

IS ROLE-PLAYING AN EFFECTIVE TEACHING METHOD?

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background

Active learning is something I am interested in learning about. I always enjoyed active learning ever since I have been a student. I believe that in order for students to truly learn information it has to be meaningful to them. Reading a textbook and listening to lectures does not make learning meaningful. I believe project-centered learning is the best type of instructional teaching method. This Master's Research Project examined the effectiveness of role-playing. None of the teachers I had throughout my school experience used this method.

Research Questions

There are many types of instructional teaching methods. Hopefully, my study will help educators better understand one of them: role-playing. The research questions this project sought to answer were:

- Is role-playing an effective teaching method?
- Does role-playing make learning more meaningful to students?

To answer these questions I decided to do active research by means of a case study with high school students. I gave students role-playing projects as well as taught them with lecture/note taking. By using more than one method, the students were able to provide me with accurate and up-to-date feedback.

Purpose and Significance of Study

The purpose of the study was to answer the research questions. I want to research whether or not role-playing is a useful teaching method and how often educators should

use it. Unless someone asks students for their thoughts on teaching methods, how will we, as educators, know what types are the best to use? I am a firm believer in active learning because I believe active learning is more meaningful to students than traditional lecture and note-taking methods. One study suggested “as students take on the feelings and voices of peoples of other times and places, the learning of historical content becomes more natural” (Cruz and Murthy, 2006, p. 4). When a student is actively involved in his or her learning, he or she is more likely to truly connect with the material and remember the concept for a long period of time. This study will help me know whether or not role-playing is a reliable type of active learning to use in my classroom and will help others educators as well.

Limitations

There are limitations to my research. The first one is because of the location of the research. My actual research was conducted at a school district I will call Paw Paw High for the remainder of this research project. The school is relatively small and is not very diverse. It is located in Southeastern Ohio and is part of Appalachia. The students who participated are all seniors in high school. There are only 75 students in all. Some of the students who attend No Diversity High go to a trade school for the last two years of high school which is why the number is so small. It is up to the reader to decide whether to use the findings of or not.

All of the students except two are Caucasian. One of the students is African American and the other one is an Eskimo American. The student population is not diverse at all. The school is located in a rural area and the majority of the students live in rural areas. Many of the students come from a low socio-economic status family.

Unfortunately, many of the students with a lower socio-economic status seem to not care as much about learning as students with a higher socioeconomic status.

Students vary so much from year to year and their prior knowledge and educational experiences may affect their opinions on role-playing. If the students have had teachers they enjoyed in the past who have made them role-play, they may be more apt to like it. Also, the student's personalities have a big part in whether or not they enjoy role-playing. Students who are shy and soft-spoken did not enjoy it as well as others.

Another limitation is the fact that I was only with the students for 10 weeks. Ten weeks was not much time to implement many role-playing projects and get true feedback. The students needed to grow comfortable with me first before they wanted to answer my questions honestly. The research was conducted in the subject area of government which could be a limitation because many students do not care about government and do not think it is important for them to learn about.

Definitions

There are numerous definitions of role-playing. The definition used for this study is from Aronson and Carlsmith who "described the role playing study as 'an |as-if' experiment in which the subject is asked to behave as if he [or she] were a particular person in a particular situation' (1968, p. 26). This definition precisely describes what the participants of this study were asked to do.

Methodology

My methodology was varied. The first thing the students did was to fill out a brief questionnaire about what role-playing is and where they had ever done it before. Next, I assigned them a project that required them to role-play a presidential primary candidate or act as his or her spokesperson. They were given time to research their candidate. After

they finished the project each student filled out a Likert-type survey. Finally, I randomly chose 2-4 students from each class (a total of 18 students) to interview about their thoughts and feelings on the project and role-playing in general. Doing these things helped me know what types of teaching methods my students enjoy and what types they do not enjoy.

Organization of the Study

This chapter focused on an overview/introduction of the study. A general overview of the purpose, the limitations, the definitions, and the methodology of the study were given. The precise details will be given throughout the rest of the study.

The rest of the study will be organized in four chapters. Chapter two is a review of literature on the topics of role-playing and teaching methods. The literature includes a number of previous studies and articles.

Chapter three will present the methodology used in this Master's Research Project. It will discuss the method of data collection and analysis. Chapter four will present the findings. Finally, chapter five will include a summary of the study, its conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

There have been numerous articles written and studies done on the topic of teaching methods for social studies. The problem is there are not as many that cover the specific topic of role-playing. The rest of this chapter will focus on literature written about role-playing and other social studies methods as well as some issues social studies teachers face.

To begin, an interesting fact is that history did not become a school subject until the late 1880's (Ravitch, 2007, p 74). During the late 1800's and early 1900's, the history taught was extremely Eurocentric and "mostly involved memorization and recitation" (Ravitch, 2007, p 74). Throughout the late 1900s items other than just history began to be taught transforming the subject of history into the broad spectrum title of social studies. "When the National Assessment of Educational Progress tested students' knowledge in 1994 and 2001, high school seniors did worse in history than in any other subject," (Ravitch, 2007, p 75). This statistic is extremely disturbing.

What can be done to change this trend? To begin with the way history and other social studies subjects taught need to get a makeover. So many social studies teachers only teach by lecturing and expect rote memorization from their students. This happens often because of the "overwhelming amount of material contained in a typical state social studies curriculum framework" (Vogler and Virtue, 2007, p 55). The teachers have so much information they are required to cover that they "have trouble getting beyond the 'just the facts' content coverage and into higher-level, critical historical thinking, especially because of the limited class time available" (Vogler and Virtue, 2007, p 55).

One main reason teachers have to cover so much information is because of high stakes testing. Researchers have found “that teachers under the pressure of high stakes tend to increase their dependency on teacher-centered instructional practices (e.g. lecture) and the superficial coverage of content driven textbooks” (Vogler and Virtue, 2007, p 56). High stakes testing has caused teachers to move away from student-centered approaches “such as discussion, role-play, research papers, and cooperative learning” because they need to learn “just the facts” because that is what the tests cover (Vogler and Virtue, 2007, p 55).

What is disturbing about these facts is that research has shown that students learn more from student centered approaches. The information becomes more meaningful to them; therefore, they retain it for longer periods of time. “Brain research has found that the brain searches for patterns and connections as its way of building meaning,” if students are not actively engaged in their learning, then they are unable to make the connections necessary to make learning meaningful (Cuthrell and Yates, 2007, p 22). Cuthrell and Yates (2007) found that social studies content should be in depth with lessons and activities (22).

The type of lessons an educator teaches is based on his/her own personal philosophy of teaching and learning. Each teacher should possess their own philosophy which “provides guidance and direction in choosing objectives, learning activities, and assessment procedures” (Ediger, 2007, p 18). Educators who have an active learning philosophy are the ones who believe role-playing is a useful and effective teaching method.

Role-playing exercises come in many forms and educators should not be reluctant to experiment with their style and structure (McDaniel, 2000, p 357). McDaniel (2000)

says there are four basic elements that are essential for the success of any role-playing activity (p 357). The first element is that the activity builds on knowledge the students already possess about a particular historical context (McDaniel, 2000, p 357). A teacher cannot expect students to role-play about something they have no prior knowledge of. The second element is to design the roles yourself to maximize student involvement and student conflict. Having conflicting perspectives is a must (McDaniel, 2000, p 358). The third element is to set up a specific situation. Do not let the students go without giving them a focal point for debate (McDaniel, 2000, p 359). The last element is the instructor's limited involvement and willingness to be flexible. The instructor needs to guide the students along, but not overbear the conversation and let the students take their own path to understanding (McDaniel, 2000, p 360). By following these four basic elements, any educator can have a successful role-playing activity.

Role-playing activities help introduce student to "real-world" situations (Oberle, 2004, p 199). Van Ments (1983) identified three general advantages to role-playing activities: they are positive and safe in dealing with attitudes and feelings, they provide a safe venue for expressing personal and sometimes unpopular attitudes and opinions, and "role-playing is highly motivating as the majority of students enjoy these types of activities and become more inspired learners (24).

Because of these advantages, universities have started using more role-playing than ever before. Role-playing is becoming particularly common in college geography classes (Oberle, 2004, p 200). "Geographers have had great success incorporating role-playing activities into their class structure," (Oberle, 2004, p 200). In his case study printed in the *Journal of Geography*, Alex Oberle (2004) follows an undergraduate college geography class through a role-playing activity (199). The professor as well as

the students evaluated the effectiveness of the role-playing activity. The results demonstrated that the activity increased the students understanding of the topics of the project, fostered their awareness about the topic and enhanced their academic skills and abilities (Oberle, 2004, p 204). In his conclusion Oberle (2004) explains how the role-playing activity is transferable to other types of geography classes and can easily be modified for high school geography classes (209). Overall Oberle found that role-playing is an effective teaching method and should be used to help actively engage students in their learning.

Oberle is just one person who has found role-playing to be effective. Ronald Morris (2003) wrote about a type of role-playing for history classes that is also effective. Morris (2003) says “when students act out history, they act engage the subject matter,” (p 44). The rest of his article gives suggestions for how to create social studies lessons using drama or in other words role-playing. In order to come up with a good role-playing lesson, the teacher must have first read extensively on the subject being covered and then “summarize the information and convert the material into a meaningful story with a setting, characters, and conflict,” (Morris, 2003, p 44). The next step is for the teacher to convert the summary of the lesson into objectives and put them up in the form of questions somewhere in the classroom that is highly visible to the students to enable the students to see what they should be learning from the lesson (Morris, 2003, p 45).

Morris’s (2003) idea for the actual lesson is to have the students divided into groups and have them go around to different stations where they participate in something from the time period they are studying (p 45). An example would be to have one station with where they listen to music of the time period and learn a dance. Another station would be a meeting of farmers talking about their crops and how they get them to grow.

By having station such as these, the students get an idea of what it was like to live during that time period. They get to learn about the culture as well as the economy within the time period.

After the students go through the stations they then go back to their seats and get into another group and answer the lesson objective questions together. By answering the questions to together they get to discuss and reflect on what they each have learned and help each other review (Morris, 2003, p 46). Morris (2003) states “because they have learned both background knowledge and conceptual tools by acting out history, all students can experience success,” (p. 47). For an the assessment, Morris (2003) has the students answer questions by writing a paragraph or two for each question; “the task can seem daunting, but the students are equipped to handle it because the material has become part of them.” (p. 47).

Morris studied his seventh grade students who completed the acting out history project and found several positive things. The first one is “students feel empathy regarding events in the past when they act out the situation, and make connections between the character they play and real situations,” (Morris, 2003, p 48). Morris (2003) states, “empathy is one of many tools historians use to help determine, interpret, and understand meaning,” (p. 48). Because of this, empathy is vital for students to feel in order to make what they learn meaningful.

Secondly, he found that the role-playing helped the students engage in perspective taking at multiple times and places (Morris, 2003, p 48). They students also “used drama to make connections from past to present and form present to past,” (Morris, 2003, p 48). In his conclusion, Morris (2003) states “acting out history holds great potential for

students” because experiencing empathy and making connections between time and places are vital to learning and making the material stick (p 49).

An article in *The Social Studies* with no said author, also focuses on the benefits of role-playing. “Students ability to identify with individuals from the past is critical to their understanding of historical events” and what better way is there to do just that than role-playing (*The Social Studies*, 2003, p 271). By “breathing life into history” with drama and by “raising questions of what could have happened,” students come to see history “not as dead and gone, but as living and unfolding before them,” (*The Social Studies*, 2003, p 271).

The role-playing example the article talks about is having students study historical figures of a time period with major problem. The students pretend to be the person and read primary documents and decide how to handle the problem as their historical figure. “As students learn what actually happened, they can compare the decisions of the historical figures with their own thinking, which allows them to make connections across different time periods and fosters historical thinking,” (*The Social Studies*, 2003, p 271).

Another type of role-playing activity is mock trial and moot court. Ringel (2004) states, “moot court is an extremely pedagogical tool which can be used for more than learning about the law or the judicial process; it has been used in a variety of disciplines including political science, media, history, sociology, etc.,” (p. 459). Ringel co-authored a moot court handbook for educators. Ringel (2004) states students can benefit from moot court in many ways; here are a few:

- they gain self-confidence
- they learn about the law and the judicial process

- they improve their critical/analytical thinking skills and improve legal research/writing skills
- they gain a greater sense of empathy for how the law treats individuals

(p. 460).

All of these benefits are not found in traditional lectures about laws and courts. Active learning helps students grasp what the educators are trying to teach them. By role-playing, the students get a real feel for what a court room is actually like. Any teacher can try a moot court activity and can use the handbook for guidance on how to have a successful one. Moot courts have been used in high school classes as well as college classes.

Andrew Schaap (2005) found that “role-playing is more likely to promote active learning amongst undergraduate students than a traditional university lecture,” (p. 46). He found that role-playing has been used effectively in disciplines such as history and others (Schaap, 2005, p. 46). There is not much difference between high school seniors and college freshman; therefore, the findings can be relevant to high school role-playing as well. Schaap’s (2005) study focuses on using role-playing to understand political theory (Schaap, 2005, p. 46).

He gives an example of a role-playing activity he had his students do to learn about political theory. At the end he merits the use of role-playing because of how his students did. By using the role-playing technique, his students had a high level of energy and excitement, they were encouraged to express ideas and they were able to get immediate feedback on ideas (Schaap, 2005, p. 50). His students thoroughly enjoyed the activity and he is definitely going to use it again and encourages other educators to try it as well (Schaap, 2005, p. 50).

Another educator by the name of Sydney Duncombe uses a role-playing strategy to make his class more interesting. Duncombe teaches American government right after lunch and decided he needed to find a way to stimulate his students (Duncombe and Heikkinen, 1990, p. 33). The strategy he uses is called the two-hat technique. What he does is debate himself in front of the class by role-playing as different characters. He wears one hat when he is on one side of the debate, and the wears a different hat when he is arguing the other side. The hats enable to students to follow him when he switches characters. He found that the students displayed a level of knowledge and insight about the two-hat topic that far exceeded their efforts on other test questions (Duncombe and Heikkinen, 1990, p. 34).

The key to being successful at using the two-hat technique is to “thoroughly research the views presented and throw oneself completely into each role one is playing,” (Duncombe and Heikkinen, 1990, p. 34). This technique allows students to ask questions and give their honest opinions about the topic because they feel as if they are arguing with someone other than the teacher (Duncombe and Heikkinen, 1990, p. 35). The instructor responds to the student’s feedback as the character he or she is portraying, not as the instructor, which allows the instructor to demolish a position without putting the students down (Duncombe and Heikkinen, 1990, p. 35). The two-hat method can add a variety to teaching, but will lose its effectiveness if used too often (Duncombe and Heikkinen, 1990, p. 35).

Role-playing is definitely effective, but like any one teaching method, should not be used too often. The key to being an effective teacher is to use a variety of teaching methods. Traditional teaching methods such as lecturing does not help students makes

connections or feel empathy towards the material like role-playing does, but is necessary at times. For some material there is no other way to teach it than to lecture.

The key to not making lectures so mundane and boring is to add activities and projects in between the lectures. Alan Marcus (2007) suggests taking students to museums, historic sites and memorials to enhance and build on the material taught (p. 105). Marcus (2007) says, “the artifacts they display, narratives they tell, and re-creations of the past they exhibit potentially engage students with content in ways unavailable in a classroom setting or by reading a textbook,” (p. 105). Going to places like this help students develop historical empathy by allowing them to experience history and make personal connections to people in the past (Marcus, 2007, p. 105). Going to museums, historic sites and memorials helps students make connections and feel empathy just like role-playing does. This method is a nice alternative to role-playing and produces similar outcomes.

Another teaching method that can produce a similar outcome as role-playing is having students write narratives. Once a teacher is done lecturing on a topic, each student could be assigned to pretend to be a person in that time period and write a story about that person, including, how they feel, what they are doing and what their life is like in general (Harris, 2007, 111). Harris states, “stories resonate with life experiences and remind people of how they fit into their culture and connect to others’ culture,” (p. 111). By writing stories, students get to use their own life experiences and compare and contrast them to a person of the past. Storytelling enables them to connect to the material and feel empathy to the person living in that time period (Harris, 2007, 111). Storytelling also encourages creativity and helps students practice their language arts skills.

Writing narratives is often done in English classes, but should be done more in social studies classes as well. Akmal and Ayre-Svingen (2002) say “allowing students to construct a biographical narrative of figures of interest to them enables them to make sense of their biographical subjects’ lives and connects their lives to those who went before them,” (p 272). Writing narratives in social studies classes has been tested and proved effective at helping students learn about historical figures in a challenging and enjoyable way (Akmal and Ayre-Svingen, 2002, p 272).

Group discussion is another teaching method that can be effective because they can be challenging, promote learning and encourage tolerance. Social studies teachers are charged with giving students an understanding of what democracy entails, and accepting other ideas and opinions different than the majority is a key aspect of democracy (McMurray, 2007, p 49). McMurray states “meaningful discussion should be promoted in a manner to ensure that learning is occurring, beliefs are substantiated by evidence, and minority opinions are protected,” (p 49). Discussions can make learning meaningful like role-playing does if they are done correctly.

Cooperative learning has been found to be an effective strategy for social studies classes. Several studies have linked cooperative learning to improved student achievement across grade levels and subject areas (Edvantia, 2007, p 90). Several of the methods mentioned earlier are types of cooperative learning activities. Role-playing itself can be a cooperative learning activity.

Summary

As proved by the literature reviewed, role-playing is an effective teaching method. It should be used with a variety of other methods as well. If any one method is used too often, its effectiveness is diminished. Social studies teachers face specific

challenges that other content areas do not face thanks to high stakes testing. Social studies teachers need to use other methods even though the fastest and easiest way to get through material is by lecturing. There are other methods that have similar outcomes as role-playing, but role-playing is unique and should be a vital part of any social studies curriculum.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

Participants

I conducted my research at Pawpaw High School in Southeastern Ohio. All 78 participants were high school seniors ranging in age from 17 to 18. All students except two were Caucasian. There was one Native American and one African American.

Prior to conducting the study, I sent home consent forms for the parents of the 17-year-olds to sign and gave the 18 year old students consent forms for them to sign themselves (see Appendix A). The forms explained the purpose of my research and that they would be required to complete the same assignments as the non-participating students.

All 78 students returned their forms agreeing to participate. The students participated in my study during their American Government class. There were three different academic levels of classes that participated: traditional, accelerated and honors. Three classes were three traditional, two accelerated and one honors.

The students participated in my study during their American Government class. There were three academic levels of classes that participated: traditional, accelerated and honors. There were three traditional, two accelerated and one honors class.

Data Collection

My methodology to collect data was multi-faceted. My students were asked to fill out a questionnaire about role-playing after they returned their consent forms and before they were given a role-playing project. They were also asked to fill out a survey at the end of their project. In addition, a total of 18 students were chosen randomly from the class roster to be interviewed about their thoughts on role-playing and their preferred

teaching methods. The number of students interviewed from each class period depended on class size.

Students in each class period completed my first questionnaire about role-playing (see Appendix B). The questionnaire asked them to define role-playing and whether they had ever done it before. If they had role-played before, they were asked in what class and whether they enjoyed the activity.

After reading the responses to the questionnaires, I offered the students my definition of role-playing, so they all would understand my interpretation. The definition I gave them is from Aronson and Carlsmith who described role playing as “an |as-if’ experiment in which the subject is asked to behave as if he [or she] were a particular person in a particular situation’ (1968, p. 26). This definition precisely describes what the participants were asked to do.

Next, I gave them a role-playing project assignment (see Appendix C). The project required them to role-play a presidential primary candidate or act as his or her spokesperson. I divided the students into conservatives and liberals based on a survey they all took at the beginning of the year. The survey was given by my cooperating teacher and consisted of a list of agree/disagree statements. The statements mainly focused on the environment, public assistance and gay rights. Other statements addressed military spending, prayer in schools and firearm ownership and were written in a negative way. Typical statements included:

- Environmental considerations should outweigh economic ones.
- The wealthy should pay a higher percentage of the federal income tax than they currently pay.

- The government should help people who are unemployed by giving them welfare and job training.
- Most citizens should not be allowed to own and carry firearms.

If the number of times a student agreed was higher than the number of times he/she disagreed, he/she was labeled as liberal. Likewise, if the number of times a student disagreed was higher than the number of times he/she agreed, he/she was labeled as conservative.

The assigned liberal students randomly chose a democratic presidential primary candidate while the assigned conservative students randomly chose a republican presidential primary candidate. Next, the students were given time to research their candidate in class. In addition, they were given two library research days. On those days, the students worked in the computer lab completing their research as I walked around available to answer questions and be of assistance. The students also had to allocate time outside of class to finish their assignments and were encouraged to watch the televised debates.

They were required to write a paper about their candidate as well as give a presentation or conduct a debate. The traditional classes gave presentations as their candidate and were given the liberty to choose the kind of presentation. They worked with one partner. One person was assigned to be the candidate, while the other was to be the campaign spokesperson. I offered them ideas on how to present such as to create a news program, organize a political rally and make a video infomercial. Their presentations were graded using a presentation rubric (see Appendix D). The presentation rubric was divided into content knowledge, visuals, creativity, eye contact, delivery, and organization.

I did not partner the students in accelerated and honors classes for their research. In order to make the debates more challenging the students were required to role-play their candidate in a debate with a candidate from the opposite party. I randomly paired these students with a debate partner by drawing names out of a hat. Next, I gave them one day to work with their partners in class on their arguments and rebuttals. The student's debates were graded on an individual basis with a rubric (see Appendix E). The debate rubrics took into account the creativity, the accuracy of information, respect, the knowledge of topic and the use of statistics in their debates.

The traditional students were given the presentation rubrics during the day they were allowed to work on their presentations in class. The accelerated and honors students were given the debate rubrics during the day they worked on their debates with their partner in class. The cooperating teacher and I both filled out one and then talked about them and came to an agreement on a score.

After they finished their presentations, all students filled out a Likert-scale type survey consisting of five statements (see Appendix F). Four of the five statements were about role-playing specifically. The statements consisted of: I enjoy role-playing, I prefer projects with role-playing, role-playing helps me retain information better than lecture learning, I enjoy working with others during role-play projects. The last statement was I prefer hands-on activities compared to lecture note learning.

After the projects were completed, I randomly chose 2-4 students from each class by counting every 3rd person from each class roster (a total of 18 students) to interview about his or her thoughts on and feelings about the project and role-playing in general. I interviewed a total of 18 students interviewed. Because the classes ranged in size from 7

to 17 students and because time was limited, I was not able to interview all students in each class. Table 1 lists the number of students interviewed by class period.

Table 1. Number of Student Interviews by Class Period

CLASS PERIOD	TOTAL STUDENTS	# INTERVIEWED
2	17	4
3	16	4
4	13	3
5	12	2
7	13	3
8	7	2

Prior to each interview I explained that their responses would not affect their grade in the class in any way and would benefit my future students. In general, the students were very open and spoke freely. I asked all of the students the same questions (see Appendix G). They were asked whether or not they enjoy role-playing and whether it makes learning more meaningful. They were asked about their preferred way of learning and to explain what types of teaching methods their teachers use and what they type they prefer and why.

The interviews were conducted during class time after a test. I called students individually to the back of the room while the rest of the class read a magazine article and discussed it with a partner. I took notes during the interviews and video taped them. I interviewed a total of 10 boys and 8 girls. All interviewees were Caucasian, except one participant who was Native American. Each interview lasted around 3-5 minutes.

I also conducted a semi-structured, informal interview with my cooperating classroom teacher. I asked him for his advice and opinion on using role-playing in the classroom and how often he uses the method himself.

Data Analysis

All participants in this study completed two written instruments: a questionnaire and a survey. In addition, 18 students participated in an interview. I read through all questionnaires while and keeping track of how many students had role-played before and in what classes. The questionnaire only contained three questions that were given before the actual assignment. The questions asked what role-playing is, if they had done it before and what classes they have role-played in. I looked to see if the students gave a similar definition of role-playing or if they were different. I also compared the responses to what types of classes they had previously role-played in.

The surveys were more detailed and easier to analyze. The surveys suggested separating the students into three categories: those who enjoyed role-playing, those who were indifferent to role-playing and those who did not enjoy role-playing. The surveys were also separated by the academic level of the class. I broke them into traditional, accelerated and honors categories. Each individual question was analyzed separately in order to obtain an accurate analysis.

I categorized the interviews on a question by question basis as well as an overall basis of whether role-playing is beneficial or not. I had no basis to compare the student interviews' responses to those of the cooperating teacher. Instead, I took into account his years of experience and what he has learned from colleagues over the years.

The survey and interviews were most helpful in the data analysis process as they were completed immediately after the project had ended. In addition, they were more

detailed than the original questionnaire. The findings of this research project will be present in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

A total 78 students participated in this study. All were between 17-18 years old and enrolled in their senior U.S. Government class. There were three academic levels: traditional, accelerated, and honors. This chapter presents the analysis of the questionnaires, project scores, surveys, and interviews the students completed. Each data collection method is analyzed and presented separately. The results are broken down by academic level in order to discern differences.

Questionnaires

The students completed the questionnaires prior to the actual role-playing project and consisted of three question items. The first item asked the participants to define role-playing. Their responses revealed that all students had a similar concept of what constitutes role-playing as all included the words 'act' or 'pretend' in their definition.

The second question asked whether they enjoyed role-playing. Their answers revealed that more students enjoy role-playing than those who do not. About one third of the students (n=26) indicated they liked role-playing, whereas about one fifth of the students (n=16) indicated that they did not. About one fifth of the students (n=15) indicated were indifferent while about one fourth (n=21) said they enjoy role-playing depending on the project. The answers indicated no clear difference in academic levels.

The third question asked the students whether they had ever role-played before and, if so, in what class. About 70% of the students (n=55) students indicated they had role-played before while nearly 30% (n=23) had not. Among those who indicated they had role-played before did so mainly in their English classes while reading Shakespeare. Only 15 percent of the students (n=12) said they had role-played in their social studies

classes before. The answers to this question also revealed that while some students consider a certain projects to be role-playing others do not. Students from each academic level of class indicated they had role-played before. All 78 students had the same teacher for English who required them to read plays aloud in each class. Many students were confused as to whether or not reading plays aloud as characters constitute role-playing.

Debate and Presentation Scores

The debate and presentation scores provided additional insights. Slightly more than half of the students (n=43) gave presentations while slightly less than half (n=35) debated. Students in the traditional classes gave presentations while those in the accelerated and honors classes debated. The scores were based upon the rubrics that were given to the students. In order for a student to receive a 90 or above on a presentation, he or she had to be creative, make good eye contact, speak clearly and loudly, know the candidate's stances on the issues, and be convincing. In order for a student to receive a 90 or above on a debate he or she had to do everything the presentation students did as well as rebut their opponent with respect and facts. There were only three students who scored below a 70 on their presentation. Over all, the traditional students had lower grades than the accelerated and honors students. This can be explained several ways. First, the traditional students might have not put as much effort into their presentations as the other students. It is also possible that the presentations were graded harsher than the debates because there were more criteria for the debaters. Some of the traditional students might have been less motivated to complete the assignment.

Only about one eighth of the total number of scores (13%, n=10) fell in the 70-79 range. All of these scores were earned by traditional students, except for two accelerated students. Slightly more than half of all students (53%, n=41) scored in the 80-89 range,

whereas almost one third (31%, n=24) scored 90 and above in each class. Eight of these were traditional, 8 were accelerated and 8 were honors students. Only one student received a failing grade because he did not present on the day he was scheduled to do so, and consequently only received half credit. The distribution of the student's scores is reported in Table 2

Table 2. Student Scores by Academic Level.

<i>Level</i>	<i>Period</i>	<i>90-100</i>	<i>80-89</i>	<i>70-79</i>	<i>60-69</i>	<i>0-59</i>
Traditional	2	4	8	4	0	1
Accelerated	3	4	10	2	0	0
Traditional	4	2	8	2	1	0
Honors	5	8	4	0	0	0
Traditional	7	2	8	2	1	0
Accelerated	8	4	3	0	0	0
Total		24	41	10	2	1

The scores indicate that role-playing is beneficial to students because the majority of the students scored in the 80 and above range. There was not one student who failed because of his or her presentation or debate. The only one who failed did so because he was not ready when he was scheduled. Because no one failed and only two students scored in the 60-69 range, the project appears to be successful. However, grading is subjective and can only be considered successful in comparison to the cooperating teacher's and my previous projects.

Surveys

The students also completed a Likert-type survey after they finished their presidential primary role-playing project. They were asked to rate the following statements ranging from 1 [strongly disagree] to 5 [strongly agree]:

- 1) I enjoy role-playing projects.
- 2) If given a choice, I prefer to do projects that include a role-playing activity.
- 3) Role-playing helps me remember information better than traditional methods.
- 4) I enjoy working with others during role-playing projects.
- 5) I prefer hands-on activities compared to lecture note learning.

The surveys were separated into three categories: those who enjoyed role-playing, those who were indifferent, and those who did not enjoy the method. The surveys were also separated by the academic level of the class as presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Preference for Role Play by Academic Level

<i>Class</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Total</i>
Traditional	25	13	5	43
Accelerated	16	7	0	23
Honors	9	3	0	12
Total [n]	50	23	5	78

For the purpose of analysis, the ratings of 4 [agree] and 5 [strongly agree] were combined into a single percent. About 65% (n=50) of all students indicated they enjoyed role-playing. When breaking the responses down by class level about 60% (n=25) of the traditional students, 70% (n=16) of the accelerated students, and 75% (n=9) of the honors students enjoyed role-playing. A greater percentage of accelerated and honors students

enjoyed role-playing. About 30% (n=23) of the combined students were indifferent. Only 12% (n=5) of the students indicated that they did not enjoy role-playing. These findings do not correlate with the responses to the questionnaires mentioned earlier.

On the questionnaire, 16 students indicated they did not enjoy role-playing, whereas only five did so on the survey. The difference in numbers could be because the survey was taken after the actual role-playing project was completed and the students had something fresh on their minds to take into account when completing the surveys. Another reason for this could be that the role-playing project was different than previous role-playing the students had completed and they might have liked this style more. Table 4 presents the findings of whether the participants enjoyed role-playing.

Table 4. Statement 1 by Academic Level

<i>Rating</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>Total</i>
Traditional	1	4	12	21	5	43
Accelerated	0	0	7	10	6	23
Honors	0	0	3	5	4	12
Total [n]	1	4	22	36	15	78
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Statement 1: I enjoy role playing projects. ▪ 1 [strongly disagree] ... 5 [strongly agree] 						

According to the responses on statement number one, 65% (n=51) of all the students enjoy role-playing projects. Sixty percent (n=26) of the traditional students, 70% (n= 16) of the accelerated students and 75% (n=9) of the honors students indicated that they enjoy role-playing projects. Only 6% (n=5) of the students did not like role-playing and all were traditional students. Overall, question one revealed that accelerated and honors students were more likely to enjoy role-playing projects than the traditional

students did. It also reveals that 29% (n=22) of the students, when combined, are neutral on the topic of role-playing projects

The participants were asked, if given a choice, whether they prefer to do projects that include a role-playing activity. The findings are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Statement 2 by Academic Level

<i>Rating</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>Total</i>
Traditional	2	4	12	19	6	43
Accelerated	0	0	7	10	6	23
Honors	0	1	2	9	0	12
Total [n]	2	5	21	38	12	78
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Statement 2: If given a choice, I prefer to do projects that include a role-playing activity. ▪ 1 [strongly disagree] ... 5 [strongly agree] 						

Fifty-eight percent (n=25) the traditional students, 70% (n=16) of the accelerated students, and 75% (n=9) of the honors students indicated they prefer projects that include a role-playing activity, if given a choice. Twenty-eight percent (n=12) of the traditional students, 30% (n=7) of the accelerated, and 17% (n=3) of the honors students were neutral on the topic. Fourteen percent (n=6) of the traditional students would prefer not to have role-playing projects while none of the accelerated students and only 1 honors student answered the same way.

The findings revealed that the majority of the students, regardless of academic level, prefer role-playing projects. They also revealed that more honors and accelerated students preferred role-playing projects than the traditional students. More traditional students indicated they prefer not to have projects with role-playing than accelerated and

honors students did.

The students were asked whether role-playing helps them to better remember information than traditional methods do. The findings are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Statement 3 by Academic Level

<i>Rating</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>Total</i>
Traditional	0	4	10	11	18	43
Accelerated	0	0	6	9	8	23
Honors	0	0	2	7	3	12
Total [n]	0	4	18	27	29	78
■ Statement 3: Role-playing helps me remember information better than traditional methods. 1 [strongly disagree] ... 5 [strongly agree]						

Sixty-seven percent (n=29) of the traditional students indicated that role-playing helps them retain information better than traditional teaching methods, while about 75% (n=17) of the accelerated students and 83% (n=10) of the honors students agreed. Twenty-three percent (n=18) of the combined students were neutral on the topic. Only 5% (n=4) of the all the students indicated role-playing does not help them retain information. All four were traditional classroom students.

The findings suggest that a great percentage of the students retain information from role-playing better than from traditional teaching methods. More students (n=56) rated this statement with a 4 or 5 than any other statement. The scores indicate that role-playing is beneficial in helping the majority (72%) of the students retain information.

Students were also asked whether they enjoy working with others during role-playing projects. The findings are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Statement 4 by Academic Level

<i>Rating</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>Total</i>
Traditional	2	4	12	15	10	43
Accelerated	0	1	6	8	8	23
Honors	0	0	2	6	4	12
Total [n]	2	5	20	29	22	78
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Statement 4: I enjoy working with others during role-playing projects. ▪ 1 [strongly disagree] ... 5 [strongly agree] 						

Fifty-eight percent (n=25) of the traditional students, 70% (n=16) of the accelerated students, and 83% (n=10) of the honors students indicated they enjoy working with their peers during role-playing projects. Twenty-eight percent (n=12) of the traditional students, 26% (n=2) of the accelerated students, and 17% (n=2) of the honors students were neutral on the subject. Fourteen percent (n=6) of the traditional students, 4% (n=1) of the accelerated students and none of the honors students indicated they do not enjoy working with others during role-playing projects.

This finding reveals that the accelerated and honors students suggested they enjoy working with their peers more than the traditional students did. It also reveals that more traditional students did not enjoy working with their peers than accelerated and honors students.

The last thing the students were asked is whether they prefer hands-on activities compared to lecture note learning. The findings are presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Statement 5 by Academic Level

<i>Rating</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>Total</i>
Traditional	1	3	11	18	10	43
Accelerated	0	0	5	10	8	23
Honors	0	0	3	7	2	12
Total [n]	1	3	19	35	20	78
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Statement 5: I prefer hands-on activities compared to lecture note learning ▪ 1 [strongly disagree] ... 5 [strongly agree] 						

Sixty-five percent (n=28) of the traditional students, 78% (n=18) of the accelerated students, and 75% (n=9) of the honors students indicated they enjoy hands-on activities compared to lecture and note taking learning. All together 24% (n=19) students indicated they had no particular preference. Only four students, all in traditional classes, indicated that they do not enjoy hands-on activities as much as they enjoy lecture learning.

In summary, the survey responses indicate that few students do not like role-playing projects at all. The student's responses to the survey suggest that they believe role-playing is beneficial as well as enjoyable. In addition, the findings suggest the academic level does matter: the higher the academic level, the more students indicated they liked role-playing.

Interviews

The interviews added in-depth information as it came directly from the students. I interviewed a total of 18 students: ten were traditional, six accelerated and two honors. All 18 interviewees were asked the same questions and informed that their answers would not affect their grade in any way.

The responses to the question what they thought about the project were varied, yet similar. Sixteen of the 18 students said it was time consuming, but they learned a great deal of information. Ten students said they really enjoyed the project because it was different than previous ones. Fifteen students said the paper was the hardest part of the project. Only five students, all traditional, said they did not like the project because it was “too complex,” perhaps due to the fact that they were not used to doing as much work as was required for the project.

The responses to what they learned from project were nearly identical. All students claimed to have learned the most about their presidential primary candidate. All indicated they learned more about their own candidate than the others. While fourteen of the students said they planned on voting for the candidate they had researched, four of the students did not like their candidate at all. Randomly drawing candidate names for projects such as this is necessary so the teacher can seek to minimize influencing students to vote a particular way.

When asked to explain why they liked or disliked role-playing, two students said they did not enjoy the activity because they get extremely nervous speaking in front of the class. However, one of them said he would rather role-play than takes notes. Four students said they did not care one way or the other. The other twelve students said they enjoy role-playing because it is nice “to do something different” and they learn more by doing it.

All students said they had done some type of role-playing before. Sixteen of the students claimed their previous role-playing was not as in-depth as the candidate project. Fifteen of the students said their previous role-playing in their English class was more improved rather than planned. Two honors students said the project was not much

different from role-playing they had done for previous social studies classes, but did differ from their English role-playing in that it was better planned.

Except for one, each student suggested he or she believed that role-playing made learning more meaningful. They suggested it helped them put themselves in someone else's place and truly understand who the person is, what they believe, and why they should or should not be president. The student who suggested role-playing as not meaningful did so because he "was so nervous about getting up in front of the class that [he] did not take time to really get anything [he] was saying."

Only the accelerated and honors students were asked to explain whether they believed role-playing was helpful in understanding how presidential debates was helpful. The two honors students replied that it "sort of" did because they already had a pretty good idea of how debates work and had watched some already. The four accelerated student said it did because they had never paid attention before to the presidential debates and were able to get an understanding of what the candidates go through.

Thirteen students said that they would enjoy a similar project in the future because they learned a lot. Four students said they would probably enjoy something similar if there were no or a less written paper requirement. One student indicated he would much rather learn from book than role-play. A traditional level student, he was excellent at memorizing information which made book learning easy for him.

All eighteen said their teachers mainly use lecture and note taking. All said their teachers sometimes use worksheets and group work, but not often. All said they had done some type of role-playing before, but it was not as in-depth and only once or twice a year. Finally, all agreed that they did the most projects the U.S. Government class with their current teacher.

Twelve students said “doing projects” was their favorite way to learn, whether it included role-playing or not. Two students said that role-playing was their favorite type of teaching method because they learn more when they are fully immersed in a project. Three students said they like having a variety of methods. They like all types of methods as long as one is not used all of the time. One student said that lecture and book learning are his favorite.

In summary, the interviewees suggested that role-playing is beneficial. Only one interviewee did not like role-playing at all. All of the students indicated they learned a lot about their own candidate. Twelve students said they learn more from role-playing than other teaching methods. Even the students who were indifferent to enjoying role-playing indicated that they learned something from the project. Seventeen of the eighteen interviewed said they believe role-playing makes their learning more meaningful because they are able to put themselves in some else’s place.

Cooperating Teacher Interview

Based on 34 years of classroom experience, my cooperating teacher started out by stating he had a philosophy of education that differs from many of his colleagues. He believed there is a time and a place for lecture and note taking, but it should be broken up with other types of methods. He believed there are too many teachers out there who only lecture because they are “too lazy to be creative and grade large projects.”

He uses a variety of methods. Although he uses lectures, they are more discussion than lecture. He asks questions while he is lecturing to get the students involved and draw from their prior knowledge. He has students go through the book after class and take notes. He gives them credit for their notes as an incentive.

For every two – three chapters from the book he plans a project. He believes this is a way to get students actively involved in what they learn. His advice to all teachers is to use a variety of teaching methods. He believes role-playing is definitely a good thing, but cautions, as with any teaching method, not to use it too often lest it become ineffective. He strongly believes that if more teachers were to use creative ways to teach, students would be much better off. He tries his best to introduce students to all types of teaching methods. The problem he faces is that he only teaches seniors and by that time in their public education, students often have developed a negative attitude toward learning because many of their previous teachers only used a lecture approach.

Summary

The data revealed certain patterns about students and their views on role-playing. The questionnaires offered a good starting point to make sure each participant understood what role-playing is. The scores provided an insight into how serious the students were about the project. The surveys gave a general idea of how each participant felt about role-playing in general. The interviews added more insight to individual students' thoughts and opinions about role-playing and teaching methods. Finally, interviewing the cooperating teacher added further insights by his suggestion to use a variety of methods, including role-playing.

The findings of this research project suggest that role-playing is beneficial and should be used. However, the data also suggest that role-playing may perhaps be more beneficial to accelerated and honors than traditional classes. The research literature suggests that role-playing should be used and helps students learn material better. The findings of this study confirm this suggestion.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS

Literature

The review of the literature suggested several common themes. Morris (2003) has suggested that “students feel empathy regarding events in the past when they act out the situation, and make connections between the character they play and real situations” (p 48). In addition, he/she Morris has argued that “empathy is one of many tools historians use to help determine, interpret, and understand meaning” (p. 48). Because of this, empathy is vital for students to make learning meaningful.

Another theme suggested in the literature is that role-playing is effective, “but will lose its effectiveness if used too often” (Duncombe & Heikkinen, 1990, p. 35). Any teaching method used too often will become ineffective. The key to being an effective teacher is to use a variety of teaching methods.

The literature indicates that traditional teaching methods such as lecturing do not help students makes connections or feel empathy towards the material to the same extent role-playing does, but is necessary at times. For some material there is no other way than lecture. The key to not making lectures so mundane and boring is to add activities and projects between the lectures.

Findings

Seventy-eight high school seniors participated in this study. They filled out questionnaires, surveys, completed a project and were interviewed. The surveys suggested that the majority of the students enjoyed role-playing. There were only five students who indicated they did not like role-playing at all. These findings affirm findings in the research literature. Andrew Schaap (2005) taught a class using a role-playing technique.

He found that his students thoroughly enjoyed the activity and he encourages other educators to try the method as well (p. 50).

Among other questions, the survey asked the students whether they retained more information from role-playing than other types of teaching methods. Seventy-two percent of the students (n=56) said it did. Morris (2003) has argued that “students feel empathy regarding events in the past when they act out the situation, and make connections between the character they play and real situations,” (p 48). When students feel empathy they are more likely to retain information because they made a personal connection with the material.

The interviews revealed this connection as well. Seventeen of the eighteen students interviewed agreed that role-playing made their learning more meaningful because they were able to put themselves in someone else’s place, in other words, they felt empathy. The interviews with the students revealed other interesting issues as well. Many of the interviewees commented that their previous role-playing was different from the presidential primary candidate project they completed for this study. They indicated they enjoyed it more than what they had previously considered role-playing in their English classes which consisted of reading plays as a certain character. After completing the presidential candidate project the students realized how in-depth role-playing can be and indicated that they liked in-depth role-playing much better. What they did in English class could be considered role-playing because they were pretending to be someone else, but they were not as fully engaged as they were in the project they completed as part of this study. The literature suggests role-playing exercises come in many forms and educators should not be reluctant to experiment with their style and structure (McDaniel, 2000, p 357).

An unexpected issue that emerged from the interviews was that 14 out of the 18 interviewees indicated that they planned on voting for the candidate they had researched. This might suggest a problem. A teacher could potentially use a project such as this to manipulate students into voting for a candidate of his or her choosing. One way to ensure that this does not occur is for the teacher to randomly assign candidates to the students.

One of the major findings of this study was that the accelerated and honors students were more likely to enjoy role-playing than the traditional students. The majority of the traditional students indicated they enjoyed role-playing, but the number was not as high as the accelerated and honors students. At the college level, Schaap (2005) found that “role-playing is more likely to promote active learning amongst undergraduate students than a traditional university lecture,” (p. 46). Typically, accelerated and honors students plan on attending a university or college while a smaller number of traditional students plans to do the same. The difference in the numbers may be in part explained by the fact that traditional students have higher instances of learning disabilities and have a low socioeconomic status in comparison to students in the accelerated and honors classes.

My cooperating teacher’s suggestions echo the findings in the literature. Similar to Duncombe and Heikkinen (1990), he argued that role-playing should be used with a variety of methods because if any one method is used too often it becomes ineffective. Likewise, he also suggested using projects and activities to break up the monotony of lectures.

Recommendations

This study was conducted in an ethnically homogeneous high school in rural Appalachia. Schools with similar as well as more diverse student populations should use the findings of this study. The research literature indicates that role-playing is beneficial,

which was confirmed by this study. Regardless of their subject area, teachers should use some form of role-playing. While this study strictly focused on high school seniors, other studies have suggested the same benefit of role-playing as early as the seventh grade.

Morris (2003) studied a seventh grade social studies class and found that the students felt empathy regarding events in the past when they acted out the situation and made connections between the character and real life situations (p. 46). Additional research (see e.g. *The Social Studies*, 2003), suggests students' ability to identify with individuals from the past is critical to their understanding of historical events (p. 271). While the editor gives no parameters on what age or grades to use role-playing, he highly suggests using role-playing and that teachers should decide for themselves whether they are ready for the experience. Consequently, especially middle and high school teachers should use a variety of teaching methods, including role-playing. Finally, they should be cognizant to not use any method too often lest they diminish the method's effectiveness.

APPENDIX A

CONSENT FORM

Title of Research: Is role playing an effective teaching method?

Researcher: Elizabeth Graves

You are being asked to participate in a master's research project. For you to be able to decide whether you want to participate in this project, you should understand what the project is about, as well as the possible risks and benefits, in order to make an informed decision. This process is known as informed consent. This form describes the purpose, procedures, possible benefits, and risks. It also explains how your personal information will be used and protected. Once you have read this form and your questions about the study are answered, you will be asked to sign it. This will allow you to participate in this project. You will receive a copy of this document to take with you.

Explanation of Study

You will be given a role-playing project in your government class. Each student in the class will be assigned a presidential primary candidate, complete a report on the person and role play as the campaign spokesperson or campaign manager during a debate on issues assigned to you. Every student will complete the project whether or not he or she agrees to participate in the study. If you chose to not participate, your grade will not be affected. As participants you may be audio and/or videotaped during the project and you may be interviewed and/or asked to answers questions about the project two weeks after the project is completed.

Risks and Discomforts

No risks or discomforts are anticipated.

Benefits

The benefits to participating are you will help future educators know whether role-playing is a good teaching method to use or not and you will be able to give your opinion on what type of learning you prefer and enjoy for future reference.

The society at large will benefit by knowing if role-laying should be used in high school classrooms to enhance learning. Society will also benefit because the participants will be well informed on how elections and campaigns work.

Confidentiality and Records

All participant names will be kept confidential. The only people who will ever see the actual names of participants are Joel Laufman (cooperating teacher), Frans Doppen (academic advisor), and Elizabeth Graves (researcher). All notes, audio/video tapes will

be kept in a secure location. No one will have access to them except the researcher. All identifiable information will be destroyed after the research project is completed. The Master's Research Project will contain no identifiable information about any participant.

Additionally, while every effort will be made to keep your study-related information confidential, there may be circumstances where this information must be shared with:

- * Federal agencies, for example the Office of Human Research Protections, whose responsibility is to protect human subjects in research;
- * Representatives of Ohio University (OU), including the Institutional Review Board, a committee that oversees the research at OU;

Contact Information

If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact one of the following:

Researcher - Elizabeth Graves
 590-3984 or e-mail: ew220700@ohio.edu
Academic Advisor – Dr. Frans Doppen
 e-mail: doppen@ohio.edu

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact Jo Ellen Sherow, Director of Research Compliance, Ohio University, (740)593-0664.

By signing below, you are agreeing that:

you have read this consent form (or it has been read to you) and have been given the opportunity to ask questions

known risks to you have been explained to your satisfaction.

you understand Ohio University has no policy or plan to pay for any injuries you might receive as a result of participating in this research protocol

you are 18 years of age or older

your participation in this research is given voluntarily

you may change your mind and stop participation at any time without penalty or loss of any benefits to which you may otherwise be entitled.

Signature _____ Date _____

Printed Name _____

Version Date: [insert 10/24/07]

Ohio University Consent Form – MINOR

Title of Research: Is role playing an effective teaching method for high school students?

Researcher: Elizabeth Graves

You are being asked to participate in a master's research project. For you to be able to decide whether you want to participate in this project, you should understand what the project is about, as well as the possible risks and benefits, in order to make an informed decision. This process is known as informed consent. This form describes the purpose, procedures, possible benefits, and risks. It also explains how your personal information will be used and protected. Once you have read this form and your questions about the study are answered, you will be asked to sign it. This will allow you to participate in this project. You will receive a copy of this document to take with you.

Explanation of Study

You will be given a role-playing project in your government class. Each student in the class will be assigned a presidential primary candidate, complete a report on the person and role play as the campaign spokesperson or campaign manager during a debate on issues assigned to you. Every student will complete the project whether or not he or she agrees to participate in the study. If you chose to not participate, your grade will not be affected. As participants you may be audio and/or videotaped during the project and you may be interviewed and/or asked to answers questions about the project two weeks after the project is completed.

Risks and Discomforts

No risks or discomforts are anticipated.

Benefits

The benefits to participating are that the participants will help future educators know whether role-playing is a good teaching method to use or not. Participants will also be able to express their opinion on what type of learning they prefer and enjoy for future reference.

Society at large will benefit by knowing whether role-playing can be an effective strategy to enhance learning. Society will also benefit because the participants will be well informed about how elections and campaigns work.

Confidentiality and Records

All participant names will be kept confidential. The only people who will ever see the actual names of participants are Mr. Laufman (cooperating teacher), Frans Doppen (academic advisor), and Elizabeth Graves (researcher). All notes, audio/video tapes will

be kept in a secure location. No one will have access to them except the researcher and her academic advisor. All identifiable information will be destroyed after the research project is completed. The Master's Research project will contain no identifiable information on any participant.

Additionally, while every effort will be made to keep your study-related information confidential, there may be circumstances where this information must be shared with:

- * Federal agencies, for example the Office of Human Research Protections, whose responsibility is to protect human subjects in research;
- * Representatives of Ohio University (OU), including the Institutional Review Board, a committee that oversees the research at OU;

Contact Information

If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact one of the following:

*Researcher - Elizabeth Graves
590-3984 or e-mail: ew220700@ohio.edu
Academic Advisor – Dr. Frans Doppen
e-mail: doppen@ohio.edu*

If you have any questions regarding your child's rights as a research participant, please contact Jo Ellen Sherow, Director of Research Compliance, Ohio University, (740)593-0664.

By signing below, you are agreeing that:

you have read this consent form (or it has been read to you) and have been given the opportunity to ask questions
known risks to your child have been explained to your satisfaction.
you understand Ohio University has no policy or plan to pay for any injuries your child might receive as a result of participating in this research protocol
you are the parent/guardian of the participant who is a minor
your permission for your child's participation in this research is given voluntarily
you may change your mind and stop your child's participation at any time without penalty or loss of any benefits to which your child may otherwise be entitled.

Signature of Parent/Guardian _____ Date _____

Printed Name _____

Version Date: [insert 10/24/07]

APPENDIX C

PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY CANDIDATE PROJECT

Traditional

You will be divided into pairs. Each pair will choose/be assigned one presidential primary candidate. Each person will have a specific role. One team member will be the campaign manager and one will role-play as the candidate. Both will be required to help research the candidate and their candidate's stance on the issues listed below.

Both the manager and the candidate will provide information and talking points for the paper. Both will pre-write the paper. The campaign manager will be responsible for typing the finished 2-3 page paper about their candidate and for introducing the candidate at the beginning of the presentation. One library day and 2 days in class will be given to work on the projects.

(There will be one group of 3 in each class. The third person will help in all areas and be titled campaign spokesperson and help in the presentation)

Issues:

- Iraq war
- Immigration
- Healthcare
- Taxes

Part 1 – Paper

- Candidate background/biographical information
- qualifications for being president
- stance on issues chosen and why he/she believes the way they do
- platform
- main sources of funding

Part 2 – Presentation of Candidate – Pretend you are at your party's national convention and you are trying to convince your fellow members to choose you as the presidential candidate.

- 8 minutes
- Introduction and biographical information (given by campaign manager)
- Stances on issues/platform
- Why should people vote for you?
- Come up with a slogan
- Create a campaign poster (to be hung in the café) that illustrates your candidate's stance on one major issue

Be creative in your presentation!!

- PowerPoint
- Campaign ad video
- speech with visuals
- any other teacher approved idea

Evaluation

- Paper – 100
- Presentation – 100
- Class work observation – 50
- Quizzes - 50

Total points possible: 300

American Government
 Presidential Primary Candidate Project

Accelerated

You will each choose one presidential primary candidate to research for your project. You will work alone and write a 3-4 page paper about your candidate and his/her stance on the issues listed below. As the finale, you will debate with a candidate from the opposite party. You will be paired with a candidate to debate with. You will work together to role play as your candidates during a debate. You are expected to script out your debate together. It should be informative as well as entertaining. You will receive one library day and two in class days to prepare for the project. Outside time will be necessary.

Issues:

- Iraq war
- Immigration
- Healthcare
- Taxes

Honors

You will each choose one presidential primary candidate to research for your project. You will work alone and write a 5-7 page paper about your candidate and his/her stance on the issues listed below. As the finale, you will debate with a candidate from the opposite party. You will be paired with a candidate to debate with. You will work together to role play as your candidates during a debate. You are expected to script out your debate together. It should be informative as well as entertaining. You will receive one library day and two in class days to prepare for the project. Outside time will be necessary.

Issues: (choose 5)

- Iraq war
- Immigration
- Healthcare
- Taxes
- NCLB (up for reauthorization this fall)
- Global warming

Part 1 – Paper

- background/biographical information
- qualifications for being president
- stance on issues chosen and why he/she believes the way they do
- platform
- main sources of funding

Part 2 – Introduction of yourself

- 2 minutes
- talk about biographical info.
- Make use of a campaign poster (to be hung in the café) that illustrates your candidate's stance on one major issue

Part 3 – Debate

- Opening statement – why should people vote for you?
- Stance on issues/platform
- Rebuttal – think about what your opponents stances are and be ready to defend your own
- Closing statement – reaffirm what makes you the better candidate

Evaluation

- Paper – 100
- Introduction – 25
- Debate – 100
- Class work observation – 25
- Test - 100

Total points possible: 350

APPENDIX D
PRESENTATION RUBRIC

Name: _____

Teacher: Graves

Date of Presentation: _____

Title of Work: _____

	Criteria				Points
	1	2	3	4	
Organization	Audience cannot understand presentation because there is no sequence of information.	Audience has difficulty following presentation because student jumps around.	Student presents information in logical sequence which audience can follow.	Student presents information in logical, interesting sequence which audience can follow.	_____
Content Knowledge	Student does not have grasp of information; student cannot answer questions about subject.	Student is uncomfortable with information and is able to answer only rudimentary questions.	Student is at ease with content, but fails to elaborate.	Student demonstrates full knowledge (more than required) with explanations and elaboration.	_____
Visuals	Student used no visuals.	Student occasional used visuals that rarely support text and presentation.	Visuals related to text and presentation.	Student used visuals to reinforce screen text and presentation.	_____
Creativity	Student's presentation was not creative at all. They just stood up in front of the class.	Presentation was a little creative, but not very much.	Presentation was creative and was well thought out.	Presentation was exceptionally creative and well thought out and rehearsed.	_____
Delivery/Verbal Techniques	Student mumbles, incorrectly pronounces terms, and speaks too quietly for students in the back of class to hear.	Student incorrectly pronounces terms. Audience members have difficulty hearing presentation.	Student's voice is clear. Student pronounces most words correctly.	Student used a clear voice and correct, precise pronunciation of terms.	_____
Eye Contact	Student makes no eye contact and only reads from notes.	Student occasionally uses eye contact, but still reads mostly from notes.	Student maintains eye contact most of the time, but frequently returns to notes.	Student maintains eye contact with audience seldom returning to notes.	_____

Total ---> _____

APPENDIX E
DEBATE RUBRIC

Name: _____

Teacher: Graves

Date of Debate: _____

Title of Work: _____

	Criteria				Points
	1	2	3	4	
Understanding of Topic	You did not show an adequate understanding of the topic.	You seemed to understand the main points of the topic and presented those with ease.	You clearly understood the topic in-depth and presented your info. with ease.	You clearly understood the topic in-depth and presented your info. forcefully & convincingly.	_____
Information	Information had several inaccuracies OR was usually not clear.	Most information presented was clear and accurate, but usually not thorough.	Most information presented was clear, accurate and thorough .	All information presented was clear, accurate and thorough.	_____
Use of facts/Statistics	Every point was not supported.	Several points were supported with facts, statistics and/or examples, not much relevance given.	Major points were supported with relevant facts, statistics and/or examples.	All points were supported well with relevant facts, statistics and/or examples	_____
Presentation Style/ Creativity	You had a presentation style that did not keep the attention of the audience.	You sometimes used gestures, eye contact, tone of voice and a level of enthusiasm to keep audience attention.	. You usually used gestures, eye contact, tone of voice and a level of enthusiasm to keep audience attention.	You consistently used gestures, eye contact, tone of voice and a level of enthusiasm to keep audience attention.	_____
Respect/ Rebuttal	Counterarguments were not relevant and/or were disrespectful to opponent(s).	Most counterarguments were relevant and were mostly respectful.	Most counterarguments were accurate, relevant and were respectful to opponent(s).	All counterarguments were accurate, relevant, strong, and were respectful to opponent(s).	_____
				Total --->	_____

Teacher Comments:

APPENDIX F
STUDENT SURVEY

Rate the following statements using the scale below:

1 – Strongly Disagree 2 – Disagree 3 – Neutral 4 – Agree
5 – Strongly Agree

- 1) I enjoy role-playing projects.
- 2) If given a choice, I would prefer to do projects that include a role-playing activity.
- 3) Role-playing helps me remember information more than traditional methods.
- 4) I enjoy working with others during role-playing projects.
- 5) I prefer hands-on activities compared to lecture note learning.

APPENDIX G
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) What did you think about the project?
- 2) What did you learn by doing the project?
- 3) What do you think of role-playing? Why?
- 4) Have you ever done role-playing before? How was it different?
- 5) Do you believe role-playing makes your learning more meaningful? Why or why not?
- 6) Do you believe role-playing was helpful in understanding how presidential debates work? Why or why not?
- 7) Would you enjoy similar projects in the future? Why or why not?
- 8) What types of teaching methods do your teachers use?
- 9) What type of teaching method is your favorite? Why?

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