

Raw and Real Simulations: Negotiating and Mediating through Offensiveness
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Carol Izumi, University of California Hastings College of Law
Lydia Nussbaum, UNLV Boyd School of Law
Gail Silverstein, University of California Hastings College of Law
Deborah Thompson Eisenberg, University of Maryland Carey School of Law
Ellen Waldman, Thomas Jefferson School of Law

Reporter: Kristin M. Franzoni, Mitchell Hamline School of Law

Program Description: This session examines how today's climate of heightened sensitivity around issues of trauma, race, sex, gender identity, socio-economics, and politics poses new questions for simulations as a teaching tool. Examples of these challenges include: How to make simulations reflect real life without reinforcing stereotypes or oversimplifying complex dynamics? What if role assignments trigger a traumatic experience for a particular student? In this interactive session, participants will closely examine role-play as a teaching tool, consider new dynamics raised (or mishandled) by simulations, and take away practical strategies for navigating this new territory and reinvigorating their use of role-plays.

1. CLIMATE AWARENESS

- a. Be aware of current media, social dynamics, local news and heighten sensitivity surrounding any issues that may be of topic in your simulations.
- b. Contemplate the learning objective of the simulation and ask for feedback from your colleagues and/or trusted sources prior to utilization.
- c. Be mindful of the timing of the use of each simulation. Be sure that the most intense simulations are saved for the end of the semester.
- d. Students may go through stages of panic, learning, and comfort.

2. PROTECT vs. PREPARE

- a. As legal educators, the goal is to first prepare law students with the skills they need to be effective negotiators / mediators.
- b. A good approach is to be progressive with your teaching methods and offer simulations that build with intensity to challenge the students as the semester goes on.
- c. Challenge law students to move away from their own comfort zones and get comfortable with being uncomfortable by encouraging and stimulating their own learning experience to prepare them for the "real world."
- d. Avoid trauma by steering away from the "panic zone" by implementing / enforcing a healthy learning environment through established classroom ground rules and open-door policies.
- e. In the beginning, allow students to be selective in their simulation roles and move to challenge their engagement as the semester advances.

3. IN SESSION DISCUSSION TAKE AWAYS

- a.** Examine the five-step simulation process stages to discover your pain points and narrow down areas for improvement to ensure execution of your simulations are effective in the future.
 - 1. Design
 - 2. Assign
 - 3. Prepare
 - 4. Intervene/Coach
 - 5. Debrief
- b.** A potential resolution for students who lack investment and/or limited preparation for simulations could be addressed by joining with local institutions that have theatre students and/or actors to play roles in simulations.
- c.** Utilize technology that offers debriefing surveys for real-time classroom feedback (e.g., Google, Survey Monkey).
- d.** Utilize pre-recorded videos of prior mediations and/or negotiations to eliminate intimidation and improve student engagement.
- e.** During the debrief process, be sure to touch on the emotions of the students - promote active and dynamic engagement to the simulation exercises.