

Engagement and Learning Through a WTO Simulation in the International Business Classroom

Arbuda Sharma

UPES School of Business, Dehradun, Uttarakhand, India

Yashvi Pancholi

FORE School of Management, New Delhi, India

Abstract. This paper presents an engagement and learning framework for a roleplay simulation of the World Trade Organization (WTO), aimed at promoting experiential learning and critical thinking through role-play. The objective was to engage students in the classroom activity, participate in discussions, and develop their learning via reflective understanding about the international trade dynamics of the WTO. A structured simulation exercise was designed and later developed into a replicable model. Student learning was observed through three levels of deliberation, reflecting their depth of immersion and cognitive engagement during the simulation. Feedback was collected using a qualitative approach and analyzed to develop the Engage-Participate-Learn (EPL) framework, grounded in Bloom's Revised Taxonomy. The EPL framework was chosen because it reflects the spectrum of learning in which a student engages while taking part in this type of roleplay simulation. The taxonomy also guided the design and assessment of learning outcomes throughout the simulation. The pedagogical tool in this study contributes to the discourse on active learning by offering a robust, adaptable framework for international business education and by showcasing simulation as an effective tool for deep, reflective learning for students of the WTO and international business.

Keywords: WTO Simulation, experiential learning, Bloom's Taxonomy, role-play pedagogy, EPL Framework.

1. A Brief about the WTO in International Business (IB) Education

The intellectual contribution of business schools has much to do with how they impart knowledge in management education. And importantly, within teaching and learning in international business (IB) as a specialization, the dissemination of knowledge of global institutions remains relatively underdeveloped. The World Trade Organization (WTO) is one such institution, that has always been complex to comprehend by IB students. As future business managers dealing in cross-country trade and negotiations, it is vital to have a thorough understanding

This shortened version of the article is for promotional purposes on publicly accessible databases.

Readers who wish to obtain the full text version of the article can order it via the url

<https://www.neilsonjournals.com/JIBE/abstractjibe20sharpan.html>

Any enquiries, please contact the Publishing Editor, Peter Neilson pneilson@neilsonjournals.com

© NeilsonJournals Publishing 2025.

of the WTO. The WTO is the sole global trade regulating body, that was established in 1995. Not that trade activities were not under any arrangement until 1995, but rather a provisional trade agreement existed between countries popularly known as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). GATT along with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB), came into existence post-World Wars I & II, as an ad hoc arrangement for trade to take place between nations. Twelve ministerial conferences and eight rounds of negotiations have been conducted since its inception, that began with the reduction of tariffs. In the eighth round of the Marrakesh agreement, the WTO came into being as an institutional approach to managing global trade with the perspective that the entire world was on a path of growth and development. However, its neutrality was and has been debated at multiple levels. It is a body for regulating trade and liberalization of trade between the member nations, the trade characteristics, growth trajectories, their micro- and macro-economic frameworks, and their points of agreement and contention, which all in all make the WTO a complex institution to understand.

The key functions of the WTO include trade negotiations, dispute settlement, trade monitoring and capacity building. The WTO plays a crucial role in overseeing, shaping, and enforcing the trade policies amongst the member nations. The trade policies ensure free trade to help the member nations to eliminate tariffs and other barriers. These trade policies also protect the industries from external competitors. With the help of these policies, the WTO enables its member nations to trade freely which further helps the economic growth of the nations (Pushp et al., 2024). Scant literature has been found that focuses on the WTO within the teaching pedagogies of IB education (Hawthorne, 2022). The teaching of the essence of the WTO on ensuring the five principle clauses of trade has not been explored in depth and hence requires a different pedagogical approach to be taught in classroom settings (Buinwi et al., 2024). It has become even more important for students to explore and learn about the WTO and its trade policies (Gallo & Steagall, 2023), as it provides them with cues to understand the issues that different countries face when they trade with each other in the current more globalised world.

The key learning objectives of this exercise are to enhance student learning and comprehend the role of the WTO in global trade (Abuseridze, 2021). At a basic level, an understanding of trade and the WTO terminologies is an essential component for IB students, without which IB education is incomplete (Baena-Rojas et al., 2023). The exercise enables students not only to understand international trade policy and agreement insights (Baena-Rojas et al., 2023), but also to develop crucial skills in trade negotiation and diplomacy (Meerts, 2017). Knowing the global trade regulator and its impact on business strategies is a critical component of international business education (Mitchell & Mishra, 2019). For IB students it is important to analyze the WTO's stand on trade issues concerning developed, developing and underdeveloped countries (Bohanes &