

Simulation as a teaching method

Prof. Dr. Agnė Tvaronavičienė
Mykolas Romeris University

MELE
Modernising European
Legal Education



Structure

- I. General Overview
- II. Organisational Aspects
 1. Key data of the simulation method
 2. Administrative workload
 3. Timeframe/ Timetable
 4. Selection procedure
- III. Substance
 1. Overall topic/ Content
 2. Learning Outcome
 - Content
 - Transversal
 3. Assessment
 4. Evaluation
- IV. Materials

Part I: General Overview

Simulation is a teaching method for developing students critical thinking and ability to apply the theoretical knowledge in practice. This method is one of the teaching tools designated to make studies of various subjects more interactive and effective. It is closely related to problem-based learning, as students simulate practical situations from a real life. In some courses this is an only option to acquire practical skills.

The purpose of simulation method is to engage students into real life situations role plays and encourage them to apply all gained theoretical knowledge in practice.

Simulation method can be used in small (2-5) or big groups (25 people or even more) depending on the selected form of a role play. Some forms of simulations require all students of the group to be actively involved, another allows passive observation of the simulation, which is as well valuable. Simulations can take from 15 minutes to unlimited amount of hours depending on the simulated issue and selected form.

MELE

Modernising European
Legal Education



Part II: Organisational Aspects

1. Simulation method can be used in Universities in two main ways:
 - Internal simulations. It can be applied during a courses withing a group aiming to develop students' practical skills;
 - External way. It is widely used in a form of international tournaments, where students' teams from different universities are competing.
2. In case of streaming to participate in international tournaments administrative workload od coaches consists of selection of students, preparing them for participation and assisting them during the tournaments. The most difficult and time requiring task is preparation.
3. For calculating time resources necessary for participation in the international tournaments the goals of the team should be taken into consideration. If the team is oriented towards getting more skills, test themself and to learn from others it is enough to dedicate 20-40 hours for initial trainings. In case team is ambitious for awards, it should be planned to have no less than 100 hours of trainings and additional independent preparation of every team member.
4. Selection procedure depends on the University and varies much. In most universities students for international tournaments are selected during the contests. This allows coaches to choose most motivated and talented students. Selection procedure mainly is organized evaluating motivation letters and performance during the short selection tasks.

MELE
Modernising European
Legal Education



Part II: Key data of the simulation method

In case the teacher is willing to apply simulation method during his course, he or she should consider:

- *Size of group – it depends on the specific of the process, which is being simulated. For example, for mediation simulations it is necessary to have at least 3 students ready to take an active roles as mediator, party A and party B. Two more participants can act as attorneys. It is advisable to appoint additional 1-3 observers, whose role is to follow attentively the simulation and provide feedback for the participates performing designated roles. In bigger groups simulations can be performed in parallel mode.*
- *Duration of simulation varies from 15 minutes to several hours or even several session for few hour each. For the international tournaments one round normally last 90 minutes.*
- *Venue – there is no specific requirements for the venue, still it is great and more realistic if the venue complies the essence of the simulated process. For example, mediation simulations need a table and three chairs.*
- *Participants. In case of international tournaments normally it is required that every team member would be a student at university (not professional of the field).*
- *Simulations done internally during the course do not cost additionally. Still, international tournaments require paying of registration fee (from 100 to 500 euro per team), traveling costs and accommodation, catering costs.*

MELE

Modernising European
Legal Education



Part II: Administrative workload

The workload behind the scenes:

- *Timetable. It is advisable to start training the team for the international tournament not later than 3 months before the event.*
- *Registration for the tournaments normally is open about 2-3 months before the event, thus the „Save the date“ notices in social media mostly are published 6 months prior the event.*
- *Who needs to be involved? The key person is coach (coaches). He or she selects students, trains them, arranges finances. University as institution delegates team and the coach to participate, pays traveling, accommodation and catering costs. External funding sources as well can be used.*
- *Travel arrangements includes flights, train or bus tickets, accommodation, insurance, catering, visa and etc.*
- *In case simulation is applied internally during the course it may be performed during the classes planned according the timetable in the same room, which is designated to the class.*
- *Creation of official course (i.e Moodle) for the simulations may be necessary, but not obligatory.*
- *Advertising simulations may be necessary in case it is planned to host the tournament. Normally it is advertised in social media.*

MELE

Modernising European
Legal Education



Part II: Timetable

MELE

Modernising European
Legal Education



Timetable of the preparation for the participation in international tournament:

- *Selection session – should be started at least 4 months before the planned tournament.*
- *Preparation Sessions – should be started at least 3 months before the planned tournament. It is suggested to have 1-2 weekly trainings and homework tasks.*
- *Simulation itself – tournaments normally take 3-4 days.*
- *Aftermath – a feedback and self reflection it is highly recommended after each performance in the tournament.*

In case of internal application of simulation method during the course time table do not require such serious preparation. Normally it is enough to designate roles and spread the case content few days before the planned simulation session.

Part II: Selection procedure (for international tournaments)



Selecting participants to serve the universities team for the international tournaments normally is a two-step process:

- *At first students are encouraged to apply for it by registering and providing motivation letter;*
- *After it, the authors of the best motivation letters are invited for the further selection round by asking them to perform in short simulations.*

What are the criteria? Student for being selected should be motivated, have good communication skills, demonstrate the ability to learn quickly. Normally the coaches and teachers of the related subjects serve as a jury.

In case of internal application of simulation method during the course all students should be provided with an opportunity to engage. If performance in simulation is one of the method of the assessment students should be familiar with the applied criterias in advance. Normally each simulation task should have a description. For example, during each stage of mediation simulation there are concrete tasks to be fulfilled and techniques employed.

Part III: Substance

1. Learning Outcome

- Content
- Transversal

2. Overall topic/ Content

3. Assessment

3. Evaluation

MELE

Modernising European
Legal Education



Part III: Learning outcome

Content:

- *ability to apply theoretical knowledge in problem based real life situation;*
- *Ability to prepare well for the simulation including deep research of the suggested for the simulation legal problem;*
- *Ability to filter the necessary information and prepare for it's best appliance during the simulation.*

Transversal:

- *improving of such soft skills as public speaking, teamwork, conflict management, time management, intercultural cooperation, and etc.*

It should be noticed that students do need an assistance for practicing above mentioned soft skills. Teacher (coach) should provide clear instructions, what it is expected to demonstrate. For successful simulation method application participants should have basic communication, which can be acquired and / or improved by the independent preparation, performance of smaller scale individual and group task during the classes.

MELE
Modernising European
Legal Education



Part III: Overall topic

Simulations can be used almost in all legal courses, which are taught at the university. Especially simulations are valuable in courses related with dispute resolution. In case of ADR, negotiation and mediations courses simulation is the main method as in these disciplines' soft skills are more important to compare with legal knowledge. In addition, simulation may be used as a method in every legal course where two different approaches, theories or concepts are being compared and evaluated. In such situation's simulation of debates, mediation or even court procedure may be organized.

MELE

Modernising European
Legal Education



Part III: Assessment

-What will be assessed?

Before the simulation, the preparation can be assessed. Normally in case of court procedure simulation some written documents are prepared. In case of negotiation or mediation simulation such documents normally are not required.

After the simulation, every active participant is being assessed following the chosen criterions. Most often those criterions include the list of concrete tasks to be performed. For example, during mediation simulation in the first stage of mediation (Mediator's opening) mediator is expected to establish connection with parties, built trusts, explain the process, answers clearly to the questions, and etc.

Self evaluation is very valuable part of the assessment procedure. Every students should be encouraged to provide feedback for his colleagues and as well self reflect.

How will it be assessed? There is few forms of assessment: assessment by the teacher, assessment by the colleagues and self assessment. Depending on the aims of concrete simulation the most suitable method of assessment should be chosen.

MELE

Modernising European
Legal Education



Part III: Evaluation

If simulation is a part of the evaluation of the course, it is necessary to set up a list of clear evaluation criteria. Evaluator should have in mind that it is a big challenge to evaluate by a mark the performance of a student in simulation without clear instructions. Students should know in advance, what is expected to do from their side.

It is strongly advisable to include self evaluation part in the process of evaluation. Student who performed poorly during the simulation, may have gotten the valuable lesson. Additional points should be granted for those students, who are able to identify his/her strengths and weaknesses and explain how he or she should perform better in the future.

MELE

Modernising European
Legal Education



Part IV: Materials

For more methodological help for mediation simulations please follow this link: <https://mediation.turiba.lv/index.php?id=10>

Follow in social media these organizations for the information about planned international tournaments:

<https://inadr.org/>

<https://iccwbo.org/>

<https://www.cpradr.org/>

<https://europeanlawmootcourt.eu/>

<https://www.echr.coe.int/moot-court-competition>

<https://www.nuremberg-moot.de/>

<https://www.vismoot.org/>

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/nelson-mandela-world-hr-moot-court>

and etc.

MELE

Modernising European
Legal Education

