On Teaching

CustomNegotiations.org: A Free Resource for Creating Custom Negotiation Simulations

Noah Eisenkraft

Negotiation role-playing simulations are among the most effective and widely used methods for teaching and conducting research on negotiations. Teachers and researchers can either license a published, “off-the-shelf” simulation or write their own custom “bespoke” simulation. Off-the-shelf simulations are usually high-quality, include teaching materials, and are typically priced affordably, whereas bespoke simulations are fully customizable and ensure that participants will face a novel challenge. In this article, I introduce a third option: CustomNegotiations.org, a free resource for creating custom negotiation simulations that have the benefits of both off-the-shelf and bespoke simulations. I describe this resource and preview how negotiation instructors can use it to customize simulations for their own classes. I also discuss possible future directions for this kind of platform.

Key words: negotiation teaching, simulations, custom simulations, negotiation teaching software.

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Introduction

Negotiation role-playing simulations are the most widely used method for teaching negotiations (Fortgang 2000; Loewenstein and Thompson 2000; Susskind and Corburn 2000) and for conducting experimental research on negotiations (Mestdagh and Buelens 2003). Simulations give participants the opportunity to learn experientially (Kolb 1974): they encourage students to generate knowledge and skills by observing and reflecting on their experience with the simulation (Lewicki 1997; Loewenstein and Thompson 2000). This teaching strategy increases student engagement and leads students to retain more knowledge than lecture-based teaching (Druckman and Ebner 2013). Role-playing simulations are also widely used by negotiations researchers. They provide researchers with a controlled context in which to perform their experimental manipulations and advance the scholarly literature (see Bazerman, Curhan, and Moore 2001; Thompson, Wang, and Gunia 2010 for reviews).

Negotiations teachers and researchers have previously had to choose between licensing off-the-shelf negotiation simulations or writing their own bespoke simulations. Off-the-shelf simulations are published cases that can be licensed via distribution centers such as the Program on Negotiation at Harvard Law School (PON) or Northwestern University’s Dispute Resolution Resource Center (DRRC). These are generally high-quality materials that have proven their value in a variety of teaching and research contexts. In some situations, however, teachers and researchers may need to customize parts of a simulation or ensure that the negotiation participants have no prior exposure to the case itself. Creating a bespoke simulation may be the preferable alternative in those situations. Unfortunately, creating bespoke simulations requires a large investment of time and effort, even for experienced authors.

In this article, I describe CustomNegotiations.org, an online resource that teachers and researchers can use to generate custom negotiation simulations that have the benefits of both off-the-shelf and bespoke simulations. Like off-the-shelf simulations, the custom simulations at CustomNegotiations.org are quality-tested and easy to use. Like bespoke simulations, they can be tailored to a specific purpose or audience and are designed to provide each group of students or participants with a novel negotiations experience. All of the simulations at CustomNegotiations.org are available for free and have no restrictions about where and when they can be used.

Existing Options for Negotiation Simulations

Teachers and researchers who want to use negotiation simulations have had to choose between licensing off-the-shelf simulations or writing their own bespoke simulations. In this section, I review the benefits and limitations associated with each of these two options.
**Off-the-Shelf Simulations**

Off-the-shelf simulations are published negotiation simulations that teachers and researchers use “as is.” They are the *de facto* standard for negotiations teaching and research. Teachers use off-the-shelf simulations to convey lessons about negotiating effectively. Researchers use off-the-shelf simulations to explore the predictors of negotiation performance in a standardized environment.

Using off-the-shelf simulations has three major benefits. First, off-the-shelf simulations have proven effectiveness; they have been used successfully in classrooms around the world and in a wide variety of research contexts. Second, they usually come with teaching materials. Well-written teaching materials can be a valuable resource for teachers who have never taught a particular simulation or who may have forgotten its features: they can explain the simulation’s underlying structure and teaching objectives, and often offer suggestions for how to best implement the simulation in class. Third, off-the-shelf simulations tend to be affordably priced. Organizations such as Northwestern University’s Dispute Resolution Research Center (DRRC) and the Program on Negotiation at Harvard Law School (PON) typically license off-the-shelf simulations for less than $5 per student.

The limitations of off-the-shelf simulations derive from their “as is” nature. Teachers and researchers cannot easily modify off-the-shelf simulations to provide a different learning experience or to better investigate a particular research question. They cannot shorten a simulation, change the number of issues being negotiated, or alter the structure of the simulation without violating copyright. Absent customization, teachers and researchers may need to locate and license a different simulation if an off-the-shelf simulation does not address all their pedagogical or research needs.

For the same reason, off-the-shelf simulations also cannot be personalized. Having a simulation set in a specific city, for example, or having a party negotiate for a specific job can make a simulation feel more relevant to a group of participants. Negotiation teachers who want to choose client-specific teaching materials must license a different simulation for every client or write their own bespoke simulations.

Using off-the-shelf simulations can also be problematic when the negotiation participants have previous experience with a particular simulation. Participants may have completed an off-the-shelf simulation in a prior class, professional training course, or research study. Participants in one negotiations class may also share information about a simulation with students taking a subsequent class. In situations such as these, prior knowledge about a simulation may disrupt the learning experience, not only for those with the prior knowledge, but also for the people they negotiate with, their classmates, and their fellow experimental subjects.
**Bespoke Simulations**

Bespoke simulations are negotiation simulations created for a specific audience or research project. In general, bespoke simulations excel where off-the-shelf simulations fall short. They are anything but “as is”; they are created to provide a specific group with a specifically chosen challenge. These simulations can be modified and personalized as extensively as needed. Furthermore, it is highly unlikely that any students or participants will have ever been exposed to an unpublished bespoke simulation. In the classroom, bespoke simulations have the potential to provide a unique learning experience tailored specifically to a teacher’s particular strengths and her students’ particular needs.

Bespoke simulations also have considerable limitations. First, quality is not assured when authors write simulations for a single use. A poorly crafted simulation may not provide students with a valuable learning experience or research participants with the expected challenge. Some elements of the simulation may not work as intended, disrupting lesson plans and subsequent discussions. Second, a bespoke simulation does not come with teaching materials. This absence makes it more difficult for people other than the author to use the simulation effectively. Third, creating an effective bespoke simulation always requires a significant investment of time and energy, even for an experienced author. There is no quick or inexpensive way to create a bespoke simulation.

**Custom Role-Playing Negotiation Simulations**

Custom role-playing simulations have the advantages associated with both off-the-shelf and bespoke simulations. Like off-the-shelf simulations, custom simulations are classroom-tested simulations that come with teaching materials and are inexpensive — in fact, free — to use. Like bespoke simulations, custom simulations can be modified and personalized to meet the needs of a specific lesson, classroom, or research project.

In this section, I discuss the four customizable elements of the simulations available through the platform I created and have made available at the CustomNegotiations.org website: background, interests and issues, scoring, and best alternatives to a negotiated agreement (BATNAs). I illustrate each of these customizable elements with examples from the *Office Rental Negotiation*, one of the site’s customizable simulations.

In addition to discussing the specific customizable components, I provide links to three customized online versions of the *Office Rental Negotiation* as examples. The first version is a single-issue negotiation set in San Francisco with full-length background information, a strong BATNA for the tenant, and a weak BATNA for the landlord. The second version is a four-issue scored negotiation set in Jacksonville with abbreviated background information and weak BATNAs on both sides. The third version is an eight-
issue unscored negotiation set in Chapel Hill with full-length background information and medium strength BATNAs on both sides. These examples highlight how customization can transform a single negotiation simulation. All the examples can be found at customnegotiations.org/examples.

**Customizable Element One: Background**

A simulation’s background describes who the parties are and gives contextual information that may or may not be relevant to the negotiation. The length of the background can be customized based on the amount of time available to negotiate. A full-length background will have more of the colorful details that help a simulation come alive. For example, in the *Office Rental Negotiation*, the tenant may read the following full-length background before starting the simulation:

You are the owner and sole employee of Executive MatchMaker, a boutique consulting firm that helps executives find new jobs. You started Executive MatchMaker last year after spending a decade working in corporate human resources. You love being your own boss! It’s such a great feeling to help people find exciting new opportunities. Plus: you made more money in the last six months than you previously made in a year!

One of your big goals for this year is to move Executive MatchMaker out of your home and into a private office. While your clients seem okay with meeting in your home, a private office would make everything feel more professional. You have been looking for offices that do not have a long commute and will preserve your clients’ privacy.

You recently toured an office at Corporate Court, a forty-unit office complex in Chapel Hill. The office’s location is perfect. It’s not too far from your house and has a lot of privacy. You are meeting today with the developer and landlord of Corporate Court to negotiate the terms of a lease.

In some contexts, participants may not have enough time to read a full-length background. In these situations, the background can be abbreviated to help participants move more quickly through the simulation. For example, the tenant’s background is just one paragraph long in the abbreviated version:

You are the owner and sole employee of Executive MatchMaker, a boutique consulting firm that helps executives find new jobs. You have been looking to move your business out of your home and into a private office. Corporate Court, a 40-unit office complex in Chapel Hill, looks like it has everything you need. The office you toured is not too far from your house and has the privacy your clients demand. You are meeting today with the developer and landlord of Corporate Court to negotiate the terms of a lease.
In addition to adjusting its length, users can personalize the negotiation background to fit a particular teaching context. For example, in the *Office Rental Negotiation*, the teacher can change the location of the office rental and also set the typical rent for that area. The default options are to set the negotiation in Chapel Hill and set the typical rent to $2,000 a month. But teachers can use the personalization features to relocate the simulation to San Francisco with its sky-high rents or to a different, more affordable locale. Personalizing will help participants feel like the simulation was designed especially for them.

**Customizable Element Two: Interests and Issues**
The interests and issues help define the challenge of a particular negotiation simulation. The interests explain why negotiators believe what they believe and do what they do. The issues are the negotiable components that negotiators believe will address those underlying interests. Users of CustomNegotiations.org can customize the total number of issues and how many have compatible and logrolling possibilities and how many are purely distributive.

Customizing the number of negotiable issues allows teachers and researchers to use the same simulation whether they want a short or a long negotiation challenge. A short simulation may focus on a small set of negotiable issues, while a long simulation may put as many as eight issues on the bargaining table. For example, the *Office Rental Negotiation* simulation can include any subset of the following eight issues: monthly rent, start date, sublet policy, security deposit, office cleaning policy, utilities policy, lease length, and guaranteed parking allocation. Customizing a negotiation to have one negotiable issue transforms what could be an integrative multi-issue negotiation simulation into a distributive single-issue bargaining simulation. A single-issue version of the *Office Rental Negotiation* can be found at customnegotiations.org/examples.

In addition to customizing the total number of issues, users can choose how many of those issues have compatible or logrolling potential and how many are purely distributive. A distributive issue is an issue in which one party's loss is equal to the other party's gain: the only way to be successful is to claim value from your counterpart. A compatible issue is an issue in which both parties seek the same outcome and the only way to be successful is to jointly create value. A logrolling issue is one in which parties seek different outcomes, but one party values the issue more than the other party, which creates opportunities for parties to make trade-offs across multiple issues to both create value with and claim value from their counterpart. The precise combination of compatible, distributive, and logrolling issues helps define the simulation's underlying challenge. For example, creating a simulation with two compatible issues and six logrolling issues will challenge the participants to create value during their negotiation, and a simulation with four
distributive issues and four logrolling issues places a greater emphasis on value-claiming strategies.

The software that generates the custom simulations requires minimal user input. Users do not assign particular issues to be compatible, distributive, or logrolling. Instead, they set the number of desired distributive, compatible, and logrolling issues and the software handles the rest. Specifically, the software uses a randomization algorithm to define the simulation’s compatible, logrolling, and distributive issues. The algorithm is designed to generate new multi-issue negotiation challenges every time it is used. For example, an issue that was compatible in one version of a simulation may be a distributive or logrolling issue in a second version of the simulation.

For example, in the Office Rental Negotiation, the algorithm can define the lease length issue for the two participants in different ways. It can generate a simulation in which lease length is a compatible issue, such that both parties want a short lease:

**Tenant preferences**: You want to sign a short lease. You are not yet sure whether you will like having a dedicated office and want to avoid getting locked into a long-term lease.

**Landlord preference**: You would like to sign a short lease. The commercial real estate market has been relatively weak for the past few years, but this long-term trend seems to be changing. Signing a shorter lease now will allow you to increase the rent sooner.

The algorithm may also specify lease length as a distributive or logrolling issue, such that the parties have opposing interests. So, while the tenant may want a short lease, the landlord may prefer a longer lease, as explained below:

**Landlord preference**: You would like to sign a long lease. It’s expensive and time-consuming to find new tenants for any of your offices.

It is also possible that the landlord may want a short lease when the tenant prefers a longer lease:

**Tenant preference**: You want to sign a long lease. The commercial real estate market has been weak for a while, but a short-term lease could hurt you if prices start to rise. You are guaranteed the same rent if you sign a long-term lease.

The algorithm also randomly adjusts the relative importance of each issue. An issue that is high-priority for the tenant in one version of the simulation, for example, may be a low-priority issue for him or her in a second version. Thus, teachers who use custom simulations do not have to worry
about whether their participants have had any prior exposure to a particular multi-issue simulation. Because the algorithm incorporates randomization into the issues and interests algorithm, participants will not have a knowledge advantage even if they are asked to repeatedly engage in different versions of the “same” simulation (i.e., the landlord won’t know in advance which issues are higher priority for the tenant).

The potential problem with customization and randomization is that they may make it more difficult for teachers or researchers to quickly identify the underlying structure of a multi-issue simulation. To avoid this problem, the customization software generates teaching materials that describe the parties’ issues and interests. The teaching materials discuss which issues are compatible, which are distributive, and how to bundle the logrolling issues in order to create the most value.

**Customizable Element Three: Scoring**

The scoring element customizes whether and how the negotiated agreements are quantified. In a scored negotiation simulation, all of the issues will have a list of outcomes and associated point values to be awarded to the participants who achieve that outcome. Higher point values reward participants when they reach deals that satisfy their higher priority preferences. In an unscored simulation, the preferences for different issues are expressed qualitatively.

Scored simulations are useful for teaching about multi-issue negotiation strategies. Assigning points to specific options help teachers differentiate distributive issues, in which the parties have equal but opposite, preferences, from logrolling issues, in which the parties’ opposing preferences are not equal to one another. Scored simulations also facilitate comparisons. Students who compare outcomes with other negotiating teams may be curious about how others reached better (or worse) deals.

Table One illustrates how points scoring can be used to assign values to various outcomes for the subletting issue in the *Office Rental Negotiation*. The landlord instructions explain the subletting scoring as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sublet Policy Options</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No sublets allowed</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sublets allowed with two month’s notice</td>
<td>850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sublets allowed with one month’s notice</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sublets allowed with one week’s notice</td>
<td>550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sublets allowed with no advance notice</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sublet Policy: Office leases often include a clause that describes the circumstances under which the tenant can sublet the office to someone else in her or his absence. You would like to reduce subletting. Subletting an office is a security problem for the other tenants in the building.

All scored simulations also come with a paragraph that discusses how to interpret the points associated with each issue. For example:

As part of your negotiation preparation, you created a points schedule that reflects your preferences. Your goal is to reach an agreement that provides you with as many points as possible. The more points you earn, the better your agreement.

A scored version of the Office Rental Negotiation can be found at customnegotiations.org/examples.

Unscored simulations are useful for teaching about negotiation preparation. The instructions in an unscored simulation describe the interests and issues qualitatively, indicating relative valuations by rank-ordering a range of possible options without assigning numeric values. For example, a nonscored version of the sublet issue in the Office Rental Negotiation could read as follows for the person in the tenant role:

The most important issue in this negotiation is the sublet policy. Office leases often include a clause that describes the circumstances under which the tenant can sublet the office to someone else in his or her absence. You would like a lenient sublet policy. Your work sometimes takes you to foreign cities for periods of a few weeks to a month. You would like to sublet the office to one of your consulting colleagues during these trips. It is critical that you get a sublet policy of sublets allowed with no advance notice.

If the sublet issue were less important, these instructions could read:

The remaining issues are relatively unimportant to you. The most important of these low-importance issues is the sublet policy. Office leases often include a clause that describes the circumstances under which the tenant can sublet the office to someone else in her or his absence. You would like a lenient sublet policy. Your work sometimes takes you to foreign cities for periods of a few weeks to a month. You would like to sublet the office to one of your consulting colleagues during these trips. You'd like to get a sublet policy of sublets allowed with no advance notice.

And if the sublet issue were the least important, it would read:

Finally, the least important issue to you is the sublet policy. Office leases often include a clause that describes the circumstances
under which the tenant can sublet the office to someone else in her or his absence. You would like a lenient sublet policy. Your work sometimes takes you to foreign cities for periods of a few weeks to a month. You would like to sublet the office to one of your consulting colleagues during these trips. While you don’t plan to fight much for this, you’d like to get a sublet policy of sublets allowed with no advance notice.

Using unscored simulations in a classroom can help students focus more on the process involved in reaching a good deal; they are an ideal tool for teaching negotiation preparation skills. Additionally, using unscored simulations encourages students to think more deeply about the interests that underlie their positions and develop creative solutions that may not have appeared on a list of possible scored options. To emphasize this point, all unscored simulations include the following text:

As part of your negotiation preparation, you ranked the issues in terms of their relative importance. Your goal is to reach an agreement where you reach the desired terms on your most important issues. However, you should not feel limited by the list of issues described below. Feel free to introduce new issues to the negotiation if you feel that these issues will help you create a better deal.

Emphasizing that new issues can be added to the negotiation encourages participants to generate more creative solutions than selecting from a set list of options. An unscored version of the Office Rental Negotiation can be found at customnegotiations.org/examples.

**Customizable Element Four: Best Alternatives to a Negotiated Agreement**

The best alternatives to a negotiated agreement (BATNAs) describe what each party will do if he or she is unable to reach a deal. Best alternatives determine the reservation value of the parties, that is, the value that a negotiated outcome must exceed before it makes the party better off than walking away.

Users can customize the BATNAs for each of the parties in the simulation. Teachers can set the strength of the BATNA to be anywhere from very weak to very strong. In a scored negotiation simulation, they can set the BATNA’s value using points. For example, in the Office Rental Negotiation, the tenant’s weak BATNA may be defined as follows:

Should you and the landlord fail to reach an agreement, you will lease an office with Beta Buildings, a nearby office park. Beta Buildings has offered you a deal worth 4,700 points.

In an unscored negotiation simulation, that same BATNA is:
Should you and the landlord fail to reach an agreement, you will lease an office with Beta Buildings, a nearby office park. Beta Buildings has offered you a pretty bad deal. You will only pursue this opportunity if you cannot get anything you want in your upcoming negotiation.

Customizing the BATNAs changes the negotiations challenge. Giving both parties a weak BATNA creates a large zone of possible agreement, circumstances that can reveal the power of first offers. Giving both parties a strong BATNA will create a negative zone of possible agreement, circumstances that can teach students when to walk away from the deal. Finally, giving one party a strong BATNA and one party a weak BATNA creates circumstances in which power asymmetries can affect the negotiation outcome. The teaching materials generated along with the simulation describe the consequences associated with the customized strength of the parties' BATNAs.

The Strengths of Custom Simulations
I previously identified six benefits associated with either off-the-shelf or bespoke simulations: quality, teaching materials, cost, customizability, novelty, and personalization. In this section, I explore how these criteria apply to the simulations at CustomNegotiations.org.

**Quality**
Off-the-shelf simulations are usually higher quality than bespoke simulations because off-the-shelf simulations are more thoroughly tested and are often revised, updated, and improved before being widely disseminated. Custom simulations are also high-quality, classroom-tested negotiation simulations, although it will be years until they are used as widely as many off-the-shelf cases. I have used them to teach graduate students, small business owners, corporate executives, and members of the United States government and military. In addition, as I built the CustomNegotiations.org platform, a half-dozen novice and expert teachers used custom simulations successfully with their classes.

**Teaching Materials**
Off-the-shelf simulations are sometimes preferable to bespoke simulations because off-the-shelf simulations include teaching materials. The software that generates a custom simulation also generates teaching materials that discuss the details of each simulation. These teaching materials are not general instructions; they describe the specific characteristics of the generated simulation, identifying, for example, the simulation’s compatible issues and describing how the logrolling issues can be bundled together to create the most value. They also highlight how the customized BATNAs may affect the simulation. As I refine and improve the software, I plan to further develop
the teaching materials to include estimates of a simulation’s difficulty, tips about administration, and discussions of how to best teach a particular simulation.

**Cost**
One of the largest advantages that off-the-shelf simulations have over bespoke simulations is their affordable price. The two major clearinghouses, the DRRC and PON, typically charge less than $5 per student to license an off-the-shelf exercise. Affordability is also a feature of the simulations at CustomNegotiations.org: they are free and I have no plans to include advertising or any other revenue-generating mechanism. Furthermore, the simulations at CustomNegotiations.org can be customized and personalized in fewer than five minutes. Once a negotiation simulation has been created, users can recreate that simulation at any time by clicking on a single link.

**Customizability**
Bespoke simulations are preferable to off-the-shelf simulations in situations that demand custom solutions. Customization is also the primary benefit of the simulations at CustomNegotiations.org. In fewer than five minutes, users can adjust a simulation’s background, interests and issues, scoring, and BATNAs to best meet their teaching or research needs. Custom simulations also allow users to go back and modify the simulation based on the experiences of their students or research participants. Users can keep what works and change what does not work without switching to a different simulation.

**Novelty**
Bespoke simulations are one-off simulations that always provide participants with a novel negotiation challenge. In contrast, students or research participants may have previous experience with an off-the-shelf simulation, which can dilute its value. This is less of a concern with custom simulations. In addition to allowing manual customization, the software adds randomization to the custom multi-issue negotiation simulations. People who customize multi-issue simulations do not have to worry that information will be passed on from one class to the next and “spoil” the lesson or that students will be familiar with a simulation from a previous class or research study. The randomization element ensures that participants always face a unique negotiation challenge.

**Personalization**
Bespoke simulations can be personalized to speak directly to participants’ experiences. Custom simulations allow a more limited range of personalization options. Although the software generates the issues and interests, teachers can add details about, for example, where a negotiation takes place or the type of car being negotiated. Personalizing these details may help students feel like the simulation was designed specifically for them.
Table Two lists the benefits and limitations of off-the-shelf and bespoke simulations. The benefits are orthogonal: the categories where off-the-shelf simulations excel are categories where bespoke simulations fall short and vice versa. The table also shows how custom negotiations incorporate the benefits of both off-the-shelf and bespoke simulations, offering teachers and researchers the ability, for the first time, to create custom negotiation simulations without a large investment of time and resources.

### Limitations

Custom simulations are not intended to replace either off-the-shelf or bespoke simulations. Custom simulations have an underlying structure that is useful for teaching negotiation basics, but do not introduce the complexity and interpersonal dynamics that are key features of some off-the-shelf simulations. These elements can be critical for teaching dispute resolution and advanced negotiation tactics. In addition, some off-the-shelf simulations offer students the opportunity to role-play famous negotiations from history — it would be inappropriate in those cases to alter the facts to introduce elements of customization. Custom negotiations also cannot be as extensively tailored as bespoke simulations. A teacher who wants to develop a simulation that closely reflects a client’s specific circumstances may need to develop a case that draws directly from the facts at hand.

### Conclusion

The simulations at CustomNegotiations.org are a small first step toward incorporating easy and inexpensive customization into negotiations education and research. A variety of enhancements for improving the platform are also possible. First, I hope to expand the scope of available

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**Table Two**

Simulation Benefits and Limitations

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Off-the-Shelf Simulations</th>
<th>Bespoke Simulations</th>
<th>Custom Simulations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>✓ High</td>
<td>Uncertain</td>
<td>✓ High</td>
</tr>
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<td>Teaching materials</td>
<td>✓ Included</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>✓ Included</td>
</tr>
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<td>Cost</td>
<td>✓ Affordable</td>
<td>Expensive</td>
<td>✓ Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customizability</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>✓ Extensive</td>
<td>✓ Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Not assured</td>
<td>✓ Guaranteed</td>
<td>✓ Likely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personalization</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>✓ Extensive</td>
<td>✓ Limited</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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simulations. Currently, all the simulations are two-party negotiations, while many of the best off-the-shelf simulations and some of the most important lessons concern negotiations between more than two parties. Creating customizable multi-party negotiations would be an important step toward making customizable simulations even more useful. These multi-party negotiation simulations would ideally include the customization options available for two-party negotiations and also flexibly accommodate groups of varying size.

Second, the negotiation simulations at CustomNegotiations.org would benefit from more diversity. Business education is global. Negotiation instruction should be global too. Teachers and researchers should have the opportunity to customize, not only the content, but also the language of their custom negotiation simulations. In an ideal situation, they would be able to provide participants who speak different languages with simulations in their native tongue. The diversity should also be reflected in the type of simulations available. As of this writing, CustomNegotiations.org includes three single-issue and three multi-issue simulations on the site, all of which focus on business negotiations. New simulations could cover a wider range of contexts including, for example, environmental, political, and legal negotiations. My hope is that the library of simulations at CustomNegotiations.org will one day reflect and better serve the diverse audiences we teach and recruit as research participants.

Everyone who has taught or studied negotiation understands the challenges inherent in these endeavors. My goal in creating the simulations at CustomNegotiations.org — and in making them available for free — is to help minimize these challenges. Custom simulations have the potential to provide many of the benefits associated with both off-the-shelf and bespoke simulations. I hope researchers and teachers will take advantage of the benefits that CustomNegotiations.org offers and that the community’s feedback will help improve this new resource.

REFERENCES


