

Simulation 2.0: The Resurrection

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Editors' Note: Ebner and Kovach consider the critique of role-plays previously offered in this series (see particularly, Alexander and Le-Baron 2009) – and reject it. They argue that what is needed is not to move away from simulations, but to use the critique to devise more efficient, more convincing, more authentic, and more sensitive simulations. They outline a series of tactics within this strategy.

“The reports of my death are greatly exaggerated.”
(Mark Twain)

The Widespread Use of Role-Play in Negotiation 1.0

If there is any one teaching method that seems to be universally accepted in the trainer’s manual for Negotiation 1.0, it would be the use of simulation-games and role-plays.¹ Noam Ebner and Yael Efron summed up the ubiquity of the use of simulation-games in negotiation training as well as in other related contexts:

It seems almost unnecessary to note the degree to which conflict resolution trainers rely upon the use of simulation games as a training tool. The literature singles out simulation games as a particularly effective method of education in negotiation (Meerts 1991; Winham 1991), mediation (Moore

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2003) and peacebuilding (Truger 2001). This, combined with legislation making simulation games a mandatory element of professional training in several countries,² merely reinforces what conflict resolution trainers have known all along: practice makes perfect. Successes, as well as failures, occurring in a controlled, debriefed environment enable the most efficient learning process (Ebner and Efron 2005: 378).

In a recent piece, published in *Rethinking Negotiation Teaching*, Nadja Alexander and Michelle LeBaron put this more succinctly, suggesting that “[u]sing role-plays in negotiation training has become as common as Santa at Christmas...or drinking beer at Oktoberfest... or expecting snow in a Canadian winter” (Alexander and LeBaron 2009: 180).

Why does role-play enjoy the popularity it does? In order to understand this more completely, we must step back and take note of the fact that conflict resolution educators are not the only ones who have had a long term relationship with role-play, and hold it in the same high regard.

Role-play – It’s Not Just Us!

Role-plays and simulation are considered important educational tools in a variety of educational fields, such as the natural sciences, management studies and the social sciences, and we would do well to learn from the experience and best practices associated with design and implementation of these activities in other fields.³

One source of positive attitude towards role-play is adult learning theory. While much study and research throughout the years has been focused on pedagogy, it has been only in the last few decades that a similar interest in andragogy or adult learning theory arose. For example, Malcolm Knowles in 1973 was one of the first educators to explore the differences in the ways that adults learn (see Knowles 2005). Since that time, others have taken the core concepts of adult learning to serve as a basis for designing and constructing classes and teaching methodologies in professional education, including business and law schools as well as in social work and nursing.

Exploring andragogy in the context of legal education, for example, Frank Bloch noted that clinical legal education, (the representation of actual clients by students under supervision) had its foundation in adult learning (Bloch 1982). Much of the use of experiential education, which often includes simulations along with actual practice, is derivative of innovation in adult learning principles. When one applies elements of adult learning, particularly those of

self-directed learning and the need for immediate application of learning, it is easy to see why experiential education-based simulations have become integral in teaching negotiation courses. For the most part, these courses have been taught primarily in graduate and professional schools as well as executive courses – aiming, therefore, at an adult audience.

Additional reasons exist for why role-play, as an instructional method, enjoys the popularity it does. Cathy Stein Greenblat, a leading writer on the subject of simulations and games, attempted to capture and categorize the many claims made about this type of instructional method by its proponents and enthusiasts (Greenblat 1981b). She found that the inventory of claims could be broken down into six categories. Simulations and games are claimed to:

- 1) Enhance motivation and heighten interest (in the activity itself, the topic being learned, the course being taken and in learning in general).
- 2) Promote cognitive learning (of factual information, procedural sequences, general principles, real-life structures, best practices, etc.), decision-making skills and systematic analysis.
- 3) Make changes in the character of future course work (more meaningful participation, more sophisticated and relevant inquiry and greater participation).
- 4) Trigger affective learning towards the subject matter (changed perspectives and orientations, increased empathy with others).
- 5) Enhance affective elements of learning (increased self-awareness and self-confidence).
- 6) Promote changes in classroom structure and relations (better student-teacher relations, greater freedom to express and explore ideas, higher degree of student autonomy, greater degree of student peer acceptance, etc.) (Greenblat 1981b: 141-143).⁴

With such potential promise being articulated for simulations and games in the formative years of negotiation pedagogy, perhaps it should come as no surprise that negotiation education embraced these methods from the beginning. But does role-play deliver on these claims?

Critique of Teaching with Role-Play

Alexander and LeBaron suggested that while subjecting negotiation pedagogy to general review, it might be time to cut down on the role that role-play plays. Suggesting that perhaps the time has come for “The Death of the Role-play” (although they were quick to revive it

themselves in the same article), some of their critique of the use of role-play centered on the following points:

- 1) Students push back against being set up to behave in certain ways.
- 2) In some cultural settings, taking on others' identities may be disrespectful, or nonsensical.
- 3) Role-play invites participants to rely on stereotypes in playing unfamiliar identities.
- 4) The degree of transferability of skills from role-play to actual negotiations is questionable.
- 5) Over- or under-identification by one participant with the role they were assigned to play can undermine the effectiveness of the activity for an entire group.

Alexander and LeBaron are not the first to question the use of role-play, although the focus of their critique (particularly the cultural focus) certainly brings up original questions which tie into wider concerns about negotiation pedagogy discussed in this book and the previous volume in the series.

Previous challenges to the use of simulation-games and role-play tended to focus on various elements of efficacy, suggesting that role-playing did not live up to the reputation built for it by educators employing it. Greenblat (1981b) commented that most of the support for the assertions made regarding the value of role-play tended to be anecdotal rather than theory-based or scientifically grounded. Indeed, some of these assertions have never been properly researched – and some of those assertions that have been examined have been found to be overreaching, if not actually mistaken.

In a recent meta-review, Daniel Druckman and Noam Ebner (2008) examined a wide body of research encompassing dozens of studies to measure the efficacy of educational simulation-games in the social sciences, conducted since simulation-games began enjoying popularity in the 1960s. While there is some variation in the data and in the testing methods, there is little variation in the results. The large majority of these studies indicated that there were no *learning* benefits associated with learning through means of participation in simulation-games, beyond those associated with other teaching methods. Students did not show enhanced understanding, a better grasp of concepts or any other measurable learning indicator, as compared to the teaching methods that simulations were being compared to.⁵

On the other hand, this same body of research supports the notion that simulation enjoys advantages over other methods in two areas: learning through simulation, students tend to retain the material better over time, and in addition their interest, motivation and

engagement are enhanced. According to Druckman and Ebner, “a pattern can be discerned across many types of studies: Most social-science simulations do not improve student learning; however, they are useful tools for retaining the material and stimulating interest.”⁶ (Druckman and Ebner 2008: 467).

To be sure, these findings fly in the face of anecdotal reports extolling the learning benefits of simulation, as well as in the face of many teachers’ intuition (ourselves included) regarding this method’s value. Many teachers might consider this intuition one reason to delay the burial of the role-play. Another reason might be that we would do well to remember that even if role-play does not live up to the reputation built up for it, it has *not* been shown to be an *ineffective* method. The findings above simply change the equation: instead of one catch-all method that provides maximum learning and maximum motivation at the cost of a given amount of time and resources, we need to reconsider a variety of teaching methods capable of achieving these goals, and use them in a thoughtful manner meant to achieve maximum return in any individual setting.

It may be that students benefit greatly from a varied teaching approach. Rather than teach directly to a particular learning style, which has been urged in many instances, controversial new research claims that students may not derive greater benefit from matching learning approach or style (Glenn 2009). Rather, learning is enhanced more by the use of diversity in approach, or in other words, by progressing through the learning cycle (Kolb 1984).

Alexander and LeBaron likewise called for diversifying the teacher’s toolbox by adding in multiple types of experiential learning. Some of those, such as adventure learning, are examined at length in this book (see, e.g., Manwaring, McAdoo, and Cheldelin, *Orientation and Disorientation*; Coben, Honeyman, and Press, *Straight Off the Deep End*; Ebner and Cohn, *Bringing Negotiation Teaching to Life*). We would add a caveat: *Any* experiential method employed to fill the gap left in the instructional toolbox due to the critique on role-play *needs to be subjected to the same examination that cleared this space*. In other words, it needs to be examined for cultural and contextual suitability on a course-by-course or training-by-training basis, and also tested for its efficacy regarding content learning, student motivation and material retention. The variety of methods used for testing the efficacy of role-play might give some idea on how to conduct such studies.⁷ For one such experimental examination of an alternative method, see Druckman and Ebner, *Enhancing Concept Learning*, in this volume).

Rebirthing the Role-Play

With some of the pressure taken off the role-play by other methods, we can now take the opportunity to revisit the role-play and aid in its resurrection by making suggestions to improve educational gains through improving their design and usage. Coupling the vast amount of experience Negotiation 1.0 education has with using role-play with the critique described above, what can we recommend for using role-play in Negotiation 2.0?

Based on the critique presented above, and on other identifiable trends in the transition from Negotiation 1.0 to 2.0, we would suggest some overarching considerations for using role-play, broken down into four parts:

- 1) Preliminary considerations: Should role-play be used at all?
- 2) Simulation choice/design: What needs to be carefully considered in the design process?
- 3) Playing it out: Conducting role-plays.
- 4) Making sense of it all: How should feedback, assessment and debrief be tailored to maximize the benefits of role-play use in learning?

This will be followed by a list of suggestions for new modes/types/models of teaching with role-play that emanate from these general considerations.

1) The Negotiation 2.0 Simulation: Preliminary Considerations

The critique presented above dictates that we can no longer automatically assume that role-play is a “good,” “tried-and-tested” or even “safe” teaching method for every situation. Careful consideration should be given to the question of whether use of role-play is suitable, given the culture and context of the educational setting and the participants.

Teachers, reconsidering the efficacy of role-play as a teaching tool, need to reconsider the amount of time dedicated to it, the topics they teach with it and its congruence with other teaching methods, including other experiential methods.

Specifically, some insights from the discussion of efficacy might be:

a) Role-play does not teach actual content or concepts better than other methods such as a classroom lecture. On the other hand, a role-play intended to elicit a number of negotiation elements might be much less costly in terms of time than a class lecture and discussion regarding each point. Teachers need to reconsider their division and allocation of time, and the specific teaching goals.

b) Role-play's biggest advantage as a teaching tool is in the area of student interest and motivation. Role-plays might best be interspersed throughout a course rather than concentrated in blocs (as some courses currently schedule them), and scheduled for times/topics prone to attention- and motivation- deficiency, such as after lunch.

c) Role-play is associated with heightened material retention. While, of course, "everything is important" and must be retained, role-play can be used to target those concepts teachers consider most important. Additionally, role-play might be used to highlight material which students will need to rely on later on in the course. For example, if an adventure learning activity is scheduled at the end of the course, in which students will need to rely on their positional bargaining skills, and positional bargaining is discussed at about the midpoint of the course, teachers might do well to include a positional bargaining role-play as part of the lesson plan, in order to enhance retention of the material.

d) The role-play can also be used to "pull together" both distinct and related concepts – which may have been dealt with in lecture or discussion individually – into a more cohesive idea or model. This "pulling together" might have special importance in those not-uncommon situations in which training is conducted by teams of two or more individuals, or in which students need to learn to implement material from more than one course or workshop. We suggest that role-play might assist in overcoming learners' tendencies towards compartmentalization and segregation.

e) Role-plays also provide a superior method for engagement in self-reflection, and can even be more effective in that regard if recorded for later playback and review.

2) The Negotiation 2.0 Simulation: Design Considerations

In their paper discussing the desired degree of proximity between simulation and reality in role-play design, Ebner and Efron (2005) suggested that:

...the design process of educational simulation games for conflict resolution *training* purposes has largely been neglected, and it seems that no theoretical models or paradigms have been developed for designing what is, in practice, the field's leading training tool. Successful models would be those designed to incorporate the knowledge gained in simulation game study into the unique dynamics and frameworks familiar in negotiation...simulation games. We propose that developing such models through increased

writing, analysis, discussion, and refinement would enable taking conflict resolution training – and with it, practitioners' abilities and skills – to the next level (Ebner and Efron 2005: 379).

Taking this challenge to heart, it would seem that the themes running through Negotiation 2.0 now present us with – if not a unique design process – a new set of parameters or guidelines which should be taken into account while designing simulation-games:

a) Take students' cultural background, learning habits and preferences into account.

This might include conducting more active research regarding the student population than we traditionally do. This also places on the negotiation educator an onus of constant creativity, adapting and tailoring, who may have fallen into the habit of using the same simulation materials over and over, across wide spectrums of context and culture.

b) Consider engaging students in the design process.

Having students design simulations is an activity of great educational value affecting concept understanding and integration, material retention and student motivation (see Druckman and Ebner, *Enhancing Concept Learning*, in this volume). Taking this one step further, incorporating students into the design process of simulations that will actually be role-played in class – such as by having two groups of students design role-plays centered on several specific negotiation concepts, and having each perform the role-play written by the other group – might increase gains in all of those categories; however, this suggestion has yet to be substantiated by experimentation. Even if one does not go through the design-swap-play process described above (it is certainly a time-costly exercise!), engaging students in the design process by asking the group, or individual students, their opinions about what topics, negotiation concepts and role-play communication medium would appeal to them might be of great value. This suggestion is an operationalization of the approach set forward by Melissa Nelken, Bobbi McAdoo, and Melissa Manwaring (2009), advocating engaging students in the process of designing their negotiation course, partially or in its entirety. Such an exercise is also quite consistent with the adult education component of self-directed learning.

c) Take into account other experiential methods used in the course.

The role-plays should be designed to integrate with, and complement, those other methods. If some form of adventure learning is to be used, a simulation reflecting either the concepts underlying that experience (e.g., positional bargaining skills), or the setting of that environment (e.g., a marketplace setting) might serve both to teach the immediate topic and to prepare students to make the most out of their upcoming experience. Other experiential methods such as providing peer feedback and even teaching a component of material can also be easily adapted and integrated in simulation activity.

d) Take into account the question of proximity to reality.

This issue encompasses several aspects, which have been given attention in recent years (see Crampton and Manwaring 2008). Increased attention to cultural and contextual suitability makes tailoring existing simulations, or creating unique simulations, for a particular audience more likely. Tailor-made simulations are likely to be set in particular contexts, and reflect particular realities, making attention to the desired balance between reality and play more acute. Trainer-designers need to be aware of the ramifications of using scenarios with close proximity to real life.

Noam Ebner and Yael Efron (2005) noted that the closer a scenario comes to reflecting participants' own experiences, the current events of the day or the context in which the training is being conducted, the more likely it is to trigger participant motivation and engagement, mediated by identification with the situation and with individual roles. However, this does not mean that the closer to real-life a scenario is, the better the learning returns. On the contrary, Ebner and Efron note that negative effects – over- or under-identification with role, disruptive group dynamics and suspicion regarding the teacher's motives – might prove to be disruptive. Accordingly, they recommended that in cases calling for role-play scenarios closely related to real-life, teachers utilize not reality, but "pseudo-reality." Using this method, scenario designers might borrow storylines, settings, or supporting material (such as newspaper articles, maps, etc.) from real-world events, or from participants' immediate context; however, they should do so only to the degree that this serves to support learning by enhancing identification and interest. When real-world facts, events or details might undermine these, or cause students to lose focus from the concepts and content the role-play is meant to teach, designers should replace them, ignore them or actively write them out of the story, forming an alternate reality or "pseudo-reality" (Ebner and Efron 2005).⁸

Another way of adding a dose of reality into role-play is by breaking the glass wall between the participant and the role they are playing, by making negotiation outcomes achieved in the role-play have real-world effect. Howard Raiffa conducted much of his early research by having students role-play with each other, with each student's outcomes scored, totaled, and calculated in a manner that accounted for one-third of the student's final course grade (Raiffa 1982). Roger Volkema (2007) describes a similar experiment with ascribing monetary value to role-play results; students paid a \$20 "player's fee" at the beginning of the course, and their outcomes in a series of role-play activities affected whether they were allowed to keep the money or whether it remained "in the kitty."⁹

In another take on incorporating students' negotiation skills into their grade, law professor Charles Craver discusses utilizing a method of class ranking. For example, in a negotiation between lawyers representing a plaintiff and a defendant, the greater the amount received by plaintiff's counsel, the higher the ranking; conversely, of course, defense counsel rankings are the inverse. This class ranking is then used as a substantial criterion of the final grade (Craver 2000).¹⁰

Another type of activity involves students negotiating directly for their grades. Rick Voyles, a teacher of negotiation at Sullivan University and at the Keller Graduate School of Management, related to us how for the students' final project in his negotiation course, he has students negotiate with each other, in groups of three to five, over the number of points they will each receive for the final project itself. As the final project carries considerable weight (about thirty percent of the grade, similar to the points dedicated to the role-play outcomes in Raiffa's courses), students' negotiation skills can help them improve their final course grade, in a very real way. Students are not graded on the skill they display – they are awarded the amount of points agreed on. A different take on this type of activity was reported by Volkema, who assigned students the activity of negotiating with him, their teacher, for their grades (Volkema 1991).

In our opinion, students negotiating for grades (assuming that the teacher is serious about this being part of the grading system) is in no way role-play. It might be adventure learning (we prefer to leave that to other writers in this book, who will no doubt attempt to define adventure learning and map out what types of activities fall under this category). It might simply be "negotiation."

e) Create engaging and relevant role-play materials.

Despite the incredible advances made in word-processing, image manipulation, desktop publishing and Web 2.0 technology, we think

it is a safe guess that most role-plays utilized by negotiation teachers are still contained in the familiar medium of a sheet of paper handed out to Party A, and another sheet of paper handed out to Party B.

We suggest that teachers would do well to consider a general upgrading of participants' interface with the role-play. Instead of a sheet of paper, role information and background can be presented in many different ways. In an international negotiation role-play, a student might be presented with a complete case file including text documents (e.g., a briefing prepared by the State Department for the negotiator, a treaty relevant to the negotiation), maps (which might be real maps, or real maps with alterations such as a fictitious cease-fire line), or newspaper clippings (which can be realistically generated online).¹¹ In a negotiation between two parties already engaged in litigation, participants can be handed a "real" case file containing all of the pleadings filed on both sides, together with any confidential documents each party may have. They would then be instructed to learn the case and prepare their approach based on the file along with any independent research they wish to conduct. A dispute between two singers over the rights to a song currently topping the charts could be introduced by a news report about the dispute (which can also be easily generated online), and reproductions of email exchanges between each participant and the singer retaining them, so that they know what they have "done" before initiating the negotiation itself. More enterprising teachers might also include a link to the song's lyrics, or to an actual song.

Of course, material design needs to be congruent with the general objectives of the role-play. Artifacts that contribute to the role-play's proximity to reality, that create role identification, that trigger motivation and interest, are all of value (keeping in mind the caveats presented above regarding the potential negative effects of reality and identification). On the other hand, not all that glitters is gold. If role-play-supporting material necessitates that students spend extensive time just to access it, or if it is dependent on technological equipment or know-how, it might be counterproductive. Similarly, over-producing material might cause students to focus on the wrong thing; if the bells-and-whistles take center stage during their preparation, they might not focus on the information they need to know, the analytical process they need to conduct, and the tactical preparation they need to do before engaging in the role-play.¹²

f) Design simulations suitable for the communication medium the negotiation is conducted through.

In a previous piece, we have suggested that the content of negotiation courses needs to change to reflect the fact that a great deal of

our negotiation processes are not conducted “at the table” in any physical sense, and courses must incorporate units or content regarding negotiation conducted at-a-distance (Ebner et al. 2009). Such a shift will likely include having students conduct role-plays through online communication channels (for more on the why and how of incorporating such simulations, see Matz and Ebner, *Using Role-Play in Online Negotiation Teaching*, in this volume). For reasons pertaining to realism and student motivation we would suggest using scenarios which incorporate distance between the parties, or some other reason for e-communication, as part of the storyline. Role-playing a negotiation between two neighbors regarding the exact placement of their joint property line by email would seem arbitrary and out-of-place, and might cause some dissonance between participants and the simulation environment. On the other hand, a storyline regarding a dispute between a buyer and a seller on an online auction platform, or a negotiation between the buyer and seller of a web domain name, might be a good mesh of storyline and medium (for examples of such simulations, see Manwaring 2005 and Ebner 2009).

g) Consider student-oriented media.

Continuing the previous point, do not limit yourself to the communication media you are used to communicating through. If your students discuss interactions they have through a medium which you are not fully familiar with (e.g., Facebook, Myspace, or Twitter), view that as an opportunity for engaging them in the design process – both course-design, and simulation-design. If your students are constantly instant messaging, consider asking students to design a simulation contextually suited for being conducted through this medium. If they are the type who are constantly checking in to Facebook or other social networking venues (in the world of wireless internet, there is a good chance you will see this going on in class, tipping you off to this valuable opportunity for engagement and practice), see if there is any topic or issue they might consider suitable for negotiating through this medium, and let them run with the design process. If your students bring their experiences in Second Life as examples of recent negotiation interactions they have had, consider creating a negotiation between avatars in that venue. If they seem comfortable “tweeting” their status in the middle of class, engage them in a discussion of whether there are any issues which they find themselves negotiating in up to 140 characters at a time – and lead them through a simulation design and conduct process.

h) Design some of the simulations to mirror real life experience of the trainers or their colleagues.

After the simulation, a discussion of the actual outcome can serve as the basis for a discussion of how certain factors – often thought to be insignificant – can influence and change an outcome. This again provides students with a bridge connecting the simulation with the real world.

i) Integrate the assessment or evaluative component of the course within the design.

Give thought, at the design stage, to ways of stressing the particular elements you will be focusing on in debrief. In particular, when using videorecording, invite student input for the recording and playback portions. When students are not only informed of the methods through which review will occur, but are also given a part in selecting certain skills to isolate or focus on in the recording, they may prepare more extensively and perhaps in a more focused manner, enhancing their ensuing learning.

3) Playing It Out: Conducting the Negotiation 2.0 Simulation

In addition to new issues to consider regarding method choice and simulation design, the critique of role-play, the experience gained with this method over the past few decades and the new issues in negotiation teaching raised in Negotiation 2.0 lead us to suggest that the actual conduct of the role-play needs to be reconsidered. Awareness as to context, culture, medium, learning style and teaching goals all necessitate careful attention to simulation initiation and conduct, going far beyond the familiar format of “I’m going to break you down into pairs, and give you each role information.” Here is an initial list of issues and suggestions emanating from our previous discussion:

a) Utilize modes of simulation that cut down on use of class time.

Some of the critique of role-play centered on the time taken from other means of learning. The calls for widening the spectrum of experiential activities are likely to place still heavier demands on already-overtaxed class time. This dictates that we need to look for ways to save actual class time in any way possible, without eliminating necessary exercises. Some initial recommendations for consideration are:

- Give students role-material for preparation ahead of time, instead of on-the-spot in class. In addition to saving time, this might alleviate some of the pressure associated with students feeling put on the spot. By asking students to not only read and prepare their role but to rewrite it or personalize it in some way, problems related to under-identification might be pre-empted (Ebner and Efron 2005).
- Assign students to conduct a negotiation out of class, such as over lunch or in the evenings. This method certainly presents challenges related to evaluation and debriefing, and teachers might consider different methods for overcoming these, such as innovative self-reflection or group reflection practices, or use of video (see below).
- Assign students to conduct a negotiation out of class, on their own time, through email. This allows students more flexible scheduling. Additional benefits are the practice of negotiation through the online media and the facilitation of evaluation and feedback through use of the recorded text transcript.
- Consider following up on an out-of-class simulation with an in-class debrief, to achieve specific teaching goals as well as to stress the joint-but-separate experience of the negotiation groups, transforming them back into one large learning-group after their individual, external, exercise.

b) Use communication media that reflect the multiple channels through which negotiation takes place in today's technologically-mediated world.

While many negotiations do take place in the face-to-face mode, this is quickly changing. We have already recommended incorporating email negotiation into negotiation courses (Ebner et al. 2009). Taking this one step further, teachers might attempt to replicate the reality of modern interactions in which a negotiation process might be conducted using multiple methods for message interchange. For example, preliminary information may be exchanged through email or fax, while opening discussions take place in person. Subsequent offers and responses may also take place through email or other means such as a phone conversation, texting or instant messaging. Providing methods for students to experience this variety within a single case or simulation provides the means to increase the realism of the simulation, in addition to practicing negotiation through a variety of media (for more on conducting role-plays at-a-distance, see Matz and Ebner, *Using Role-Play in Online Negotiation Teaching*, in this volume).

c) Anticipate and recognize reasons for student distress or under-participation.

This potential downside to simulation use should be addressed early. Often, students in executive courses are unable or unwilling to detach from their work, and find themselves returning a call to a client or engaging in an actual negotiation for the purchase of real estate even as they are supposed to engage in a simulated negotiation. This distraction is one of the reasons for under-participation and lack of preparation. By directly addressing the situation at the simulation's initiation, this might be avoided or the effects diminished. Another by-product might possibly result: this addressing of potential distractions is an opportunity for instructors to learn more about the participants, perhaps leading to the creation of more realistic and meaningful role-plays, or to variations created on the spot.

d) Provide more direction in role-plays.

One concern raised about using role-plays was that the participants over-acted, or, conversely, did not seem to be engaged in the simulations in a way that was particularly helpful to learning. Simulations are either not played out or over-exaggerated (Alexander and Le-Baron 2009). Providing more detailed instructions, and addressing issues of identification, role-acting and the relationship to the participant's real life persona will lower anxiety rates and result in more authenticity and realism. This will be beneficial in a number of ways, both for simulation conduct as well as for skills and knowledge transferability to real-life situations.

In some instances specific instructions for a role-play might include certain reactions and/or emotions, which are helpful in demonstrating and isolating particular points or situations – for example, the cognitive barrier of optimistic overconfidence. In many other instances, however, simulations can be much more realistic if the participants are instructed to “be themselves” and act and react as if the situation described actually happened to them. Not only does a more realistic situation result, but the participants are then in a better position to provide more accurate (at least from their standpoint) feedback to others.

e) Devote more time to preparation.

Devoting more time to the preparation segments of the simulation may be one way that not only produces more realistic role-plays, but also provides learning about a stage of negotiation that is often overlooked in reality, as it is under-taught in trainings: preparation for negotiation. Often, students are provided the simulation information immediately preceding the role-play. This leads to rushed prepara-

tion, in which students attempt to quickly learn enough to play, as opposed to carefully consider and internalize their role, strategize, and plan specific tactical moves. When possible, role information should be provided well in advance. Teachers can hand out preparation sheets to be filled out, either aimed at teaching students a particular model of preparation or at focusing them on particular elements which are the actual learning goals of the exercise. Providing role information in advance also makes it possible to provide much more information, such as an entire case file, as mentioned earlier. As a result, the participants would have more time to review and become familiar with the material, as well as designing the approaches they plan to take. Simulations can be designed to allow students to take advantage of this preparatory stage for *in-role* preliminary activities, such as reaching out to potential allies (in a multiparty simulation), obtaining additional information through independent research, etc.

f) Don't limit yourself to the class participant list.

There are many ways in which you can arrange to have your students negotiate with people who are not their current classmates. One option may be to engage local professionals, for example from business and law, and pair your students with them to simulate a negotiation drawn from their area of actual practice. This might include sending students to these professionals' office or place of business, adding a shot of reality to the exercise (see Cohn and Ebner, *Bringing Negotiation Teaching to Life*, in this volume). In frameworks in which the instructor has recurring courses, she might call on alumni of previous courses to engage in simulations with current students. Other ways to provide students with unfamiliar opposites might be to hire professional actors, engage your university's drama department, match up two negotiation classes of your own, or invite last year's students in for a simulation. This lack of familiarity with the other will serve to increase the degree of realism in the role-play, contributing to transferability of lessons learned. In addition, this method can be used in order to generate potential for cross-cultural issues to manifest, providing unique learning opportunities. An interesting and motivating way to do this is to form a partnership with another negotiation teacher, perhaps from another country, and have your students conduct a simulation with each other at a distance.

g) Integrate assessment, to some degree.

While we address assessment in detail in the following, separate section, methods of integrating evaluative means should also affect

simulation conduct considerations. Yet most of us think of the terms evaluation and assessment in terms of a final or course ending activity (see, for example, Cohn et al. 2009). Recently educators across disciplines have been placing additional focus on formative assessment, that is, the use of assessment tools *during* the learning process (Sullivan et al. 2007).

Most of the discussion on assessment we provide below centers on video use as an assessment or evaluation tool, whether done by the instructor, peers or self-evaluation. How might this same method enable formative assessment? A simple and often used example through which simulations are used in formative assessment is with feedback provided during, or immediately after, the role-play. To increase and incorporate video self-review can increase the effectiveness of formative assessments. One way would be to record part of the role-play, stop the recording, review it, either alone or with another, whether it be peer or instructor, and then use what has been learned to improve performance and increase understanding in continuing the simulation or in a subsequent one. Thus, the simulation can be recorded at several intervals during the course.

This opportunity to revise a simulation mid-course provides a uniquely rich learning opportunity for students by broadening the use of formative assessment means and increasing the effectiveness of experiential education. Simulations may also be designed with an eye toward conducting them with the use of recording, with a variety of specific goals in mind. Often absent in the design of simulations is specificity of the particular points which are to be highlighted. For example, if the instructor intends to demonstrate the cognitive barrier of optimistic overconfidence and perhaps the related concept of partisan perceptions, the simulation can be written with language and instructions to highlight these barriers. When such focus is made during the simulation, participants are able to actually see and note the changes in what they are doing. As we have noted, priming students in advance can improve formative assessment. If time allows, this design can provide additional avenues for learning. In the context of optimistic overconfidence, rather than having just one opportunity to test methods to overcome this barrier, with video, playback, and the ability to “take two,” students can have more than one learning experience.

This is obviously more time-consuming in the course as a whole, as well as time-intensive for instructor. We never said it would be easy. After all, as we are learning, Negotiation 2.0 is all about deliberately making hard choices.

4) Making Sense of Things: Debriefing and Assessing the Negotiation 2.0 simulation

A crucial issue in improving learning and retention gains from use of simulation is providing the best feedback, assessment and evaluation possible. In trying to capture the general state-of-the-art regarding key features of a basic feedback session on a negotiation simulation, we would say the following:

- It is usually the trainer, coach or facilitator who observes the simulation and then provides – or guides – the feedback.
- This feedback is generally provided in a public forum – that is, in front of the class or at a minimum the other role-players.
- Feedback is most often given at the conclusion of the simulation (although some trainers choose to conduct simulations in a “stop-comment-start” mode).
- Encouraging and providing opportunities for self-reflection during feedback is a critical component.

We suggest teachers consider all of these elements, as they have potential for great effect on the teacher-student relationship, the depth of feedback and opportunity for change during the role-plays, among other issues.

Undoubtedly, room for improvement exists with regard to evaluation, and we need to search for ways to best utilize this element of simulation for insight capturing and for highlighting transferability between simulation and real-life. In this regard, we suggest three distinct uses of video which can improve the assessment methodology. The reason we are stressing video in this chapter is that this is one area in which a huge jump has been made over the past few years, which has barely at all been reflected in the classroom. Ten years ago, videotaping a simulation required a special room, special equipment and a technician. Today, most cell phones can record decent-quality video-clips (albeit limited in length), many students possess digital cameras which they can bring to class, and good quality webcams built into laptops might also be used to record simulations. Many students will be skilled at downloading the movie from the camera, editing it in various ways and perhaps uploading it to the Internet where it can be accessed by all students in the class. With this advance in technology and economy, let us examine the benefits of using video recording for feedback and assessment.

Reviewing video recording of a simulation provides the student-participant a very accurate (and nearly indisputable) picture of exactly what they did. This allows the trainer/critiquer to point out the various aspects of performance that were conducted well, as well as

to raise questions regarding needed or helpful changes to improve effectiveness in negotiation. For some time now, the use of recording for evaluation purposes has been explored and advocated, particularly where such courses are graded, as in university settings (Kovach 1996). As mentioned earlier, simulations can also be recorded in segments, allowing students to make changes during the simulation. Recordings can also be structured to allow students to engage in self-reflection and assessment, a vital component of professional development (Schön 1987).

Recording of the simulation allows the students to see for themselves how they conducted the negotiation. Rather than receive comments from external sources (even the coach, with copious notes, may not remember or see/observe everything), the recording provides an accurate picture for review. In addition, it also provides a mechanism to *continue* to review – perhaps after waiting some time to allow an increased comfort level. This is not to say that telling an individual how they conducted themselves is not beneficial; however, it is only beneficial if they are open to it. Some students, particularly when coming off of the emotional and identity roller-coaster that a simulation sometimes is, may feel defensive and not be willing to accept the feedback, perceived as criticism. However, an accurate observation of themselves by themselves can often break through the resistance (Rosenberg and Petersen 2008).

Another benefit of recording is that it allows others, at a later time, to provide feedback. Receiving multiple assessments can be helpful – as well as allowing students to understand some of the variation in negotiation approaches, which easily illustrates the absence of a complete right or wrong way to approach the process. One concern about evaluation of skill performance is that it is inherently subjective in nature. As often the review is done by only one individual, even where a specific rubric is used, the assessment necessarily includes that individual's personal preferences. Multiple assessments or evaluations provide greater breadth of feedback.

With the use of actual recordings, students are able to see for themselves just how they conducted the negotiations, on a move-by-move level. They are able, for instance, to determine if planned strategies and tactics were implemented effectively. Perhaps even more important, they are able to view their reactive moves, those parts of the process which cannot often be planned for (unless the negotiators work with each other on a continual basis).

Through watching themselves on video, participants are able to *relive* the moments, producing a better ability to understand and remember just what was going on, cognitively, when particular moves were made. This contributes to greater accuracy in self-reflection

and analysis. An important element of professional education is the ability to accurately engage in self-reflection (Schön 1983). To accurately self-assess is a necessary component of a learning process; yet, sometimes offering those opportunities can be difficult (Schön 1987). Often, part of self-reflection is developing an understanding of how and why action is taken. Without the aid of a recording, we sometimes remain stumped: we are asked why we did something and try to remember, but have difficulty doing so. With the use of a recording, however, watching the action can stimulate memory. Moreover, in some self-reflection without the aid of a recording, students are either too critical (when suffering from low self-confidence), or conversely (when suffering from an excess of the same), do not appreciate the need for improvement. In this context, the value of a recorded simulation provides not only an opportunity to view oneself, but also to allow a more accurate and hence effective picture to view.

This self-reflection does not need to be immediate, and it does not need to be teacher-driven. The video can be commented on by the participants themselves, in small-group work or in individual assignments; immediately following the simulation, or over the days following class. Software allowing the inclusion of text sidebars, or voice-overs with commentary, can enable students to comment on specific moments and moves, provide a play-by-play or reflect on emotional undercurrents of the negotiation dynamics, and allow for several viewpoints regarding the same moment or interaction examined (for an example of teaching with such software, see Williams, Farmer, and Manwaring 2008. For other suggestions on using video for giving feedback to students, see Matz and Ebner, *Using Role-Play in Online Negotiation Teaching*, in this volume.)

Conclusion

Returning from the grave has never failed to enhance reputation, and simulations are no exception to this. The critique posed to simulation, rather than bury it, will serve to improve it – if its lessons are taken to heart.

Notes

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¹ In this chapter, we use the terms “simulation” and “role-play” as generic references to experiential-learning-oriented activities commonly labeled “simulations,” “games,” “simulation-games” and “role-play.” We use the term “role-players” to denote participants in a simulation activity who play out roles based on information and instructions they are given, such as in

the experimental condition described below. These decisions are not intended to influence the debate on the way these activities are conducted or the delineation between them. For an in-depth discussion of this issue, see Greenblat (1981a) and Crookall et al. (1987).

² This is exemplified by mediator certification rules in, for example, the state of New York (New York State's Office of Court Administration 2003: 12) and in Israel (Israel Court Administration 1999: 12). (*footnote in the original*).

³ A good starting point for exploring the uses of simulation and gaming across various educational fields is provided by David Crookall's guide to the literature (Crookall 1995: 167-9)

⁴ Alexander and LeBaron suggested several other reasons which may explain why role-playing resonates with negotiation trainers: They are animating, they are popular with students and they can be used multiple times with little or no revision.

⁵ This varied from study to study. While usually compared to conventional, frontal-lecture-type classroom study, simulation was also measured against the case-study method and others.

⁶ For discussion of one method that was found to give better returns than role-play not only in concept learning but in motivation as well, see Druckman and Ebner, *Enhancing Concept Learning*, in this volume.

⁷ For a listing of some of these studies, and some critique of their design, see Druckman 1995 and Druckman and Ebner 2008.

⁸ For an example of a simulation designed utilizing the pseudo-reality method, see "*Converging! September 2007 in Israel/Palestine*" (Ebner and Efron 2007).

⁹ Of course, one would do well to remember that at a certain point along the proximity-to-reality spectrum, an activity ceases to be role-play, and becomes something else. One of Volkema's activities was to have students attempt to return a package of sponges without a receipt to a retail store – without knowing where the sponges had been bought. Students went to a store of their choosing, which in all likelihood was not where the sponges had been purchased, and attempted to return the sponges. While they received a monetary reward or penalty vis-à-vis their "player's fee," this activity – requiring students to go out into the real world and engage with it – is much closer to adventure learning than role-playing. Yet, as students negotiate every day, (although many do not realize or acknowledge it) spending more time and focus on the real negotiations they are involved in can not only connect the class work to reality, but also provide additional foundation for the design of additional simulations. Students could also inform instructors of a negotiation they will be engaging in, such as a lease agreement, and the instructor could create an *ad hoc* simulation as a "dress rehearsal."

¹⁰ Craver does, however, provide students an option of a pass/fail grade. An interesting note is that more and more students are opting for the pass/fail grade option. See also Craver (1999).

¹¹ For examples of such material, see Ebner and Efron, *supra*. note 8.

¹² This is particularly important in the context of the "executive course" which by design is short, and where balancing time constraints is always a challenge. One option is that the preparatory element of the simulation

would take place in the evenings of the course. Clearly, a new balance needs to be struck.

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