

BBSE3009 Project Management and Engineering Economics

<http://www.mech.hku.hk/bse/bbse3009/>

ROLE PLAYING EXERCISE (RPE) (2012-2013)

The aim of this exercise is to simulate a site meeting at which the various parties in a construction project will meet and discuss controversial issues and try to resolve them. Students are asked to play the roles of different personnel/parties and explore the measures for handling the related claim(s) and dispute(s), in a professional, creative and constructive manner.

The Scenario

Super Construction Company is carrying out a construction project for an academic building in a university. However, the project progress and site operation were affected in November by a serious accident in which two workers fell from a working platform and died when removing materials inside a lift shaft. The construction work was stopped for two weeks for the Police and relevant Government departments to carry out inspection and investigation. The project team will meet and discuss the remedial actions and try to resolve the dispute/issues.



Assignment of Roles

Students shall form a group of 6 to 7 persons to perform this role playing exercise. Each student will take up a role from the following list and represent the respective character. There is no need to take up every role on the list but the composite of the participants shall be reasonable.

Supervision sector:	Production sector:
- Representative of the Client/Employer	- Project manager
- Architect	- Site manager
- Structural Engineer	- Contract manager
- Building Services Engineer	- Contractor's Quantity Surveyor
- Quantity Surveyor	- Domestic Sub-contractor
- Clerk of Works	- Nominated Sub-contractor

Major Issues to Discuss

- The Main Contractor applied for an extension of time of four weeks because the material delivery and building services installation work were delayed during the period after the accident. The Client has received the application but does not agree with the request.
- After the accident, the Main Contractor also claimed for expense in relation to the damages at the construction site. These damages include the working platform and construction materials of the Lift Sub-contractor. The Clerk of Works is asking the Quantity Surveyor to estimate the losses and will negotiate with the Main Contractor.

The meeting/discussion of each student group must be brief and shall last for about 15 minutes. You may make any assumptions or suggestions for the scenario, if needed.

A debriefing discussion will be conducted after the role-playing so that the students can define what they have learned and reinforce it.

Assessment

There are two graded components for this exercise, each constitutes 50% of the total marks.

- The presentation given by the group. The assessment criteria include contents, teamwork, creativity and communication skills.
- A written summary prepared by each student on the character's perspective and opinions about the issues being discussed. The summary shall be not more than two A4 pages and be submitted within 3 days after the role-playing. Submission shall be done by email to “cmhui@hku.hk”.

References and Resources

- Chappell, D., 2011. *Building Contract Claims*, 5th ed., Wiley-Blackwell, Oxford. [KN83.8 C46 b]
- Hills, M. J., 1995. *Building Contract Procedures in Hong Kong*, Longman, Hong Kong. [692.95125 H65]
- Knowles, R., 1992. *Claims: Their Mysteries Unravelling*, 2nd ed., Knowles Publications, Cheshire. [692.8 K6]
- Kwakye, A. A., 1997. *Construction Project Administration in Practice*, Longman, Harlow, Essex. [624.068 K98 c]
- Lai, A. K.-T., 1987. *The Standard Form of Building Contract for Hong Kong*, Professionalmanship Publ. Co., Hong Kong. [692.8095125 L1]
- Trickey, G. and Hackett, M., 2001. *The Presentation and Settlement of Contractors' Claims*, 2nd ed., Spon, London. [343.42078624 T82] (eBook)

Appendix

What is Role-Playing?

Role-playing can be thought of as unstructured drama. A student looks at the topic from the perspective of a character, who will affect and be affected by the topic. The instructor provides the setting and the characters, but the students have to decide their characters' lines and directions. Generally, the students will need to do some research to make informed decisions from their characters' perspectives. This research opportunity can easily become an inquiry element.

Role-playing exercises teach skills that are often assumed to be learned outside of the classroom (and sometimes aren't), and how to use those skills to complement technical knowledge. These exercises require the students to use imagination, background knowledge appropriate to the character being role-played, and communication skills.

There is no "correct" outcome and the scenarios are often open-ended. The education goals are dealt with when students research their roles and the problem under discussion. The subtle goals are for students to learn not just their characters' but other characters' perspectives in order to work with them and/or to persuade them to some end. Actually, the real-life situation is shaped by the processes that the students have spontaneously simulated.

Why Use Role-Playing?

Role-playing is simultaneously interesting and useful to students because it emphasizes the "real-world" side of the subject. It challenges the students to deal with complex problems with no single "right" answer and to use a variety of skills beyond those employed in a typical academic study. In particular, role-playing presents the student a valuable opportunity to learn not just the course content, but other perspectives on it.

Role-playing, like any good inquiry approach, transforms the content of education from information into experience. It can effectively motivate students, augment traditional curricula, and teach real-world skill. The creative aspect of the exercise will make it seem more like play than like work. The primary purpose of role-playing exercises is to get students to look at the material they are learning in a new light.