

# The Use of a Middle East Crisis Simulation in an International Relations Course

By Drs. Chad Raymond and Kerstin Sorensen

## Abstract

This paper discusses the classroom use of an exercise designed and managed by Elon University's Model United Nations club that simulated a crisis in the Middle East. In the exercise, undergraduate students role-played cabinet-level officials in Iran, Iraq, Syria, Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt, and were required to make foreign policy decisions based on knowledge acquired in the classroom and on information delivered as the exercise unfolded. The paper analyzes the goals of the simulation exercise, whether the goals were achieved, and whether a positive learning outcome occurred.

## Pedagogical Value of Simulations

In November, 2006, students from Elon University's Model United Nations Club (MUN) conducted an exercise intended to simulate a series of crises in the Middle East. In the exercise, a total of sixty-six undergraduate students role-played cabinet-level officials in Iran, Iraq, Syria, Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt, and were required to make foreign policy decisions based on knowledge acquired in the classroom and on information delivered as the exercise unfolded.

The exercise can be most accurately described as a role-playing simulation. Participants in simulations operate under a set of constraints or rules that model central features of reality. The representation of reality permits participants to experience a high degree of complexity, while the rules prohibit actions that are impossible in the real world (Lane 1995, 607; Hensley 1993, 64). When used as a teaching tool, a simulation

focuses on learning how to explain situations, rather than on predicting outcomes (Guetzkow and Jensen 1966, 268). In role playing, participants are assigned a role and, though they must follow rules that constrain their behavior, can act “as they think the person whose role they are playing would act” (Dorn 1989, 3). The Elon MUN exercise met these criteria.

While role-playing simulations have been used for decades in political science, their pedagogical value remains under debate. The use of role-playing simulations in the classroom is associated with a host of potential problems. Role-playing simulations can:

(a) engender a high opportunity cost by consuming large amounts of time during the semester that otherwise could be spent on possibly more productive teaching methods and more substantial theoretical material (Lowry 1999, 124; Rodgers 1996, 222)

(b) create hard-to-resolve conflicts with students, professors, and departments because of competing demands for time, physical space, and technology

(c) produce frustration, depression, and anger among participants by straying from students’ traditional expectations of the student-teacher role in the classroom, by thrusting certain students into leadership positions that their classmates find “hard to swallow,” and by forcing students who are “unwilling to become more active participants in their own learning process” out of a preferred state of passivity (Vavrina 1995, 726)

(d) be difficult to grade because they are not based on factual retention

(e) oversimplify issues and produce inappropriate responses among students

(f) lack clarity in learning objectives

(g) produce terribly uneven student performance if some students “never move beyond a focus on classroom personalities or group interaction . . . and fail even to try to engage with the historical materials” (McIntyre and Callahan 2000, 165).

Given the popularity of role-playing and other simulations, there is a surprising lack of empirical evidence on their usefulness. Simulations of all types “are rarely properly validated to determine whether/when they achieve their desired purposes or alternatively lead to dangerous or counterproductive outcomes” (Mandel 1987, 339), and claims of their pedagogical effectiveness often consist, at least in part, of the subjective impressions of the instructor (cf Schelling 2001, 833). The evidence that simulations are “more effective in teaching content, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills than conventional methods of lectures, reading, and group practice” is mixed (Dorn 1989, 8). One study involving one hundred and forty-nine students found that a gaming simulation produced considerably less of a gain in understanding of subject material than a conventional introductory course (Wentworth and Lewis 1975, 118).

Advocates of role-playing simulations cite their ability to generate active learning as their main value as instructional tools. These advocates refer to Kolb’s (1984, 21-2) interpretation of social psychologist Kurt Lewin’s model of action research and laboratory training (cf Dorn 1989; Brock and Cameron 1999; Shellman 2001). According this interpretation, traditional forms of teacher-directed learning are based on a form of information processing in which students first passively receive information from texts or lectures and then assimilate and understand it. Students next “infer particular applications of what is learned to general principles . . . [and] in the fourth and final

stage, they learn to use the general principles to act in some way.” The incentive for learning is not evident to students until these last two stages (Dorn 1989, 6).

In contrast, the active learning process described by Lewin is experiential. Students are first immersed in a particular application of knowledge that requires their active participation – a concrete experience. Students then observe and reflect upon the effects of their behavior in that instance of application. In the next stage of learning, students form abstract generalizations and concepts as they seek to understand overarching principles that may apply to their concrete experience. Lastly, students test these concepts to new circumstances both inside and outside the classroom. This active, experiential mode of learning is believed to be better than passive learning at creating effective thinkers (Dorn 1989, 6; Brock and Cameron 1999, 254; Shellman 2001, 827).

Simulations, because they facilitate active learning among students, can therefore:

(a) “permit students to experience institutional processes in ways that reading textbooks and listening to lectures may not allow” (Shellman 2001, 827), thereby producing a “deeper level of insight into the political process” (Smith and Boyer 1996, 690) and demonstrating how the real world often diverges from theoretical principles (Rodgers 1996, 222)

(b) enable students to retain more information (Pace et al 1990, 63) and gain a better understanding of abstract concepts than traditional lectures and note-taking (Smith and Boyer 1996, 690)

(c) develop critical thinking, speaking, and presentation skills among students

(d) generate high motivation and greater effort, and a perception of greater academic benefit among students (Rodgers 1996, 221; Dorn 1989, 6)

(e) increase student interest in the subject despite the often large amount of work involved (Hensley 1993, 67), which may in turn translate into more students majoring in the department

(e) result in more positive student evaluations of the course and the instructor.

### Learning Objectives and Student Preparation

The goals of the simulation exercise for the instructors were to increase student knowledge of the Middle East and to integrate the learning that had previously occurred in the course. This learning included an awareness of how foreign policy is designed and implemented and an ability to evaluate the explanatory value of international relations theories. The instructors also wanted the simulation to increase student retention of the course's subject matter through the creation of an active learning environment.

Preparing for the simulation exercise was only part of the course requirements which the students had to fulfill, comprising 15 percent of the grade in the international relations classes. While the instructors strove for some similarity in student preparation across the two classes, they did not create identical assignments for their students. The timing of similar student preparation tasks also differed across the classes over the course of the semester (September through early December).

The course instructors created Blackboard discussion groups for each cabinet; each cabinet could only access its own discussion group to minimize the exchange of information between students who belonged to different cabinets prior to the simulation. The Model UN Club provided brief country background reports to each cabinet and these reports were posted in respective Blackboard discussion groups by the instructors. To

facilitate the role-playing aspect of the simulation, students from both international relations classes were assigned the task of writing a single-page profile of the officials that they were to represent. The profile required students to research each official's personal background, role in the government, and probable foreign policy positions. Students posted their profiles in the Blackboard discussion groups. Once this preliminary research had been completed, each cabinet was instructed to formulate three or four primary foreign policy objectives that the cabinet would try to achieve during the simulation. This task was intended to get students to educate themselves about the foreign policy interests of certain states in the Middle East and to cause students to create a clear and realistic set of goals to focus on achieving during the simulation.

Students from one international relations class were also required to make group presentations about general information/background of their countries. Each cabinet was instructed to include economic, political, military, social, and other factors, which might influence the country's response to crisis in the simulation. In addition, the groups were asked to present their country's official foreign policy priorities and most pressing current events. The class presentations were intended to challenge students to acquire the most pertinent information about their country in preparation for the simulation, as well as to encourage students to raise questions about the information (or lack thereof) presented by their peers.

### Simulation Design

The Middle East crisis simulation at Elon University was designed entirely by members of Elon's Model UN Club. The Princeton International Crisis Simulation,

which several members of Elon’s Model UN Club had participated in, was used as a guide. Three members of the Elon Model UN Club created a series of realistic and timely crises that were to occur in Egypt, Israel, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Iran during course of the simulation. Only these three individuals – known during the simulation as masterminds – knew what events were planned for the simulation. The majority of the crises were state-oriented, but several involved non-state actors – i.e., terrorists (see Figure 1).

State	Crisis
Egypt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Anti-government protests by Muslim Brotherhood in five cities</li> <li>➤ Attacks in Cairo and Giza by Islamic Mujahadeen for the Liberation of the Two Cities of the Prophet, a terrorist organization</li> </ul>
Israel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Mortar fire from Golan Heights into Israel</li> <li>➤ Intelligence report that Egyptian-flagged freighter, possibly loaded with arms supplied by Iran and/or Saudi Arabia that are intended for Hezbollah in Lebanon, is moving through the Suez Canal</li> <li>➤ Attacks against civilian targets in Israel and against Israeli soldiers in Gaza by Islamic Mujahadeen</li> <li>➤ Intelligence report that a leader of Islamic Mujahadeen is in Saudi Arabia</li> </ul>
Syria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Three intelligence officers are killed in Lebanon by unknown assailants</li> </ul>
Saudi Arabia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Egyptian woman sentenced to be stoned to death for adultery</li> <li>➤ Oil refinery seized by Islamic Mujahadeen</li> </ul>
Iraq	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Loss of communications with oil tanker in Strait of Hormuz</li> <li>➤ Attacks by Islamic Mujahadeen in Baghdad</li> </ul>
Iran	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Student-led pro-democracy protests in six cities</li> <li>➤ Iraqi oil tanker drifts into Iranian waters in the Strait of Hormuz after losing power</li> </ul>

Figure 1: Crises for the Simulation

The students who participated in the simulation were divided into teams (three teams from each international relations class) that represented government cabinets from

the six Middle Eastern states listed above. Each cabinet team was composed of a chairperson from the Model UN Club and eleven international relations students. Ten of the students within each cabinet were randomly assigned to represent government officials from their respective states. One student in each cabinet was randomly designated as a “special actor,” an individual whose character functioned in a liaison, intelligence, or other capacity for the cabinet. These special actor characters included Major General Frank Patton of U.S. CENTCOM for Iraq, the Hezbollah representative Mullah Karim Abd Jihad for Iran, and for Israel, Lieutenant Colonel David Emmanuel Goldstein, the commanding officer of Mossad Task Force Seven. Special actors were able to submit their own action orders (see below) without the consent of their respective cabinets or chairpersons.

At the beginning of the simulation, each cabinet was placed in separate room with its respective chairperson, who explained the rules of the simulation to participants. Each room was equipped with a computer console, internet access, and a large wall-screen. The simulation occurred over two successive days, with the first session lasting for approximately five hours, while the second session lasted for approximately three hours.

The chairperson of each cabinet functioned as the line of communication between his or her cabinet and command center operated by Model UN members during the simulation. In addition to the three masterminds, the staff of the command center included a group that processed action orders submitted by cabinets, individuals who made presentations to cabinets at specific points during the simulation, and other students who produced text, audio, and video information that was distributed to cabinets during the course of the simulation.

Communications from a cabinet to the crisis command center were in the form of action orders, of which there were six types, listed in Figure 2.

Action order	Function
Diplomatic	➤ All requests related to diplomacy, such as setting up a meeting with or sending a message to another cabinet.
Military	➤ Any action that a cabinet wanted its military to complete, including troop movement, the purchase of new equipment, and training exercises, short of an offensive military operation.
Operation	➤ A military order used specifically to launch a military operation. This type of action order required an operation name, a detailed explanation of how the operation was to be carried out, and a list of the operation's intended objectives. The results of operation orders were distributed to all cabinets in the form of news briefings.
Intelligence	➤ A request to secretly obtain intelligence on another state. The crisis control center's response to an intelligence action order was provided only to the cabinet that had submitted the order.
Information	➤ Requests for non-sensitive information, such as the names and number of ships in a certain harbor. Information orders were also used by cabinets to clarify the procedures used in the simulation.
Internal Communication	➤ Any public service announcement or propaganda that a cabinet wanted to communicate to the general public, branches of government, and/or the military.
Other	➤ For a subject that did not match any of the other types of action order.

Figure 2: Action Orders

All communications from and to the cabinets had to pass through crisis command center so that the masterminds could be aware of all the cabinets' decisions and coordinate events. The command center and the cabinets were connected electronically via Skype, a software package that permits text and voice communication over internet connections.

To prevent members of different cabinets from communicating directly with each other, the use of laptop computers and cell phones by students was prohibited.

The cabinets were responsible for making decisions and issuing action orders that would accomplish the real-world foreign policy objectives of each state represented in the simulation. These objectives, as formulated by the members of the Model UN Club who designed the simulation, were as follows:

State	Strategic goals for the simulation
Egypt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Maintain current regime</li> <li>➤ Minimize threat from domestic political opposition</li> <li>➤ Regain regional prestige</li> <li>➤ Promote foreign direct investment and tourism</li> </ul>
Israel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Minimize external threats</li> <li>➤ Ensure stability of West Bank and Gaza</li> <li>➤ Prevent Iranian ambitions</li> <li>➤ Improve relations with moderate Islamic countries</li> </ul>
Syria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Maintain current regime</li> <li>➤ Regain covert or overt control/influence over Lebanon</li> <li>➤ Re-arm Hezbollah</li> <li>➤ Secure regional influence through external forces</li> </ul>
Saudi Arabia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Maintain current regime</li> <li>➤ Ensure regional economic supremacy</li> <li>➤ Become militarily competitive with other regional powers</li> <li>➤ Maintain high regional political profile</li> <li>➤ Diversify economy</li> </ul>
Iraq	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Destroy insurgency and create a government monopoly on force</li> <li>➤ Improve economy</li> </ul>
Iran	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Become the acknowledged regional hegemon</li> <li>➤ Develop special weapons</li> <li>➤ Strengthen relationships with friendly nations</li> </ul>

Figure 3: Foreign Policy Objectives

### Outcomes: what went right

The simulation represented a large time commitment for students outside of class – a Sunday afternoon and evening, and a Monday evening. Attendance at the simulation was a course requirement in one international relations class, resulting in participation by the entire class over the two days. However, even without this requirement the vast majority of students from the other international relations class did attend, demonstrating at least some level of interest among students in participating in the simulation.

Similarly, the crisis command center, though often hectic, was fully staffed throughout the simulation. When some cabinets complained that the crisis command center was slow to react to incoming information, causing delays between a cabinet's submission of an action order and the receipt of a response from another cabinet, the communication process within the command center was streamlined. The members of Elon's Model UN Club who dedicated their own time toward operating the simulation are the reason that the simulation functioned as well as it did.<sup>1</sup>

Students were able to quickly grasp the structure and rules of the simulation despite having never before participated in such an exercise. Most cabinets rapidly learned of the need to discuss possible courses of action, seek out information from the crisis command center or from the internet via their chairperson, and issue action orders in a timely fashion. Students became engaged in active learning about the Middle East

---

<sup>1</sup> While not discussed in this paper, the opportunity to receive experiential education credits while creating, organizing, and structuring the simulation experience was taken by two members of the Elon Model UN club (two of the three simulation masterminds). At the beginning of the semester, the two members and one instructor formulated learning goals (create and operate interactive university level role-playing simulation; acquire greater understanding of the region; create a list that others can follow), and specified the academic assignments required for evaluation (journal of simulation notes; evaluation of simulation's effectiveness; paper on war gaming applicability to role simulations).

and the foreign policy process through the role-playing and real-time aspects of the simulation.

Student-centered assessment of a simulation is generally recognized as an important component of the simulation's experiential learning process. Assessment also helps the instructor determine whether the educational objectives of the simulation have been achieved (Lantis et al. 2000, 4). Students from one international relations class were required to complete a post-simulation assessment assignment by responding to a number of questions. The assignment was not graded, although completing it was required in order to receive the simulation grade. The majority of students expressed enjoying the simulation (indeed, many students stated surprise at how fun and interesting it was) and answered affirmatively the following question: "Overall, was the simulation a good educational experience for you?" Indeed, many students believed that they had learned more about the Middle East "by doing" than if listening to class lectures or reading a textbook on the topic.

A large group of students also pointed out that the simulation experience opened their eyes to a whole new world they never considered before. The complex issues facing the participants during the simulation forced many students from the black/white thinking-box (or winner/loser; bad/good) to more sophisticated thinking (e.g., "I never considered before that you cannot just go and bomb other countries... you must first plan out other ways [to deal with the crisis situation]"). Having to deal with difficult issues for about eight hours during the course of the simulation offered students insights into the plight of some people living in the Middle East region ("I never knew before that there are people who have to deal with issues of this magnitude [poverty, terrorist

threats/destruction, insurgency] on a daily basis”). The post-simulation assessments also indicate that students learned something new about the substance of politics or international relations (“I obtained a better understanding [that] when governments enter into specific alliances with others, it does not only have the potential to benefit both countries, but can also have dire repercussions should certain tense circumstances arise”).

In addition, many students learned about their own ability to interact with others on international issues (“I learned that I was able to hold conversations with other[s] on important international issues”; “I learned that I am able to be heard and get my views out to a group of people”). Other students emphasized the importance of using their listening skills. As one student remarked: “I learned just how important it is to listen to others when figuring out a plan. Other people in my group had really interesting ideas and came up with very creative strategies. A lot of what we did, I never would have come up with on my own.” Another student stated: “I learned a lot about how to let other people talk...[and] that everyone has something to contribute and that it pays to listen before you speak.”

The post-simulation assessments indicate that the simulation offered the students to experience “institutional processes in ways that reading textbooks and listening to lectures may not allow” (Shellman 2001, 827). “By doing,” the students gained greater insights into the political processes in the Middle Eastern region, and challenged students to develop critical thinking and speaking skills. They also gained a greater understanding of the substance of international relations, such as alliance building, bargaining, diplomacy, foreign policy, power, and military force. The simulation, according to one

student (and similarly expressed by several students), “made all the abstract ideas that we have discussed in class more applicable.”

Outcomes: what went wrong

Some technological glitches became apparent during the simulation. Late in the first session, the Skype software used for communication between the crisis command center and the cabinets crashed. Although the program was quickly brought back online, the transcript of what had been communicated up to that point was lost. The chairperson of one cabinet initially appeared to have some difficulty operating Skype, opening incorrect windows and being unable to quickly send messages to the command center or other cabinets.

Occasionally cabinet chairpersons appeared to be either too active or too passive in their oversight of the decision-making process for their respective cabinets. In one cabinet, students always framed their ideas in the form of questions, asking permission of their chairperson for proposed courses of action; for example, instead of saying “we want to mobilize our military forces,” members of the cabinet would ask their chairperson “can we mobilize our military forces?” This communication style placed members of the cabinet in a dependent position and gave too much control over events to the chairperson. Another cabinet did not react to events as quickly as the crisis command center expected; a more forceful chairperson could have pushed this cabinet to reach a consensus more efficiently.

The quantity and quality of student participation in the cabinet debate and decision-making process varied greatly. Frequently discussions in each cabinet were

dominated by three or four students, while two or three students in some of the cabinets remained silent during the entire course of the simulation. Several students were ignorant of basic geographical, cultural, and historical knowledge about the Middle East; for example, the student playing the role of Israel's minister of trade and industry did not know the sources of Israel's imported oil, and the student playing the role of Egypt's minister for health and population was unaware that Egypt shared a border with Israel. In these cases, the assignments that were designed to prepare students for the simulation failed to achieve their intended effect.

Several students expressed in their post-simulation assessments that they felt unprepared and that they would have prepared differently, if not necessarily more, if they had to do it over again. They were under the impression that most issues they would face during the simulation would revolve around relations with other countries. However, many situations involved internal problems which they were unsure how to handle. Others expressed frustration over knowing little about how the countries in the region interact with one another, as well as lacking background information on the three Middle Eastern countries not represented by students in the class.

Although a large number of students stated that the simulation appeared very realistic, some felt that it produced inappropriate responses among students. The most critical response on this subject did not recommend the crisis simulation "as it currently exists" for future international relations students. The reason given by the student was the slow response to action orders, the minor role the U.S. played in the region, and the nuclear exchange between several states that occurred at the end of the simulation.

Students in the other international relations class were requested, rather than required, to complete a post-simulation assessment in which they evaluated the performance of themselves and their fellow cabinet members on a scale of one to five. On the assessment form students were also asked to write comments. Nearly all students in the class returned completed assessment forms, but the students' responses did not produce much usable information for the instructor of the class. Most students simply awarded the highest possible score to themselves and their teammates, and very few students wrote comments.

### Recommendations

After the simulation had concluded, students were asked to raise their hands if they had previously taken a course on the Middle East. No students raised their hands. The students were then asked to raise their hands if they thought taking such a course would have improved the quality of their participation in the simulation. All students raised their hands. The students recognized that prior study of the Middle East would have been beneficial to their participation in the simulation, and the instructors agree. Thus, it is evident that more class time needs to be devoted to learning about the Middle East, as very few international relations students have any background knowledge about the region. As mentioned above, several students were ignorant of the most basic knowledge related to the Middle East, indicating that the assignments created to prepare them for the simulation were not effective. Although some students had studied "their" cabinet official and knew the most detailed information about "their" minister's previous positions, educational background, relation to the royal family, etc., they knew very little

about what a prime minister or minister of interior actually do. Indeed, many students addressed this issue in response to the post-simulation assessment assignment question “What did you learn about your own preparation for the simulation and the importance of prior information for this type of experience?” Having students focus more on what a minister of defense or prime minister do, rather than learning about and representing a particular person, would be more effective. However, learning what ministers do would not help the students understand more about the region. Requiring student to research and write background papers on the nation-states represented in the simulation would help students familiarize themselves with critical information as well as increase their feeling of investment in the simulation’s outcome. Creating assignments which explore major political (and other) issues of the Middle East, and holding weekly class discussions of current issues relating to the region would be steps towards accomplishing these objectives.

The group presentations in one international relations class were partly effective. Only three cabinets (i.e., only three of the six countries) were represented, which posed a problem as students were expected to potentially interact with any or all of the six Middle Eastern states. A possible solution is to pool the two classes for the presentations, provided group presentations are required in both classes (and the scheduling permits it). Greater guidance is also needed in selecting the most pressing current issues in the countries represented. The Iranian cabinet, for example, chose drug problems as an important current issue. While this is certainly a problem, presenting and discussing other issues facing Iran more pertinent to the simulation exercise would have offered greater insight into Iran to better prepare students.

In response to the post-simulation assessment question “What suggestions would you offer to make this simulation a better learning experience in the future?”, students offered a number of recommendations. While most of their recommendations have been addressed in this paper, the following three suggestions have not and may be worth considering: spend more time together in groups/cabinets prior to the simulation; offer the simulation as an extra credit so only students who are motivated participate; and, allow cabinet members to have some jurisdiction over their field of expertise.

The method of assessing learning outcomes from and student reaction to the simulation needs to be refined. It is likely that the instructors would gain greater insight into the learning outcomes generated by the simulation by asking students questions that directly address participation, collaboration, understanding of abstract concepts, and retention. These questions could include:

- How would you assess the effectiveness of your preparation for the simulation?  
Would you have prepared more carefully if you had to do it over again?
- What were your cabinet’s policy objectives during the simulation and how did your cabinet formulate these objectives?
- How well did your cabinet function as a group? What were the strengths and weaknesses of your cabinet? What would you recommend that a cabinet should do to be a more effective and cohesive working unit?
- How would you assess your own personal involvement in the actual simulation, whether in terms of speaking, writing, or other means?
- If you were grading your participation in the simulation on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest score, what grade would you honestly assign yourself? Explain briefly the reasons for the grade you assigned yourself.

- What did you learn about your own ability to interact with others on important international issues in the context of a simulated international crisis?
- What did you learn about diplomacy and the foreign policy process from the simulation?
- What did you learn about the theory and practice of international relations from the simulation?
- What were the strengths and weaknesses of the entire simulation project as a learning experience? What suggestions would you offer to make this simulation a better learning experience for students in the future? Would you recommend this crisis simulation to future international relations students? Why?
- Do you have any additional comments about your experience in the simulation that are unrelated to the above questions?

### Conclusion

The learning objectives of the simulation were to increase student knowledge of the Middle East and to integrate the learning that had previously occurred in the course. Though the crisis simulation offered many opportunities for students to develop their critical thinking, speaking, and collaborative skills, these learning outcomes were only partly achieved. Several student preparation tasks and assignments failed to achieve their intended effect and thus, need to be revised or dropped altogether.

According to Lowry, “a simulation must be realistic in three respects if it is to be a valid learning experience. First, it must be realistic in appearance. The preparation students undertake, the props, and the atmosphere must help to propel students into their roles. Second, it must be realistic in its internal process. The structure and process of the

simulation activities must imitate the real world, acquainting students with the messy aspects of decision-making. Finally, the simulation must be capable of generating realistic outcomes. This possibility gives the students a sense that their efforts have purpose and their accomplishments are valid” (1999, 125).

The simulation was successful in creating a realistic appearance and in imitating the real world in its internal process. However, it was less successful in producing realistic outcomes, especially towards the end of the simulation period when, in one student’s words, it became “a rather unrealistic bombfest.” Future simulations at Elon University should encourage students to assume a more diplomatic approach to international crises when appropriate, and discourage unrealistic behavior by students, perhaps by penalizing the grades such students receive for the simulation.

Responses from post-simulation assessment reveal that students did acquire a greater understanding of the complexities involved in world politics and that many had been challenged to move from a lower to a higher level of thinking (Anderson and Sosniak 1994). This achievement may actually be quite significant for several reasons. The current generation of students has grown up in the culture of the internet and interactive zero-sum war games; they are used to applying a win/lose mentality to complex issues. Enabling students to shed this mentality during the simulation is an accomplishment. We should not underestimate the intellectual achievements of our students as they realize through simulations such as this one that “you cannot just go and bomb other countries,” especially in light of the rhetoric of our political leaders. Even if this is the only achievement, it may be worth the effort!

## References

Lorin W. Anderson and Lauren A. Sosniak (Eds). *Bloom's Taxonomy: A Forty-year Retrospective*. Ninety-third Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL, 1994.

Kathy L. Brock and Beverly J. Cameron. "Enlivening Political Science Courses with Kolb's Learning Preference Model." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 32, 2 (June 1999), pp. 251-256.

Dean S. Dorn. "Simulation Games: One More Tool on the Pedagogical Shelf." *Teaching Sociology* 17, 1 (January 1989), pp. 1-18.

Harold Guetzkow and Lloyd Jensen. "Research Activities on Simulated International Processes." *Background* 9, 4 (February 1966), pp. 261-274.

Thomas R. Hensley. "Come to the Edge: Role Playing Activities in a Constitutional Law Class." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 26, 1 (March 1993), pp. 64-68.

David A. Kolb. *Experiential Learning: Experience as The Source of Learning and Development*. Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1984.

David C. Lane. "On a Resurgence of Management Simulations and Games." *The Journal of the Operations Research Society* 46, 5 (May 1995), pp. 604-625.

Jeffrey Lantis, Lynn M. Kuzma, and John Boehrer. "Active Teaching and Learning at a Critical Crossroads," in *The New International Studies Classroom: Active Teaching, Active Learning*, Jeffrey S. Lantis, Lynn M. Kuzma, and John Boehrer, eds. Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder, CO, 2000, pp. 1-18.

Pamela E. Lowry. "Model GATT: A Role-Playing Simulation Course." *The Journal of Economic Education* 30, 2 (Spring 1999), pp. 119-126.

Robert Mandel. "An Evaluation of the 'Balance of Power' Simulation." *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 31, 2 (June 1987), pp. 333-345.

Michael McIntyre and Patrick Callahan. "Constructing Effective Systems: Simulating the Paris Peace Conference," in *The New International Studies Classroom: Active Teaching, Active Learning*, Jeffrey S. Lantis, Lynn M. Kuzma, and John Boehrer, eds. Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder, CO, 2000, pp. 153-166.

David Pace, Bill Bishel, Roger Beck, Peter Holquist, and George Makowski. "Structure and Spontaneity: Pedagogical Tensions in the Construction of a Simulation of the Cuban Missile Crisis." *The History Teacher* 24, 1 (November 1990), pp. 53-65.

Yana van der Meulen Rodgers. "Role-Playing Exercise for Development and International Economics Courses." *The Journal of Economic Education* 27, 3 (Summer 1996), pp. 217-223.

Stephen M. Shellman. "Active Learning in Comparative Politics: A Mock German Election and Coalition-Formation Simulation." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 34, 4 (December 2001), pp. 827-834.

Elizabeth T. Smith and Mark A. Boyer. "Designing In-Class Simulations." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 29, 4 (December 1996), pp. 690-694.

Vernon J. Vavrina. "Poughkeepsie to Person Gulf Revisited: ICONS, the Internet, and Teaching International Politics." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 28, 4 (December 1995), pp. 725-728.

Donald R. Wentworth and Darrell R. Lewis. "Evaluation of the Use of the Marketplace Game in Junior College Economics." *The Journal of Economic Education* 6, 2 (Spring 1975), pp. 113-119.