

Conducting Justice Simulations

Purpose

One of the best ways to invite student “a-ha” moments is by involving them in simulation exercises. This method is particularly helpful in the delivery of a social justice curriculum because the students are able to experience and deepen their understanding of injustice, political oppression, and the unjust distribution of goods, to name a few. Simulation exercises engage cognitive skills and significantly benefit visual, bodily-kinesthetic, and interpersonal learners.

Intent

Effective classroom simulation exercises usually require the students to have at least some prior learning of the subject matter before the exercise takes place. The students' understanding of the purpose and goal of a simulation exercise is aligned with the previous learning. Simulation exercises often tap into the emotions of the participants, which can lead to greater retention and interest in the subject matter.

Preparation

Most simulation exercises require time, preparation, materials gathering, and location scouting (to find the optimal setting in which you can conduct the simulation). Although it takes careful and sometimes time-consuming planning, the benefits (student learning and deeper understanding) far outweigh the work involved in the preparation and execution of the simulation.

Method

1. Design the simulation to match the goals of the learning experience.

Search the Internet for appropriate sites that offer simulation exercises. (See suggestions offered at the end of this article.)

2. Gather the necessary materials. Arrange the room according to the requirements of the simulation.
3. Introduce the topic in advance.
4. Explain the goals and objectives of the simulation. Provide clear and concise instructions regarding student roles in the exercise. Ask for volunteers for specific roles.



5. Lead the students through the simulation.
6. Process the simulation with the students, inviting them to share any realizations, understandings, and knowledge they gained from the experience.
7. Assign a written follow-up reflection exercise.

Justice Simulations Available on the Internet

- **BafaBafa:** cultural sensitivity simulation (available on several sites)
- **Baldicer:** world food production simulation (www.peacecorpschina.org/2006/06/09/baldicer-a-simulation-activity-about-world-hunger)
- **Global Summit Simulation:** economic justice simulation (www.concernusa.org)
- **Migration Simulation:** (www.worldhistorynetwork.org/migrationsim)
- **Oil Drilling Simulation Game:** environmental justice simulation (available on several sites)
- **Star Power:** examines the concepts of power-over versus power-with (available on several sites)

