

Learning Design for Online Role Play vs Simulation

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Project EnROLE, an ALTC project to encourage uptake of online role play, named the field of role-based e-learning for the first time, carving out the territory by differentiating it from simulations.

Simulations involve students playing one role against a computer model. Although there are roles in simulations, the roles are not interacting with each other.

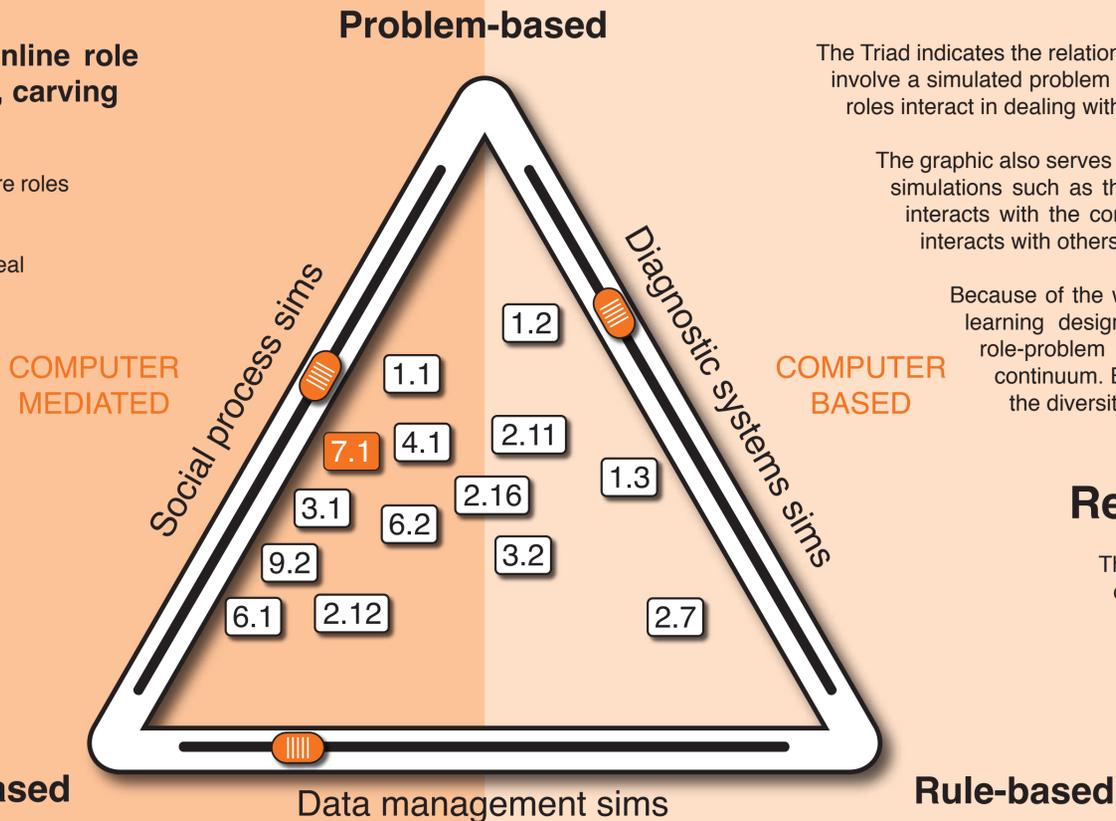
In contrast, role-based e-learning environments, designed to increase understanding of real life human interaction and dynamics, are defined as having the following characteristics:

- participants assume a role in someone else's shoes or in someone else's situation
- participants undertake authentic tasks in an authentic context
- task involves substantial in-role interaction with other roles for collaboration, negotiation, debate
- interaction between roles is substantially in an online environment

Over 60 learning design descriptions for online role plays have been collected in the EnROLE repository and now descriptions of simulations are being added. The Simulation Triad was developed to help illustrate the difference. It takes as its starting point that all simulations involve roles and rules and a problem (sometimes called case, situation or scenario). The triad represents design decisions according to emphasis placed on: Roles vs Problems vs Rules.



enrole.uow.edu.au



The Triad indicates the relationship of role-based learning to problem-based learning. Online role play may involve a simulated problem context and analysis of related data, but the focus of learning is on how the roles interact in dealing with the problem.

The graphic also serves to indicate the differing role of the computer in online simulations. Traditional simulations such as those that model Nuclear Power Plants are **computer-based**. The learner interacts with the computer. Whereas, role plays are **computer-mediated**, that is, the learner interacts with others, via the computer.

Because of the way the project originally defined role-based e-learning, the majority of the learning design descriptions collected in Project EnROLE's repository are along the role-problem continuum. Newer examples being added belong along the role-rules continuum. Examples from the repository are mapped onto the Triad in order to illustrate the diversity of the simulation learning design.

Read more about it...

The advent of 3D virtual worlds such as Second Life challenges EnROLE's original definition of online role play because simulations too can now be designed with multiple roles, although, unlike online role play, they can only operate in real-time. The Simulation Triad is a visual way to define online role play and better accommodates new developments in simulation.

This is explored further by EnROLE team members (Wills, Leigh and Ip) in their guide to designing and moderating role-based e-learning.

SIMULATION TRIAD

1.1 Save Wallaby Forest	2.12 Virtual Peace	6.1 Middle Eastern Politics
1.2 PPressure Point	2.16 Pain Education	6.2 XB
1.3 Virtual Patient	3.1 First Fleet	7.1 Scarlet Letter
2.7 Ardcalloch	3.2 Pain Prescription	9.2* Mekong eSim
2.11 Accident Investigation	4.1 RiftRaft	

*Number labels refer to the chapters in the book where there are fuller descriptions of each example.

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