Although the past couple of weeks it has been more difficult to monitor my group’s dynamic as my mentees were spread out and placed into other roles, I believe the students have become more accustomed to and more excited about working in a group of diverse people. Between the two weeks of the simulation, I have seen each of my mentees take on a leadership role that required them to be collaborative.

Though the first week of the simulation took longer to get set up than expected, I believe it was the more successful run for my mentees. There was more enthusiasm surrounding the simulation and a larger number of them had more prominent roles in the simulation. However, my mentee who played a hostage was also very excited and engaged throughout the simulation.

In the time between the first and second simulations, the group message saw the student who played the US President the first round send self-deprecating messages because he felt he did not do an adequate job as he only saved two of the three hostages. I attempted to cheer him up with the news that no other group got close to resolving the hostage crisis, but he still continued with his negative comments and went on to blame his failure on his Defense Secretary. This is the same student who I discussed in my first reflection who brought negative comments to the discussions the first few weeks. Other than keeping myself positive and encouraging more positivity, I am unsure of what more I can do to help this student become more confident in himself and avoid bringing negativity to the group.

The second simulation, while more successful in the result, I believe was less successful for my mentees. Two of them played family members and were uninvolved in the simulation as compared to those who played the family the first week. For the most part they sat in a corner and stared at their phones as no one was interacting with them. Every now and then the other mentors and I would encourage the media to go talk to them, but again their answers were unenthusiastic. Those students who played hostages were more engaged than the family members but I still felt as though there was less engagement than those who had played the roles the previous week, which was disappointing.

One of my students, Alex Lambert, messaged me immediately before recitation to inform me that she was at the hospital as she woke up with a headache and was unable to hear. Obviously, she was unable to participate in the simulation as the Defense Minister of Israel, so I asked one of my students who was playing a smaller role to step up to take her place.

In terms of the group project, my group has not made much headway except to choose a potential topic. The group member who came to class having watched the wrong movie really stepped up and took the lead in this task. He did research on a current hot-button issue and proposed Antifa as the group’s topic. He found that, although the US does not officially recognize them as a terrorist organization, Homeland Security has taken initiatives to warn the public of potential Antifa appearances and classifies their tactics as “violent domestic terrorism.” He even proposed a couple of counter terrorism strategies. Everyone really loved the idea and agreed nearly immediately. A second group member also did research on some other options in case another group claimed Antifa before ours or if the topic was not satisfactory. He found research on the Earth Liberation Front and the Jewish Defense League. The first student was also very open to changing the topic and both were all-around team players when it came to deciding on one of their ideas.

Overall, I believe my mentees are growing into their roles as collaborative leaders and I am proud to be able to witness and facilitate this growth. However, there is still work to do to bring everyone up to the standard that I have set for my group. I look forward to seeing how the students evaluated myself and each other so that I can help facilitate even more growth in the students.