

About fifteen years ago the hot spots in the world were Beijing, Berlin and, yes, Baghdad. At that time I initiated at my institution a new course, International Communication and Negotiation, which took advantage of a splendid simulation opportunity offered by the Department of Government & Politics at the University of Maryland – the ICONS Project.¹ Since that time, with considerable support from administrators at my college,² I have regularly integrated into my classroom this constantly evolving high tech version of a model United Nations. In the past I have written about these experiences; but, I have not done so for a decade. The purpose of this paper is to share with my colleagues accrued insights into teaching international politics through Project ICONS in particular and the simulation technique in general.³ In today's post 9/11 world, using various approaches to helping our students understand complex international and transnational politics is especially vital.

In ICONS students on their home campus do research to role play an assigned country's diplomatic delegation. Using modern technology they correspond and negotiate with their peers at institutions who are portraying government missions from other nation-states. A simulation is divided into three phases devoted to research, negotiation and debriefing.⁴ Real-time conferences are invariably the highlights. During these hour-long sessions country teams from all over the world (literally and figuratively) are free to negotiate in English on predetermined agenda items. Typical subjects include: conflict resolution, terrorism, Third World trade & debt, global ecology, world health and human rights.

Phase One

Pre-simulation questionnaires are to be administered at this time. These, combined with similar post-simulation instruments, are useful for the purposes of outcomes assessment.⁵ A series of map exercises is very important. Basic knowledge of political geography is appalling for many undergraduates today.

At the beginning of the semester, faculty and students have access to a “scenario” produced at ICONS headquarters. This details basic issues to be negotiated throughout the ensuing weeks as well as fundamental assumptions about the international system. The scenario projects the real world into the future by some six months. This frees students in the following negotiations to have some flexibility developing their own policies, yet simultaneously portray their assigned countries authentically.

Throughout my years of teaching ICONS-based courses, I have been consistently pleased with the up-to-date, thoughtful, and wide-ranging content of provided scenarios. I learn a great deal from them. If at the end of the semester, my students have mastered a substantial piece of their scenario, I know the course has been successful.

The focal point of Phase One is the writing of a class position paper from the point of view of the foreign policy decision-makers in the country assigned to us by the University of Maryland.⁶ This is truly a daunting task. Of course, the job is complicated by the number of students in the class – something over which the professor may have little or no control. I have found that ideal class size is 15 to 20 students. Too small a roster puts too much strain on the participants. Too large a class is very difficult for the instructor to monitor properly. In any event, what is more important than the size of a class is the quality of students in it. To enhance monitoring my preference is for the class to meet at least twice a week. It is true that some student activity may be checked electronically; nevertheless, I have found there is no substitute for face-to face meetings.

It can not be emphasized enough that class dynamics in a section utilizing ICONS are very different from those existing in traditional lecture formats.⁷ Thus, ICONS instructors are encouraged by the University of Maryland staff to become facilitators.⁸ This means that as the semester progresses, the professor allows class participants to take over more and more of the responsibility for a successful educational experience. Even from the beginning, some students are thrust into unexpected leadership roles, perhaps causing others to become disgruntled. Everything should be carefully explained to enrollees from the outset. Some individuals do not handle well this non-traditional class. I strongly believe in up-front truth in advertising about all courses – especially those based upon simulation, such as ICONS. On the other hand, some definitely flourish in the non-traditional setting. I am often fascinated by watching certain “mediocre” students rise to meet the simulation challenge.

I carefully choose two students to be class co-editors of the mandatory position paper.⁹ From both personal observation during the course and interviews of co-editors after the semester is completed, it is clear the latter find the job to be extremely challenging. Apart from the academic and editorial burdens are problems stemming from getting several small groups of people to cooperate together for the common good. What should a co-editor do exactly, for example, when certain students refuse to hand in required material on time? What if assignments are completed expeditiously, but lack quality? How do you get your peers to cooperate when you don't have any real power over them?

I typically encounter several difficulties during the first phase. I prefer to have one class in the college library conducted by a professional reference librarian who has been previously briefed on the particular items that will go into the position paper.¹⁰ After all, one of the main objects in the course is for students to hone their research capabilities.

Participants by this time will have been placed in a sub-group specializing in one of the aforementioned issue areas. Unfortunately, several students will invariably complain that they knew everything beforehand and that the bibliographic instruction was a waste of time. All I can say in response is that *I* always learn from these bibliographic sessions at least one thing that I didn't know before. I am happy if this is true for the bulk of my students and if they learn to appreciate the value of a good reference librarian.

Another usual problem during Phase One is that students are prone to rely solely on American sources as they conduct their research.¹¹ In addition, they sometimes act as if everything they find on the Internet is unbiased and true.¹² A final difficulty is that in practice it is very hard to get students to continue their research once the class has completed its position paper.

Phase Two

During the second portion of the semester, students communicate and negotiate with their peers at other institutions that are role playing additional countries. Closely guarded by professors until the very end of the simulation is a list of what schools are representing what country teams. In other words, if my students are pretending to be Spanish foreign policy decision makers, students from other colleges will not learn this until the end of the course. This is as it should be.

Years ago, the knowledge of hardware and software required by both students and teachers to engage in ICONS was substantial. In those days, technical problems were fairly routine. System crashes were common especially during the first batch of real-time conferencing. Imagine how difficult it had to be run the show when country teams tried to access the University of Maryland's computers using a myriad of hardware platforms and software protocols! Trails of messages were captured on dot-matrix printers (perhaps

9-pin) which hopefully would not jam, or run out of paper, at inopportune moments. It was always a good idea to have ready access to an IT specialist and to keep at close hand the phone number of ICONS Project's contact person. Moreover, you had to pray not to lose your phone connection linking you to others.

Today things have changed drastically. Participants do not have to learn arcane mainframe commands. Being plagued with technical demons is rare. Immediate access to Academic Computing is not necessary, nor is a telephone connection. Instructors do not have to spend hours of time assisting students with the mechanics of properly sending and receiving messages. Moreover, students are not apt to be computer phobic as was frequently the case in the past.

However, I find there is a downside to the vastly improved hardware and software in current use. In the early 1990s there was a certain mystique about computers and telecommunications in the classroom that is understandably lacking today. Seasoned professors today have no trouble remembering life before the PC. Such is not the case for the undergraduate of 2006. My belief is that participants in ICONS-driven courses "in the good old days" felt that they were pioneers and were, therefore, more likely to walk the extra mile. In that bygone era, my students had special access to a small, dedicated ICONS room. At that time it was considered quite an accomplishment to get the image from the CRT projected onto a wall for perhaps a dozen to see. Security for all of the valuable equipment was also enhanced by having a special room with limited access. The space was appropriately regaled with posters and flags of our assigned country. Students enjoyed using the room for discussion sessions as well as for sending messages to other delegations before, during and after real-time conferences. Alas, modern technology no longer requires such dedicated space. That room was converted

into an office long ago! What a pity! My current students do not know what they are missing.

In a similar vein, in the early days of ICONS, to accommodate country teams that were literally around the globe, real-time conferences were sometimes scheduled at bizarre times - very early in the morning or quite late at night. Although late night sessions were strange, and perhaps irritating, from the professor's perspective, the students flourished on the idea. More recently, ICONS officials have tended to set real-time conferences for more mundane times – such as Tuesday at 10:00 a.m. EST. I presume this is to the advantage of ICONS staff who live in the Eastern time zone. Although the prosaic times are, likewise, more beneficial for me, I doubt if that is the case for my students.

On the subject of time, it should be understood that all messages sent in an ICONS simulation are tagged according to Greenwich Mean Time. All conferences are scheduled in GMT. Students should learn how to translate GMT times into their own local equivalents. In doing this, they must take the absence or presence of daylight savings into account. Several years ago, with the help of University of Maryland staff, I made a presentation on ICONS before a dozen distinguished professors from another academic institution. I mentioned that tagging messages in GMT was one way to help American students appreciate that millions of people, in fact, inhabit vast other stretches of our planet. One professor replied that this was simply exchanging one form of ethnocentrism (American) for another (British). I thought then, as I do today, that such criticism was unnecessarily harsh. The reality is that for centuries mariners have used the prime meridian for navigational purposes. I am not convinced using some arbitrary longitude would enhance learning.

It is fortunate if several country teams which are physically abroad participate. Having American students communicate with peers who are literally scattered around the world is a definite plus.¹³ Even though students do not know for sure if they are negotiating with non-Americans until after the simulation, they can often sense that this is the case. Nuances in language are big clues. I have been disappointed more than once when some of my students make fun of another country team's English. I promptly remind them that the other delegation is almost certainly composed of people whose native language is not our tongue. How well would my American students perform if they had to correspond in any other language? This question usually gets the point across.

One of the things that has surely remained constant over time is the need for a strong simulation control (SIMCON) at ICONS headquarters. The individual(s) assuming this role is/are performing absolutely vital functions. SIMCON acts a traffic cop, keeping order out of what could quickly degenerate into chaos. It serves as the final protector of simulation authenticity.¹⁴ Participants, both students and faculty, notice when SIMCON has something to say. Good SIMCONs are adept at keeping numerous country teams on track with regard to the particular negotiation at hand. The very best SIMCONs provide concise, accurate and timely summaries after each round of a real-time conference. The lesson to be learned here is never underestimate the human factor in learning – even in an enterprise marked with sophisticated hardware and software.

Phase Three

The third and final portion of an ICONS simulation should be devoted to debriefing. During this important, but perhaps overlooked, phase, students and instructor may examine the strengths and weaknesses of the entire nontraditional experience and attempt to answer a whole host of questions: How authentically did our class role play our

assigned country team? How well did our country team stick to parameters laid out in the class position paper? Which country teams excelled? Why? Which teams played out of character? In what respects? How important was the role of SIMCON at the University of Maryland? How closely did the simulation approach reality? In what ways was the simulation off the mark?

One perennial pragmatic problem, in my experience, with Phase Three is the sheer lack of time. Due to the headaches presented when scheduling common activities for schools with dissimilar calendars, it turns out that Phase Two typically ends late in the semester, thus allowing perhaps two classes for the final period. This is not a lot of time – especially when you consider that Phase Three includes administration of post-simulation questionnaires or other instruments the professor might employ for outcomes assessment.

Another interesting component of Phase Three is peer evaluation. When I first became involved with ICONS, I was persuaded by University of Maryland personnel to allow my students to grade each other. Student peer evaluations formed a *portion* of the actual final grade awarded for the course. Since this is such a non-traditional course, I agree some different methods of evaluation are warranted. It is impossible for a lone professor to monitor all of the student interactions that occur during the semester. However, I must admit that in recent years, I have witnessed a tendency for students to inflate the grades they hand out.¹⁵ The problem of grade inflation in colleges and universities, of course, is complicated and goes well beyond the scope of this paper. Nevertheless, I have adjusted to the difficulty I have perceived by reducing the value of peer evaluations in final grades. An additional piece of advice is to require students to explain in writing *why* another classmate has earned a particular grade.

The Final Examination

I have strived to use my ICONS course in such a way as to improve students' facility with research methods. This is done early in the semester by getting participants to draw from assigned texts¹⁶ propositions, or research questions, to be tested against the empirical data base of archived messages of the simulation. For most students this is a daunting task. I take plenty of time to meet with each one-on-one to assist in planning this written requirement. My hope is that students will pay even more attention to the messages in Phase Two, when they comprehend that they will need to master a subset of these communications¹⁷ in order to succeed at the end of Phase Three.

Course Evaluations

International Communication & Negotiation is a course that is evaluated closely. Student evaluations tend to be on the positive side. Opinions vary, certainly, from section to section; but, most students like this non-traditional offering.

Students self report considerable learning takes place. Thus, in my last ICONS course (Spring 2005) out of 18 respondents, 11 said in post-simulation questionnaires they felt they learned "a lot" about "the complexity of foreign policy making." Seven more learned "a moderate amount" in this respect. Nobody answered they learned "a little" or "almost nothing." On a different question, 2 participants indicated they learned "a little" about how to choose the right word in a diplomatic correspondence. However, 9 of their peers replied they learned "a moderate amount" and 7 more "a lot."

Did these students feel during the simulation they learned much about problems of developing countries? Five did; but, 8 learned "little." The average score was 2.83 on a scale of 1 (learned almost nothing) to 4 (learned a lot). By a wide margin, students ranked assigned readings and lectures as the least important elements in the class as far as

learning was concerned. Writing the position paper was deemed the most important learning activity, with sending and receiving messages a close second.

When queried how they felt during on-line conferences, students revealed they were quite interested. On a 7 point scale from 1 (extremely bored) to 7 (extremely interested), the mean score was 5.38. A similar question on passivity/activity shows most students self-reporting high degrees of activity when real-time conferencing. The mean score was 5.50. In a familiar tune, participants identified strongly with the role of diplomat (mean = 5.05) as well as with the country they represented (mean = 5.44). Questionnaire results generally indicate students preferred during the simulation to state their opinions only on issues on which they felt well informed. Approximately 22% of the respondents stated they learned “a little” or “almost nothing” about “how to communicate with other teams who have different perspectives about foreign policy.” However, the overwhelming majority claimed they learned “a lot” or “a moderate amount” about this.

Innovations

As is hopefully apparent, the ICONS Project has been developing and improving for many years. Perhaps the most significant innovation has been the writing of a text designed for those involved in ICONS simulations *or* anyone interested in international negotiation. Now in its second edition, the book is titled, *Negotiating a Complex World: An Introduction to International Negotiation* (Starkey, Boyer and Wilkenfeld 2005). In addition to a useful board game paradigm for analyzing complex international relations, the work includes brief case studies of actual negotiations involving the Kyoto Protocols, North Korean nuclear crisis and U.S. involvement in the Persian Gulf. A brief appendix, called “Students as Diplomats,” gives details on the ICONS Project.

The volume serves as a kind of anchor for my course. During the rather hectic weeks of Phase Two, it is easy for both students and facilitator to get so involved in the details of a specific issue, that they lose the larger perspective. I believe the book can help insure everyone sees the forest as well as the trees. Also, I suspect students are impressed to find a text written by individuals that have been intimately involved with ICONS.

One more innovation worth mentioning is the addition of a proposal facility during Phase Two. This provides participants with an easy way to put their ideas on the table. There is, however, a set of criteria that proposals must meet for them to be accepted by SIMCON.

The Foreign Language Option

ICONS was originally the brainchild of a political scientist (Jonathan Wilkenfeld) and a language specialist (Richard Brecht). The project was developed in the early 1980s.¹⁸ While the political aspects of the program have flourished since inception, regrettably the same can not be said of the foreign language components. It is possible to arrange an ICONS class so that, for instance, a team role-playing Mexico can send/receive its messages in the native language of that country and have them translated into English when necessary. At my college, we have taken advantage of this option for years. However, most institutions do not choose to take this path.

I run my course on International Communication & Negotiation in close cooperation with a colleague's offering in Advanced Translation. Usually the colleague has been one who teaches Spanish. My political science students will compose their messages in English and indicate which country teams are to be the ultimate recipients. The language professor's students electronically receive my class' communications (and sometimes those from other country teams), translate them into Spanish, and forward them

appropriately – followed in due time with the English versions. The language professor is responsible that the translations are correct. This is not an easy task. Communiqués go back and forth at a rapid pace. Even advanced foreign language majors are not prone to know technical terms in international relations.

In theory, if employing the aforementioned system, political science majors become more attuned to the importance of culture and the nuances of languages. Foreign language students, at the same time, learn more of the complexities in international politics. In practice, things do not go as well as I would like. Ideally, students from both classes should be given opportunities to commingle. I prefer to host at least one event where both classes meet together at the same hour to hear a guest speaker who is well versed on the assigned country. Unfortunately, the synergy that I would love to foster between the two sections usually never gets off the ground. It was a bit easier to be successful in this regard “in the old days” when both classes were forced to share the single ICONS room.

My political science students sometimes complain about having to wait for translations. Our translators often complain about poorly written messages they must transform perfectly into another language. Both sides have grounds for their complaints.

In spite of all of the above, I am convinced the foreign language option is very worthwhile. It is a pity more schools do not avail themselves of this alternative. If nothing else, benefits to language students are obvious.

From the point of view of a language instructor, one can make these observations about ICONS:¹⁹

1. It allows students to use technology in a different manner as they converse with their peers at other colleges.
2. It enables students to see the practical aspects of translation.
3. It fosters excitement for both professor and class.

4. It teaches students that translation is not as easy and quick as it appears.
5. It is a lot of work for students and instructor.²⁰

In post-class evaluations translation students always emphasize the challenging nature of ICONS-driven courses. They come to understand the importance of culture. They appreciate that words from one language are hard, or impossible, to translate into another. They learn the difficulties inherent in simply translating the multitude of acronyms (WMD, WTO, ICBM, IMF, IGO, NGO, etc.) associated with international relations. They especially enjoy communicating with country teams that are physically abroad and whose members speak a language other than English.

Some translation students become so enamored with the ICONS experience that they walk the extra mile. One, for example, invested a huge amount of time compiling a glossary of acronyms and technical terms typically used during simulations.

As is the case for their political science counterparts, translation students are prone to give positive marks in formal course evaluations. Furthermore, they are apt to reminisce about ICONS-embedded courses long after graduation.

Simulations in International Relations

Understanding international politics via simulation has a venerable history. Back in the 1920s a Model League of Nations was put together by a small number of students at Harvard. Today Model UNs flourish at the secondary and post-secondary levels. Some have as many as 2,000 delegates (Endrst 1991)!

Harold Guetzkow and four colleagues from Northwestern wrote a landmark book in which they took initial steps at erecting IR theory from the Inter-Nation Simulation they created (Guetzkow et al. 1963). They were careful to note, however, that one should not leap too quickly in extrapolating from the simulated to the real world. Chadwick Alger

explains in the work connections between INS and undergraduate teaching. Several years later Charles and Margaret Hermann built on the Northwestern foundation. Their labors culminated in a famous attempt to simulate the outbreak of the First World War (Charles Hermann and Margaret Hermann 1967).

Others employing simulation in numerous manners to further knowledge of international politics include: Sloan 1981; Suransky 1983; Etcheson 1989; Van Belle 1998; Jefferson 1999; Newmann and Twigg 2000; Brown et al 2003; Roper 2004; Dinkov and Stoyanov 2005; Pepinsky 2005; and Majeski 2005.²¹ These authors cover a gamut of issues; for example, international terrorism, balance of power, war crimes trials, engaging Intro to IR students, gender differences, arms races, revolutionaries and reformers, the Cyprus problem, and asymmetric power.

Teaching International Politics via Simulation

The bulk of the previous discussion has specifically concentrated on courses integrating the ICONS Project. Now, more generic observations about using simulation for better pedagogy are in order.

In the best of all possible worlds, I would generally want all of my students to take a traditional international politics course *before* availing themselves of the simulation route. However, given the scheduling problems many face (due to transfers, student abroad programs, changes of majors, etc.), this is not always feasible. Another caveat is alluded to above; namely, some students do surprisingly well in the non-traditional environment. These individuals, I believe, actually profit most from being first seduced into learning about the intricacies of world politics via simulation.

Incidentally, I have taught in simulation courses a number of physically or otherwise challenged students. My impression is that the latter especially enjoy the simulation

environment – especially the use of computers. Technology seems to even out the playing field for those with afflictions. I have always wanted to explore the relationships between the challenged and simulation; but, my attention has gone elsewhere. My feeling is that in this regard as an educational community we have barely scratched the surface.²² The power of simulation has been largely untapped.

Simulations also offer interesting possibilities for the non-traditional student who has responsibilities at home or workplace. Their potential positive interdisciplinary effects are appealing, if difficult to attain. Simulations may be valuable integral parts of clusters of courses.

Instructors contemplating simulations should be warned the technique may be extremely time-consuming and energy-draining. This is especially true for the first several attempts. Start-up costs may be high. Probably most exhausting is the effort it takes to monitor students - a task akin to herding kittens. Simulations can be excellent vehicles to promote writing across the curriculum. But, no teacher acting alone (and no doubt with a myriad of other pressing teaching and professional responsibilities) can possibly read all of the messages his/her team submits. I will frequently break down a class into groups and give each an assigned task and try to circulate as best I can. Nevertheless, I know that the moment I leave one group to work with another, the educational quality of work within the first is likely to deteriorate. Without doubt, this specific problem is not unique to simulation classes.

Likewise, it is virtually impossible for the professor to attend all real-time conferences. Many are likely scheduled in the middle of other classes or important meetings. It is highly desirable, if at all possible, to at least remotely monitor your students'

performances from time to time. Students may actually enjoy the reality that “Big Brother” is, or may be, watching.

It is difficult for many professors to adjust to becoming facilitators. Teaching a traditional class, for example, I almost always feel I am in control. I know not only what I want to cover, but also how and when to do it. Instructors in simulation-based courses are prone to feel less control. This is not necessarily a bad thing. However, it does take time to adjust. Facilitators grow to appreciate the advantages of having students become more active participants in their own educational process and learn from the logical consequences of their own decisions.

Good Undergraduate Education

Chickering and Gamson have outlined seven famous principles of good practice in teaching undergraduates (Chickering and Gamson 1987). Teaching international politics via simulation meets most, if not all, of the criteria which may foster better learning outcomes. Student-faculty interaction in simulation-driven classes is of necessity high. Simulations encourage participants to cooperate, but nothing is guaranteed. Active learning is a hallmark of the simulation technique as is respect for different ways of learning. Prompt feedback of a kind occurs during negotiations as students meet, or fail to meet, their objectives. Whether other criteria (time on task and high expectations) are met in a simulation appears to be a function of the skills and attitudes of each individual instructor.

Major Considerations

Those toying with the idea of teaching international politics via simulation need to heed this warning: This approach is hard work. Again, start-up costs are especially high – although due to improved technology, most likely not as high as in an older era.

Professors contemplating using ICONS, or a similar program, need to weigh carefully how well their efforts in utilizing technology will be received at their respective institutions. Would they be better off in terms of tenure and promotion to take the substantial time and effort needed for profitable simulations and invest it instead in the production of another piece of traditional research? Answers will no doubt vary greatly from one college/university to another. Instructors who take the plunge into teaching with the simulation technique might be well advised to write about their experiences in suitable venues.

Conclusion

After fifteen years of experience, I remain as convinced as ever that simulation (such as in the ICONS Project) is an effective way in which non-traditional techniques and modern technology may be utilized for better pedagogy. Course evaluations appear to support this contention. Students tend to remember simulations and related interpersonal experiences. Many appreciate the opportunity to learn by doing. Almost all learn that in the real world it is harder than they thought to solve important problems and an enormous amount of toil is a prerequisite to successful international negotiations.

¹ Those interested in more information should contact: Simulation Coordinator, ICONS Project, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742, (301) 405-4172; icons@gvpt.umd.edu; www.icons.umd.edu.

² University of Maryland fees associated with the program are available on the project's web site. Spring 2006 fees for a single university team range from \$150 to \$500 depending on the length of the simulation and other factors. Today, the other costs to be absorbed by the home institution are more modest than in the past. With ICONS' older software, called Polnet, it was necessary to have a dedicated space for each country team to place its necessary hardware. Iconsnet, the most recent U. of Md. software, allows anyone with Internet access to participate regardless of location.

³ Since 1991 I have been an ICONS facilitator for thirteen 5-week university simulations.

⁴ Project ICONS offers a variety of simulation experiences for both university and secondary school students. My experiences are based upon 5-week International System distributed simulations which are integrated into traditional semester courses in International Politics. Similar 3-week simulations exist as do single-site simulations. The latter can be used at any time. During Spring 2006, a 3-week simulation on the International Relations of the Americas is scheduled. In addition, the University of Maryland's Center for International Development and Conflict Management, of which the ICONS Project is a unit, offers professional-level simulations to clients such as the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education Media Fellowship Program.

⁵ ICONS officials for years have provided instructors with pre and post-simulation evaluation instruments.

⁶ At the time of registration with Project ICONS, faculty may request to role play a particular country. There is a good probability that early registrants will be given one of their top choices.

⁷ The facilitator observes some of the complicated dynamics during class meetings. However, even more light is shed by virtue of reading student evaluations (formal or informal) once the course is completed. Students are not reluctant to discuss overbearing class leaders, malingerers, etc.

⁸ The role of the facilitator is not easy. Sometimes it is not clear when, how, or if, s/he should intervene. One may notice students making relatively minor mistakes in the course of a real-time conference, for example. But, is it really worth it to stop the flow of the moment? As a general rule, I believe the less intervention, the better. Major exceptions include acting to stop your country team from using inappropriate language, acting grossly inconsistently or out of character.

⁹ Clearly, I prefer as co-editors students I have taught before. Strong writing and organizational skills are a must. Nevertheless, interpersonal skills remain paramount.

¹⁰ The importance of bibliographic instruction is magnified when you are teaching a class of varying majors. I have taught ICONS sections composed of mainly political science majors as well as interdisciplinary honors sections.

¹¹ To alleviate this problem the ICONS website has handy links to news outlets from around the world. The ICONS research library is continually being updated. It is amazing how much pertinent material, including vital statistics, one can access through this site alone. Links to embassies, UN permanent missions, central banks, and other IGOs and NGOs are very helpful. For those proficient in foreign languages, some non-English sources are included.

¹² This problem is not by any means unique to simulation driven courses. The ICONS web site has a useful link to a page from the University of Maryland's Office of Information Technology warning readers of the perils of indiscrete use of Web materials. It also explains various methods of citing resources.

¹³ My students have participated in simulations with as few as 5 country-teams (none physically abroad) and in those with as many as 32 teams (15 outside the U.S.A.). While too large a number of teams of any kind is problematic, having a simulation include a few strong teams that are physically abroad adds a distinct dimension of welcome excitement. The more time zones, the better!

¹⁴ The first layer of defense against a country team's acting grossly out of character should come from the actual students portraying that country team. The country team facilitator also has a key role to play as "keeper of authenticity." Sometimes participants from other institutions provide still another layer of defense. There is probably nothing more detrimental to a good simulation than to have country teams, especially those representing major nation-states, portray themselves in a manner that would never occur in the real world. Given the hundreds of messages that fly back and forth in a typical simulation, monitoring this problem is more difficult than one might at first believe.

¹⁵ In the Spring 2005 simulation the average participation grade 20 students received from their peers was

above B+. The average final grade that I gave out in this course was B, much higher than for most courses I teach. Students ranged in age from 18 to 24. Six were female; fourteen were male. Three were minorities.

¹⁶ I require reading of *Negotiating a Complex World* as well as the simpler, *Getting to Yes* by Roger Fisher et al. Other interesting possibilities include Raymond Cohen's *Negotiating Across Cultures* and Fisher et al's *Coping with International Conflict*.

¹⁷ ICONSNET makes it easy to pull out permutations and combinations of simulation messages which when formulated are tagged according to issue area.

¹⁸ Since that time about 150 universities located in some 35 countries have become involved (Starkey, Boyer and Wilkenfeld 2005, p. xii).

¹⁹ Interview of language professor by author, Poughkeepsie, NY, 12 January 14, 2006.

²⁰ Language students are under constant stress to translate many messages in a timely fashion during the five weeks of the simulation. The instructor is under pressure to make sure translations are done correctly.

²¹ For still other pioneers in using simulations in international politics see Starkey, Boyer and Wilkenfeld, pp. 153-154.

²² There is some evidence, for example, that in America students whose native language is not English perform better in virtual classrooms than in traditional ones (Ehrmann 1999).

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