

ROLE-PLAY STRATEGY IN PRACTICUM CLASS FOR HOSPITALITY STUDENTS

Ida Bagus Manuaba

Politeknik Negeri Bali Kampus Jembrana, Bali Indonesia

E-mail: gusmanu17@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Practicum class plays an important role in vocational education which facilitating the gap between the two aspects; theoretical knowledge and practical skill. To accommodate the gap, Roleplay strategy is held in Practicum class. On the other hand, English is used as the main language in the class. Practical skill and communication skills for hospitality students can not be separated. English as a basic requirement for hotelier practitioners must be learned by students by combining the two aspects. Furthermore, students can be hesitant in doing an internship (On the Job Training) as a trainee or even as an employee in the hospitality industry (hotel, restaurant, cruise ship) because of their lack of Practical skill and communication skill. To overcome the problem, the role-playing strategy is applied in the practicum class. This study evaluates the effectiveness of role-play strategy in practicum class and the effect of implementing role play in the teaching process to the self-confidence of students in doing job training. This article concludes with a discussion of pedagogical implications and future research recommendations.

Keywords: Roleplay, vocational education, hospitality.

Introduction

Roleplay is a teaching strategy that can be applied to various levels of learning. The strategy is well-known to involving the students' ability by giving a real simulation as real life. Practical skill and communication are simulated as real as their environment. The application of role play in the practicum class of hospitality students is the focus of this paper. It begins with examining the concept of role-playing and how it works on hospitality students along with class practicum or industrial practicum. The second part of this article discusses the effect of implementing role-play in the teaching process to the self-confidence of students in doing job training. Finally, this article presents the results of an evaluation of the educational objectives of the role-play in a practicum class.

In role-play, participants assume a specific role, enter a simulated scenario, and behave as they expect they should in the circumstances. Role-plays can be strangely applied in heterogeneous classes; the strategy can be very simple (such as role-play in taking order in a restaurant or welcoming guest to a hotel) or complex (planning,

designing, and running complex system of a hotel). In real life action and personal relationship experiences are flexible (McGuire and Priestley, 1981).

This study evaluates role-play as a practical strategy for Hospitality students. This study focused on identifying the effectiveness of role-playing in developing the skill of hospitality students and the effect of implementing role-play in the teaching process to the self-confidence of students in doing job training.

Errington (1997) notes a series of reasons for applying role play at a higher level of education related to the result of the learning process. The highlight applications of role-playing are demonstrating the knowledge, skills, or abilities which is gain from a stud. Role-play can be used to develop practical implications and knowledge without attending the real work environment.

Role-play as a teaching strategy offers a dynamic learning environment to compare and contrast different social interaction on an issue (Errington, 1997). The experience which is given in role-play strategy is particularly to educate the students to assume as a person and play a role opposite of their natural environment

(for instance, a college student with and educational environment play a role as a restaurant supervisor or restaurant’s guest).

Role-play strategy is a practical and experimental strategy that is highlighted by ‘learning by doing’. A student may learn a theory of servicing guests in having dinner in a restaurant, to give a clear understanding of the theory; role play is applied to give a practical process of the theory. Errington (1997) explains four types of role-playing, features outlined and supported example in the hospitality environment which is presented in Table 1. A role-play exercise can be applied by combining four approaches in the table below.

Table 1: Role Play’s approaches and the examples

Approach	Typical Features	Examples
Skills-based approach	Acquiring and rehearsing a skill or ability and demonstrates it to other students	Students learn a basic skill in serving wine to the restaurant guest, then demonstrate it in a group.
Issues-based approach	Investigating the attitudes, beliefs, and values of an issue. Based on the situation students take a role and position.	Students discuss some videos about servicing guest in a restaurant, then they conclude all the video and represent it based on the best or effective way in servicing guest
Problem-based approach	Dealing with a series of the problem which is given by the teacher.	The teacher manages a problem for their students, such as a hotel’s guest lost his key, then students act as hotel

		staff how to handle the problem.
Speculative-based approach	Speculating on past, present, or future events using real and simulated data. This approach is useful in developing and justifying a situation.	Students are shown a list of guest comments, then students ask to speculate their next plan in servicing guests.

Source: Adapted from Errington (1997)

Role-play can be an effective way to bridging the gap between academic knowledge and real-life (Maddrell, 1994). Another key, role play is a strategy to increase the students' ability as an active part of the teaching process (Duveen and Solomon, 1994); Roleplay does not giving any excuse to students to be passive students in gaining knowledge (Mitchell, 1998).

Ratminingsih (2017) mentions that the strength of the role-play method is the students can develop their skills in a different situation. Students are *obliged* to participate in role-playing and, as Richardson and Kleiner (1992) mention, being an active participant in the learning process leads the students’ interest in a teaching topic, maintains knowledge and skills. Brown (1994) argues that role-play is an active and interactive strategy that holds the students’ imaginations, stimulates involvement, and allows freedom expression. The acquisition of the role, like donning a liberating mask, helps some students lose their self-consciousness Ladousse, (1987) and allows them to experiment with self-identity and role fixity in social life (Mitchell, 1998).

Role-play is highlighted as an effective strategy in building the confidence of students in a non-threatening environment in which belief is suspended; especially when the fact that the participant is simply playing a role is constantly acknowledged. When meeting

a similar situation outside the learning environment, Richardson and Kleiner (1992) propose that the student will be more confident to handle a situation when they had practiced it before. Another strength of role-playing is the acknowledgment that alternate solutions are possible; the result of the process by applying role play is generally not known so it more closely resembles the uncertainty of the 'real world'. Role-play is considered an exotic activity and it is often unfamiliar to students and teaching staff (McGuire and Priestley, 1981). Students often confuse doing role-playing with amateur theatrics and game playing (Jones, 1988; Mitchell, 1998).

Applying for role-play strategy needs a long time to design, implementing, and evaluating the strategy (Richardson and Kleiner, 1992; Alden, 1999). Maddrell (1994) argues limited time in the teaching process and lack of resources disappoints many teachers, and lack of control by the teacher may another problem to be a concern (Mantra, Astawa, & Handayani, (2019). Many teachers find, in conducting role-plays the teaching outcome is unpredictable (Brown, 1994). Role-play also demands dramatic and extrovert mode of teaching' (McGuire and Priestley, 1981:46). Maddrell (1994) argues the lack of training and control is the reason why this strategy rarely to be applied.

Discussing with other tourism and hospitality educators indicates that role-play is a reasonable strategy to be used. In hospitality education, role-plays are used to teach practical and communication skill which is associated with customer service and staff management. Foucar Szocki (1989) describes a role-play conducted in a teaching process to giving a real simulation in which students assume and role as a management role. Harris (1997) adopted a novel approach that is applied in accounting and finance hospitality, where students prepared a role to engage the other students. The study emerges the effectiveness of the strategy applied in the learning process. Daruwalla (1997) examined a disability

awareness intervention program for tertiary education students who were employed in the industry.

Research Method

The role-play method was evaluated using observation and questionnaires. More than one method was used to research the same issue and complementary quantitative methods examined different issues to some students.

Throughout the role-play process, the author observed the students' responses to the role-play and record personal reflections. In the second semester, 25 students from 175 students participated in this study. In the middle of the second semester, students did on the job training in a hotel or restaurant around Bali. At the end of the semester, the students completed a short written questionnaire about the role-play method. The questionnaire contained ten statements with a five-point Likert response scale ranging from 'not agree' to 'very agree'. The completion of the survey was optional and anonymous. The results of the methods were analyzed qualitatively.

Finding And Discussion

The objective of the role-play was to apply theoretical material and vocational skills. The discussion in this paper was focused on the effectiveness of role-playing as a teaching method in developing communication skills, hospitality skills and students' confidence in doing job training. The role-play was effective in developing higher education skills such as researching, analysis, and communication for the majority of students. Although these skills were already reasonably advanced for most students, the role-play provided an original environment for their further development and application. The role-play was particularly successful in encouraging vocational skill development and specifically, comprehension of hospitality

practice, English communication skills, interpersonal skills, and teamwork. The hospitality environment of the role-play was reflected in the students' comments. One student stated:

“I think the role-play method is the most realistic perception into the real work that I had done in college.”

Second students express that:

It was a good method because what we did in college was closely the same as what we did in the hotel, just need a little adjusting to the following SOP of the hotels.

Another student also noted that:

“Role-playing takes a long time because we need to roll our role to get experiences of all roles. On the other hand, we can mastery every skill needed in a restaurant.”

In order of constant improvement, the debriefing and questionnaire elicited responses on how the role-play could be improved students' skills and confidence. Three issues were acknowledged: understanding role-playing, the duration of the role-play, and students' confidence. Almost all of the students show that the time in doing roleplay needs to be longer. Once they had begun role-playing they found it generally enjoyable and wanted more time to test and demonstrate their knowledge and skills. The result of the questionnaire was shown as follows:

Table 2: Responses to questionnaire statements on skill and knowledge development in the role-play

No	Statement	Percentage (%)				
		D	SD	M	A	SA
1	Role Play method gave pre-perception to students about skill and knowledge related to the job field			8	44	48
2	Roleplay method was an effective way of gaining experience related to the job field			8	28	64
3	Roleplay method involving students			4	20	76

	in doing the process as a real hospitality worker				
4	Effective time duration	18	12	24	36
5	The role-play was an effective way of gaining communication and hospitality skill			16	84
6	The role-play was an effective way of giving job perceptions			16	84
7	Roleplay method improving student' English communication skill and hospitality skill			16	84
8	Roleplay method was necessary applied in the teaching process			16	84
9	Roleplay process was closely the same as the real hospitality standard			24	76
10	The learning process through Roleplay method developing students' self-confident			8	92

Where:
 D: Disagree
 SD: Slightly Disagree
 M: Moderate
 A: Agree
 SA: Strongly Agree

The questionnaires, which were intended to measure the effectiveness of role-playing in developing skills and knowledge in the hospitality industry and the effect of implementing role-play in the teaching process to the self-confidence of students in doing job training. It was administered 3 months after the students doing on the job training. The result of the questionnaire which is put in tables 2 are discussed as follows: To evaluate the effectiveness of role-playing, 64% of respondents very agreed that the role-play method gave a

real-life simulation based on their job field. Furthermore, the role-play method gave them a chance to involve their skill, ability, and experience as the real hospitality workers, it was shown by more than 48% very agree with the statement. On the other hand, respondents stated that the effectiveness of time duration needed to be adjusted. More than 18% of the respondents said that there was not enough time to do every single role completely.

To evaluate the self-confidence of the students in doing job training, the result was shown by the tenth question. The result presented that 92% of respondents felt very confident in doing on the job training. This statement was supported by the third and ninth question which showed that the process of the role-play method closely the same with the hospitality standard. Furthermore, the result shew that the role-play method was the best method to apply for hospitality students.

The evaluation indicated the need for adjustments and these are described here because they have a comprehensive application to role-play as a learning method. First, students have different levels of experience with role-playing and those levels need to be learned before starting a more complex role-play. If students are inexperienced, a series of mini-role-plays and related exercises are recommended. There is always a balancing act between providing the students with too much and too little material for a role-play. Too much material may swamp the students and constrain the natural flow. Too little material may result in anxiety and uncertainty. In retrospect, basic material on the other roles was warranted and may have led to more thoughtful preparation.

Another difficult decision for the role-play designer is the duration and this is likely to be resolved through trial and error. Ideally, a role-play should be left to run its natural course. In this case, the duration was governed by the wish to reproduce a realistic hospitality environment. If students are to be assessed on their performance, however, they must have adequate opportunity to demonstrate their skills.

Role-play is a powerful tool for higher education learning and teaching. Duveen and Solomon (1994) argue that true learning cannot take place when students are passive observers of the teaching process. Role-play is a flexible method in terms of length, complexity, purpose, scale, and scope, It is the power of the learning method. Further publications and presentations on the design, operation, and evaluation of role-playing in the tourism and hospitality field would encourage their future application.

Conclusion

This study examines whether the effectiveness of role-playing in developing skills and self-confidence of students. On average, our results indicate that the role-play does improve confidence, communication, and skill for students. In particular, this exercise is most effective for students who have low confidence and low perceptions of communicating in English. However, confidence and perceptions of the students were changed into positive and negative effects. In communicating and skill, most of the students could improve their ability. In future work, negative experiences and increase the positive experiences for all students must be applied. There were no significant differences in the role play which was applied in the learning process to the real work role. This indicates that role-play as a method in teaching hospitality students could accommodate the gap between theoretical knowledge and skill-based practice.

References

- Brown, K. M. (1994) Using Role Play to Integrate Ethics into the Business Curriculum: A Financial Management Example. *Journal of Business Ethics* 13(2), 105-110
- Daruwalla, P. S. (1997). *A Disability Awareness Program for the Hospitality and Tourism Industry – Attitude Change or Practice Effect?* In R. Bushell (ed.) *Tourism*

- Research: Building a Better Industry.* Canberra: Bureau of Tourism Research, 502.
- Duveen, J. and Solomon, J. (1994). The Great Evolution Trial: Use of Role-Play in the Classroom. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching* 31(5), 575-582
- Errington, E. (1997). *Role-play*. Canberra: Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia Inc.
- Foucar Szocki, R. (1989). The Restaurant Simulation. *Hospitality Education and Research Journal* 13(3), 415-425
- Harris, P. J. A. (1997). Seminar Role-Play Model for Hospitality Accounting and Finance Education: Development, Implementation And Evaluation. *International Journal of Hospitality Management* 16(1), 65-77
- Jones, K. (1988). *Interactive Learning Events: A Guide for Facilitators*. London: Kogan Page.
- Ladousse, G. P. (1987) *Role Play*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Maddrell, A. M. C. (1994). A Scheme for the Effective Use of Role Plays for an Emancipatory Geography. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* 18(2), 155-162
- Mantra, I. B. N., Astawa, I. N., & Handayani, N. D. (2019). Usability of innovative learning models in higher education. *International Journal of Social Sciences*, 2(1), 38-43. <https://doi.org/10.31295/ijss.v2n1.91>
- McGuire, J. and Priestley, P. (1998). *Life After School: a Social Skills Curriculum*. Oxford: Pergamon.
- Mantra, I. B. N., Astawa, I. N., & Handayani, N. D. (2019). Usability of innovative learning models in higher education. *International Journal of Social Sciences*, 2(1), 38-43. <https://doi.org/10.31295/ijss.v2n1.91>
- Mitchell, G. (1981). Role-Playing Rhetoric of Science Pedagogy and the Study of Medical Ethics. In *National Communication Association Convention*, New York.
- Ratminingsih, N. M. (2017). *Metode dan Strategi Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris*, Rajawali Pers
- Richardson, J. D. and Kleiner, B. H. (1992). The Relevant Effectiveness of Different Training and Development Methodologies. *Management Research News* 15(10), 23-26