

Guidelines for Role-Playing

- Present the problem or situation. Students must be given enough information to play the roles convincingly.
- Get the class involved as quickly as possible. Don’t spend a lot of time on the introduction.
- Assign roles or solicit volunteers. If you arrange the students in pairs or trios, using the third student as an observer, an entire class may participate even if there are only two roles.
- Role reversal can be a useful device when students appear unsympathetic to the opposing viewpoint, or when a student has been stereotyped by peers.
- The following questions may be useful for focusing the follow-up discussion:
 - Were the players realistic?
 - Was the problem solved? Why or why not, and how?
 - What were the alternative resolutions?
 - Is this situation similar to anything you have personally experienced?
 - How did you feel playing that role?

Precautions

- Keep it simple. Initial role-playing activities should be simple, but can become increasingly complex.
- Don’t belabor the introduction. Role-play first and answer questions later.
- Allow time to role-play several incidents; students will become less self conscious and more aggressively involved with each incident.
- Don’t expect polished performances.
- Don’t worry about losing control of the class. It may be a bit noisy, but if you stick to the procedure, the noise will be productive.