

Bringing the Street to the Classroom and the Student to the Street: Guided Forays into Street-wise Negotiations

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***Editors' Note:** Many writings in this series have argued for greater authenticity in training and teaching, including getting students out of the classroom. No greater authenticity in negotiation teaching settings is likely to be found than in the authors' experiments with teaching students who are actually at work negotiating, while they really are at work. The authors argue that two key attributes of authenticity are served by this technique: repeated engagement, as distinct from isolated role-plays, and expanded stakes, where the student stands to gain or lose in an immediate career sense. Not only is the training, at least in part, actually performed at work, but the students are observed closely by people who are associated with management. The authors report on early experiments in a multinational business setting (in Mexico and the United States), and a public policy setting in Singapore.*

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Introduction

Extending negotiation experiences, such as role-plays and real, ongoing negotiations or projects, beyond the purview of one class or course can improve learning outcomes. In this chapter, we discuss several experiments in which students have been taken out of the classroom to engage in or be coached through intensive negotiation experiences. These experiences extend teaching beyond the classroom through *repetitive engagement*, with the same experience across multiple classes and, in some cases, through *expanded stakes*, by evaluating students' performance in the negotiations and, in some cases, by engaging students while they take part in real life negotiations.

In the next section, we discuss the typical role-play, and critiques of it that have emerged during the Rethinking Negotiation Teaching project. Then we introduce our pedagogical experiments and how they encourage the extension of the learning cycle.

Role-plays for Teaching Negotiation

Alternative dispute resolution (ADR) is a practice, as well as a literature. Teaching about ADR requires preparing students so that they can practice their skills immediately after the course, as well as giving them ideas and frameworks to enable long term reflection on and improvement of those skills. As such, negotiation pedagogy has made extensive use of experiential methods for student learning, including negotiation role-plays.

To understand how our experiments moved beyond the typical role-play, it is first important to understand the place of role-plays in the learning cycle. There are two common approaches to learning using experiential tools. The first, more deductive approach is to introduce certain concepts and practices to students, ask them to practice those elements during the negotiation role-play or other experiential method, and then reflect upon what they have learned from that experience. The second, more inductive approach starts with the experience, and lets the students identify which aspects of the lessons (puzzles, mishaps, and successes) they want to reflect upon. The aspects they choose to reflect upon may have been covered by the class' concepts and frameworks, or may go beyond them.

Both learning approaches can be placed on the same learning cycle of planning-action-observation-reflection-planning (Kolb 1984), shown in Figure 1.

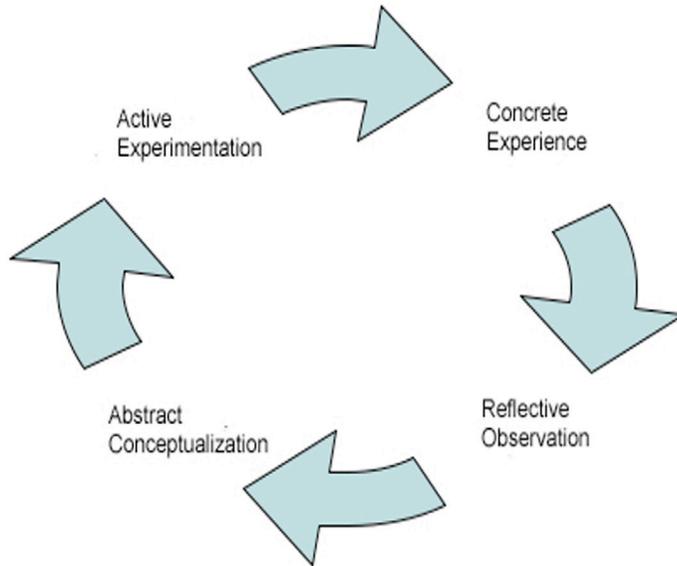


Figure 1: Kolb's Cycle of Experiential Learning

When a negotiation role-play is used within one class, the instructors typically aim to have the students leave the class with a few take-home lessons that will increase their understanding and that they will be able to practice in later role-plays or, even better, real-life negotiations. The benefits of this interaction between analysis and doing are well established. Research indicates that hands-on learning adds to student retention and satisfaction in the learning process (Roblyer 2006). However, as others in the Rethinking Negotiation Teaching project have noted, the effectiveness of using role-plays is limited.

Moving Beyond the Typical Role-play

Nadja Alexander and Michelle LeBaron (2009) challenged the efficacy of such role-plays in the first volume of the Rethinking Negotiation Teaching series, arguing that students sometimes do not find such role-plays compelling or applicable to their daily lives, and that students can often either under- or over-act their roles, further making the negotiation experience unrealistic. These authors do not call for the end of role-plays *per se* (though their title implies so), but instead argue that role-plays need to be supplemented with other experiential pedagogical methods, such as adventure learning (in which students engage in real-life negotiations or other kinds of interactions) and micro-exercises that focus on one particular negotiation activity, e.g., active listening.¹ Overall, many authors in the Rethinking Negotiation Teaching series have echoed this call for more realistic negotiation

experiences for students to engage in, including those that go beyond the classroom and class time (see Nelken, McAdoo, and Manwaring 2009; Coben, Honeyman, and Press 2010; Manwaring, McAdoo, and Cheldelin 2010; Panga and Grecia-de Vera 2010). This chapter looks at the authors' pedagogical experiments using both more realistic simulations and real life negotiation experiences in their courses.

First, since typical role-play exercises are conducted within one class, the students have to engage in a new role-play for the next class. Even if that new role-play allows them to practice the same skills and concepts as covered in the previous role-play, the student will still spend at least part of the class time getting warmed up to the role, the other players, and other dimensions of the role-play scenario. Furthermore, any lecture or readings will typically introduce new concepts and skills. The end result is that we tend to leave it up to students' initiative and cognition to continue the learning about the skill or theory touched upon in the simulation. The lack of real stakes and real student engagement mentioned above is the second limitation that our experiments seek to overcome.

The pedagogical experiments we describe here fit with the spirit of more realistic negotiation experiences beyond the classroom and class time, but they are different from the experiments described in the earlier two volumes produced by the Rethinking Negotiation Teaching project. Some are efforts to make negotiation simulations more real and effective by extending the time of their implementation across multiple classes and allowing for reflection on them in each class. Others place students in real-life negotiation scenarios that are close to what they might do in their professional jobs. More specifically, they are experiments distinguished from traditional role-plays by two characteristics: repetitive engagement and expanded stakes.

Repetitive Engagement

The first characteristic that distinguishes these pedagogical experiments is related to *repetitive engagement*. The online simulations and real-life negotiations described here last beyond the duration of one class. All of the techniques described here extend the negotiation experience over multiple class sessions, with each session providing an opportunity for feedback, reflection, and re-strategizing for the continuing negotiations. Repetitive engagement allows multiple iterations of the learning cycle as students plan, act, observe, reflect, and re-plan. We also hope that using the same scenario or real-life negotiation experience for multiple learning cycles reduces the time spent on other activities commonly found in simulations – e.g., the need to “get in character,” to learn and adapt to a new scenario, to learn and adapt to new negotiating partners.

When simulations are extended, instructors can help the students go through multiple iterations of the learning cycle in each related class. Students can try to achieve the same goal multiple times, iteratively improving their understanding and application of the concepts without having to start over again in a new context and role that have to be deciphered and internalized. In fact, even if the students or instructors choose to focus on new challenges and ideas as the negotiation progresses, there are still benefits, because the students can focus on strategies and observations rather than expending effort in warming up to a new scenario or role.

Expanded Stakes

The second distinguishing characteristic of the experiments is *expanded stakes*. This applies more to the experiments in coaching that will be described below. The stakes in these negotiations are real and personal. The students may be negotiating as part of their job, or doing a class project that involves real clients and real outcomes. In this sense, the pressures to perform, the interpersonal dynamics, and the many other complexities are closer to, or actually are, what they will experience when they leave the classroom. In addition, classroom teaching can be enhanced by high level, interactive “street-wise” experiences with coaching (Barreto 2009; Sosa 2012).

Before we proceed to analyze our experiments, it is important to state a few common assumptions and starting points that the authors share. First, we all teach the seven elements framework (Fisher, Ury, and Patton 1991)² in our classrooms as one way of analyzing and preparing for negotiations. Second, we believe that there is much to learn from reflective engagement with an ongoing negotiation experience (see Druckman 2006). Third, our students come from a variety of cultures, languages, professions, and settings, that influence their expectations, interpretive frameworks, and other ways of making sense of the world (see Goh et al., *As We See It*, in this volume). We acknowledge and encourage students to identify potential differences, while still providing the “seven elements” and other frameworks as a starting point for discussions. Then, we deal with differences as they arise, in class discussion, one-on-one sessions with students, and other media of reflection and analysis.

In the next section, we describe how we used role-plays that extended beyond one class session. The two subsequent sections describe pedagogical experiments in which the instructors follow and coach students who are engaging in real-life negotiation practice. The first of these experiments revolves around a class project in which the students work together to identify a topic, convene stakeholders,

and facilitate a dialogue with outside stakeholders. In the second of these experiments, the instructor shadows and coaches one or more students as they engage in their professional negotiations. In the last section we provide a summary of what we have learned from conducting these experiments and from comparing our experiences, and conclude by proposing improved experiments for the reader and ourselves.

Using Extended Role-Plays

Extended role-plays (i.e., beyond one class and learning cycle) were designed for students to continue engaging the concepts learned in class, to continue following up with the concepts to ensure applications, and to reflect upon experiences in subsequent classes. Here the authors present the use of online negotiations as a tool to allow students to learn and apply concepts asynchronously and synchronously. This section describes the experiment in more detail.

Using an Online Simulation to Teach Negotiations at Business Schools

A way of teaching negotiation at the Cameron School of Business at the University of St. Thomas which we have found very useful was to engage students in actual negotiations, rather than exclusively role-plays, using an online simulation program developed by the University of Maryland's ICONS project.³ We have used several ICONS simulations, such as Nigeria Oil; Borders, Environment, and Trade of the Americas; and European Union. We will describe how we used these and invite other professors to use similar platforms that help connect the students more into a real case simulation.

The Borders, Environment, and Trade in the Americas simulation is a multi-party, multi-issue negotiation that can extend the MBA student's business exercise experiences. We wanted the students to be exposed to a more realistic case simulation in which they can act as diplomats of specific countries, do research, and understand domestic issues, positions, strategic needs, and strengths and weaknesses. Also, we wanted the students to develop a coalition-forming strategy to gain negotiation power. Students had an opportunity to think and strategize regional multilateral agreements and bilateral agreements, depending on needs, issues, and positions.

Also very important was the students' mixed-mode communication experience while negotiating. This simulation was designed to be used as an outside-of-the-classroom negotiation. Students could feel and experience the difference between negotiating online, sending messages, delivering and receiving emails, and conducting online

chats as opposed to traditional face-to-face meetings. Multi-mode communicating is more representative of an actual negotiation.

How ICONS connects with the course

Our course was an International Trade and Negotiation MBA special topic summer course at the University of St. Thomas. Learning from both the most famous negotiators in history, the Phoenicians, and the modern ICONS Project simulation, we used a syllabus that covered the following topics:

- International trade and negotiations
- Basic principles of negotiation
- Single-issue two-party distributive negotiation to collaborative negotiation
- Single-issue multi-party cases to multiple-issue multi-party negotiations
- Internal vs. external negotiations
- Culture and negotiations
- Commercial vs. diplomatic negotiations
- Negotiate like a Phoenician (Taking a look at history to see what the best historical negotiators did and how the student can apply it in today's environment) (Chamoun and Hazlett 2007)
- Deal methodology and the use of "tradeables" (Chamoun and Linzoain 2004)

The ICONS simulation was in addition to in-class material, and was conducted online outside of class. At every classroom meeting, we dedicated ten minutes to discuss the ICONS simulation and what the students needed to do in each session.

Simulation timing

The MBA course was a six-week summer course. We met every Monday and Wednesday evening. In the first two weeks, students performed research on their specific assigned country, completed the country worksheet, filed their position paper, and developed their strategy.

Students were asked to send at least three messages per week and three questions per week to other countries for the first three weeks. In the second week, when we noticed some students had failed to answer inquiries from other countries, we set as a rule of the simulation that everyone not answering an inquiry from others would be penalized in the game. Subsequently, everyone started communicating more frequently.

By the third and fourth week of class, we specified that students needed to exercise conferencing features in ICONS to schedule online

discussions and formulate proposals. We initiated a rule that a country needed to submit at least one proposal by the fourth week of class, and that others needed to respond. In the fourth week of class, we set a rule that students needed to do conferencing at least once a day. Scheduling conferencing was the most difficult task. The MBA students are professionals with very busy schedules, so setting specific times for country combinations was quite difficult.

We left the conferences open in the fifth week, checked the messaging between countries, and determined which countries wanted to have private conferencing. Finally, we set country conference combinations based on the students' messaging aspirations and expectations. After conferencing, the students had an opportunity to vote for proposals and write their final assignment reaction paper.

In the sixth week, we opened all the conversations on the simulation, so that the students could go back and read the messaging of the different countries and reflect on what really happened in the negotiation. They analyzed coalition formation and how this helped or hindered the negotiation strategy.

Teacher and student roles

Our role as teachers was to observe and give directions via e-mail outside of the simulation. We wanted the students to discover and learn as much as they could on their own after being given instructions in the classroom but before doing the simulation outside of the classroom. We examined simulation messaging daily, noting proposal postings and requests for conferencing. We sent email reminders as needed to promote messaging, proposals, and conferencing, depending on course stage.

We provided ICONS materials to the students to guide their progress, such as the country worksheet, the position paper, proposal and strategy guidelines, and then the reaction paper. We helped them with debriefing questions to prepare for the reaction paper, which we found was very helpful in meeting student expectations.

We facilitated the next steps in the simulation without getting directly involved in them. We found the process more important than the actual subject they were negotiating. We instructed students to look at actual newspapers to find out how the true negotiations progressed among the countries they have represented: Venezuela, United States, Mexico, Colombia, Peru, Honduras, Ecuador, Chile, Argentina, etc. We tried to guide the students with the simulation to be as realistic as possible by looking at real online newspapers, as well as information that the ICONS Project had provided through many resourceful avenues.

Learning objectives and assessment

The learning objectives were:

- To think critically
- To learn to do team work
- To persuade and communicate effectively
- To learn the complexity of negotiating online
- To conduct regional (multilateral) and bilateral agreements
- To learn the negotiation process by doing
- To use tactics of negotiation effectively
- To analyze the effect of diplomatic negotiations on their own business
- To understand the effect and stability of coalitions and their power in negotiation.

The students, in our view, reached these goals. Students conducted face-to-face exercises in the classroom and reflected upon the lessons learned in the simulation. Students communicated and negotiated more collaboratively by the end of the course.

Student feedback

A couple of the student comments, which we think are typical, may help provide a sense of their reaction concerning the class and simulation. According to the students' survey responses at the end of the course:

The ICONS Project Simulation and class material helped us think deeper and differently about the various negotiation strategies and the ways in which negotiation can take place.

[T]he most exciting part of the course is the International Negotiation ICONS Simulation exercise which allows students to experience and play an active role in the negotiation process on an international scope. This by far is the most useful part of the course, because it combines every element and principle of negotiation taught and allows the student to apply all of them extensively in a real-life context. The online Negotiation course was a challenging and extremely enjoyable experience which taught us very valuable lessons that we will use for the rest of our lives in situations both professional and personal.

We have used the ICONS Project Simulation three additional times: once using the Nigeria Oil simulation with students from Mexico, Guatemala and the United States simultaneously, a second time using a European Union Negotiation simulation with U.S. students, and last

with the Borders, Environment, and Trade in the Americas simulation with European students.

The bottom line in teaching students negotiation in a real-life context, we think, is that if you as a teacher can link learning to doing, you will be more effective. This differs from negotiation teaching using only role-plays, because it expedites the application of concepts in the real world. The instructor becomes a coach, facilitating and supplementing learning in and out of the classroom, and creating situations where students can explore different modes of learning synchronously and asynchronously.

Recommendations

For teachers preparing to participate in an ICONS simulation for the first time, we recommend⁴ the following:

- Give the students a two-week period to research their country. Have them deliver a country worksheet, position paper, strategy, and proposal by the third week. Encourage students to set forth at least one multilateral proposal and one bilateral.
- Preclude email messages between students outside of the simulation.
- Encourage students to log into the simulation frequently to check for messages.
- Allocate classroom time to set the conferences while everyone is present.

The instructor needs to monitor information flow, and periodically encourage students to be more active, as well as remind students of the time window for voting on proposals and the deadline to deliver the reaction paper.

Bringing the Class to the Street and the Street to the Class

In this section, we describe two experiments we have conducted in which our students engage in real-life negotiation activities and the instructors provide guidance and coaching. The first of these experiments revolves around a class project: convene a dialogue on a topic of some controversy that is also related to a governance issue. The second of these experiments situates the instructor as both a shadow and coach while students engage in their professional negotiations.

For both experiments, one of the key pedagogical tools we employed was coaching. Coaching is a process in which one person (the coach) supports another (the “coachee”) in the latter’s effort to improve a certain personal or professional goal (Kauffman and Bachkirova 2008). In our case, the instructors are the coach and our

students the coachees. The coaching processes described here revolve around the students' experiences in real-life negotiations. The instructors meet the students multiple times during the course of the teaching period to help the students identify skills they need to improve or goals they want to achieve; develop approaches to try; and then debrief with those students in the next meeting to help them revise their strategy as the negotiations proceed. More detail on the coaching that each author used will be provided below.

Experiment One: Convening Policy Dialogues in Singapore

At the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore, the course "Advanced Negotiation: Convening Policy Dialogues" requires that students convene a dialogue on some policy topic by the end of the semester. This course is "advanced" in that a) it follows a basic negotiation course in which the seven elements and other core negotiation concepts are taught and b) it extends the concepts to intra-group negotiations, as well as convening multi-stakeholder policy dialogues.

This course has two real-life negotiations in which students engage. First, the students are required to convene a dialogue on a policy issue that a) they choose as a group; b) involves stakeholders; and c) is an issue around which there is at least some disagreement among stakeholders. As examples, previous classes have convened dialogues around Singapore's immigration policy, the faculty's pedagogical policies, the preservation and display of maritime artifacts, and Singapore's potential use of nuclear and grid management technologies to meet its long-term energy needs.

Second, the students need to negotiate internally as they choose a topic, choose what activities they will do to make the dialogue happen, assign tasks, and otherwise go through the process of convening a dialogue, facilitating the meeting, and making a report on it. These negotiations are different from the situations that they encounter in the basic negotiation course because: a) the outcome of the negotiation has very real impacts, not only on their grade, but also potentially on their self-confidence, reputation, and curriculum vitae; and b) the negotiations occur within a group that sees itself as a team. In fact, much of the class reflection time is spent on helping students realize how they tend to assume that they all have similar interests when they are in the same group: when they discover disagreement, they tend to argue instead of negotiate. Those with the same interests only require clarification of the facts; those with different interests, like in any other negotiation, need to identify and meet needs through trades, collaborations, compromises, etc. With regard to this chapter,

the rest of this section focuses on: a) the impact that using a real negotiation experience has on student learning, and b) the use of coaching as a tool for reflection and learning in this course.

Learning Objectives

There are two broad sets of learning objectives for this course. The first set of learning objectives revolves around the convening and facilitation of policy dialogues. For example, the instructor will encourage the student groups to start assessing the stakeholders, their interests, possible agendas, the context, and other factors that will allow them to determine whether to hold a dialogue, who needs to be invited, what the dialogue will try to achieve, and what process the participants will follow. Student groups will also learn about the need to go out and meet prospective participants and other interested parties, not only to assess their interests and willingness to participate, but also to build participant trust in the process and work through the agenda with their input until it is legitimate.

The second set of learning objectives revolves around the application of the basic negotiation concepts in real practice. As the students think about how to design the dialogue, for instance, they can use the “Seven Element Framework” and other tools. This class, however, is also about using the tools in intra-group processes. In most negotiation role-plays, the setting is inter-organizational, a setting which provides at least some permission for disagreement and possible non-cooperation should it be impossible to reach a suitable deal. The class group does feel that it has the luxury of non-cooperation, but there tends also to be a strong norm of cooperation. The latter often becomes strong enough that many students find it difficult to remember that they as individuals might have different interests – despite the instructor’s constant reminders.

Coaching

For the course, students need to meet with the instructor three times during the semester: the first time after approximately three weeks have passed, the second about four to five weeks later, and the last either just before or after the dialogue.⁵ In class, the instructor provides both on-the-spot observations of emerging dynamics and some perspective on crucial moments in the students’ deliberations and after-meeting reflective discussions.

Each group coaching session lasts forty-five to sixty minutes. The first session starts with the professor asking the students to quickly identify their strengths as a negotiator. Next, the instructor asks the students to identify a few particular negotiation (including here facilitation as well as convening) skills that the students feel that they

could improve. Once that is done, the students are asked to identify one of those skills as something they will work on during the next three to four weeks. This work can occur in class as well as outside, in other negotiation situations that students might find themselves in, though most students choose in-class situations. For the identified skill, the student then spends the rest of the coaching session choosing one or two ways that they will practice that skill in the upcoming weeks. For example, if a student decides that they want to work on building relationships with people they find difficult, they might identify a person and develop a set of activities that they will undertake for approaching them.

The second coaching session follows much the same procedure, though it starts differently. In the first part of the interview, the instructor will ask the student to explain how their experiment went and what they learned from it. After that, the student will be asked to identify what skill they would like to work on over the next three to four weeks, and a strategy will be developed. The third coaching session is similar to the second one, with an additional few minutes spent on wrapping up the coaching relationship. The last two coaching sessions are also used to assess students' abilities to learn in the field by analyzing negotiation situations and then devising the adjustments to their negotiation strategy (see Fuller 2012).

In-negotiation Interventions

Besides providing ongoing coaching, the instructor for this course observed most meetings of the group. These observations had two purposes. First, a portion of the students' assessment was based on their performance in applying negotiation skills during the meetings. Second, the instructor would stop the meeting once or twice to point out good, surprising, and ineffective negotiation moments and behaviors as they became apparent. During these ten minute interruptions, the instructor briefly described what he saw and asked the students to analyze its causes, and what they could do about it as individuals and as a group.

In practice, it was always a struggle to choose which moments were important and interesting enough to merit an interruption. Most meetings had more than enough such moments; knowing which ones to choose was crucial. Sometimes an intervention was more of an interruption than a useful teaching moment, because the group lost momentum. Similarly, there was a careful balance between making a point and allowing *students* to come to that point themselves. The latter often requires more time, and while it may produce more learning, it also hinders their ability to conduct the meeting fruitfully. It

also risks increasing their frustration and sense of failure, and in turn reducing their motivation for the course.

The instructor must also keep a careful eye on the balance between students learning from their struggles and keeping a sense that the project is doable and worthwhile. Almost all students will willingly recognize that they learn most from the struggles they encounter; yet each class also encounters moments where it begins to lose hope. Over the years, the instructor has spent more time highlighting their progress, working to keep them motivated, while simultaneously allowing them to fall into fairly predictable challenges. For example, at the beginning of the semester, the instructor will strongly encourage the students to choose a person or committee that keeps an eye on the overall process and its targets and deadlines. Inevitably, the groups so far have either not chosen that person or sub-group or, in the one case where they did choose two individuals, the appointed students gradually forgot to maintain that role. While this instructor encourages the students from time to time to go back to this perspective, he does not force the issue.

Lessons learned

Following are the lessons that the instructor has learned teaching this course. These lessons draw from in-depth discussions that the instructor has had with many students during and after the course and from the feedback given during the university's official student assessment of the course. The main lessons are:

- **Students find the coaching very useful.** In general, students have found the coaching sessions to be very useful for developing their skills. All students surveyed to date have counted the coaching as a useful tool for identifying skill and understanding gaps and working to improve them.
- **Students learn most from their struggles.** In each class, the instructor and students have observed that the group learns much from the struggles it undergoes. Students have mixed feelings about this. They generally acknowledge that most of the lessons could not have been learned unless they went through the difficult patches. At the same time, they sometimes feel quite frustrated – and a few may remain so for the remainder of the course. So far, the main negative impact of this is on the teaching evaluations, where, for one out of the four years this approach has been taught, the teaching evaluation was lower than usual.
- **The instructor must carefully and constantly evaluate the benefits and risks of interventions, both in the classroom and in coaching sessions.** As mentioned earlier,

the instructor observes the students in most of their meetings and engages them in the analysis of particular moments and outcomes. This provides insights and prompts students to be more reflective about their negotiation strengths and weaknesses. At the same time, temptations to resist are letting these moments go on too long and speaking too much. Students often look to the instructor to provide observations and ideas about what they ought to do. Such an approach, however, is both: a) something provided during the classroom time; and b) counterproductive to the purpose of the coaching session, which is to develop not only their negotiation skill but also their ability to reflect, learn, and re-strategize as reflective negotiators in the future. Therefore, the instructor must make sure to constantly give the reflective and strategizing role back to the students.

- **Students' failure to implement the strategies from previous coaching sessions is an opportunity for learning.** Reflective exercises like coaching can do well even if students do not do what they plan. When students do what they plan, the outcomes of their actions can be discussed, and the effectiveness of their planned strategy assessed. When, on the other hand, they do *not* do what they had planned, the instructor can encourage the student to identify why they did not conduct the experiment. From this, the student would have a better idea of the barriers they face in improving and implementing their negotiation skills. The new strategy they develop would, with luck, take these into account, or even address them exclusively as a separate and necessary step before seeking to improve the skill they first identified as important.

Experiment Two: Coaching Students in Street Negotiations

Some of the authors designed a course for a real client, known as Barcel USA, with an overarching client objective to position Mexican salty snacks in the United States. The students were employees of the firm, and the instructors had the challenge to co-design a training program with Barcel executives that would not only help the participants to focus on concepts and skills of negotiations, but also make sure participants *implemented* what they learned, and aligned it with company strategies. Coaching was a crucial element in this course.

For this course, our coaching is what we call "negotiation shadowing plus." This methodology, essentially coaching students who are engaged in real-life negotiations, expands experiential learning beyond the traditional role-plays, simulations and case studies. The

instructor sees students engaged in ongoing, real-life negotiations, and coaches them as they seek to improve their performance. This is a results-oriented methodology that not only helps the students achieve their self-development objectives, but also the objectives of the negotiation in which they are engaged. There are four phases of the methodology: a) introspection; b) self vs. corporation awareness (the identification of self-development objectives through reflection with company objectives); c) conflict and negotiation core concept studies (e.g. Negotiation 101); and d) onsite implementation of learning and feedback.

Real-life negotiations

After the first training and negotiation teaching session at Barcel USA with traditional role-play and case studies, we realized we needed to change the teaching approach. Our approach was not leading us to the immediate results we expected, especially in terms of alignment with the company objectives. Therefore, we refocused the training based on participants' real-life negotiations.

Participants learned from their own real, ongoing cases. In other words, based on participants' concrete experience, the instructor shadowed or coached the negotiation concepts examined in class. Following the experiment, we resumed classroom sessions to reflect upon what we observed and what we learned. Subsequently, we were able to teach advanced negotiation concepts which helped conceptualize what students actually experienced. We encouraged participants to experiment based on our concepts and experiences as the learning-through-application cycle as described by Kolb (1984) continued.

For the specific course described here, Barcel USA's objective was to position several products made in Mexico in large supermarkets in the United States. At least partly as a result of this "shadowing plus" training, we believe, not only did the distribution company position several products at strategic store locations all over the United States, but it also positioned one product as one of the bestselling salty snacks in the United States. The company's annual revenues increased by forty percent and sales exceeded \$100 million. The experiment was repeated in another distribution company, Intelligent Mexican Marketing (IMM). IMM is a company that is growing extremely fast and has experienced fifty percent annual growth for four years in a row.

Setting and tracking learning objectives

We believe this systematic approach to teaching negotiation works only if we align the teaching objectives with specific company objectives and parallel the teaching concepts with real case applications. If

the participants need to obtain specific objectives for their job scope and activities, then the course is designed around those objectives. For example, suppose the company distributes salty snacks and candy in the United States in two different channels: independent supermarkets and chain stores. After basic instruction, negotiation course instructors designed a plan to visit stores representing both channels, with the task of applying what students learned and getting focused results.

The authors developed an assessment tool to measure student effectiveness on a Likert scale from one to five in five different areas. The areas of evaluation during a client visit were:

- a) **Empathy.** Did the participant develop empathy on the client visit? Did he ask questions? Did he understand the other side? Is the relationship developing?
- b) **Avoiding internal objections and responding to external objections.** Internal objections are self-generated barriers, such as a lack of confidence, while external objections are barriers the client gives, such as “it is too expensive” or “I don’t need it.” (Participants were asked beforehand to prepare a list of the most common objections and the most likely responses.)
- c) **Understanding other needs and interests.** Did the participants ask questions to understand the interests of the other side?
- d) **Satisfying the needs of the other.** Is he actually getting the problems solved? Were options generated?
- e) **Closing.** Is he actually closing the deal? Were the negotiation objectives covered for both sides? Did our student apply principles learned to close the deal? How effective was his understanding of the concepts and their application?

Before designing this observation-based tool, authors Chamoun and Hazlett created a participant self-evaluation questionnaire that was used as both pre-test and post-test to measure course effectiveness. This tool used a scale of 1-5 in all of the questions (1 meaning they do not apply (or lack skill in applying) a particular negotiation concept and 5 meaning they use and are skillful in application). Analyzing more than 500 response sets, participants’ self-scores increased on average from 3.34 to 3.90, a modest measure of course effectiveness, albeit simply a self-assessment. An observation-based tool chronicling student performance during actual negotiations before and after instruction was expected to provide a better gauge of coaching effectiveness and student learning. Using one workshop that included applying principles “on the street” as an example, class mean scores

across all five categories rose from 1.59 to 3.41 as pre and post-course evaluations. We assert that the observation-based rating is more representative of the initial state than self-evaluation scores, and the difference logged in application-based assessment is a stronger indicator of change. The ability to close positively all prepared real negotiations improved from a typical rating of “not closing, or being afraid to ask” to “has the courage to ask.” The actual indicator of success, on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 being unsuccessful, 5 being “very successful”) changed similarly: the average participant’s ability to close deals increased from 1 to 4 after they “went to the street.”

Lessons learned

This chapter is really about the *progression* of negotiation teaching, from classroom instruction with role-plays toward coaching students through real job negotiations, which we call street-wise negotiation. Here are some observations within both Barcel USA and Intelligent Mexican Marketing (IMM). We believe they have applied to all associates involved in the course.

- a) The first negotiation in which they succeed is the internal one with oneself – their own case. They understand how things could be accomplished if they are properly negotiated.
- b) They understand that they don’t sell, they negotiate.
- c) They lose their fear to ask for things. Suddenly, nothing in the organization is non-negotiable.
- d) Training as part of a workgroup encourages individuals to pursue similar goals; it creates a new standard of accomplishment and unifies group wants.
- e) Diversity in the training group enriches the experience. Sometimes the positive inertia engages the non-believers. It encourages change toward a new mindset.
- f) They transform their approach to work from “unprepared” meetings to a fully prepared sales force. They seek their objectives with a new level of intensity.
- g) People understand the relevance of “closing the circle.” Not only do they prepare in advance, but they also close all initiatives they start.
- h) The relationship between theory and practice is key.

Fernando Guadarrama, one of our many Barcel USA students (and a former Regional Sales Manager) commented on the process,

I have witnessed how effective coaching is to bring negotiation skills instruction to the field. We decided to approach a client that we had lost and that we had not been able to recover after many failed attempts on our part. The client had a

very high sales potential but until then had refused to accept our products back into her business and did not even want to speak with us again. My sales team's negotiation behavior was such that they were afraid to ask questions. It was also difficult for them to listen, and at times they didn't have the courage to walk away. After reflecting on this in class and strategizing with my sales team a plan of action to change this behavior, we went to visit this client. I am convinced that because Dr. Chamoun-Nicolas and I were present, my sales representatives felt not only motivated, but also probably obligated to experiment (with) the negotiation methodology that they had just learned. I noticed my sales representatives changed behavior by following Dr. Chamoun's advice on-site. They learned how to ask questions, to listen, and to take breaks when necessary. Once the source of the negotiation problem was identified, my sales representatives were able to offer the client exactly what she needed, and in return we got her business back. My sales representatives, at a reflection session after this experiment, expressed that they felt empowered by this learning experience and that they would certainly continue using the negotiation strategies in the future.

Future work

We believe there are benefits to both self-assessment and observational-based rating tools. A single, unified, validated tool that includes self- and third-party evaluation can assist the student as well as the coach in evaluating the learning experience.

Conclusion

Whether or not the reader is prepared to accept our assertions, which we concede are not yet provable, we believe that our experiences show at a minimum that it is possible to introduce concepts in the classroom, and then place students in role-plays or real negotiations in which they have to apply and reflect upon those ideas. It is also possible to put students in negotiation experiences, and then ask them what they found most interesting, difficult, or surprising, and to use those discussions in turn to elicit teaching points. We have found both ways to work.

In our experience, "going to the street" first, with appropriate prior planning, captures the attention of the participants more. Students tell us that they only realize how difficult it is to practice their skill and improve their outcomes when engaged in a long, multi-session, and higher-stakes negotiation.

Some are surprised by the quick turnaround of results that can occur when they deliberately experiment with new techniques midway through the negotiation, and after some reflection and even coaching. This motivates the students to pay closer attention to the case studies used later in the classroom.

Such turnarounds can take longer when the negotiation is multi-party and occur among people who see themselves as a team, which is what occurs within the public policy course. Students in these courses often struggle to get a handle on the process and make the group work effectively. Successes that happen along the way are balanced by new challenges, as students struggle with the complexities of negotiating within a team and convening a real dialogue. Some form groups that meet after or before class sessions to debrief their experiences and strategize how to improve their outcomes. Almost all students grudgingly admit that this repeated encounter with small successes and constant struggles is valuable as a learning experience. The successful completion of the dialogue is also a powerful motivator and a significant accomplishment.

The two characteristics that distinguish the pedagogical experiments described here from traditional role-plays are repetitive engagement and expanded stakes. Having the students go through *multiple learning cycles* during one negotiation seemed useful, whether or not the later cycles considered the same skills, behavior, or moments as the first one. Students focus more on what they are doing and what is happening, rather than trying to catch up to the constantly changing negotiation role-plays and other scenarios. When they focus on the same skill for multiple learning cycles, they begin to understand that skill or concept in a deeper way, moving beyond each concept (which generally sounds simple enough on its own) to the real challenges and mishaps that occur when we try to apply it in real-life situations.

Expanding the stakes has also proved very useful for our courses. Students treat these negotiations, whether extended role-plays or real-life interactions, more seriously. The degree of their emotional and personal involvement is noticeably heightened, and the sense of satisfaction and accomplishment when completing the real-life negotiations is clear.

When we align the negotiation teaching objectives with the participants' concrete experiences, this seems to yield the right environment to anchor the participants' interest to learn, to help participants see the value of learning since it would immediately help them resolve a real case, and to create a virtuous cycle of learning. Knowing the specific interests of participants is essential (see Lewicki and Schneider 2010). That interest, for MBA students, could be extra

course credit, a better grade, or more effective resolution of their own cases. Whatever the interest may be, the instructor needs to develop a teaching methodology that considers the participants' interest and which will help not only keep him or her on track, but also motivate to learn.

The authors intend more experiments in the future with a similar experimental design basis, to address course participants' real needs. In other words, if we are going to follow Kolb's cycle of experiential learning effectively, we need first to find the right environment to create concrete experiences as stepping-stones. Second, we must design more sophisticated tools to help students follow the learning cycle effectively and link concrete experience with negotiation theory, and ongoing experience with ongoing reflection. Third, we need to find ways for students to engage more effectively with each other in making sense of, and trying to improve the outcomes of, their negotiations. Fourth, the instructors must have a follow-up and coaching plan to apply actively what is learned from step two, and to feed the results back into the concrete experience environment (see Figure 1). Finally, in order to make all this happen, we need to expand the scope of role-plays to multiple consecutive training classes or courses, and expand the stakes for the students beyond those typical in classroom work.

Notes

¹ For additional constructive advice on effective use of role-play, see Ebner and Kovach (2010).

² For a description of the seven elements (relationship, communication, interests, options, standards, alternatives and commitments), see Patton (2005).

³ As part of the Center for International Development and Conflict Management at the University of Maryland, College Park, the ICONS Project offers complex simulations that can be conducted either face-to-face or through its customized web-based communication system, ICONSnet. For brief descriptions of available simulations, see <http://www.icons.umd.edu/training/simulations> (last accessed April 25, 2012).

⁴ We also envision ICONS Project simulations as an avenue for furthering research, by analyzing the different negotiations with different students from different countries.

⁵ The timing varies in each course because students are in charge of setting the schedule for their activities. Some try to get the dialogue done earlier, others (more commonly) do this near the end of available time.

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