

Lights! Camera! Action! The Art of Role Playing

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Hello class, and Dr. Klein! This is Crystal Graening, and today, I will take you on a journey to look closer at the art of role playing within the instructional setting. We will explore what role playing is, how it can fit into an instructional plan, including the advantages and disadvantages of using it along with tips on how you can incorporate it, and participate in a role playing activity.

Presentation Outcome and Objectives

Upon the completion of this session, students will recognize the components of role playing and how role playing is used as an instructional method.

The objectives that will be met after completing this lesson will include:

1. Define role playing and its purpose within a teaching plan.

This objective focuses on the cognitive learning domain as the learner must recognize the concept of role playing and its purpose when being used as a teaching method.

2. Compare the advantages and disadvantages of role playing as a teaching method.

This objective focuses on the cognitive learning domain as the learner must be able to apply the knowledge and recall specific advantages and disadvantages of role playing (Randall, 2011).

3. Verbalize five ways or tips that may be useful to the learner in using role playing as a teaching method.

This objective focuses on the affective learning domain as the learner seeks to identify what is found to be of benefit and value to them in using role playing as a future teaching method (Randall, 2011).

4. Participate in a role playing activity to further understand this method of teaching.

This objective focuses on the psychomotor learning domain as the learners practice a role playing scenario to better understand the technique (Randall, 2011).

Anticipatory Set

Imagine walking into a classroom on your first day and the instructor announces that you need to break into small groups and act out specific scenes in front of the entire class. Almost every student will feel a sense of doom and anxiety will overtake many, as for the most part, no one knows anyone other than perhaps one or two friends. Every student hopes they will be paired up with someone they know or sort of know and that they will not be left in the awkward situation of not being part of any group. If you as the instructor carry out role playing in this manner, it will not be successful. Role playing requires creativity and planning on the part of the educator, and for the students, they each need to know one another better and have built some type of rapport before being thrown into acting out a part (Bastable, 2019). Role playing as a teaching method needs to be understood by both the instructor and learners to be carried out successfully and to be effective within the classroom.

Link to Previous Knowledge

Role playing is similar to the simulations that many students and even nurses, participate in as part of simulation labs or settings. However, some schools and healthcare organizations cannot afford the expensive simulation mannequins and technology required to carry out this type of learning. Role playing is one inexpensive way to do so. Like with lecture, it can be incorporated into a variety of small group settings and fit the content that is being taught. Students also find that role playing is an interesting and effective method of learning (Delnavaz et al., 2018).

Role-playing Content Outline

There are many effective methods to use when teaching. Role playing is one of those that many instructors are using. Reasons include that role playing relies minimally on technology and is an inexpensive strategy within active learning that can be incorporated into a variety of settings (Ulrich, Gillespie, Boesch, Bateman, & Grubb, 2017). Role playing is defined as a method of teaching in which learners participate in a dramatization of a situation that is unrehearsed (Bastable, 2019). Those participating in the activity are asked to play specific parts or characters in a way they feel the character would in real life (Bastable, 2019). According to Bastable (2019), the intent of using this technique is so that learners can feel and respond emotionally.

Purpose of Role Play and Theoretical Rationale

The use of role play as a teaching method is useful in achieving behavioral objectives within the affective domain of learning as it places learners into a real-life situation (Bastable, 2019). Participating in this manner helps learners better develop an understanding of others as well as the behaviors of others and why that behavior occurs (Bastable, 2019). It allows the learners to play a role in an environment that is similar to what they will encounter as future professionals and work through real-life cases (Delnavaz et al., 2018).

Bastable (2019) included that role playing may be a supplement or substitute for simulation, which can be high-tech and costly, to teach learners skills and further develop clinical judgment. It allows learners to explore not only their feelings, but also the feelings of others while gaining an insight into values, beliefs, and attitudes they hold (Bastable, 2019). Additionally, problem-solving and decision-making skills develop further when using this method (Bastable, 2019). Role playing is useful in simulating issues or problems that currently

exist within the nursing profession, such as bullying, so that students are educated on such issues and identify how to respond ethically to them (Ulrich et al., 2017).

Role playing is based on the social cognitivism theory of learning (Oermann, DeGagne, & Philips, 2018). Both a social process and internal process occur during learning (Oermann et al., 2018). The responses and interactions during role play and in the debriefing following allows for learners to develop new ideas and skills, crucial components within this learning theory (Oermann et al., 2018). Oermann et al. (2018) added that when others that are participating assist one another bridges a gap between what they know and can do to what they can do and can know. Role playing allows for these concepts to occur among the learners.

Advantages and Disadvantages

There are both advantages and disadvantages when using role play as a teaching method. As previously mentioned, role play is an inexpensive learning strategy that requires minimal reliance on technology and can be implemented across multiple settings (Ulrich et al., 2017). Role playing also addresses the area of affective learning, which is an area that is not addressed thoroughly within nursing education (Ulrich et al., 2017). It also helps prepare future nurses for situations they may encounter within the clinical setting, working through the scenarios without concerns of making mistakes or being able to try a variety of approaches to do (Ulrich et al., 2017). It allows learners the opportunity to explore their feelings and attitudes, allowing for a possible bridge between understanding and feeling (Bastable, 2019). Learners are also able to narrow the distance between both patients and other professionals through the use of role play (Bastable, 2019). Additionally, research has found that those who participate in role play find it a more interesting and effective method when compared to lecture (Delnavaz et al., 2018).

Some disadvantages to role play include that it is a strategy that is limited to small groups (Bastable, 2019). Some who participate in role playing may also exaggerate the role assigned, which can lead to that part losing its credibility and realism (Bastable, 2019). On the contrary, some learners may not feel comfortable with a role, causing it to fail in the development of the role fully (Bastable, 2019). Another disadvantage is the amount of time necessary on behalf of the instructor to create and set up the scenario (Redden, 2016).

Domains of Learning and Higher Level Thinking

All three learning domains are supported by role play. The affective domain, however, is dominant. This domain helps ensure that professional values are developed through feelings and emotions being explored by learners (Ulrich et al., 2017). Role playing achieves this as the learners take part in a scenario and walk in another person's shoes so they experience what the person experiences (Ulrich et al., 2017). Ulrich et al. (2017) added that doing so allows the learners to empathize and understand the motivations of the person. The cognitive domain is also part of this learning method as the learners must analyze the situation in which they have been placed within the exercise (Ulrich et al., 2017). Because of the physical part of the role, Ulrich et al. (2017) explained that the psychomotor domain is also a part of this strategy.

An important component of role play is to end with a debriefing of the session as this allows for learning within the affective domain (Bastable, 2019). Debriefing allows for a discussion of how the learners felt within the situation to further gain an insight on the understanding of interpersonal relationships and their reactions to the roles or conflicts that occurred (Bastable, 2019). Through debriefing, there is an interaction among the learners and educator that allows the students to further understand feelings and emotions while developing competence of how to interact within difficult situations (Ulrich et al., 2017). This allows for a

higher level of thinking to occur as learners discuss what they learned, why they responded to the situation as they did, and how they may respond differently based off of the role play activity (Ulrich et al., 2017). The results of one study showed how role playing allowed students to see the whole picture, increasing students' self-awareness and improving critical thinking (Redden, 2015).

Educator Attributes and Tips for Role Playing

A key attribute for the educator in regards to a role playing activity is the ability to be a facilitator (Bastable, 2019). Bastable (2019) included that the educator also needs to have strong planning abilities, as careful planning is crucial to the strategy itself and ensuring that the points needing to be captured during the activity are done so during the dramatization. It is also important for the educator to be flexible and allow the learners to work through the role play activity with minimal input from the educator during the actual activity. The educator needs to provide an outline of the scenario that is realistic and relevant, and should not provide a full script to allow the learners to work through the situation themselves and not how the educator wants it (Ulrich et al., 2017). The educator should also maintain a sense of humor throughout the activity and be patient with the learners as they work through the scenarios (Redden, 2015).

There are also important components to consider to carry out role play effectively in the classroom. First, the educator must ensure that the group is comfortable with one another so that they feel secure in dramatizing a scene with each other (Bastable, 2019). The first few encounters a group has with one another is not a time to implement this teaching strategy, as the learners must first develop a rapport with each other and the educator to avoid feeling self-conscious or embarrassed in the situation (Bastable, 2019). Each participant within the group should also be assigned a role that requires them to actively participate in the role play, may it be

an actual role or an observer (Bastable, 2019). For those assigned a role, the educator should ensure that they are informed about the role and expectations so that they can portray it effectively, while those who are assigned to be observers should be given specific instructions on what to observe for during the scenario (Bastable, 2019).

A role play session can vary in time, but should not exceed 15-20 minutes and are best done in small groups so everyone has the opportunity to participate (Bastable, 2019). A debriefing must occur following the scenario and involve participation by all group members to ensure that learning occurs (Bastable, 2019). Ulrich et al. (2019) added that debriefing is perhaps the most important part of role playing as it allows the students a time to discuss the situation, how they felt and responded, what other ways they could have responded, and understand how others felt in the situation. Other tips include being prepared, clarify the learning objectives, create cases that are challenging, use an assessment form that is structured, and encourage reflection and participation by all (Redden, 2015).

Learner Types

Learners who are most accepting of role play as a teaching method based on the visual, aural, read/write and kinesthetic (VARK) learning styles would be kinesthetic learners. This type of learner, per Bastable (2019), enjoy role playing as it is a hand-on activity. Role playing would also appear to aural learners, especially since a role play scenario allows for interactions within a group setting. The debriefing portion of role play would also benefit aural learners as they prefer to discuss topics (Bastable, 2019). Role play would not be accepted well by visual or read/write learners as it does not provide step-by-step directions or allow for information to be received through the written word (Bastable, 2019). However, by ensuring clear directions are

given to the visual learners and a pre-activity reading assignment for the read/write learners would benefit these learners in this type of activity.

Necessary Resources to Implement

Since role playing is an inexpensive activity that relies minimally on technology, few resources and materials are needed for this teaching method. The educator must plan out a scenario that is realistic and applicable to the objectives needing to be met on the topic (Ulrich et al., 2017). It is also important that there is adequate time for the activity and debriefing to occur (Redden, 2015).

Comparison and Contrast of Role Play to Lecture

Both lecture and role playing are effective methods of teaching if carried out properly and to the right audiences (Bastable, 2019). Like with lecture, role play is an inexpensive teaching method (Ulrich et al., 2017). The two also require minimal resources and materials, unless the educator chooses to use more with lecture (Bastable, 2019). Unfortunately, the similarities between the two end there.

Lecture may be used with large or small groups, while role play must be carried out only with small groups (Bastable, 2019). Role play activities also take more time to plan out versus lecture (Bastable, 2019). While role play can meet all three domains of learning, lecture is limited to mostly the cognitive domain (Ulrich et al., 2017). Role play activities can be carried out in less time than lecture too, usually in a half-hour or less versus up to an hour for most lectures (Bastable, 2019). Lastly, rapport must be built between both the instructor and group members before carrying out a role playing activity, while with lecture, rapport only needs to be built between the educator and learners (Bastable, 2019). Some learners may also never be

comfortable with role playing, which is not the case with lecture as learners can attend lecture and not participate much, if at all (Bastable, 2019).

Delivery of Presentation

After presenting the title, personal introduction, and overview of the teaching presentation that includes the outcome and objectives within 90 seconds, a definition of role playing will be given along with the purpose of role play as a teaching method. This will be presented in one minute. Following a 30 second overview of the theoretical rationale of the teaching method, the advantages and disadvantages of role playing will be discussed within one minute. The next 90 seconds will be allotted to discussing how role playing meets the domains of learning and achieves a higher level of learning along with the types of learners this method would be received by versus those it would not. Attributes of the educator that are necessary for role playing will then be discussed along with tips and resources for using role playing as a teaching method over 90 seconds. This portion of the presentation will conclude with a comparison and contrast of role playing to lecture, taking 30 seconds and allowing 30 additional seconds for any portions in which extra time may be needed for a total portion of time spent on this section to be seven minutes.

Teaching Strategies for Presentation

The content about role playing will be delivered through the use of lecture and a PowerPoint presentation within the time frames discussed. Following this, the group will be asked to participate in a role playing activity that will help the group better understand the concept of role playing and how it is to be carried out with students. Time will also be allotted for the important component of debriefing following the role play activity. Afterward, a

summary of the presentation will be given and the group will be asked if they have any questions regarding role playing as a teaching method.

Interactive Activity

A role play activity will be designed for the group to participate in after the presentation of role playing. The role play will be one in which those participating are to learn how role playing can be used as a teaching method and how to carry it out with a group. Each student will be instructed that they are a future nurse educator and must understand role playing as a teaching method.

After a brief lecture on role play, in this case, the presentation, the students are asked to participate in the activity in which each role has a different take on role playing. A number of roles will be assigned, including an educator, a nurse educator student who is excited to use role playing and learn how it can benefit students, another nurse educator student who feels role playing is too difficult to use with groups, and a third nurse educator student who finds role playing silly and does not want to participate. Another group member will be assigned the role of the observer and asked to identify how each role member's participation and input made them feel as both someone taking part in role playing and also if they were the educator carrying out the role playing activity. The group will be given five minutes to carry out this role play and an additional five minutes will be utilized for a debriefing session. The educator role will carry out the debriefing session, and a list of questions to ask the participants will be provided to the educator role.

Evaluation: Objectives

During the summarization portion of the presentation, the learners will be asked a set of questions to determine whether or not each learning objective was met. The first objective will

be met if the learners can define role playing and the purpose of it within a teaching plan. The question asked of the learners will be: Define role playing and identify what purpose it has as a teaching method. The second objective will be met if the learners can answer the following: Provide at least one disadvantage and one advantage of using role playing as a teaching method. The third objective will be met if the learners can name five tips from the presentation that can be used by them when using role playing as a teaching method. The learners will be asked during the review time to list those tips. If the learners are unable to answer a question related to the objective, that objective will not be met. The last objective will be met if the learners actively participate in the role playing activity. If they do not participate, this objective will not be met.

Evaluation: Outcome

After the learners have identified the components of each of the objectives above, they will have demonstrated that they recognize the components of role playing, including its purpose and the advantages and disadvantages of it, and how role playing is used as an instructional method after participating in the interactive activity. Discussion to evaluate whether or not the objectives will occur in which the presenter will ask open-ended questions. This will occur in both the debriefing portion of the activity as well as in the review section of the presentation. If each of the objectives is met, and the learners actively participated in the role playing activity, the outcome of the teaching presentation will also have been met.

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