

Role PlayActivity: Funding Competition – Media Research in Germany

Goal

Understand how audience research informs policy decisions by designing, defending, and critically evaluating research studies.

Class Structure (28 students)

Research Teams (3 groups × 6 students = 18)

Each group represents one study:

- AWA
- agma
- AGF

Policy Makers (11 students)

Divided into panels:

- Panel 1 – Method Experts (4 students)
- Panel 2 – Impact Experts (3 students)
- Panel 3 – Feasibility Experts (3 students)

Scenario

You are allocating €100 million in public funding.

Each research team must convince policy makers that their study deserves funding, contributes to society, and informs real policy decisions.

Task – Research Teams

Preparation (25 minutes)

Prepare a 3 to 5 minute pitch covering:

1. Purpose

What does your study investigate?

2. Method

How is data collected and analyzed?

Why is this method appropriate?

3. Key Insights

What does your study reveal about media use?

4. Policy Relevance

Why does this matter for society?

What decisions could be informed?

5. Limitations

What are the possible limitations?

6. Contributions

Despite the limitations, what are the contributions?

Team Roles

- Lead Researcher: introduces the study
- Method Expert: explains method
- Data Analyst: presents key insights
- Policy Advisor: connects findings to policy
- Critical Reviewer: anticipates limitations
- PR/Communication: makes the pitch persuasive by addressing main contributions

Task – Policy Makers

Preparation (25 minutes)

Each panel prepares at least 3 critical questions per study.

Panel Focus:

- Method Panel: validity, reliability, data quality, limitations
- Impact Panel: societal relevance, stakeholders, policy value
- Feasibility Panel: cost, implementation, scalability

Pitch Session (35 minutes)

Presentations

3 groups × 5 minutes = 15 minutes

Q&A (structured)

After each presentation, panel groups select a question to ask to each group based on the previous pitch:

- Method Panel asks 1 question per group
- Impact Panel asks 1 question per group
- Feasibility Panel asks 1 question per group

Funding Decision

Deliberation (5–7 minutes)

Each panel:

- discusses internally
- selects one study to fund
- prepares a short justification

Voting

Each panel casts one vote.

Important rule:

Each panel should focus only on its own criterion when voting.

Announcement

Each panel briefly explains:

- why they voted as they did
- key strengths and weaknesses of the studies

Debrief (10 minutes)

Discuss:

- What made a pitch convincing?
- What were the main weaknesses identified?
- What influenced the funding decision?
- What does this reveal about the role of research in policy-making?

General Rules

- Every group must speak at least once
- Each panel must ask questions
- Each group should answer the questions

Roadmap

0:00–0:03 | Quick Start (3 minutes)

- Brief reminder of the task and roles
- Students move into pre-assigned groups

0:03–0:28 | Preparation (25 minutes)

Research Teams:

- Prepare 5-minute pitch

Policy Panels:

- Prepare at least 2 questions per study
- Focus on panel-specific criteria (Method, Impact, Feasibility)

0:28–0:43 | Presentations (15 minutes)

- Each research team presents their pitch (5 minutes per group)

0:44–1:00 | Q&A Session (15 minutes)

After each presentation:

- Each panel asks 1 question, and groups respond

1:01–1:11 | Deliberation (5 minutes)

- Each panel selects one study to fund
- Prepare a short justification

1:12–1:17 | Voting and Conclusion (5 minutes)

- Each panel casts one vote
- Majority determines the outcome
- Panels briefly justify their decisions