

Debriefing the Debrief

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***Editors' Note:** An afterthought; a rushed invitation for general comments; some PowerPoint slides flashed at the end of an exercise; a pre-prepared reading list of "take away lessons" . . . do these sound familiar? The authors argue that all too often, good intentions for thorough debriefing of negotiation exercises degenerate into something disappointing, or even pointless. They contend that debriefing is too critical an element in overall learning to be defensibly treated this way. In a thorough analysis that should also be read in conjunction with the same authors' treatment of debriefing adventure learning specifically (chapter 14 in this volume), they first outline a choice of goals; then analyze the characteristics of good debriefing work, and discuss some general approaches; and then outline predictable challenges and some tactics for handling them. As is appropriate for the project's increasing focus on the differences between student groups (see Lewicki and Schneider, *Instructors Heed the Who*, chapter 3 in *Venturing Beyond the Classroom*), the authors end by discussing how debriefing might be tailored for specific audiences.*

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Introduction

Debriefing is not limited to teaching negotiation, or even to teaching. It is used in such diverse settings as medical and nursing education, business, counseling, and military operations.¹ In the education context, the debrief is a post-experience analytic process that is an indispensable element in the journey of experiential learning. Done well, debriefing provides an opportunity for participants to reflect on their progress, and enables them to carry away lessons that enhance their knowledge and skills. The debrief provides the crucial “so what” to the teaching exercise.

Debriefing is complicated and demanding, yet it has not received as much attention in the literature as design and implementation of simulations (Lederman 1992). Unfortunately, debriefs of negotiation activities are not always done well, and there is little guidance for structuring and conducting a successful debrief. Too often, a debrief degenerates into “an afterthought or a rushed invitation for general comments” (Alexander and LeBaron 2009: 194). We have also observed trainers conduct debriefs by flashing up PowerPoint slides at the end of exercises and reading lists of “take away lessons.” Without effective debriefing, negotiation exercises fall short of achieving their optimal learning potential.

This chapter seeks to stimulate thinking on designing and conducting debriefings in teaching negotiation. It draws on the authors’ experiences teaching negotiation in a variety of contexts and with a variety of participants. Some of us teach students in a classroom setting. Others conduct training workshops. Many do both. We teach students in law, urban planning, conflict resolution, and more. We train individuals from a wide range of professions, such as business persons, government officials, and lawyers. We teach in the United States, Europe, the Middle East, Asia, Africa, Central America, and Australia, often to groups with mixed national backgrounds. We concur on many points, but occasionally differ in our approaches.

We believe that a good debrief is essential to teaching negotiation well. It should make the experiences of the learning activity come alive. It should connect those experiences to the content of the course and assist participants in putting theory into practice and constructing their own lessons. It should make the process feel personal and real, and increase the likelihood that the students will remember and use their new learning. It should help students develop the habit of reflecting on their practice. The effectiveness of a simulation role-play or other experiential learning activity depends to a great extent on the effectiveness of the debriefing.

This chapter primarily considers debriefing simulated negotiations in the form of role-play exercises, which are the most common method of teaching negotiation (Movius 2008; Alexander and LeBaron 2009; Ebner and Kovach 2010). For a consideration of the special issues involved in debriefing adventure learning experiences, see our companion chapter (Deason et al., *Debriefing Adventure Learning*) in this volume. This chapter applies generally to both teaching and training, and we use the terms “teach,” “train,” and “facilitate” interchangeably except where the context indicates distinct meanings. Similarly, until the final section when we discuss the differences between executive-style workshops and the academic setting, we do not distinguish between “participants” and “students” or “classes” and “workshops” unless we make an explicit contrast.

The chapter begins with a discussion of the goals of conducting a debrief and of the importance of debriefing for the learning process. We then outline the characteristics of good debriefing and describe general approaches to debriefing. Next, we explore the challenges entailed in debriefing and make some suggestions about ways to address them, including a section with ideas for designing debriefing structures. We then outline a series of functional steps for debriefing negotiations. Finally, we close the chapter with a section on tailoring debriefing for specific audiences.

Goals of Debriefing

A negotiation exercise is an unaccompanied immersion: students are asked to jump into the situation and handle it on their own. By necessity, instructors deliver their contribution outside this experience, i.e., before and after it. Before the exercise, this input may come through lectures, discussion of readings, the planning of the exercise, and preparatory briefing or instructions. After the exercise, the instructor’s input comes through debriefing. This is the point at which a carefully constructed discussion with clear analytic lessons is crucial to the teaching of negotiation skills (Susskind and Coburn 2000).

A primary purpose for debriefing is to develop and reinforce the learning goals for the exercise. Thus, a good debrief begins in the planning stages for the exercise, with very carefully thought out and articulated learning goals for the activity (even if those goals may not be articulated in advance to the students). Then, the plan for the debriefing should be aligned closely with the goals for the exercise. The debriefing should also reinforce the function of the exercise in the broader context of the course or workshop, which as Lynn Cohn and her colleagues (2009) stressed in the training context, should be designed based on a careful assessment of the overall goals. It is es-

essential to create a close linkage between that foundation of general goals, the content and skills conveyed to the participants, the specific purpose(s) of the exercise, and the debrief.

While using analogical reasoning and observational learning in combination with simulations shows promise for improving knowledge transfer about negotiation (Nadler, Thompson, and Van Boven 2003; Movius 2008), currently the typical educational tool used with simulations is principle-based learning. Often an instructor designs an exercise to give students a chance to apply negotiation principles by using a factual setting that encourages students to practice concepts presented through reading, lectures, or discussion. In this context, the crucial role of debriefing is to tie the specific applications in the exercise back to the broader concepts and to solidify those lessons. The debrief should elicit reactions and observations from the participants about the application in the exercise and, embedded within the discussion, review the concepts and explore how they could be applied in other situations. In some cases, it may also be possible to use the debrief to assist the participants to transfer lessons from the class to their real-world contexts by helping them anticipate what they will do in the future.

Instructors may also plan a negotiation experience to generate new realizations and change practices or approaches. Without an effective debrief, however, this experience might have little pedagogical benefit. It can leave untouched the baggage of habits, cultural legends about negotiation, and poorly-understood basic concepts such as “win-lose” or “win-win.” It can even confirm for some the false conclusion that they are master negotiators who always get the best of their opponents. The debrief is the step that processes the experience, challenges students’ assumptions, and fosters new approaches in the future.

Other goals may be less directly tied to course content. In the educational setting, negotiation exercises and their debriefing can play a role in students’ general professional development. For example, if law students have not yet taken a clinic or had work experience that has exposed them to representing a client, practicing negotiation skills may bring them closer to a sense of being a lawyer than the doctrinal content of many of their other courses. The debrief is an important part of this process. If it is conducted as a conversation among professionals, honoring and acknowledging the knowledge and experience each individual brings to the learning enterprise, it can help students develop a professional identity (Rudolph, Simon, Raemer, and Eppich 2008). Furthermore, presenting the debrief as a model for ongoing self-assessment encourages students to develop as reflective practitioners (Schön 1983) engaged in continual learning.

Contributions of Debriefing to Learning

Learning is understood as a process in which the learner internalizes concepts and principles, leading to new thought patterns and changed actions (Kolb 1984). During the debriefing of a negotiation simulation, this internalization takes place through reflection and feedback. Reflection has been defined as the collection of “intellectual and affective activities in which individuals engage to explore their experiences in order to lead to new understandings and appreciations” (Boud, Keogh, and Walker 1985). Although the definition is phrased in terms of an individual activity, in debriefing reflection occurs at a group level as well. This can help students make sense of their experience not only by exploring their own observations but also by gaining insights from the reactions of their peers.

The importance of reflection for effective debriefing is supported by the theoretical work of several scholars who emphasize the role of reflection in moving a person from an unexamined experience to new understandings for future actions. John Dewey (1933) pioneered the idea of reflective thinking as education, seeing the process as not only an intellectual activity, but also an emotional one. Donald Schön (1983) maintained that professionals face complex situations that cannot be resolved by technical tools alone, and proposed an approach to professional learning facilitated by reflection. He coined the term “reflective practice” to describe the discipline of examining the values, assumptions, and knowledge-base that drive one’s professional practice.² Kurt Lewin’s (1951) cyclical model of adult learning alternates between a concrete experience and analysis of that experience. In the cycle articulated by David Kolb (1984), after an experience in which learners gather information, their reflections on that experience lead them to formulate new generalizations and abstract concepts, which they then test in new situations. This process of alternating exploration, action, and reflection is central to adult learning (Brookfield 1986).

Debriefing is also an opportunity for feedback to participants not only from the teacher(s), but also from their fellow participants or an observer. Effective feedback is one of the main elements in the “learning curve” concept introduced by Newell and Rosenbloom (1981). A review of the literature on simulations in medical education concluded that feedback is the most important feature of this form of medical education (Issenberg et al. 2005). Feedback can also promote the acquisition of negotiation skills (Patton 2000).³ Thompson (1998) highlights studies demonstrating the importance of feedback to building negotiation skills and concludes that “effective negotiation requires practice and feedback” (Thompson 1998: 8). It is considered especially important in learning behavioral negotiation skills, as dis-

tinguished from learning negotiation theory and concepts (Williams, Farmer, and Manwaring 2008).⁴

Characterizing the Effective Debrief

In suggesting ways to improve negotiation role-plays, Nadja Alexander and Michelle LeBaron (2009: 194) stress the importance of debriefing them “specifically and completely.” We have identified the following as important additional characteristics. An effective debrief:

- Focuses on the process of interaction. Dialogue among the participants and between the facilitator and participants allows essential articulation of insights.
- Draws on the experience of the participants by eliciting reactions and encouraging reflection on the activity.
- Explicitly connects the exercise, which has been tailored for a specific purpose, to the course material. The facilitator needs to be able to weave participants’ comments into this structure.
- Offers additional information from negotiation theory and experimental and field research. This helps tie the experience to reasons behind behaviors, interaction patterns, effectiveness of strategies, and quality of outcomes.
- Models behaviors that reinforce past lessons or preview future ones. This makes the debrief a link in the chain of activities in a course or workshop.
- Lasts long enough to be comprehensive and to underscore the importance of the activity.

In a nutshell, a good debrief is the opposite of a recipe. Its distinguishing mark is that it gives students the tools to analyze specific situations and make choices informed by an understanding of why certain techniques might work or how they might be adapted to work. A good debrief empowers students with the knowledge they need to react in the negotiation moment, however different it might be from past experiences.

General Approaches to Debriefing

The specifics of conducting a debriefing vary depending on the teaching context (whether an academic course or professional training), the professional and cultural context, the participants’ background, and the time allotted. There are commonalities, however, and we discuss here two general approaches with contrasting pedagogical underpinnings.

We call the first approach *deductive*, in that debriefing starts with a presentation to the students of the lessons to be gleaned from the exercise. Then the participants are invited to share their experiences and

the facilitator uses their responses to illustrate those learning points or to generate discussion around exceptions to the learning points. The second approach is a more *inductive* process. The facilitator first elicits reactions and responses to the experience and then uses them to build up to the lessons. In this approach, the experiences are the raw materials from which students construct their personal learning. Metaphorically, this second approach is akin to weaving a tapestry from threads contributed by the students. The image on the tapestry, and the point of the discussion, will not be clear until the facilitator pulls the strands together and the lessons emerge.

Both approaches have advantages and disadvantages. The deductive approach is easier and faster to conduct. Because instructors identify the lessons at the outset, they can facilitate a relatively brief and targeted discussion. This is comparatively straightforward because the initial road map of the lessons provides structure for the discussion and makes it easy for the students to recognize the “take away” points. On the negative side, even though this approach has the participatory element of asking students about their experiences, presenting the conclusions first has a prescriptive effect. It turns students into confirming responders rather than initiators, and might as such inhibit student reflection.

The second, inductive, approach offers the advantage of encouraging participants to construct their own knowledge. However, these debriefs usually take longer. The facilitator has to build the lessons from the responses, and it takes time to elicit sufficient comments to concretize the lessons. These debriefs can also be more challenging, especially for instructors with limited experience in debriefing, because the lessons must be constructed in real time. With the participants not privy to the road map of the lessons, the facilitator has to keep track of responses and manage the discussion to develop the intended points. The “open-endedness” of this conversation can also be somewhat unsettling for the participants. But it makes them less likely to jump to premature closure, which leaves them more open to discovering and learning lessons that are personally meaningful but go beyond the instructor’s plan.

The consensus among the authors of this chapter favors the second, more elicitive approach. We believe that a debrief is more likely to create learning that students will actually retain if their own reflections lead to the conclusions. This is apparent when a student announces in a debrief – often with great enthusiasm – a realization she made on the basis of the exercise. Even when a point has previously been made in a reading assignment and again in prior class discussion a student may not absorb it until she discovers it herself, as she becomes aware of her experience.

Many of the chapter's authors, however, modify the purely inductive approach by using questions to organize the debrief. This gives the process more structure, although it also makes it less open-ended. In this variation, the debrief is a highly interactive process, in which the facilitator asks questions of the group to guide their learning and uses the responses to continue and develop the discussion. The goal is to draw on what the participants actually experienced and tie their comments to what the facilitator planned (or hoped) would be discovered in the exercise. Instructors can retain many of the benefits of the purely inductive approach by asking open-ended questions (such as "what worked well?" or "what was hard for you?") along with more focused questions, and by using planned discussion points and questions only as starting points. We prefer to conduct the debrief in free form, taking cues from what participants say and bringing out examples of student behaviors we observed during the exercise.

When using an inductive approach, it is useful to conclude with a summary that incorporates what the students have shared as well as any important additional points that were not articulated. Instructors may present this summary on a previously prepared slide, flip chart or a handout, so that the "take away" points are clear. It can be similar to the information that students would get at the start of a deductive debrief. The summary makes up for any gaps in the discussion and ensures that the debrief links the experience to its objectives and places it in the larger context of the course or training.

Challenges to Successful Debriefing and Suggested Remedies

The requirements of an effective debrief pose significant pedagogical challenges for trainers. In this section, we outline some of the issues – psychological and social, facilitative, and logistical – that teachers often face, and we explore approaches and techniques to help address them.

Psychological and Social Challenges

Participants face psychological challenges during debriefs. Self-reflection can be uncomfortably revealing of shortcomings, and there is also a natural reluctance to receive criticism.⁵ Resistance to change is a common theme in education, as reflected in numerous studies (Patton 2000). Trainers face the challenge of fostering an atmosphere of safety that enables participants to seek feedback and to strive for improvement.

Criticism also creates social challenges through threats to the role of individuals in a group (Patton 2000). One factor is that dissect-

ing a participant's behaviors may have an effect on the individual's standing in the group. Another is that exercises with an opportunity to double-cross a negotiating partner can provoke sympathies and antipathies with lasting effects in the classroom (see Welsh 2012). A debrief needs to defuse threats to the self-worth and reputation of participants in order to preserve an environment conducive for learning.

To create a safe environment for everyone to express their views, the facilitator must model openness and tolerance. An effective way to do this is to listen with respectful curiosity and the goal of understanding, and then to utilize responses to further the discussion. This shows the value of each person's contribution, provides space for the participants to explore and digest their experiences, and demonstrates that the discussion is a safe place to discuss concerns. Consider overtly encouraging a spirit of experimentation during exercises, which can moderate reactions to role-play dynamics and threats to reputation. The goal is to foster a sense of community that encourages the growth of all.⁶

Facilitation Challenges

No matter how experienced the teacher, facilitating a debrief involves challenges in terms of participant dynamics and managing contributions. Many of these challenges are common in facilitating any discussion, but they may be more pronounced during debriefs where students are being asked to dissect their performance and to describe personal reactions and feelings. Perhaps the best general facilitation advice parallels what we teach our students about negotiation: combine thorough preparation with flexibility in the moment. A debrief will rarely turn out the way one has planned it. But if one can keep in mind the goals of the debrief and be flexible in utilizing responses, learning objectives can be met.

Preparation means identifying the objectives of the exercise, and planning lines of questioning and summary points in advance so that the instructor is ready to use the debrief to further those objectives. It is also vital to know the details of the fact pattern for the exercise in order to follow nuances in the discussion, and to the extent possible, it is very helpful to observe the students doing the exercise. Jotting down examples of student interactions prepares the facilitator to enrich the debrief; students cannot always be counted on to volunteer their experience, but will usually respond to prompts. More generally, preparation also means being comfortable with the subject matter. Ideally, the teacher should be familiar not only with what she intends to cover, but also with related material that speaks to the experience the students are likely to have.

These forms of preparation are also helpful in alleviating a trainer's anxiety; an inductive debriefing style can be intimidating. There is no pre-planned content to deliver – just an open forum. This can be uncomfortable for some because it feels as if the conversation can go anywhere (or nowhere). On occasion, they may even hold rather heated discussions – a sign of engagement, but with the risk that the instructor will lose control. Facilitators need to strike a balance between allowing adequate space for the discussion and steering it back to the purpose of the exercise. Thorough preparation and clarity about those purposes assists greatly with this ambitious goal.

Flexibility is necessary to adapt to the unanticipated directions participants may introduce into the conversation. Planning the goals of the exercise and the debrief, as opposed to the minutiae of specific questions, supports flexibility by preparing the instructor to relate unexpected comments to the larger picture. Curiosity and concentration are also practices that support flexibility in debriefing. (See Efron and Ebner 2010 for suggestions on cultivating curiosity and openness in preparation for leading a training.) During the discussion, stay in the moment with the students. Listening carefully to their experiences is essential in order to be able to make meaningful connections in an agile debrief.

In terms of more specific facilitation challenges, there are a number of common difficulties to be expected during debriefing conversations. We suggest some skills instructors can cultivate to address them.

“The sound of silence”

Sometimes, it is difficult to get responses from the room with a general invitation. People have a variety of reasons for reticence: they may not want to be first, or to risk sounding stupid, or they may not understand. Silence can also be an expression of the psychological or social factors discussed above, or it can reflect something as simple as postprandial or late evening timing. Some reframing and encouragement may be necessary to elicit responses. A specific person might be invited to respond to start the conversation. This, and the facilitator's reaction to the response, will hopefully lead to more fruitful discussion. If, however, after several open questions and prompts there is still silence, it may be necessary to fall back on using a pre-written set of learning points on a slide or a flip chart, which can help guide the discussion and prompt responses from even the most difficult group.

“The Dominant Party”

Occasionally someone in the room dominates the discussion or pronounces views in a definitive way. This may dissuade others in the

room from speaking, reducing the variety of views and preventing a full discussion. Furthermore, silent participants may be less likely to process the experience in personal terms, and they lose the benefit they would gain from articulating their insights. The most constructive approach is to encourage the involvement of the rest of the room without alienating the dominant party or marginalizing his view. Instructors can do this by asking for other views. If necessary, the facilitator might have to single out a couple of specific people for their responses. In extreme circumstances, the facilitator may need to speak to the “dominator” individually.

“Missing the point”

At times a participant offers an observation that is either irrelevant, off-point, or simply wrong. A related challenge is when a group is stuck on discussing specific outcomes or other topics that do not have general applicability. As in the case of the dominant party, the challenge is to address the problem without alienating that person or group or discouraging participation. It is therefore better not to ignore this type of response. It may be possible to use the response to open a discussion by linking it to something that is relevant. Done this way, the participant making the initial response will both learn and feel included. Alternatively, the teacher can acknowledge the response as one possible way of seeing things, but then elicit different views from others who might challenge it. This gives the person who offered the initial response an opportunity to rethink it in light of what other participants have to say, which may be more palatable than a counter from the facilitator.

“Runaway emotions”

After some role-plays, especially prisoner’s-dilemma-type exercises or simulations designed to raise ethical issues, some participants may feel wronged or upset about having been double-crossed. Even without an element of deception, there is likely to be an emotional component to students’ sense of their performance in the role-play. While emotions can be an important aspect of the learning process, helping students manage them is necessary to keep the debrief on track. Allowing some venting at the beginning of the debrief may pre-empt this difficulty. Some of us also suggest that reassuring participants that emotions are a human mechanism for dealing with issues that matter, and praising those who take the learning experience so seriously, can help replace hostility with pride. An analogy to a real-life negotiation process can also be helpful to deal with emotional overflow. Asking students how emotions might affect the negotiation

process and other participants in real-life negotiations is one way to refocus the discussion on broader themes.

“The mosaic”

Anyone who has taught knows that the more heterogeneous a group is – in terms of initial skills, interests, experience, and educational background – the more difficult it is to teach the class at the appropriate level and to manage the variety of contributions. This, however, is a challenge that can be turned into a valuable asset. Diversity in the classroom microcosm can be treated explicitly as mirroring the diversity of perspectives that participants will encounter in their professional negotiations. Thus, differences among students can illustrate key negotiation points related to the effects of differences in perceptions, substantive knowledge, life experiences, and culture. Instructors may want to use every opportunity to draw attention to these differences and explore how they affect negotiation processes and outcomes, reminding students that agreements are often made possible by differences in preferences rather than similarities.

Logistical Challenges

Time constraints

Insufficient time for adequate debriefing is one of the most common challenges faced by negotiation teachers. Trainers struggle with how to distribute time among conveying theoretical elements, experiential exercises, and their debriefing. Inadequate time for a debriefing session undermines its effectiveness and, given its importance, limits the learning experience. It is especially difficult for the teacher to stay elicitive and fully foster self-discovery when time is short. When there is insufficient time, the debrief tends to become more of a presentation than an interactive discussion. And, even if the process is interactive, everyone may not have a chance to speak. In short, inadequate time for a debrief risks compromising important goals of the process.

One rule of thumb in the educational context is to allocate, as a starting point, twenty-five percent of the total exercise time to debriefing (Hertel and Mills 2002). This may need to increase with a large group, a group unfamiliar with debriefing, or a complex activity. In contrast, others advocate longer timeframes. Steinwachs (1992) runs debriefs for at least as long as the experiential part of the exercise. In nursing education, where simulations are widely used, some advocate allotting three times the length of the experiential portion to debriefing (Arafeh, Hansen, and Nichols 2010). In actual practice, however, nursing educators tend to allocate from ten to fifty percent of the total exercise time to reflection and debriefing (Brackenreg 2004). For

negotiation simulations, some of the co-authors of this chapter estimate that debriefing can fulfill most of its potential if approximately twenty-five percent of the exercise time is dedicated to the debriefing session. In any event, variation in the duration of debriefing should be related to the complexity of the exercise and the learning objectives.

Whatever the length of time planned for debriefing, it is important to keep the exercise on schedule. Cutting off negotiation in the middle can be difficult for students who feel that they could reach agreement with just a little more time. But the debriefing will have to absorb the time overrun. In deciding when to stop an exercise, it may help to consider how much additional learning, if any, students would get from continuing it. There may be a point of diminishing educational returns after which students will benefit much more from debriefing than from continuing the exercise. Although students typically seek the satisfaction of completing an agreement, the educational goals of an exercise may not require this, and some lessons may be stronger if not all students reach one.

The timing for the debriefing session

When is the optimal time to conduct debriefing – immediately after a negotiation exercise, or later, once the experience has sunk in? The nursing literature on simulations advocates debriefing immediately in order to productively focus the emotions that will naturally arise when students begin to analyze their performance following a simulation (Arafeh, Hansen, and Nichols 2010). Pedagogically, immediate feedback makes it easier to connect behaviors to outcomes and, therefore, to the need for changed behavior. In addition, students remain engaged and they remember details. However, logistically, there is the problem that negotiating groups will inevitably complete the activity at different times. An immediate debrief may keep some students idling while others continue their negotiation. Moreover, there simply may not be time to conduct a full debriefing process, especially within the constraints of a class period.

In order to adapt to timing constraints, it may be advantageous to postpone the debrief until the following session, particularly with a complicated simulation exercise (high stakes, multi-party, multi-issue) that may require an entire class period to negotiate. With this approach, students should be asked to take a few minutes to jot down their impressions, either in free form or with some guidelines, to help them recall their experiences in the later discussion. Alternatively, some negotiations can take place outside class. This may call for using some of the alternative designs for debriefing that we discuss below.

In addition to logistic considerations, there are some pedagogical advantages to separating the role-play and the debrief. It takes time to

ponder one's actions, their consequences, and their desirability. Some distance between the experience and the discussion can help students cool off and bring perspective to their analysis. Debriefing effectively must balance both needs – to process the experience directly and immediately, and to allow sufficient time for reflection. Admittedly, semester-long classes offer more options than workshops.

Number of participants

Although there is some indication that many negotiation classes are taught in groups of under thirty students (Patton 2000; Williams and Geis 2000), larger classes are not uncommon. Trainers sometimes work in teams of two or three, and may have more influence over the size of a workshop, but usually they too lack the luxury of matching the number of participants to the number of training staff. Thus in both settings there are often more working groups of students engaged in role-plays than teaching staff. As a result, instructors cannot observe each negotiation entirely, which limits their ability to provide feedback. Furthermore, with large numbers of negotiation groups, there are more experiences to discuss, and this makes whole-group debriefing sessions more complex. Especially when combined with time limitations, an unwieldy number of students imposes significant constraints on full participation during a debrief.

One response to size is to break the class into smaller groups led by adjunct instructors for simulation exercises and debriefs. Other solutions involve varying the design of the debriefing structure, as discussed in the following section.⁷

Designing a Debriefing Structure

Some of the challenges of debriefing can be best addressed by considering alternative methods for debriefing and selecting a structure suited to the specific exercise. In a typical negotiation class, several groups negotiate the same role-play exercise simultaneously and the entire class reconvenes at the end of the role-play for an in-class debriefing session. An advantage of this format is that all students can benefit from the varied experiences of the small negotiating groups. However sole reliance on this approach has many of the disadvantages, discussed above, that are associated with immediate debriefing in a large group. Rather than automatically adopting this structure, an instructor should consider varying it with other approaches.

Many of the authors of this chapter have experimented with debriefing methods designed to respond to some of the logistical – and other – challenges that trainers face. Self-assessment or other written reaction is one approach that expands the scope of reflection.

Discussion in small groups is an additional, productive way to complement traditional whole-group discussion. We also discuss the benefits of whole-group discussions and ways to adapt them to large groups.

Personal Assessment

One way to overcome the reluctance participants have to share their shortcomings, fears, and concerns with others, while simultaneously encouraging participants to examine their assumptions and performance, is to use a self-assessment instrument.

Yael Efron and Noam Ebner have developed personal assessment sheets to guide reflection at each debriefing point in the exercise: before it begins, half-way through (if applicable), and at the end. The sheets are not handed in to the teacher nor shared with anyone, but participants are encouraged to keep them for future reference. This promotes candid reflection over time, and provides a perspective on skill improvement throughout the course. A sample set of questions for a simulation exercise emphasizing negotiation skill-building is included in Appendix A. The questions can be tailored to fit other goals as appropriate for the training session.

A related, less guided, approach is to ask the students to spend a few minutes after the exercise recording their immediate reactions and observations. This helps engage all students in the subsequent discussion. It can also enable that discussion to occur or to continue during the following class period if the time left at the end of the negotiation is not long enough to do justice to a full debrief.

Small-group Discussions

Most of the chapter authors rely, to varying degrees, on small-group discussions among those who participated in the same role-play group. This allows participants to share confidential role information and to provide personal feedback to each other. The small group may be more comfortable for discussion than the plenary format, allowing some students to be more forthcoming. These discussions also help smooth the timing problem created when some groups finish negotiating earlier than others. Substantively, the discussions can highlight different perspectives on the group's shared experience and prime participants to offer their viewpoints in the large-group discussion. There, the small groups' experiences can be used as examples to demonstrate common themes or diverse approaches.

A logistical challenge for small group debriefs is having too few trainers to lead the discussions. While groups can hold discussions without a facilitator, this may not be ideal. One solution is to assign a student to act as a "coach" in each group. The coach acts as an observ-

er during the role-play and leads a discussion in the small group after the exercise. The coach is equipped with a set of specific questions to bear in mind while observing the exercise and to use as the basis for the discussion.⁸ Additionally, the coach is tasked with preventing the small-group discussion from becoming a simple, play-by-play rehash of the negotiation or – even worse – a continuation of the negotiation itself. Teachers can rotate the observer role among participants over the course of the training, as this role can aid in solidifying learning.

Whole-class Discussions

Personal assessment and small-group discussions cannot, however, fully substitute for traditional whole-group debriefing. A whole-class discussion guided by a facilitator is preferable for creating a learning opportunity that draws on others' experiences and insights. Drawing attention to the commonalities and the differences in participants' courses of action in the negotiation has the beneficial effect of easing participants' concern about acknowledging their mistakes, and it encourages them to explore different tools and techniques in further experiences.

Plenary discussions help create a shared language and experience based on the role-plays which carry on throughout the continuation of the course or training. For example, the phrase "There is always a round nine," was used in a debrief of a prisoner's dilemma-type role-play in which the students were surprised by a ninth round when they thought the exercise was over. The phrase came to signify the importance of keeping the future in mind when considering relationship building and was later used whenever relationship building actions were discussed in debriefing other exercises.

It may be necessary, however, to modify the traditional large group format to respond to logistical issues. With a group so large that discussion is unwieldy, Steinwachs (1992) suggests using a fishbowl debriefing technique. She puts ten to twenty students in an inner circle to participate directly in the conversation; the rest of the group observes from an outer circle, but can rotate in and become an active participant by standing behind someone's chair. An alternative we have used is to limit the interaction within the whole group to reports from the smaller groups. Or, when observers are used, they can report during the plenary session.

Additional Vehicles for Debriefing

Reflective journals or papers can also be used to supplement traditional in-class debriefing. Like self-assessment sheets, journals used at the beginning of the debriefing process help students reflect in prepa-

ration for group discussions. A post-discussion journal assignment extends the analytical learning process by requiring each student to organize his or her thoughts and debrief on an individual basis, and gives a quiet student an avenue to articulate his reactions (Petranek, Corey, and Black 1992). Charles Petranek (2000) argues that students learn much more when oral debriefing is followed with written debriefing. The drawbacks, however, are the time commitments for students to prepare the reflections and for faculty to evaluate the papers and provide feedback. For more on using reflective journaling, see McAdoo (2012).

Reviewing a video in a small group is another way to conduct a debriefing, and is particularly suited to providing feedback on student performance. Williams and colleagues (2008) developed a method using webcams to record students practicing negotiation micro-skills, which they combine with reflective journal entries that are informed by watching the recording. For more examples of such methods, including suggestions for making them less labor- and time-intensive for teachers, see Matz and Ebner (2010), Ebner and Kovach (2010), and Manwaring and Kovach (2012).

Functional Stages of Debriefing

Whatever debriefing methods the instructor selects, the course of the debrief should be carefully planned to bring out the points of the exercise, but at the same time should foster a natural discussion with and among the participants. Barbara Steinwachs (1992) divides the debriefing process into three phases: description, analogy/analysis, and application.⁹ We suggest structuring these phases using the following steps, which are a variation of stages proposed by the American Society for Training and Development¹⁰ and are based on a composite of the facilitation and elicitation approaches used by the authors of this chapter. As observed by Steinwachs (1992), participants are often reluctant to move out of the earlier descriptive phases. Allocating time for each stage can help ensure that the discussion reaches the steps for analysis and future application.

Step 1: Encourage Venting and Expression of Emotion

A significant challenge in starting a debrief is separating participants from the story line of the simulation. Participants find it difficult to detach from the role they have been playing and to adopt a learning stance towards themselves and their experience (Ebner and Efron 2005). Participants often want to relive the story or account for their various moves – to work out their anger or frustration, or communicate their sense of accomplishment. Trainers want to shift the fo-

cus instead to the dynamics, the tools used, and the skills practiced. This requires students to transition from their roles in the simulation back into seeing themselves as participants in a learning exercise. This identity prompts a more analytical mode that allows them to generalize and draw conclusions from their experience.

Dealing with emotions can help with the transition. After the participants have had an opportunity to vent, stress that the role is over, the negotiation is done, and that they should let things go rather than carry the negotiation into the debriefing session. In addition, discussing emotions explicitly at the start of the debrief can not only help prevent “runaway emotions” from later hijacking the debrief, but it can also harness emotional energy and constructively redirect it toward learning. Emotions have effects on interactions during the role-play that need to be explored (Nelken, Schneider, and Mahuad 2010), and discussing participants’ feelings is a way to intensify and personalize the analysis of the experience for participants (Brackenreg 2004; Fanning and Gaba 2007). New understandings that change behaviors need to be realized on an emotional, as well as a cognitive, level (Patera and Gamm 2010).

Step 2: Define Debriefing Goals and Set a Mutually Respectful Tone¹¹

State clearly what you hope they will gain from this experience in terms of the goals of the exercise. Announcing the goals of the debrief helps students locate their experience in the broader perspectives of the course, and also gives the trainer objective grounds for bringing the discussion back on point if it wanders too far afield. During the first debrief of a training, the instructor may find it helpful to tell students that it is an opportunity to transform their simulation experience into practical lessons.

This is also the time to set an appropriate tone for the debrief by demonstrating respect for the participants and their experiences. This is particularly necessary when students’ experiences and conclusions differ from the ideas that the instructor wants to convey. Above all, the debrief should be a conversation. This invites interaction and fosters collective possibilities for learning that exceed what any individual could achieve on their own (Baker, Jensen, and Kolb 1997).

Step 3: Explore the Experience

Some of the authors of this chapter typically begin their debriefs by asking how many of the groups reached agreement, eliciting the main points of the agreements (or, if one was not reached, where the negotiations left off), and recording these results on the board or a flip-

chart. The danger in doing this is that it can send a signal that the end result of the negotiation matters more than the process, and reinforce some students' tendencies to judge their performance based on a comparison to results from other groups. If this step is skipped, however, students often need to describe what happened in their group, and the conversation keeps circling back to that topic. Like the process of surfacing emotions, reporting results can allow participants still engrossed in the exercise to transition to an analysis. In addition, the agreements are often instructive. For example, they may show a great variety of possible outcomes and demonstrate students' creativity in generating options.

Other co-authors prefer to begin with a question related to the theme of the exercise. Starting with a good, clear, open question invites responses that can open up many avenues of discussion. This question should ask for subjective experience rather than an objective response. That way, everyone has a valid response to contribute and the debrief models openness to different perspectives. For example, to begin a discussion of how negotiation outcomes can be evaluated, the opening question might probe whether students feel their negotiation was successful. Then one can segue into why participants felt it was a success (or not) and use those responses to develop possible criteria for measuring success. In a debrief aiming to illustrate a number of points, the instructor should have a good first question for each point. Sequencing the topics is also important so that each one opens up the discussion of the next.

Step 4: Focus on Training Goals and Develop Learning

The heart of debriefing is a discussion with the students about their experience, highlighting aspects that illustrate specific negotiation theory points and best practices, and emphasizing key lessons that might apply to other situations. To that end, the discussion needs to link the experience to the learning objectives of the exercise. The difficulty of creating this link should not be underestimated. When there is a lack of clarity about the goals, this invites an unfocused discussion, reducing the effectiveness of the debriefing. Often when students are confused it may be because trainers are confused.

Facilitators who have clearly articulated their goals to themselves can use students' responses to advance the discussion in a number of ways. Clarifying questions are one way to use a response to expand on useful points and create more material from which to concretize lessons. Douglas Stone (2000) counsels that good follow-up questions arise from the learning points appropriate for the session, and can help dissect how participants are connecting their experiences to their

conclusions. One can also use responses to illustrate desired behavior, reinforce past lessons, or foreshadow future lessons. The more an instructor is able to put every role-play experience into perspective and bring out repeatedly some of the key lessons – such as preparation, best alternative to a negotiated agreement (BATNA), and mutually beneficial tradeoffs – the more likely it becomes that students will understand and retain what we teach.

Step 5: Look to the Future

After the negotiation experience has been processed and connected to theory and process points, the debrief can help prepare students to transfer their new knowledge to other settings (with an appropriate admonition that context matters and negotiations will differ). To promote this transfer, one technique is to question students about what they would do differently if negotiating in a related, but different situation. A series of “What if . . .?” questions can bring out contingencies to prompt rethinking of strategies. One of us elicits from each student a “nugget of wisdom” – an observation about behaviors, expectations met (or not), the negotiation process, or an outcome – that might inform future negotiations. This part of the debrief is specifically directed toward promoting reflective practice habits.

Step 6: Pull the Threads Together

At the end of the debrief, it is important to pull together the threads of the discussion. If the discussion has been rich, this concluding summary will have more meaning for the students than if the instructor had simply provided a take-home message. Pulling the threads together can be as straightforward as using a flip chart to summarize the discussion in terms of each of the lessons. A prepared slide can be a starting point if it is supplemented with suggestions from participants. It is helpful to allow participants to consult these points throughout the course or training. Consider posting any prepared debriefing materials (such as your planned questions) and the results of each group’s negotiation on the web or, more simply, post any flip chart pages on the wall for future reference.

Step 7: Celebrate Success

Several of this chapter’s authors believe that it is helpful pedagogically to close a debrief by acknowledging the success of the participants. Especially in the concentrated day-long format of a workshop, it is not unusual for the group to be worn out by the end of the debrief, and anxious to end the session. This can diminish the participants’ ability to absorb information. Moreover, fatigue seems to promote pessi-

mism, so stressing points for improvement might translate in a tired participant's mind into a feeling of being "no-good." For this reason it is important to "[c]elebrate success and encourage optimism. Remind participants that if the use of particular skills, techniques, and tools enabled them to achieve changes in [the simulation exercise], they can help them do the same in reality" (Ebner and Efron 2005: 392).¹²

One way to acknowledge success is to end a debrief with a festive ceremony of signing the agreements the parties reached. Another possibility, particularly appropriate at the end of short courses, is to award certificates and take pictures of the group. To reinforce particular behaviors, the trainers might announce notable accomplishments or mark specific advances with a round of applause. Or, the identification of achievements can come from the group in a "take-away" session in which each participant shares one key learning point or identifies what he or she is most proud of from the day. Throw in a bowl of candy from which each participant can take some sweets prior to his or her announcement and it's a celebration.

Tailoring the Debrief for Specific Audiences

In this final section, we analyze adjustments for debriefing based on who is participating in the training. (On the importance of tailoring overall training design to participants, see Lewicki and Schneider 2010.) Some of the challenges of debriefing are different in an executive workshop format than for university education. Within an educational setting, the discipline can make a difference. And adjustments need to be made, in both workshops and the classroom, for the participants' language and culture.

University Education vs. Executive Workshops

While this chapter's prescriptions are intended generally to apply to both academic teaching and executive training, there are some notable differences in conducting debriefs between these two settings. The need for assessment, experience of the participants, their relationships, and the time structure are factors influencing debriefing decisions that often differ between the two contexts. As a result, a debrief (even of the same exercise) will likely be different in both content and style.

In an academic setting, the instructor is responsible for assessing whether students have mastered the material, and for grading that mastery. (See Ebner, Efron and Kovach 2012.) Grading permits the academic instructor to fashion certain incentives that are not available in the workshop context. For example, making participation in classroom discussion a component of the grade can help encourage

participation in the debrief. But the eventual need to grade can also influence the content and emphasis of debriefs. In contrast, in an executive-style negotiation training, the participants are primarily responsible for their own learning, and debriefing does not need to be shaped with an eventual assessment in mind.

In an academic setting, the instructor may occasionally need to be directive to ensure that the important points of the lessons have been covered and to connect the exercise to basic concepts. Some of the authors feel that, in contrast, executive-style trainings offer more leeway to take cues from the participants and allow them to glean the lessons that are most relevant to them. On the other hand, other authors find that they are more likely to use the deductive approach in an executive workshop than in the classroom. Busy people may want a quick “take away” and may not have the patience to be led to formulating insights.

Participants in academic courses and executive trainings are likely to have very different real-life experience. While a debrief should always connect in meaningful ways to the participants’ past negotiation experiences and allow them to learn from one another, there is often more depth of experience to work with in a training. Executive trainers work with adults who often have an extensive work history; they may even have more hands-on negotiation exposure than the trainers themselves. In contrast, students may have no experience of some of the situations in the role-plays. These different knowledge bases necessarily affect the starting point and content of a debrief, and influence the richness of the learning environment. In workshops, the greater depth of experience also creates a potential for the debrief to provide opportunities for reflection, perspective taking, and exchange of ideas, rather than serving primarily as a vehicle to convey basic negotiation concepts.

Experience can also pose challenges and reduce receptiveness to new ideas. In trainings, participants’ perceptions of their experience level, even when that does not correspond to actual skills, shape their expectations about how they should be taught. They may also expect more hands-on activities (depending on their cultural background) and be more comfortable expressing discontent if the training content does not meet their expectations.

In addition, executive training participants may work in the same agency or company and know each other well. Students may, or may not, know each other from prior classes, but they are unlikely to have shared work experience. The extent of a shared background and participants’ comfort level in dealing with each other can lead to different dynamics among participants. Receiving criticism from, or in

front of, peers is always sensitive, but particularly so during in-house trainings. When individuals will continue to work together after the training, there is a strong need to save face with one's colleagues – particularly if employees are in the same training program as their supervisors. This is an especially important factor when the training relates to a core skill that might be a measure of one's value to the organization, as with in-house negotiation training for lawyers, managers or sales professionals.

Another difference between debriefing in academic courses and executive trainings is the length and structure of the contact time. In a semester-long course, instructors have time to develop a deeper familiarity with student participants than is possible with the brief exposure in a workshop. One consequence is that executive debriefs often require the trainer to be a quick study and be particularly flexible. Participants' needs may be harder to predict and the debrief is more likely to deviate from preplanned goals. Trainers must be able to follow participants' interests closely and adapt the debrief accordingly.

The compactness of a workshop may be an advantage in that participants are focused on nothing else and completely immersed in the subject. But there are limits to what can be absorbed in one sitting, and fatigue can limit the effectiveness of a workshop debrief. Compared to the compressed format of a workshop, the duration of an academic course gives classroom facilitators greater leeway in selecting what to cover in any particular debrief. If a topic is appropriate for a later negotiation, the teacher has an option to postpone discussion if time is short. The academic course format also allows other techniques for dealing with inadequate time, such as asking students to record their thoughts for discussion during the next class. These time management techniques are not available to trainers. In theory they may have less need for them, with a longer block of workshop time that is not constrained by the duration of a class meeting. But in reality there is never enough time, and the structural options for responding to this challenge are more limited in the workshop setting.

Perhaps the most important consequence of the concentrated learning in a workshop is that participants do not have a debriefing opportunity for guided reflection over time. There is no opportunity to gradually develop realizations that build on their earlier work. One way to counteract this disadvantage of the workshop setting is to schedule follow-up sessions to encourage further reflection and check on progress in applying the workshop lessons. Another approach is to build an online support group and use it for communication between

workshop/course sessions, or even post-workshop, with several added benefits in terms of relational and group dynamics (see Bhappu et al. 2009).

Academic Discipline or Participant Background

While many of the authors teach law students, Kaufman teaches public and urban affairs students. Because most of them seek careers in the public sector, she aims to equip students with the skills needed to become effective and reflective negotiation *parties* in the context of multi-party public decision-making. This context for the course shapes debriefings regardless of the specific objectives of the exercise. Each debrief is directed not only at the particular goal of the role-play, but also toward helping students connect to the big picture of negotiating in the context of public decisions. (For a discussion of teaching negotiation for public decisions, see Matsuura et al., *Beyond "Negotiation 2.0"*, in this volume.) For example, with a prisoner's dilemma-type exercise, the debrief sorts out the dynamics the students have experienced and develops examples of real situations that present similar incentives. What differs – and is driven by the specific audience – is that the debrief also covers strategies for mitigating the effects of such incentives in public decisions, as well as possibilities for structural change.

Compared to business or law students, public affairs students often tend to be relatively less competitive in classroom role-plays. Their orientation toward public service combines with normative messages in other courses to enhance their desire to compromise, which they often confuse with cooperation. To help them become effective negotiators on behalf of their future constituencies and to impart the habit of reflective practice, Kaufman emphasizes this issue in debriefs throughout the course. She makes a special effort to help students differentiate between compromise and cooperation, and to convey that cooperation is a strategic choice they should adopt only when they expect a better outcome than with other strategies.

Law students might conduct the same role-plays, and debriefs might similarly emphasize inter- and intra-group dynamics, different ways to approach a negotiation situation, making a strategic choice as to which approach to take, and encouraging reflection. But the focus on specific lessons in debriefing likely differs. Some law students tend toward a competitive and adversarial approach. In addition, they may have difficulty seeing things from the perspective of others. During debriefings, there is frequently an "aha!" moment when students realize that there are ways of achieving one's goals (or those of one's clients) apart from competition. Law students' worldview is therefore "complexified" by the negotiation exercise and the debrief.

Since law students will often represent clients, it is important to design exercises and focus debriefing to bring out issues of authority, internal and external negotiations, and principal-agent tensions. Acting as an agent is not unique to law students; representation of constituencies is a topic that needs a lot of attention with public policy students. But in the legal context, especially with regard to settlement negotiations, it is particularly appropriate to emphasize principal-agent tensions and the ethical and professional responsibility questions that may arise. In addition, other topics, such as evaluating litigation prospects as a party's BATNA, are more uniquely relevant to legal settlement negotiations and may require not only emphasis in debriefings, but also specially tailored exercises.

Native Language and Culture

Language can have a significant effect on participation in the debriefing process in either an academic or workshop setting. In a class conducted in English with non-native speakers, as is common with international groups, the facilitator may need to adjust some debriefing techniques. Simple steps can be taken to aid comprehension. For example, it may help participants if they can read some of the key questions for the debrief on the instruction sheet for the exercise or on a PowerPoint slide, rather than only hearing them. Joseph Stulberg and his colleagues (2009) offer a number of suggestions for minimizing communication barriers in conducting negotiation workshops for global professional groups, many of which are relevant to debriefing (see also Abramson 2009).

Trainers faced with language differences should be prepared to adjust their expectations regarding student response time. As an example, a group of lawyers from North Finland participating in a workshop offered in English by one of the co-authors took a very long time to respond to questions, because they needed time to think and process. What can seem like an eternity of silence to a facilitator is but a moment to students dealing with a language that is foreign to them. Longer response times may translate into the need to allocate a longer time for debriefing, or to limit the scope of the debrief and carefully select key questions.

We have observed that participants in a workshop conducted in what is, for them, a foreign language may also need extra encouragement to participate. This may be due not only to hesitancy with the language, but also to a learning style preference influenced by background and culture, such as an educational experience dominated by lectures (see Kovach 2009). Such students may be uncomfortable with role-playing itself, which may carry over into discomfort with

the debrief. Some students may not be comfortable with speaking up in a classroom at all. Other individuals may not be accustomed to the heavy use of questions in debriefing. They may instead expect the facilitator to act as an expert and impart instruction, rather than eliciting lessons from students. Awareness of differences in educational approaches and expectations in different cultural settings, and explicit acknowledgement of this awareness, can help relieve some of the tension.

Other cultural factors, including organizational or professional culture, may also influence the discussion dynamic. For example, with a group of officials from Nigeria, the importance of power and status in the group caused participants to feel ill at ease offering their opinions before the most senior person had spoken, and when they did speak they did not express disagreement with him. Whatever the cultural or language reasons for lack of participation, with a less active group the trainer will have to “lead from the front,” while still encouraging dialogue (even if there are spells of uncomfortable silence).

Conclusion

We close with the observation that most of the little advice available on debriefing is, like our own, based primarily on experience. Given the importance of debriefing to experiential learning, the negotiation field could benefit from research on what makes the process effective, and from the development of tools to assess debriefs. In addition, most negotiation teachers learn how to lead a debrief by remembering their own teachers’ practices, and through the experience of doing debriefs. We suggest that negotiation teachers develop the reflective habit of applying debriefing principles to analyze their own debriefs. After debriefing a negotiation exercise, instructors should reflect systematically by asking what happened, how it felt, what challenges they encountered, what worked well, what might account for their experience, and what they could do differently the next time. It might be helpful to enlist a colleague to observe a debrief and then participate in debriefing *that* experience.

Notes

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¹ See Lederman (1992) for descriptions of the use of debriefing in military contexts and with psychological studies involving deception of subjects, where it serves different functions than in the educational setting.

² Schön (1983) differentiated between the reflection that occurs during practice, “reflection-in-action,” and the reflection that occurs in critically thinking back about practice, “reflection-on-action,” which is the type of reflection

in a debriefing. A third form of reflection, "reflection-for-action," integrates the outcomes of the first two into reflection to guide future behavior.

³ Patton (2000) cites research conducted by Professor Israel Unterman of San Diego State University comparing agreements that were achieved at the end of negotiation sessions conducted by students, who received concrete and specific feedback in negotiation training, with agreements reached by businessmen whose negotiation skills were acquired through experience alone. The students, who received practice and feedback, reached better results than the businessmen.

⁴ Gerald Williams and colleagues (2008) advocate the use of deliberative practice, a method that relies heavily on feedback, for teaching negotiation skills. Participants practice: 1) a well-defined task; that is 2) challenging but achievable; they receive 3) immediate feedback on their performances and outcomes; 4) they correct their errors; and 5) they repeat the tasks until performance becomes routine (Ericsson 1996: 20-21).

⁵ It is not uncommon for some students to react to criticism by explaining what they really meant to communicate, or blaming the others' behaviors and showing themselves to be "right," rather than reflecting on what could be learned from the experience for the future.

⁶ Some commentators emphasize this process goal over content goals. Baker, Jensen, and Kolb (1997: 8-9) believe that the work of the facilitator should be "shaped by the intention to create a hospitable, receptive place to hold a conversation, rather than by the intention to make certain things happen." The values that underlie this approach include:

a profound respect for each participant in the conversation, including the assumption of the wisdom each has to offer; the inclusiveness of voices, meaning that even those who have traditionally been excluded must not only be present but be heard; an assumption that reflective listening is at least as important in the conversation as active speaking; the fundamental importance of allowing silence to provide space for reflection and deep listening; a readiness that is essential for learning; and an openness to surprise and the unanticipated must be welcomed.

(Baker, Jensen, and Kolb 1997: 9)

⁷ Physical space can be another logistical issue. If there is any flexibility, thought should be given to finding an appropriate location. Ideally each group should have its own space for the negotiation, so that the shared space where the debrief will be conducted is available for returning participants who have completed their activity (or their small group discussion). The debriefing space should allow everyone to hear and see each other easily, as well as to see any flip charts or PowerPoint slides that are used to collect observations or debriefing points.

⁸ The questions can address specific skills discussed earlier in class (e.g., "Look for and note any active listening elements exhibited by the parties," or "Observe and note the parties' choices for use of questions in this negotiation"). They can address theories students have learned or concepts that the teacher wishes to highlight (e.g., "What was the apparent choice of negotiation strategy employed by each party?" or "How did the relationship between the parties change over the course of the negotiation?"). In some of the courses where this technique is used the coach prepares a written report on the discussion that contributes to his or her grade.

⁹ For other formulations of debriefing phases, see Lederman (1992), Rudolph and colleagues (2008), and Zigmont and colleagues (2011).

¹⁰ Writing for the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD), Sivasailam Thiagarajan (1996: 526-527) suggests a debriefing structure consisting of a series of questions in the following sequence: 1) inquire about participants' feelings; 2) explore what happened in the exercise to aid recall and "discover similarities, differences, and patterns"; 3) ask what participants learned, to encourage them "to come up with generalizations and to test them"; 4) prompt participants to consider how their simulation experience relates to the real world; 5) pose "what if?" questions to encourage participants to apply the experience in new contexts; and 6) conclude with "what next?" to "encourage action planning based on insights from the activity." Alternative frameworks for structuring questions have been suggested by Gaw (1979), Thiagarajan (1992), and van Ments (1999).

¹¹ If the trainer is using personal assessment as part of the debrief, and if time permits, this might be an appropriate point to suggest some personal reflection. Allow five to ten minutes for participants to fill out their personal assessment sheets. This quiet, reflective, and personal activity not only enhances self-awareness, but also helps prepare for discussion in the subsequent steps.

¹² Other co-authors take a more cautious approach to celebrations, especially to the promise of a carry-over to real negotiations. Simulations are never quite like reality, and Kaufman maintains that trainers owe students a frequent reminder of this point. Truth in advertising means that teachers should not oversell a promise that what worked in the classroom setting will work in the same way in a real situation.

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Appendix A

Personal Assessment Sheet

Professionalism demands constant learning and improvement.

Reflect on these questions – they will help take you to the next level.

Before Game Begins:

When negotiating, I feel my strongest quality or ability lies in using the following skills:

The skills I would like to improve or enhance are:

At Simulation Mid-point:

Describe a point in the negotiation where your strongest quality or ability was best demonstrated. How did the use of this specific element advance the negotiation?

Describe a point of difficulty in the negotiation. What skill or tool might you have used (focus on yourself, rather than on others!) to advance the negotiation?

What skill/tool would you like to develop or practice during the rest of the negotiation?

After Simulation Conclusion:

Describe a point in the negotiation where your strongest quality or ability was best demonstrated. How did the use of this specific tool advance the negotiation?

Describe a point of difficulty in the negotiation. What skill or tool might you have used (focus on yourself, rather than on others!) to advance the negotiation?

What is the most significant insight you found during this exercise, regarding the practice of negotiation? How will I be using it in your future negotiations?