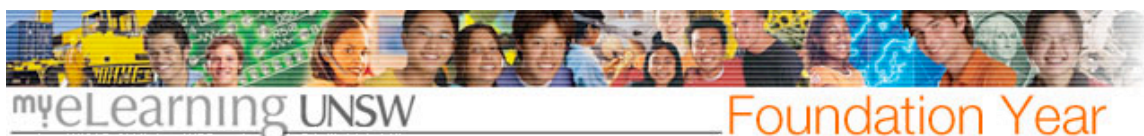# BIG PAPER b-SIM

ABSTRACT

Participants engage in a role based case study into the development of the pulp and paper industry in South America through which they deepen their knowledge and understanding of forces, risks and benefits of globalisation as well as developing their generic skills of research, problem solving and team work.

KEYWORDS

International Studies; Globalisation;; Blended learning; e-Learning; Reusability.

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DESCRIPTION

BIG PAPER b-Sim is a blended online role play simulation set in the region of the Uruguay River in South America on the border between Uruguay and Argentina. Participants assume the role of stakeholders concerned with development activities in a dispute about the development of a large-scale pulp and paper industry in Western Uruguay. Students are assigned a role of an organisation or agency and must research this organisation so that they can authentically respond to events and issues from the perspective of their organisation. From here, participants interact with other organisations in a role play attempting to achieve an outcome to the dispute that is in keeping with the objectives and responsibilities of their role.

AUDIENCE/GROUP SIZE

Group size is scalable; however a minimum of 6 participants is recommended. Students are divided into 'interest' groups and allocated 1 out of 40 stakeholder roles to play. The number of interest groups and individual roles allocated is determined by the number of participants. There is potential for teaming participants within specific roles and/or running parallel b-Sim proceedings if desired.

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Within the context of the BIG PAPER b-Sim, participants are invited to further develop their:
- Knowledge and understanding of political, social, economic and environmental dimensions to decision-making in the context of international issues.
- Skills of communication, research, critical thinking, negotiation and decision-making skills.
- Appreciation of socio-economic dynamics and cross-cultural issues
- Integration of skills into action: negotiation, computer literacy, problem solving and teamwork

TIME AND SETTING

The BIG Paper b-Sim is embedded as an 8-week activity within the second semester of *International Issues and Perspectives,* a year long subject within the UNSW Foundation Year Arts, Fine Arts, International Studies and Arts/Law programs. UNSW Foundation Year is a university preparation course for international students.

RESOURCES

The b-Sim blends face-to-face and online modes of communication between stakeholders which culminates in judicial decisions by simulated international tribunals. The online component of the b-Sim is currently operating within WebCT VISTA providing synchronous and asynchronous communication tools including discussion boards, email and electronic classroom. Private areas are established for interest groups and decision-making bodies. Action with this b-Sim is guided via regular news updates released through WebCT, however, most LMS should be capable of performing these functions. In addition to the online environment, a comprehensive b-Sim Handbook provides guidance for participants.

ASSESSMENT

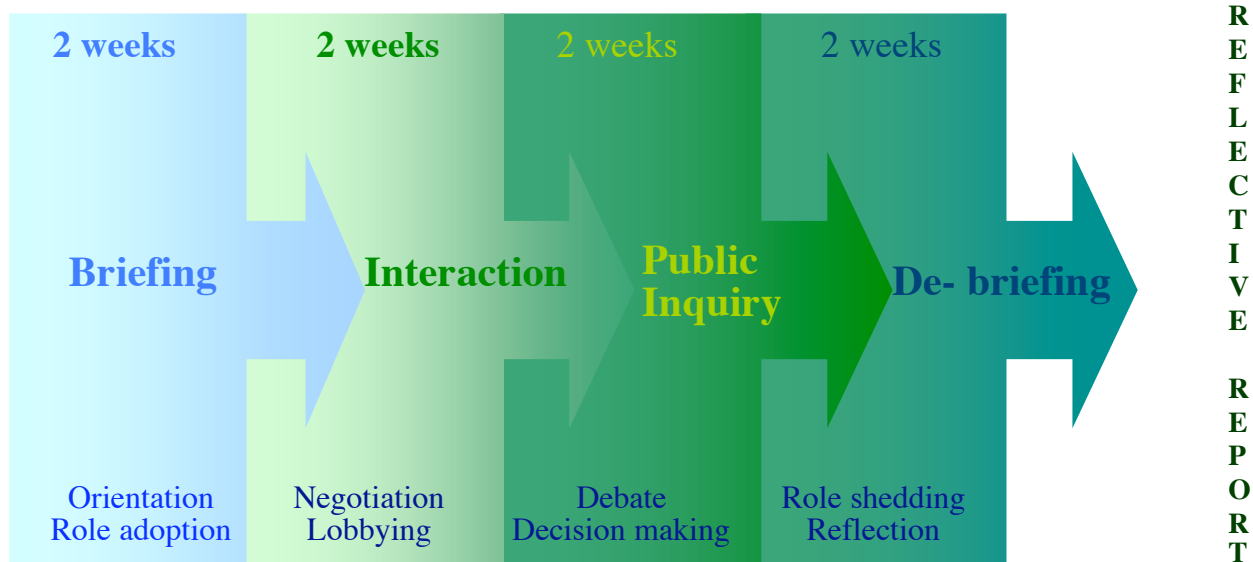Performance in the b-Sim contributes 25% towards the formal course assessment mark.

Individual performance is assessed by:
1. **5%** **Role Profile Statement** synthesising the aims, goals, stakes and intended strategy of stakeholder role
2. **10%** **Public Inquiry Submission** arguing the stakeholder position to try to influence the Inquiry outcome
3. **5%** **Interaction** within public and alliance online discussion forums
4. **5%** **Debriefing Report** reflecting on international explored during the role play as well as impact on personal learning.

As a **simulation** the BIG PAPER b-Sim utilises simplified scenarios and events modelled on real world interactions. In all instances throughout the b-Sim participants must respond in a way that **faithfully represents** the aims, goals and strategies of **their stakeholder role organisation**. All responses must fall within the scope of the simulated events and only material introduced into the b-Sim discussion boards and Public Inquiry Submissions may be considered during the Public Inquiry decision- making stage and assessment of student performance.

Stages of the BIG PAPER b-Sim

2 weeks	2 weeks	2 weeks	2 weeks	
Briefing	**Interaction**	**Public Inquiry**	**De- briefing**	R E F L E C T I V E R E P O R T
Orientation Role adoption	Negotiation Lobbying	Debate Decision making	Role shedding Reflection	

Briefing Stage — Participants are introduced to the processes and rules before being allocated a stakeholder role which they must represent throughout the b-Sim.

Interaction Stage — Trigger events are released via the media to stimulate action. Participants research issues as well as using negotiation and political lobbying to try to influence the position taken by other stakeholders within the Public Inquiry.

Public Inquiry Stage — Participants present their formal arguments before the Public Inquiry.

Decision-making bodies scrutinise submissions calling on stakeholders to clarify their position and to substantiate arguments presented.

At the conclusion of submissions participants form alliances to respond to the preliminary decision before a final decision is made.

Debriefing Stage — Conducted over 2 face-to-face meetings.

In-role: In the first meeting participants remain in-role while alliances probe the Public Inquiry decision seeking clarification and justification from the decision making body.

Out-of-role: In the second meeting participants de-role in order to reflect on their learning throughout the b-Sim.

Close — At the conclusion of the debriefing stage students submit a debriefing report reflecting on their experiences throughout the b-Sim.

REUSABILITY

The structure and methods of the BIG PAPER b-Sim are modeled on the highly successful and robust *Mekong e-Sim* (R. McLauchlan, D. Kirkpatrick, H. Maier & P. Hirsch) currently conducted through University of Adelaide.
http://services.eng.uts.edu.au/~robertm/mekong/default.htm
http://www.adelaide.edu.au/situationallearning/examples/mekong

- Transferable across Learning Management Systems and may be adapted to utilise other ICT systems.
- As a multi-disciplinary role play simulation, it can be implemented across discipline areas, notably Arts, Social Sciences, Politics, International Studies and Business.
- Trigger events and inquiries can be adapted to suit a variety of levels within secondary school and higher education.