ABSTRACT

Learners adopt the roles of either convicts or officials of Australia's first settlement in an attempt to solve the problems of theft and starvation in 1789.

KEYWORDS

Australian History, First Fleet, Colonisation, Law Enforcement

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DESCRIPTION

The role play engages students in understanding the lives of others and the events of past history by having them:
- Research a real historical person
- Act in character as that person
- Collaborate with others to propose a solution to a social issue.

AUDIENCE/GROUP SIZE

- Originally designed for 32 students or multiples of 32 if teams of 2-7 students collaborate on one role
- Classes larger than 32 require more moderators
- New smaller version created for 12 students or multiples of 12.

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

This learning design aims to:
- Enhance learner's empathy with an historical figure and with life in another period of time
- Engage learners via collaboration in portrayal of a role that is as historically accurate as possible and imaginatively creative when historical detail is found wanting
- Develop learner's ability to contribute to negotiations with stakeholders who hold conflicting viewpoints
- Foster learner understanding that "history" is an artifact constructed from incomplete evidence by historians operating from their own viewpoint and context
- Foster learner understanding of the people, circumstances and issues that define the first British colony in Australia.

TIME AND SETTING

It has been used a number of times in different formats:
- One day workshop in a computer lab
- Four weeks, meeting once per week in a computer lab and some usage assumed outside class time
- Four weeks entirely online distributed between three sites including an overseas site, assuming usage about 3-4 times per week for about 1 hour.
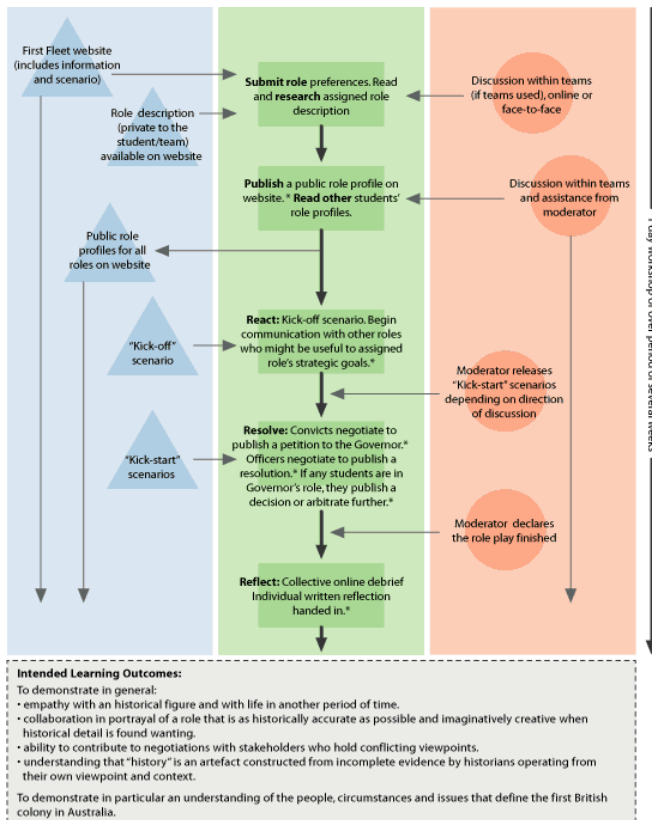
RESOURCES

A web site and convict database are provided as online resources http://firstfleet.uow.edu.au/ as well as:
- Set of real historical characters and descriptions of those characters;
- Scenario close to historical fact at a point in time;
- An issue that has to be collaboratively negotiated;
- Series of compounding events that moderators can choose to activate depending on how the negotiations are proceeding.

ASSESSMENT

- Mark for publication of public role profile
- Mark for participation as tracked via the discussion forum
- Mark for contribution to the publication of a petition or resolution (the above three marks are team marks if more than one learner is playing one role)
- Iindividual mark for an individual reflection to be handed in after the completion of the role-play. The reflection covers learning about history as well as learning, via this medium, generic skill such as team work and negotiation.

First Fleet **PROCESS**

First Fleet website (includes information and scenario)

Role description (private to the student/team) available on website

Public role profiles for all roles on website

"Kick-off" scenario

"Kick-start" scenarios

Submit role preferences. Read and **research** assigned role description

Publish a public role profile on website.* **Read other** students' role profiles.

React: Kick-off scenario. Begin communication with other roles who might be useful to assigned role's strategic goals.*

Resolve: Convicts negotiate to publish a petition to the Governor.* Officers negotiate to publish a resolution.* If any students are in Governor's role, they publish a decision or arbitrate further.*

Reflect: Collective online debrief Individual written reflection handed in.*

Discussion within teams (if teams used), online or face-to-face

Discussion within teams and assistance from moderator

Moderator releases "Kick-start" scenarios depending on direction of discussion

Moderator declares the role play finished

1 day workshop or over period of several weeks

Intended Learning Outcomes:
To demonstrate in general:
• empathy with an historical figure and with life in another period of time.
• collaboration in portrayal of a role that is as historically accurate as possible and imaginatively creative when historical detail is found wanting.
• ability to contribute to negotiations with stakeholders who hold conflicting viewpoints.
• understanding that "history" is an artefact constructed from incomplete evidence by historians operating from their own viewpoint and context.
To demonstrate in particular an understanding of the people, circumstances and issues that define the first British colony in Australia.

* assessment task

Students engage in the following activities:

Choose or be assigned a role
- Students may choose or be assigned to a team to play one role (this is optional, however most learners report that team-work, although time intensive, is educationally valuable). Students then read the role description and research the role and the camp in which the role is situated (that is, Convict Camp or Officers Mess) in order to obtain an understanding of the role's strategic goals (including both public & private agendas).

Publish a public role description and familiarise themselves with the other roles
- The publishing of a role description could be optional in a cut-down version but most students comment that this assessment task really gets them into the role. *

Read other learners' public role descriptions
- If the above task is not done by the students then the teacher/designer will need to ensure that public role descriptions are available to all.

Make contact
- Contact, via email, other roles that may be useful to furthering the role's strategic goals.
- Read, research and understand the "kick-off" scenario.

Publish a petition or resolution
- Convicts as a group negotiate to publish a petition to the Governor* and officers negotiate to publish a resolution*.
- The moderator releases "kick-start" scenarios depending on the direction of the discussion. If any students are in the Governor's role, they publish a decision or arbitrate further.*

Conduct a collective online debrief
- The moderator declares the role-play finished and then facilitates the online debrief. Students submit an individually written reflection. *

FACILITATOR ISSUES
- Requires committed facilitation in order to bring the role play to resolution and to avoid shallow acting instead of deep learning
- Depending on confidence of students with this topic it might be best for the teacher to also take on the role of Governor Arthur Phillip

REUSABILITY
- *First Fleet* is currently being re-designed to be transferable so that other teachers can run and facilitate it.
- Scenarios and role descriptions are Word files for teachers to upload into their University's Learning Transferable into Learning Management Systems or into special purpose role play systems like Fablusi
- Teachers Guide is under development.
- Can be used at secondary school level or university level

REFERENCES AND LINKS
Wills, S. & Ip, A. "Online Role Play as a Complementary Learning Design for the First Fleet Database" in *Linking Learners: ACEC 2002 Conference Proceedings*, [CDROM] Australian Council for Computers in Education, Hobart, July 2002 ISBN 0-9581188-0-9 http://ro.uow.edu.au/asdpapers/37

Learning Designs: http://www.learningdesigns.uow.edu.au/exemplars/info/LD24/index.html