



University of Michigan Provost's Teaching Innovation Prize

2019 WINNER



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ViewPoint: Simulating Decision Makers' Choices in Classrooms and Online

Innovation Description

Role-playing simulations immerse learners in complex decision-making settings, providing opportunities to experience first-hand the challenges that arise when decision-makers must come to a collective decision over which they disagree. ViewPoint is a cloud-based software that streamlines the authoring and implementation of such simulations, and it is flexible enough to support a wide range of simulation scenarios, from intense in-person, multi-day events to entirely online, asynchronous experiences. The barriers of creating a simulation for an educator, and participating in a simulation for a student, are lowered, creating a more inclusive experience. Participants are assigned roles to play, and features like the newsfeed and dynamic calendar keep all participants informed of decisions being made, making the complex process more visible and comprehensible. Creators and facilitators can assemble documents and materials in advance, tailor templates to suit their own needs, and easily share the results of the simulations with other interested parties, making the role-playing process more understandable and legible even for those who did not directly participate.

ViewPoint makes real the messy, complex process of decision making in a way that lowers barriers for this pedagogical experience to be used in more places, by more students. The simulations made possible by this platform are consistently described by participants as valuable learning experiences impossible to capture in other settings, directly related to the work in policy and community advocacy that students go on to pursue.

Comments

I loved the newsfeed and ability to learn about all of the different roles through the individual profiles. It was also helpful to see the different groups, which to me was a reflection of the various alliances that were formed and helped me navigate the process.

I had to critically evaluate what information/assumptions I base my policy preferences on and realize how these differ between people.

There are a lot more stakeholders with influence than I would have originally expected. Early on, I assumed that most people would be against the pipeline. However, the potential changes in livelihood of those impacted by a shutdown, though marginal compared to the rest of the state, were very much a key part of the exercise. Additionally, the impacts of lobbying and money were also felt during the simulation.

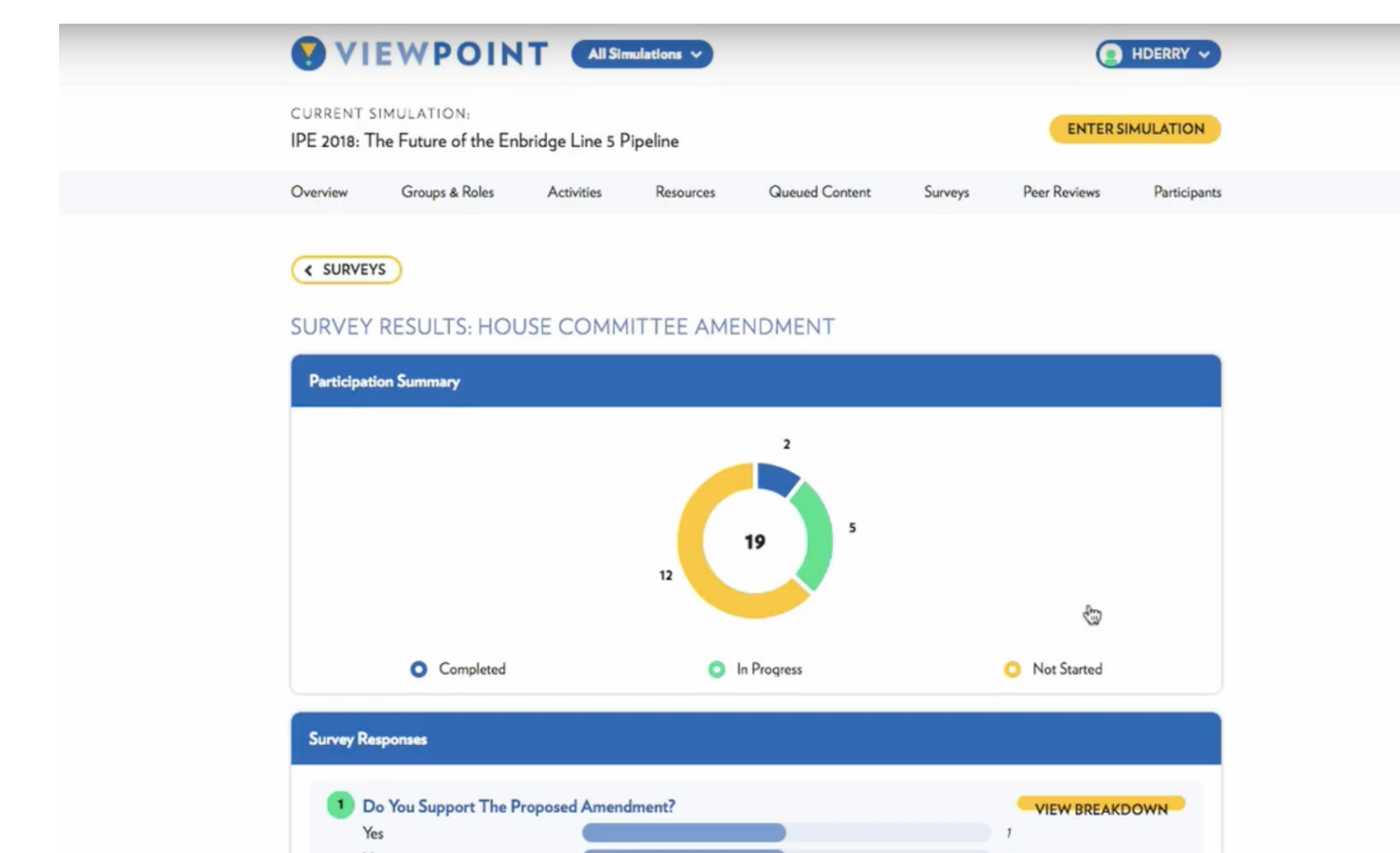
Playing a role that had very little real power was an insightful experience. It was often challenging to feel like my positions were being heard. It definitely taught me how difficult it can be to feel like part of the policy making process when you don't have real power/influence.

It is an incredibly flexible and intuitive program that could facilitate decision-making simulations of all kinds....clearly designed with an eye towards promoting engagement, inclusion, coordination, and ease of access for simulation participants.

Examples of Teaching Innovation



ViewPoint enables instructors to quickly create custom simulations that meet their specific learning objectives.



With ViewPoint, an instructor can assign participants into groups and roles, communicate with participants in multiple ways and collect information from them before, during, and after the simulation.



In Winter 2019, the Ross Business School's *Leadership Crisis Challenge* simulation began using ViewPoint, making the complex event more manageable.