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Lisa New Freeland
Eastern Illinois University, lnewfreeland@eiu.edu

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LISA NEW FREELAND

EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

In attempts to move my honors social problems course from a passive environment to a more active and student-centered one, I drew on my experience and the experience of others using simulations to produce a course model committed to "games" and student-initiated learning. I stepped back and reevaluated what I wanted my students to gain while in my class and what impact I wanted the course to have on their future in society. Simulation games provide an opportunity for students to discover knowledge and drive their own education rather than passively taking in information. These "games" are simulations of real world phenomena that can be reproduced in a classroom for academic purposes.

For example, I use a game called "The Sinking Ship" to examine status, occupation, education, and power. Each student is given an index card with a status written on it such as migrant worker, senator, college student, or nurse. I then read a prepared statement explaining that they are all on a sinking ship and have fifteen minutes to decide who of the eighteen passengers will be given the six lifeboat seats. I sit back and give them fifteen minutes to write the chosen survivors on the board. Usually they start by going around the room and making a plea for why they should be saved according to the status on their card. I then walk them through a detailed briefing about why they chose those individuals. Usually the cues for debriefing come from one first question, "Why them?" They begin to talk about power by describing who can sue the ship line on behalf of the victims or what the senator can do for them in the government if he/she lives. They discuss status and education by detailing what skills and knowledge each survivor could contribute while in the life boat. Concepts of gender also arise as they consistently refer to the doctor as male and the nurse as female regardless of who has the card. The students themselves begin to analyze the social concepts for our discussion rather than my listing them from a power point.

We all recognize the need for lectures, power points, and instructor-devised lists in the course of academia, but I try to combine those standard tools with more active participation models. While I use these simulations in some other classes as well, I do not devote any other class to the model as a whole.

Part of my expectation of honors students is increased motivation, creative thinking, open participation, and adaptation to various learning designs, especially those that involve intellectual risk taking. In my honors classes at EIU, my students have met these expectations. Although my regular sections also respond well to simulations, I do have individual students who let the others in the group do the work, do not participate at all, or even mock the process as a whole. I never have those cases in my honors sections.

I also expect my honors students to do a better job of linking together viewpoints and knowledge bases from the various disciplines. A simulation allows students to respond honestly to what is happening rather than trying to devise the "right" or expected answer according to the class. This is one reason I particularly like this model in an honors class. Many of my students are in honors programs because they have learned the academic game: how to please, how to respond, how to perform according to expectations. The game model forces a more honest intellectual approach. It does make some students uncomfortable at first, but they respond well after a few weeks. In fact, this past semester I had several very quiet students who were somewhat unnerved by the model and said they were not used to speaking that way in class. By the time the final arrived (which is a graded Socratic Dialogue), each of these students did a remarkable job of answering questions on the spot without any trepidation. One freshman student said that his family always talked current events and politics at Christmas while he played Nintendo. He said this Christmas he was confident enough in his ability to speak and be heard that he would skip Nintendo and join them.

What follows is the experimental model that has produced positive results in my honors social problems classes. I provide not only the model but also the benefits and challenges of the design. As with any teaching method, I continue to assess the effectiveness daily and make necessary changes constantly to ensure the best possible learning environment both for my students and for myself.

THE SIMULATION MODEL

In keeping with my hopes for a fresh student experience rather than expected or manipulated outcomes, I do not publish a course schedule with topic lists or assigned readings. The game serves as an introduction to the chapter/unit. I cover one topic each week and assign a short paper for the weekend. We begin each week by discussing the papers from the previous topic, and I often use points from our discussions as a transition to the exercise for the day. Such points are often where I start the debriefing after the game to bridge the course topics.

The simulation begins with no introduction other than the instructions for the game itself. Different games are used each week to uncover a particular element within society and social structure. A list of topics and related games are provided in Table 1. The game is played in its entirety with no interruptions

for on-the-spot interpretations, though I often make notes for the debriefing. In the course of play, I also draw out specific points or stimulate particular inter- actions. Importantly, the game is structured enough to allow necessary themes to emerge and flexible enough for naturally occurring outcomes and possible variations.

For example, I generally include *Starpower* early in the semester. This game requires students to trade chips for profit and then allows the better traders to make new rules for trading. In the eight years I have played this game, themes of capitalism, socialism, power elites, private/public interest, public policy, deviance, individualism, class delineations, and elected governments have always emerged. In the same time, however, I have had two revolutions, one dictatorship, rampant waves of crime and deviance, apathetic conformity, and in one case a move to overall socialism in a single round of trading. Years of these different experiences provide me with some contrast points once the game has concluded and the debriefing begins.

Debriefing can be done as a class in a small section or in small groups with handouts in larger sections. Initial reporting of behaviors and observations is often the best way to open dialogue. Afterward, a series of questions will draw out three specific areas: 1) the types of social problems in our society related to the phenomenon exhibited in the game, 2) identifiable factors influencing and/or causing the problems, and 3) possible individual and collective respons- es to the problems. In any course where you use simulations, I would encour- age you to identify a few central themes and build the debriefing around them. Such continuity of structure helps in providing a cohesive pattern in what can seem like an unstructured course. The inclusion of personal experiences, world perceptions, and related information from other courses is encouraged at this point. Through the debriefing, try to link current issues and concepts to those of past topics and specific vocabulary students will see in assigned reading.

Unlike a lecture, the debriefing format allows students to arrive at some of the same information and identify themes and concepts themselves. As their critical thinking skills develop throughout the semester, the dialogue should improve in breadth and depth of content as well as in articulation. If you have a large or particularly quiet section, driving the format yourself and slipping into lecture mode are often easier. As one goal is student-driven analysis, prepared questions, patience, and calling names for answers may be necessary to achieve the goal. By mid-semester, students may come to view your role as a facilitator, rather than as a professor, as if you aren't really working. Though such a role may result in a temporarily thankless position, empowering students through a facilitative approach bodes well for their future as critically thinking citizens with the ability to self-teach and self-learn in later stages of life. Once a complete debriefing has been accomplished, reading assignments on the topic are made and should be completed by the following class period.

Table 1: Topics, Games and Debriefing Themes

Topic	Game(s)	Debriefing Themes
Crime/Deviance	*Barnga*—card game that produces conflict by different definitions of winning	Determinants of deviance, boundary setting, crossing cultural communication, social control
Drugs	*To Criminalize?* Drug outlines without drug names are distributed and students must decide whether to criminalize or legalize the drugs	Public policy, PACS, profit, costs to society, health care, medicalization of social problems
Education	*Sinking Ship*—as the ship goes down students must choose which 5% are to be saved	Credentialing, differential educations, status, inconsistent status definitions, grade inflation, hidden curriculum
Environment	*Saving the Fishes*— activists work to produce policy toward environmental protection	Environmental degradation, pollution, corporate pollution, corruption within public policy
Family	*Staying Married*—A couple meets with family members to determine if divorce is an option	Premise of permanence, premise of primariness, marital quality, mate selection, adultery, divorce
Gender	*Playing toys*—gendered toys are distributed for play	Gender socialization, gender roles, feminization of poverty, abuse, discrimination, sexual harassment
National Security	*Hostage Negotiations*— students role play world leaders to settle an international crisis	Ethnocentrism, world systems and markets, political structure, nationalism

Policy	*Ecotonos*—using different cultural characteristics students are given a common task of policy upon which they must agree	Power differentials, culture, ethnocentrism, power elite
Politics/Economy	*Starpower*—students trade for wealth and power	Distribution of wealth, voting, PACS, lobbyists, campaign reform, interlocking directorates, socialism, capitalism, deviance
Population	*Saving Bolivia*—students work in assigned groups of activists and legislators to produce population policy	Family planning as a national issue, consumption, replacement rate, reproductive rights, dependency ratio, privacy issues
Poverty	*City Distribution of Funds*—city funds must be distributed based on occupation	Class, status, human potential, occupational strata, welfare, inequality
Race and Ethnicity	*The incoming Freshman*—student groups decide entrance into a school based on affirmative action plans	Prejudice, discrimination, affirmative action, subjective/objective measures
Urban areas	*An Alien Among Us*—individuals with different characteristics are chosen for an urban task force	Urbanization, gentrification, urban renewal, dislocation of resources
Violence	*Keeping the Peace*—groups must write a zero tolerance policy on violence in a high school setting	Social control, prevention, patterns of violence, violence in the media, privacy issues

The remaining class period or periods of the week are used to show related films, introduce specific cases or problems related to the topic, or address related current events. Whatever is covered, the discussion is more robust since students have already articulated topical issues in the debriefing. Links are made throughout the week from whatever the specific current discussion is to the themes that emerged in the game. As the semester continues, the students begin to link the outcomes of other games and to build bridges from one social element or structure to another without my having to force the lesson upon them. At the end of the week, a writing assignment, due the following class period, is announced.

The assignments can be designed and organized in a variety of ways, and I have tried several. I may assign theoretical interpretations, political perspectives, causal analysis, or discussions of public debate on the topic. I have used a series of very different cues throughout the semester and have used a set of month-long themes in writing from which they produce a portfolio at the end of the semester. Whatever the particular cue, I require an integration of the text material, classroom simulation and discussion, and any other material from the week. I also give them a single-spaced, one-page maximum which they often find infuriating. Students love the idea of such short papers when the description is in the syllabus the first day, but they soon learn the challenge of coordinating everything you want to say in such a concise manner. I have had many students, however, come back after graduation and thank me for forcing them to learn the skill to make concise, well-integrated arguments. The exercise has helped them apply for graduate school, win scholarships, attain jobs, and even get promotions. Such comments can be easily identified as benefits, but there are many others to discuss.

BENEFITS OF THE DESIGN

The benefits of a simulation model have fulfilled the specific goals of my course curriculum: to define current and future social problems, identify related elements, analyze such problems from a variety of theoretical perspectives, determine ways to investigate social problems, and produce possible individual and collective responses to social problems. I tell my students that the primary goal within the course exists beyond content objectives. They should leave the class with an informed opinion. Their view does not have to be mine, but students must come to judgment through reading, thought, and debate, and it should be an opinion they are willing to act upon. Allowing students to experience social problems themselves in a controlled setting allows them a more personal perspective than they might otherwise experience, and I have found that they indeed form very personal yet informed opinions.

To work toward my stated goal, I stress five points that must be accomplished:

- participation,

- critical thought,

- synthesis of ideas,

- exposure to resources, and

- application of content.

Simulations at times encourage these points and at times force them.

PARTICIPATION

Students must participate to stay in the class and seldom have I had any-one change sections to avoid adhering to the standard. I use a quick game the first day so students can determine if they are uncomfortable and want to switch sections while there is time to do so. In the gender unit, for example, passive aggressive behavior manifests itself as nonparticipation when the gentlemen given dress-up clothes and a baby doll opt not to play with the toys. That action in itself is rife with opportunity for analysis, so the act does not have a negative effect on course discussion. Using the model, I have found that students are more likely to speak to me and to classmates, to open up with ideas and per-sonal experiences, and to initiate discussion of links to other classes and con-tent. Students believe that this type of participation makes the class easier than others in which they memorize content. Students have told me they love com-ing to our class because it is fun and they never know what is coming next.

CRITICAL THOUGHT

As students participate and become more involved, they are more likely to think critically. I am careful to refer to the simulations as games throughout the semester because students become more involved and look toward "winning" them, producing strategies that employ critical thought. From critical thought to critical analysis is a short step. In truth, the discussion they begin is exactly what we need to drive the debriefing. Students regularly claim that they enjoy "figuring out" solutions for themselves instead of having problems resolved for them. Because they are overtly encouraged to form opinions of their own, students revel in the opportunity to work toward refining and articulating their educated opin-ions. In drawing conclusions on the matters in class, students bring in outside examples and are more easily able to think through other examples critically.

SYNTHESIS OF IDEAS AND EXPOSURE TO RESOURCES

Once they begin bringing in outside examples and other class content, stu-dents find that the work toward synthesis of ideas is inevitable. Teaching stu-dents to integrate knowledge, media, life experiences, and public debate pre-pares them to engage in synthesis after college. Once the synthesis is positive-ly sanctioned, many students look toward outside resources to "make their point" in the class after a game is played. The use of outside resources is again encouraged, and we discuss the value and availability of different resources. If students are looking up research data on the census website or in the reference

section of the library to back their statements in class, I feel that a significant part of my job has been accomplished.

APPLICATION OF CONTENT

Just as these behaviors of resource and information allocation and synthesis of ideas are rewarded in class, so is application of concepts to other social problems. Throughout the semester, students begin to bring up social problems they have identified that are not on the class agenda. Their engagement suggests that they are watching their social environment and determining what areas interest them. I always take time to let the class address such student-delivered topics and allow them to work together in applying the concepts and analysis from class to new topics. The practice suggests that students will continue through life identifying and analyzing problems in their environment and deciding how they will add to the solution rather than the problem. I want them to determine explicitly whether and how they will be part of the the solution. The challenge seems to have an easy answer the first day of class, but the games put them in situations where they realize choices are more difficult than may first appear. Choosing between social action and the protection of self or family becomes far more real dilemma when the class is staring at you and asking you to act rather than when you're reading about a dilemma in a text.

CHALLENGES OF A SIMULATION MODEL

The benefits of the content completion and the five goals discussed above are valuable and worthy of faculty time and effort, but remember that our format and its benefits produce specific challenges as well. The time involved extends beyond the usual preparation of a class lecture and discussion. Essentially an instructor must plan the content coverage and then determine questions that will drive the coverage rather than a more upfront presentation. The methodology, at times, seems to be a backdoor approach to education. Each game requires setup and strike time and possibly physical logistics of groups for play. The model is successful only if the simulation, the debriefing, the reading, and the writing assignment are completely integrated. Again, such overt integration is done in any class but can be more time consuming in the simulation model.

The time factor often suggests an increase in effort as well. You must be "up" to some extent to play a game each week. The enthusiasm of the students is only as high as that of the instructor. Often, telling students what they need to know rather than helping them produce the content and discussion themselves is easier. A fine line must be maintained in the model between guiding the experience and controlling the education. As simulation is a guided experience, the instructor may have to spend time patiently biting his or her tongue and awaiting the response of students, a challenge especially at the beginning of the semester when they are still adjusting to the model.

Beyond the time and effort of the instructor, specific support may be needed from the department as well. Scheduling times and rooms that are conducive to

the simulation model is essential. Such a class is best taught in large time slots (1 hour+) since some of the games can be long. Teaching the model in a once-a-week class, however, is difficult because students do not have the reading assignment until after the game. You must also have a physical environment where you can be loud at times as many of the games involve free expression. Many also require free movement, and so you should have a classroom in which you can move tables and chairs. Aside from the physical space of the classroom, your department may need to find funding to build the needed library of games if you use commercially produced ones. A variety of games also require cards, dice, name tags, and posters.

The final and key ingredient must be student involvement and initiative. We have all experienced particular cohorts or classes that are disgruntled with a new teaching/learning design. I find this more often in my general education classes than my honors classes, but the point is important. In my honors classes, the benefits exist for all participants because of the level of individual motivation and initiative we see in our honors students. That said, honors students can often be the ones least likely to adopt new classroom models. They have often done well in school because they mastered the educational model at hand, and they can be very uncomfortable if they aren't sure about the "newness" or are afraid it may in some way negatively affect their GPA. By the end of the first three weeks, the fears have diminished, but we should note fairly that some students blossom more than others in courses designed around simulation strategies.

TIPS FOR SIMULATION USE

After a short while of using simulations, any instructor will become more adept at preparing, implementing, and debriefing simulations. I have included here some general tips for those who are just beginning, and they may be helpful to seasoned game players as well. In fact, in producing the list, I uncovered some good intentions that I have let slip from time to time.

To make each topic and transition run smoothly, plan the entire semester ahead of time. Schedule the topics, games, and films in a logical sequence for ease in transitions and grouping of content. Scheduling so that similar games are spread out through the semester, providing spontaneity and avoiding class "ruts," can also be helpful. I also intentionally do not address the topics in the order of text chronology. Though students may find the decision annoying at times because they want to know what is next, variation does keep their perceptions fresher when the topic is introduced.

Once you have a schedule and your films are requested, the next tip is that you must be prepared to change any of it. Snow days, instructor illness, and social context will often lend themselves to particular topics during certain weeks. If you want students to apply what they learn in class to their world out of class, then paying attention to their social world will play to that end. For example, one year Valentine's Day brought more of a buzz than usual, so I moved problems of marriage and family to that week. Our discussion of dating

and mate selection found a natural home in Valentine's week and produced excellent discussion that we might not have heard in another week.

Simulations may be used during any point of the unit. I would suggest, however, using the games before content coverage as I do in the model I describe. I have found that, if students know (or think they know) the expected outcome, they are less invested in actual participation and true outcomes. Students' presumptions can lead to apathetic treatment of the simulation, and essential themes may not emerge in play. The cautionary note speaks specifically to controlled educational outcomes of the experience. Curricular needs define a specific level of participation and content coverage of the topic. Achieving such goals is best accomplished when expectations are met and necessary content delivery emerges through debriefing. I suggest using planned debriefing questions to ensure appropriate coverage. Running simulations allows you to use all parts of your brain simultaneously. Though good for our longevity and intellectual stimulation, the points you want to make are easily forgotten. Because of the format, coming back and discussing specific points in later class periods when you have to re-contextualize the point can be difficult. Hence, planning for questions in the simulation model holds the same value as planning for helpful interaction in a lecture, ensuring coverage, clarity, and synthesis of ideas.

When using small groups and debriefing handouts, I usually have more questions than time allows, and I tell students that not finishing is all right. The reassurance keeps groups from running through the questions and then discussing last night's game. I do not want them to think they are "done" discussing social problems or elements of social reality. I want them to leave college believing they are all unfinished discussions they can continue throughout their lives.

Such a format is obviously more comfortable to some students than others. Consequently, I play a game the first day to allow students to understand the model. I play a game of identities that forces students to get out of their seats, meet other students, participate, engage in a discussion of diversity, and establish respectful discussion practices from the very beginning. Students thus know what to expect from the start, and the exercise allows those who find the model unbearable to drop within the appointed timeframe. When students hear that they receive points for papers and participation but that there are no tests, they believe the class to require minimal effort. The first day's simulation discourages such assumptions. Essentially, the opening simulation offers an opportunity to disclose that participation of all students is necessary. Throughout the semester, the instructor may pointedly have to include quieter students.

Finally, I would suggest that, to build a library of games, instructors should accumulate different types of games with different topical applications. Writing grants for funding is certainly an option and can often provide enough funds to gain a foundation of games for use in many courses. I applied for and was awarded an academic enhancement grant through my college to build such a

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library. Games are available from commercial simulation companies, professional journals, teaching organizations, and books. Some online companies allow you to purchase and download games directly from the web. The example in the introduction of "The Sinking Ship" is a quick and cheap game that I use each semester. There are more complicated simulations that can be purchased from educational providers. Some games for institutional use can cost up to $400 while others can be downloaded from the internet for $20. Still other games can be made from index cards, stuff in your office, and an afternoon of your creative time for much less. (A list of games, sources, and literature regarding the procurement and implementation of simulations is provided in the bibliography.)

I would specifically encourage you to buy at least one game that provides adaptations for use in more than one topic, such as *Ecotonos.* This particular game employs multicultural decision making and planning by using cards telling the players how to behave according to a variety of cultural norms. The game itself comes with written tasks, both organizational and physical, as well as suggestions for writing your own game situations. After some time, instructors become more comfortable in producing their own simulations to address exact topics and to draw out the desired content and discussion. I use *Ecotonos* to simulate hiring a new agency director, developing population policy, and relocating an industrial plant site. As with any experimental design in teaching, the most important suggestion is to adjust methods and resources as necessary. Instructors should learn from each simulation just as the students do. Using that knowledge to better the course curriculum and teaching method improves the class product for both the instructor and the students.

CONCLUSIONS

The simulation model is successful in generating particular outcomes in the classroom. The design encourages active participation in the classroom while the evaluation design of integrated papers specifically discourages passive learning. Critical thought, student analysis, and teamwork toward policy emerge as primary goals in the format. Student response has been positive, claiming that the design is more interesting and fun than a traditional lecture course. Though education and not fun is the main objective in the classroom, the interest and fun have proven to stimulate independent motivation. The students have also expressed that they retain more of the information in the simulation model. They claim they remember more and can make better use of the information if they have "done it" rather than "heard it." Other methods obviously exist that produce similar results; simulation simply provides another alternative to faculty. Facilitating rather than professing demands a cognitive role change at some level for the instructor. A shift in preparation, classroom management, tools of the trade, and evaluation methods depend on time and effort from the faculty member. The method provides a holistic model of simulation teaching, and options for partial integration into the course work also exist.

If nothing else, stepping outside a practiced (and to some degree ritualized) routine in the classroom pushes students and faculty alike to bring a fresh perspective to the teaching/learning experience. At any point in our professional lives as educators, such change for improvement in itself is always meaningful. Personally, two valuable outcomes have emerged from the model for me. First, I have renewed faith in the future leaders of tomorrow as I watch them ask and answer tough questions of each other effectively when provided with the data and framework necessary. Secondly, I have spent more time with my mouth closed, learning from students and expanding my own perspectives. Increased time listening and learning has also allowed me to model the educational process for my students more often, thereby encouraging a lifelong commitment to education and critical analysis.

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The author may be contacted at

lnewfreeland@eiu.edu