Working Man’s Paradise

ABSTRACT
This Role-play is designed to engage students in the content, language and politics raised by a novel. The role-play is run within the Blackboard Learning Management System.

KEYWORDS
19th Century Australian literature; Politics; Blackboard LMS; Australian Studies

CONTACT
Debra Dudek, University of Wollongong, debra_dudek@uow.edu.au

DESCRIPTION
The online role-play takes place in a marketplace in Sydney in 1891 and is based on the novel, The Working Man’s Paradise by John Maurice Miller.

Scenario: The atmosphere in Sydney is one of turmoil. The shearers’ strike in Queensland is inspiring even more people to support unions for manual labourers in Sydney, especially the working-class women, who are exploited by their male bosses. The marketplace is abuzz; some people support unions while others support a capitalist system and see unions as the death of capitalism. All the characters are in the marketplace and have gathered around a speaker, who is proclaiming his position atop a soapbox.

Students are allocated a character from which they respond to the scenario. The action takes place in three scenes. Scene one allows the students to introduce their character; Scene two, students respond in character to a statement made on a “soap box” in an outdoor market; Scene three, students debate and defend their position. The final debrief activity takes place within a face-to-face tutorial.

AUDIENCE/GROUP SIZE
- Total number of students is 90. 15 groups of 7 students
- University 200 Level
- Arts, Literature subjects

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES
This learning design aims enable students to demonstrate:

- Critical analysis of the novel
- Understanding of language, politics and ideology
- Independent and groups online action
• Critical and respectful engagement with the work of colleagues
• Understanding of political discourses within the novel
• Understanding of the discursive means by which gender and class are formed within the novel
• Understanding of the ideological position of a character
• Understanding of voice in terms of form and content

TIME AND SETTING
The role play is designed in the following time and setting:

• The role play is set in late 19th century urban Australia
• It takes place over one teaching week in which a minimum of three postings are made

RESOURCES
Overview of resources supporting the role play

• Online learning module within Blackboard LMS
• Online discussion area
• Scenario
• Student instructions

ASSESSMENT
The task is compulsory and assessment is ungraded.

SET-UP

FACILITATOR ISSUES
• Introduce role-play in lecture
• Set up online learning module in Blackboard LMS
• Set up student groups
• Allocate roles
• Provide student instructions
• Set up online discussion
• Debrief in a face-to-face tutorial environment

REUSABILITY
• Literature
• Politics
• Cultural theory
• Sociology