

Buyat Bay Planning Focus meeting



ABSTRACT

Participants take on roles from a mining company, local community, government, health profession and NGOs. They prepare for, and then take part in, an online version of a meeting to review a proposal to re-open a gold mine in Indonesia. The role play gives experience of professional analysis of environmental impact, health impact and shows how stakeholder perspectives can influence the presentation of evidence.

KEYWORDS

Public Health

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DESCRIPTION

In this role play students deal with environmental health issues raised by a mining development. Buyat Bay Mine is a real gold mine in Indonesia, which was the subject of a controversial court case claiming that pollution from the mine had caused health problems to local residents, and which has since closed. Real documentation is available to inform the role play, from the mining company and from various health impact studies presented in court. So the students can critique authentic documents as professionals. The scenario is a Planning Focus Meeting to consider re-opening of the mine following discovery of further gold reserves, at which NGOs, local villagers, government and mining company representatives will put their respective cases.

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Participation in this activity will provide the opportunity to:

- Evaluate the perspectives of key stakeholders from both mining and environmental health
- Work as an effective member of a team to collaborate with other health and/or mining professionals to make recommendations as to the reopening of the mine.

Environmental Health students will also have the opportunity to:

- Apply the tools of basic toxicology and epidemiology to environmental health issues
- Debate options for the prevention and management of environmental health problems
- Identify different stakeholders in environmental health and consider the impact of different perspectives on public health decision making
- Locate high quality information about environmental health issues

Mining students will have the opportunity to:

- Develop an understanding of the legal/political/religious/social context of the mine depicted in the scenario.
- Consider factors regarding sustainable development impacting on the scenario.

AUDIENCE/GROUP SIZE

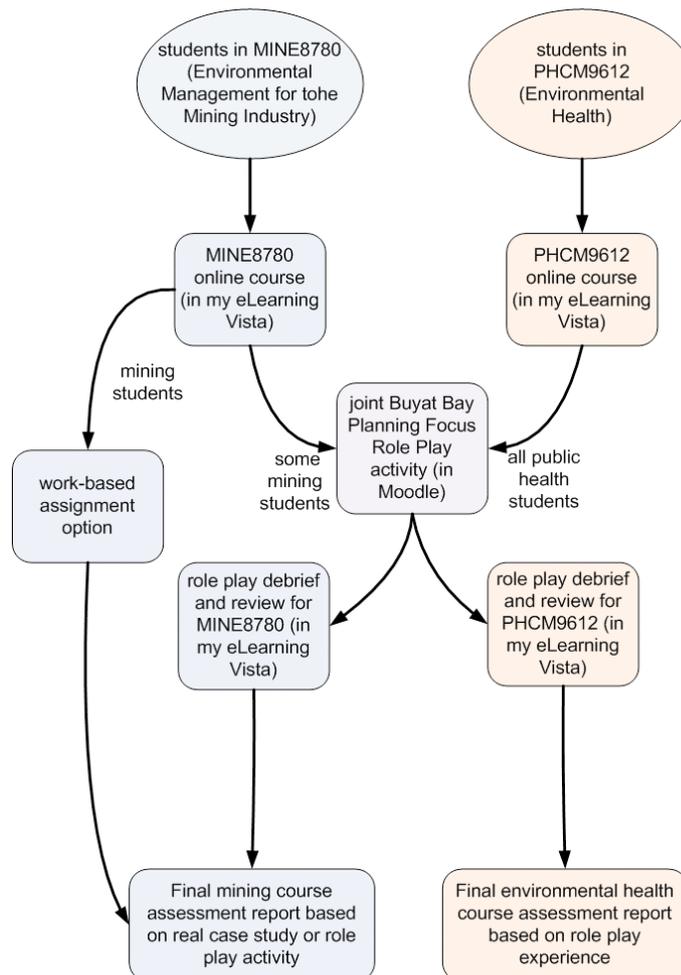
The role play is being designed for postgraduate students in Public Health, studying environmental risk assessment, and for postgraduate Mining Engineering students, studying the environmental assessment of mining operations. In the first run, in semester 2 of 2009, there were 18 Public Health Students (the whole cohort doing the course) and 14 Mining Engineering students (who chose this as an alternative to a real work-based assignment). Each student cohort came into the role play from separate online courses, as illustrated.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

The Mining Engineering students are studying entirely online, and a significant number are working in the mining industry. The major assessment activity in a previous version of the course was an environmental assessment of a real mine. The role play is offered as an alternative, and may suit those who are not currently working in mining, or who prefer not to use their own work. The Public Health students are in a blended course and have some face-to-face preparation, and all take part in the role play. Both sets of students use their own WebCT Vista modules to access role play resources. Both sets of students view a documentary film about the Buyat Bay mine and have access to relevant background materials. Each role is allocated to a group of students in one of the courses. The role groups confer online using standard group discussion tools (in the separate WebCT Vista course modules) first to consider some trigger questions in their respective roles and then to prepare the role's 500 word submission to the Planning Focus.

For the Planning Focus meeting, each role has a single login and password to a Moodle course where the meeting takes place as an asynchronous discussion over 2 weeks. So each role group has to plan who uses this and when, as part of the group strategy. The meeting is facilitated by a lecturer, in the role of a government representative who chairs the Planning Focus meeting and who will be making a final decision on behalf of the Government. After the initial submissions, each role responds and debates the issues raised, using evidence and arguments from the resources available.

In a role group debriefing activity (online in WebCT Vista) the students review the issues raised. Each student then writes an individual reflective report based on the role play experience, which is assessed in relation to the course learning outcomes.



Student cohort participation in Buyat Bay online role play

REUSABILITY

The role play design is based on several others using a Round Table format – where students prepare a case to present at a meeting of different stakeholders, from different professions, to decide on a course of action. The design used the Pain Management Round Table role play from the University of Sydney as a model. Since many of the scenario materials are public documents, it would be relatively easy to adapt for different scenario using a different set of publicly available resources.