Conference Lunch Role Play

(Re-Use of Idontgoto Uni)

KEYWORDS

Higher education; Assessment; Policy;
Forum

ABSTRACT

Learners adopt various staff and student roles within an Australian university conference lunch setting and explore an issue in assessment.

CONTACT

David Macdonald, CEDIR,
University of Wollongong,
davidmcd@uow.edu.au

Gordon Joughin, CEDIR
University of Wollongong
gordonj@uow.edu.au

DESCRIPTION

The scenario revolves around lunchtime discussion. An academic makes the first posting, which is a about a cohort of students failing a particular mid-year test. The average score was 30% so he thought it might just be easier to give all students an extra 20% so the Head of school wouldn't ask too many questions.

AUDIENCE/GROUP SIZE

The role play activity is conducted over two weeks. It is undertaken in groups of approximately eight.

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

This learning design aims to:

- Deeper investigations and understanding of teaching policy and practice especially with regards to assessment.
- Skills development in the use of online teaching technologies.
- Develop understanding of the wider framework of influences on decision making in the higher education sector.

TIME AND SETTING

The role play is an activity within the University Learning and Teaching (ULT) course, a compulsory course for all new academic staff at the University of Wollongong. It had been used as Idontgoto Uni over seven years, approximately 21 times. This scenario was adapted and modified to promote greater engagement by participants through less structured response format.

RESOURCES

- Scenario
- Role descriptions
- Series of postings that moderators can use depending on how the role play is proceeding
- Online access to relevant University policies to which participants are expected to refer

PROCESS

The role play is conducted using the asynchronous discussion forum in a learning management site. A separate forum is established for each group. The forum is anonymous and participants title their postings using their role name.

It begins with a face-to-face introduction. The group is provided with a scenario and the character they are to play: Professor, Dean of Students, Student, Lecturer etc. The characters have a name, a title and a brief role description and it is left up to participants to decide on the character's personality. The moderator takes on the role of keynote speaker.

Participants are required to make a first posting stating their role's view on the case, and then pause to research the issues further. The moderator enters the discussion only if they feel that the discussion is slowing or has come to an end. There are a series of alternative linked statements that the moderator can introduce. Participants respond with further responses that would be typical for their characters and continue interactions over a two week period of online activity.

ASSESSMENT

There are no grades allocated for assessment activities in this course. For the role play task, participants must post a minimum number of times with a final proposal as to what suggestions do they have for making the policy/guidelines more useful for new teachers at your university?

FACILITATOR ISSUES

The facilitator is a significant support for the activity and must actively facilitate the discussion by contributing online postings that prompt further discussion.

REUSABILITY

- Scenarios and role descriptions are Word files
- Can be used at university level with students rather than teachers
- Has been modified for use with multi location and offshore academics.

REFERENCES AND LINKS

University Learning and Teaching http://www.uow.edu.au/cedir/ult

Bell, M. (2001). A case study of an online role-play for academic staff. In G. Kennedy, M. Keppell, C. McNaught & T. Petrovic (Eds.), *Meeting at the Crossroads. Proceedings of the 18th Annual Conference of the Australian Society for Computers in Learning in Tertiary Education*. (pp. 63-72). Melbourne: Biomedical Multimedia Unit, The University of Melbourne.

Devonshire, E. (2006). *Re-purposing an online role play activity: Exploring the institutional and pedagogical challenges.* Paper presented at the 23rd annual ASCILITE conference: Who's learning? Whose technology?, Sydney

Ip, A & Wills, S. (2002) *Learning designs – Online Role-play* Accessed 17/6/2007 http://www.learningdesigns.uow.edu.au/guides/info/G1/Downloads/TeachersChecklist.pdf

Wills, S., & McDougall, A. (2006). *Facilitating uptake of online role play: Reusability, learning objects and learning designs.* Paper presented at the 23rd annual ASCILITE conference: Who's learning? Whose technology?, Sydney.