On Teaching

Mega-Simulations in Negotiation Teaching: Extraordinary Investments with Extraordinary Benefits

Stephen E. Weiss

A mega-simulation is a complex-negotiations teaching exercise involving complicated issues and challenging conditions that is undertaken by three or more teams of students. In this article, I draw on two decades of teaching with mega-simulations in international business negotiation courses to discuss potential learning goals for this type of experiential exercise, effective ways to organize the experience, challenges for the instructor, and the distinctive educational benefits that justify the substantial investment of time and resources required to implement these mega-simulations. These simulations can help students to develop greater sophistication in basic negotiation skills, become more extensively exposed to complex skill sets, and develop a deeper understanding of negotiation subject matter and complex processes than they would by conducting standard role plays. Mega-simulations offer major opportunities for students to move to advanced levels of negotiation skill not just in international business, but in diplomacy, law, engineering, and a host of other professional arenas.

Key words: negotiation, negotiation pedagogy, complexity, mega-simulation, experiential learning, situated learning, international business.

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Introduction

Consider these scenarios. In late 1999, two American businessmen traveled to India to lease office space for local programmers they hoped to employ in their software development start-up. They found existing facilities inadequate and developed a plan to build an entire community from the ground up. Thus began a series of negotiations with local agents and government officials at various levels over such issues as location, land price, job creation, and government incentives.

Earlier in 1999, Nissan Motor Company and Renault were six months into discussions over the formation of a strategic alliance prompted by Nissan's dire financial condition. More than one hundred individuals were sharing and analyzing massive amounts of data. Then Nissan received an offer from DaimlerChrysler. Nissan's president proceeded to juggle competitive discussions in two arenas, while Renault's chief executive wrestled with huge uncertainty.

Negotiations in international business, like the two examples earlier, are challenging to comprehend and conduct. They involve diverse parties, a wide variety of issues, and multiple contexts or sets of conditions that influence the parties' behavior and interactions. The negotiations are thus multifaceted and often protracted. How can an instructor prepare students to manage them effectively?

A number of educational theories (e.g., Kolb 1984) focus on the student as the constructor of his or her own understanding and support the value of "learning by doing." Building on the tradition of constructivism and experiential learning, proponents of situated learning theory assert that students learn through activity and social relationships — specifically, through participation in a "community of practice" — and that *the context matters* (Lave and Wenger 1991).[1] A classic example of situated learning is the medical residency: working closely with peers and professionals, medical students participate in a community of practice in which the educational context (such as an operating room or a maternity ward) is as authentic as possible and in which the residents learn with and from each other as well as from the experts. In sum, situated learning adds the "deliberate use of the social and physical context" (Brown, Collins, and Duguid 1989: 32; Houde 2007) to earlier theories of activity-based learning.

Negotiation instructors have relied on activity-based learning (primarily role plays) for decades, but they have paid far less attention to context. The most commonly used role plays call for two individuals to negotiate a few issues within an hour or less. Some role plays even specify a finite set of possible solutions and their values. Simple and abstract, these exercises have gained acceptance as effective ways to teach negotiation concepts and skills (Lewicki 1997). From a situated learning perspective, however, they

fail to offer appropriate contexts for learning about the dynamics of complex negotiations and related skill sets.

This article concentrates on a relatively uncommon form of experiential exercise: the behavioral "mega-simulation."[2] A mega-simulation is designed to represent and recreate key features of a complex negotiation (Weiss 1993; Wheeler and Morris 2002). For example, mega-simulations based on the two negotiations described earlier involve twelve individuals, divided into two- to four-person teams, who prepare for three weeks and spend two days negotiating face-to-face. Such mega-simulations require extraordinary investments of time and effort by teachers and students, but the return in learning about negotiation is also extraordinary.

Large-scale simulations are not new to negotiation teaching (Fayerweather and Kapoor 1972) or, for that matter, to social science (Guetzkow 1962; Crookall and Arai 1995), and I do not advocate that mega-simulations completely replace simple role plays and serve as stand-alone, all-in-one educational tools. Rather, my contention is that mega-simulations have been underutilized and, in addition, misunderstood and undervalued.

In this article, I discuss the implementation and benefits of using mega-simulations to promote learning about complex negotiation, particularly but not only in international business. The ideas herein draw on my experiences designing four fact-based mega-simulations for international business negotiation and organizing more than one-hundred-twenty iterations with fifteen-hundred participants. First, I set forth goals for mega-simulation use; next, I provide guidelines for organizing a mega-simulation experience; and third, I take up pedagogical challenges for the instructor. Finally, I tackle the ultimate question: how effective are mega-simulations?

Goals for Mega-Simulation Use

As an experiential exercise, a negotiation mega-simulation offers participants opportunities to learn and practice skills with the aim of becoming better negotiators. There are many other learning (and teaching) goals, however, that can be pursued in a mega-simulation, and several of these goals are achievable *only* through a mega-simulation exercise.

Explicitly setting forth goals for instructors may run counter to the precepts of situated learning in its pure form, but doing so can usefully orient both teachers and learners. Moreover, my intent in this article is not to conform to or promote situated learning *per se* but to draw from it to elucidate the use of mega-simulations. For example, situated learning favors "decentering" learning rather than spotlighting the instructor as the central figure in the enterprise, a feature that relates well to mega-simulations, as do such practices as allowing students to configure their own learning, attending to learners not only as individuals but also as a group, and paying attention to how the community of practice is organized (Lave and Wenger 1991). That said, I will describe some desirable attributes for

mega-simulation participants and then specify some possible learning goals for these exercises.

The Participants

Most participants in my international business negotiation mega-simulations have been second-year master's in business administration (MBA) students in semester-long, international business negotiation courses in the United States and Canada. The prerequisites for the course include core business studies and at least one course in international business. In my course, they take at least five weeks of classes that include short negotiation exercises before undertaking their first mega-simulation.

In general, I believe that the individuals best suited for a mega-simulation — those with the most to offer and to gain — already have some negotiation skills training and knowledge of the negotiation subject matter. Someone new to both of these areas would have too much ground to cover during simulation preparation to obtain maximum benefit from the simulation or to uphold its quality for other participants. The ideal participant is also highly motivated to perform well and learn from the experience (Kolb 1984). After all, mega-simulations lie on the most challenging end of the range of negotiation exercises.

Various individuals and groups possess these attributes. I have organized mega-simulations not only for American and Canadian MBA students but also for MBA students in Europe, master of law students in Canada, and the legal department of a major multinational corporation. Mega-simulations could also be conducted for individuals involved in diplomacy, environmental disputes, scientific consortia, and many other areas.

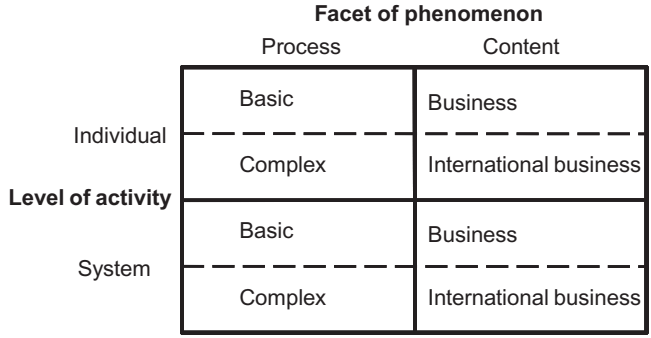
Framing the Learning Goals

Judith Torney-Purta (1998) has distinguished between declarative knowledge (field-specific concepts and content) and procedural knowledge (strategies and skills). Similarly, I suggest that learning goals for a mega-simulation can be related to two facets of negotiation: subject-matter content and negotiation process. While the two categories are not entirely separable, their emphases are different. Complex negotiation complicates this classification because it involves general skills relevant to any negotiation *and* skills specific to complex negotiation (more on this later). The same type of distinction applies to international business (see Figure One). Finally, negotiation process and content can be considered in terms of the actions of the individual negotiator and the interactions between and among negotiators (including the composite of simultaneous interactions). The resulting framework can help teachers and learners both establish and organize learning goals.

Process Goals

Among the many possible learning goals related to the negotiation process and negotiating skill, consider three that are uniquely feasible through a

Figure One
Foci of Learning



mega-simulation: 1) combining negotiation concepts and skills, 2) appreciating the nature of complex negotiation dynamics and tasks, and 3) obtaining multidimensional, multisource performance feedback.

Combine and Synthesize Negotiation Concepts and Skills. In a simple role play, individuals may concentrate on a single element or a handful of elements such as making the first offer, distinguishing interests from positions, or demonstrating empathy. The richness of a mega-simulation, however, calls on participants to use a wide range of basic negotiation skills in a sophisticated combination. Not only do they need both integrative and distributive bargaining skills, they must also apply their abilities in preparing, managing the process, communicating, and problem solving. (Elements of these skill sets are detailed in the "Effectiveness" section.) For these reasons, a mega-simulation can provide students with a culminating learning experience in a negotiation course.[3]

Gain Exposure to Complex Negotiation Dynamics and Tasks. As a complex negotiation, a mega-simulation presents participants with special types of negotiation issues that do not arise in other types of negotiation exercises, such as tensions in intergroup relationships and vicissitudes of multilateral discussions. At the same time, participants have the opportunity to operate in new away-from-the-table venues in which they can apply basic skills such as planning and "shaping the game" (Lax and Sebenius 2006; Watkins 2007). An instructor can help students to "push the envelope" by stretching their basic capabilities and introducing complex skill sets.

Obtain Multidimensional, Multisource Performance Feedback. With all of the negotiation that a mega-simulation entails, participants can gain a fairly comprehensive picture of their strengths and weaknesses as negotiators. They learn whether or not these assessments differ by context or counterpart or apply generally. Different circumstances arise throughout a mega-simulation, and depending on how the experience is organized (see "Organizing"), a participant may receive feedback from teammates, multiple counterparts, and/or an instructor-observer. Some feedback actually occurs during the simulation — in team caucuses and sidebars. Moreover, individuals observe other participants whose behavior proffers exemplars. Thus, students can make adjustments and improve their capabilities in "real time," not just after the exercise.

Content Goals

With respect to learning goals related to negotiation content, let me use international business negotiation as an example. A mega-simulation can fulfill at least two goals for students by helping them to understand the distinctiveness of negotiation in international business and to expand their knowledge of international business as a professional domain.

Understand How Negotiation in International Business Differs from Negotiation in Noninternational Arenas. Jeswald Salacuse (1988) has pinpointed seven distinctive features of international business negotiations, ranging from the use of multiple currencies to the impact of operating under more than one legal system. These features affect not only the topics for discussion but also the very conduct of the talks (Sebenius 2002). In the same vein, Joyce Kaufman (1998) and Gilbert Winham (1991) both have argued that the dynamics of international governmental negotiations are too difficult for students to grasp without seeing or experiencing them directly; a mega-simulation offers students this opportunity.[4]

Expand Knowledge of International Business. While many negotiation instructors and books downplay content, highly regarded negotiators in diverse fields have emphasized the importance of "mastering the subject" (Benoliel 2005). In international business, substantive expertise covers fundamental business principles and transactions and international factors on two levels: generalist knowledge of international business as a domain and specialized knowledge of particular countries, cultures, and industries. For example, in the Nissan case mentioned in the introduction to this article, negotiators deal with information about the global auto industry and markets across the world, on the one hand, and French and

Japanese laws and negotiating practices, on the other. There is a great deal of information to acquire and assimilate.

A mega-simulation based on factual information can engage participants and focus their attention while motivating them to think and learn about a range of topics in some depth. John Fayerweather and Ashok Kapoor's (1972: 22) foreign investment simulations had the capacity, as they put it, to "immers[e] students in all features of a project"[5] (see also Gardner 1999: 187ff). Moreover, what students learn seems to be retained longer than lessons gleaned from other forms of instruction (Winham 1991; Shaw 2004).

The five process and content goals listed earlier are not exhaustive, but they show the extraordinary promise of mega-simulations. From an instructor's point of view, Ronald Klein and Robert Fleck (1990: 150) have written that a simulation "integrates knowledge, concepts, and people as no other method of instruction can." From a learning perspective, it seems entirely fitting to develop knowledge and skills for complex negotiation through mega-simulations.

Organizing the Experience

The basic phases of a mega-simulation experience (prepare the simulation, conduct the simulation, debrief the simulation) parallel those of most negotiation exercises, but they are much more involved and consequential. Preparation, for instance, is critical for a realistic and effective negotiation of a mega-simulation. The debriefing strongly shapes what and how much participants learn from the negotiations. For these and many other reasons, a mega-simulation should be well organized.

The instructor may play various roles in this enterprise, including producer, convener, director, coach or advisor, observer, analyst, and evaluator. These roles influence and affect participants differently; some of them even conflict. It is therefore important for an instructor to decide which roles to play at which times and to inform participants accordingly at the outset.

My view is that a mega-simulation is the *participants*' experience. As the instructor, I provide the opportunity for them and assist them in maximizing learning from it. This aligns with situated learning theory, but it is a position I took long ago for a different reason, one specific to teaching negotiation. At an elemental level, I want to convince students that negotiation should be a process owned and used by the parties; it is *their* opportunity and responsibility. Accordingly, as a mega-simulation instructor, I seek to reinforce this message.

I assume different roles at different points in the experience. During setup, I act primarily as a producer, selecting the mega-simulation scenario and handling major logistical arrangements. During the preparation

period, I evaluate and comment on participants' negotiation plans, albeit somewhat guardedly. For the negotiation period, participants understand that my role is not to control, manipulate, or even manage the process. Instead, I act as an observer, gathering information for post-simulation debriefings and performance evaluations, and occasionally, as the coach or counselor, by providing informal advice. Finally, in the post-negotiation period, I take the roles of analyst, evaluator, and once again, coach. (For the challenges associated with these roles, see "Challenges for the Instructor.")

The following sections address mega-simulation designs and materials, guidelines for participants, all of the main activities, and the time investment.

Mega-Simulation Designs and Materials

Mega-simulation scenarios may be fictitious or real, with the latter either disguised or openly described. I prefer the last of these for three reasons. First, a real negotiation generates excitement among participants that can be harnessed for all learning goals. Second, the factual information in case materials aligns with subject-matter learning goals. And third, a reality-based mega-simulation makes feasible important lessons about negotiation preparation and post-negotiation concerns (cf. Ebner and Efron 2005). In their preparations, students can identify gaps in their case information or personal knowledge and conduct outside research. After the negotiations, students can study the implementation of an agreement and track long-term effects.

There is no generally accepted minimum or fixed number of participants for a mega-simulation. My simulations are designed for twelve individuals, with a minimum for viability of nine and a maximum of about sixteen. The attributes desirable in prospective participants have already been detailed earlier.

Mega-simulation materials consist of extensive public and private (role-specific) information. For example, the public information package for my Nissan Partner simulation is eighty-six pages long, including exhibits. It profiles Nissan, Renault, and DaimlerChrysler; depicts the international and Japanese auto industries; details Nissan's negotiations with Renault and with DaimlerChrysler up to the time of the scenario; and offers background information on mergers and acquisitions as well as the Japanese, German, and French business environments.

The agendas and issues to be negotiated are not fully specified in my mega-simulations. Some issues are mentioned in public and/or private materials, while others are merely implied, and most are left for the participants to stipulate. This forces them to grapple with issue identification and agenda setting, both of which are critical skills for complex negotiations. In the same vein, possible solutions, if they appear in case material, are

mentioned only briefly or indirectly, and their values to the parties are neither fully nor explicitly set (Teich et al. 2000).

Guidelines and Rules for Participants

When I introduce a mega-simulation to students, I state that it is intended to be as realistic a negotiation experience as possible (short of the real thing). It is an opportunity for them to put into effect all that they have learned about negotiation. Their main goal is to negotiate professionally and achieve a good result in the context of their simulation, given their particular counterparts and the particular dynamics that arise. They are not expected to replicate the real negotiation outcome.

Each participant is assigned to represent a real person and receives a biography and a corresponding set of documents (e.g., company cash flows, a published interview). This information does not prescribe bargaining positions for the participant, nor is it intended to induce students to "act like" or "play" the person. Instead, a participant is expected to use this background information to develop a sense of the person's perspective, decipher his or her interests, and then pursue those interests in the course of the simulation. This applies equally to all assignments, whether an American student receives a role as a Chinese official or an Indian student receives an Italian executive role.

I impose few rules on participant conduct beyond the general schedule in the next section. The only rules are that (1) students may not employ or seek information dated after the "freeze date" set in the public simulation material (their simulation will generate its own dynamics that require attention), (2) no full, team-on-team meetings are allowed prior to the main negotiation period (to ensure that there is enough to do during that period), and (3) students must stay on-site during the negotiation period. There is a fixed time period within which to hold negotiations, but the participants themselves determine whom they meet with, when, where, why, and for how long.

Schedule of Activities: Overview

In my approach to a mega-simulation experience, the three major phases — preparation, negotiation, and debriefing — cover a five-week period. The first three weeks are dedicated to preparation. In my MBA course, most of this work goes on behind the scenes while students continue with their classes and other assignments in the course. The centerpiece of the entire schedule is the main period for negotiation — a total of eight hours — held over a weekend. This is what many participants call "the simulation," although in many ways, the simulation begins weeks earlier with the preparation period and encompasses all of the interactions that participants undertake in role. The last two weeks entail post-negotiation analysis, in-class debriefing, and individual feedback.

Preparation

The quality of participants' preparation can make or break a mega-simulation. It is a large and complex undertaking, with the expectations and investments of many individuals at stake. These stakes are much higher than they are in simple role plays (Kaufman 1998).

At the level of the individual participant, the value of preparation is dramatically underscored. A student rarely performs effectively in a mega-simulation by "winging it." It is a common, accepted maxim that preparation determines much of one's success as a negotiator (Thompson 2005), but instructors and students in experiential exercises too often abbreviate or rush preparation in their eagerness to move to the negotiation period. There may be no more dramatic way than a mega-simulation to drive home the importance of preparation.

I inform students that the better they prepare, the better the experience will be — for all concerned. Then I review the steps of my system for comprehensive negotiation planning, distribute simulation materials long before the negotiation period, and issue two written assignments that operate as checkpoints during the preparation period. In the first assignment, each student summarizes the individual interests and objectives for his or her simulation role and records two personal learning goals. For the second assignment, negotiation teams submit a written "team plan" for the negotiations that addresses parties' interests, anticipated agenda items, the team's negotiation strategy, a draft proposal and talking points, and other basic considerations. I return the team plans with comments before the negotiation period so teams have time to modify them.

Main Negotiation Period

Beyond any informal or tacit preliminary negotiations initiated by the participants themselves (which, as noted previously, may occur only between representatives, not full teams), the main period for negotiation comprises two time blocks: three hours on a Friday evening and five hours on Saturday. This format allows participants to review their progress at the midpoint, consider adjustments to increase their effectiveness, and deliberately project ahead to the next day's events.

On Friday evening, participants arrive on-site in business and other role-appropriate attire with laptops, PowerPoint presentations, and any other resources they choose to bring. (The attire, which I subtly recommend only once, contributes to a sense of authentic activity, a concept central to situated learning.) I take a few minutes to greet and rally the group, allocate rooms to teams for use as headquarters, and reiterate the few ground rules. I set up one camcorder in the largest team's headquarters and run it continuously in order to record all external negotiations and caucuses held there.

The ensuing eight-hour period is up to participants to structure as they see fit. They can choose to negotiate formally in team-on-team sessions at a conference table or informally in one-on-one sessions in the corridor. Communications take place through various channels: face-to-face, e-mail, cell phone, and chat. Activity is multifaceted and intense. The only action that I consistently take during this period is to distribute several unannounced, prepackaged press releases to all teams at various intervals up to mid-day on Saturday. These reprints of news articles and analyses from the actual negotiations are intended to increase realism and dynamism (Winham 1991). By the 3:00 p.m. deadline on Saturday, participants must produce written results whether they have reached an agreement or not.

Debriefing and Feedback

After the negotiations, I begin an extensive series of debriefing and feedback activities for participants as a group and as individuals. It consists of four segments: "deroling," classroom debriefing, evaluation, and feedback meetings.

Deroling. While it is unusual for an instructor to provide time expressly for participants to decompress and emerge from their roles in a standard role play, it is critical for a mega-simulation. Participants experience a range of intense emotions during a mega-simulation and cannot process them all on their own. Cause and effect often cannot be understood without dialogue between the participants involved. This, essentially, is what I call "deroling," and I schedule it immediately after the negotiation deadline. With all of the participants seated in view of each other, I ask each in turn to describe his or her feelings at this point. Whenever a speaker refers to another participant, I ask that participant to respond with his or her point of view.

Deroling highlights quite memorably the affective dimensions of negotiation. It also offers the particular benefit of enabling participants to process lingering negative emotions that might impede further learning from the simulation (George, Jones, and Gonzalez 1998) or damage post-negotiation relationships among individuals. This and other benefits are reinforced right after the formal deroling when the participants and I reconvene informally at a nearby restaurant.

Classroom Debriefing. I do not debrief participants in my mega-simulations immediately after their negotiations. They are too drained to engage in a sustained discussion. Furthermore, there is a lot of simulation data to organize and assimilate because I usually schedule three concurrent runs of a mega-simulation.[6] I therefore schedule analysis and discussion of the experience for a class a few days later.

To prepare for the in-class debriefing, each simulation participant writes a case analysis/personal review consisting of a synopsis of the outcome, major determinants of the outcome, other salient aspects of the negotiation process, evaluation of the outcome, justification for his or her final decision, and strong and weak points of negotiation performance. My own preparation involves poring over my "field notes" to formulate general lessons about process and behavior and selecting video excerpts that can be played back in class as "learning moments" (Peppet 2002). The touchstone in class discussions about the effectiveness of any strategy or behavior is the counterpart's reaction at the time, but other participants' reactions are also solicited to explore the generalizability of the effect. We also devote time to comparing simulation runs with each other and with the real negotiation on which their scenario was based.

Exhaustive debriefing and analysis of a mega-simulation lies beyond the reach of a single class period. One way to extend learning from the simulation experience is to encourage students to continue to process it with classmates on their own time. The instructor can facilitate these efforts by showing students how to discuss intention and effect most productively.

Evaluation. In my MBA course, I evaluate three components of students' simulation work: the aforementioned team-written negotiation plan, the individually written case analysis/personal review, and the participant's negotiation performance. Combined, they account for roughly one-third of a student's course grade.

Negotiation performance is assessed on multiple dimensions by fellow simulation participants (anonymously) and by a faculty observer (the instructor or a guest). The twelve dimensions include demonstrating knowledge of case subject matter, presenting views clearly and persuasively, seeking a coherent team posture, implementing appropriate bargaining tactics, and showing creativity in problem solving.[7] A negotiator's overall performance score combines the observer's assessment and peers' assessments in roughly equal measure. Both inputs matter. The former provides an experienced outside view and the latter validates reactions from the very people to whom the negotiators directed their efforts.

Feedback Meetings. The last scheduled activity in my mega-simulation plan is a thirty-minute meeting with each student to deliver performance feedback and personalized advice. The feedback draws on multiple sources: peer evaluations, my observations and evaluations (or those of a guest evaluator), and simulation videotapes. I convey ratings verbally and in person in order to preserve peer authors' anonymity and maintain the flexibility to decide on the spot how best to deliver bad

news and engage the student in productive discussion. The meeting is part performance review, part individual debriefing, and part coaching session. For many students, this last element of the mega-simulation experience has a major impact on their learning.[8]

Acknowledging the Investment

This experience, which is spread over five weeks, requires an extraordinary investment of time and effort by both instructor and participant. Former students have estimated their investment, from the initial reading of the simulation case to the instructor–student feedback meeting, to be twenty to thirty hours. An instructor who organizes a single mega-simulation in the previously mentioned format can easily put in forty hours. Concurrent mega-simulations offer some economies. Each additional simulation requires only half of that time if other instructors observe the negotiations and write up performance evaluations.

Challenges for the Instructor

As noted earlier, mega-simulations present a number of challenges that generally do not arise in role plays. How an instructor responds to these challenges significantly affects what students learn from the instructor as well as from other students (see Houde 2007).

Table One offers twelve examples of mega-simulation challenges that are roughly organized by timing of initial occurrence. They derive from my experiences with international business negotiations but apply to any mega-simulation organized similarly.

Assigning Roles Meaningfully and Fairly

Roles for participants in negotiation exercises are usually randomly distributed or self-selected, but for a mega-simulation, there is a good reason for the instructor to assign them purposefully. The entire enterprise must "launch" and be sustained for hours, and it is too risky for an instructor to leave the life of the enterprise completely to chance. Assigning roles also allows the instructor to attend to individuals' educational needs.

The challenge lies in assigning the roles most appropriately. What are the right criteria? Are some more important, given that they probably cannot all be met for each participant? How can the instructor minimize the potentially negative inferences made by students? Is there an element of unpredictability to students' simulation performances that should be taken into account?

When I make role assignments for students' first mega-simulations, I initially target the difficult-to-play and central roles such as team leaders. I try to match these roles with students who have demonstrated high capability and commitment. Subject expertise also enters the picture (see "Managing Trade-Offs"). In filling out the teams, my primary criteria are

Table One
Challenges for the Instructor

Preparation Period
- Assigning roles meaningfully and fairly
- Appreciating students' concerns as mega-simulation participants
- Lacking information about significant, behind-the-scenes moves (e.g., early coalition building)
- Managing trade-offs between class benefit and individual growth

Main Negotiation Period
- Judging how much to guide the process as a whole
- Determining where to be and what to observe among multiple arenas and actors
- Deciding how to best preserve observations for post-negotiation use
- Judging whether, when, and how to assist individual participants

Debriefing/Feedback Period
- Selecting the right data and level of detail to effectively connect micro-events to macro-effects
- Validly evaluating each participant's performance
- Encouraging constructive use of feedback
- Capturing the full extent of the lessons that participants draw

membership diversity (nationality, work experience, gender) and balance in the ostensible negotiating abilities of teams. If students later participate in a second mega-simulation, my main criterion for role assignments is broadening negotiation experience. In the second mega-simulation, I will assign students to a role different from their first role (e.g., team chair versus member, familiar versus unfamiliar country, business versus nonbusiness actor) on a team with a different set of classmates. I also try to create opportunities for students to test themselves and stretch their negotiating capabilities (see Lantis 1998; Shaw 2004). These students usually rise to the occasion.

Appreciating Students' Concerns

Like the instructor, students face challenges with the mega-simulation. Separately from the problems students tackle as negotiators (for those, see the section titled "Effectiveness"), these challenges affect how the simulation works for them as students, and an instructor should stay alert for these challenges. Most of them are not unique to mega-simulations, but the pressures they generate tend to be more intense than in ordinary role plays.

The challenges include:

- taking on a role for a long period, especially with values antithetical to one's own;

- coping with the volume of information and the complexity of tasks;
- having the freedom to experiment but fearing peer and instructor reactions (gaining experience versus damaging preexisting relationships, lowering grades);
- dealing with out-of-context moves by counterparts; and
- concentrating on specific negotiation skills while engaged in a large-scale undertaking.

Some of the challenges are short-lived, while others recur or last throughout the simulation. Their effects also differ to some extent from student to student.

Managing Trade-Offs between Class Benefit and Individual Growth

Class-wide and individual learning goals do not necessarily conflict. In fact, mega-simulations implicitly assume they are mutually supportive. They can present dilemmas, however, that an instructor should be prepared to address.

I faced this trade-off with a General Motors–Toyota joint venture mega-simulation for a class of mostly American MBA students as I considered which role to assign to a Japanese student who happened to work for Toyota. In the past, I had favored one side or the other in this trade-off, but in this case, I thought I could have it both ways. The student had told me early on that he had taken my negotiation course to improve his English-language skills. An obvious choice would have been to assign him to the General Motors team, but I decided to assign him to the Toyota team on the grounds that he could learn much from the non-Toyota aspects of the simulation, educate his team and other participants with his real-life knowledge, and be designated for a "stretch" role in the second simulation. After the simulation, his teammates credited him with teaching them a great deal about Toyota and Japan, and he assured me that he gained much from the experience.

On the other hand, the trade-off may go undetected or be tough to manage. In the previous simulation, the role assignment of the Japanese student had an unintended, negative effect on the rest of the class. While his teammates believed that they benefited from his role assignment, other teams worried that his knowledge put them at a disadvantage and thus feared him as a counterpart. Indeed, the trade-off between group and individual benefits has the potential to affect several of the challenges listed in Table One.

Judging How Much to Guide the Process

With respect to the negotiation period as a whole, an instructor can act as an active director, a passive observer, or anything in between. For an

instructor who prefers a central role and a clear direction in the classroom, an unstructured, eight-hour period can be trying. He or she faces uncertainty about how the process will unfold, which negotiation problems will occur, and the extent to which the exercise will relate to the instructor's intended teaching goals. An instructor unduly focused on these concerns might intervene so much or so often that participants learn less than they otherwise could.

On the other hand, if an instructor opts for the observer role, situations inevitably arise that test that choice and call for prompt decisions on whether or not to make an exception. For me, these situations include prolonged inactivity by a team, staid or mechanistic dialogue, a strong push toward agreement for agreement's sake, entrenched impasse, endless debate over contradictory or inadequate information in the simulation case material, and solicitation of ideas from a team in a concurrent run of the same simulation. On the far side, I have witnessed a fistfight between participants (once) and a frightening kidnapping (staged, it later turned out) on one dark Friday night.[9]

Only rarely do I choose to address a team or assembly of teams during their negotiations. When I do, the challenge is to find a way to provide just enough guidance to maximize participants' learning while maintaining their sense of responsibility for the process and outcomes. Usually, I adopt a Socratic approach and nudge rather than direct teams. Even so, an instructor's actions can have a distracting or disproportionate influence on proceedings (Shaw 2004).[10] (See also "Judging Whether to Assist Individuals.")

In general, I think it is most educational for students to be allowed to interact without instructor interference. They then think through how to respond, take action, and feel with full force the consequences — be they successes, failures, or something in between. Even in the dicey situations where I have felt a responsibility to take action for my students' welfare, I have usually found that graduate students handle these situations with maturity and given the chance, learn significantly from them. I have the option to comment on these situations later in post-negotiation debriefings. I also have great confidence after twenty-five years of organizing mega-simulations that even without scripting or guidance, students will generate ample negotiation dynamics for debriefing and learning.

Observing Effectively: What to Observe and How to Preserve Data

The number of individuals and teams involved in a mega-simulation spawns activity in several locations at once, and an instructor, as the lone observer, simply cannot witness all that occurs. One would like at least to catch the momentous exchanges, but they cannot consistently be predicted. The instructor should also track every team enough to have a sense of the ongoing relationships and the performance of each participant. In addition

to choosing where to be at what time, the instructor must also decide which actions and events, amid a seeming plethora of them, will be most useful to capture for simulation-wide analysis and post-negotiation learning.

There are coping strategies. I circulate continuously to sample different teams' and individuals' activities and take notes assiduously about the process as a whole and individuals' conduct. Occasionally, during a break or caucus, I ask teams individually for the times of any upcoming meetings and for very brief updates on meetings that I miss. The ongoing video recording in one location allows me to spend less time there; I can review the videotape later. At some future point, I may make use of technology such as web cams or trackers, which every participant could wear, and develop a template for writing and organizing field notes.[11]

Judging Whether, When, and How to Assist Individuals

In addition to questions about guiding the simulation as a whole, an instructor must continually decide whether and when to assist individual participants during the negotiation period. They face challenges both as negotiators and as students (recall the list earlier). While the instructor's primary concern may be the participant as a learner, decision making at any point is complicated by the instructor's simultaneous role as an evaluator, by considerations of fairness to other participants, and by the individual's ability to treat assistance appropriately. For example, during one run of a Nissan mega-simulation, a student made several large concessions in a row without any apparent cost–benefit calculations. Seeing a potential "learning moment," I asked her quietly during a break in the action, "What will 6 percent cost you?" After the simulation, she told me that she had interpreted my question as a strong opposition to her offer. That, of course, was far beyond my intent.

Validly Evaluating Each Participant's Performance

In the context of a mega-simulation, an instructor can find it difficult to accurately and fairly evaluate individual performance. The hurdles for both faculty and student (peer) evaluators include the many aspects of complex negotiation, information gaps between the evaluator's observations and the entire body of an individual's simulation behavior (the evaluator may have completely missed the individual's most effective or most ineffective moves), the varying degrees of effectiveness of an individual's actions, and the common biases of favoring a collaborative negotiating style and participants who had lots of "air time" (which can be a function simply of an inherently salient role). Other complicating factors include participants' different motivations or assumptions about roles; in-process modifications of their negotiation goals; preexisting friendships, personality conflicts, and in-class reputations; below-threshold activity by an individual; and the comparability of negotiation tasks across simulation runs.

As an example of an information gap, during the first meeting in one mega-simulation that I observed, a team chairman began reasonably, I thought, by proposing an agenda and process. His counterpart rejected them in a manner that struck me as inappropriately harsh. In the post-simulation debriefing, however, I learned that the two chairmen had previously agreed on a process for the negotiation period, and the responding team felt the other chairman was violating this agreement. They had not expressed this view *during* the negotiations, so I had no inkling of it at the time. (Recall "lacking information about behind-the-scenes moves" in Table One.)

This task — evaluation — is one of the biggest challenges for a mega-simulation instructor. I address it by disclosing evaluation dimensions to students before their simulations, triangulating performance with multiple data sources (the instructor, as many as eleven peers), and assuring participants of a respectable minimum grade if they make a dedicated effort to participate throughout the simulation. Inconsistencies among evaluators and outliers are offset in the quantitative evaluations by averaging. (In feedback sessions, as discussed later, they are handled quite differently.) Nevertheless, I still wrestle with this challenge.

The outside expert who observes and evaluates students in a mega-simulation contends with additional hurdles. In the words of one who has covered one of my concurrent simulations for several class years, showing up for the start of the negotiation period is "like walking into a movie forty-five minutes late."[12] The challenges for an external evaluator include orientation costs, having no baseline for participants' behavior, and incomplete knowledge of the instructor's simulation objectives and previous teachings about negotiation. In addition to learning participants' names, an outsider must quickly try to gain a sense of their personalities and typical behavior in order to, among other things, be able to discern areas where participants are experimenting or pushing themselves. These factors can influence how the external evaluator facilitates deroling and completes performance evaluations.

Encouraging Constructive Use of Feedback

As described in "Organizing the Experience," I meet with my students individually to convey performance evaluation scores, discuss evidence and illustrations, and suggest improvements. For each meeting, it is important to consider how the student will likely respond. While most will respond constructively, there are also students who too readily discount peer evaluations or overreact to negative feedback. They dwell on justifying their own behavior and attributing malevolent motives or errors to others. On the other extreme, some students are devastated by the evaluations. In all of these cases, convincing the student to take a more constructive view toward learning is, in a word, challenging.

These students differ in what they find most compelling. With respect to peer feedback, I generally point out that peers, as counterparts, were the actual targets of the student's influence attempts. That is what makes their feedback pertinent in ways that mine is not. Counterparts' true reactions are the touchstones for effectiveness throughout a mega-simulation. When feedback from peers is inconsistent, I urge students to think back to particular counterparts and occasions (e.g., teammates versus counterparts) that they encountered during the simulation. I also deliberately direct attention to the concrete reasons for numerical scores that evaluators provide on their evaluation forms. Examples, in my view, are crucial to understanding and furthering effectiveness. Sometimes a student needs to "see it for him or herself," and that can be done with the videotape. I am keen to watch these students' behavior in subsequent negotiations.

Selecting the Right Data and Capturing All Lessons

In the post-negotiation period of a mega-simulation, an instructor faces challenges related to making sense of the entire experience. Myriad factors are potentially relevant to analyzing complex negotiation processes, outcomes, and individual negotiators' effectiveness (Weiss 1993). A lot of activity has occurred at different levels — individual, team, coalition, and system — across a substantial period of time. Which actions and events really drove simulation-wide dynamics? Why did some relationships become so productive, while others appeared dysfunctional?

Two further concerns bear mention. Ironically, they conflict to some extent. The first is some students' "tunnel vision": a penchant for only certain types of conclusions and lessons. For instance, Jeffrey Lantis (1998) has written that the lessons students most readily draw from simulations are process and relationship oriented. The second challenge is that students learn more from a simulation experience than they disclose in class and the instructor cannot access all that students learn.

Where do these challenges leave the instructor? I think it is critical in class discussions for an instructor to go beyond his or her direct observations and ideas and solicit information and insights from multiple participants and witnesses. Further, videotaped segments of caucus behavior, in particular, can be examined to reveal intentions and interpretations "in the moment." Given the number of lessons possible, an instructor should help students collectively to identify some of the key takeaways (see "Effectiveness"). As for the additional conclusions that students reach on their own, my post-negotiation discussion methods and case analysis/personal review assignment are intended to give students the tools for their deliberations.

In the end, an instructor who organizes a mega-simulation the way I do must accept that processing the entire experience is physically impossible. At the same time, I think there can be satisfaction rather than regret in realizing that students learn even more than one teaches them directly and

that those lessons derive from the experience that one has organized. Between and across the students, there are huge multiplier effects.

The Effectiveness of Mega-Simulations

At the outset of this article, I suggested five learning goals that suit and motivate mega-simulation use. The three process-related goals for students were to combine basic skills in negotiation, gain exposure to complex negotiation dynamics and skills, and obtain multidimensional, multisource performance feedback. The two content-related goals were to understand the distinctive qualities of international business negotiation and deepen knowledge of international business. Now we can consider the effectiveness of mega-simulations — or my particular approach to organizing them — in meeting these goals.

To speak to effectiveness, one needs to identify what simulation participants actually learn. Claims of simulation effectiveness have been made for years, but they have lacked substantial empirical backing (Feinstein and Cannon 2002).[13] Formal analysis of simulation data would go beyond the scope of this article, but I do want to outline what my students in international business negotiation seem to learn relative to the learning goals mentioned earlier. My sense of what my students learn is based on content analyses (admittedly informal) of student writings, my field notes from mega-simulations, and other faculty evaluators' observations. The student writings include post-negotiation case analysis/personal reviews and final course memos in which students spell out "top ten" reminders for negotiators. The lessons concerning process skills are also drawn from participants' feedback forms. All of the tables in succeeding discussions were reviewed by my current students.

Developing Process Skills

Like many negotiation instructors, I aim to help students improve their negotiating skills. In the context of a mega-simulation, their work encompasses basic skills and complex skill sets. In my view, both bodies of skills involve preparing, managing the negotiation process, communicating, and problem solving. Although I have not systematically laid out all dimensions of these skills for my students, with the exception of preparation, the central tasks are straightforward and representative dimensions are explicit in the performance feedback forms that students receive before mega-simulations as well as after them. (For examples, return to "Organizing — Debriefing and Feedback.")

Basic Skill Sets. With respect to basic negotiation skills, students learn from mega-simulations in at least three ways. First, through the use of each skill set, students learn more about their respective skills and refine their use of these skills. A mega-simulation typically stretches

Table Two
Mistakes as Lessons from Mega-Simulations

Preparing
- Setting vague goals
- Paying minimal attention to counterparts' deep interests and motivations
- Not considering multiple contingencies for the course of negotiations

Managing the Process
- Mishandling "opening moments"
- Accepting the process as given; foregoing the opportunity for leadership
- Not promptly addressing dysfunctional interaction patterns and negative affect

Communicating
- Basing influence attempts only on one's own perspective and logic
- Using words tactlessly; misjudging their impact
- Not asking enough questions or listening carefully

Problem Solving
- Not identifying and clarifying the full set of problems
- Fixating on one solution or approach; not thinking outside one's own "box"
- Making multiple, unilateral concessions in anticipation of later reciprocation

students' basic skills. They learn, for example, how to set priorities for multiple issues as opposed to setting a target for a single issue. Second, students emerge from mega-simulations with a tangible sense of how skill sets work in combination. Students realize, for instance, how communication affects process management and problem solving. They also see that good negotiators do not rely solely on one skill set. Third, students witness numerous action–reaction sequences — theirs and others' — and reach conclusions about what works and what does not.

Table Two lists twelve mistakes that my MBA students have made and learned from in mega-simulations. It is an illustrative, not an exhaustive, list and one that applies primarily to first-time simulation participants, although certainly not to all of them. The entries are largely self-explanatory, so I will discuss just one or two examples from each skill set.

The large number of issues and potential solutions in a mega-simulation intensify the negative consequences of not setting concrete and measurable goals. Students experience the lack of direction and have difficulty making decisions. A mega-simulation also highlights the

importance of opening moments in negotiation. First-time participants often feel nervous and behave awkwardly or defensively. What that does to relationships can take a long time to turn around. As negotiations proceed, students typically concentrate on persuading others and neglect listening, and later realize the significant drawbacks of this approach. Finally, with respect to problem solving, students realize through direct experience and observation how easily negotiators lock on to positions in the intensity of the action and create stalemates in their talks.

Each of these mistakes relates to negotiations generally rather than to complex negotiations specifically.[14] A mega-simulation reinforces the point that certain (basic) skills are necessary in any negotiation. It also shows that the transfer of skills to a new setting, after students have completed simpler negotiation exercises, is often neither seamless nor immediate. At the same time, the long and varied course of a mega-simulation provides many demonstrations of effective behavior and multiple opportunities for participants who make mistakes to venture different behavior.

Complex Skill Sets. As complex negotiations, mega-simulations require negotiation skills beyond those invoked by simpler negotiation exercises. Simply recognizing that complex negotiations require additional skill sets represents a lesson in itself. But mega-simulation participants also learn, from each other and from the instructor, what it takes to use these skills effectively.

Using the same order of skill sets from Table Two, Table Three itemizes skill elements particular to or salient in complex negotiations. These elements come into play over and above those reflected in Table Two. The contents of the tables dovetail, however. Opening moments in Table Two, for example, may be linked with orchestrating activities in Table Three.

In Table Three, the lessons most frequently cited by students are the necessity of thorough preparation, the impact of relationships on negotiation process, and the effects of process on outcomes. Students are also struck by the difficulty of keeping their teams together, the tension between internal and external negotiations, and the importance — and difficulty — of moving back and forth between the big picture and details. An instructor could add many other possible lessons, from envisioning a broad set of possible outcomes during preparation to the "problem-finding" aspect of problem solving — that is, the need to identify and articulate problems before attempting to solve them.[15]

Participation in at least two mega-simulations facilitates the acquisition and development of these skills. In my international business negotiation course, I normally schedule two mega-simulations for just that reason, and students' progress between the first and the second is evident

Table Three
Complex Skill Sets-Elements Learned from Mega-Simulations

Preparing
- Realize the scope and impact of a thorough preparation
- Organize the negotiation team; align interests and set a common strategy
- Contact key counterparts to set the stage for formal negotiations

Managing the Process
- Establish an agenda that provides structure yet flexibility
- Orchestrate activities carefully; be attentive to all relationships
- Be ready to proceed differently in talks with different counterparts
- Coordinate external and internal negotiations

Internal (Team) Management
- Maintain team cohesion; create processes for communicating and making decisions at the table
- Find ways to exploit individual team members' different (and sometimes unforeseen) strengths
- Know when to call a caucus and how to use that time judiciously

Communicating
- Monitor a range of sources for meaningful messages and signals
- Deal with conflicting messages from members of opposing teams
- Choose strategically among possible communication channels
- Look out for misinterpretations by additional audiences

Problem Solving
- Manage the enormous information volume and flow
- Acknowledge unknowns; address uncertainty
- Move between the "big picture" and the details appropriately

both to them and to others.[16] Because the simulations usually differ on several dimensions (e.g., acquisition versus market entry, automobile versus information technology industry, Europe and East Asia versus North America and South Asia), performance improvements indicate that students learn about complex negotiation generally, not only about a particular type of transaction or cultural practice.

Understanding International Business Negotiation

A second area of lessons for my mega-simulation participants relates to the particular nature of international business negotiations. This is the larger context in which students can situate their individual and team skills.

Students learn much about international business negotiation through mega-simulations. As demonstrated in written assignments and communications during the negotiation, students develop knowledge specifically

Table Four
Twelve Insights from Mega-Simulations for Understanding International Business and Other Complex Negotiations

1. While negotiations share some patterns, every negotiation develops a life with its own characteristics and rhythms.
2. Relationship concerns and substantive tasks both require attention, but appropriate proportions differ across parties. All parties, however, expect respect.
3. Individuals and groups quickly create reputations within a negotiation that affect their reception and effectiveness in later rounds.
4. Teams generally experience some taxing internal conflict during negotiations.
5. "Cultural behavior" may be used deliberately for tactical purposes.
6. Business–government negotiations differ from interfirm talks in nature and dynamics; distinctive interests and capabilities are involved.*
7. Sessions between teams in formal settings often slow or prevent progress, whereas one-on-one talks away from the table often stimulate breakthroughs and advances.
8. Neglected, dominated, and otherwise aggrieved counterparts vent their collective frustration through blocking coalitions.
9. The entire negotiation process may be tripped or transformed by a seemingly minor action or event.
10. Progress toward a final agreement requires ongoing process leadership.
11. International business negotiation produces a series or set of results over time, not just a single outcome.
12. Rushed agreements — written and verbal — tend to cause misunderstandings and multiple understandings of what the parties achieved and intend to implement.

*For a discussion of the unique characteristics of business–government negotiations, see Salacuse (2008).

related to the simulation scenario (e.g., the bargaining power of Nissan's company union in the late 1990s or the political climate for foreign investment in Andhra Pradesh, India in early 2000). They also learn about concepts and procedures used in international business generally, such as key considerations in negotiating an international acquisition and various types of government regulations for foreign investors.

Table Four offers twelve examples of insights regarding international business negotiation that students have generated through their mega-simulation experiences. A few insights such as tactical cultural behavior (#5)

and mixed negotiations (#6) are essentially international. Other lessons specific to international negotiation can come from the simulation participants themselves and the national backgrounds and personal experiences that they bring to their simulations. On the whole, the table is very much in line with Winham's (1991: 418–420) short list of lessons from international political negotiation simulations.[17]

As Table Four indicates, international business negotiation mega-simulations illuminate a great deal about complex negotiation. One particularly memorable lesson for my students has been the potentially drastic consequences of upsetting more than one counterpart (see coalitions, #8). Such lessons are not feasible in simple role plays.

Caveats

In the interest of balanced discussion, some caveats and concerns about mega-simulations should be raised. One caveat hinted at in Table One is that an instructor's inability to identify all that a student learns creates blind spots. Students may reach some distorted or erroneous conclusions of which the instructor is unaware and cannot attempt to address. (This is not, however, a problem unique to mega-simulations.) Further, the many benefits of a mega-simulation experience notwithstanding, participants may have a "maximum absorptive capacity" as learners. There is probably only so much that the typical student can assimilate. For that matter, not all students may be suited to learning effectively from mega-simulations.

Daniel Druckman (2006: 647), writing about "marathon exercises" involving six teams and four to eight hours of negotiation, has expressed concern about an "illusion of learning." In his exercises, learning denoted the extent to which negotiators used sixteen elements (e.g., information exchange tactics, role of power) to solve dilemmas. Some participants evidently reported learning more from the exercises than justified by their written reports. This led Druckman to suggest that learning might improve with shorter, less complex, and more transparent cases.

In a similar vein, Gerald Williams has argued that certain negotiating skills are best taught through deliberate practice and simple exercises (Williams, Farmer, and Manwaring 2008). He has concentrated on "microskills" — discrete negotiation tasks — such as reframing demands as options. From this vantage point, a mega-simulation would be too complicated a setting for students to focus on improving the way that they, for example, frame questions.

Finally, the tremendous investment of time and effort may deter instructors and participants. Some might suspect that negotiations fill the time allotted (an example of a phenomenon known as Parkinson's Law) and that just as many educational benefits could be gained in four or five hours as in eight. I have experimented with shorter negotiation periods and single blocks of time with limited success. The intensity of participant

involvement dropped, as did the richness of discussions. Students complained that the length of the negotiation period was not commensurate with the extensiveness of their preparation. Most importantly, as noted in "Organizing the Experience," a single time block diminished learning and skill development because it removed the one major interval during which all participants take stock, assess their performance, and consider adjustments. A better way to economize, in my view, is to organize multiple, concurrent runs.[18]

I do not have ready answers for other concerns but have no desire to dismiss them out of hand. They deserve study. They may even lead to improvements in mega-simulation use.

Overall Effectiveness

The lessons in previous discussions come foremost from participants and correspond to the five learning goals at the outset of this article. I have been careful not to simply impute them.

Much of what simulation participants learn, be it through the instructor or from each other, seems to hinge on how their experience is organized, and the organization described here clearly supports student learning. In formal evaluations of my MBA course, students have rated the dimension "learned a great deal" at a modal score of 7 out of 7 every year for the last decade. Far and away, the most common explanation is the mega-simulations.

Ten and fifteen years after this course, alumni still talk to me about their mega-simulation experiences and the effects of these experiences on their subsequent careers. The lessons have remarkable staying power. This, too, highlights the extraordinary benefits of using and participating in mega-simulations.

Conclusion

Mega-simulations represent a major departure from the simpler role plays that have been the staple of negotiation instructors for three decades. They differ in terms of inputs and outputs. Many benefits of mega-simulation experiences simply cannot be realized through typical role plays.

Last winter, I asked my international business negotiation students for their views on learning through experiential exercises. Several students extolled the mega-simulation, saying that it offered a broad understanding of negotiation and required "a synthetic way to look at a situation." Specific lessons have already been detailed in the "Effectiveness" section of this article. Summing up the consensus view, one student underscored the realism of mega-simulation negotiations when she wrote: "In real life, negotiators are 100 percent mentally and physically engaged in their negotiation; they own it. This can only be simulated with a complex simulation over several days."

Authentic activity is a central precept of situated and experiential learning (Houde 2007). In and through a mega-simulation, individuals integrate and refine their basic negotiation skills, identify and practice skills for complex negotiation, expand their subject matter expertise, and through direct observation and discussion with fellow participants, reach and internalize valuable conclusions about strategies and actions that are more and less effective for negotiators. They develop cognitive complexity, adaptability, and sophistication in their approaches to negotiation. These kinds of lessons are not restricted to international business negotiation. Mega-simulations can serve students and teachers in international relations (Wilkenfeld, Kraus, and Holley 1998), law, the sciences, and virtually any other field in which professionals might engage in lengthy, complex negotiations.

With the increasing frequency of complex negotiation and the growing maturity of the field of negotiation and its students, instructors need to expand their repertoires of teaching approaches and methods. It is time to take negotiation teaching and learning to a new level. The mega-simulation is a technique — an experience — that instructors and students can use to a much greater advantage in the future.

NOTES

This article is based on my presentation at the inauguration of the Negotiation Pedagogy Unit at the Program on Negotiation at Harvard. I gratefully acknowledge feedback from attendees, editing by Melissa Manwaring and James Tiessen, and discussions with my negotiation students.

1. I thank Christopher Dede of Harvard Graduate School of Education for this example and for bringing situated learning to my attention.

2. This term is intended only to differentiate large-scale simulations from simpler simulations and role plays. Educators use the word "simulation" itself variously, and confusingly, to refer to different forms of teaching tools (computer, behavioral, man–machine), to a method of teaching, to a particular scenario (case) and related materials, to the actual proceedings, and to the scenario and proceedings combined. In my uses, I will try to make my meaning clearer.

3. For years at New York University, an MBA course centered on negotiation simulations served as an alternative to a thesis.

4. For ideas on teaching specifically about cultural factors, see Weiss (2003).

5. For a similar perspective, see Gardner (1999: 187ff) on using "powerful points of entry" to teach students about an academic field or discipline.

6. This makes the informal post-simulation get-together at a restaurant on Saturday afternoon doubly useful for all of my students. In addition to talking to co-participants from their simulation in small group conversations, students can compare notes with classmates who participated in other simulation runs.

7. The entire form may be obtained from the author.

8. More details about organizing a mega-simulation, which may especially interest instructors considering a first use of mega-simulation, are available from the author in a separate paper.

9. The "kidnapping" occurred during a simulation of IBM Corporation's negotiations with the government of Mexico over a microcomputer plant investment. The IBM team contracted with a student outside of the simulation to disguise himself in a ski mask, interrupt an IBM–Mexico session, and remove an IBM team member so that the team could underscore its concerns about security and business risks in Mexico.

10. For example, my mega-simulation instructions include a diagram of the main parties and individuals' roles. In early versions of this diagram, lines between some but not all teams were

intended to indicate major communication channels, but some students concluded that unconnected teams literally could not communicate with each other.

11. My current use of one camcorder is because of resource constraints, not because of pedagogical reasoning. Chris Dede mentioned the use of trackers. As to the template for field notes, it would go beyond the dimensions of the performance evaluation form.

12. For these insights, I thank Brian Freedman, a senior director at the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, who has graciously served as an external evaluator in my MBA mega-simulations for many years.

13. Feinstein and Cannon (2002) distinguish between representational and educational validity. The former focuses on the structure or design of a simulation, whereas the latter turns to the effects of the simulation on its participants.

14. For a list of mistakes specific to international business negotiation, see Fayerweather and Kapoor (1976: 47–49).

15. I am indebted to Melissa Manwaring for this idea.

16. Quantitative analysis of the students' performance feedback forms for the two simulations could further substantiate this claim, but I have yet to pursue it. There is even greater advantage to scheduling three mega-simulations. Students who do poorly in the first simulation sometimes overcompensate in the second one. One year, some of my students went from setting no schedule in their first simulation to booking every fifteen minutes in the second simulation. A third simulation would have given them one more opportunity to get it right.

17. Winham's (1991) list includes "the nonrational element," organizational structures, and complexity. For complexity in particular, he points to missed signals in communications, the only partial amenability of negotiation to strategic planning, the risk of loss of control (and of failure), and pressure on negotiators to establish priorities.

18. An instructor could also increase the return on investment by using mega-simulations for research purposes (Druckman 2005: 66–79, Druckman 2006).

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