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GUIDE ON SIMULATIONS



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GUIDE ON SIMULATIONS:

INTRODUCTION: SIMULATION-BASED TEACHING, TEACHING OBJECTIVES, LEARNING OUTCOMES & TRANSVERSAL COMPETENCES

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The idea of the GUIDE ON SIMULATIONS is to create a guide for (new) lecturers, providing methodological guidelines on how to design and use simulations as a teaching method. We hope to give lecturers some fresh ideas on how to include and carry out case studies in class.

After an introduction to simulation-based teaching, the question of which teaching and learning outcomes can be achieved and which transversal competences can be trained by using simulations in general, is answered. We then give you a general guide for creating a successful simulation. The guide is complemented by sample teaching materials for 4 different types of simulations that we have identified.

Simulation-Based Teaching

According to the Oxford dictionary, a simulation is defined as "a situation in which a particular set of conditions is artificially created for the purpose of studying or experiencing something that exists in reality". Examples of simulations include a computer simulation of how the planet works or a simulation model. In legal education, simulations are often understood to mean role-playing and the simulation of court proceedings.

There are two approaches to conducting simulations. In the first method, students are given an alter ego and asked to familiarise themselves with their alter ego, to impersonate and express opinions that are consistent with those of the alter ego. This means that the students have to deal intensively with the personal/official views of their alter ego and act accordingly. For example, a student could play the role of Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, and may have to give statements and opinions on the European Social Charter just as she would give them. The second way to run a simulation is not to play a particular alter ego, but instead to represent a perspective, of a state for example, by playing a representative of Germany in the United Nations Security Council.

Much like science students observe physical processes in laboratory experiments, simulations can offer law students the opportunity to learn first-hand. Manipulating variables in a simulation changes the dynamics of the students' interactions and the outcome of the simulation. For this reason, simulations are an experiential learning process. They allow students to apply and test what they learn in their textbooks and lectures, and often help to improve students' understanding of theories and concepts

and attract students who may be discouraged by traditional teaching methods.

Transversal Competences: Teaching objectives & Learning outcomes

Simulations are not only a great way to teach law students, but also train a variety of cross-cutting skills. By placing students in role-plays where they have to make defensible decisions and often convince others to work with them, simulations also provide students with opportunities to learn and improve skills. Students learn communication and negotiation skills, and in many cases improve their teamwork skills. Simulations also help students solve real-world problems and arrive at practical solutions. In essence, students practice and improve their problem-solving skills and decision-making abilities. Students also acquire the ability to think more critically and self-critically and to develop new and creative ideas and arguments. They also learn time management and planning, especially in the preparation and research phase of a simulation. The duration of a simulation and its level of complexity often train students' resilience and their reaction to encountering a difficult problem or situation. It also trains the ability to work independently without the guidance of a teacher or the help of the group once the rules of the simulation are established.

There are indeed other competences that students learn and practise and that are explored in detail in the individual simulation models we present in this toolbox.

CREATING SIMULATIONS IN LEGAL EDUCATION

Simulations in legal education are becoming more and more common. While there are many established simulations models and methods, there are limited guides to help educators develop their own simulations. There is a growing need for a detailed structure of simulation creation in legal education. The method toolbox on simulation addresses this issue and explores the effective integration of simulations into courses

Having a good plan makes a simulation. We believe that a well-designed simulation is more than just interaction between participants. A simulation should be designed to maximize learning at every stage of the simulation: **Preparation, Interaction, Debriefing/Assessment.**

The preparation phase introduces the topic of the simulation game and the necessary research or familiarization with the simulation game material. Students have the opportunity to learn intensely about the topic of the simulation and the role they will play. Using this knowledge helps them to develop goals and strategies for negotiations. When participants are divided into teams, students also learn communication, negotiation, and decision-making skills through the interaction with their teammates.

The interaction phase is the period of the "game" in which the participants communicate, interact, and try to achieve their goals. During the interaction phase, students have the opportunity to put into practice what they have learned in the preparation phase. Interactions with their classmates/teammates can challenge their thinking and make them think more deeply about the content of the simulations. The

interactions also allow students to use and test various strategies to achieve their goals.

The debriefing/assessment phase is a guided reflection time after the interaction phase. This can be done through a group discussion or a written assignment. Students have the opportunity to internalize the lessons learned from the simulation. Without guidance and time to reflect, students may not be able to make the connection between what they learned in the simulation and the concepts or processes the educator was trying to demonstrate.

These stages will become clearer when looking at the different types of simulations we have prepared.

CONCLUSION AND GENERAL REMARKS

All teaching methods have their benefits and drawbacks, and there are no general rules for assessing their suitability; instead, a number of factors and determinants must be taken into account. What is certain, however, is that simulations generally have several advantages and can be used flexibly in different scenarios, thus achieving extraordinarily positive results in the classroom.

The aim of this guide is to present some models that can help teachers prepare their own case studies and adapt them to the specific circumstances of their teaching. Using simulations, students can deepen their theoretical knowledge and develop the ability to transfer this knowledge to a scenario that simulates practical life, which in turn prepares them for professional life. The use of simulations opens up new skills for students.

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