Simulations as a Useful Teaching Tool

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Prepared by Guy Zohar

Why read about a historical event when you can re-create it?

Why learn passively about political and media characters when you can step into their shoes?

Why struggle to understand world politics complexities when you can take part in them?

Learn with a fun, interactive and innovative tool!

Go for it – Start Using Simulations!
Simulation

- A political system
- Set up intentionally
- To replicate fiction or nonfiction situations

- Involves at least two participants
- Individuals or teams,
- Representing states, nonstate actors, international organizations, or media organs
- Interacting according to a given scenario
- Within a present time frame
- And specific rules for activity
Simulation Types

Simulations are classified by *Players* and *Environment*.

- **Players**
  - *Human* – students, professionals and practitioners
  - *Machine* – robot interactions structured by pre-preinstalled formula/software

- **Environment**
  - *Physical* – concrete location, classroom/lab
  - *Virtual* – abstract, non-nontangible milieu

Ben-Yehuda, Levin-Banchik, and Naveh. 2015. pp. 30-32
Simulation Types

- **Face-to-Face**
  - Human participants
  - Physical environment

- **Cyber**
  - Human participants
  - Virtual environment

- **Hybrid**
  - Two rounds or more
    - Face-to-face, on campus
    - Cyber, on the web

Ben-Yehuda, Levin-Banchik, and Naveh. 2015. pp. 30-32
## Simulation Typology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Players</th>
<th>Environment</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human</td>
<td>Face-to-Face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machine</td>
<td>Software</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human &amp; Machine</td>
<td>Human &amp; Software</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Simulation Variations

- **Course subject**
  Empirical, theoretical, area studies, methodology

- **Course duration**
  Single lesson, semester, year

- **Class**
  Size and academic level

- **Simulation scenario**
  Historical, contemporary, fictional

Ben-Yehuda, Levin-Banchik, and Naveh. 2015. pp. 23-29
Are Simulations a Useful Teaching Tools?
Study Differently: Cognitive Simulation Utility

- Apply, explore, and understand paradigms, theories, and complexity underlying processes and causal mechanisms
- Change abstract to tangible international relations, political studies, history, media concepts and theories come to life
- Enter a social science lab to learn more about decision-making, negotiations, journalism as subjects practical training research
- Increase levels of study active learning process

Ben-Yehuda, Levin-Banchik, and Naveh. 2015. pp. 12, 21-22, 146-48, 159-60
Practice & Develop Skills: Behavioral Simulation Utility

- Critical thinking and analytical skills
- Laboratory for practical training and research on decision making, negotiations, journalism and other topics
- Information management and retention
- Peer-based collaborative teamwork
- Civic culture and rhetoric skills

Ben-Yehuda, Levin-Banchik, and Naveh. 2015. pp. 12, 21-22, 146-48, 159-60
Feel & Enjoy: Affective Simulation Utility

- Diversity of cultural, ethical and religious issues, value judgments, prejudice and subjective points of view

- Sympathy, empathy, identification and attitude modifications

- Creativity and improvisation to make learning emotional, intensive and fun

Ben-Yehuda, Levin-Banchik, and Naveh. 2015. pp. 12, 21-22, 146-48, 159-60
Traditional learning
vs.
Hybrid learning with simulations
The Hybrid Learning Cycle

Lectures

Solitary Learning

Simulations

Research Projects

Debriefing

Ben-Yehuda, Levin-Banchik, and Naveh. 2015. p. 11
Passive Learning Replaced

*Traditional learning*
- Knowledge is transferred by the educator to the students
- Students are generally passive followers

*Hybrid learning with simulations*
- Knowledge is transferred
  - educator to the students
  - students to peers
  - students to educator
- Students partake in an active learning process

Ben-Yehuda, Levin-Banchik, and Naveh. 2015. p. 7
Restructuring of the learning configuration:
From a traditional top-down one illustrated by the bold red arrows alone, to a more complex one, shown by the addition of multiple light blue arrows

Ben-Yehuda, Levin-Banchik, and Naveh. 2015. p. 7
Solitary Learning Transformed

Traditional learning
- The learning process is prefixed
- Assignments as solitary tasks: reading texts, and written essays

Hybrid learning with simulations
- Active participation of each student
- Interactions between students and educator
- Interactions among peer students
- Assignments shaped by educator with individual initiatives as opportunities for creativity and cooperation

Ben-Yehuda, Levin-Banchik, and Naveh. 2015. pp. 7-8
Traditional Resources Expanded

Traditional learning
- Academic content and textbooks, mostly available at the library
- Sharing resources and debating them is limited

Hybrid learning with simulations
- Unlimited resources: traditional and cyber, such as photos, videos, and documents, available online with easy access
- Sharing resources online makes discussions on their contribution and quality easy and common

Ben-Yehuda, Levin-Banchik, and Naveh. 2015. pp. 8-9
Hybrid Learning Resources

Infinite New Resources in a Virtual Space

- Websites
- Academic & Media Archives
- Databases
- Documents
- Email
- Photos & Videos

Ben-Yehuda, Levin-Banchik, and Naveh. 2015. p. 9
Curriculum Redesigned

*Traditional learning*

- Students are bound to a pre-determined narrative
- Materials and data are provided by educator

*Hybrid learning with simulations*

- Students can “alter” history, as they step into decision-makers shoes
- Students create their own database for research

Ben-Yehuda, Levin-Banchik, and Naveh. 2015. pp. 10-11
Questions for Discussion

- Who would you like to represent and why?
- Would you agree to represent an enemy?
- Should we replicate reality?
- Is it possible to replicate reality?
- What are your expectations from the simulation?
Key Concepts

- Simulation
- Players
- Environment
- Face-to-face simulation
- Cyber simulation
- Hybrid simulation
- Traditional learning
- Hybrid learning cycle and resources
Relevant Figures and Tables

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- Table 3.1. *Simulation Typology*, page 31

Available online at book’s website under classroom resources