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# *On Teaching*

## Teaching Negotiations in the New Millennium: Evidence-Based Recommendations for Online Course Delivery

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*Traditional methods for teaching negotiation have required both instructor and student to be physically present in the same location. With the advent of the Internet and associated technological advances, however, instructors may now transcend geographical barriers and effectively deliver the same content virtually. In this article, we present an exploratory study comparing two masters-level negotiation courses: one taught using a traditional in-person method and the other taught online. Results showed no significant difference in knowledge acquisition as quantified by objective measures, including mean grades. In addition, self-report data indicate that, although students' skill and mastery of negotiation improved in both courses, online students reported that they experienced less interaction and social engagement with their classmates and instructor. Several course development strategies and best practices are discussed.*

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**Key words:** negotiation, negotiation pedagogy, online course development, negotiations online.

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## Introduction

The use of technology in higher education has surged in the last fifteen years (Monko 2010). For-profit institutions have capitalized on the opportunity to offer many of their courses exclusively via the Internet, while not-for-profit public and private schools have been somewhat slower to embrace the change and have only recently begun to realize the possible benefits of engaging in this new educational model (Howell, Williams, and Lindsay 2003). Traditionally, college courses were taught in-person; more recently, online courses have become more widely accepted (Allen and Seaman 2011).

For purposes of this article, we use “in-person” to refer to the traditional face-to-face classroom instructional method in which students attend classes in a designated classroom on campus at a regularly scheduled time. In this article, “online” refers to Internet-based or virtual classroom instructional methods in which students access course content from computerized devices, typically in locations other than a classroom. The instructor of an in-person class may utilize the Internet to deliver some course content, but the online instructor delivers *all* course content exclusively via the Internet.

In this article, we argue that teaching negotiations online has emerged as an essential next step in the continued evolution of negotiation pedagogy. We discuss critical aspects of online course creation, including the obstacles that course designers face. In addition, we present findings from an exploratory study in which we compared a traditional in-person negotiation class and an online negotiation class, and offer some preliminary evidence on the viability of online negotiation courses. Finally, we discuss how online course delivery can be improved, and suggest ways to leverage technology to increase students’ sense of community and connection in online negotiation courses. We hope this article will offer instructors a model for online negotiation instruction that can spur creativity, enliven debate, and extend the scant literature in this area.

## Teaching Negotiation Online

Increased globalization coupled with an emphasis on lifelong learning has propelled online education into the forefront of a new academic landscape (Wang 2006). According to a recent survey of online learning (Allen and Seaman 2011), more than 6.1 million students have had some experience with online course work (i.e., taken at least one course online). This total reflects an increase of more than 10 percent from the previous year and is double the number of students since 2005. As colleges and universities have made a push to develop online courses, faculty have begun to convert conventional in-person classes to a virtual environment. Programs in areas as varied as nursing, art, photography, and literature have begun to offer

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classes in the virtual format (see Moore and Hart 2004; Peterson and Slotta 2009; Strang 2010). In addition, many business schools have recently started modifying traditional teaching strategies to appeal to a more computer-connected student body. For example, business cases are being taught online (Rollag 2010), negotiation courses are using blogs as online journals in which students can reflect on simulations and other class activities (Macduff 2009, 2012), and in some instances entire negotiation courses are being taught virtually (Weiss 2005).

The increase in online courses appears to be driven by institutional and faculty interest in reaching students where they are, both geographically and technologically. Educational theorists have argued that online teaching offers certain pedagogical advantages, such as the ability to deliver content creatively, efficiently, and effectively while maintaining rigor and offering the flexibility that increasingly globalized and changing student populations demand (Abrami et al. 2011).

In the last decade, several experienced instructors have developed sets of recommendations for how to develop successful multimedia teaching strategies that can be easily accessed and applied to any online classroom (Abrami et al. 2011). In addition, we argue that negotiation courses are particularly suited to an online environment. Real-life negotiations are often not conducted entirely face to face; negotiators tend to communicate with the aid of technology. They negotiate by phone, e-mail, text messages, voice-over-Internet services (e.g., Skype), or through a combination of communication modes (Ambrose et al. 2008). Online courses and traditional courses with online components, thus, allow students to experience the inherent advantages and disadvantages of using technology in negotiation. For example, the benefits of text-based negotiation include reviewability, revisability, and recordability (leaving an e-mail or text thread or trail, for example). The disadvantages include the greater likelihood of disagreements or misunderstandings, difficulty with rapport-building, and lack of nonverbal cues (Kelly and Keaten 2007).

## **The Challenges and Opportunities of Teaching Negotiation Online**

While teaching negotiation online might seem like an easy next step for negotiation teaching, the traditional strategies for teaching negotiations can, on the face of it, appear challenging to translate to online media. The primary pedagogical methodology employed for most negotiation courses has traditionally been based on an “experiential learning” framework (Lewicki 1997). In addition to using traditional lectures and reading assignments, negotiation instructors typically teach theories and concepts using realistic “learn-by-doing” exercises (simulations, cases, and role plays), joint open inquiry (discussion), and integration/reflection (Lewicki 1986, 1997; Patton 2009).

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In addition, few articles have specifically examined the teaching of negotiation over the Internet, leaving instructors to develop techniques mostly on their own. Those who have examined teaching negotiation classes, or parts of classes, online (e.g., McKersie and Fonstad 1997; Weiss 2005) report that it requires a great deal of time and coordination to be successful. Another significant challenge, Joshua Weiss pointed out, is the “lack of direct interpersonal interaction with the students” (Weiss 2005: 78). Other challenges include the difficulties of fostering a sense of community, of choosing appropriate role plays or simulations for an online format, of holding students’ attention, and of keeping instructions simple and clear (McKersie and Fonstad 1997; Weiss 2005). Also, quality and quantity of discussion board postings can be difficult to moderate (Rollag 2010).

But, as Joshua Weiss (2005) argued, despite such challenges, online negotiation courses can be lively, interactive, and successful. It is possible to adapt all the elements of an experiential learning model to an online class. Indeed, an online environment offers several opportunities that do not exist in traditional face-to-face classes, such as offering student discussions via online postings. This can encourage the participation of students who are too shy to speak out in the classroom, which can in turn build their confidence. “The online discussion board forum provides a less stressful, more conducive environment for some students to join the conversation and demonstrate their course mastery” (Rollag 2010: 502).

## **Course Development**

Keeping in mind the challenges and opportunities inherent in the online format, we endeavored to create an online negotiation course that we could compare with an in-person negotiation course. Our course development goals included:

1. to assure learning and skill transfer;
2. to create an exciting teaching and learning experience;
3. to create an online negotiation course that is sufficiently interactive;
4. to maximize student engagement in role-play simulations in an online environment;
5. to investigate virtual tools that can allow students to record and compare with other student negotiating pairs; and
6. to encourage vigorous discussion.

We applied the traditional experiential approach to an online format, developing a course that incorporated experiential exercises, lectures, opportunities for skill building, and reflection and integration but that differed in the communication modes used for delivery. We used a Blackboard

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web platform where students accessed voice-over PowerPoint lectures, readings, technology tutorials, simulation instructions, discussion board forums, and negotiation pairings for the semester. Students reported on their negotiation outcomes on an online whiteboard that allowed all students to access, compare, and contrast settlement information from all negotiation teams.

In addition, we designed the course around performance-oriented goals for maximizing long-term learning, as recommended by Barbara McAdoo and Melissa Manwaring (2009). They have suggested that course objectives should focus on the specific skills that students should master rather than the content that will be covered. See the sample objectives and competencies from our online negotiation course as listed in Table One.

To foster the conceptual understanding that enables students to apply the appropriate negotiation technique in the appropriate setting, we employed a “cognitive apprenticeship” approach (Collins, Brown, and Holum 1991) in which we first presented theories (via voice-over PowerPoint lectures and assigned readings). Then, students engaged in negotiation simulations.

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**Table One**  
**Online Negotiation Class Objectives and Competencies for**  
**Modules One, Two, and Three**

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**Module One**

In this module students will:

- Begin to build a tool kit for negotiation.
- Be able to effectively prepare for a negotiation.
- Use basic distributive and integrative negotiation tactics.
- Ponder the meaning of “winning.”

**Module Two**

In this module students will:

- Begin to think about negotiations more systematically.
- Learn techniques for uncovering integrative potential in a negotiation.
- Link communication processes to negotiation success.
- Ponder the dilemmas of honesty and trust in negotiation.

**Module Three**

In this module students will:

- Begin to understand the complexities of negotiation.
  - Learn to structure and analyze multiparty/multi-issue negotiations.
  - Use knowledge of conflict styles in negotiation to improve negotiation process and outcomes.
  - Ponder the meaning of negotiation success and the role of ethics in negotiation.
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Next, we modeled appropriate skills presenting “in-action” negotiation videos of the same negotiation scenario in which students had participated but with actors playing the roles. Through discussion board questions, we then coached students to compare and contrast the video negotiation with their own processes and outcomes. We offered feedback and direction via the discussion board or via voice-recorded audio files (using Audacity software) that we either e-mailed to students or posted on the class web portal.

## **Background and Methodology**

A major goal of our exploratory study was to compare the outcomes of our online course with a comparable in-person negotiation course. To our knowledge, the literature on pedagogy in general includes few direct comparisons of online and in-person courses, and no direct comparisons of online and in-person negotiation courses specifically. Therefore, we sought to explore the differences and similarities between in-person and online negotiation courses to gain greater insight into the sustainability and usefulness of online negotiation courses, and to generate recommendations for teaching negotiations online. Our main research question asked: What is the effectiveness of the online negotiation course (in terms of skill acquisition, student engagement, instructor-student interaction, learning, and performance as measured by grades) when compared with an in-person negotiation course?

We made efforts to ensure consistent and parallel content and instructional methods when possible. Specifically, we assigned both classes identical readings, role-play simulations, and other assignments. Additionally, we made in-action negotiation videos available for both classes to view. We asked students in each class to keep a negotiation journal on an electronic discussion board, and both the online and in-person classes watched PowerPoint lectures. In the online version of the class, the students watched PowerPoint lectures with voice-over narration, whereas the students enrolled in the face-to-face class attended lectures delivered by the instructor with accompanying PowerPoint slides.

The communication modes used for the role-play negotiation simulations differed by class. The primary communication mode for negotiation simulations in the in-person class was face to face, whereas the online class conducted their negotiations primarily over Skype.

To gain insight into the effectiveness of an online negotiation class generally and in comparison to an in-person negotiation class, we conducted an exploratory survey using a modified pre-test/post-test design by asking students to complete a questionnaire at the beginning and end of the course.

### ***Subjects***

A total of thirty-seven students from a graduate master’s in business administration program participated in this study. Twenty students

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(thirteen male and seven female) from the online negotiation and bargaining course completed the preclass survey, and seventeen of them completed the postclass surveys. From the in-person class, thirteen students (six male and seven female) completed the pre-survey and an additional two students completed the post-survey, for a total of fifteen respondents. We conducted separate analyses to determine if the nonequivalent size of the groups (i.e., some students did not complete both surveys in each condition) affected the results by removing the additional students to make the size of the pre- and postclass survey participant groups the same. These results did not differ so we performed the final analyses using *all* the data.

Student ages in both classes ranged from the early twenties to the early forties, with the majority of students reporting their age as ranging between 26 and 30 (50 percent for the online class and 46 percent for the in-person class). Students in both classes rated their own levels of negotiation expertise prior to taking the class. The average level of self-reported expertise for the online class was a 3 (1 = beginner, 7 = expert) and for the in-person class was a 2.4, which was a statistically insignificant difference.

### ***Design and Procedure***

Prior to starting either the in-person or the online negotiation classes, students were asked to complete an online survey with a number of Likert-type questions. Specifically, the pre-survey informed students that “the following statements relate to your interest and experience with negotiations. Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.” The questions are listed in Table Two.

The online class was taught over approximately five weeks (comprising a week for class setup and introductions, three weeks for negotiation exercises, and a week for post-class communication, final discussion board postings, and final assignments), and the in-person class was taught over a seven-week period.

After the final class, we asked students to complete the post-class online survey that included the pre-survey items (see Table Two) as well as an additional questionnaire. For the additional post-survey, students were instructed that “the following statements ask you to rate your interest and experience with negotiation now that you have completed the negotiation course. Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.” The additional questions are listed in Table Three.

In addition to the pre- and post-questionnaire, we examined several other variables. In particular, we investigated outcomes that did not depend on self-reporting to supplement the questionnaire data with more objective measures. We compared students’ grades on the first assignment and the

**Table Two**  
**Survey Administered before and after the Class**

**Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:**

	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>							<b>Strongly Agree</b>
I am skilled at negotiation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	7
I feel competent when negotiating.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	7
I get nervous when I negotiate.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	7
I feel I have much to learn about negotiation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	7
I believe that becoming skilled at negotiation is critical for success in business.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	7
It is important that I do the best for myself in a negotiation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	7
It is important that all parties in a negotiation are satisfied with the outcome.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	7
I believe that I need to look tough when negotiating.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	7
I prefer to be collaborative when negotiating.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	7
I enjoy negotiating.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	7

joint points they accrued in a scorable negotiation (“New Recruit”) across class formats.

We chose one discussion board posting randomly out of a hat to analyze using the Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) (see Pennebaker, Booth, and Francis 2007), a qualitative text analysis program that assesses word count, positive and negative emotions, insight, and perceptual language based on a predetermined validated dictionary. For



**Table Three**  
**Negotiation Class Post-Survey**

	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>						<b>Strongly Agree</b>
I learned a lot in this course.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The quality of instruction was high.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The class felt like a collaborative learning environment.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I got to know my classmates.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I got to know my instructor.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I had difficulty managing my time in this class.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

example, LIWC scans a text for more than one hundred words expressing such positive emotions as “hope,” “share,” “comfort,” “joy,” “terrific,” and “cool.” Except for word count, LIWC expresses all averages as a percentage of total words in that sample.

## Results

We used independent samples *t*-tests to analyze the differences in results between the two class formats (in-person and online). Levene’s test (Levene, Olkin, and Hotelling 1960) for homogeneity of variances was performed for all between-class *t*-tests. If the assumption of homogeneity was violated, we used the more rigorous test with fewer degrees of freedom. We used dependent sample *t*-tests to compare the differences within the classes for the pre- and post-questionnaires.

Our analyses indicated that there were no significant differences between the online and in-person classes for the preclass questionnaire, which included ratings of negotiation skill, competence, nervousness, etc. These results are shown in Table Four. Responses from both classes to the post-class questionnaire were also similar (see Table Four). We found that responses to only one item from the post-negotiation survey varied significantly across classes: those in the in-person class rated negotiation as more critical to business than those in the online class.

**Table Four**  
**Descriptive Statistics, *t*-Tests, and Effect Size Estimates between and within Classes**

Class	Pre-Survey		Post-Survey		<i>t</i> -Test	<i>p</i> -Value	Cohen's <i>d</i>	<i>r</i>	
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation					
Skill	Online In-person <i>F</i> -test	3.18 2.92 n.s.	1.24 1.04	5.29 5.69 n.s.	0.686 0.63	<b>-7.49</b> <b>-9.14</b>	<b>0.000</b> <b>0.000</b>	-2.11 -3.22	-0.69 -0.85
Competent	Online In-person <i>F</i> -test	3.59 3.15 n.s.	1.28 1.28	5.29 5.92 n.s.	0.59 0.49	<b>-4.86</b> <b>-7.32</b>	<b>0.000</b> <b>0.000</b>	-1.71 -2.86	-0.65 -0.82
Nervous	Online In-person <i>F</i> -test	4.06 4.69 n.s.	1.52 1.93	3.47 4.00 n.s.	1.07 1.68	1.34 1.06	n.s. n.s.	0.45 0.38	0.22 0.19
Much to learn	Online In-person <i>F</i> -test	5.94 6.08 n.s.	1.34 1.12	4.81 4.46 n.s.	1.45 1.51	<b>2.09</b> <b>3.31</b>	<b>0.05</b> <b>0.006</b>	0.81 0.96	0.38 0.43
Critical for business	Online In-person <i>F</i> -test	6.29 6.31 n.s.	1.05 1.03	6.06 6.54 n.s.	0.83 0.52	0.7 -0.64	n.s. n.s.	0.24 -0.28	0.12 -0.14
Self-interest	Online In-person <i>F</i> -test	4.65 4.77 n.s.	1.58 1.17	4.71 4.84 n.s.	1.31 1.63	-0.10 -0.13	n.s. n.s.	-0.04 -0.05	-0.02 -0.02
All satisfied	Online In-person <i>F</i> -test	5.35 5.08 n.s.	1.37 1.55	5.24 5.38 n.s.	1.39 1.26	0.31 -0.54	n.s. n.s.	0.08 -0.21	0.04 -0.11
Tough	Online In-person <i>F</i> -test	3.18 3.69 n.s.	1.51 1.49	3.12 3.15 n.s.	1.05 1.34	0.12 1.07	n.s. n.s.	0.05 0.38	0.02 0.19
Collaborate	Online In-person <i>F</i> -test	5.47 5.38 n.s.	1.33 0.96	5.76 5.31 n.s.	0.90 1.11	-0.65 0.17	n.s. n.s.	-0.26 0.07	-0.13 0.03
Enjoy	Online In-person <i>F</i> -test	4.06 4.00 n.s.	1.39 1.73	5.35 5.23 n.s.	1.06 1.48	<b>-2.92</b> <b>-1.92</b>	<b>0.01</b> 0.08	-1.04 -0.76	-0.46 -0.36

Note: Numbers in bold indicate significance at  $p < 0.05$ .

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When we compared pre- and post-questionnaire responses within each class format for these variables, we found that students in both the online and in-person classes rated their skill and competence in negotiating as being significantly higher after taking the class, and were much less likely to report that they had “much to learn about negotiation.” Students in both classes reported that they enjoyed negotiation more after taking the class, but the difference between the pre- and postclass results for students in the in-person class was not significant (see Table Four for *t*-tests and *p*-values). We note that effect sizes on all significant differences were above 0.80, which is considered a large effect (see Cohen 1992).

In response to the additional questions that we asked only in the second (post-class) questionnaire, students in the in-person class rated their learning in the course, the quality of instruction, how collaborative they perceived the learning environment to be, and how well they got to know their classmates and their instructor significantly higher than did those in the online negotiation course. These results are reported in Table Five. Time management was not particularly problematic for either class as evidenced in the low mean ratings; classes did not significantly differ in their rating of their ability to manage their time. Effect sizes for all significant differences were above 0.80, indicating a large effect (see Cohen 1992).

The mean grades for an assignment that required students to analyze a negotiation they engaged in in the real world did not differ significantly across classes nor did the joint points that students earned for a scorable negotiation simulation. For the discussion board postings that we analyzed using the LIWC constructs, however, word count and perception words did differ significantly across classes: fewer words in general and fewer words indicative of perceptual content were found for the in-person class. These results are reported in Table Six.

## Discussion

Overall, our exploratory results suggest that online negotiation courses can have learning outcomes similar to those of in-person negotiation classes. Students in both the online and in-person classes reported that they believed themselves to be significantly more skilled and competent at negotiating after taking the course. In addition, the online participants rated their enjoyment of negotiating as an activity significantly higher after the class than before.

Neither grades nor simulation performance differed significantly between the two classes, but when we compared the answers to the additional self-report questions (students’ perception of how much they learned, quality of instruction, how collaborative the environment was, and how well they got to know their classmates and instructor) after the course ended, the in-person course ratings were significantly higher. This suggests that while the online class format may have transferred knowledge and

**Table Five**  
**Descriptive Statistics, *t*-Tests and Effect Size Estimates for the Postclass Survey**

	Online		In-person		<i>t</i> -test	<i>p</i> -level	Cohen's <i>d</i>	<i>r</i>
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation				
Learned	5.65	0.99	6.47	0.64	<b>2.73</b>	<b>0.01</b>	0.98	0.44
Instruction	5.35	1.41	6.53	0.64	<b>3.11</b>	<b>0.005</b>	1.08	0.48
Learning environment	5.06	1.43	6.53	0.74	<b>3.58</b>	<b>0.001</b>	1.29	0.54
Know classmates	3.76	1.56	5.6	1.18	<b>3.71</b>	<b>0.001</b>	1.33	0.55
Know instructor	3.35	1.73	5.73	1.1	<b>4.57</b>	<b>0.001</b>	1.64	0.63
Time management	2.13	1.31	2	1.08	0.28	n.s.		

*Note:* Numbers in bold indicate significance at  $p < 0.05$ .

**Table Six**  
**Means and Standard Deviations for Non-Survey Measures**

	Online	In-person
Assignment grade	89.05 (4.14)	91.5 (4.69)
“New recruit” (joint points earned)	8333 (3346.64)	8850 (4141.42)
Discussion board		
Word count*	572.25 (294.09)	378.69 (185.79)
Positive emotions	4.2 (1.17)	3.69 (0.94)
Negative emotions	0.77 (0.3)	1.05 (0.51)
Insight	3.78 (1.66)	4.07 (1.56)
Perceptual*	1.68 (0.91)	1.05 (0.58)

*Note:* Standard deviations in parentheses; \* $p < 0.05$ .

skills, the social and emotional aspects were less satisfying for students in the online class than they were in the traditional in-person class.

Previous research (see Pelz 2004) has found that a key contributor to success in an online classroom is interactivity, and this requires three types of “presence” or manifestations of interactivity and connection: social, cognitive, and teaching. Our findings suggest that the online negotiation class was able to deliver on cognitive presence (establishing an intellectual connection), but the social presence (establishing a community of learning) and teaching presence (facilitating interaction and connection with the instructor and students in a climate of learning) may need to be enhanced.

We note that, in the online class, students used more words in their postings than those in the in-person class. We think this is because most of the online class interaction was confined to the discussion board, whereas for the in-person class much interaction happens during face-to-face class time, leaving less to be said online, which is consistent with the suggestions of other scholars (e.g., Weiss 2005).

### ***Study Limitations***

This exploratory research was conducted outside of a lab in a naturalistic setting, and it was not possible to control some important elements. For example, we could not control the number of weeks each class was taught, which was predetermined by the university administration. The online negotiation class was shorter than the in-person class, and we cannot rule out the possibility that the length of the course affected the results. For example, it could provide a potential alternative explanation for why the perception of deeper interaction and collaboration was reported in the in-person class.

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Therefore, to investigate this question further, we conducted a survey with students in an executive MBA program who participated in an in-person negotiation workshop delivered over two Saturdays. While the sample size was small ( $n = 8$ ), we found no significant differences between the longer and shorter in-person classes in any of the post-survey items. However, we found significant differences between the two-Saturday in-person workshop responses and the online responses: the online students rated their learning experience, quality of instruction, collaborative learning environment, and knowledge about instructor significantly lower than did the two-Saturday in-person workshop students. These findings lend some small support for the explanation that learning modality rather than length of class was responsible for the differences we found.

In this research, we examined the experiences and attitudes of students, not teachers. Because an educational program is more sustainable when teachers also find it fulfilling, we believe research about the experiences of faculty who teach online courses would also be worthwhile.

### ***Insights and Recommendations***

Based on the results of our exploratory study, we provide several recommendations for future online negotiation classes. Specifically, we suggest that programs and instructors who develop online negotiation courses should find ways to create a more collaborative learning environment and foster greater student-to-student and student-to-instructor interaction. New technology and teaching strategies can both be used to accomplish these goals. Based on our own experiences and the literature on online teaching, we have developed a set of recommendations, which are listed in Table Seven.

### ***Building a Learning Community***

Because the course syllabus is the initial interface with online students, the online negotiation course syllabus should be particularly thorough as well as interactive. The posted syllabus should have hyperlinks to key internal university webpages (e.g., internal review board, student conduct policies, library web site, and assignments) as well as relevant external sites (e.g., readings, publisher web sites, negotiation and conflict sites) — anything useful that can be linked should be linked.

Building a learning community requires setting clear expectations (see Dennen, Darabi, and Smith 2007). Instructors should establish policies and procedures for student engagement (e.g., students must log in three times per week, they must respond to at least two classmates, they must post two unique comments). Expectations should include time lines for instructor feedback (e.g., the instructor will respond to e-mails within twenty-four hours) and specific levels of interaction (e.g., you can expect the instructor to log in to discussions three times per week).

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**Table Seven**  
**Recommendations for Improving Students' Social and Emotional Experiences**

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<b>Build a Learning Community</b>	<b>Enhance Student-to-Instructor Interaction</b>	<b>Foster Greater Student-to-Student Interaction</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create an interactive syllabus</li> <li>• Establish clear expectations</li> <li>• Make an impression with introductions</li> <li>• Use web conferencing</li> <li>• Form a Facebook group</li> <li>• Video-record and share negotiations</li> <li>• Create a student photo blog</li> <li>• Create wiki trails or go on an “Internet road trip”</li> <li>• Create collaborative assignments</li> <li>• Have students review each other</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer individualized attention</li> <li>• Use threaded discussion with multimedia</li> <li>• Make frequent and regular contact in discussion spaces</li> <li>• Give and solicit feedback often</li> <li>• Offer online office hours</li> <li>• Schedule conferences</li> <li>• Use multimedia approach</li> <li>• Embrace technology and social media</li> <li>• Stream video or create podcasts</li> <li>• Conduct midcourse evaluations</li> <li>• Record video e-mails for students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create small discussion groups</li> <li>• Use the buddy system</li> <li>• Create a “student salon”</li> <li>• Conduct a virtual interview</li> <li>• Interact in synchronous chat rooms</li> <li>• Use threaded discussion with multimedia</li> <li>• Promote frequent communication</li> </ul>

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After the instructor introduces the course and expectations via the syllabus, both students and the instructor should also make personal introductions. Rather than a simple text-based introduction on a discussion board (as we did in the course described in the study), we suggest that students post pictures or video-record an introduction, or that they be matched up in pairs to interview each other and then introduce their partners on the discussion board.

One could get even more creative using software applications like Blabberize, Bitstrips, or Comic Master, and ask students to introduce

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themselves via comic strips. Programs like Voki allow individuals to create personalized avatars that can speak e-mail messages, and students could use Wordle to create word clouds about their expectations and goals for the negotiation class. They could also share photos using Picasa or Tumblr. The introduction should be used as a model for the rest of the class. It should embrace technology, be interactive, exciting, and engaging.

As the class progresses, collaboration can be facilitated by using web conferencing software, such as Skype or Google Hangout, ooVoo for performing negotiation simulations, and Facebook groups for reflection and journaling. Voicethread is an application that lets individuals upload and share via text and audio, and allows for comments to be added to any part of the upload by those with whom the information is shared. It is convenient for team assignments, reflections, and team presentations. Students could also use such applications as Camstudio, Jink, Skype, Fuzee, WebEx, or other screen recordings or video conferencing applications to record portions of dyadic negotiations that could then be posted in discussion boards and used for modeling and reflection.

Assigning students to review these negotiation clips and offer feedback is another way to promote dialogue and interaction. Web-based whiteboards, such as Scribbler.com, Google docs, or Writeboard, allow students to record negotiation outcomes and save them so the entire class can view and compare their negotiation outcomes with others in the class.

We recommend that instructors create assignments that make use of the many resources on the web, and take an Internet road trip or produce a wiki trail. In other words, students can find web sites that relate to negotiation and provide reviews of the sites on a class wiki that they jointly produce. We note that most of the applications mentioned above are free or available as “shareware.” Some, however, may require purchase or access through the school’s computer services.

### ***Enhancing Student-to-Instructor Interaction***

According to Thomas Tobin (2004), instructors who seek to develop and teach online classes must understand that doing so requires *increased* instructor attention and support. Not only should instructors have a consistent presence on the discussion board (via text-based feedback or by audio- or video-recording summaries of discussions or important points), faculty should also reach out to students individually via e-mail, phone, or video conference technology. The individualized attention can address student’s questions and improve their understanding, but it can also foster deeper connections with the faculty. If instructors have no need to contact students individually during the normal course of events, they should consider scheduling conferences during the course.



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If class instruction takes place primarily on the discussion board (Weiss 2005), then a more interactive approach to the discussion board may be warranted. For example, the instructor should keep a frequent and consistent presence on the discussion board. In particular, Kenneth Strang (2010) has suggested that instructors use Socratic questions to clarify, probe, and prompt students to link theory with evidence — and also press students to link applied examples with concepts being learned in the course. Threaded discussion via a discussion board is now ubiquitous in the online environment; however, making sure that feedback and interaction is regular and consistent is important. Adding multimedia components to the discussion thread (pictures, video, and audio clips) can add a sense of intimacy that may not be present with text alone. Instructors can experiment with applications like Voxopop that uses voice rather than text in a discussion board format.

Social media can also be used to enhance faculty and student interaction. As noted earlier, Facebook groups can be used to reflect on and debrief negotiation simulations. Twitter can be used in a number of ways: (1) instructors can post links to negotiation relevant media, articles, and information; (2) students can be asked to follow particular negotiation gurus or professionals; and (3) instructors can tweet about current events that relate to negotiations.

Instructors can also offer office hours via Skype by leaving their Skype account open and on for particular hours during the day and inviting students to initiate contact without making an appointment. They can also record video e-mails for students and use streaming video or podcasts for real-time class updates.

Finally, instructors can offer students opportunities to provide the instructor with feedback. They can also conduct midcourse evaluations using such simple survey applications as SurveyMonkey or Polldaddy, and then provide the class with summaries of the feedback, and if applicable describe how the feedback may be affecting the course trajectory. If a mid-semester survey shows that students want more multiparty negotiations or renegotiation experiences or individual coaching, the instructor could add more simulations or offer direct feedback to students.

### ***Foster Greater Student-to-Student Interaction***

Online classes can get quite large. Creating smaller discussion groups can allow students to engage in a more thoughtful inquiry and can also prevent students from being overwhelmed by all the posts from an entire class. But if the teacher does break the class into smaller discussion groups, we recommend that he or she change the groups around at some point in the semester (Dennen, Darabi, and Smith 2007). Interacting with different students adds variety to the learning, exposes students to a wider range of opinions, and expands the student's network. Instructors could also

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provide students with opportunities for synchronous chat and offer a “student salon” where students can connect without the presence of the instructor, giving them opportunities for informal discussion and chances to develop camaraderie.

While some students may know each other, many will not. Pairing students with a “buddy” at the start of class can foster collaborative relationships and decrease the depersonalization of the online environment. While in an in-person class a student might ask a question of his or her neighbor, in the online class he or she could reach out to the buddy to ask quick questions about the class, homework, simulations, or assignments. A buddy system could be combined with the interviewing introduction assignment as mentioned above. Students can be paired with buddies, and then interview them and create discussion board postings about them.

Instructors should provide frequent opportunities for interaction and communication between students. Students should be encouraged to meet via teleconference (Skype) for the negotiations. They could also post collaborative reflections on the discussion board. When possible, the teacher could devise assignments that engage several students to work together. One possible collaborative assignment could be to jointly analyze a negotiation from either a feature film or a documentary.

## Conclusion

This study sought to examine empirically whether negotiation can be taught online as effectively as it can be taught in a classroom. Our exploratory study indicates that, according to student surveys and objective measures such as grades and negotiation outcomes, negotiation instruction can be delivered online as effectively and as enjoyably as in person.

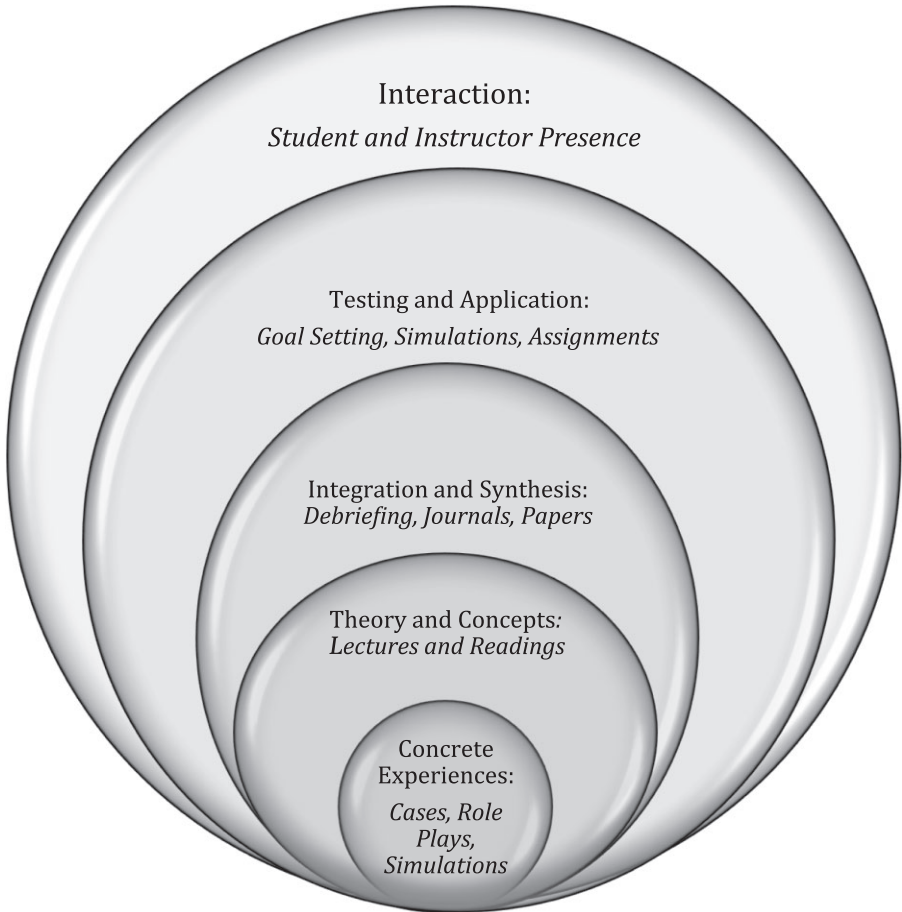
In addition, our results highlight the need for online negotiation courses to pay particular attention to the social and emotional experiences of students. Creating deeper interpersonal relationships (among students and between the instructor and students) as well as fostering a more collaborative learning environment should be key concerns for instructors as they develop online negotiation courses.

We further propose that the experiential learning model (Lewicki 1997) used in most negotiation classes be extended further for online negotiation classes, as shown in Figure One. This learning model involves providing students with concrete experiences supported by instruction in theory and research, with integration of the experiences through discussion and journaling and the testing of knowledge through assignments and application to the real world. In the context of an online environment, however, we believe that all of those elements should be reinforced by meaningful interaction among students and between students and the instructor.

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**Figure One**  
**Experiential Learning Model and Negotiation Course**  
**Learning Tools**

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Adapted from Lewicki (1997).

The rapidly changing nature of academic instruction brought on by new technology has led to increases in the number of online courses in higher education. Our exploratory study results suggest that online negotiation classes can deliver negotiation knowledge as effectively as an in-person class, although they also suggest that online negotiation instruction provides less interaction and sense of collaboration than does the

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traditional negotiation class. Based on our experiences and the literature, we believe these deficiencies can be effectively addressed through thoughtful and creative course development.

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