2020

THE ROLE PLAY

WHEN AND HOW YOU SHOULD USE IT

Erasmus+

What is Role Play?

RPG is a game where players take on the role of one or more characters and through conversation and dialectical exchange create an imaginary space, where they take place fictitious, adventurous facts in a narrative setting that can be inspired by a novel, a film or another **creative, historical, realistic** source as in real life or of pure invention. A role play indicate how, when and to what extent, each player can influence the imagined space.

Role Play should be facilitated by an **expert** or a person with knowledge in **human sciences, human resources**.

The **RPG** can be effectively used for educational purposes in two ways:

- **Peer group** (change the relational dynamics of a group whose life-span is wider than that of play experience);

- **Cultural objects** (change individual perceptions of certain cultural objects, such as symbols, beliefs, values and practices).

Five tips come to the aid of anyone wishing to use **RPGs** in this way. Each deserves a broader discussion and if you are interested, you just have to participate in a training course treating this tool.
Here we will limit ourselves to a summary, to give an idea:

Intransitivity (knowledge is not delivered but discovery, naming and mirroring are induced. There cannot be a story already written, the choice of the players is fundamental).

Objectification (the educator must not make judgments about what is right or wrong in the game world, but guarantee an un-moral world).

Referentiality (clear rules are needed, to ensure transparency and impartiality in the game, the basis on which trust and equal dignity can be grafted between users and the social worker)

Shamelessness (nothing can be censored by anyone)

Evaluation (whatever choice a player makes, it must not be subjected to a value judgment by any of the participants. Any judgment that passes from the player's value to the person's value is intolerable).

With these premises, it is clear how the RPG can be used both to consolidate group cohesion within a work team, and as a tool to promote social and cultural dialogue.

In both cases the methodology is the same, the only changing aspect is the context of the imaginary background situation.
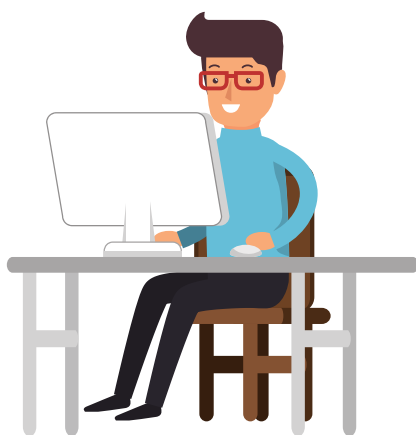
Role Playing
The technique

Role-playing takes place between two or more people, who act out roles to explore a particular scenario. By acting scenarios like these out, you can explore how other people are likely to respond to different approaches; and you can get a feel for approaches that are likely to work, and for those that might be counter-productive. You can also get a sense of what other people are likely to be thinking and feeling in the situation. Also, by preparing for a situation using role-play, you build up experience and self-confidence with handling the situation in real life, and you can develop quick and instinctively correct reactions to situations. This means that you'll react effectively as situations evolve, rather than making mistakes or becoming overwhelmed by events. You can also use role-play to spark brainstorming sessions, to improve communication between team members, and to see problems or situations from different perspectives.

How to use Role Play

It is easy to set up and run a role-playing session. It will help to follow the five steps below.

Step 1: Identify the Situation

To start the process, gather people together, introduce the problem, and encourage an open discussion to uncover all of the relevant issues. This will help people to start thinking about the problem before the role-play begins.If you're in a group and people are unfamiliar with each other, consider doing some icebreaker exercises beforehand.

Step 2: Add Details

Next, set up a scenario in enough detail for it to feel "real." Make sure that everyone is clear about the problem that you're trying to work through, and that they know what you want to achieve by the end of the session.

Step 3: Assign Roles

Once you've set the scene, identify the various fictional characters involved in the scenario. Some of these may be people who have to deal with the situation when it actually happens (for example, salespeople). Others will represent people who are supportive or hostile, depending on the scenario (for example, an angry client). Once you've identified these roles, allocate them to the people involved in your exercise; they should use their imagination to put themselves inside the minds of the people that they're representing. This involves trying to understand their perspectives, goals, motivations, and feelings when they enter the situation.

Step 4: Act Out the Scenario
Each person can then assume their role, and act out the situation, trying different approaches where necessary.It can be useful if the scenarios build up in intensity. For instance, if the aim of your role-play is to practice a sales meeting, the person playing the role of the potential client could start as an ideal client, and, through a series of scenarios, could become increasingly hostile and difficult. You could then test and practice different approaches for handling situations, so that you can give participants experience in handling them.

Step 5: Discuss What You Have Learned
When you finish the role-play, discuss what you've learned, so that you or the people involved can learn from the experience.

Further Tips

Some people feel threatened or nervous when asked to role-play, because it involves acting. This can make them feel silly, or that they've been put on the spot. Hand two "actors" a prepared script, give them a few minutes to prepare, and have them act out the role-play in front of the rest of the group. This approach is more likely to succeed if you choose two outgoing people, or if you're one of the actors in the demonstration.Another technique for helping people feel more comfortable is to allow them to coach you during the demonstration. For instance, if you're playing the role of a customer service representative who's dealing with an angry customer, people could suggest what you should do to make things right.

If you want to discover more about RPG don't hesitate to contact us and start a collaboration!

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Role-Play Example

In an effort to improve customer support, John, Customer Service Manager for Mythco Technologies, sets up a team role-playing session. Acting as the leader/trainer, John brings together a group of software developers and customer support representatives. He divides the **12 people** into two groups:

Group A represents the customer support representatives;

Group B represents the customer.

John tells Group A that the customer in this situation is one of Mythco's longest-standing customers. This customer accounts for nearly 15 percent of the company's overall annual revenue. In short, the company cannot afford to lose her business!

John tells Group B that the customer has recently received a software product that did not live up to expectations. While the customer has a long-standing relationship with Mythco, this time she's growing weary because Mythco has previously sold her faulty software on two separate occasions.

Clearly, her relationship with Mythco is in jeopardy. John now allows the groups to brainstorm for a few minutes. Next – with this particular approach to role-play – each group sends forth an "actor" to take part in the role-play. The actor receives support and coaching from members of the team throughout the role-playing process. Each team is able to take time-outs and regroup quickly as needed.John runs through the scenario several times, starting with the "customer" behaving gently and ending with the customer behaving aggressively. Each time, a best solution is found. Of course, John can always ask for additional role-playing and suggestions if he feels that the process needs to continue, or that the team has yet to uncover the very best solutions. Once it's clear that they cannot identify any more solutions, John brings the two groups together and discusses the session. During this, they discuss the strategies and the solutions that the actors implemented, and how they could apply them to a real-life situation. John also asks each team to write a short summary of what they learned from the exercise. He then combines the summaries and provides a copy of everything learned to all participants.