Relations industrielles
Industrial Relations

Classroom Collective Bargaining Simulation : How Close to the Real Thing
Les jeux dans l'apprentissage de la négociation collective

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Volume 30, numéro 1, 1975

URI : https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/028586ar
DOI : https://doi.org/10.7202/028586ar

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Éditeur(s)

Département des relations industrielles de l'Université Laval

ISSN

0034-379X (imprimé)
1703-8138 (numérique)

Découvrir la revue

Citer cet article

Tracy, L. & Peterson, R. B. (1975). Classroom Collective Bargaining Simulation : How Close to the Real Thing. *Relations industrielles / Industrial Relations*, *30*(1), 98–112. https://doi.org/10.7202/028586ar

Résumé de l'article

Les jeux et les simulations sont devenus un moyen populaire d'enseignement au cours de la dernière décennie. Leur utilisation est fort bien appropriée à un processus comme celui des négociations collectives. Plusieurs*sketches* de négociations sont disponibles et en usage dans plusieurs campus universitaires à l'heure actuelle. Le présent article décrit l'une de ces saynètes telle qu'on la joue à l'université de Washington.

Malgré leur popularité et leur valeur apparente au premier coup d'oeil, les jeux et les simulations n'ont été rarement soumis à une véritable épreuve quant à leur caractère réaliste. L'étude des différents aspects de la négociation collective en tant que le comportement des parties est en jeu fournit une occasion de vérifier si les perceptions des négociations simulées se comparent aux perceptions des véritables négociations tant du côté des salariés que du côté des employeurs.

On a découvert qu'il n'y avait pas de différence significative entre les principales réparties des aspirants négociateurs et celles des négociateurs syndicaux, surtout si ces derniers sont inexpérimentés. Les différences entre les étudiants et les négociateurs vraiment expérimentés, notamment les négociateurs patronaux, variaient surtout selon leur degré d'expérience et de maturité et en ce que les négociations « jouées » comportent une responsabilité moindre et n'offrent pas d'occasion d'avancement. Dans l'ensemble, on est arrivé à la conclusion que les négociations simulées se rapprochaient pas mal des négociations réelles. En conclusion, l'article suggère quelques moyens de les rendre encore plus réalistes.

Classroom Collective Bargaining Simulation How Close to the Real Thing

Lane Tracy
and
Richard B. Peterson

The use of games and simulations as means of instruction is particularly appropriate to a behavioral process such as collective bargaining. The author describes, analyses and evaluates one which is used at the University of Washington.

Introduction

During the past decade there has been increasing use of simulation techniques in college and university classrooms. The simulations used in business schools have ranged from computer modeling of an investment decision to playing the Prisoner's Dilemma.

Most of the simulations have been developed on the assumption that (1) the concepts are better understood through actual experience with them, and (2) student motivation is enhanced by involvement in the exercice (when compared to the traditional lecture method of imparting information). Furthermore, it has been argued that one can only really « understand » the concept or idea by gaining a « gut level » reaction to it. This argument would seem particularly relevant to the study of interpersonal and intergroup processes, such as collective bargaining.

Attainment of the twin objectives of increased student motivation and better understanding of concepts can best be net if the simulation provides a microcosm of the real world. Collective bargaining simulations have the potential of meeting both of those objectives. First, the simulation exposes the student to the realities and emotions of the bargaining process. Secondly, to the degree that the simulation really captures the dynamics of bargaining behavior, the simulation offers specific skills which are usable in the job market.

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A number of business schools throughout the United States and Canada use collective bargaining simulations as a means of teaching their students about labor negotiations. One of the earliest such games was The Case of Bruns and Bruce, developed by BNA president John D. Stewart in 1959. Its use as a training tool was reported by French (1961), who later described the use of collective bargaining simulation at the University of Washington (1962). The negotiating games currently in use range from relatively short exercises like the Exercise Negotiations (Bass, et al.), IRC's Collective Bargaining Game, Contract Negotiations (Zif & Otlewski, 1969), Collective Bargaining (Rausch, 1968) and Settle or Strike (Abt Associates, 1967) to more complex exercises like Tempco Metal Products (Peterson & Kienest, 1973), Mock Negotiation Problem (Sloane & Witney, 1972) and Cashford Container Corporation (Kuechle, 1969). The more complex exercises entail longer time periods and require considerable research preparatory to the actual bargaining sessions.

Do collective bargaining games do a good job of simulating the real thing? Our own experience at the University of Washington suggests that mock negotiations not only have value for learning about bargaining, but also allow the student considerable insight into interpersonal, intra-group and intergroup behavior.

The intent of this paper is to report upon a test of the efficacy of a complex collective bargaining game as a simulator of actual labor-management negotiations. However, before doing so, it is advisable to briefly summarize the major features of the bargaining game as it was used at the time of the study. The remaining sections of the paper will present the research design, results, and summary and conclusions.

The Student Bargaining Game

At the University of Washington each year approximately 80-100 students enroll in a course in labor relations in which they are exposed to the arbitration and collective bargaining processes — primarily through active participation in arbitration and bargaining simulations.

Since the sections of the course are limited to 16-20 students, the course is taught by two different professors. Each instructor uses slightly different procedures for the bargaining game. However, the general thrust in all sections is as described below.

The students are assigned to bargaining teams very early in the quarter. Since there are two concurrent bargaining games per class, the students are divided into four teams of 4-5 members. The instructor provides : (1) a history of the collective bargaining relationship of the parties (which are in the private sector), (2) a copy of the collective bargaining agreement, (3) a listing of major issues confronting the management and union, and (4) material helpful to the teams in figuring the costs of their demands, etc.

During the next 3-4 weeks the bargaining teams are responsible for independently determining how their contract compares with ongoing settlements regarding wages, benefits, hours and working conditions. The results of this research lead each management or union team to make certain demands of the other party.

Approximately the 7th week of the term the two parties exchange their sets of public demands. At the same time each team presents a separate set of private demands and/or expectations to the instructor based upon their real needs or expectations. The public demands are limited to no more than 15 items while the private demands are held to 8 items. However, since wages and fringe benefits represent one item, there is considerable flexibility over the issues for negotiations. The limits are imposed primarily to help the students in terms of manageability of vast amounts of information. The teams are not confined to any given bargaining issues.

During the next three weeks the teams bargain with each other using various strategies and tactics discussed in the readings and lectures. The teams can use caucuses, walk-outs, etc., as a means of placing more pressure of their opponents or defensively responding to pressures from the other team. Since the game is a learning exercise, all of the students are encouraged to take active speaking roles in the bargaining sessions. This represents a departure from the general practice in real-world negotiations, where the chief negotiator usually plays the dominant role.

Each bargaining game allows for a maximum of 10-12 hours of direct negotiations prior to the contract deadline, which falls just before the end of the quarter. There are options of calling for a mediator (another instructor) or scheduling extra sessions prior to the termination date. By the termination date of the present contract there is either a strike or settlement. The parties then submit documentation concerning the specific items included in the settlement or the reasons for the strike.

Approximately one-half of the course grade depends upon the effectiveness of the individual and his-her team in the bargaining simulation. A certain degree of reality is built into the game by grading the exercise. However, it is doubtful that the use of grades can equate with the pressures on real labor and management negotiators to « produce » at the bargaining table. In addition, there is no way that we can build constituent pressure into the simulation, since there is no union membership or top management to pressure or constrain their respective bargaining parties.

Once the bargaining game commences, there is no further opportunity for the teams to change their private demands and expectations. The instructors do not give any input to individuals or teams during the bargaining process. However, at the end of the game, the instructor provides feedback to the entire class. The feedback includes the final settlement or reasons for the strike as well as analysis of specific tactics and behaviors employed by members of each bargining team. It is at this time that the students can raise questions concerning the strategies and tactics utilized by their opponents. Helpful insights on one's own behavior emerge from the discussion.

This bargaining game captures much of the dynamics of real negotiations, in spite of the lack of constituents or of the necessity to live with the resulting contract. The similarity to real collective bargaining was considered sufficient to use student bargainers to pretest a questionnaire for a study of the behavioral dynamics of collective bargaining. This led us to administer the questionnaire to later student bargaining groups in order to compare their reactions with those of real negotiators. The details of the study design are presented in the following section.

Study Design

The above-mentioned questionnaire was designed for a study of the effects of noneconomic behavioral variables on a negotiator's inclination toward settlement on a contract and on his feelings of satisfaction with the outcome. Consequently, the questionnaire measured the negotiator's perceptions of such variables as : the amount of praise or criticism received from teammates or members of the other team, feelings of success, the extent of responsibilities and authority, opportunities for growth and advancement, friendliness with teammates, the pattern of relationships between the teams, and the equitability of the contract.

Measurement of these variables was by means of questions such as :

How much personal praise did you receive
from your teammates ruding the negotiations ?
none at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 very much

There were at least two, and in some cases four, questions measuring each variable. The responses to these questions were summed together to form variables scores. The variable scores were then analyzed primarily by means of t-tests and a matrix of Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients.

Since the questionnaire measured attitudes and perceptions of negotiators immediately after settlement on the contract, and since these attitudes and perceptions were expected to change with time, it was not considered possible to establish the test-retest reliability of the questionnaire. No two questions were designed to measure exactly the same thing, but Kendall's *tau* correlations between questions designed to measure different aspects of a particular variable ranged from .03 to .60, with the majority tying in the .30 eo .50 range.

Data were gathered from real negotiators who had just completed negotiations on a contract. The negotiators were asked to respond to the questionnaire with reference to these recently completed negotiations. Both chief negotiators and other team members were asked to respond.

Responses were obtained from 40 union negotiators and 32 management negotiators concerning 18 different contracts. Responses were obtained from the management side of all 18 contracts, and from the union side of 15 of them. The contracts were in such industries as manufacturing, public transportation, communications, education, service, and retailing.

The main hypotheses of the study were that each of the measured noneconomic variables was related to (1) the negotiator's personal inclination toward settling for the new contract that was finally agreed upon, and (2) his satisfaction with that contract. With respect to the first hypothesis, it was found for all negotiators that their personal inclination toward settlement was positively related to praise and credit from both sides, agreement with the team's policies and procedures, an overall feeling of success in the bargaining, a feeling that their role in the bar-

gaining was suitable and challenging, a cooperative pattern of relationships between the parties, and the judgment that the new contract was equitable. All of these relationships were found by one-tailed t-test to be significant at least at the .05 level, and the last four were significant at the .01 level. The findings for the second hypothesis were similar, except that the relationship to the feeling that the role was suitable and challanging was nonsignificant.

It was found, however, that there were considerable differences between union and management negotiators. These differences can be seen in Table 1.

The findings of this study of union and management negotiators are reported more fully elsewhere (Tracy, 1974). For purposes of this paper, we are more interester in comparing the findings for these real negotiators with the responses from students who have completed a mock negotiation.

Concurrent with the study of real negotiators, the same questionnaire was given to 28 students in two sections of the labor relations course at the University of Washington. These students had just completed one of three different negotiations under two different instructors. The relationships of their responses to the noneconomic variables with their inclination toward settlement are shown in Table 1, beside the relationships for real union and management negotiators.

It can be seen from this table that the reactions of the student negotiators differed considerably from those of their real counterparts, often being in the opposite direction. The student's reactions also seem to be stronger than those of the real negotiators. This might in part be attributable to the smaller sample of negotiations about which the student were responding. The newness of the negotiation might also tend to make student reactions sharper. The variable of experience needs to be added to the analysis.

The differences in correlations are suggestive, but a better way to test the similarities and differences of the real and student negotiators is to look at their responses directly. For that purpose we made use of multivariate analysis of variance and discriminant analysis. There classification variables were used : student-real, labor-management, and experienced-inexperienced. Although our basic interest was in the differences between real and student negotiators, the other two classification

TABLE 1

Pearson Product-Moment Correlations of Noneconomic Variables in Bargaining with Inclination toward Settlement on the Contract, for Union and Management Real Negotiators and Student Mock Negotiators.

	Personal inclination toward settling for new contract			
	Real Negotiators		*Student Negotiators*	
Noneconomic Variables	*Union (n=40)*	*Mgt. (n=32)*	*Union (n=12)*	*Mgt. (n=16)*
Praise and credit :				
from own team	.183	*.335*	.591	.114
from other team	.034	.175	.333	—.188
Criticism :				
from own team	—.080	.202	—*.504*	—.108
from other team	—.227	.026	—.329	—.093
Perceived success :				
in distributive bargaining	.240	.039	.224	*.434*
in integrative bargaining	.239	.196	.045	—.143
in attitudinal structuring	.181	*.404*	.046	.156
in intraorganizational bargaining	.120	*.309*	.388	—.451
Responsibility and authority	.088	.019	*.695*	—.494
Suitable and challenging role	*.312*	.124	*.574*	—.426
Personal growth	—.138	.041	—.081	—.516
Possibility of advancement	.015	—.035	.243	.059
Team policies and procedures	.021	*.489*	.417	.211
Relationships with teammates	.147	*.300*	—.072	.418
Pattern of relationships between teams :				
cooperative action tendencies	.179	.028	.299	*.437*
legitimacy of opposition	.190	.031	—.198	—.027
trust & respect	*.349*	*.331*	—.212	.407
friendliness	.152	*.325*	.263	.090
Working conditions	.144	.160	—.270	.136
Perceived equitability of contract	*.284*	*.548*	—.199	.318
Work effort	.041	.062	.268	—.356
Psychic stress	—.029	.093	—.178	—.234

NOTE : In italic correlations are significant at the .05 level, one-tailed test.

variables were expected to interect with the student-real variable, as indicated in the following hypotheses.

Hypotheses

The students who participated in the mock negotiations were mostly business majors. Regardless of which side of the negotiations they were supposed to be representing, their basic values and attitudes would be expected to match those of management representatives more closely than those of union leaders. For this reason, our first hypothesis was that :

> The overall pattern of responses to the noneconomic variables for the student management negotiators would be similar to the pattern for real management negotiators, but the pattern of responses for student labor negotiators would be different from the pattern for real union negotiators.

The second hypothesis was concerned with negotiating experience. For most of the students this was their first experience with labor contract negotiations. It could be presumed that their reactions would be more like those of real negotiators who were negotiating for the first time than like experienced negotiator. [1] Thus, the second hypothesis was that :

> The overall pattern of responses to the noneconomic variables for the inexperienced student negotiators would be similar to the pattern for real negotiators who are bargaining for the first time, but different from the pattern for experienced real negotiators.

Hypothesis tests

These hypotheses were tested by means of multivariate analysis of variance, using F-ratio tests. The twenty-two variables shown in Table 1 were the variates used in the multivariate analysis of variance and in the discriminant analysis which followed.

There were eight groups or cells in the analysis. The number of cases in each cell is shown below : [2]

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[1] Negotiators who had previously bargained at least one contract were considered « experienced. »

[2] The number of cases used in this analysis is somewhat smaller than the number used in the correlational analysis, because all cases with missing data had to be discarded.

		inexperienced	experienced	total
union negotiators :	real	14	20	34
	student	10	2	12
management negotiators :	real	2	25	27
	student	11	2	13

The small size of three of the cells was not ideal, but the remarkable thing is that we had any experienced student negotiators at all.

TABLE 2

Multivariate F-rariosfor the clasification student-real, labor-management, and experienced-inexperienced

Contract	*(D.F. = 22/57) F-ratio*	*chance occurrence Probability of*
1. Student-real	2.14	.012
2. Labor-management	1.86	.032
3. Experienced-inexperienced	2.92	.001
4. Interaction of 1 and 2	2.25	.008
5. interaction of 1 and 3	0.69	.827
6. Interaction of 2 and 3	1.08	.392
7. Interaction of 1, 2 and 3	0.79	.724

The results of the multivariate analysis of variance shown in Table 2 indicate a clearly significant difference between experienced and inexperienced negotiators, independent of other variables. This result tends to confirm our second hypothesis.

The student-real and Labor-management contracts are also significant at the .05 level, but there is a significant interaction between these two classification variables. Therefore, it is necessary to examine separately the contract between the following four groups : real labor, real management, student labor, and student management.

TABLE 3

Multivariate F-ratios for the contrasts between real labor, real management, student labor, and student management negotiators

Contrast	*F-ratio (D.F. = 22/61)*	*Probability of chance occurrence*
1. Real labor and real management	2.11	.02
2. Real labor and student labor	1.26	.25
3. Real labor and student management	1.90	.03
4. Real management and student labor	2.04	.02
5. Real management and student management	3.33	.001
6. Student labor and student management	2.05	.02

The results shown in Table 3 definitely refute our first hypothesis. Not only is there a significant difference between real management and student management negotiators, but also it is the most significant difference of all the contracts. Moreover, the only two groups which do *not* differ significantly are real labor and student labor negotiators. Apparently our premise that business students share the basic values and attitudes of management is incorrect. Instead, the students identify best with labor.

Discriminant analysis

When a significant difference has been found between the mean vectors of two groups, discriminant analysis may be employed to discover which variables are primarily responsible for the difference. We used this technique to identify the variables which significantly differentiated between real management and student management negotiators.

TABLE 4

Significant discriminating variables between real management and student management negotiators

Variables	*F-ratio*	*D.F.*
Trust & respect for opponents	20.17	1/38
Possibility of advancement	13.22	1/37
Personal growth	7.52	1/36
Responsibility and authority	4.23	1/35
Work effort	6.26	1/34

The five variables shown in Table 4 emerged as significant discriminators between the two groups. Examining the means of each of these five variables for both groups, we found the following :

1. Real management negotiators expressed considerably more trust and respect for their opponents than did student management negotiators. This may reflect a difference in maturity of the fact that, for the students, the opponents were peers and equally inexperienced.

2. Real management negotiators perceived a substantially greater possibility of advancement, but less personal growth resulting from the negotiations, than did student management negotiators. These differences seem reasonable, since student negotiations cannot lead directly to any advancement, but are designed to help students grow and learn. Also, most students were inexperienced while most management negotiators were experienced, and personal growth was by for the most significant discriminating variable between experienced and inexperienced negotiators.

3. Real management negotiators felt they had somewhat more responsibility and authority and that their negotiations required more time and effort. This would seem to reflect some unavoidable differences between real and mock negotiations. In the mock negotiations students were instructed to spread responsibility around so that all could learn. The greater effort perceived by real managers probably reflects the fact that the consequences of that effort were also real.

Altogether, five of the twenty-two behavioral variables were found to discriminate significantly between real and student management negotiators. The remaining 17 variables were substantially the same for real and student negotiators. These variables were : praise and credit from one's own team or the other team ; critiscism from one's own team or the other team ; perceived success in distributive bargaining, integrative bargaining, attitudinal structuring, and intraorganizational bargaining ; suitable and challenging role ; team policies and procedures ; relationships with teammates ; cooperative action tendencies, legitimacy, and friendliness of the opposition ; working conditions ; perceived equitability of the contract ; and psychic stress.

Summary and Conclusions

It appears in many respects a complex student mock negotiation does a good job of approximating the real experience. The mean responses of student labor negotiators to 22 behavioral variables in their negotiations were found not to be significantly different from the responses of real union negotiators.

Even where an overall significant difference was found, as between student and real management negotiators, the discriminating variables seemed to reflect the wouthfulness and inexperience of the students as much as the structure of the game. Indeed, prior experience in bargaining was found to be more significant than the student-real dichotomy in differences in responses to the behavioral variables of bargaining. It may also be differences in experience which partly account for the considerable differences between real and student negotiators in the relationships they showed between the behavioral variables and their personal inclination toward settling on the new contract.

However, we must acknowledge some shortcomings in the ability of mock negotiation to simulate the real thing. For instance, it is difficult to avoid the fact that the student are peers and equally inexperienced. It might help if the bargaining could be carried out between teams from two different sections of the course. This would make the sense of alienation between the teams more complete and natural.

Noncompeting teams from the same section might serve as a constituency for each other, having a final say on whether the contract is acceptable. We were not able in this study to test the effect of the lack of a constituent group, but conceptually this is a shortcoming of mock negotiations.

Another problem is the lack of trust between the two sides, which is common in first negotiations even in real labor relations. Students might be given more instruction concerning the importance of attitudinal structuring and the maintenance of a cooperative pattern of relationships. Also, the grading might be made to reflect this aspect of negotiations, as well as pure distributive bargaining. These changes would emphasize the ongoing nature of the relationship and reduce the purely competitive aspect of the game. Another possibility is to have a short bargaining exercise early in the course, preceding the more complex simulation.

Student seem to have more difficulty getting into the management role than the union role. Perhaps students on the management teams could profit from some special instructions concerning their role. They should understand some of the regular, ongoing concerns of a manager with such items as labor costs and restrictive work rules.

In spite of the lack of a constituency, or of a sense that the contract is to be a working document, a complex mock negotiation appears to simulate the behavioral aspects of collective bargaining quite well. Mock negotiations should serve to bridge the gap we found between experienced and inexperienced negotiators. This is encouraging news for the many schools that have been using mock negotiations as a training tool for potential future negotiators.

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Les jeux dans l'apprentissage de la négociation collective

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On a découvert qu'il n'y avait pas de différence significative entre les principales réparties des aspirants négociateurs et celles des négociateurs syndicaux, surtout si ces derniers sont inexpérimentés. Les différences entre les étudiants et les négociateurs vraiment expérimentés, notamment les négociateurs patronaux, variaient surtout selon leur degré d'expérience et de maturité et en ce que les négociations « jouées » comportent une responsabilité moindre et n'offrent pas d'occasion d'avancement. Dans l'ensemble, on est arrivé à la conclusion que les négociations simulées se rapprochaient pas mal des négociations réelles. En conclusion, l'article suggère quelques moyens de les rendre encore plus réalistes.

COMMENTAIRES

Le rapport Waisberg

Gérard HÉBERT *

La Commission Waisberg devait enquêter sur certaines pratiques présumément illégales dans les secteurs du plâtre, de la planche murale et des formes à béton de l'industrie de la construction, dans les régions de Toronto, Hamilton et Ottawa. Formée le 28 mars 1973, la Commission a remis son rapport en décembre 1974.

Le rapport présente d'abord une description détaillée des secteurs à l'étude, syndicats et entreprises, sans oublier les multiples interrelations d'intérêt qui existent entre plusieurs entreprises impliquées. Les chapitres suivants (2, 3 et 4) contiennent un exposé circonstancié, souvent par la transcription des témoignagegs et la reproduction des pièces, des principaux actes de violence et de fraude, intervenus entre 1968 et 1973 et qui avaient provoqué l'enquête : incendies, dommage à la propriété, attaques à la dynamite, assauts sur la personne, menaces, paiements illégaux, fixation des prix, etc. Il en ressort certaines descriptions fascinantes et quelques portraits hauts en couleur.

Dès le début du second chapitre, le Juge Waisberg déclare : « Ces événements ne se sont pas produits en réponse à de la provocation, ni dans le vide. Ils sont reliés, dans le temps et les lieux, à la concurrence entre employeurs et entre syndicats, et aux conflits entre employeurs et syndicats » (p. 32). Aussi le Juge consacre-t-il son dernier chapitre à divers aspects des relations patronales-syndicales : méthodes d'embauche, conflits de juridiction, fonds de bien-être, etc.

De tout cela, le Juge Waisberg tire 4 conclusions et 17 recommandations. D'abord les autorités judiciaires devront prendre les poursuites qui s'imposent suite aux révélations de l'enquête. De plus, il faudrait un contrôle plus sévère des armes et des explosifs. Sur le plan des relations

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