

SPECIAL SESSION ON ROLE PLAYING IN THE CLASSROOM

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Participants: William W. Brown, Deborah Cours, Oscar W. DeShields, Deborah Heisley, and Melanie Stallings Williams, California State University Northridge, College of Business Administration and Economics, 18111 Nordhoff Street, Northridge CA 91330-8245; (818) 677-2458

This session presents several examples of the use of role playing in the classroom. Two of the papers illustrate student role-playing exercises used to teach management skills. The other paper highlights the use of performance science as a way of presenting research and as a way of teaching students how to engage in interpretative research.

**Marketing Beer to Hispanics:
An Interdisciplinary Classroom Simulation**
Deborah Cours, Melanie Stallings Williams,
William W. Brown, and Judith Hennessey

These presenters discuss an interdisciplinary classroom simulation they have developed that focuses on a public relations crisis faced by an American beer producer regarding the company's target marketing to Hispanics. Students are assigned to roles, which include the role of CEO, Marketing Manager, Consumer, Shareholder, Politician, FTC Economist, and management of a Mexican beer producer company. During a three-hour period, the various characters hold meetings and engage in politicking, negotiating, information sharing and decision making. At the end of the simulation, each role character must present a "position statement" in which the decided-upon course of action is announced. The simulation was developed to illustrate many of the internal and external forces that influence management decisions. The simulation also addresses an important program goal to integrate the consideration of ethical issues into business education. Student and faculty evaluations of the simulation will also be presented.

**Presenting to the Board:
Role Playing in Case Discussions**
Oscar W. DeShields, Jr.

This presenter reports on his use of role playing in the capstone marketing strategy course, which emphasizes a case analysis approach. Each

case in the semester is assigned to two student teams to present. The students must prepare a written and oral case analysis. One team presents case recommendations and supporting rationale. The other team critiques the case. At the end of the critiquing group's presentation, the two groups discuss each other's comments in a crossfire type setting. The remaining students role play as the Board of Directors and vote on the recommendations at the end of class. This role playing exercise illustrates the use of students to teach students, a form of active learning highly advocated by the current learning literature. Students must engage in critical thinking as they discuss and debate the issues at hand and the presented recommendations. Finally, students are exposed to the professional responsibilities in a formal organization.

**Teaching Interpretative Research Through
Performance Science**
Deborah Cours and Deborah D. Heisley,

Performance science is the dissemination of research through performance. In this case, the presenters highlight a classroom pedagogy that utilizes role-playing to inform students about the procedures and issues involved in conducting interpretative research (Cours et al 1999). The performers role play as both researchers and informants. This format gives the informants greater voice than the traditional method of using several sentences of quotations. It also incorporates researcher concerns and disagreements in analysis, bringing to life the coding and analysis process. Finally, this unusual pedagogy brings excitement to the classroom as students are taught to "think out of the box" of the conventions of traditional research and information presentation.

Cours, D. D. D. Heisley, M. Wallendorf, and D. Johnson (1999). It's All in the Family, But I Want It. *Advances in Consumer Research*. 26: 253-259.