



**Online Business Simulations**  
PEDAGOGY | ASSESSMENT | LEARNING

**BUSINESS GRADUATE CAPABILITIES FORUM**

www.bizsims.edu.au

Funded by




PROJECT PARTNERS  
THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND | GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY | LA TROBE UNIVERSITY  
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### Challenges in Business Education

- Large cohorts
- How can students develop and practice **business capabilities**?
  - Reports and essays are limited
  - Business plans and case studies not dynamic / interactive
  - WIL experiences often focused on operational skills
  - Exams and MOOCs largely content-based
- Can we provide large cohorts with a learning experience where students sharpen their managerial skills through regular feedback?



**Online Business Simulations**  
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### Authenticity Matrix

(Herrington, Reeves and Oliver, 2010)




**Online Business Simulations**  
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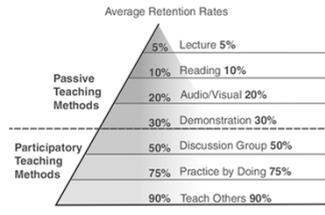
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### The Learning Pyramid



Adapted from National Training Laboratories, Bethel, Maine




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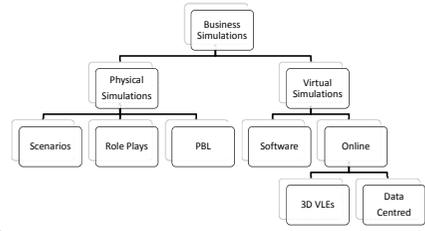
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### What are Online Business Simulations?




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### What are Online Business Simulations?

Complex simulations designed to teach strategy, competitive analysis, finance, marketing, HRM, cross-functional alignment, and the selection of tactics to build a successful business.




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### Project Aims



- Map the **features** of online business simulations.
- Evaluate the contribution of simulation-based **pedagogies** to **student learning outcomes**.
- **Identify** and **promote** innovative **pedagogies** and **resources** for using online business simulations as learning tools.
- Assess the **challenges** associated with the integration of simulations into sustainable teaching practice in business.




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### Project Resources



- Simulations Audit
- Simulation Learning Barometer
- Case Studies
- Good Practice Guide
- Website [www.bizsims.edu.au](http://www.bizsims.edu.au)
- National Workshops




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### Why simulation-based learning?

(Lateef, 2010)



- Applied to many different disciplines
- A technique (not a technology) to amplify real experiences
- Mostly "immersive" in nature
- Experiential learning
- Authentic learning




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### Why simulation-based learning?

(Biggs, 1999; Feinstein, Mann, & Corsun, 2002; Fripp, 1997)



- Developing skills in a safe and risk-free environment
- Make errors that do not have real repercussions
- Enhance participant's enthusiasm and motivation to actively learn
- Encourage collaborative learning



### Why business simulations?



- Most business programs are among the largest fields of studies UG/PG students
- Integrate the various elements of running a business
- Experiential learning environments that replicate workplace tasks
- Opportunity for manageable large class capstone learning experience



### Why business simulations?



- Authentic and dynamic team-based learning experiences
- Mirror real world problems
- Develop employability skills
- Need to reframe/rethink teaching practices



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### Why online business simulations?

(Adobor & Daneshfar, 2006; Bowness, 2004)



- Apply critical thinking and decision making in a non-linear environment
- Decisions/actions lead to complex and unexpected outcomes
- Develop graduate capabilities and strategic decision making skills
- Continuous feedback to help students understand the outcomes of decisions
- Technology enabled learning available any time, any where




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### What do students say about bizsims?



- The best aspects of using simulation is that it is close to a **real life scenario**, but at the same time it allows us to **make mistakes**
- I think it's definitely better than any other course at the uni, because it's **practical** and **you really make something happen** and it's not only about theory
- Sometimes we had **arguments** but in the end we used the data to prove which decision was better




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### What do students say about bizsims?



- We really had to **work closely together** because every decision made by each group member could affect our performance
- Due to the fast pace of the simulation we really develop **problem solving skills** that help us to **make decisions** quickly




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### Simulations & PBL

Benefits of simulations	Benefits of problem based learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ grasp the interrelationships among the various functions of business</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ develop knowledge that can be applied in many situations</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ problem solving</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ skills in problem solving</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ decision making skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ evidence based decision making</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ self awareness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ enhance intrinsic motivation</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ communication skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ collaboration</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ sense of accomplishment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ self-directed lifelong learning</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ active and dynamic learning experience</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ realism without severe risks of failure</li> </ul>	



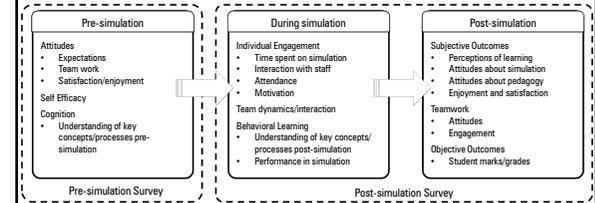
### Learning outcomes

Learning outcomes are considered to be multidimensional:

- Cognitive learning can be described as developing an understanding of basic facts
- Affective learning is where the simulation participants perceive that they learn, hold positive attitudes and satisfaction
- Behavioural learning can be described as simulation participants taking the facts and formulating correct decisions or actions



### Simulation Learning Barometer




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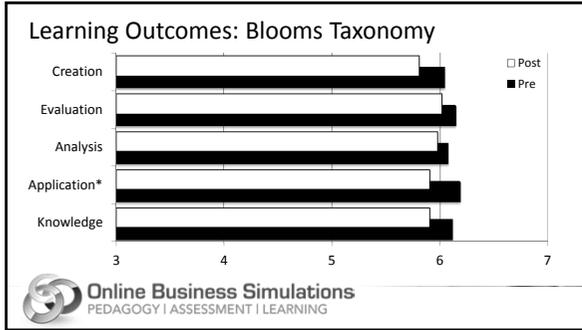
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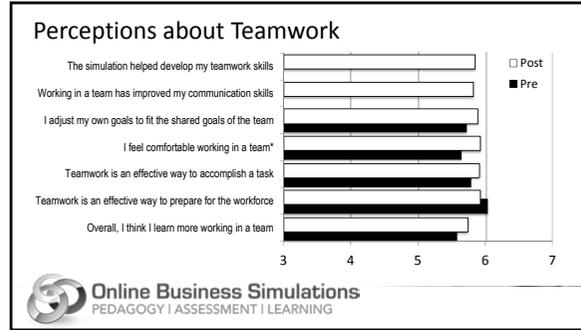
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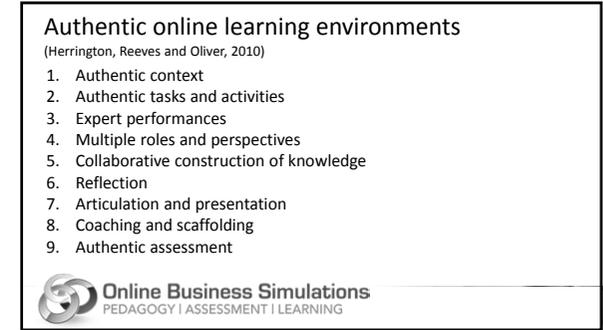
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### Simulation Pedagogies

- Map out expectations (time, team roles, instructor as a 'guide on the side')
- Give students time to learn from trial and error, trials or practice rounds
- Provide support (e.g. videos, demos, manuals, flow charts)
- Encourage collaboration (e.g. facebook, skype, wikis)
- Align learning outcomes
- Use complementary pedagogies (e.g. field trips, industry speakers, mentors, cases)
- Link curriculum to events in the simulation, use class time for debriefs
- Assess learning (not time or effort spent on the simulation)
- Aim for authentic learning and assessment (Herrington et al. 2010)




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### Assessment

Assessment aligned with learning outcomes and simulation tasks

- Team interaction (e.g. peer evaluation, video, wikis)
- Reports and presentations
  - ↳ Proposals or plans
  - ↳ Company performance
  - ↳ Competitor analysis
- Reflective assessment
- Performance metrics
- Quizzes




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### Student Reflection

*The simulation provided a great challenge to push myself to deal with a complex environment, project task management, leadership, problem solving and team relationship management.*

*Detailed planning, quick reactions, keeping cool and encouraging team members are four major skills I learned from the operation of the simulation.*




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Some challenges...

For Educators

- Commercial packages require additional funding
- Steep initial learning curve

For Students

- Time is compressed
- Some variables cannot be simulated
- Students become too engaged
- Not a solution for all team work problems



A banner for Online Business Simulations. At the top left is the circular logo with three interlocking loops. To its right, the text "Online Business Simulations" is in a large, bold, sans-serif font, with "PEDAGOGY | ASSESSMENT | LEARNING" in a smaller font below it. In the center, the website address "www.bizsims.edu.au" is displayed in a bold, black, sans-serif font. At the bottom, there are three sections: "PROJECT PARTNERS" with a list of universities (The University of Queensland, Griffith University, La Trobe University, University of South Australia, William Angliss Institute); "Funded by" with the Australian Government crest and logo; and the "Office for Learning &amp; Teaching" logo.

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