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ABSTRACT

Since negotiations are continually taking place around the world, speech communication departments would be wise to update their curricular offerings by adding a course in negotiation theory and practice, or by supplementing courses with a unit in negotiation. An initial technique for introducing students to negotiation involves brainstorming. As a class or in groups, students could list examples of situations in which negotiation, in some form, frequently occurs. Next, they could examine recent situations in which they have personally negotiated, analyzing what occurred and why. The second step, incorporating both theory and practice, should examine four of the theoretical perspectives of negotiation: personality approach, the economic or learning model, strategic analysis, and process analysis. Students could examine research concerning each perspective and later incorporate those findings into their own negotiations. The third step involves the use of simulation to provide opportunities for practicing and developing the negotiation skills. Regardless of type of simulation used, the critical factor is the follow-up analyses in each negotiation so that students can relate their own verbal and nonverbal behaviors and the negotiation outcomes to the theories and principles already studied.(HOD)

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A CALL FOR THE STUDY OF NEGOTIATION

by Ruth Hunt\*

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Negotiations are continually taking place around the world. The U.S. and the Soviet Union negotiate to establish nuclear arms limitations; the U.S. and Japan negotiation to loosen trade restrictions. Elected officials negotiate with colleagues for political favors and cooperation. Workers collectively or individually negotiate for improved pay, working conditions, or job security. Students negotiate for extra credit and revisions in their instructors' expectations for assignments and exams. Individuals negotiate with car dealers, coworkers, and even family and friends.

How does one acquire the highly useful skill of negotiation? Unfortunately, many communication departments still do not teach negotiations and seem to discount its importance. The closest counterpart to such course might include segments of interpersonal communication courses dealing with conflict resolution in a most general sense, and courses on persuasion or argumentation dealing with social influence. While some claim these topics appear quite similar to bargaining and negotiation, much more is involved than conflict resolution or persuasion. As researchers Sawyer and Guetzkow conceded, "communication and persuasion" are "major elements in the process of modifying utilities," but a multitude of variables affect the bargaining process.<sup>1</sup>

Communication departments would be wise to update their curricular offerings by adding a course in negotiation theory and practice, or at the very least, by supplementing courses with a unit in negotiation. High school speech classes could also include negotiation instruction. A wide variety of courses seem to be likely candidates for inclusion of such a unit--persuasion, conflict resolution, interpersonal, organizational, business and professional, or political communication. All of these types of communication processes and situations require the use of negotiation--to obtain or divide resources, power, and influence--and yet related courses have typically excluded

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the topics of bargaining and negotiation. These skills are falsely assumed to be critical only in training for profession in law or labor negotiations.

The argument for the study of negotiation will proceed by first, briefly defining the process of negotiation, second, summarizing current approaches in negotiation modeling and research, third, comparing present approaches in negotiation instruction, and fourth, offering suggestions for coursework to better prepare students for negotiation in personal and business interactions.

### Definitions of the Negotiation Process

Negotiation appears to be an inevitable fact of life, occurring "whenever the terms of an economic transaction must be determined, or whenever a dispute must be settled."<sup>2</sup> Indeed, some bargaining is necessitated whenever two parties come to desire conflicting or competing ends.<sup>3</sup>

Studies of negotiation by Walton and McKersie demonstrated labor negotiation to be a subset of the larger domain of social negotiations. They applied the classifications "attitudinal structuring" and "intra-organizational bargaining" to in-group situations such as collective bargaining, and "distributive" and "integrative" bargaining, in a broader sense, to non-labor settings.<sup>4</sup>

The distributive style of bargaining includes "The complex system of activities instrumental to the attainment of one party's goals when they are in basic conflict with those of the other party." Integrative bargaining functions to "find common or complementary interests and solve problems confronting both parties."<sup>5</sup> So when negotiators' interests are not in direct conflict, they may integrate their goals and share in the outcome.

Pruitt and Lewis further distinguished between these two types of negotiation. Distributive bargaining generally occurs when negotiators perceive that one person's gain requires a corresponding loss to the other. In contrast, integrative bargaining functions as more of a problem-solving mode of interaction. Since participants' goals may overlap, they are motivated to cooperate and perhaps compromise.<sup>6</sup>

The game theory terminology of "zero" versus "varying sum" outcomes applies directly to the distributive versus integrative orientations of the bargainers. Individuals who perceive that their gain must cause a corresponding loss for their opponents (outcomes sum to zero) will be more likely to use distributive tactics. Meanwhile, bargainers who believe that a variety of possible outcomes may be created, whether through collaboration or compromise, utilize integrative behaviors.<sup>7</sup>

The role of communication in these two arenas differs. One review of the negotiation literature suggested that distributive bargaining involves the hiding of settlement information, in a "climate of defensive communication." In contrast, integrative bargaining proceeds more directly and deliberately as the participants recognize that resolution requires information disclosure and trust.<sup>8</sup> Putnam and Jones concluded, "The central problem in negotiations, then, is not the effect of message strategies, but the nature of interpersonal influences that accompany how these trades are communicated."<sup>9</sup>

This cursory review of literature defining negotiation requires the advancing of three concluding points. First, negotiators may switch back and forth between an integrative and distributive style.<sup>10</sup> Second, these styles actually lie on opposing ends of the same continuum. Agreement necessitates cooperation, and so distributive bargainers must exhibit some integrative communicative behaviors or deadlock will ensue.<sup>11</sup> Finally, aside from the interpersonal orientations of the bargainers, many other issues influence the nature of the negotiation--tangibles such as money or materials, and a large number of intangibles such as the desire to "save face" or to ensure good will for future interactions.<sup>12</sup>

The "give and take" of negotiation thus may involved multiple styles of communicating and interacting. While the process may be defined in basic terms, many variables influence both the manner in which a given negotiation will proceed and the outcomes which will result.

#### Current Approaches in Negotiation Modeling and Research

Just as many elements make up the negotiation process, representations of that process differ significantly, with either a methodological or theoretical focus. The

methodologies used in studying negotiation have included game theory, parasimulation, and real world observation. Games have been the most prevalent by far, with Rubin and Brown summarizing results of over 500 such studies in a ten-year period.<sup>13</sup> The Prisoner's Dilemma, Parchese Coalition, Acme Bolt Trucking, and Bilateral Monopoly games place participants in mixed motive situations and require skill in interactive decision making to reach some goal.

Parasimulation, a second negotiation methodology, retains similarities to game models yet incorporates revisions to overcome certain deficiencies. Guetzkow's "international simulation" contributed some of the elements of this model, which "falls somewhere between a straightforward simulation and a game."<sup>14</sup> One paradigm involved role playing by two fictitious groups, the "Surgical Manufacturing Company," a producer of microscalpels, and "Wholesale Supply Company," the sole area distributor of the scalpels. Negotiations proceeded to determine the price and quantity desired. Donohue's rules approach to negotiation utilized a hypothetical case involving the role-playing of a civil suit, out-of-court negotiation.<sup>15</sup> Other researchers have also utilized parasimulation because of the more realistic interaction and conflict management it fosters in comparison with gaming situations.

A third methodology, real world observation, involves examining actual negotiations, making comparisons, and drawing conclusions from the collective information available. But because so many variables may influence the outcome of negotiations, researchers have traditionally preferred the laboratory setting in which they could control and manipulate variables at will, isolating specific strategies and behaviors to determine the effects on negotiation processes and outcomes.<sup>16</sup>

While these three methodologies summarize the ways in which negotiation has been studied, researchers have concentrated upon at least four theoretical perspectives. First, the psychological-sociological or personality approach focused on attributes of the negotiators themselves rather than the process in which they engage. Second, the economic or learning model developed mathematical equations and utility curves to describe gaming and bargaining. Third, strategic analysis evaluated outcomes from game models so as to draw conclusions between the use of various

strategies and their effectiveness. And fourth, process analysis evolved from all three types of methodologies and observed that negotiation involves the interrelationships between numerous variables, but particularly the interactional attributes brought to the negotiation by the participants.<sup>17</sup>

The preceding descriptions only briefly overview the four perspectives as presented in a wide body of literature to date. Whether their focus is on a method of investigation or a theoretical explanation, researchers continue to dispute which avenues of study are most productive.

### Current Approaches to Negotiation Instruction

It would be convenient if becoming a better negotiator merely required compiling the results of thousands of studies on negotiation to date, and then simply putting the recommendations into practice. But the process defies simplistic generalizations, and merits closer attention than is currently being given. At the present time there appear to be two camps: the rather indirect approaches as presented in current courses of study in communication, and quickfix "how to" books or consulting courses. Each of these may be examined by briefly considering representative examples.

Communication departments have frequently considered negotiation to be a subset of other activities. Semlak proclaims, "conflict resolution is a delicate social science which can be learned."<sup>18</sup> Similarly, other authors suggest bargaining and negotiation are tools which can be used in conflict resolution, through use of Dewey's reflective thinking process or Toulmin's model of argument to systematically advance and assess opponents' arguments. Interpersonal communication concepts such as Kilmann and Thomas' five conflict and communication styles and Gibb's characteristics of defensive versus supportive communication are also discussed as modes of conflict resolution.<sup>19</sup>

Unfortunately, such suggestions fall short of responding to the specific needs of negotiation situations. For example, Dewey's scientific method for conflict resolution can only succeed when both parties desire to resolve their conflict and cooperate as necessary. The problem-solving



model offers no mechanism to adapt to varying degrees of competitiveness or widely divergent goals.

Keltner's discussion of bargaining and negotiation as a part of interpersonal conflict resolution constitutes one of the first attempts by an interpersonal communication theorist to offer more systematic guidelines for skill development. But again the suggestions are very generalized, such as "be sensitive to the fact that minor win-lose issues may escalate into major conflicts if not controlled at the early stages."<sup>20</sup>

In persuasion courses and textbooks, conflict is often designated as a situation primarily requiring special persuasive skills. If bargaining is mentioned, some authors imply that skills acquired in the art of persuasion may simply be transferred. Andersen asserts, "In many senses the negotiations are a specific persuasion setting, and general patterns of persuasion apply."<sup>21</sup> Yet little evidence of such an overlap accompanies this statement and the explanation of how to accomplish skill transfer to negotiation is omitted. Other recent persuasion texts avoid the topic of negotiation altogether.<sup>22</sup>

Organizational communication classes have traditionally used the case study method effectively. Analyses of what went "wrong" in a conflict situation requiring negotiation admittedly produces important insights. Unfortunately, an organizational communication course generally has little time to focus upon either developing understanding of or applying negotiation skills.

Textbooks in argumentation and debate courses often make an assumption parallel to that regarding conflict resolution. One self-styled "professional debater" claimed that argumentative skills are directly interchangeable with negotiating skills. "Almost every negotiation leading to compromise is preceded and/or accompanied by that 'statement of a case for or against something' which is the very definition of argumentation."<sup>23</sup> Sayer claims the need to "study and practice" argumentation today is more critical than ever as people are bombarded daily with hundreds of arguments.<sup>24</sup> Yet neither Rusher, nor such argumentation text authors as Freeley, Jensen, or Ziegelmüller suggest exactly how the transfer of skill to negotiation may be accomplished.<sup>25</sup>

This brief overview of basic communication references offers common approaches and shortcomings. If aspiring future students of negotiation do not find the information they seek in their communication department courses, they may turn to the popular press for enlightenment. Perhaps beginning with Carnegie's classic How to Win Friends and Influence People, various authors have sought to summarize a list of "winning" strategies and tactics, to be applied to negotiations generally, or to situations as specific as commercial or salary negotiations.<sup>26</sup> For example, You Can Negotiate Anything became a bestseller by promising great power and influence: "money, justice, prestige, love--it's all negotiable."<sup>27</sup>

Numerous consultants offer negotiation training. For the expenditure of a few hundred dollars and one day's time there are Robert Laser's "Practical Negotiating Skills" or Fred Pryor Seminar's "How to Negotiate With People." Gerard Nierenberg markets a multimedia learning program entitled, "The Art of Negotiating."<sup>28</sup> The rising popularity of such programs suggests a corresponding increase in awareness of our need to negotiate.

While some of these authors and trainers base their recommendations upon both theory and careful study and observation, others offer little more than sweeping generalizations which oversimplify the processes involved or the skill development required.

### Coursework in the Study of Negotiation

Negotiation appears inevitable and necessary to successful functioning in today's society. If the acquisition and development of such skills should not be left to chance or the atheoretical suggestions of "how to" manuals, appropriate coursework is needed. Several steps can be taken to better prepare students to bargain. First, the recognition that bargaining is inevitable must become more widespread. Second, coursework should incorporate an examination of both theory and practice. Third, opportunities for skill development are needed.

The arena for increasing awareness of negotiation may simply lie within adding a unit to present courses, or better yet, in adding new courses to the curriculum. University departments of communication commonly offer coursework relating to conflict analysis and resolution.



High school speech courses frequently incorporate the study of argumentation.

An initial technique for introducing students to negotiation involves brainstorming. As a class or in groups, students could list examples of situations in which negotiation, in some form, frequently occurs. Next, they could examine recent situations in which they have personally negotiated, analyzing what occurred and why. Using these experiential references, the class could devise their own definition of negotiation--after which the instructor should introduce noted authority's definitions for discussion.

Sources for assigned reports on actual negotiations are numerous. Advanced college level students could take a critical approach in reviewing real world negotiations. For example, Zartman's The Negotiation Process: Theories and Applications and The Practical Negotiator offer findings from international negotiations, as do texts by Kapoor, or Kincade and Porro.<sup>29</sup> High school students or college students in introductory level classes could be requested to examine recent reports on labor negotiations or international negotiations.

The second step, incorporating both theory and practice, should precede practical skill development with closer examination of the four theoretical perspectives already mentioned. Analysis of the types of bargaining and their characteristics provides both a starting point and linkage to earlier discussions of how common negotiation appears to be today. Students should also analyze suggested procedures to be used while bargaining. Again, Rubin and Brown's summary of over 500 experimental studies, and Zartman's examination of real world cases offer a wealth of such suggestions within specific context.<sup>30</sup> For example, Zartman describes a useful process model of negotiation--diagnose the situation, negotiate an understanding of the nature of the conflict, and then negotiate specifics of a resolution for the dispute.<sup>31</sup>

As to the four theoretical perspectives, students could examine research relative to each and later incorporate those findings in their own negotiations. Students interested in the psychological-sociological approach might concentrate on Spector's "microlevel of analysis." He advises negotiators to scrutinize personalities, needs,

compatibility, "perceptions and expectations," and "persuasive mechanisms."<sup>32</sup>

The economic model approach to negotiation may most simply be studied through Karrass' "critical satisfaction theory." He advises negotiators to identify their minimum and maximum expectations and their areas of overlapping interests.<sup>33</sup> A recent article by Hawver gives sample diagrams and worksheets on how to visualize one another's needs or expectations and probable arguments.<sup>34</sup> The instructor could provide such worksheets and require students to arm themselves with carefully drafted advance calculations before they proceed to bargain.

Donohue's strategic analysis approach contends that negotiators use communication rules relating to attacking, defending, and regressing or integrating tactics.<sup>35</sup> His taxonomy and studies strive to relate the structure and sequencing of bargaining communication to successful outcomes. Students might experiment with such tactics so as to assess how various behaviors affect the negotiators' give-and-take and the nature of their final agreement.

Fisher and Ury's "principled negotiation" model relates to the fourth theoretical perspective--a process approach to negotiation. Getting to YES: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In bases its prescriptions on actual negotiations as evaluated by the Harvard Negotiation Project.<sup>36</sup> Their "win-win" approach focuses on the people and interests involved, the possible options which may be generated, and the criteria or standards by which the outcome should be fixed or assessed. Students might contrast Fisher and Ury's suggestions with win-lose or purely competitive, distributive behaviors.

After studying the theoretical principles and their practical applications, students should be better prepared for the third step in learning to negotiate--opportunities to practice and develop skills. Materials to provide stimulus for the negotiator simulations should be gathered. The impetus for the negotiation may be as simple as instructor-provided scenarios relating to students negotiating with parents for privileges, with a landlord regarding terms of a rental contract, or with an employer in requesting raise in salary.

More elaborate negotiation stimulus materials may be found in a wide variety of imaginary cases. Legal or organizational communication texts frequently include such materials.<sup>37</sup> These provide opportunities for realistic simulations of a variety of situations and conditions. Ideally, as students progress, the instructor might adapt the information given to either side, thereby affording students the opportunity to discover how differing knowledge and information influences the parties' needs and/or behaviors.

The greatest wealth of material for simulations is still available as related to gaming situations. Modifying the Prisoner's Dilemma (or X, Y) game to involve face-to-face communication can be a useful tool in illustrating the role of trust in negotiation.<sup>38</sup> The instructor may advise opponents that their goal is to "win at any cost," thereby instilling a highly competitive, distributive or win-lose orientation. With the instruction to jointly obtain the best possible outcome, a win-win situation, participants would learn to exhibit cooperative, integrative behaviors.

An easy to use imaginary scenario is entitled the "Ugli Orange Case."<sup>39</sup> Two opponents are given information explaining only their own roles as research biologists. One seeks a cure to a disease, while the other seeks an antidote to neutralize the effects of nerve gas. Both desire the exotic "Ugli orange," but neither is initially aware that while one needs only the rind, the other needs the juice. Even if their trust levels lead to such a disclosure, negotiations must continue as to what procedures they may arrange to assure that both parties' needs are met.

Another useful source of cases for negotiation simulation is the periodical entitled Simulation & Games. An article by Hunsaker, Whitney and Hunsaker presents an outline of the key variables in negotiation, a brief discussion of possible tactics for the negotiators' use, and background information for a labor-management negotiation between the printer's union and the "Any Occasion Card Company."<sup>40</sup>

Follow-up analyses of what happened in each negotiation are critical. Use of videotape equipment further enhances such analyses, as does the use of nonparticipating observers who are given the information available to both sides. With guidance, students should be able to relate their own verbal

and nonverbal behaviors, and the negotiation outcomes, to theories and principles previously studied. Conclusions may be drawn regarding how they might best prepare for and proceed with future negotiations. Of course, care should be taken to avoid allowing students to generalize, as all negotiations should be considered within the context of situational and personality variables.

The institution of such coursework would directly address the skills needed for today's complex society. This clearly surpasses assuming students in interpersonal communication classes can make the transfer from a view of communication as a transactional process, to a real world ability to know how to go about negotiating. Or that students instructed regarding the nature of argumentation or conflict can apply that insight to bargaining situations.

The next time students with such training would desire to negotiate for better grades, a job, a car, higher pay, or a more satisfactory definition of an interpersonal relationship, they would be prepared to deal with the situation more successfully. Negotiating skills should not be left to chance. The rigors of modern life demand their acquisition--and application.

#### FOOTNOTES

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