

## Role Play

Method	Role Play
Introduction	
<p>In English there is a saying “to be in somebody’s shoes” which means taking somebody else’s perspective, their way of thinking, their position in a discussion. This saying is a good way to introduce role-playing, which is based on taking on someone else’s role when trying to solve a particular problem. Role-playing can be used as an educational method, which involves the active identification of students with fictional roles and situations. It activates the student's knowledge and skills and creates new opportunities for cognitive, emotional, sensory and motor activities based on the student actively taking on someone else’s role.</p>	
Aim	To take on specific roles in an effort to resolve specific problems
Target group:	Students taking part in social sciences studies, teacher training, business training, health service courses, etc.
Intended learning outcome	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved ability to see the other point of view and to see problems from different perspectives</li> <li>• Better social awareness and level of personal responsibility</li> <li>• Enhanced creative thinking, critical thinking, decision making, problem solving</li> <li>• Better communication and group-work</li> </ul>	
Description	
<p>Students are invited to work in groups of three, each of whom is given a specific role:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fictional role 1(for example the teacher)</li> <li>• Fictional role 2 (for example a parent)</li> <li>• Witness</li> </ul> <p>Students are then given the task: for example the teacher has to inform the parent that the child is suspected of having Autism. The Students playing the fictional roles then act out the conversation. The witness listens to the conversation and makes two lists – one with good and one with bad statements according to the procedure given by the teaching staff member.</p> <p>After ten minutes the student playing the teaching staff member gets feedback from the witness. In positive feedback the witness says 3 good and 1 information to improve.</p> <p>Then the students playing fictional roles swap the roles.</p> <p>After ten minutes the teaching staff member gets a second round of feedback from the witness.</p> <p>Once this phase is over you as facilitator should initiate a whole-class discussion in order for the students to exchange opinions, discuss how to build a procedure to solve the given problem and to deliberate on the different options that were taken.</p>	

Preparation	Preparing the role play task, thinking of roles, sometimes role-cards can be used, students may also need to carry out some investigative work prior to the class.
Required resources and equipment	Pencil and paper for witness. You may want to prepare cards describing each role and a template for the witness to complete with their observations.
Success factors	For this method to be successful you need to allow enough time for the exercise and to coordinate the allocated space well. As the facilitator you also need to have a good background knowledge of each role that is to be played.
Advantages	The role play method improves students' ability to see the other point of view and to see problems from different perspectives, it leads to better social awareness and level of personal responsibility and creative thinking, critical thinking, decision making, problem solving.
Disadvantages	It can take a lot of time.
Additional information	<p>Here is an example of applying this role play method in an Interior Design course:</p> <p>Students work in threes and are given roles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fictional role 1 of interior designer</li> <li>• Fictional role 2 of the client</li> <li>• Witness</li> </ul> <p>Students are given the task: the designer has to investigate the client's needs in the designing of a new flat. The witness listens to the conversation and make two lists – one of good and the other of bad statements, procedures and behaviours of the designer. Students run the conversation.</p> <p>After ten minutes the designer is given positive feedback by the witness. Then they swap roles while the person playing the witness remains the same. After this exercise there is a whole-class discussion to exchange opinions, discuss how to solve problems, give options, etc.</p>