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Teaching Human Rights at the Tertiary Level: Addressing the 'knowing-doing gap' through a Role-Based Simulation Approach

Names and affiliations of all contributing authors
Susan Banki, University of Sydney
Elisabeth Valiente-Riedl, University of Sydney
Paul Duffill, University of Sydney

Full address for correspondence, including telephone and fax number and email address
Susan Banki
A22 - Old Teachers College
The University of Sydney
NSW 2006 Australia
Phone: +61 2 9351 4279
Fax: +61 2 9351 3624
Email: susan.banki@sydney.edu.au

Biographical Details

Susan Banki is a Lecturer in Human Rights at the University of Sydney. Her most recent publication was "Refugees as Educators: The Potential for Positive Impact on Educational Systems," in Margaret Vickers and Florence McCarthy, eds., *Achieving Equity in Education for Refugee and Immigrant Students*. Sydney: Information Age Publishing. In 2012 she was the recipient of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences Excellence in Teaching (Design and Practice) Award.

Elisabeth Valiente-Riedl is a Lecturer in Human Rights at the University of Sydney, teaching into an interdisciplinary postgraduate program: the Master of Human Rights and Democratisation (Asia Pacific). Her recent book, *Is Fair Trade Fair?* (London: Palgrave Macmillan), was published in 2013.

Paul Duffill is a part-time Lecturer and researcher at the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Sydney. He has been involved in teaching postgraduate-level human rights and peacebuilding simulations since 2009 and has been working in adult education and inter-cultural communication for the last nine years.

Summary
This article describes a five-pointed approach to teaching human rights at the tertiary level. This approach points to the need for human rights education that: 1) offers abilities and capacities that complement legal approaches; 2) provides students with the tools to grasp the root causes of violations; 3) incorporates learning on local, national, regional, and international levels; 4) includes significant collaborative opportunities; and 5) offers students the chance to put into practice the skills they have learned. The article critically examines and problematises this approach through a case-study examination of a 'role-based simulation' module trialled in a postgraduate human rights course at the University of Sydney, the *Human Rights Simulation*. The substantive and pedagogical challenges that have emerged are discussed, drawing on the insights from teaching the Simulation and the substance of student feedback.

Keywords
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Introduction

Tertiary education has a double task: introducing students to the prevailing knowledge in a given field, and, with the exception of more theoretical degrees, such as in philosophy, equipping students with skills that are directly transferrable to the workplace. Despite this need for practice-oriented curriculum and teaching, many tertiary programs struggle to design teaching strategies that establish deep connections between theory and practice. The challenge of applying classroom concepts, theory and ~~conscious~~ knowledge to 'realistic' contexts of interest to students outside of formal learning environments can be referred to as the *knowing-doing gap*, a concept that originally stems from corporate leadership training (Pfeffer and Sutton, 2000).

The *knowing-doing gap* is particularly worrisome in tertiary programs with a vocational element, a class of applied programs to which human rights courses invariably belong. Despite the imperative this sets for practice-oriented teaching, tertiary human rights educators are often influenced by a different set of pressures, including publishing articles that have been called '"tenure pieces" disconnected from [human rights] practice' (anonymous respondent in Mariner, 2011). Assessments, too, pose a challenge: there is a prevalent reliance on written exams, essays and class presentations as the basis for assessment rather than the hands-on, interactive practice of skills that human rights students would require for pursuing human rights advocacy (McElwee et al., 2009). Thus, it seems that students commonly lack the experience to understand how to operationalise a campaign for human rights. While tertiary study can offer an excellent introduction to the 'why' of human rights, courses may be less effective in answering the practical 'how'. As a result, students feel that they are not equipped to step into professional roles when they leave the classroom. In the postgraduate context, this has been referred to as an 'imposter complex' (Buccieri et al., 2011: 20).

This article describes the development of a Human Rights Simulation module at the University of Sydney (herein the 'Simulation') that aims to correct this imbalance. The Simulation is not the only practice-oriented teaching tool currently on offer in tertiary human rights curricula, and indeed, not the only Simulation. However, it is underpinned by a pedagogy that may inform key principles and

practical improvements for the design and delivery of practice-oriented tertiary human rights curriculum in other institutions. This article describes a five-pointed pedagogical approach to teaching human rights at the tertiary level, emphasising: an interdisciplinary understanding of human rights; the importance of tracing causality in addressing human rights violations; the multi-spatial dimensions of human rights violations and responses; the importance of collaboration between activists; and the need for inclusive and practice- and production-oriented pedagogy. The article critically examines and problematises this approach through a case-study examination of a 'role-based simulation' module trialled in a postgraduate human rights course at the University of Sydney. Here, the substantive and pedagogical challenges that have emerged are discussed, drawing on the insights from teaching the Simulation and the substance of student feedback. While the Simulation has been trialled in a postgraduate program, it could also be delivered and further developed in undergraduate human rights teaching.

A Five-Pointed Approach to Teaching Human Rights at the Tertiary Level

Five separate elements inform this approach to teaching human rights. These set clear challenges for the design and delivery of human rights curricula aiming to promote skills relevant to praxis.

First, *human rights law is not the same as human rights*. Activists working toward the protection of human rights already know that laws alone are insufficient to protect against and prevent abuses of human rights. The development discourse has been particularly quick to pick up on this gap. 'Meaningless legalistic' approaches to development have been critiqued (Uvin, 2007: 602), while the increasingly wide adoption of rights-based approaches to development acknowledges the importance of 'making human rights more operational' (Gready, 2008: 745). Further, scholarship on the role of rights as a social construction to package and promote NGO strategies – 'rights-framed approaches' – (Miller, 2010) indicates that the language of rights may have commenced with those who drafted the laws initially, but is now the purview of those who work in many fields including public relations, communications, and fundraising. The interdisciplinarity of human rights is clear. Broader reference

points for understanding human rights include ethical, philosophical, and (as discussed below) structural/historical perspectives.

However, there remains a heavy bias on the discipline of law for those who research and write (and presumably teach) about human rights at the tertiary level. Of the 25 human rights journals listed in the Australian Research Council's 2012 ERA journal rankings, 21 are coded as law journals.[1] The publication and rise of this journal, *The Journal of Human Rights Practice*, demonstrates a challenge to the assumption that law is the primary means through which we can understand human rights, with the editors' observation that 'the practical application of rights cannot be properly understood from a single disciplinary perspective' (Gready and Phillips, 2009: 4). Similarly, the 2012 Special Issue of *Sociology* devoted to human rights, and the subsequent creation of the Sociology of Rights study group of the British Sociological Association, support an increasingly interdisciplinary understanding of human rights.

In the practice of teaching, this element points to the need for coursework that goes beyond the teaching of jurisprudence and legal precedents (Smith, ~~2013~~this issue). For example, a study of article 33 of the Refugee Convention may be useful for understanding the principle of *nonrefoulement*[2], and an examination of its application in various contexts may inform how the law is interpreted domestically. So, in January 2011, when the Australian and Afghan governments signed a Memorandum of Understanding that permitted the involuntary deportation to Afghanistan of asylum seekers whose claims were rejected, salient questions emerged about the applicability of the principle of *nonrefoulement* and whether Australia was flouting international law in permitting the return of this population[3]. But other equally important nonlegal elements were at play that could benefit from close

[1] http://www.arc.gov.au/era/era_2012/era_journal_list.htm, retrieved 15 January 2013. The other 4 are coded as Criminology, Public Health, Anthropology, and Political Science.
[2] *Nonrefoulement* stipulates that refugees not be repatriated to countries where "life or freedom would be threatened on account of ... race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion" (United Nations 1951: Article 33.1).
[3] For example, http://castancentre.com/2011/11/15/can-the-australian-government-return-unsuccessful-asylum-seekers-to-afghanistan/ (accessed 10 April 2013).

examination and analysis: refugee advocates issued press releases[4]; community workers held public meetings[5] and members of Afghanistan's ethnic minority population held protests in Canberra to lay bare the continuing persecution they would suffer if returned.[6] Thus the work of protecting refugees from being sent back to countries where their lives are in danger requires not only an understanding of the law, but media work and political mobilisation strategies.

Second, *a comprehensive understanding of human rights violations must explore the roots and relationships associated with that violation*. Counter to the literature that measures human rights outcomes as a manifestation of government policy (for example, Landman, 2004), we view the human rights system as one encompassing a broader array of dynamics, such as the role in human rights violations of structural violence (Galtung, 1969; Schirch, 2004: 22-24), ethno-nationalist tensions (Ignatieff, 2011: 32-33), social/normative influence (Maney, 2000; Risse et al., 1999; Ropp and Sikkink, 1999; Woods, 2010), and the deployment of historical narratives (Minow, 1998: 144-45). In the context of tertiary human rights education, this element suggests a need to understand the relationships that undergird the discourses and actions of human rights violators, human rights protectors, and human rights victims. Several have offered methods for depicting these relationships in ways that are conceptually and practically clear, utilising approaches that map (often graphically) the social and political dynamics of a situation (Fisher et al., 2000; Francis, 2002; Johnson and Pearson, 2009). These mapping approaches demonstrate the importance of systematic considerations of social, ethno-cultural and other contextual factors in the analysis of, prevention and response to human rights violations.

Third, *the human rights regime is a multi-spatial system*. What we mean by this is that human rights violations and their responses occur on multiple spatial levels: local, national, regional, and

[4] See, for example, a statement from the Edmund Rice Centre, at http://www.erc.org.au/index.php?module=pagemaster&PAGE_user_op=view_page&PAGE_id=126 (accessed 12 April 2013).
[5] See, for example, http://www.greenleft.org.au/node/47196 (accessed 12 April 2013).
[6] http://www.theaustralian.com.au/opinion/plight-of-the-hazara-fails-to-move-stone-hearts-in-canberra/story-e6frg6zo-1226609092972 (accessed 15 April 2013).

international. Much of the 'beyond borders' literature implicitly takes this into account, starting with Keck and Sikkink's oft-quoted work (1998) explaining local activists' efforts to 'boomerang' their causes, to more recent conceptualisations that argue that the deterritorialisation of transnational politics has further accentuated the power of mobile actors, such as migrants and transnational agencies (Lyons and Mandaville, 2010). Indeed, the practice of integrating grassroots realities with national, regional and international structures and organisations is acknowledged as a critical element to support sustainable social inclusion, social equity and nonviolent relationships between and within communities (Fisher et al., 2000; Francis, 2002; Lederach, 1999). The 'fair trade' marketing strategy is an example of a multi-spatial advocacy response to perceived inequities in the global free trade architecture[7]. Here, northern NGOs – specifically 'Fairtrade'[8] labelling organisations – have worked to target northern corporations and consumers as a means to improve the livelihoods of marginalised producers in developing countries (see Valiente-Riedl 2013, pp. 50-51). An international Fairtrade labelling system, connecting consumer markets in the global north with production origins in the global south, effectively builds not only a multi-spatial advocacy strategy in a geographic sense, spanning local producers, export networks, global south and north governments, and consumers in the global north, but also qualitatively moves between political, economic and social imperatives.

This has important implications for tertiary human rights education: a comprehensive examination of human rights abuses and responses must incorporate a knowledge of local, national, regional and international dynamics. In the above example of 'Fairtrade,' NGOs have worked to operate within but also challenge the rules of the global marketplace, and to engage and partner with consumers and corporations, in an effort to improve the terms of trade for marginalised producers and workers (see Valiente-Riedl, 2013, pp. 50-51).

Fourth, *no actor is an island*. Social movement theorists have long acknowledged the need to create attributional processes that help mobilisers (human rights and otherwise) to identify the targets of

[7] For a comprehensive history of the fair trade movement, see Raynolds, Murray and Wilkinson (2007).
[8] 'Fairtrade' is a registered trademark of Fairtrade Labelling Organisations International.

their mobilisation (i.e., those whose behaviour they want to change), known as boundary framing (Gamson, 1995; Hunt et al., 1994; Silver, 1997). More recently, however, scholars have recognised that boundary framing also occurs *within* movements, and that a critical element of activists' work is identifying other actors whose goals and messages are both aligned with *and* different from their own (Wiktorowicz, 2004). This points to the need to understand – both theoretically and practically – the utility and challenges of collaboration among actors. In terms of teaching, boundary framing comes alive as a concept when students are furnished with concrete examples that challenge them to collaborate even when strategies and goals are not 100% aligned. For example, activists promoting Palestinian rights possess a wide range of opinions on strategic goals and associated tactics, and these can act as a wedge issue within the movement. As an illustration, the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign, which calls for a general boycott of economic, sporting, academic and cultural relations with Israel, has prompted debate among advocates. Some argue that the BDS should only target individuals and organisations that operate within Palestinian-claimed territory[9]; many others seek to apply pressure more broadly. Exercises that encourage students to identify and debate these tactical differences allow for a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities for collaboration.

Fifth, much of the pedagogical literature demonstrates that the presentation of *knowledge alone is not enough. Practice and production are essential*. This is the crux of the knowing-doing gap. Practice involves activities that break down skills into easier steps, removed from distracting or intimidating high pressure situations. Production, on the other hand, creates realistic situations in the learning environment where students are free to experiment with the application of their knowledge (Cook, 2001; Harmer, 1991; Rivers, 1981).

[9] For example see: interview with Norman Finkelstein, 9 February 9 2012, at http://vimeo.com/36854424 (accessed 7 April 2013); interview with Noam Chomsky, 2 September 2010, at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H5hY-gffV0M (accessed 7 April, 2013); statement by Michael Lerner in the interview: *Building a Jewish and Democratic State: A Conversation with Peter Beinart*, at http://www.tikkun.org/nextgen/building-a-jewish-and-democratic-state-a-conversation-with-peter-beinart (accessed 7 April, 2013).

The importance of attending to the knowing-doing gap is further supported by andragogical (adult learning) literature that focuses on the specific ways that adults learn, and the educational processes that engender positive learning outcomes for these populations (Chan, 2010: 27-28; Cretchley and Castle, 2001; Knowles et al., 2005: 64-69; for the various contexts where this has been applied, see also Savicevic, 1991). The Simulation, which will be examined in the following section, features a range of activities (including group collaboration, interviewing, and engaging and lobbying stakeholders) that are based on principles of andragogic practice. Differences between adults and children in motivation, experience, and desire for real-life contexts in the classroom, for example, suggest that an andragogical approach emphasises practice and production over simply presenting knowledge. Here, simulation-based activities and assessments, by providing experiential activities mirroring 'real situations', are well-placed to provide multiple opportunities for students to practice their newly acquired skills by integrating them with their existing experience and knowledge.

The implication~~s here~~ of the value of simulations ~~are~~ is evident: effective human rights educators ought to adopt a critical and conscious approach to their own teaching methods and incorporate an advancement of practical skills training. The question is: how?

We believe that role-based simulations offer an important tool for practice-oriented learning. The effectiveness of simulation activities in tertiary learning is well established (Dorn, 1989; Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Lederman, 1992), as is the relevance of their application to social justice training as noted by practitioners working in the field (for example see Deck, 2010; Lederach, 1995). Law schools hold moot courts, strategic studies programs simulate conflict situations, and Harvard University's Program on Negotiation teaches students the mechanisms of mediation and negotiation through simulated events (Kaufman & Duncan, 1992; Kunselman & Johnson, 2004; Watkins, 2007). It is

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worth noting here that internships often offer the same building of skills. However, they rarely function on multiple spatial levels, a component that is key to this approach.[10]

Case Study: The University of Sydney Role-Based Human Rights Simulation

The Human Rights Simulation module[11] aims to address all of the elements outlined above, in an effort to bridge the 'knowing-doing' gap, which often applies to human rights pedagogy. In this section, we note the practicalities of the Simulation, the skills it develops, and its current form.

The Simulation is an adaptable teaching tool, applicable to various human rights contexts, in which a *skeletal structure* comprised of several components is overlaid with the factual content of a *specific* human rights situation – the 'scenario.' The skeletal structure includes a number of core exercises, whose activities are described below. To flesh out the skeletal structure, one might overlay scenario content about child rights in Bangladesh, for example, or gay rights in Uganda. Clearly, adapting the Simulation to a new scenario requires specialised knowledge of the human rights situation chosen; the skeletal structure furnishes the educator with a process to collect and apply information specific to each human rights context. One colleague at the Australia National University is currently adapting the module for use on anti-discrimination in Australia.

The current Simulation as it is run at the University of Sydney uses a scenario based on real events that have taken place in West Papua, Indonesia, where human rights violations of the indigenous population (torture, extra-judicial killings, dispossession of land) are embedded in a variety of substantive issues: a struggle for independence/autonomy, ethnic/racial/religious conflict, control of

[10] One notable exception is the multi-dimensional internships offered by our colleagues at the Centre for Refugee Research (CRR) at the University of New South Wales, where students deeply engage on both local and international levels.

[11] The Simulation is the core assessable activity in a human rights module coordinated by Dr Susan Banki. Dr Banki conceptualised, designed, developed and authored all of the material for the Human Rights Simulation Module, and ran the first three semesters of the Simulation in their entirety. In the fourth semester, Paul Duffill provided assistance with assessments and logistics. Both Dr. Valiente-Riedl and Paul Duffill supported the theoretical underpinnings of the Simulation.

natural resources, intense militarisation, environmental degradation, and external business interests (Elmslie and Webb-Gannon, 2011; Kirksey, 2012; Ondawame, 2006).

A comprehensive step-by-step description of the module and related resources is outside the scope of this paper, but a brief explanation of the Simulation's current structural form follows. The Simulation has changed slightly each semester in response to student feedback and university temporal and spatial requirements, such as room and hour allocation. Currently, the Simulation occupies approximately one-third of a semester's in-class lecture/tutorial time, constituting about 12 hours of in-class teaching time. Most recently it was run over the course of four weeks: during two consecutive three-hour timeslots spaced one week apart, and then on one day for six hours straight two weeks later. The Simulation activities thus ran entirely during student class time, although assessments required essential group work among students outside of class time in preparation to respond to the Simulation's activities. The Simulation's exercises, described below, can be spaced out in such a way that it can be adapted to other universities' structural requirements. A brief explanation of its key activities follows.

Introduction to the Specific Human Rights Scenario

In order to ensure that students develop an in-depth knowledge of the actors and dynamics of the specific human rights violation (in this case, the situation in West Papua), materials are developed that include key readings, a structured lecture (often with a guest speaker), and useful links for further reading. This first segment is offered in a traditional presentation manner, with a focus on element two of the ~~Simulation schema~~pedagogical approach by problematising the underlying roots and dynamics of violations.

Mapping Exercise

Students are asked to graphically depict the personal, political, and economic relationships that inform one particular instance of violation. This exercise draws on the work of Johnson and Pearson (2009) and is best carried out by utilising an actual current situation related to the scenario in question. For

example, for the West Papua scenario, students are presented with the news of a recent shooting of a Papuan university student by police forces, and asked to map the relevant actors that lie at the intersection of the violation and its possible preventers, starting with local actors (friends, family, and community) and moving concentrically to more distant relationships, such as NGOs, government agencies, and international actors. Students are asked to brainstorm initial 'interventions' that work to capitalise on given relationships to produce protection or prevention outcomes. For example, having identified the (often unexplored) relationships between religious institutions and police forces, students may suggest an intervention that uses interfaith dialogue to bring victims and perpetrators together. Students then present their maps to one another to reinforce shared learning.

The mapping exercise serves several pedagogical functions, one of which is to develop an in-depth understanding of the relevant actors. Through boundary framing, students identify the most important mobilisers (i.e., those organisations working to protect human rights). Then students are divided into groups and assigned to these organisations, which may be local, national, regional or international in nature. While the organisations may not have goals that are entirely aligned, all pursue some form of advocacy on behalf of the scenario's victims.[12] For the remainder of the Simulation, students remain in these groups and are expected to model the aims and activities of their assigned organisation through role-based activities. Groups are divided carefully, trying to achieve a mix of stronger and weaker students, and students for whom English is and is not their first language. This mapping specifically addresses two elements of the approach: element two, which asks students to consider the roots, relationships and broader context associated with a particular human rights violation and element three, which asks students to examine human rights as a multi-spatial system.

Budget Exercise

[12] In many role playing situations, participants are placed in adversarial roles, i.e., the 'good guys' and 'bad guys.' In fact, the original inception of this Simulation did just that. However, it became clear that students were seduced by the dramatic opportunity of playing the role of villain and failed to learn the necessary skills of collaboration. As such, the Simulation was modified to its present form.

After discussing and agreeing upon their organisation's goals and objectives (based on factual profiles of the organisation) each group is given a budget in order to determine the tactical strategies that they will prioritise. The budget of each organisation is different, as is the cost of certain tactics. For example, the cost of conducting an interview with a witness to a human rights violation is less expensive for a local community-based group than for an international organisation, even though the international organisation has a far larger budget. This exercise reinforces the importance of theoretical work on resource mobilisation (Bob, 2005; Edwards and McCarthy, 2004) and practically forces students to allocate scarce resources effectively This activity clearly emphasises that human rights actors must strategically extend their activities beyond human rights law, as per element one of ~~the Simulation schema~~the pedagogical approach, which requires students to examine human rights from an interdisciplinary perspective.

Group Collaboration

In a subsequent exercise, students are advised that they can collaborate with other groups, and thus reduce costs. However, in order to collaborate, groups must answer a series of questions that forces the groups to consider how to align, or when it is not possible to align, objectives, strategies, constructed messages, and/or the selection of spokespersons. That is, the exercise teaches students to operationalise the tactics that they have previously selected. For example, in determining whether or not groups will collaborate on writing an editorial, the groups must ascertain if they can agree on a central message, a call for action, and which publication(s) to target. The advantages and challenges of collaboration, which element four of ~~the simulation schema~~the pedagogical approach asks students to problematise, are thus placed in stark relief.

Interviewing Techniques

Each group must prepare for a human rights interview, and then must carry it out. The interviewee may be a witness, victim, former police officer, government official, or another actor whose presence is relevant for the exercise. This will depend on the specific scenario. In the Sydney Simulation, volunteers were recruited from outside the class to play the role of interviewees, furnishing them with

specific information about their profiles. Skills around preparation, ethical interviewing, and appropriate questions and responses are reviewed beforehand; students are then able to put these skills into 'practice and production', as required for element five of ~~the Simulation schema~~the pedagogical approach.

Preparing tactics for multi-level stakeholders

Each group is given a series of assignments to respond to the scenario's human rights violation. Depending on the size of the group and the time allotted, this can ~~include~~ encompass a range of activities, the skills of which are taught beforehand, generally in tutorials throughout the semester. These may include: writing an editorial; preparing a briefing paper; creating a media strategy; producing an advocacy video; organizing and mounting a public protest; holding a press conference; preparing a shadow or alternative report; and preparing a fact sheet for legislators (at the local, national, regional and international level). While these activities may involve analysis and explanations of the law, they engage a range of other tactics as well, enabling students to engage with human rights from an interdisciplinary perspective, as per element one of the Simulation approach.

Participating in simulated lobbying activities at the regional and international level

Post-preparation, students are expected to simulate their participation in regional or international meetings. The meetings chosen, of course, ought to be relevant to the specific context. For example, for West Papua, students worked in groups that 'participated' in a simulated international meeting of the UN Human Rights Council during Indonesia's Universal Periodic Review. At the regional level, they prepared for and participated in the Second Regional Consultation of the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights with Civil Society Organisations. The specificity of these ~~agencies~~ platforms offered students a key pathway to understand the technical processes associated with the meetings, their powers and limitations, and a chance to practice 'UN-speak.' This exercise, including a range of organisations at different levels, addresses the need for students to understand the human rights regime as a multi-spatial system (element #3).

Debrief

Given the intensive nature of these activities, a debrief of the simulated activities provides a necessary means for students to reflect on the challenges they encounter and to draw upon these for future advocacy. Topics of discussion centre around: the adequacy of student preparation; the comprehensiveness of each group's strategic approach; the effective use of scarce resources; the advantages and challenges of collaboration; and reflections on what students would do differently. As such this debrief process integrates and consolidates student learning associated with all five elements in the approach.

Challenges and Feedback

A key source of data on the Simulation that has informed the development of this curriculum over two years has been student feedback. The module has been taught four times, with class sizes ranging from 7 to 63 students. Altogether, 146 students have participated in the Simulation. In four semesters, 83 anonymous pieces of feedback about the Simulation have been collected, from two sources: 1) official University of Sydney Unit of Study Evaluation (USE) surveys; and 2) an unofficial anonymous survey that was set up via Survey Monkey. Both surveys requested information about the human rights course in general; the data we discuss below only concern those comments about the Simulation specifically. A quantitative representation of the student experience of the Simulation was produced by coding qualitative survey data. Where students only made positive comments, these responses were coded as 'positive'; where students only made negative comments, these were coded as 'negative' and; where students made a mix of positive and negative comments, these were coded as 'neutral/both'. Qualitative data were further evaluated to assess two key concerns: a) key challenges for further development of this curriculum and b) the capacity for this Simulation to address the 'knowing-doing' gap in the context of teaching human rights.

Before examining the results it is important to consider the limitations of the survey sample and the data analysed. In the case of the official USE survey, which follows a standardised University format and does not ask questions about the Simulation specifically (rather about the student experience of

the unit of study regarding matters such as 'workload' and 'assessment'), only those surveys which ~~included~~ provided qualitative comments about the Simulation itself were ~~included~~used. As a consequence, the surveys included in this study do not provide a full representation of students that have participated in the Simulation, and data gathered only allows for a preliminary assessment of possible trends. In addition, neither evaluation tool specifically assessed the Simulation elements presented in this paper. Broadly, t~~T~~he survey data examined permits ~~an evaluation~~a pilot evaluation of ~~the~~ student experience of the Simulation and its capacity to bridge the 'knowing-doing' gap. However, ~~, but~~ links to ~~the strength of~~ individual elements in our pedagogical approach cannot be made, thereby limiting the capacity to evaluate the relevance of component parts of this pedagogy.~~-~~ In future generations of the Simulation, we intend to design a survey that specifically evaluates the Simulation's utility and its ability to address the pedagogical principles upon which the Simulation has been developed.

Of the 83 comments about the Simulation, 36 (43%) were wholly positive, 24 (29%) were wholly negative, and the remaining 23 (28%) were either neutral or contained both positive and negative feedback. Table 1 divides this feedback by semester. While only indicative, these data suggest that student perceptions of the Simulation have improved over time, and that wholly negative feedback has decreased considerably. Furthermore, the largest class (63 students) expressed by far the most negative feedback. This may be due to the organisational challenge of managing a larger number of students and group roles, although few of that semester's critical comments reflected this complaint specifically.

We view these numbers as encouraging for two reasons. First, as noted below, nearly all the negative comments concerned logistical and technical issues, which is why we believe negative numbers have decreased over time as concerns were addressed. Second, we erred on the side of 'negativity' when coding the comments, so that a comment with a positive aspect and constructively negative one was placed in the 'neutral/both' category. For example, several comments noted positive elements of the Simulation but then suggested that it be a larger percentage of the final grade, such as this comment:

'I just LOVE this simulation, since it really is useful "for life" but I think 10% doesn't do the (sic) justice, given the effort we are putting in' (Semester 2, 2011, Survey Monkey). This was coded in the 'neutral/both' category, rather than in the positive category.

A great deal of useful student feedback was also received via unsolicited email, nearly all of it positive. This information has not been included in the numbers above, as it can be assumed that students were less likely to offer identifiable negative feedback to their instructors. These comments nevertheless offer useful qualitative data and thus play an illustrative role. Some of the comments below come from email feedback.

Student feedback can be divided into four general categories. These are comments on: (1) the **substantive** quality of the Simulation; (2) the **workload** required; (3) the nature of **group work;** and (4) the **assessment** of the Simulation. The great majority of feedback on the **substantive** quality of the Simulation was positive, with students noting the specific skills they had learned and/or their vastly improved knowledge of West Papua. One student appreciated the way that the Simulation focused on solutions:

> I really enjoyed the simulation. I felt it solidified all that we had learnt throughout the semester and asked us to be involved and provide solutions. It really added to my understanding of the issues (Semester 1, 2011, USE).

Another noted greater attention to the Simulation's topic, West Papua:

> It's been a really interesting learning process and I've thought about the issues involved and engaged with the topic in a completely different way than I would in preparing an essay. It's been really interesting through preparing for the Simulation how many of us have been completely taken by the cause. Even simply looking at the facebook of classmates so many are posting videos, links to articles and news stories about the Papuan struggles (Semester 2, 2012, via email).

A third detailed the most useful learnings of the Simulation:

> The simulation was successful to give us insight into the actual politics of handling human rights issues, how state sovereignty conflicts with any attempt to practically implement the universal human rights, the simulation was also helpful for us to learn the group work, and I think the most interesting activity was the budget allocation (Semester 2, 2012, Survey Monkey).

There were only six negative comments concerning substance. One student noted the 'sensationalist' quality of the Simulation (Semester 2, 2011, USE). Another questioned whether the simulated protest her/his group mounted accurately reflected reality. These are fair comments; asking students to mount a simulated protest in which all the relevant actors, including press, happen to be present does not reflect the tedium with which some protests are planned and few people show up. Similarly, because the Simulation activities necessarily take place over the course of a month during the semester, campaigns that in reality go on for years are collapsed into a shortened time period. We believe the Simulation still has value in addressing the knowing-doing gap, despite the collapsed time frame; one way to correct for this problem is to discuss a more realistic timeline during the debriefing session.

Second, students commented on the **significant work and time required** to complete all of the Simulation's assessment tasks. Predictably, these comments were mostly negative; 25 comments referred to the work and time commitment, including 'the INTENSE volume of work' (Semester 1, 2011, Survey Monkey) or 'not enough time' (Semester 1, 2011, USE). Another noted that 'strangely' the Simulation was the best part of the class, 'although it was highly taxing' (Semester 2, 2012, Survey Monkey). Over the course of four semesters, careful attention has been paid to these comments, adjusting the time at which assignments are due, noting and repeatedly explaining the deadlines of the various activities, and extending the length of time that students have to prepare. However, it is important to take a balanced approach in responding to comments about workload to ensure that the pedagogical approach is not compromised, possibly needlessly. ~~This Responding to comments about workload is a difficult balance to achieve,~~ both because "light" assessments can lack pedagogical value~~,~~ and also because complaints vary ~~, and varies~~ considerably from student to student and class to class.

Third, students commented on the nature of **group work**. Comments along this nature were about evenly split. For the most part, negative comments about group work were related to assessments, which we cover below. One student found it a 'headache inducing' experience (Semester 1, 2011, USE). Another was more neutral, noting group work facilitated 'keep(ing) my temper' (Semester 2, 2011, USE). Other students were positive about group work, such as the student who noted:

> In the end, (our group) wasn't successful in reaching our goal, and that was really disappointing. But I guess it was realistic. Anyway I appreciate now how hard it is to work in groups, and I appreciate the way the simulation made us think about that. We were completely focussed on fighting the government and didn't spend enough time figuring out what the other local Papuan groups wanted. Even in (our group), we weren't in full agreement, but it was an incredible learning experience (Semester 1, 2011, via email).

Fourth, the greatest number of comments (28) were concerned, in one way or another, with how the Simulation was **assessed**. Many complained in the first semester that it was unfair to apportion 40% of one's grade to a group task. When that was lowered in response to 10% the following semester, students complained that, given the work that they had to put in, that the percentage should have been higher. Some students noted that the Simulation allowed them to demonstrate what they had learned, but a great many ~~others~~ felt their own skills were not well recognised. According to one student, the Simulation represented a 'great merging of learning, but group-work is never really a good accurate individual grade' (Semester 2, 2012, USE).

Several adjustments have been made over the four semesters to respond to student concerns. Most recently, a matrix was provided through which students assessed everyone in their group, the collective of results of which could add to or detract from their final group grade by 10%. Some students appreciated this approach, but others complained, saying it created a stressful competitive environment within the group.

Assessments continue to be the most challenging part of running the Simulation in an effective manner. We believe these exercises have pedagogical merit, and four semesters of positive feedback on learning outcomes demonstrate this, but many of these carefully designed exercises must be done

in group situations in order to reflect realistic campaigns. Choosing groups carefully, as noted earlier, helps to mitigate the strong group/weak group complaint, but in an assessment driven culture, as tertiary institutions are, it is inevitable that students will be eager to ensure they are judged exactly based on their own skills. An individual personal reflective paper to cap the Simulation is under consideration, in which students will be judged on their reflections of the Simulation, in addition to the skills they demonstrate. This will require more work – for students and for the educators – but it remains a possibility for the future.

Conclusion: A Leap of Faith?

This paper has suggested five important pedagogical justifications for the inclusion of skills-based learning at the tertiary level. First, human rights law is not the same thing as human rights. Second, a comprehensive understanding of human rights violations must explore the roots and relationships associated with that violation. Third, the human rights regime is a multi-spatial system. Fourth, no actor is an island. Fifth, knowledge alone is not enough. Practice and production are essential.

The design, preparation and execution of the Human Rights Simulation module is a time-intensive process, requiring that educators commit significant hours to its implementation. Further, it does not follow a traditional academic path and is therefore open to criticism from students who have come to expect a certain type of learning and certain types of assessments. For these reasons, continuing efforts to improve the Simulation represent a leap of faith, because there is not yet sufficient evidence to argue an explicit causal link between the Simulation and an increase in human rights sector career opportunities for the students, an assurance for which students clamour. However, we can endeavour to measure, and indeed have provided preliminary evidence for, the impact of the Simulation on skills development.

Available data on the student experience of the Human Rights Simulation indicates that while significant challenges remain, students have had a generally positive response to this curriculum and have made compelling observations of deeper learning through this module. However, to truly test its

merits, further evaluations must be undertaken. Targeted student surveys and focus groups could help to assess the capacity of the Simulation to address the 'knowing-doing gap', specifically, to test the relevance of the individual elements of the five-pointed pedagogy outlined in this article. Longitudinal research monitoring the ability of graduates to apply knowledge and skills gained from the Simulation in their work could also benefit this research project. In addition, interviews with employers may help to trace the relevance of the Simulation curriculum to applied work in the field. In the interim, the design of the Human Rights Simulation curriculum itself provides encouraging evidence that practice or 'practitioner relevant' activities (for example preparing a press release or shadow report) and 'real world' skills (such as budgeting and interviewing) can be incorporated into human rights courses, allowing the dissemination of not only knowledge but importantly, the learning of *craft.*

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Table 1: Anonymous Student Feedback, Human Rights Simulation, 2011-2012

Semester	Size of class	Total Comments	Positive	Neutral/Both	Negative
2011_1	34	20	7	7	6
			35%	35%	30%
2011_2	63	29	10	5	14
			34%	17%	48%
2012_1	7	6	3	2	1
			50%	33%	17%
2012_2	42	28	16	9	3
			57%	32%	11%
Totals	146	83	36	23	24
			43%	28%	29%

Source: Responses from University of Sydney Unit of Study Evaluations and Survey Monkey