fantastic result
- Concerned citizen
who believes universities are too elitist and should be open to more students
- Faculty member
who believes assessment tasks should 'weed out' the 'poor' students
- Dean of Students
who tries to ensure students are treated fairly and resolves any student grievances
- Chair of the Students Representative Council
who is concerned about equity issues for all students

EXAMPLE: Editor Posting #1

ALL STUDENTS TOP OF THE CLASS

A lecturer at Idontgoto University, Dr E. Galitarian, has given all of her students 100%. All 38 students in the subject PHR356 Professional Skills in Phrenology have received grades of 100% because Dr Galitarian claimed each of them gained mastery on all of the required skills according to criterion-referenced tests.

An expert in Higher Education, Dr Norm Alcurve was contacted for comment. Dr Alcurve is

quoted as saying: "Normally universities use norm-referenced assessment, which means students can be sorted into different grades somewhere between 0% and 100%. With norm-referenced assessment you would expect quite a spread of scores. On the other hand, where criterion referenced assessment is used appropriately, it is quite proper that all students should gain 100% if they have all reached the set criteria. It depends on what kind of assessment you consider appropriate".

EXAMPLE: Editor Posting #2

REVIEW SECTION OF PAPER - EXPERT ARTICLE ON NR AND CR

EXAMPLE: Editor Posting #3

[SUMMARISE DISCUSSION SO FAR AND INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION]
Everyone agrees that Dr Galitarian clearly indicated the assessment process on the subject outline and explained it thoroughly to the students at the beginning of session. They also agree that the assessment tasks were appropriate for the subject, well integrated into the learning requirements and they clearly cover the learning objectives. In fact the subject is very well structured and Dr Galitarian has plenty of evidence of the highest quality teaching. A second marker has checked all of the assessments and agreed with the marks.