Chapter 10

Rethinking Reusability:
Implications from a Longitudinal Study of Online Role-Play in Australian Higher Education

Sandra Wills
University of Wollongong, Australia

ABSTRACT

This chapter provides the results of a study that tracked the use of fifty-three online role-plays in Australian higher education over the period 1990–2006, calculating that forty-five of these were a reuse of another role-play. Most reused the design of another role-play (82%) whereas only a handful reused a role-play itself (18%) which confirms the relevance of learning designs as a reusability construct but raises concerns about learning objects. The instances of reuse of the same role-play involved four role-plays which were analyzed in more detail. This fuller history of reuse post-2006 provided a rich sample for: Exploring issues around what is meant by "reuse," describing factors that could improve the design of reusable learning objects (RLOs). The implications from this study apply in particular to RLOs that involve active, authentic and collaborative learning such as online role-plays.
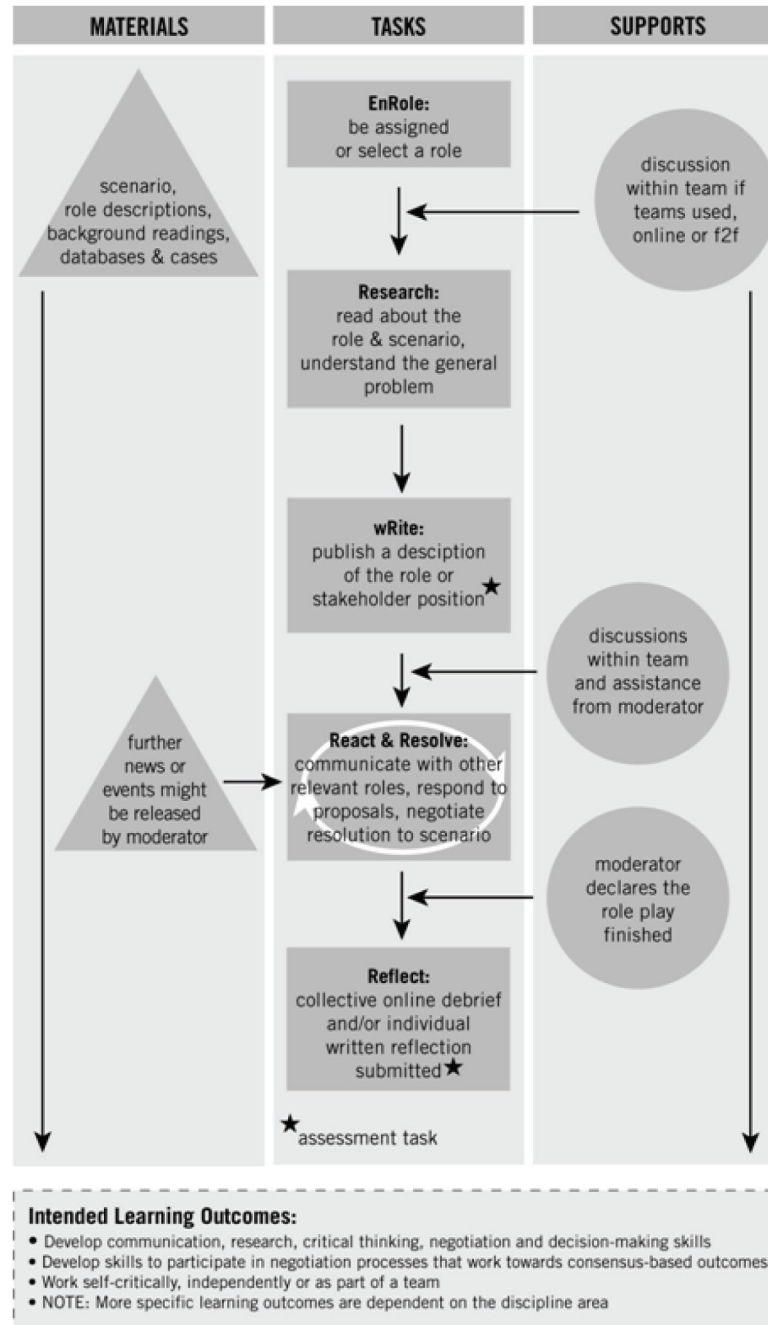
RATIONALE AND BACKGROUND

Role-plays are situations in which learners take on the role profiles of specific characters or organizations in a contrived setting. Role-play is designed primarily to build first person experience in a safe and supportive environment. Figure 1 illustrates the sequence of learning activities for a generic online role-play from the students' perspective. In a recent Australian national project to encourage uptake of role-based online learning environments in university education, Project EnROLE (Wills et al., 2009, p. 2, 10), the following characteristics of online role-play were adopted as a definition:

- Designed to increase understanding of real life human interaction and dynamics
- Participants assume a role in someone else's shoes or in someone else's situation

Figure 1. Learning Design Visual Sequence for online role-play (Wills, Leigh, & Ip, 2011) modified from Wills and Ip (2002)

MATERIALS

scenario,
role descriptions,
background readings,
databases & cases

further
news or
events might
be released
by moderator

TASKS

EnRole:
be assigned
or select a role

Research:
read about the
role & scenario,
understand the general
problem

wRite:
publish a desciption
of the role or
stakeholder position ★

React & Resolve:
communicate with other
relevant roles, respond to
proposals, negotiate
resolution to scenario

Reflect:
collective online debrief
and/or individual
written reflection
submitted ★

★ assessment task

SUPPORTS

discussion
within team if
teams used,
online or f2f

discussions
within team
and assistance
from moderator

moderator
declares the
role play
finished

Intended Learning Outcomes:
• Develop communication, research, critical thinking, negotiation and decision-making skills
• Develop skills to participate in negotiation processes that work towards consensus-based outcomes
• Work self-critically, independently or as part of a team
• NOTE: More specific learning outcomes are dependent on the discipline area

8 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:
www.igi-global.com/chapter/rethinking-reusability-implications-longitudinal-study/78402

Related Content

Update - Anytime/Anywhere - Finding Our Way: Better Understanding the Motivations of Teachers in Online Learning
Kathleen P. King, Frank J. Meliaand Marlene D. Dunham (2005). *International Journal of Information and Communication Technology Education (pp. 56-69).*
www.irma-international.org/article/update-anytime-anywhere-finding-our/2275

Technological Strategic Planning and Globalization in Higher Education
Plamen Miltenoff, Jared Keengweand Gary Schnellert (2013). *Learning Tools and Teaching Approaches through ICT Advancements (pp. 348-358).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/technological-strategic-planning-globalization-higher/68599

A Framework for Collaborative Learning in Dynamic Group Environments
Kamen Kanev, Shigeo Kimuraand Thomas Orr (2009). *International Journal of Distance Education Technologies (pp. 58-77).*
www.irma-international.org/article/framework-collaborative-learning-dynamic-group/1740

Millennium Teachers in a Global Context
Craig Kissock (2005). *Encyclopedia of Distance Learning (pp. 1288-1288).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/millennium-teachers-global-context/12270

Age Issues in Online Teaching
Lesley S. J. Farmer (2012). *Pedagogical and Andragogical Teaching and Learning with Information Communication Technologies (pp. 149-164).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/age-issues-online-teaching/55165