



**UNESCO Chair
on Visual Anticipation
and Futures Literacy
towards Visual Literacy**



ROLE-PLAYING

Assuming different roles while researching, discussing or analyzing a topic, provides a dynamic and immersive learning experience, allowing learners to, actively, engage with scenarios and concepts. This experiential learning fosters critical thinking, creativity and imagination, encouraging participants to think outside the box and explore alternative viewpoints. By embodying different roles, they gain insights into their own behaviors, beliefs, and reactions, leading to personal development and self-reflection. Regardless of the role, personal memories and points of view always emerge during the process.

The tool **aims** to:

- Support understanding and the development of empathy and interpersonal skills.
- Shed light on different aspects of a topic and train learners to defend different points of view.
- Facilitate emotional growth and self-awareness as learners explore and express emotions in a safe and supportive environment.
- Shed light on tacit memories.
- Bring to the fore and comprehend tacit assumptions and deriving anticipations.

How to apply it

Facilitators offer a variety of roles corresponding to main actors involved in the topic under examination. Learners are free to choose any of the available roles and take some time to imagine how the chosen persona would experience the topic under examination. Depending on the conditions (social issue; research activity; business topic, etc.) the facilitator can give more or less time for exploration.



Learners are expected to step into the shoes of the chosen persona and imagine her/his life, ways of thinking, perhaps thoughts, feelings and actions. Learners need to a) narrate the topic/event from the point of view of the assumed persona in the most possible concrete manner; b) bring visual materials that support their narratives; c) explicitly refer to the affective impact of the topic/event on the assumed persona; d) speculate on the consequences it has/d on her/his imagined life.

This tool involves rigorous imagination and a great deal of assumptions on the part of the learners. While narrating the imagined scenario, they will inevitably expose their own understandings, assumptions, perceptions and anticipations. It is important that facilitators support each learner to dig deeper, focus better and visualize in as many details as possible the assumed role.

Peers take notes on the questions and thoughts that emerge in their minds while listening. Facilitators need to note all crucial information that provide new insights and understandings for further discussion. This material will become a new starting point to broaden the discussion of the topic under examination, will deepen understanding and will facilitate novel solutions.

Suggested combination with other Visual Literacy tools

The “Role-playing” tool combines effectively with the “[Barcoded Baby](#)”, the “[Wall](#)”, the “[Stage](#)”, the “[Identity Triangle](#)”, the “[Visuality Iceberg](#)”, the “[Frame](#)”, the “[White T-shirt](#)”, the “[Letter to an unborn child](#)”, and the “[Reframing concepts](#)” tools.

NOTE: Role-playing could be sensitive or problematic under certain occasions, e.g. when it involves assuming victim/perpetrator roles in violent conflict environments. Facilitators need to judge if this tool is appropriate to use or if they need to adjust their questions in a way that will not (re)traumatize the learners or cause emotions difficult to handle.