



Towards a New Generation of Engaged Universities: *The Need to Act, Adapt and Transform*

16th– 18th April, 2024 | Kempinski Central Avenue
(Formerly the Address Dubai Mall), Dubai, UAE

From flipped classroom to Gamification: Arab League Crisis Management Simulation in AUE

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Overview

From flipped
classroom to
Gamification:
Arab League
Crisis
Management
Simulation in
AUE

- ✓ Introduction
- ✓ American University in the Emirates (AUE)
- ✓ Context & Theoretical Background/ Pedagogy
- ✓ Institutional Goals and Outcomes Achieved
- ✓ Background of Program, Course & Students
- ✓ Implementation – Lesson plan





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Introduction

- ✓ Students-centered approach (Tang, 2023; Hains & Smith, 2012)
- ✓ **Low-tech classroom** but engagement via **flipped classroom** (Reyna, 2015) **gamification** & **simulation** (Wiggins, 2016), following the principles of problem-based and team-based learning.
- ✓ Promoting **critical thinking, creativity**, improving **communication, collaboration, and negotiation skills**
- ✓ Introducing to students/ “diplomats” real-life tools (they need to write **diplomatic memos** and draft a **UNSC Resolution**).
- ✓ Actual class taught in Fall 2023-2024 during the course MAD 601 (Master of Arts in Diplomacy/ Diplomacy in the Gulf)





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American University in the Emirates (AUE)

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- ✓ Vibrant & fairly young private tertiary education institution (2006)
- ✓ Steadily growing both in size and quality
- ✓ International accreditations, along with stellar results in all ACC ones (SACSCOC, AACSB, NASAD, ABET) & 4-stars in QS Ranking
- ✓ Unique Colleges like the College of Security and Global Studies
- ✓ Unique specializations like Sport Management
- ✓ One of the Top 100 Universities in the entire MENA Region
- ✓ Focus on applied knowledge
- ✓ College of Security & Global Studies fastest growing College, despite being 9 years old - from 20 students (2015) to more than 500 (2024)





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Context & Theoretical Background/ Pedagogy

- ✓ Student-Centered Learning (active engagement)
- ✓ Flipped Classroom (research/ preparation)
- ✓ Problem-Based Learning (provide solutions)
- ✓ Team-Based Learning (negotiations, lobbying)
- ✓ Case-Based Learning (realistic cases)
- ✓ Brainstorming & Collaborative Learning
- ✓ **Gamification & Simulation (crisis management and UNSC meeting simulations)**

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Institutional Goals and Outcomes Achieved

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- ✓ In AUE's Strategic Plan 2023-2028 "Quality Inclusive Education & Lifelong Learning" focuses on **cultivating critical thinking and thus empowering our students with the knowledge, skills, and experiences**
- ✓ **Teamwork, openness and creativity** are some of AUE core values
- ✓ Academic goals include offering and **maintaining high quality and market-relevant programs and maintaining a rigorous academic assessment plan** that includes continuous improvement.
- ✓ An institutional goal is to **enhance the on-campus experience**
- ✓ By the end of 2028, the AUE plans to achieve 30% of core and specialized courses to be **skill-based and employer-led**.
- ✓ We also aim to an overall 80% **student satisfaction**





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Background of Program, Course & Students

- ✓ One of three master's degrees offered by the College of Security and Global Studies is the Master's of Arts in Diplomacy
- ✓ The program aims to cultivate the culture and provide the skills needed for any future diplomat, employee at an international organization, or anyone involved with international relations
- ✓ Many international students from Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Egypt, Morocco, Algeria, Syria and Palestine
- ✓ Program's Learning Outcomes focus on practical issues & the Diplomacy in the Gulf Course Learning Outcomes include interpreting the bilateral and multilateral policies that the GCC (scope broadened to include Arab League) implement
- ✓ Average CGPA in this class was above 3.4





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Implementation – Lesson Plan

Four-Part Lesson Breakdown

- ✓ Part A: Pre-class Student Preparation (flipped classroom) based on a Crisis Management Scenario
- ✓ Part B1: **In-class** Simulation Dynamics with individual diplomatic memos and discussion
- ✓ Part B2: **In-class** Escalation (decision-making under stress)
- ✓ Part C: **In-class** Drafting the UN Resolution
- ✓ Part D: Feedback for knowledge, improvement & evaluation





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Part A (at home)

- ✓ Based on the “flipped classroom” strategy the students receive the following package (Information about their country, scenario of a crisis in the Middle East region that they need to respond to, guidelines as to how a UN Resolution is drafted, guidelines as to how to draft a diplomatic memo (both have already been discussed in the class), the latest actual UN Resolution relative to the crisis or the country that is the subject of the crisis
- ✓ Moreover, students need to research as regards their countries’ policies pertaining to the issue and they prepare a diplomatic memo where their countries’ positions are stated.





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Part B (in class)

- ✓ Application of “gamification and simulation”. The class simulates an Arab League Summit & they start to engage in discussion concerning the solution of the crisis they had prepared at home
- ✓ Possible course of action, mainly including diplomatic measures at a multilateral level (GCC, Arab League, UN) is negotiated
- ✓ Thirty minutes into the lesson, the instructor provides the students with an escalation of the crisis, indicating that they need to react fast (crisis within the crisis).
- ✓ Arab League measures but also international ones main considerations should be taken into account in Part B2)





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Part C (in class)

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- ✓ Application of “gamification and simulation”. Students need to combine the proposed measures from the previous day in a draft UNSCR to be presented by the UAE (as non-permanent member of the UNSC during the simulation year)
- ✓ Students not only learn how to draft a UN Resolution, but also understand the meaning of carefully choosing one’s words when in a diplomatic environment.
- ✓ During this part, an expert colleague in drafting UN Resolutions, as a former Model United Nations organizer provides support, so that Preambulatory & Operative Clauses are correctly used.





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Results & Outcomes

- ✓ In individual Diplomatic memos students learn to summarize the most important part of their cases & differentiate between the background (facts), the analysis (opinions based on facts), conclusions (based on the analysis) & recommendations (based on conclusions)
- ✓ In group UNSC Draft Resolution students learn use of words
- ✓ Flipped classroom research
- ✓ Realistic Simulation Experiences (enthusiasm, ownership)
- ✓ Enhancement of Student Skills





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Reflections & Lessons Learned

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- ✓ Importance of Avoiding Sensitive Political Issues
- ✓ Importance of knowing your students
- ✓ Managing Time and Educator Flexibility
- ✓ Challenges and Student Engagement
- ✓ Extrinsic Motivation & Grading (not used)
- ✓ Feedback 3X3 Importance (for accountability, improvement and knowledge) by (students, peers and self)
- ✓ (Un)Importance of technology





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Recommendations

- ✓ Any simulation/gamification class should not occur in the beginning of the Semester
- ✓ Create a sense of community
- ✓ Time management including flipped classroom, careful design, time-keeping
- ✓ Challenge of integrating gamification/ simulation to the course assignments (at least actual participation bonuses – extrinsic motivation)
- ✓ Teaching approach and methodologies for all disciplines
- ✓ Technology unimportant; yet enabler (eg VR)





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Conclusions

- ✓ Remarkable potential of combining low-tech educational strategies with active student participation to foster significant learning outcomes
- ✓ Chosen pedagogical methodologies, develop key skills including teamwork, creativity, and critical analysis
- ✓ Alignment with institutional objectives to cultivate globally conscious citizens
- ✓ Gamification and role-play as motivational factors
- ✓ Overarching message: education is profoundly impactful through the application of innovative, yet accessible strategies, with or without the use of technology





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