

Redesigning Assessment with Generative AI:

Role-Play Assessment: Bridging Theory and Practice for Authentic Learning



CASE SCENARIO 1

In a literature class, the focus is on “Shakespearean Drama” and the teacher creates a situation where students are required to re-enact and reinterpret scenes from various plays of Shakespeare. This role-play is part of the course assessment.

Each student is assigned a specific character from a particular play. They must research their character’s motivations, relationships, and evolution. They then prepare and perform a scene where they depict their character in a novel situation.

The teacher asks each group of students to submit a written script of their scene, alongside their rationale explaining the choices they made in creating this new interaction. This allows the teacher to evaluate how well students understood their characters and their ability to imagine creative yet plausible scenarios.

CASE SCENARIO 2

A medical school teacher devises a role-play assessment where students must handle a patient consultation as a doctor, dealing with a complicated medical and personal situation.

The students are provided with a detailed scenario: their patient is a middle-aged man, suffering from type-2 diabetes and showing early signs of depression. He is the sole provider for his family, and the potential loss of income due to his health issues is causing stress and fear.

Students are paired up for the role-play; one takes the role of the doctor, and the other plays the patient. The ‘patient’ is given a detailed background story, as well as a set of symptoms and personal fears they must convey during the consultation. The ‘doctor’ is expected to handle the medical consultation professionally, addressing the medical and emotional concerns of the patient.

Each role-play session is recorded and reviewed later with the teacher and the student, discussing the student’s performance, decision-making, and areas for improvement.



INTRODUCTION

Role-Play Assessment involves students taking on specific roles in real-world contexts to display their understanding of course concepts. By stepping into the shoes of professionals or other key roles, students can learn to display their understanding in an active, engaging, and highly authentic manner.

RATIONALE

Role-Play Assessment is deeply rooted in authenticity as students must not only understand course concepts, but also apply them in contextually appropriate ways. While GenAI can generate text based on given parameters, it cannot replace the unique perspectives, creative problem-solving, and contextual decision-making that students bring to role-play scenarios. The unpredictability and complexity of human interactions during role-play also makes it hard for GenAI to replicate such an experience.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

A specific context or situation related to the course content is provided. Students are then assigned or choose roles that they will play in this context. They must research their roles and work within them to address the scenario. Assessment is based on how well they have understood and embodied their roles, how they interact with others, and how effectively they apply course concepts in their actions and decisions.

Assessment criteria can include:

- **Understanding of Character:** Thorough understanding of the assigned character's motivations and development throughout the original play.
- **Script Writing:** Creation of a coherent and engaging script that is true to the character's voice and the style of the original play.
- **Performance:** Performance in the role-play demonstrates understanding of the character and ability to bring the character to life.
- **Reflective Rationale:** Justification of creative decisions and explanation how the given scenario aligns with the character's attributes and motivations.

BENEFITS & CHALLENGES

Benefits

- Enhances students' understanding of course concepts by applying them in real-world contexts.
- Develops students' skills in research, empathy, communication, and problem-solving.
- Provides a highly engaging and interactive learning experience.

Challenges

- Requires careful planning and execution by the instructor to ensure scenarios are relevant and manageable.
- Assessment can be subjective and may require the use of detailed rubrics.
- Requires commitment from students to research and embody their roles effectively.
- The effectiveness can depend on the dynamics within the student groups.