Abstract: The most common challenge confronting instructors of international relations is engaging “resistant populations” in meaningful dialogue. The use of simulations has long been touted as an effective way to overcome challenges associated with student learning. Simulations provide experiential learning, which helps students develop the crucial skills required for the study of the international politics. While this claim seems logical, there have been few studies that have actually measured the impact of simulations on student learning in the classroom. Additionally, the “resistant population” is often absent from discussions of this kind. A preliminary study of the effect of simulations on the “resistant population’s” learning was conducted in the Introduction to International Relations (POLS370) course at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville in the Fall 2005 semester. Doug Eder, Vice Provost and Director of the Office of Undergraduate Assessment and Program Review, provided support for this project in the area of assessment. In addition to discussing the characteristics of the “resistant population, this paper discusses the simulation mechanism and assessment devices used in this study. The paper also provides an overview of the preliminary findings of the study.

INTRODUCTION
When I first arrived at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE), I believed that
“students were students were students.” In other words, despite differences in socioeconomic status, geographical location or educational background, college students possessed the necessary tools and knowledge to engage in the intellectual exploration of international relations (IR). I worked tirelessly to put together my introductory course on the subject. I took extra care to pick out interesting reading assignments and written work that would engage and heighten student interest in the subject. Believing I was well prepared to face a new group of students, I entered the classroom full of confidence and enthusiasm.

Things appeared to be going fairly well for the first couple of weeks. Then, it happened! In the middle of a lecture on global poverty, I showed several overheads identifying regions around the world where a majority of the population lived on less than a dollar a day. Immediately, one student’s hand shot up. Pleased by what I thought was going to be an intellectual observation, I was floored by the student’s comment:

“Dr. DeGarmo, how do those people afford to put gas in their cars?”

I stood in the front of the class speechless for what seemed to be an eternity. I was not prepared for nor had I anticipated that students might have difficulty grasping this concept. Needless to say, I was perplexed. Why was it so difficult for students to understand poverty in this context? As I would soon discover, observations such as these were characteristic of the student population at SIUE - a population that I refer to as a “resistant population.”

Many scholars in the international relations community have asserted that the use of simulations in the classroom provide one avenue for students to better engage in the complex world of international relations. Simulations affect learning by providing students with the necessary experiences to develop the crucial skills required for the study of international politics. It seemed like a reasonable assertion. After all, I had used several simplistic simulations in my international relations courses to illustrate some of the more difficult concepts. I had always assumed these exercises had provided students with additional insights but did not actually know for sure if they had made a difference.

Since most of the claims regarding the effectiveness of simulations are normatively rather than empirically grounded, I decided to put the aforementioned assertion to a preliminary test by introducing the International Communications and Negotiation Simulation (ICONS) into my introductory course on international relations. By administering a series of assessments, I would able to collect preliminary data on the affects of simulations on student learning. This paper, then, explores the use of simulations as an effective way to address the challenges posed in teaching international relations to a “resistant population” while improving student learning overall. It begins with a general overview of my conceptualization of a “resistant population.” Given the extensive literature on the subject of traditional teaching methods coupled with discussions regarding simulations, I will only briefly explore the reasons why traditional approaches to international relations fail to provide an adequate learning environment for this specific population of students. I will briefly discuss the simulation mechanism used in this study, as well as the assessment devices used to gather data about student learning. I will then move to a discussion of my preliminary findings. Finally, I will discuss how simulations can

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1 For more information see: http://www.developmentgoals.org/Poverty.htm#percapita
augment teaching practices to better meet complex environments, while providing an experiential context that allows the “resistant population” to more effectively explore the world of international relations.

THE “RESISTANT POPULATION”
What is it that makes it so difficult for my students\(^2\) to grasp the complexities of international relations? Why is it they know so little about other cultures, or for that matter, competing perspectives of the world? Why is it when asked to discuss the implications of U.S. activities abroad they become defensive or antagonistic? To answer these questions, I decided to take a look at the general characteristics of the student population at SIUE.

One might think that a quick flip through the *Southern Illinois University Edwardsville Fact Book* would reveal some characteristics that would provide an explanation as to why students in my introductory international relations course were experiencing such difficulties. The information I uncovered was not particularly helpful:

- 82.7% of the student population is White, Non-Hispanic.
- The average ACT composite score for new first time freshmen is 21.9.
- \(\frac{3}{4}\) of the students ranked in the upper half of their high school class.
- The average time to completion for an undergraduate degree is six years.\(^3\)

I decided that a survey might provide better insights into the students enrolled in the course. I constructed a very simple survey\(^4\) that asks students a range of questions from their gender to their travel history. The survey is administered to students on the first day of class. I am well aware that the construction and administration of this questionnaire lacks the scientific rigor associated with traditional survey work. I am also aware that the results of this survey cannot be generalized to the entire student population. But, the information gleaned from this survey has provided me with invaluable insights into the population of students taking my introductory course, and, it has allowed me to rethink the model of instruction I use in the class.

*POL\(S\)3\(7\)0: Introduction to International Relations* is the gateway course to the IR subfield. On average, this course is taught twice a year at SIUE. The stated course objective is to familiarize students with the major theories, concepts and issues in the field of international relations. Upon completion of the course students should have a more comprehensive understanding of international relations. They will also be prepared for upper-division courses in international relations such as U.S. foreign policy, international political economy, international organizations, global terrorism, and the global politics of technology and culture. The average enrollment in this course is 45 students. The information provided below is based on a compilation of answers to eight surveys conducted between Fall 2000- Fall 2005. The N = 403.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1.0: Overall Characteristics of Students Enrolled in POL(S)3(7)0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

\(^2\) I do not mean to imply that “resistant populations” are strictly a phenomenon found at SIUE. I fully realize that this type of student may be present on campuses across the United States. But since I have not had the opportunity to observe those students, I limit my remarks to students I have instructed.

\(^3\) For more information see: http://www.siue.edu/CONSUMER/GraduationRates.htm.

\(^4\) For a copy of the survey please see Appendix 1.
The results of this survey are quite telling. For instance, first generation college students come to the classroom facing challenges beyond mere academics. In many cases they confront a variety of personal, financial, and social pressures without parental support or guidance. Non-traditional students, on the other hand, have mainly focused their early life experiences on their work and/or family. Many non-traditionals are trying to obtain better skills to acquire better jobs. Students who are employed must divide their time between studies and working. They are also subjected to changes in work schedules that might affect their ability to attend classes or complete assignments on time. As a commuter college, students are less likely to take advantage of the educational, social, cultural and intellectual programs offered on campus. Therefore, they are less likely to be exposed to diversity and competing visions of the world. It is not unrealistic to assume that some students are less concerned with intellectual development and more concerned with receiving their degrees. The majority of the students (56%) enrolled in POLS370 reside in the rural counties of southern Illinois (the “red” or Republican part of Illinois) which explains their more conservative attitudes. Students rarely travel beyond their hometown let alone their home state. Even fewer students have traveled abroad for anything other than military service. Therefore, their knowledge and experience with international relations is very limited or nonexistent. It becomes clear that while the students at the university may be bright and motivated, international relations is not only

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5 First generation college students are defined as students whose parents have not received a bachelor’s degree. See http://www.siue.edu/SERVICE/Qualification.html

6 The National Center for Education Statistics defines non-traditional students as those who meet one or more of the following criteria: financial independence, part-time or delayed enrollment, employed full time, have dependents beyond spouses, or high school equivalency certificates. See: http://nces.ed.gov/
distant, but in most cases, of little importance to their daily, real-life needs and concerns. This “distance” from “the international” creates frustration and anxiety for students undertaking the study of international relations.

I have adopted the term “resistant population” to describe the students at SIUE. A “resistant population” then consists of students who have little if any knowledge of politics in general or international relations specifically. Their experiences, or lack thereof, make it difficult for them to understand life beyond the confines of United States and in many cases beyond the state of Illinois. These unique set of circumstances hinder their understanding of international relations, make them defiant when it comes to learning new ideas and concepts, and unwilling to engage in conversations that do not portray the United States in positive light. These students become easily frustrated in their studies. Professors often tell these students they do not have what it takes to learn advanced and complex concepts based on their behavior. These comment only reinforce the “resistant population’s” feelings of inadequacy. The term “resistant population” could certainly be used to describe student populations of similar make-up beyond the SIUE campus.

TRADITIONAL INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACHES TO IR
The literature addressing traditional instructional approaches to international relations is immense. It is so immense I believe it unfeasible to address this literature in great length here. Rather, I will highlight several points I believe applicable to working with “resistant populations.” The traditional approach to international relations describes the teaching environment as one based on the combination of lectures, essay writing, and exams. Lectures employ a “unidirectional form of face-to-face communication.” Instructors convey knowledge to students who are expected to be able to identify key information based on their minimal knowledge of international affairs. Individual research consists of students reading books and journal articles related to a specific research question, followed by the writing of a comprehensive essay that analyzes their findings. Therefore, the preferred learning mode within the traditional model involves: 1) the selection of reliable and appropriate material for their perusal; 2) the comprehension of the selected materials; and, 3) the application of knowledge to the international context. The traditional model of instruction assumes students have acquired the necessary skills and knowledge to complete these tasks prior to their enrollment at the university.

The assumptions underlying the traditional model of IR instruction seem less applicable to the “resistant population.” Although the “resistant population” has the motivation and desire to succeed, they do not possess the skills, knowledge or experience to effectively understand international affairs. Hence, students find it difficult to identify key pieces of information let alone determine reliable resources. Since the traditional approach relies on existing knowledge and skills, instruction in international relations proves frustrating for both teacher and pupil, and thus a less effective model of instruction. Therefore, it is imperative for the field to reexamine the traditional approaches to ensure “resistant

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9 Ibid.
populations” are not excluded from the educational environment. It is crucial to find those methods and tools that will help them overcome the obstacles they face.

When I re-examined my syllabus for the introductory course in international relations, I too relied on the traditional model of instruction. The bulk of the course consisted of lectures. Once in a great while I supplemented the lectures with small group discussions. I relied on students to read their assignments and comprehend the materials prior to attending class. Written assignments and exams made up the entire course grade: quizzes (200 points toward the final grade); homework assignments consisting of essays (150 points toward the final grade); and, final essay exam (150 points toward the final grade). No wonder my students didn’t understand global poverty! They had no context in which to situate the phenomenon because I failed to supply them with one.

SIMULATIONS AS A TEACHING TOOL FOR “RESISTANT POPULATIONS”
Simulations in IR, whether imagined or factually based, are scenarios that are used to demonstrate international behavior or processes. These scenarios introduce students to a wide range of influences including conflict and negotiation. They also provide an opportunity for students to gain insight into the complexities of the international system. The belief that “experience is the best teacher” provides justification for the use of simulations as pedagogical tools. Furthermore, simulations have become a valuable teaching tool where “pedagogical practice in real environments carries too high a risk” or where access to real environments is restricted or limited. Therefore, “simulations help to make real a distant or unfamiliar environment.”

These assertions are pertinent to the discussion of “resistant populations.” If students lack experience in and knowledge of the international system, then it follows that simulations would provide them with a context in which to gain greater insights into its inner workings. Simulations would help students experience international phenomena that have been previously out of reach for them. Simulations could provide opportunities to integrate theory and practice in the classroom. For the purpose of teaching IR to “resistant populations,” the creation of an artificial but factually accurate environment may be, if not ideal, at least sufficient. From a normative perspective, this makes sense. On the other hand, empirical studies measuring the affects of simulations on student learning are not readily available.

THE RESEARCH DESIGN
Before I move into a discussion about the research design, I would like to take a moment to thank Professor Doug Eder, Vice Provost and Director of Undergraduate Assessment and Program Review at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, for his valuable

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10 For more information about simulations, please see: United States Institute of Peace. (2004) For the Classroom: Simulations @ http://www.usip.org/class/simulations
11 Roni Linser and Som Naidu, op. cit.
12 Ibid.
13 United States Institute of Peace, op. cit.
14 Roni Linser and Som Naidu, op. cit.
15 While a plethora of information about student learning can be found in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Literature, the field of IR has little to offer.
16 Permission to conduct this research required approval by SIUE’s Office of Research and Projects Institutional Review Board because of the use of human subjects. Approval to use Human Subjects was approved August 14, 2005 with official notification of approval provided on August 29, 2005.
17 For more information please visit: http://www.siue.edu/~deder
assistance and support throughout the duration of the simulation. Professor Eder assisted
me with the selection of appropriate assessment devices for this study as well as with the
interpretation of data. Most importantly, he assessed the learning outcomes associated
with the simulation. Without Professor Eder’s input, this project would not have
produced the rich data and insights that it did.

The aforementioned lack of empirical information is what led me to the decision to
conduct a preliminary study that investigated the affect of simulations on student
learning. I wanted to see first hand whether simulations had an impact on student
learning, and if so, in what ways the learning was affected. In order to make sure
students came into the course as open-minded and unbiased as possible, I did not make it
evident before the class started that there would be a simulation component to the class.
Students enrolled in the course had no idea they would have to role-play another country
let alone negotiate several international issues. I also decided that students would not
receive a grade for their participation in the simulation for fear the grade might induce
behaviors that might not otherwise be present.

The simulation mechanism
Choosing the simulation mechanism was an easy task. After presenting at APSA’s
Teaching and Learning Conference in 2005 and discussing the ICONS simulation with
several attendees of the “Internationalizing the Curriculum” track, ICONS seemed like
the perfect medium to use for my study. The ICONS 18 simulation is an experiential
program that employs web-based software to create an array of “virtual” scenarios in
which students confront specific negotiation topics through role-play. This “virtual”
community allows students to familiarize themselves with various components of the
international system including: conflict resolution, decision-making, negotiation, cross-
cultural communication and crisis management.19

The objectives of ICONS include: 1) the enhancement of student learning through
interactive experiences; 2) the development of critical thinking skills; 3) improved
communication skills generally and multinational communication skills specifically, 4)
appreciation of cultural differences; 5) learning and using problem solving techniques;
6) appreciation of negotiation strategies; and, 7) enhanced understanding of the
international system.20 In other words, “ICONS provides a laboratory where students can
test theories about how nations create foreign policy, resolve conflicts, practice
international negotiation skills, and work collaboratively.”21

The scenario provides the details of the environment in which a series of negotiations
take place. Students are expected to conduct comprehensive research on specific issue
areas from the viewpoint of their assigned country. They must also investigate the
viewpoints of other states involved in the simulation. The goal of the research is to
compile enough information to create a position paper that guides the students’ actions
and decisions through out the negotiation process. Students interact in the negotiation
process through “diplomatic” exchanges. They also attend a series of “virtual
conferences” aimed at bringing about cooperative solutions to international problems

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18 ICONS is the brainchild of the University of Maryland. It is used as a tool to help students gain a better
grasp of the complexity of international issues. See: http://www.icons.umd.edu
19 See: http://www.icons.umd.edu
20 Ibid.
21 Ibid.
such as: international debt, nuclear proliferation, human rights, trade, narcotics trafficking and the environment. Once the simulation has been completed students engage in debriefing exercises that help them apply what they have learned to real world situations.

I registered my class for the five-week “International System Simulation” that ran in Fall 2005. This particular scenario involved negotiations on human security, military security and the global economy. The specific issues within these three categories were: debt and trade; refugees and internally displaced persons; conflict resolution and peacekeeping; public health; and, terrorism. Egypt was the country chosen for my class to role-play. I would like to take a minute to explain the rationale behind the choice of country. I knew full well playing Egypt would be challenging for my students given they knew very little about the international system and the states that comprised that system. However, I wanted them to have an opportunity to learn about a state in which Islam rather than Christianity provided the backdrop to political and societal decisions. Secondly, I wanted students to learn about a country that was economically less developed than the United States. Additionally, as an important ally of the United States in the Middle East, playing Egypt would allow students to see what is was like being a recipient of U.S. foreign policy rather than the creators of foreign policy. I also wanted students to collaboratively explore the workings of the international system while experiencing the security dilemma up close and personal. I wanted students to be forced outside their comfort zones!

**Learning Objectives**

To create an environment conducive to assessment, one must start by selecting learning objectives for the course. Learning objectives guide instructors in their choice of instructional materials. These materials are geared toward helping students achieve the specified goals. Assessment devices are chosen after the objectives and materials have been selected.

Cognitive objectives are those objectives that address knowledge and the development of intellectual skills. Table 2.0 below not only lists the cognitive learning objectives for the course, but also identifies how those objectives will be achieved.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective 1:</th>
<th>Students will analyze the interconnection of the actors in the international system and the effects that events taking place in one country have on other countries. This objective will be achieved through the readings in the textbook that will be supplemented by homework assignments on Islam and the HIV pandemic. Analyses will be supported by work completed for and during the simulation.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective 2:</strong></td>
<td>Students will explain how global problems and challenges, such as resource scarcity, pollution and population growth, affect individuals and their living spaces. This objective will be achieved through the readings in the textbook, the HIV pandemic homework assignment, and through participation in the simulation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective 3:</strong></td>
<td>Students will discuss the role of cooperation in solving complex international problems. This objective will be achieved by participation in the simulation as well as through the debriefing that will follow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective 4:</strong></td>
<td>Students will gather data using both quantitative and qualitative techniques. This objective will be achieved during the research component of the simulation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Objective 5:** Students will analyze the future of the following issues in the face of national resistance to international solutions: debt, free-trade, sustainable development, terrorism, peacekeeping, refugees and public health. This objective will be achieved through participation in the simulation.

**Objective 6:** Students will frame international problems and identify and articulate the advantages and disadvantages of proposed solutions. This objective will be achieved through the negotiation and proposal writing components of the simulation.

**Objective 7:** Students will demonstrate oral and written communication skills in the negotiation of strategic international issues while collaborating with their peers. This objective will be achieved through the collaborative work required for research, in addition to the negotiation and proposal components of the simulation.

**Objective 8:** Students will identify interests of key actors in the domestic and international political arenas. This objective will be achieved through readings in the textbook and participation in the simulation.

**Objective 9:** Students will test theories regarding the methods decision-makers use to resolve conflict. This objective will be achieved through the readings in the text, the homework assignments on Islam and the HIV pandemic, as well as participation in the simulation.

**Objective 10:** Students will familiarize themselves with demographic diversity and model appropriate political behaviors in diverse settings. This objective will be achieved through participation in the simulation.

**Objective 11:** Students will exhibit geographic literacy. This objective will be achieved through the readings in the text, participation in the simulation, and periodic map quizzes.

Affective objectives address the manner in which students deal with things including values, motivation and attitudes. The affective objectives for the course are in Table 3.0 located below.

**Table 3.0: Affective Learning Objectives for POLS370: Introduction to International Relations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective 1:</strong></td>
<td>Students will understand the nature of value judgments. This objective will be achieved through class discussions, homework assignments on Islam and the HIV pandemic, as well as through participation in the simulation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective 2:</strong></td>
<td>Students will gain insight to the importance of being a citizen of the global community. This objective will be achieved through class discussions, the homework assignments on Islam and the HIV pandemic, as well as through participation in the simulation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective 3:</strong></td>
<td>Students will actively participate in the classroom setting. This objective will be achieved through collaborative work and participation in the simulation, classroom discussions, and question/answer periods scheduled at the end of scheduled lectures.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Survey Instrument**

In order to determine whether or not students enrolled in the introductory course met the criteria outlined for a “resistant population,” I decided to use the survey instrument I had been working with since arriving at SIUE in Fall 2000. The survey would be administered the first day of class before any discussion of course requirements to limit bias and encourage more accurate responses. Certainly, there is no guarantee that students would accurately self-report but given the survey had provided some interesting
insights when used previously, I was sure it would do so again.

The “Minute Paper”
The “Minute Paper”\(^{23}\) would be one of several assessment techniques used to measure the simulation’s affect on student learning. The “Minute Paper” requires the instructor to pose a pertinent question to the class\(^{24}\) and allow students one minute to respond to that question. The answers remain anonymous and are returned to the instructor for analysis. The “Minute Paper” lets instructors quickly determine if they are getting their points across in an effective manner. The “Minute Paper” I used focused on students’ feeling about the simulation while providing them with an opportunity to identify key points that remained unclear. The results of the “Minute Paper” would be used to collect data and help me identify major points that needed clarification.

Journal
A journal component\(^ {25}\) was incorporated into the class. The “Scholarship of Teaching and Learning” literature states: a journal “accentuates favorable learning conditions by providing the writer with intellectual space to think while encouraging independent learning.”\(^ {26}\) Journals encourage reflection, which fosters deep learning. Deep learning refers to the ability of individuals to gain a personal understanding of materials while integrating that knowledge with what is already known.\(^ {27}\) Additionally, there is a correlation between writing and the enhancement of learning. Writing helps students clarify their ideas. Responses to written entries in a journal provide immediate feedback from the instructor.\(^ {28}\) The language used in journals is less formal and more expressive than traditional written assignments and might actually promote enhanced learning.\(^ {29}\) Finally, the journal would provide me with an opportunity to engage in direct conversation with students about issues and concerns they had regarding the course, the materials, or the simulation. Students would receive points for their journal entries and the grades for the journals would be based on a grading rubric provided by the Office of Assessment and Program Review at SIUE\(^ {30}\) in order to convey expectations to students while providing a way to consistently evaluate the entries. The journals would later be subjected to content analysis to help collect data on student learning.

Assessment of Group Effectiveness
Students would also be encouraged to evaluate their team’s effectiveness through the use of group assessment.\(^ {31}\) This type of assessment helps students bond as a cohesive unit while helping them “identify their sense of the task(s) before them, explain the


\(^{24}\) Questions traditionally focus on the most central things students have learned thus far in the class or on questions students have about the material that have remained unanswered at the time the “Minute Paper” is administered. *Ibid.*

\(^{25}\) See Appendix 2 for a copy of the journal assignments.


\(^{27}\) See: http://www.ucd.ie/teaching/good/lea4.htm

\(^{28}\) *Ibid.*


\(^{30}\) See: Writing Assessment and Evaluation @ http://www.siue.edu/~deder/grrub.html

\(^{31}\) See: http://www.siue.edu/~deder/assess/cats/gpw14.html
organization they see as necessary to accomplishing the task, and reflect on the diversity of talents and effectiveness of teamwork required to conclude the task successfully.\textsuperscript{32}

Individuals are only responsible for evaluating their contributions to the team and once the forms are completed, groups engage in discussion about their findings. If a group needs to adjust its behavior, it is the responsibility of the group to initiate that change.\textsuperscript{33}

**THE FINDINGS**

**The Survey**

When class convened on August 23, 2005, I began the session by introducing myself. Before I went any further, I administered the survey. I explained to students I was interested in learning about their background. Without hesitation, they completed the survey. Table 4.0 below provides a summary of characteristics associated with students enrolled in the *POLS370: Introduction to International Relations Class* in the Fall 2005 term.

As with the other surveys, students in this class can be classified as “resistant.” They are overwhelming first generation college and non-traditional students. As stated elsewhere in this paper, these students face many challenges beyond the academic environment. First generation students often confront academic challenges without the benefit of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males enrolled in POLS370</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females enrolled in POLS370</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Generation College Students\textsuperscript{34}</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-traditional Students\textsuperscript{35}</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed Full Time</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed Part Time</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live Off Campus</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reside in southern countries of Illinois</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traveled Outside of Illinois (beyond St. Louis)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traveled Outside the US for purposes other than military</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have Performed Military Service</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traveled Outside US for Purpose of Military Service</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.09%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{34} First generation college students are defined as students whose parents have not received a bachelor’s degree. See http://www.siue.edu/SERVICE/Qualification.html

\textsuperscript{35} The National Center for Education Statistics defines non-traditional students as those who meet one or more of the following criteria: financial independence, part-time or delayed enrollment, employed full time, have dependents beyond spouses, or high school equivalency certificates. http://nces.ed.gov/
parental input. Many non-traditional students must balance children and careers with academic responsibilities. With ninety-six percent (96%) of the students employed in either full or part time jobs, they must balance work and academic schedules, as well as employment responsibilities with academic obligations. Eighty-seven percent (87%) of the students live off campus. Therefore, students may spend less time in campus libraries or take advantage of an array of university programs. While there seems to be an increase in the percentage of women enrolled in this class, the class is still dominated by males. Fifty-nine percent (59%) of the students have not traveled outside the state of Illinois, while only .06% of the students have traveled abroad. Those who reside in the counties of southern Illinois are less likely to have encountered diverse cultures and tend to be more conservative. With so few students having traveled outside of the United States, there is little direct exposure to the world of international relations. Students seem to be preoccupied with their daily, real-life needs and less concerned with the workings of the global community.

**Introduction of Simulation to the Class on First Day**

Let me begin this discussion with YIKES!!!!! I had hoped the class would ooze exuberance when I explained to them they would be participating in a simulation that involved universities from around the world. The response was anything but enthusiastic:

- No one told us there was going to be a simulation prior to enrolling!
- I don’t like anything but lectures. I don’t want to participate in this thing.
- There seems like there is too much work in this class. Other classes don’t have to do this. Why do we have to?
- This isn’t fair!
- I hate group work! I hate this!
- @!###*@!

I have to admit I felt a bit of trepidation. Although I carefully provided an overview of the simulation, explained that there would be plenty of time to prepare for the project and that they would not be graded for their participation in the simulation, the general atmosphere of the class remained “frigid” for the remainder of the evening. You can only imagine the reaction when the students were told they would be playing Egypt!

The class met once a week for approximately three hours. The class sessions leading up to the simulation consisted of lecture, discussion, and simulation research. Lectures focused on international relations theory, nationalism, globalization, states, international organizations, military security, diplomacy, and international law. These subjects seemed most relevant to the simulation. Discussions were used to test and explain international relations phenomenon as it related to Egypt. Within three weeks, students self-selected into teams based upon specific issue areas that were to be negotiated during the conference proceedings. Each team was organized so that some students would research a specific issue according to the Egyptian point of view, while others would conduct research on policies of other countries involved in the scenario.

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36 The actual simulation dates were October 4 – November 8, 2005.
The First “Minute Paper”

After several weeks of preparation, I decided to administer the first “Minute Paper” on September 27, 2005. My goal was to discover how students were feeling about the impending simulation and what they believed I needed to do to help them better prepare. These are the questions that were asked of students in the class:

**Question 1:** What do you think is the scariest thing about the upcoming simulation?

**Question 2:** What can I do to help you prepare for the upcoming simulation?

In regard to Question 1, students displayed a faire amount of apprehension in regard to conducting research. They were generally afraid they would not collect the “correct” information or that they would not have enough information to be successful in the negotiations. Students were uncomfortable with collaborating with others. They were resistant to the idea that they would have to assume a role other the United States. They felt inexperienced and did not like being in a position of not knowing what would be involved in the negotiation process. They were even more concerned about the outcome of the simulation. They seemed convinced that the other schools participating in the simulation would have more experience than they would. Therefore, I think it is safe to say students were uncomfortable with having to “dive into the unknown” or “forced outside their boxes.” They lacked confidence in themselves and their abilities. The responses are certainly what one would expect from a “resistant population.”

The responses to the second question revealed similar concerns. The responses ranged from “you are doing enough” to “you are not doing enough” to help us. The class was schizophrenic – students in the same class had competing visions of what I needed to do for them! Some of the responses were quite demanding indeed: “tell us everything you know, tell us how to put everything together.” Not surprisingly, students once again responded from their own self-interest. In response to the first “Minute Paper,” I sent students an email that provided them with some helpful hints in preparing for and completing the simulation component. I tried to encourage them and support them in this endeavor.

Change in Consciousness: The Second “Minute Paper”

Three weeks later, on October 18, 2005 - the mid-point of simulation preparation, I completed another “Minute Paper” with my class. Again, I asked the question: What do you think is the scariest thing about the simulation? While some students still had concerns about the “unknown” and accurately portraying Egypt, there seemed to be an overall sense of confidence emerging from students in the class. One student responded that he/she believed they would “blow the other teams out of the water,” while other students stated they were no longer scared at all.

What might account for the differences in responses between the first and second “Minute Papers”? First and foremost, students had several lines of support from members of the SIUE and Edwardsville communities. In order to assist with the immersion of students into Egyptian life, I arranged for several guest speakers to visit the

37 See Appendix 3 for questions and responses to the first “Minute Paper.”
38 See Appendix 4 for the written response.
39 See Appendix 5 for the written responses to the question posed in the second “Minute Paper.”
class. Some of the invited guests had first hand knowledge about Egypt, while others were experts in the issue areas involved in the simulation. Eric Barnett, the curator of the SIUE University Museum, came to the class to discuss Egyptian culture, religion, and sustainable development. Peg Soliday and Mary Diamond, members of the Edwardsville community, spoke with the class about their recent visit to Egypt. Their presentation included a lengthy discussion of politics, gender inequality, and socioeconomic and environmental conditions. Peg and Mary provided maps, photo albums, and various items they picked up during their visit. They even permitted the students to hold on to the items for the duration of the simulation. Students received a variety of resources to supplement their research from Cyndi Peterson a member of the Office of International Programs of the School of Business at SIUE. Students also had the opportunity to meet with Silvia Torres of the SIUE International Trade Center to discuss economic issues.

Professor Eder visited one conference session to cheer students on while observing their behavior. I believe one of the strongest influences on student learning during this time period was the outpouring of support from the SIUE and Edwardsville communities. Being enveloped in the arms of experts helped students gain additional knowledge about Egypt. And, students knew that support was there for the duration of the simulation.

Additionally, class was devoted to the various tasks needed to adequately prepare for the simulation. Teams were conducting research collaboratively outside of class. They were also communicating more with each other via the course discussion board. My teaching assistants met with each team to help them with their research. They also read rough drafts and offered comments on the teams’ position papers. Students had a chance to explore the ICONS “virtual” community and learn how to operate its many features. Much of the “unknown” that had frightened so many students had become “known.”

Students also conducted group assessments of their individual teams. Amazingly, students steered clear of personal attacks against one another and focused on their individual contributions to the team in a meaningful way. After summarizing their responses, the teams reconvened and discussed their strengths and weaknesses within their individual groups. Students were able to evaluate: 1) the participation of the members of their team; 2) the overall preparedness of group members for the simulation; and, 3) the effectiveness of collaboration. Additionally, students were able to acquire additional information from the group that was missing from their own research. They also suggested ways to enhance the group experience. Individual teams began communicating with other teams in the class to discuss the various positions of each team. Teams helped teams clarify their points, their missions, and their tasks for the upcoming simulation. As corny as this may sound, a sort of “Borg” consciousness was emerging in the class.

**Observation of Class During ICONS conference**

When the conference period opened for the ICONS simulation, each team selected members from their own group to attend and represent that team’s position on specific issues. Therefore, if the topic of the conference was “Debt and Trade,” not only were members from the Debt and Trade team present, at least one member from the IDP team present, at least one member from the IDP team,

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40 While students traditionally organize and summarize this information, they asked if I would complete this task in order that responses would be examined in an objective way and so that I might comment on additional tasks that needed to be undertaken.

41 A note of thanks to Cindy Scarsdale of the Office of Undergraduate Assessment for helping me find a term that adequately reflected the conference behavior of my students.
the Refugee team, and so forth would present at the conference as well. Multiple computers were set up in the Department of Political Science Conference Room to provide students with a space in which to work through the various aspects of negotiation. Those students involved in a specific conference would then huddle in groups of two or three around each computer. Members would then read and type appropriate responses to whatever questions or issues arose.

The conference behavior of my students is still something I have trouble describing. I have never observed anything like this in my entire teaching career. In fact, it was so remarkable I asked Professor Eder to observe one conference session to reassure myself that what I was not imagining the whole thing. The students, with no prompting from outside sources, developed a scheme that would allow them to track and respond to messages coming across their computer screens at the approximate rate of 8-10 messages per minute. This scheme was developed without prior discussion between them. They just seemed to “know” that each computer station should be responsible for reading and responding to messages coming across the screen at different points throughout the conference. One computer station would be responsible for reading and responding to messages sent at the opening of the conference. Another station would be responsible for reading and responding to messages that were sent in the middle of the conference. Others would read and respond to new messages coming across their computer screens. Students intuitively switched between roles as typist or responder when a message required a different response than what the individual at the keyboard could supply. In other words, students moved to and from the computer when certain expertise was required. There was very little verbal communication between them. They intuitively knew when to switch positions and how to tackle the stream of messages. When asked how they knew to do this, students replied that they just somehow knew what to do. They could not explain how they knew this – they just knew this was the best way to tackle the conferences.

The “Borg” Consciousness
For those of you unfamiliar with Star Trek, a bit of background information may be helpful at this point in the paper. The Borg are part organic and part artificial life-forms that came into contact with the crew of the Enterprise in the Star Trek Next Generation series. The goal of the Borg was to collect as much technology as possible. The Borg were linked together via bio-chip thus creating a collective consciousness. Individuals would be captured and assimilated into the Borg collective. They would lose their individual identity and become a member of the overall consciousness. Each Borg was unique because of the artificial component implanted into their body. Also, each Borg provided the collective with new pieces of information upon assimilation. The Borg were quick to adapt to new situations and all knowledge obtained by the Borg was transferred to the collective.

Students participating in the various conferences in the ICONS simulation appeared to lose their individual identities as well and become a member of the collective consciousness of Egypt. They no longer “resisted” the simulation, in fact they became one with it. While each individual had a unique perspective on the issues and questions put before them, their responses reflected Egypt as a whole rather than their individual expertise. They adapted quickly to the technology and to the challenges placed before them in the negotiations. They innately knew who was better suited to answer or address
particular issues. No individual “ego” was present during the conferences. What each
team had learned was transmitted to the class as a whole. As a collective whole, students
were able to identify issues, explore solutions, prioritize those solutions and then choose
the most appropriate response. Very Borg-like behavior, if you ask me! But on a more
serious note, this behavior is also characteristic of deep learning whereby individuals gain
a personal understanding of materials and integrate that knowledge with what is already
known. My students took that learning one step further – they integrated their
knowledge into “collective class knowledge.”

\[\text{On Becoming Egyptian and Other Revelations}\]

Although the content analysis of the journals has not been fully completed,\(^43\) preliminary
analyses have revealed some rich details and patterns regarding student learning. The
journals also reveal a disturbing trend that has affected nearly 1/3 of the students enrolled
in the course – physical and sexual abuse. I will start my discussion with this revelation.
Since I have never had students write journals, I do not know if the patterns of abuse are
consistent with students in other classes or with universities nationwide. I had not
anticipated that students would so honestly reflect their personal experiences when asked
to introduce themselves to me in the first journal assignment: \#1: \textit{Introduce Yourself to
Me}. I am not well versed in the literature on patterns of abuse among college students so
I am hesitant to make any assertions. What I learned from these revelations is the need to
be more attentive to the backgrounds of students when teaching topics related to violence
overall, and rape and genocide more specifically.

Some of the first glimpses into changes in perceptions about the world occurred in
journal entry \#3: \textit{The World’s Problems}. In this entry students were to: 1) list what,
according to them, are the world's worst problems; 2) rank them so the very worst is on
the top of their list; 3) describe what they think cause(s) these problems; 4) discuss how
do they think these problems affect the living spaces of individuals; and, 5) describe what
they think some solutions are to these problems. Before this journal entry was due,
students had read and discussed the following topics in international relations:
international relations theory, nationalism, globalizations, national states, international
organizations and law, and national security. Students had also engaged in research and
team work in preparation of the simulation. I was curious to know which had the greater
impact on their selections, the book or the simulation. Some of the answers most
repeated in this assignment are provided here. The number in parentheses indicates how
many students placed this issue at the top of their lists: the loss of natural resources (8),
the environment (7), HIV/AIDS (12), poverty (20), and terrorism (11). It is clear that at
this point in class the simulation had a greater influence over what students believed to be
the world’s worst problems, since many of these topics had not been formally introduced.
These issues would not be explored until after the simulation was completed. Another
important point to mention is the ability of students to conceptualize the problem, draw
inferences regarding the impact of the problem, and propose cooperative solutions. They
certainly had not learned this from simply reading the text. These capabilities had been
reinforced by the work completed during the preparation for and negotiation in the

\(^{42}\) http://www.ucd.ie/teaching/good/lea4.htm

\(^{43}\) There were 46 students enrolled in the class. Each student was responsible for submitting seven journal
entries. The journals were submitted for the last time on December 13, 2005. There is still work to be
completed in regard to the content analysis. References from the journals are used for preliminary
discussion here.
For the purposes of this paper, the most telling journal entry was **#5: Inside Your Role.** In this assignment students were asked to imagine they were an Egyptian individual assigned to investigate their country’s position on a particular international issue (preferably the one they were working on for this simulation). They were to write about their life or experiences as that person in this position, while avoiding stereotypes. Most students did quite well with the assignment. I have provided only a few excerpts from the various entries here. I hope you can gain some sense of the transformation of students into their Egyptian counterparts.

The passage below provides a fairly accurate portrayal of Egyptian foreign policy. Egypt expresses its loyalty to its Muslim brothers, yet receives a disproportionate amount of foreign aid from the US. It shows the uneasy line that Egypt must walk in order to maintain itself as a leader in the Arab community while remaining a good partner to the United States. It is unlikely that students who had not had the intimate experience of playing Egypt in a simulation would understand this tenuous position.

The resolution began as a “good idea on paper.” It was a condemnation of genocide. After all, how could anyone raise an objection to a decree denouncing the wholesale slaughter of an entire group of people? There have been many objections, owing largely to a single paragraph on a page near the end of the document. The paragraph consists of a strong condemnation of Islamic fundamentalism as a driving force behind genocide. Most Muslim countries, not just those that are governed by Islamic law, but secular Muslim countries as well, have taken this passage as an insult or outright attack of Islam. Egypt has not yet taken a position. President Mubarak has decided to delay his decision until the United States decides. This decision to wait on the U.S. is a gamble that is likely to cause Egypt more harm since the rest of the Middle East and North African countries are looking to us to take a strong stand.

Another example illustrates the tenuous position of Egypt in regard to economic development and consequences that development will have on the life force of Egypt—the Nile River.

My name is Farouk Abdel al-Aaron. I am a board advisor for Badr el-din Petroleum Company in Egypt. Recently, our company has been receiving international and domestic pressure in regard to environmental issues. Our major dilemma is figuring out a way we, at Badr el-Din, can provide jobs at our petroleum factory, and at the same time, help keep the Nile River and the rest of our environment clean…. Unfortunately, pollution from surface runoff, river traffic, and industrial use has tainted the water, thus posing severe health threats to aquatic life, livestock and to humans…. The Egyptian population growth rate is 1.8% annually, which means our extremely limited land for agriculture and development is decreasing rapidly … The winds of the Sahara Desert have claimed much of our land … So what can we do to help given Egypt does not have the necessary funds to help with the development of clean technology.
The final example addresses the issue of Islam and its relationship to terrorism. It illustrates the ability of students to not only understand the major underpinnings of a religion different than their own, but apply those religious concepts to a real-life event: terrorism.

I am a religious person and I believe every word of the Holy Qu’ran. The Qu’ran states that if a non-Muslim attacks a Muslim, then every other Muslim must come to the defense of their Muslim brother in jihad. This is the argument that terrorists use to justify their actions. Yes, I called them terrorists. There is a difference between a freedom fighter and a terrorist. However, the Holy Qu’ran also states very specific rules of jihad. In a jihad, Muslims are forbidden to kill women and children. The Holy Qu’ran also states that if an enemy soldier throws down his sword then you are not permitted to kill him …..

While many may think that these results are not all that remarkable, let me remind you about the group of students who wrote these words. The students in the class are a classic example of a “resistant population.” They screamed and complained about the work load, the commitment they would have to make to the project, and having to operate in an “unknown” environment. They lacked a basic understanding of the international system and important topics therein. Given they live in the rural and conservative world of southern Illinois, they had little if any understanding of the diversity of the world around them. Even more important, they lacked the ability to take on the “lives” of a culture diametrically opposed to their own. For the members of the “resistant population” to be able to capture the essence of Egypt in such detail is remarkable indeed!

**ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING OUTCOMES**

On November 29, 2005, Professor Eder interviewed the class in order to assess the learning outcomes of students. As detailed in his letter on feedback from the class interview, Professor Eder divided the students into small groups and posed several questions to them. The questions and integrated responses are provided below.

1. This course is about stimulating you to explore subject matter from a perspective that differs from the one you are used to in college. Please describe the most unexpected thing you discovered as a result of your engagement in this course. What do you think allowed you to make this discovery?

- **We discovered how the US truly acts with other countries in its international relations.** We were able to discover this because we were assigned to another country that's under the wings of the US. The simulation allowed us to see how other countries act.
- This course was challenging, but we thought it would be more difficult. We worked together so well so it went quickly [from problem to solution], We kinda clicked.
- [We discovered that] we weren't competing against other countries. Instead it was kind of like collaborating and working together. [We could succeed because] it was nice to know we couldn't fail unless we got out of character [in the simulation].
- [The most unexpected thing was] the confusion and disorderliness of the international system, the simulation paralleled the real world.
- For us the most unexpected discovery was the buoying role the US plays in the international scene. We found this out by taking a different (that is, the Egyptian) perspective on international issues.
- Our most unexpected discovery was the study and gaining of an understanding of the international

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44 See Appendix 7 for the letter.
community through a non-US perspective. [We made this discovery] because we did research both individually and in groups and during interactions with other groups in the simulation.

2. Discovery is not easy, especially if the latitude for making mistakes is large. What activity or expectation in your learning environment for this course made you the least comfortable...or the most "discomfortable"? Intellectually, how did you cope with it? What did you learn from it?

- [Our least comfortable circumstance was the presence of] brains and knowledge by other groups worldwide. They knew so much...more than we did. They had huge proposals and we felt overwhelmed. We confronted the discomfort by just diving in headfirst, blindly.
- [We worried about] having to rely on other groups [in our class] to represent us and talk for us [in the simulation]. We coped with it by having faith in the other groups to do their jobs.
- For us it was fear of the unknown. We coped with it by sticking out and giving it our all. We learned to have trust in our own abilities and in each other.
- We weren't sure exactly what preparation was necessary for us to succeed in the simulation. We coped by mostly by waiting for the simulation to begin and then we realized we were fully prepared. We learned that we had to have faith in ourselves. Some things you just have to wait for.
- We were most worried about during the negotiations, like if things were brought up that pertained to other groups and we had to represent them [without preparation]. We worried that we might agree to something we shouldn't have or might make a mistake. We worked this out by talking out problems [among all of our groups] after each negotiation.
- For us it was not knowing the specific mechanics of the simulation...not knowing how the medium we are communication was going to work. That meant we didn't specifically know what to prepare for. We found that we could adapt our research to the medium and we also found that we could learn quickly.

3. What is your metaphor for your educational experience in this course?

- This isn't really a metaphor, but you get out of it what you put into it.
- This simulation was like being stuck between a rock and a hard place.
- It's like going from being on top of a mountain to being in a valley. When we got to the bottom we had to dig our way out.
- "There is no I in teamwork."
- It's like being in a waterpark. From outside the gate you don't know what it's like but once you're inside the waterpark it's tons of fun.
- It was like the being on the Titanic: You can sink or swim...or freeze to death.
- This course made me walk in another person's shoes and see a different perspective.
- It was like playing Russian roulette: You didn't know if you were going to get shot [by other teams in the simulation].
- This class is like standing on the edge of a cliff because we kept wondering if we were going to fall off or be ok.
- This course is kind of like riding a bike. At first you're afraid and you don't want to fall off. And then you get the hang of it and find out you're ok.

Professor Eder provided me with the following analyses of students' responses:

As you witnessed, your students responded to these three questions with good-natured gusto as well as through serious reflection. In all my numerous experiences of interviewing students in courses, I have never come across such a strong combination of good humor and unassuming deep thought. This quality of reflective thinking without guile and pretension confirms my initial, positive impressions that arose when I observed the students in action during the international simulation itself. Unusually "deep learning" happened in your course. I am interested in what environmental factors have contributed to this happening.

A couple of trends are evident to me in your students' responses to the questions above. First, a theme of cooperative discovery runs through the responses to the first question. Students in this course found themselves mentally transported into unfamiliar, somewhat...

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45 See Appendix 7.
threatening, territory, and they discovered that they could navigate by cooperating. This cooperation became necessary, from my perspective, because (a) the task for the course far exceeded the capabilities of any single student, and (b) the international simulation itself was a cooperative, not a competitive, venture. The literature that I have read about student learning emphasizes strongly the value of cooperative learning as one of the strongest pedagogies available. It appears to me that you intentionally chose a pedagogical environment that channeled your students into very powerful learning processes. And the students themselves sensed that.

I see a second theme in the group responses to Question 2: Students found themselves entering into zones of intellectual discomfort. It is noteworthy that they didn't select "quitting" as an option for coping with their discomfort. Rather, they use the non-competitive environment in which they found themselves as a resource, because success lay in cooperation, not in escape. In my experience both at SIUE and on other campuses, I think it is interesting to test the hypothesis that the sort of really high-quality learning that has emerged from this course is due, in part, to an environment that contains some level of intellectual discomfort for the students. Remarkably, your course has parallels in a Culture, Ideas, and Values (CIV) course led last year at SIUE by Eric Ruckh and Steve Brown. Students in neither your course nor their course were selected or filtered in advance; they simply registered for the course and encountered an unusual pedagogy, one that put them in an intellectually "discomfortable," but emotionally supportive and cooperative, situation. Evidence arising from both courses supports the hypothesis that greater-than-usual learning arises from this kind of environment.

I detect confirming evidence supporting the two themes above in the metaphors the students offered in response to Question #3. Whereas humor percolates through the metaphors, indicators of cooperation and risk are even more evident. Similar, but not identical, metaphors arose in the metaphors collected from Ruckh and Brown's CIV course mentioned above. That is, students revealed that the course was risky business and often contained strange, even confrontational elements. Yet none of these elements were identified with the professor. Performance expectations as communicated by the professor(s) were high, but the rigor of each course arose from the students themselves, not from some artificial harshness imposed by the professor. It takes a degree of trust, for example, to dive in headfirst blindly, trust in one's own abilities, and have faith in the quality of what other student groups are doing (cf. responses to Question #2 above). In my experience, this is a remarkable finding, and it elevates these courses out of the merely ordinary, where students in groups parasitize each other's work, into something worth investigating as a pedagogical model. From my numerous conversations with you, Denise, this combination of academic risk and cooperative support is clearly an intentional combination that you built into your course from the beginning. It was an equally clear combination in Ruckh and Brown's CIV course. Both courses produced student behaviors that are nationally connected to "deep" or "higher" learning. It will be interesting to see what long term effects linger from the very special course you have design and the very special students who have emerged from it.

SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS
The goal of this project was to examine student learning in the context of simulations. There is no question in my mind that ICONS had a positive affect on student learning in this case. The immersion of this “resistant population” into a “virtual” environment, provided the experiential learning necessary for students to adequately understand and operate within the international context. The “virtual” scenario helped students explore various social, political and cultural phenomena that occur at the international level. The learning environment allowed students to test “real” assumptions in their “virtual” environment. The importance of collaborative learning was also reinforced through the use of ICONS. Collaborative learning fostered cooperative forms of engagement thus enhancing the educational experience of this population. The simulation got students
involved as active participants in their own educational process and served as an important pedagogical tool for linking classroom knowledge with real-world experience. All in all, the simulation helped my “resistant population” overcome feelings of inadequacy while building confidence to move beyond their confines.

Assessment has provided me with an opportunity to explore and demonstrate the affects of simulations on the learning outcomes of the “resistant population.” The important next step is to introduce ICONS into my next introductory course and replicate this study in order to compare learning outcomes. This will allow me to more fully analyze the results and make recommendations for a more comprehensive model of instruction for the field of international relations, one that helps students gain a deeper understanding of the world around them.

APPENDIX 1: SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Please take ten minutes of your time to respond to the attached survey. Participation in the survey is voluntary. You may choose not to participate. If you choose not to participate, please return the document to the survey administrator. The information collected will be used to examine the influence of simulations
on the learning experience of students enrolled in POLS370: Introduction to International Relations.

Thank you,
Dr. Denise DeGarmo
Department of Political Science
Southern Illinois University Edwardsville

**Questionnaire**

Please read each question carefully and respond by circling the appropriate answer.

1. Please identify you sex.
   - Male
   - Female

2. Did **both** your parents obtain a bachelor’s degree?
   - Yes
   - No

3. Are you **financially independent** of your parents?
   - Yes
   - No

4. Describe your **enrollment** status.
   - I am a full time student (enrolled for 12 or more credit hours).
   - I am a part-time student (enrolled for less than 12 credit hours).

5. Describe your current **employment** status.
   - I am employed full time (35 or more hours).
   - I am employed part time (less than 35 hours).
   - I am not employed.

6. Do you have **dependents** (children) beyond a spouse?
   - Yes
   - No

7. Describe your previous educational experience.
   - I have a high school diploma.
   - I have a GED.

8. Describe where you live.
   - I live on campus.
   - I live off campus.

9. Are you a resident of the state of Illinois?
   - Yes
   - No

10. Are you a resident of the United States?
    - Yes
    - No

11. Do you reside in any of the following counties in Illinois: Madison, St. Clair, Monroe, Randolph, Clinton, Washington, Perry, Jackson, Union, Alexander, Pulaski, Marion, Jefferson, Franklin, Williamson,
Johnson, Massac, Hamilton, Saline, Pope, White, Gallatin, and Hardin.

Yes  No

12. Have you traveled outside the state of Illinois for purposes other than the military?
Yes  No

13. If you answered yes to question 11, has this travel extended beyond St. Louis?
Yes  No

14. Have you traveled outside the United States for purposes other than the military?
Yes  No

15. Please describe your military experience.
   I have never served in the military.
   I formerly served in the military.
   I currently serve in the military (for US students this includes the reserves).

16. Have you traveled outside Illinois for military purposes?
Yes  No

17. Have you traveled outside the United States for military purposes?
Yes  No

APPENDIX 2: POLS370 JOURNAL ASSIGNMENT
Overview: In addition to homework assignments and quizzes, you are required to complete two written pieces associated with the simulation. While the 1st simulation piece will focus on writing a policy recommendation for a specific issue area (details will be provided once we are assigned to groups and receive final simulation details), the 2nd piece will consist of keeping a journal. Your journal is one place I get to have an in-depth "conversation" with you about the issues and ideas that come up in class and in the readings. It's not a private diary - I give you assigned topics to write about. But, you will have more freedom of expression when you write because I will be paying less attention to the form, spelling, or grammar of what you write. I am interested in what you think, what you have to say and how you integrate ideas, always. The college day is a busy one, so the journal is the one place we'll both always have time to "listen" to each other.

Journal Rules: I take your journal very seriously, and will spend a lot of time on it--as you will discover. It is my hope it will become your favorite thing that I grade.

Here are the general rules for the journal assignment:

• Please purchase a spiral notebook. I will not accept loose papers or three ring binders.
• The length of the entry should be as long as it takes to fully address the questions/topics.
• The journal is due at the beginning of class on the dates indicated below.
• This assignment is worth 100 points toward your final course grade. Late journals will be accepted but will only earn up to 30 points of the assignment grade.
• Your journal must be legible.

Grading will be based on the following criteria:

• Do you fully respond to the questions posed to you?
• Do you clearly present a statement that identifies the specific issue you are addressing with each entry? Are you focused and well organized?
• Do you exercise good critical thinking? Do you provide adequate supporting arguments with reasons, evidence and examples in your entries?
• Do you display originality and creativity?

The Topics: Below is the list of topics and questions I would like for you to address in your journal. These have been arranged according to a weekly schedule which will correspond to discussions and presentations scheduled for each particular session. This schedule is to provide you with some focus and help you organize your thoughts.

#1: Introduce Yourself
Due September 6
Here's the place to more formally introduce yourself to me. Tell me about your…

• PAST: Your family, where you were born, where you've been, etc.
• PRESENT: What kind of person are you? What things do you like and dislike? Why did you decide to take this course? How do you see (if that is indeed the case) this course as helping you reach your goals?
• FUTURE: What are your plans for the future? Career plans? What would you like your life to be like in 10-15 years?

#2: Teach Me
Due September 27
• Every person possesses certain knowledge. What is something you know about the international system? Try to think of something you know about the international system, but you think I probably
don't know about. Tell me everything you know about this particular piece of “knowledge.” Provide plenty of examples, pictures, etc. to convey this “knowledge” to me.

#3 The World's Problems

Due October 11

• List what, according to you, are the world's worst problems. Rank them so the very worst is on the top of your list. What do you think cause(s) these problems? How do you think these problems affect the living spaces of individuals? What do you think some solutions are to these problems?

#4: Your Topic

Due October 25

• Tell me about your area of expertise for the simulation. Why did you choose it? What do you already know about it? What kinds of things do you want to learn about it? Tell me how the work on your topic is going thus far. Tell me what you've done since you chose your topic. What have you looked for? What have you found? Have you learned anything new yet? Have you had any problems yet you've had to overcome? Had you any lucky breaks in your research? What is the best source you've found so far? How is the group work going? Do you like group work or not?

#5: Inside Your Role

Due November 8

• Imagine you the Egyptian individual assigned to investigate your country’s position on a particular international event (preferable the one you are working on for this simulation). Write about your life or experiences as that person in this position. For instance, what is the key interest of the individual both personally and politically? Write in the first person (using the pronoun “I” as you write). While I encourage creativity, be sure you remain in role and avoid stereotypes.

#6: Assimilating Egyptian Culture

Due November 29

• Tell me how you feel about becoming “Egyptian.” What has been the greatest challenge you have faced in this assimilation? What has been the easiest thing for you to assimilate? What do you perceive to be the greatest difference between you and your Egyptian counterpart? What do you perceive to be the greatest similarity?

#7: Empathy

Due December 5

• How do you define empathy? Who is the most empathetic person you know? Describe that person. How empathetic are you? What is the most empathetic thing you've ever done? How could you improve, to make yourself more empathetic? Would you ever be so empathetic as to risk your life and reputation to help a stranger even if that individual did not share your religious, racial, ethnic, political or ideological beliefs? Even if you weren't in the group that was being threatened, and you could safely just do nothing and stay out of it?

APPENDIX 3: THE FIRST MINUTE PAPER

Minute Paper
POL5370
September 27, 2005
Q: What do you think is the scariest thing about the simulation?

A:
- become able to write a proposal that everyone would understand and not offend anyone
- the scariest thing is that we are depending on a very large class of people we don’t really know to give us success or failure
- that we can get kicked out and embarrass ourselves and you
- the scariest thing about this simulation is the amount of time that we need to put on it, including research and reading information from countries that we never heard about
- not know exactly what the forum for the negotiation will be like. It’s hard to prepare for what you don’t know.
- having to exchange information with diplomats from our respective country and to create a proposal for our own respective group’s position
- the research preparing for the sim. Being able to portray Egypt correctly with the research we do.
- the unknown and what exactly to say and how I am being graded
- going into it blindly, not knowing too much about our country
- not understanding how to put together a proposal that is concise and fits the purpose.
- the scariest thing about the simulation is communicating with the country without being rude or inappropriate
- I think the scariest thing about this simulation is playing the role of Egypt with your views masked by the Egyptian view
- the scariest thing in the simulation is the fact that I have never done this before
- the most frightening thing is that others will know way more than me (other countries that is). And, thus be able to get what they want
- the scariest thing about this simulation is relying on others to work as a team, and being able to collaborate effectively at the designated meetings.
- not knowing what I am suppose to be looking for
- the scariest thing about this simulation is the fact that we have no idea what we our getting ourselves into, we don’t know what it’s going to be like, we aren’t Egypt and we’ve never done this before
- the unknowing of it, walking into a situation never done before not knowing who you are against and what is going on or what will happen
- we don’t know what and who the other schools are. Not knowing what resources they have and experience they have
- not really knowing what other’s mindset are. I mean, we have to project the responses of the others countries and know when to compromise
- not knowing who we are up against – meaning what schools. Also not sure if will be prepared but I know we will be
- I feel the scariest thing about the simulation is that I won’t be able to find enough info and will cause problems for the class due to this
- the scariest thing about the simulation is not knowing an exact goal to work toward. I’m really good at convincing people once I know what to convince them of
- not know what country we will be negotiating with
- Pressure to complete research and retain the knowledge so that I will do well
- The scariest thing is knowing what to write and to what level I’ll have to be at to able to compete with other schools
- Playing a person in a culture I’ve never been in …but it’s also the neat thing. The writing is scary
- not knowing exactly who we are up against is the only scary part – that and letting down my teammates
- not knowing all the information ahead of the time. The amount of research is a close second.
- I feel the scariest part of this simulation is not knowing what is going on for sure and where the results of this are actually going to go and be put towards
- the fact that, I believe, there are experts who are far more experienced at this sort of thing with far more resources playing against us
- being responsible for ½ my group and covering my part completely, I want to do well
- not really knowing what we should be researching from the get-go. I need it all laid out in black and white!! Im scared I’ll mess up and get a bad grade
- having t make the proposal to the other country’s
- To me, the scariest part is the anticipation of what it will be like when we start. A lot is still not known at
this point.
- We don’t know who we are up against and we don’t know what to expect from them. We have to be
  prepared for everything.
- The scariest thing is really knowing exactly what to research and who we are up against. Also, the time
  constraint (3 weeks to do it in) is a little
- Trying to address the Egyptian view of a single approach to prevention when they suffer from different
  ailments
- I fear I am not finding the right stuff.

Q: What can I do to alleviate your fears regarding the simulation?

A:
- meet with each group and just assure us that we’re on the right track with what we’re doing. Continue to
  tell us how much you believe in us …. Like the little engine that could.
- you already have … you’re available via email/office hours to answer questions. I think its just a matter of
  getting going/starting the simulation – them we’ll all feel more comfortable.
- offer help when it is requested, which you have been doing.
- you can make that it stay on task and language friendly
- DeGarmo can maybe turn a class into some socializing and getting to know each other or possibly bring
  the class together as one, not 20 “very divided groups” as we’ve been thus far.
- I think a more precise timeline for gathering information so that some people in the group don’t slack off!
- Tell us everything you know about it. Because we still confused about this whole thing.
- Tell me that I do not need to know these things right now, and that all will be well.
- Dr. D can bring us milk and cookies to alleviate our fears of the simulation. Aldo to help us find a few
  greeting phrases in Arabic.
- more real work experienced people who have lived/visited/studied specifically Egypt and its policies to
  visit our class.
- give us some example of a simulation scenario.
- I think fears will be alleviated once we start doing our work sessions on it. I think everyone now is kind
  of clueless.
- Tell us or lead us in the way to put a proposal together that fits all of the criteria needed as well as keep us
  in character.
- give me a million dollars or at least an “A” in the class.
- give us some insight as to how to conduct ourselves without seeming like jackasses.
- bring in a Egyptian point of view to learn how we are suppose to act during the simulation
- we could start the simulation that is going to be the only thing that will take away my fear of not knowing
  what this is going to be like.
- nothing – I have to go in and learn as much as I can fit in my tiny brain.
- Maybe designate ½ hour – 1 hour per class time for group work in library or downstairs in computer room
- go in depth on what we are to be looking for. Just so I don’t let my team down.
- Give examples of previous simulations. Show movie form actual negotiations. Footage of ACTUAL
  Egyptian diplomats? Make us feel more comfortable with out character.
- She can just keep informing the class of new information as it comes so we know more about it.
- tell us the other schools. The things I fear you can’t change. I fear the lack of world power we have.
- nothing I can think of, it’s a learning experience – I’d like to take it as it comes and deal with the positive
  and negative consequences
- You have done all you can, can’t tell us who the other schools are, and have helped with research
- Let us know how much information we really need. Do we need pages upon pages worth? I’m just
  nervous about exactly the info that is necessary
- Unfortunately, without doing the simulation for us there is nothing to be done. Giving honest advice on
  our negotiation ideas would be good, even if you have to tell us they are bad.
- keep giving the class ideas/suggestions
- tell us where to find more information – where at state department? CIA?
- You don’t have to do anything, I feel this is a project of responsibility rather than something that’s
  actually challenging. Discipline is key.
- I don’t know. Explain the types of writing we will be doing for the simulation (messages, conferences,
  negotiations) if possible
- Only tell us who we’re up against – but understandably that’s not going to happen. Actually, that just
make things worse – disregard.
- Do the work for us! Just kidding. I think just continuing what you are doing.
- Hold me and tell me everything will be alright. Or tell me if I’m right.
- Keep most of the group organization in class because that way my group is here and I can ask you for help. It’s hard to have synchronous communication outside class.
- not much can be done because you don’t have all the information yet either!! You’re doing a great !!
- It would be wonderful if you could be at the conference to help us through it.
- At this point I am not sure. I am sure however, that as long as Dr. DeGarmo is available during the simulation to provide assistance, all will be well.
- To help alleviate my fears – DeGarmo could offer samples of policies – samples of what you are looking for.

APPENDIX 4: RESPONSE TO FIRST MINUTE PAPER

POL370
September 28, 2005

Dear Students – here are some helpful hints to successfully completing the simulation. Although I have discussed these several times, I believe that conveying them through written word might be helpful because you can refer back to the suggestions as often as you need to.

1. You don’t need to know everything about everything. You need to focus on YOUR specific assignment.
You are either finding Egyptian policy about a specific issue or you are finding the policies of other states in regard to a specific issue. This is all you should work on between now and next week. You should have an idea of what the specific ideas/opinions/stands for the country/countries you have been assigned by October 4. You will have additional time to specify a more specific policy by October 11. “Policy” is nothing more than a description of a state’s approach to a particular topic.

2. Most of the materials you need to discover these policies have been provided on the ICONS site. By devoting your attention to your assignment you will facilitate your group’s ability to efficiently come to some consensus on what the Egyptian position should be in regard to the issues. This is about you taking a risk to discover something about someone that you don’t know.

3. The writing that needs to be done at this time has to do with providing everyone with an overview of what you have found out. The introductory letter will be written together. I am not assigning the policy brief nor am I giving you a copy of it because this is due later in the semester and you do not need to be distracted by it at this point. Focus on your individual assignment for the time being.

4. I am happy to meet with each group and have been doing that already. You need to ask for help when you need it. I am here to help you in any way I can – just ask!

5. Look at the ICONS website to see what others have done in prior simulations. This is a wonderful source of information and can provide an example of what occurred in past scenarios.

6. Today and tonight and for the next couple of nights, work on your individual assignment. It is not time to speculate how other states will act or how Egypt will react to them.

7. Besides going to the library at the beginning of class on Tuesday, we will spend the next three classes working together and in groups. Also remember that we will meet during scheduled class time during the three weeks of conferences – we will be able to continue to work together as well during the evening.

8. I know you can do this. With some patience, discipline and faith in yourselves, you can negotiate your issues in the scenario. The only expectation I have of you is that you give it your best shot. I am proud to be working with such an incredible group of students. I could not ask for anything more. Again, this is not about me – this is about doing the best you can and roll with the punches as best you can. We are in this together and will walk through it together.

See you all at the library on Tuesday at 6pm.

Shanti,
Dr. D.

APPENDIX 5: SECOND MINUTE PAPER

Minute paper
October 19, 2005

Q: What do you think is the scariest thing about the simulation?

A:
- I am scared we are going to blow all of the other teams out of the water.
- Not knowing what things in my area of expertise we are willing to negotiate away.
- The actual act of being in front of the competition and having to do all of that and worry about saying the wrong thing.
- The scariest thing is trying to complete the requirements for the simulation from the Egyptian point of
view. I can you backwards and forwards what I know, but I am not Egyptian yet.
- I am still scared because I can’t figure out what I am supposed to be doing. I haven’t been able to find my
information and I need it now. Also, I feel we area just out of our comfort zone.
- Composing the actual statement. Maybe negotiating. Do we know enough? Will we be prepared? I’m
really ready to get it over with.
- People in our group have dropped and now we have to pick up the slack and I already have a lot going on.
- The unknown. I’m confident in my group and my knowledge on our topic; however, I’ve never been in
an online debate.
- The scariest thing about this simulation is the idea that we are so dependent on our entire class, most of
whom we barely know or trust. This makes it scary because we depend on strangers.
- I guess the scariest thing left is being unprepared. I feel like I’ve only touched the tip of the iceberg – one
thing I research leads to another, etc.
- I have collected a fair amount of resources to help me along, but I guess I am unsure about how the
negotiations take place, if at all, out side the conferences
- making sure I have enough information to portray my group/person/ideas/thoughts as an Egyptian
correctly. I’m afraid of being marginalized
- That I will let my team down. Somehow I will cause our group to lose points or break a rule of the
simulation
- I really don’t know what my group members are really up to – are they B.S.ing me or are they really
researching. Also I’m worried about Randy’s attendance,
- The countries or country that are going to negotiate with. It’s not knowing who we are going to talk to
that makes me nervous.
- going against other schools. Feeling like I still need more research. Wish I could have seen it in action as
observer first.
- procrastinating and not being ready on time.
- I’m scared that I will not know how to help my team better with research
- not scared
- Honestly I’m not scared at all. The only concern I have is accurately portraying the points of view of the 6
or so countries and their views.
- I’m scared that I do not have enough information to be able to adapt to more in depth topics that might
arrive
- I’ve gained much more confidence in the simulation since I’ve learned that the info is almost entirely in
the website. Very helpful. Scariest part is not being lazy
- we are coming along well but in general I think the scariest part is worrying about my grade. I’m afraid
I’m accidentally going to screw something up and get a bad grade.
- I am scared that I won’t get all the info for my group and fail them in getting ready for this project. Then
they think I am not doing my part and I get a bad grade for this class.
- I’m not scared anymore, I’m just hoping I find the right info on the other countries.
- thinking correctly like Egyptian so you don’t get on us. We thought we had it but you set us a little more
straight on the right path.
- not really anything. However, the issue of who we are dealing with intrigues me. I have been in
international simulations before but meet with them.
- The scariest thing about the simulation is not knowing who the other teams are. The unknown is the only
thing worth being afraid of. Everything else is just a matter of study and preparation.
- The unfamiliarity of it …. As soon as it starts, I’m sure everything will fit together and make sense.
- getting all the facts and info to support our own mission within the simulation. I want to be as acquainted
with the subject as I can be and knowing the facts will help.
- nothing scares me to this point. I understand the general premise of the countries foreign policy towards
terror and I’m just ready for them to start putting the issue on the table.
- I don’t know how I will use all the information that I collected.
- the other teams could be more prepared. We have a lack of organization.
- how/when we need to write proposals to the other countries.
- I’m scared about the experience the other players might have in this simulation. It will obviously be
beneficial to those that have done this simulation before.
- disappointing Dr. DeGarmo or letting the group down
- I have no idea what to expect. I don’t really know exactly what to research. And I don’t want to let my
team down.
- I believe that confronting other students in this simulation who are located across the world is my biggest
APPENDIX 6 THE WORLD’S PROBLEMS
Major Global Issues Identified Through Journal Entry #3

Issues Related to Natural Resources and the Environment
Gas 1
Ozone hole 1
Loss of natural resources 8
Deforestation 1
Clean water 2
Air pollution 1

Global warming 3
Environment 7
Water pollution 1
Pollution 4
Nuclear Waste 1

Issues related to Public Health
Health 7

HIV/AIDS 12

Issues Relating to Education
General Education 4  
Lack of information 1  

Issues Relating to Poverty  
Greed 1  
Hunger 3  
Miss information 1  

Issues related to Population  
Overpopulation 1  
Illegal immigration 1  

Issues related to Economy  
Capitalism 2  
Debt 2  

Issues relating to Religion  
Religion 2  

Issues Related to Power Politics  
Political power 1  
Terrorism 11  
Violence 1  
Genocide 4  
State sovereignty 1  

Other Issues  
Self pity 1  
People 1  
Close mindedness 1  
Need for total system reform 1  
Intolerance 1  
Unwillingness to pay back US for aid and assistance 1  

APPENDIX 7: INTERVIEW WITH CLASS BY DOUG EDER

TO: Prof. Denise Degarmo  
Department of Political Science  

FROM: Douglas Eder  
Undergraduate Assessment -&- Undergraduate Research Academy  

SUBJECT: Feedback on classroom interview, November 28

Please accept my thanks for the privilege of interviewing your Political Science 370 course on Tuesday evening. I asked your students the three questions listed below
and collected their responses while you observed. As you know, the students showed a gleeful exuberance even as they engaged in serious, reflective discussion.

For the purpose of interviewing your students and filtering their responses to Questions 1 & 2, I divided them into 6 groups of 5-6 individuals each. The questions listed below are followed by each group’s integrated responses in as close to the students' own words as I could capture. Therefore, no individual student’s opinion ruled. There is no ordering or ranking of responses between the groups. Responses to Question 3 arose not from groups but from individual students who volunteered their metaphors.

1. This course is about stimulating you to explore subject matter from a perspective that differs from the one you are used to in college. Please describe the most unexpected thing you discovered as a result of your engagement in this course. What do you think allowed you to make this discovery?

- We discovered how the US truly acts with other countries in its international relations. We were able to discover this because we were assigned to another country that's under the wings of the US. The simulation allowed us to see how other countries act.
- This course was challenging, but we thought it would be more difficult. We worked together so well so it went quickly [from problem to solution]. We kinda clicked.
- [We discovered that] we weren't competing against other countries. Instead it was kind of like collaborating and working together. [We could succeed because] it was nice to know we couldn't fail unless we got out of character [in the simulation].
- [The most unexpected thing was] the confusion and disorderliness of the international system...the simulation paralleled the real world.
- For us the most unexpected discovery was the bouying role the US plays in the international scene. We found this out by taking a different (that is, the Egyptian) perspective on international issues.
- Our most unexpected discovery was the study and gaining of an understanding of the international community through a non-US perspective. [We made this discovery] because we did research both individually and in [our class] groups and during interactions with other groups in the simulation.

2. Discovery is not easy, especially if the latitude for making mistakes is large. What activity or expectation in your learning environment for this course made you the least comfortable…or the most "discomfortable"? Intellectually, how did you cope with it? What did you learn from it?

- [Our least comfortable circumstance was the presence of ] brains and knowledge by other groups in the simulation world wide. They knew so much…more than we did. They had huge proposals and we felt overwhelmed. We confronted the discomfort by just diving in headfirst, blindly.
- [We worried about] having to rely on other groups [in our class] to represent us and talk for us [in the simulation]. We coped with it by having faith in the other groups to do their jobs.
- For us it was fear of the unknown. We coped with it by sticking out and giving it our all. We learned to have trust in our own abilities and in each other.
- We weren't sure exactly what preparation was necessary for us to succeed in the simulation. We coped by mostly by waiting for the simulation to begin and then
we realized we were fully prepared. We learned that we had to have faith in ourselves. Some things you just have to wait for.

- **We were most worried about during the negotiations**, like **if things were brought up that pertained to other groups** and **we had to represent them** [without preparation]. We worried that we might agree to something we shouldn't have or might make a mistake. We worked this out by **talking out problems** [among all of our groups] **after each negotiation**.

- **For us it was not knowing the specific mechanics of the simulation...not knowing how the medium we are communication was going to work**. That meant we didn't specifically know what to prepare for. We found that we could **adapt our research to the medium and we also found that we could learn quickly**.

3. **What is your metaphor for your educational experience in this course?**

- **This isn't really a metaphor, but you get out of it what you put into it.**
- **This simulation was like being stuck between a rock and a hard place.**
- **It's like going from being on top of a mountain to being in a valley.** When we got to the bottom **we had to dig our way out.**
- "**There is no I in teamwork.**"
- **It's like being in a waterpark.** From outside the gate you don't know what it's like but **once you're inside the waterpark it's tons of fun.**
- **It was like the** being on the **Titanic**: You can **sink or swim...or freeze to death.**
- **This course made me walk in another person's shoes** and **see a different perspective.**
- **It was like playing Russian roulette**: You **didn't know if you were going to get shot** [by other teams in the simulation].
- **This class was like standing on the edge of a cliff** because we kept wondering if we **were going to fall off or be ok.**
- **This course is kind of like riding a bike. At first you're afraid and you don't want to fall off. And then you get the hang of it and find out you're ok.**

**COMMENTS:** As you witnessed, your students responded to these three questions with good-natured gusto as well as through serious reflection. In all my numerous experiences of interviewing students in courses, I have never come across such a strong combination of good humor and unassuming deep thought. This quality of reflective thinking without guile and pretension confirms my initial, positive impressions that arose when I observed the students in action during the international simulation itself. Unusually "deep learning" happened in your course. I am interested in what environmental factors have contributed to this happening.

A couple of trends are evident to me in your students' responses to the questions above. First, a theme of cooperative discovery runs through the responses to the first question. Students in this course found themselves mentally transported into unfamiliar, somewhat threatening, territory, and they discovered that they could navigate by
cooperating. This cooperation became necessary, from my perspective, because (a) the
task for the course far exceeded the capabilities of any single student, and (b) the
international simulation itself was a cooperative, not a competitive, venture. The
literature that I have read about student learning emphasizes strongly the value of
cooperative learning as one of the strongest pedagogies available. It appears to me that
you intentionally chose a pedagogical environment that channeled your students into very
powerful learning processes. And the students themselves sensed that.

I see a second theme in the group responses to Question 2: Students found
themselves entering into zones of intellectual discomfort. It is noteworthy that they didn't
select "quitting" as an option for coping with their discomfort. Rather, they use the non-
competitive environment in which they found themselves as a resource, because success
lay in cooperation, not in escape. In my experience both at SIUE and on other campuses,
I think it is interesting to test the hypothesis that the sort of really high-quality learning
that has emerged from this course is due, in part, to an environment that contains some
level of intellectual discomfort for the students. Remarkably, your course has parallels in
a Culture, Ideas, and Values (CIV) course led last year at SIUE by Eric Ruckh and Steve
Brown. Students in neither your course nor their course were selected or filtered in
advance; they simply registered for the course and encountered an unusual pedagogy, one
that put them in an intellectually "discomfortable," but emotionally supportive and
cooperative, situation. Evidence arising from both courses supports the hypothesis that
greater-than-usual learning arises from this kind of environment.

I detect confirming evidence supporting the two themes above in the metaphors
the students offered in response to Question #3. Whereas humor percolates through the
metaphors, indicators of cooperation and risk are even more evident. Similar, but not
identical, metaphors arose in the metaphors collected from Ruckh and Brown's CIV
course mentioned above. That is, students revealed that the course was risky business and
often contained strange, even confrontational elements. Yet none of these elements were
identified with the professor. Performance expectations as communicated by the
professor(s) were high, but the rigor of each course arose from the students themselves,
not from some artificial harshness imposed by the professor. It takes a degree of trust, for
example, to dive in headfirst blindly, trust in one's own abilities, and have faith in the
quality of what other student groups are doing (cf. responses to Question #2 above). In
my experience, this is a remarkable finding, and it elevates these courses out of the
merely ordinary, where students in groups parasitize each other's work, into something
worth investigating as a pedagogical model. From my numerous conversations with you,
Denise, this combination of academic risk and cooperative support is clearly an
intentional combination that you built into your course from the beginning. It was an
equally clear combination in Ruckh and Brown's CIV course. Both courses produced
student behaviors that are nationally connected to "deep" or "higher" learning. It will be
interesting to see what long term effects linger from the very special course you have
design and the very special students who have emerged from it.

Thank you for the privilege of interviewing your students and sharing in their
reflective thoughts and exuberant laughter. It gives me much pleasure to learn from you
and from your students. Members of an orchestra produce notes, but the conductor is
important for bringing it together into a coherent work of music. Your students have
shown themselves to be superb members of your orchestra, and objective evidence suggests that you are an adventurous and stimulating conductor. Something special is going on in your classroom and I hope that this letter to you outlines a thought or two that you can use in the future.