

Jeff Walz, Ph.D.
Professor of Political Science
Concordia University Wisconsin

**TEACHING THROUGH SIMULATION:
BROWNIES, STARBURSTS, AND MUCH
MORE!**

Cookies for All!

- ⦿ Or is this Misleading?
- ⦿ Brownie Simulation
 - What is Politics?
 - How Politics and Government Work
 - Lessons about Politics and Government

Simulations Defined

- Bromley (2013)
- “Collaborative activities when students take on roles and make decisions accordingly.”
- A Staple of Political Science courses
- How useful in other disciplines?

Discussion Outline

- Types & Sources of Simulations
- Walz Examples
- Strengths of Simulations
- Weaknesses of Simulations
- Assessment Process
- Simulations in Your Disciplines:
Reflections and Ideas (by table)
- Q and A

Types of Simulations (based on duration)

- ⦿ One class
- ⦿ Multiple Class
- ⦿ Semester-long
- ⦿ Other: Model UN (club or organization)

Sources of Simulations

- ⦿ Colleagues
- ⦿ Discipline Literature
- ⦿ Looking “out the window” for own ideas
- ⦿ Use of Technology

Walz Simulations

- ⦿ Brownies
- ⦿ Alabama Literacy Test
- ⦿ Starburst Coalition
- ⦿ Balancing the Budget (video clip)
- ⦿ 1960 Presidential Debate
- ⦿ Presidential Cabinet

Strengths of Simulations

- ◎ Raymond and Usherwood (2013) (and Walz)
- ◎ Fun!
- ◎ Student Engagement
- ◎ Change of Pace
- ◎ Increased Learning
- ◎ Enhanced Student Motivation
- ◎ Peer-to-Peer Insights

Weaknesses of Simulations

- Raymond and Usherwood (2013) and Bromley (2013) (and Walz)
- Overused; consider case studies, enhanced lectures, large group discussion, small group work, in-class writing
- Insufficient Assessment
- Risk: Will it Work?
- Planning Time

Assessment Process (based on Raymond and Usherwood 2013)

- Current: Did the students seem engaged? Did it appear the students learned something?
- State specific objectives or desired outcomes.
- Align simulation to assessment regime.
- Debriefing and feedback to students
- Big picture: Did it work? Should I keep it? Should I tweak it?

Simulations in Your Disciplines: Reflections and Ideas (by table)

- ⦿ Would simulations be feasible in my field? Why or why not?
- ⦿ If yes, what resources do I need?
- ⦿ Where might I get simulation ideas in my discipline?
- ⦿ Other thoughts and observations

Thank you!!

Questions???