The Art of Negotiation Exercise Design: Five Basic Principles to Produce Powerful Learning Experiences

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Negotiation exercise design is a skill that, such as negotiation itself, is rooted in certain core principles and can be refined with practice. How writers approach the design process is the key to producing effective exercises and powerful learning experiences. This article addresses five core principles that can be used to curate both simple and moderately complex negotiation exercises, including games, role plays, and simulations. These core principles are (1) define the purpose, (2) determine the format, (3) maintain focus, (4) test the function, and (5) plan for a debrief. These principles can be used as a general framework to help writers overcome the challenges inherent in exercise design and empower them to create and deliver their own tailored negotiation exercises. The principles are a tried-and-true method developed from the authors' own experience designing the material for university curricula, executive education, and workshops for government, military, and private clients.

Keywords: negotiation, simulation, role play, curriculum design, teaching, learning, games, exercise.

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Introduction

Interactive exercises are a staple of the modern negotiation classroom. Negotiation exercises, including those on climate change (Andonova and Mendoza-Castro 2008; Dengler 2008), conflict management (Belloni 2009), and legislative debates (Baranowski 2006) are particularly helpful for students to gain a better understanding of how negotiating dynamics shape policy outcomes (Schnurr, De Santo, and Green 2014). Moreover, these exercises have been lauded for stimulating student interest in the lesson material and enhancing critical thinking and behavioral skills (Dengler 2008; Schnurr, De Santo, and Green 2014). These tools not only give participants opportunities to become immersed in the lessons, but also encourage them to reflect on their experiences and transfer the lessons to real-life situations.

With a growing body of negotiation exercises available online,[1] instructors can simply order a standard or bespoke exercise for their classrooms. However, a growing concern for the discerning negotiation instructor is that these exercises are often static in their design and do not always meet the particular needs of his or her classroom. In such cases, instructors might be interested in designing new exercises that are tailored to the specific educational needs of the learners before them. In this article, we describe a method for designing anything from introductory games to multiparty, multi-issue simulations. While exercises differ in their aims, styles, and intended audiences, following this five-step method will make the design process more accessible to both students and instructors.

Definitions and Caveats

This article defines "negotiation exercise" as an interactive activity designed to develop negotiation skills. Drawing on the work of Lawrence Susskind and Jason Corburn (1999), this article also employs the following terms: (1) "game" to describe simple activities that have agreed upon the set of rules that limit possible final outcomes, (2) "role play" to describe interactive activities that assign characteristics to each participant, which may impose restraints, pressures, or influences on participants, and (3) "simulation" to describe exercises that combine elements of games and role plays, consisting of at least three parts—background scenario, confidential instructions for each role, and a debriefing component. While this article makes use of these terms—game, role play, and simulation—it does not seek to expand or make an argument for the effectiveness of these exercises.

This five-part method draws upon our own experience designing the exercises for university curricula, executive education, and workshops for government, military, and private clients over the past decade. This method will be the most relevant for negotiation exercise designers and instructors interested in designing a complete classroom experience, including a written product with both exercise and debrief materials. Our method applies to the design of games, role plays, and simulations that range in complexity from single-round, two-party bargaining exercises to moderately complex multiparty, multi-issue exercises. This method does not encompass the design of more complex, dynamic exercises, including "systemic multiconstituency exercises" (SMCE) (Bell and Mandell 2018) or "mega-simulations" (Weiss 2008) that may require extensive participant preparation, unfold over the course of several days, and involve fifteen or more parties.[2] Additionally, while this method is intended to assist with the planning of exercises, it does not offer detailed guidance on negotiation exercise research or writing, or on the design of specific exercise elements. Furthermore, this method does not comprehensively address the administration or debriefing of an exercise. Instead, it focuses on five basic principles that can guide the design of both simple and moderately complex negotiation exercises. Designers who follow these principles will be better able to create a teaching tool that fulfills their desired educational purposes, while avoiding typical pitfalls of exercise design.

Five Principles in Negotiation Exercise Design

Negotiation exercises today range from two-party scorable games to large-scale, immersive, highly realistic simulations. In his theoretical work "Negotiating in a Complex World," Michael Watkins complained that some simple exercise models are too "simplistic, sterile, or static" to confront the realities of real-life negotiations (Watkins 1999: 245). Attention to detail in the exercise environment, actor development, and scenario background are all elements of immersive exercises; yet these elements can also distract case writers. Common design pitfalls include creating an exercise that does not elicit the intended dynamics (or that elicits an unintended dynamic that overshadows the intended purpose), designing an exercise that includes far too much information for the intended audience to absorb in the intended time, or conversely, writing an exercise with insufficient or ambiguous instructions. Negotiation exercise design can become overwhelming when writers get too bogged down in the details and fail to pay attention to the principles of basic negotiation exercise design. This five-step method is a tried-and-true system to develop meaningful learning experiences for both novice and advanced audiences. We recommend the following five steps to design enriching negotiation exercises: (1) define a clear purpose, (2) determine the format, (3) maintain focus, (4) test the function, and (5) plan for a debrief.

Define the Purpose

As the negotiation process always begins with in-depth planning, so does exercise design. The first questions a negotiation exercise designer should consider are the following: *Who* are the participants that will be taught? *What* exactly will be learned? Answering these questions will yield the negotiation exercise's "purpose," which we define as the exercise's planned learning outcomes with consideration for the intended audience.

Understanding the "who" and "what" will allow instructors to lay the groundwork for the exercise. The tailoring of a negotiation exercise should also consider the assumptions and values of the participants, as these underlying ideas will be the base for which new experiences will be integrated into their mindsets (Lande et al. 2012).

Once a designer understands the participants, including factors such as levels of experience (e.g., university students versus practitioners) or exposure to negotiation instruction (Lande et al. 2012) then the instructor will be better able to determine what particular skill or skill set should be taught or reinforced. When defining the exercise purpose, it is beneficial for designers to outline the goals of the exercise from a performance perspective, that is, to articulate what participants *should be able to do* by the end of the instruction (McAdoo and Manwaring 2009). Doing so enables designers to better conceptualize the exercise design. Another way to design a negotiation exercise with purpose is to consider orienting the exercise toward content—that is, enhancing knowledge around the scenario topic,[3] or toward processes—that is, enhancing specific negotiation (or other) skills (Ebner and Efron 2005).

One example of purpose may be found in Raiser's studies of the use of exercises on European politics to train social sciences students in soft skills, including developing negotiation rhetoric, searching for common ground, and enhancing team skills such as collaboration and productive time and resource management (Raiser, Schneider, and Warkalla 2015). Other concrete purposes could include training graduate students with backgrounds in international affairs on how to anchor effectively in multiparty, multi-issue negotiations[4] or teaching novice participants how to create mutual value through an interest-based approach.[5] Our own example of defining a clear purpose was illustrated when we endeavored to design an exercise with a scenario set in Eurasia. We worked with a creative writer to help us design a compelling narrative and rich characters. However, our discussions on this topic led us down the wrong path and we found ourselves prioritizing personalities and scenario features instead of the exercise's purpose. At this point, we had to step back and focus on what participants will learn from this exercise—understanding and pursuing the interests of Central Asian countries in the context of China's Belt and Road Initiative. With the purpose defined, we could now allow it to clearly guide the design's development, rather than to allow creative characters to be the core of an otherwise purposeless exercise. Designing an exercise with one or a few concrete aims allows instructors to maintain a clear, consistent exercise narrative.

Determine the Format

With the exercise's purpose defined, the instructor should then determine which format is best suited to facilitate learning: game, role play, or simulation.[6] Games tend to have a structured set of rules as well as outcomes that may be measured or compared, while role plays and simulations[7] typically are more firmly centered on a modeled reality that allows participants to act in a realistic setting (Ebner and Efron 2005). It is important to note that there is often an overlap between role plays and simulations, as simulations generally incorporate all the same elements that comprise a role play (see Susskind and Corburn 1999). Generally, simulations are more complex role plays that include multi-stage exercises (more than one negotiating round) and comprehensive materials including general instructions, confidential instructions, and a debrief plan (Susskind and Corburn 1999).

Games. In their purest sense, games are simple exercises with a set of rules that allow for a discrete number of outcomes (Susskind and Corburn 1999). This model is normally situated outside of the scope of simulated reality and focuses on a specific negotiating task, for example, "winning" (Buckner 1999) in distributive bargaining. Games typically are context-less activities that focus on the teaching or reinforcing of a particular skill. One example is the "The Two Dollar Game" developed by Mary Rowe at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.[8] This is a simple three-round, one-on-one game in which several pairs of participants are asked to divide two dollars between the two of them. Participants then learn that they are asked to do this simple task again with a different partner and then a third time with their original partner. This game was designed to introduce novice negotiators to distributive bargaining and concepts such as "bargaining range," "reservation point," and "best alternative to a negotiated agreement" or "BATNA." Games tend to be efficient, with minimal preparation required, and can be effective for illustrating specific concepts, problems, or dynamics. However, they can limit negotiator creativity by prescribing a fixed set of options that minimize opportunities to invent mutual gain. Games do not facilitate the development of more complex negotiation skills by advanced students and professionals.

Role Plays and Simulations. Experiential learning theory posits that ideas are not fixed and that learning is a process continuously shaped by experience (Kolb 1984). Utilizing role plays and simulations in instruction can help participants learn negotiation skills more naturally (or experientially) in a particular context. As immersive exercises, role plays and simulations have been shown to enhance substantive knowledge, as well as strengthen critical and analytical thinking skills (Shellman and Turan 2006). Furthermore, problem-based learning, a method in which learning occurs in a context, has been shown to be critical in the transfer of lessons beyond the classroom setting (Marra et al. 2014). Some research indicates that learning as an experiential or problem-based approach alone is not enough and requires some additional components such as observational or analogous learning (Nadler, Thompson, and Van Boven 2003).

When tailoring role plays and simulations, designers must determine the degree of contextual realism that suits their purpose. Daniel Druckman and Noam Ebner use the example of negotiating lawyers to highlight the tension between creating a realistic scenario and a scenario that focuses on the teaching objective (2013). For example, legal education may put participants in the roles of negotiating lawyers who swoop in at the final minute to close the deal. However, this is not realistic as lawyers consult extensively with clients before finalizing any agreement. Druckman and Ebner suggest that a multi-stage exercise (role play or simulation) would be a more suitable format to authentically reflect the realities of legal negotiations. We agree with this claim if an authentic reflection of legal negotiations is indeed the purpose of the exercise.

Role plays typically involve participants assuming the characteristics and interests of concrete actors and are suitable for participants of all levels. They can give participants a more contextual understanding of a scenario as well as insights into actors' individual interests, strengths, and situational restraints (Susskind and Corburn 1999). Role plays can also be used to help participants understand their own negotiation behavior and learn effective negotiation practices (Poitras, Stimec, and Hill 2013). When compared with other conventional instruction techniques such as lectures, role plays have been shown to lead to greater long-term retention of negotiation concepts (Druckman and Ebner 2013).

While role plays are a staple of negotiation instruction, they also have their fair share of critics. Druckman and Ebner (2013) have noted that research does not strongly indicate that role plays are a more effective method than other conventional learning techniques in terms of facilitating concept learning (Druckman and Ebner 2013; Poitras, Stimec, and Hill 2013). Research on role plays also demonstrates mixed results when considering variables including the internal structure of exercise design, administrative variables, and the nature of participants as factors that shape the exercise's effectiveness (Bredemeier and Greenblat 1981; Nadler, Thompson, and Van Boven 2003).

Simulations, the most sophisticated of the realistic exercises, often model complex processes. They are distinguished from role plays by their complexity (such as the number of stages and parties) and by their incorporation of three elements: a more detailed scenario background, confidential instructions for each role, and a more comprehensive teaching/debrief component (Susskind and Corburn 1999). The debrief (discussed below) is critical in solidifying the negotiation lessons. Simulations provide participants with a safe space to test their skills and experiment with learned techniques in a more realistic environment. They can have a fixed number of diverse agreements, open-ended agreements, or even no agreement at all.

"Harborco" is a simulation designed by Susskind and Corburn (1999) that they have described as multiparty, multi-issue, and scorable. The scenario is centered around Harborco, an industrial consortium, and its negotiations for the development of a deep-water port. Participants in this simulation must decide whether to grant Harborco a license to develop the port and, if so, under what conditions. Participants take on the roles of union members, company spokespersons, and others. Each role receives a set of confidential instructions, which gives unique perspectives on an actor's interests, motivations, and views of the Harborco deal. The parties negotiate over five issues, which could result in any of the fifty-five possible agreements or no agreement at all. At the conclusion of the exercise, the experience is debriefed with lessons in understanding one's BATNA, finding opportunities to create value in competitive environments, and the importance of creating "winning" or "blocking" coalitions.

Since simulations are generally longer, involve more participants, and consider a broader set of interests than role plays, these models can be particularly helpful for training participants on advanced topics including the sequencing of negotiation moves, using internal and formal negotiations to one's advantage, and building interest-based coalitions.

The Limitations of Reality-Based Exercises. Negotiation scholars debate the ideal degree of authenticity within role plays and simulations. Realistic exercises can generally be divided into "realistic familiar contexts" and "realistic unfamiliar contexts" (Crampton and Manwaring

2014). It is useful to consider this distinction in planning the design of a negotiation exercise.

Realistic familiar contexts are exercise environments created to mirror the participants' own reality, placing participants in negotiating situations that they have had previously encountered or are likely to encounter in their line of work or daily routine. A realistic familiar contextual exercise, for example, could be a scenario based on real-life labor negotiations, designed for participants who plan to participate in the negotiations on which the simulation is modeled. Realistic familiar exercises encourage participants to put learned negotiating skills into practical use (Crampton and Manwaring 2014).

Conversely, these same familiar exercise environments can have adverse effects. When exercises too closely mirror participants' real-life circumstances, individuals sometimes shift their focus away from the overall scenario and onto details of the exercise that are inconsistent with their own experience, thus diminishing their comprehension of the lessons (Susskind and Corburn 1999). Additionally, the realistic familiar context may inhibit participants from experimenting with unfamiliar approaches. Due to the realism of these environments, participants may fear embarrassment before their peers, or fear that they may reveal elements of their negotiation strategy that will be used to their detriment in future negotiations with these same peers (Crampton and Manwaring 2014).

Realistic unfamiliar contextual exercises, the more common of the two, are set in a realistic environment—such as a high-profile international negotiation—that participants understand, but in which participants do not normally operate (Crampton and Manwaring 2014). Designing exercises to simulate actual negotiations gives students enough contextual reality to be able to transfer lessons, but also avoids the too familiar stimuli mentioned by Susskind and Corburn (1999) that may disrupt the learning experience. Negotiation exercises that mimic real negotiations can provide students with the necessary factual background and stakeholder information they need not only to practice certain negotiation skills, but also to understand the negotiation's context—historical, political, ethnic, and otherwise. The realistic unfamiliar context may also be bolstered by the use of actual background materials including agreements, contracts, and media reports (Ebner and Efron 2005; Crampton and Manwaring 2014).

Realistic unfamiliar contextual exercises also have limitations. One potential problem with basing exercises on actual events is that participants' knowledge of the outcome of real-world negotiations may influence them to act in ways that ensure the historical results (Crampton and Manwaring 2014).

Maintain Focus

Once the purpose and format are determined, it is necessary to maintain the focus throughout exercise development. We define "focus" as a clear attention to the exercise's goals in all parts of the process including the exercise design and delivery.

To highlight the role of focus, we take the example of a simulation designed with the purpose of training advanced students in "coalition building"; the scenario in this example will center on the negotiation of a bilateral arms control treaty. With the exercise purpose and format in mind, the designer must maintain the same level of realism and sophistication throughout both exercise design and delivery. For example, in simulation writing, it is important to write a factual and easy-to-read scenario that will familiarize participants with the context of the exercise without inundating them with extraneous details or excessive, unactionable information. With this scenario background set, participants receive confidential instructions that provide coherent narratives of their personal backgrounds within the scenario and overviews of their negotiation interests, all written with the degree of attention that is required to preserve the exercise's authenticity. Unless the exercise's purpose and teaching objectives involve the role of confusion and ambiguity in negotiations, all participants should be able to understand their interests, goals, and BATNAs from a careful review of their materials.

Maintaining focus also means ensuring consistency in exercise administration. For example, if the arms control scenario's purpose is to train participants in coalition building, then the physical exercise space must be conducive to this end. In this example, the designer could consider a scenario in which participants are divided into distinct negotiating parties. To maintain the realism of these dynamics, the designer should then consider designating spaces (e.g., classrooms or offices) for the parties to collaborate on sensitive issues and strategize among themselves, away from the negotiating table.

Furthermore, to maintain a clear exercise focus, the designer should consider who will deliver the exercise and how they will do so. With limited resources, it may be difficult for a single instructor to maintain the exercise's realism and coordinate an advanced simulation's dynamic elements. In this case, it is important that the designer simplify the exercise or advise the instructor to draw on support staff or outside assistance. The more the designer complicates the administration of an exercise—for example, by staggering agreement submission deadlines or incorporating other "moving pieces" of which the teaching team must keep track—the more likely it is that the case will become unmanageable or that future teaching teams may make logistical errors that negatively influence the learning experience of the exercise participants.

Finally, for simulations, we advise that designers create a package of materials that includes—at a minimum—a schedule of in-scenario events (including formal meetings and agreement submission deadlines), a list of all negotiators, a results sheet template, scenario background information, and confidential instructions for the separate roles, to allow for an easy-to-operate exercise. These materials can empower participants to move more independently through the scenario and allow instructors to assume the role of observer rather than exercise administrator.[9]

Test the Function

We define "function" as the process of ensuring that a negotiation exercise operates as intended in relation to its learning objectives and practical administration.

The designer who respects this principle will follow a "test it and change it" rule. Before running the exercise in the envisioned environment, it is important to conduct at least one "beta test." A beta test is a full-scale iteration of the exercise with participants from the target audience that the instructor observes and records, and ideally, from which he or she receives constructive participant feedback. To maximize testing feedback, it is best to recruit enough participants to run the same exercise simultaneously in groups, which allows the instructor to observe negotiation patterns that emerge independently from the tactics that individuals employ. The instructor should make sure to build a structured feedback mechanism into the test to receive actionable information. We find surveys to be an effective medium as they allow the instructor to receive targeted feedback. Common questions we employ include the following: Were the rules of the exercise clear? Were your negotiation objectives clear? Was the exercise too long, too short, or just right? Was it difficult to accomplish your objectives? Was your role relevant to the exercise? What would you change, clarify, or remove from the exercise? In our surveys, we have found it helpful to employ a mix of multiple-choice and long-answer questions. In addition, we recommend allowing participants to include at the end of the survey any other relevant feedback they have to offer.

After this test, the instructor will know more about which exercise components work as planned, what components should be added, and which components might need to be adjusted or eliminated. This process also can allow instructors to close loopholes in the scenario or, alternatively, to liberate some scenario constraints to allow negotiators room to experiment with creative solutions, if feedback shows that the rules were perceived to be too rigid or counterintuitive. If, for example, the exercise's purpose was to teach participants about creating value in negotiations, yet several beta-testers reported that they felt constrained in their options, it is critical that the instructor return to the drawing board even at this late stage of the design process. In any case, it is crucial to gather as much feedback from beta-testers as possible to analyze whether a new exercise serves its intended purpose. At this point, the instructor will then have to make revisions, and, if needed, conduct another round of testing before releasing the exercise.

Plan for a Debrief

> Without feedback the exercise is empty; a simple isolated behavior from which little can be learned. (Hunsaker, Whitney, and Hunsaker 1983: 394)

We define "debrief" as a process that purposefully explores the participants' experiences in the exercise to elicit learning, typically focused on the intended learning outcomes (or "purpose"). It is important that designers understand how the design influences participants' experiences and contributes to the internalization of the exercise's purpose. In this way, designers may rely on the exercise purpose as a guide to plan the debrief. Designing a debrief plan can help solidify the lessons learned in a manageable, yet effective way.

Although research does not uniformly conclude that debriefing leads to enhanced learning (Chartier 1972; Livingston 1972; Bredemeier and Greenblat 1981), this article follows the general notion that debriefing a negotiation exercise is a positive tool. The primary function of a postexercise debrief is to integrate student experiences with concepts and applications that are transferable to settings beyond the classroom (Dennehy, Sims, and Collins 1998). This process is essential to maximize student learning and is the point at which the exercise concepts can be internalized and translated into generalizations and symbolic meaning (Bredemeier and Greenblat 1981). Regardless of the exercise type, many conclude that debriefs that focus on individual and group reflection and the delivery of clear lessons are necessary components for student learning (Susskind and Corburn 1999). Effective debriefs may be conducted in the classroom with the aim of retrieving common dynamics and insights through reflection (Nelken, McAdoo, and Manwaring 2009) with the instructor as a facilitator of parts or the whole of this process (Fuller 2012).

While there is no consensus on the most effective debrief style (and we do not advocate any style or styles over others), we encourage exercise designers to incorporate a mode of feedback and reflection that allows participants to consider the exercise's purpose in relation to their experience. We outline below the individual reflection, small group feedback discussion, and plenary debrief as three basic methods of debrief. Debrief style notwithstanding, the instructor should ensure that the purpose of the exercise is the core of the debrief. Although negotiation outcomes can vary widely, the lesson to be learned should be driven by the purpose. For example, if the purpose of an exercise is to allow participants to practice value creation techniques, then the debrief should allow participants to reflect on this point regardless of whether value creation techniques were effectively used. Instructors can facilitate the debrief by providing guiding questions for individual reflection or a group discussion, or through a formal instructor-led presentation.

Individual Reflection. Self-reflection should be purposeful and conducted with the goal of transferring knowledge outside of the exercise setting (National Research Council 1999). By instructing students to ask themselves questions such as: "What did I do well during the negotiations?" "Did I meet all of my objectives?" "What were my biggest obstacles?",[10] instructors allow participants an opportunity to identify both their strengths and their opportunities for growth. Providing participants time to consider these questions encourages them to use their knowledge of negotiation to analyze what happened and to evaluate their own performance. Effective individual reflection can take place both in and away from the classroom. While the list of guided questions set forth above is appropriate for shorter individual reflections, for deeper analysis, the instructor should consider assigning a long-form essay that allows participants to more thoroughly dissect the exercise.

Small Group Feedback Discussion. The small group debrief is a time for participants to provide constructive feedback on one another's performance. The structure of this debrief can vary. If the exercise divides participants into teams, then a small group debrief between those on the same team may be more suitable to receive constructive feedback. Additionally, a small-group debrief among negotiation counterparts is an opportunity to get valuable feedback on many issues, including how certain comments were interpreted, what opportunities were missed, and where they felt optimistic or frustrated. Instructors could consider allowing participants to form small groups based on negotiating objectives or even allow for a full group debrief, if there is no natural division between participants. Studies show that self- and peer assessment are effective feedback tools to facilitate learning outcomes (Mason 2002). While the instructor will be unlikely to observe all participants in depth, especially in the case of large groups of learners, the small group debrief allows participants the opportunity to receive detailed feedback from another's perspective.

Instructors may have reservations about leaving participants to debrief unsupervised, fearing that students may resort to "he-said, she-said" conversations (Druckman and Ebner 2013). It is important to separate participants from the scenario (perhaps by switching locations or allowing for a break after the exercise), so participants do not resort to "reliving the scenario" by working out their anger and frustration on each other (Ebner and Efron 2005). Additionally, by giving participants debrief questions that focus on the individual execution of negotiation skills rather than on in-scenario events, instructors are better able to avoid confrontational, unconstructive conversation. Questions such as "What did you observe me doing well?" "What specific negotiation strategies did you see me use, if any?" and "How did my negotiation behavior influence you and/or shape the final outcome of the exercise?" allow participants to focus on the negotiation process rather than on the scenario details. [11]However, other questions can be considered if understanding the scenario content is integral to the exercise's purpose. For example, the exercise "Nagorno-Karabakh: A Convening of Community Leaders"[12] introduces participants to the role of sacred issues and conflicting historical narratives. In this instance, debrief questions should, of course, focus on relevant parts of the scenario to promote meaningful conversation.

Plenary Debrief. Plenary debriefs should be carefully structured to extract the intended lessons to be conveyed in an organized way by the instructor (Susskind and Corburn 1999). This debrief is an instructor-led presentation aimed at tying the negotiation lessons (from the exercise "purpose") together with the exercise experience. To prepare a plenary debrief, the instructor should consider a general plan to incorporate the purpose into the presentation. Additionally, once the exercise has concluded, the instructor should consider how to tie the negotiation outcomes back to the purpose. If participants negotiated an outcome that demonstrates that they fulfilled the purpose, then this can be highlighted in the plenary debrief. However, if participants did not fulfill the purpose (for example, if participants were expected to use value creation techniques yet fell into redistributive bargaining) then the instructor can pivot the debrief into a discussion of the factors that deterred value creation strategies.

One way to carry out a plenary debrief effectively is to compare the results of the exercise with that of another iteration (either a simultaneous iteration or one from a previous occasion, if possible). In this way, the instructor can show participants how outcomes differed and encourage students to consider the factors that led to their specific outcome. By incorporating tangible observations such as exercise outcomes with instructor notes about process and performance, students will be better able to understand the exercise mechanics and concepts that contributed to their experience. Debriefing in this way will allow students to understand *why* a deal may have been sustained in one group but fallen apart in another, or, in scorable situations, *how* their individual performance compared with others and what factors may have contributed to the outcome. Overall, the instructor is instrumental in the plenary debrief to ensure that participants come away from the exercise with a full understanding of the intended lessons.

Conclusion

Writing effective negotiation exercises can be a creative and personally rewarding endeavor for instructors, students, and designers. Our five-step method of exercise design principles distills the development process to a set of core actionable steps: (1) define the purpose, (2) determine the format, (3) maintain focus, (4) test the function, and (5) plan for a debrief. Approaching negotiation exercise writing with these principles in mind will not only simplify the design process but can also lead to the development of scenarios and lessons tailored to specific audiences to maximize participant learning.

NOTES

1. The most prominent example is the Program on Negotiation's Teaching Negotiation Resource Center (TNRC) at pon.harvard.edu/store. Other sources include the Harvard Kennedy School Case Program (hks.harvard.edu/more/about/leadership-administration/academic-deans-office/slate/case-program), the Negotiation Task Force's Case Exercise Incubator (daviscenter.fas.harvard.edu/ntf/negotiation-case-exercises), the Kellogg Case Collection (kellogg.northwestern.edu/kellogg-case-publishing/about.aspx), Negotiation & Team Resources (negotiationandteamresources.com), and CustomNegotiations.org.

2. While negotiation exercises have several benefits for both individuals and groups, there is a consensus that these tools are most effective when paired with other interactive activities and readings (McAdoo and Manwaring 2009; Druckman and Ebner 2013). Additionally, while our method is widely applicable to a variety of audiences and skill levels, it is most effective for relatively static exercise designs. For example, the full scope of Systemic Multiconstituency Exercise (SMCE) design falls outside the purview of this method. Unlike many exercises that range from simple to multiparty, multi-issue exercises, SMCEs are more immersive and confront participants with a dynamic exercise architecture, often involving moving parts resulting from "trigger" events that emerge as a result of specific negotiating moves (Bell and Mandell 2018). Moreover, our method for negotiation exercise design does not encompass the particular needs of "mega-simulations," complex exercises involving complicated issues and challenging conditions undertaken by three or more parties of participants (Weiss 2008). Mega-simulations are created to develop greater sophistication of negotiating capacity in participants and to help participants gain a deep understanding of advanced concepts by recreating key features of complex negotiations (Weiss 2008). These exercises often require extensive participant preparation, as well as advanced administration, which our five-step method may not effectively cover.

3. One example is the Workable Peace curriculum, designed to teach secondary school students about historical intergroup conflicts. Available from cbi.org/book/workable-peace-collection.

4. One example is the "The Conflict in Eastern Ukraine" exercise, available from daviscenter.fas.harvard.edu/ntf/negotiation-case-exercises.

5. One example is the "Sally Soprano" exercise, available from pon.harvard.edu/shop/sally-soprano-i/.

6. The medium of the exercise (face-to-face or online) does not preclude the use of games, role plays, or simulations, though they should be considered during this phase of the design process.

7. Some authors interchange the terms "role play" and "simulation." We employ Susskind and Corburn's (1999) definitions to distinguish the two: a "role play" describes interactive activities that assign characteristics to each participant that may impose restraints, pressures, or influences on participants similar to those in real life; and a "simulation," which, generally, is a more complex role play, comprises at least three parts—background scenario, confidential instructions for each role, and a debriefing component.

8. The Two Dollar Game is available from ocw.mit.edu/courses/sloan-school-of-management/15-667-negotiation-and-conflict-management-spring-2001/lecture-notes/gen_instr.pdf.

9. Examples of these materials can be found in the Negotiation Task Force's Case Exercise Incubator (daviscenter.fas.harvard.edu/ntf/negotiation-case-exercises). Each exercise contains a customized set of materials including general instructions, confidential instructions, and a meeting schedule (tailored with room numbers and timings).

10. The American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) has published a suggested structure and list of questions for exercise debriefing to encourage self-reflection (1996).

11. Effective question-guided debrief discussions are a mainstay of the Harvard Kennedy School's "Advanced Workshop in Multiparty Negotiation and Conflict Resolution."

12. This exercise can be found in the Negotiation Task Force's Case Exercise Incubator (daviscenter.fas.harvard.edu/ntf/negotiation-case-exercises).

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