Tips for a Successful Simulation

Simulations are most effective when each phase is intentionally planned and executed.

Key Reminder: Debriefing is critical to learning in simulation-based instruction. The learning happens when students make sense of their experience and connect it to economic concepts.

INTRODUCTION

Get student buy-in and prepare students to connect the activity to the economic content.

- Model enthusiasm for the activity
- Explicitly connect the simulation to the discipline
- Keep novel materials out of students' hands until they are needed

SETUP

Assign roles and establish clear activity parameters.

- Clearly explain roles, rules, and steps
- Ask students to verbally describe what they will do
- Demonstrate key actions before starting

ACTION

Run the simulation and observe student decision-making.

- Rehearse the moves in advance
- Build in cues or reminders for yourself (slides work well for this)
- Recruit student helpers to support logistics
- Observe student behavior closely
  - Take note of unexpected outcomes to discuss in the debrief

DEBRIEF

Guide students in reflecting on what happened and connect the experience to economic concepts, models, and the world outside the classroom.

- Plan for both "ideal" and "typical" student responses
- Leave sufficient time for the debrief (do not push the debrief to the next class)
- Rely on students to respond; ask follow-up questions
- Supplement student responses, as necessary, with discipline-specific vocabulary
- Use messy or unexpected outcomes as learning opportunities rather than evidence of failure