

Section Description

This article can be used by Local Government CECH-UP teachers to train students in the role playing technique applied to case studies and simulations dealing with local government issues.

**The North Carolina Local Government Seminar
THE TECHNIQUE OF ROLE PLAYING**

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1. Select the Role Playing Problem.
 - a. The teacher must consider his or her own teaching goals, and the needs and limitations of students.
 - b. The teacher must ensure the personal security and privacy of each individual when selecting situations.
2. Conduct a Warm Up (if necessary).
 - a. The purpose of a warm up is to relax all the students and to give practice and security in public performance and expression.
3. Explain the General Situation.
 - a. The students should understand the educational purposes of the role play and how its problem is relevant to them.
 - b. It is important for the whole class to know the site, situation, and courses of action possible within the problem situation.
 - c. In certain special circumstances the teacher may prefer to omit item b., brief the actors privately, and ask the rest of the class to guess at the major issue~, roles, and applications.
4. Select Volunteers for the Participant Roles.
 - a. Describe the characters of the role play and ask for volunteers to act out one of the potential scenarios.
 - b. The selection of students to specific roles should avoid placing any child in his or her usual life role.
 - c. Students must know that they can decline a role despite peer pressure-
 - d. The teacher may help participants conceptualize how they wish to play their roles. (However she must not tell students how to play their roles.)
 - e. The students must understand that their role portrayal has no reflection on their real personal identities.
 - f. Role players are not expected to present their roles flawlessly.

5. Explain Audience Roles.
 - a. The audience can be involved in a fruitful and active manner by 1) giving them specific points to look for, 2) suggesting that each of them identify with one of the actors, or 3) assigning some other task that makes each of them responsible for observing some aspect of the action.

6. Conduct the Enactment.
 - a. The actual performance may be brief or extended.
 - b. Once the action has started, the students should be given enough time to become thoroughly immersed in the problem situation, and to take full advantage of the situation's promise for fostering understanding of human behavior.
 - c. Eventually the teacher will end the role play and bring the actors back into the class group.

7. Conduct the Debriefing Discussion.
 - a. The discussion should help the class members review the role players' actions, reflect on the data observers collected, analyze cause and effect relationships, and speculate on alternative behavioral patterns.

8. Conduct a Re-enactment (optional but advisable).
 - a. The re-enactment provides a second chance to explore how individuals attempt to negotiate solutions to social dilemmas.
 - b. The original actors may re-play their roles improving interpretations in light of audience reactions, or new actors may take the roles.

9. Evaluation.
 - a. The teacher can gain a subjective evaluation of a session through the debriefing discussion or a post-session reaction form.

Some Thoughts About Classroom Role Playing

1. By taking on the role of another person and by pretending to feel like, think like, and act like another person, students can act out ideas and feelings without the risk of real-life sanctions or reprisals.

2. Role playing allows students to examine and discuss controversial issues and problems without anxiety. These issues and problems are not focused on the self, they are attributed to a given role or stereotype.

3. By placing themselves in the roles of others, students can identify with the real world and with the imaginations of other children and adults.

4. Increased opportunity for understanding oneself and others paves the way for positive behavioral change.
5. Role playing may be used to explore personal problem areas and interpersonal relationships.
6. Because of its active nature, role playing is a useful instructional technique for use with non- verbal and acting-out students.
- 7.

Some Questions to Use for Debriefing

1. What happened in the role play?
What actions took place?
What did the players say or do?
How did they react to one another?
Did the people stay in character?
Did people play seriously?
2. What problems or issues came out in role play?
How did the role players handle these problems?
What were (or are) these problems?
Would they have been problems with different behaviors from our actors?
3. What are some alternative courses of action that might have been considered?
What would be the probable consequences of these actions?
4. What risks were involved for the characters in this role play?
What did (name) have to gain or lose?
Do we face, or have we faced, similar risks ourselves in other situations?
Explain.
5. What type of relationship was portrayed?
Who was dominant or subordinate? Why?
How could the actors have changed their statuses?
How would you characterize their communication?
6. Additional questions.
Did the role play expose useful thoughts/insights into what motivated people's behavior? Could I generalize from this role play some guidelines to help me in other future situations?
How might others view/interpret the action?
What "experts" might have the most to say about the behaviors manifested in the role play? Why?

Some Things To Avoid

1. Avoid criticizing the authenticity of a role play or the appropriateness of a player's response.
2. Avoid the slightest semblance of a hidden agenda in terms of the outcome of the lesson or the moral to be learned through the role play.
3. Avoid over-directing the role play. Let it develop as the players see fit.
4. Never criticize a player's acting ability.

References:

Abt, C. C. *Serious Games*. New York: Viking Press, 1970.

Alessi, S. M. & Trollip, S. R. *Multimedia for Learning: Methods and Development*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2001.

Chesler, M. & Fox, R. *Role Playing Methods in the Classroom*. Chicago: SRA., 1966.

Shafte4 F. R. & Shaftel, G. *Role Playing in the Curriculum*. 2nd ed. New York: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1982.

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Section Description

Students can use these questions to interview local government elected officials.

**ELECTED OFFICIAL
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. How long have you been serving as an elected official?
2. When you first ran for office, what were your reasons for wanting to serve?
3. For officials who have served multiple terms:
Have your reasons for running changed since your first term?
4. How much time do you spend each month on your duties as an elected official?
5. What area or .areas of municipal or county operations do you find most interesting?
What area or areas do you find most complex?
6. Of what accomplishment are you most proud? Why?
7. What aspect of the job came as a surprise after you took office?
8. What is the toughest budget decision you've had to make?
What made it especially difficult?
9. What is toughest public policy decision you've had to make? Why?
10. What would you like to see as a prerequisite for serving as a local government elected official?

Source: Adapted with the permission of the North Carolina City and County Management Association and the North Carolina Civic Education Consortium.

Section Description

Students can use these questions to interview local government employees.

**GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. Please give us your name, title, department, and the local government for which you work.
2. Can you tell us briefly about the responsibilities of your job?
3. How long have you held this position?
4. Have you had any special education or training to do this type of work?
5. How did you happen to choose this career? Could you do this same type of work in the private sector? Have you worked in the private sector?
6. What is the most difficult aspect of your job?
7. What do you like best about your job?
8. Are there any particular goals you'd like to achieve during your time in this job?
9. Have you ever had an unusual or unique situation arise in this job? How did you handle it?
10. How closely do you follow the news coverage of your department and your local government? In general, how would you rate the accuracy of that news coverage?
11. If you had the chance to make your own public service announcement related to the work you do, what would you talk about? Why?

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READING AND WRITING ABOUT YOUR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Students read and write summaries of ten articles about the City of Chesterfield six weeks before their individual and small group projects are selected. Students are provided with a checklist for their summaries and a form to use. The teacher responds to each student's summaries and provides feedback on a Summary Response Sheet, along with total points and a grade.

Name _____

Checklist for Writing a Summary and Response

General

- _____ Did you divide your writing into two distinct paragraphs:
- _____ Did you indent each paragraph?
- _____ Do you have a topic sentence for each paragraph?
- _____ Do you use connecting words and phrases (in addition to, in contrast, likewise, first, second, finally) to make your precis clear?
- _____ Did you look up words that you were not sure how to spell?
- _____ Did you check carefully for incorrect grammar sentence fragments, subject/verb agreement, correct antecedents) or misused words (their, there, they're)?
- _____ Did you edit your work for clarity, phrasing, style, or sentence variation?
- _____ Did you reread your writing?
- _____ Would your writing make sense to someone who had not read the article?

Paragraph 1 (Summary)

- _____ In the first paragraph, did you summarize what the article is actually about?
- _____ Did you include all necessary bibliographic information (title, author, source, date)?
- _____ Did you check to make sure you did not voice your own opinion in the first paragraph?
- _____ Did you pick out the main ideas that the author was trying to get across?

Paragraph 2 (Response)

- _____ In the second paragraph did you respond directly to the article and not some side issue that the article mentioned?
- _____ Did you focus mostly on your own opinion and not the opinion of the author?
- _____ Did you refer to specifics in the article itself at least twice in this paragraph?
- _____ Did you include any personal experiences that may be relevant to this article?
- _____ Did you make your opinion clear and distinct from that of the author of the article?
- _____ Did you explain your reasons for the opinion which you voiced?

Current Events Local Government Project

Headline of Article _____

Date of Article _____

Source of Article _____

Summary of Article

Reaction to Article

Summary Response

<i>Article</i>	<i>Comments</i>
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____
6. _____	_____
7. _____	_____
8. _____	_____
9. _____	_____
10. _____	_____

_____ **Total Points**

_____ **Letter Grade**

Source: Randy Krone, Parkway Central Middle School

LESSON PLANS OF INTEREST

History of the Local Community

This lesson plan provides students with activities which will familiarize them with local areas in which they live, develop an awareness of how their local community has been influenced by history, and help them become aware of how the local community influences their lives today.

<http://www.col-ed.org/cur/sst/sst27.txt>

"Promote a City" Posters

This lesson plan helps students better understand their state and the variety of places to visit close to home.

<http://www.col-ed.org/cur/sst/sst179.txt>

Know Your Local Government

This lesson plan introduces students to the local government structure and the people in the various power positions.

<http://www.col-ed.org/cur/sst/sst99.txt>

Where Do You Live?

This lesson plan increases students' awareness of the make-up of their immediate community. Discussions, field trips, and construction of 3-D community models are utilized.

<http://ofcn.org/cyber.serv/academy/ace/soc/cecsst/cecsst060.html>

A Day at the Court House

Students observe a court session and answer questions provided on a worksheet designed to increase knowledge via observation.

<http://www.col-ed.org/cur/sst/sst240.txt>

Community Government

Students study the mayor/city council form of government and act as a city council in handling a problem that has the entire community alarmed.

www.eduref.org/cgi-bin/printlessons.cgi/Virtual/Lessons/Social_Studies/US_Government/GOV0055.html

On the Brink of Collapse

Students study ground information about a community suffering economic decline and discuss ways of helping to restore the community.

www.farmers.com/farmcomm/americanpromise/downloadables/tchguide_downloads/tchguide_gov02.html

Leverage Turns Red Light Green

Students examine a traffic light case involving a fictitious town and role-play a town meeting to discuss the traffic problem and possible solutions.

www.farmers.com/farmcomm/americanpromise/downloadables/tchguide_downloads/tchguide_gov03.html

Create Your Own Case Study

Students are given guidelines for preparing their own case studies dealing with local government issues.

www.farmers.com/farmcomm/americanpromise/downloadables/tchguide_downloads/tchguide_civ02.html

Some Ways That Students Can Help the Community

Students are given ideas for service learning projects they can do for the community.

www.farmers.com/farmcomm/americanpromise/downloadables/tchguide_downloads/tchguide_serv02.html

