

# **VIRTUALLY SETTLED: TIPS FOR ONLINE LABOR NEGOTIATION PROJECTS\***

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Many labor relations and collective bargaining courses make use of labor negotiation simulations to give students the opportunity to practice negotiations skills and learn about human resource management policies. Teaching these courses online via the internet need not be a barrier to incorporating a labor negotiation simulation between groups of students. This paper presents tips and suggestions, learned over fourteen semesters, for scheduling class activities, forming groups, and managing a labor bargaining simulation among undergraduate online students. Topics discussed include: Scheduling and Timing of the Project, Organization of the Project Website, Group Pages and Communication, Negotiating Online, and Evaluating the Project and Assigning Grades.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

This paper provides tips and suggestions for administering an online undergraduate labor negotiation simulation gleaned from fourteen semesters of teaching using Blackboard 7.0. Two different negotiation cases have been used since going online in fall semester 2001. They are: Quality Furniture Manufacturing Company (QFM), St. Louis, MO and the Industrial Workers United (IWU) (Holley, Jennings, Wolters, 2001), used from Fall 2001 through Spring 2004, and The Zinnia Hotel, Minneapolis, MN and the International Union of Service Workers & Allied Employees Local H-56 (Budd, 2005, 2008), used from Fall 2004 to the present.

Why use a labor negotiation simulation? Hansen (2008, p. 93) notes that a challenge for universities is "...teach[ing] students how to apply theory to practice and thus transfer their knowledge from the classroom to the workspace. This is already happening to some extent given the resurgent interest in the experiential learning process..." Texts in training and development point to several reasons for using this experiential learning approach (see Blanchard & Thacker, 2007; Desimone, Werner & Harris, 2002; Noe, 2008). First, the simulation actively engages the students, and adult learning theory tells us that people learn by doing and interacting with others in small groups. Second, the elements of the simulation support learning by giving students the opportunity to apply principles of bargaining, practice interpersonal negotiation skills, and see the results of their decisions in a risk-free environment. Finally, the practicing helps students recall and transfer the learning to future situations.

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Research going back nearly three decades shows that simulations and games of this type can be an effective teaching method for transferring knowledge and developing interpersonal skills. Stevens and Bohlander (1982) found that a collective bargaining simulation helped students get a more realistic feel and understanding for the negotiation process when compared to lecture alone, while Roderick, Wilterding, and Eldredge (1979) found the collective bargaining simulation to be an effective method for transferring factual information and developing interpersonal negotiation skills for understanding “real world” conditions. In an investigation of the effectiveness of simulations as a teaching method, business school alumni surveyed by Hemmasi and Graf (1991) reported that the business simulation they had participated in as seniors was highly effective in teaching a variety of managerial skills that were helpful in their job performance.

Teaching interpersonal skills, such as negotiating, in an online environment can pose special challenges. While the dynamics of face-to-face communication can't be replicated exactly, significant portions of the negotiation process can be approximated in an online simulation. In a 1996 paper, Chickering and Ehrmann updated the “Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education” for application to computer technologies. Several of those practices helped in the successful transitioning of this course from a traditional format to an online format, including encouragement of contact between faculty and student through the use of email, announcements, and telephone; collaborative learning, group problem solving, and discussions among students; and active learning from participating in the negotiation simulation. Research by Hansen (2008) supports some of those recommended practices. In an experiment comparing online students with traditional classroom students, he reported that online marketing students involved in a group project demonstrated greater transfer of knowledge in their performance on a start-up business marketing plan than did face-to-face students, noting that the online students took greater ownership of the course material, communicated more, had a stronger sense of community, showed more cooperation between group members, and were more independent of the instructor than the traditional class students.

Widespread availability of high-speed internet connections have eased the communications process for online students, allowing for easier file sharing, quicker downloading, and generally more reliable services. This exchange of information and the discussion of issues and proposals are a critical part of what students need to learn about the negotiations process. As Lewicki, Saunders and Minton (2001) state, “The dominant force for success in negotiation is in the planning that takes place prior to the dialogue.” (p. 40). With that in mind, the planning stage of negotiations is a major focus of the online project, and advance planning by the instructor is key to the success of the labor agreement negotiation project.

This paper is organized into five sections: Scheduling and Timing of the Project, Organization of the Project Website, Group Pages and Communication, Negotiating Online, and Evaluating the Project and Assigning Grades.

## **SCHEDULING AND TIMING OF THE PROJECT**

To welcome students and set the tone for the online class, student-teacher contact starts the week before the class begins with a detailed email message to all enrolled students explaining

the time commitment expected (9-12 hours per week for a 3 credit course), the three proctored exams, and the group project. It is explicitly stated that the course is not self-paced, that it is not easier than a traditional face-to-face class, and that if students are “too busy” for a traditional class, the online class will not work for them either. The primary reasons to take the online section of the course are because of scheduling conflicts with work or other classes, or commuting distance. This “realistic course preview” has reduced the number of students who drop the course in the first few weeks.

The simple truth is that the asynchronous communication of an online course takes longer than face-to-face communication due to the delays in reading and writing responses by group members (Chen, 2007; Cavanaugh, 2005; Palloff & Pratt, 1999). In their adaptation of a group role playing game to an asynchronous online format, Bos and Shami (2006) note that “significant changes to the flow and format of the game were made...”(p. 516), with students appreciating having more time for deliberation [before responding] when compared to the face-to-face version. Likewise, one of the first adjustments to the online labor negotiation project is scheduling extra time to complete all portions of the project. In most cases, if one week was given for turning around an assignment in a traditional class, two weeks is needed in the online class. Consequently, the online negotiation project begins several weeks before a project in a face-to-face class, typically around Week 6 or 7 instead of Week 10 of a 16-week term. Whereas the traditional class might allow one week’s time to negotiate the contract and complete the supporting documents (estimate the costs of the changes, edit the labor agreement, and write a union ratification speech), the online class works best with one week to negotiate the issues, and a second week to complete the supporting documents.

A general overview of the course flow follows:

Weeks 1-3: Building community among all students in the class;

Weeks 4-6: Group Building for the negotiation project;

Weeks 7-13: Developing Bargaining Plans;

Week 14: Negotiating the Labor Agreement; and

Week 15: Writing up the contract changes and union ratification speech.

Table 1 shows more details and the sequencing of assignments for the labor negotiation project during a typical 16 week semester, with one week off for Spring Break or Thanksgiving Break.

**Table 1. Schedule of Project Related Assignments**

Week	Topic	Assignments (Only negotiation project-related assignments are shown for this article.)
Week 01	Introduction, Chp. 1 & 2	Course Discussion Board assignment: Online introductions

Week 02	Chp. 4, Historical Development	
Week 03	Chp. 5, Labor Law	Course Discussion Board – Important Labor Events; Forming groups: sign up for two blocks of time when typically available during the week, label first & second choice.
Week 04	Chp. 6, Labor & Management Strategies & Rights	Group communications tools assignment – edit, post document to the Group File Exchange.
Week 05	Chp. 7, Union Organizing	Group Discussion Board assignment: Contract impressions
Week 06	<b>Exam 1</b>	Begin Group Project by reading the General Instructions and materials in the Projects folder in Blackboard, and the Group-level instructions posted to Group File Exchange.
Week 07	Chp. 8, Bargaining	Decide on negotiating model by both groups in a Team.
Week 08	Chp. 9, Impasse Resolution	First draft of negotiation plans due.
Week 09	Chp. 10, Contract Clauses & Administration	Negotiation plans returned to groups with comments and suggestions for revision.
Week 10	Holiday Week	Spring Break (or Week 13 Thanksgiving Break in Fall)
Week 11	Finish Contract Administration & Grievances	Work on revisions to negotiation plans.
Week 12	<b>Exam 2</b>	Work on revisions to negotiation plans.
Week 13	Chp. 11, The Changing Structure of Work	Final revised negotiation plans due on Monday at noon. Early permission given to begin negotiations if both groups have acceptable plans submitted.
Week 14	<b>NEGOTIATIONS WEEK</b>	Use this time to <u>negotiate</u> the new Zinnia Labor Agreement and begin contract revision, cost estimates, etc. <b>NOTE: This is a major portion of your course grade; it requires a lot of time and work, so plan ahead!</b>
Week 15	Write-up Contract Changes Chp. 12, Globalization	Finalize the contract language and submit revised contract, costs information, union ratification speech and complete peer evaluations by noon, Monday of next week.
Week 16	Chp. 13, Labor Relations Around the World	
	Finals Week	<b>Exam 3</b>

Building a sense of online community begins in Weeks 1 and 3 with course-level Discussion Board assignments. Online introductions in Week 1 often lead to students responding to each other with comments about previous classes taken together, mutual friends, or shared interests. . Thompson and Nadler (2002) note that early rapport building activities influence online negotiations, including lower impasse rates, increased trust, and better negotiated outcomes. Building trusting relationships via email can be difficult, so Kurtzberg, Dunn-Jensen, & Matsibekker (2005) suggest extra encouragement through introductions and friendly chit-chat activities built into early course assignments. Increased trust also appears to be an outcome when email is used for more complex situations, perhaps because it creates its own record of offers, and counter-offers (Gattiker, Huang, & Schwartz, 2006).

In Week 3 students post responses to a discussion board as if they were giving a speech on “The Three Most Important Events in Labor History” with the stipulation that they not simply repeat what others have written, so the habit of reading and evaluating postings is developed. Also, Union and Management groups are formed and that can be challenging due to the busy schedules and/or geographic dispersion among students.

Typically, Union and Management groups are formed with two to four students on each side, although as many as six per side may be used (this increases scheduling and communication difficulties between members). Even though the course is delivered online, students often prefer to meet face-to-face for some portion of the negotiation project. To facilitate those meetings, a “Group Sign-up” Discussion Board Forum is started during Week 3. The forum has 14 Threads, two for each day of the week, one designated “Early - Before 2 p.m.,” and the other “Late - After 2 p.m.” Students are asked to sign up for two periods when they typically have open blocks of time in their schedules, designating their first and second choice slots. This enables groups to be formed of people with similar schedules, who can meet face-to-face should they wish to do so. One of the project rules is that groups may not meet face-to-face if the purpose is to exclude a group member from participating. If there are not enough entries in a time slot to form a group, an email can be sent asking the student(s) to select from other possible time slots where there were enough students to form groups. While not a perfect system, it does reduce scheduling conflicts and gives students an opportunity to exercise input and control over some aspects of the course. Groups are fully formed during Week 4 with their first group communications assignment due the following week, so some of the “forming, storming, and norming” of the group gets accomplished during that time.

In Weeks 4 and 5 the focus is on building group identity with use of group-level communication tools and discussion board postings, establishing a habit of working together and sharing of ideas. In Week 4 students use the group email to contact each other, and post and edit a document in the group file exchange.

Week 5 includes a group assignment to read the labor contract and share impressions in their group discussion board about at least three possible issues to consider when it comes time to draft their negotiation plans. Often, this is the first time a student has read a labor contract, so sharing impressions frequently brings up questions of interpretation and opportunities to explain clauses that students don’t understand.

Weeks 6 through 13 are devoted to developing solid bargaining plans with clearly defined issues and bargaining ranges to guide each group's future negotiations. The main project activities begin in Week 7, coinciding with the chapter on Bargaining. Each union and management group develops its own negotiation (bargaining) plan consisting of six prioritized issues with defined bargaining ranges. Groups submit a first draft of their bargaining plans to the instructor for review that is returned with feedback in about a week. A second draft incorporating comments and suggestions made by the instructor is then submitted by about Week 9. One week turn-around time is normally allowed between each draft, review, and revised submission. Depending on the quality of the bargaining plan, a last chance third draft may be required if a plan has poorly defined issues, or unrealistic bargaining ranges.

The weeks between submission of initial bargaining plan drafts and actual negotiations can become quite intense, especially if students try to "wing it" with their first drafts by not reading the text and lessons on bargaining models before completing the worksheets. During one semester, all four pairs of union/management groups chose to adopt the interest-based (win-win) model format, yet all but one of the eight groups submitted bargaining plans with traditionally defined bargaining issues and distributive bargaining ranges. (The online lesson they were supposed to have read included an extensive section comparing the two bargaining models, giving examples of how to define the issues and ranges using each model, based on information from the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Services lessons on interest-based bargaining, and "Getting to Yes" by Fisher, Ury, and Patton, 1991.) Consequently, the first draft was essentially a throw away effort. Only after numerous email exchanges and several group meetings with the instructor did groups develop solid interest-based bargaining plans.

All of this bargaining plan development activity leads up to Week 14 which is entirely devoted to negotiating the contract changes, followed by Week 15 used for writing up the new contract changes, estimating costs, and writing a union ratification speech.

The role of the instructor is focused on helping students develop issues and strategies, not as a participant in the actual negotiations, nor as a mediator or arbitrator. During the negotiations process the instructor answers lots of questions, gives guidance on how to think about issues or how to handle a conflict, or encourages analysis of consequences (intended and unintended) of certain actions, or suggests places to look for answers to questions that come up during negotiations. Those activities are geared toward getting the groups to reach their own agreements. The project rules specify a grade of no better than "C" should groups end at an impasse, so there is incentive to reach agreement on all issues from both sides by the midnight deadline of negotiations week.

## **ORGANIZATION OF PROJECT WEBSITE**

The examples and suggestions used in this paper are from a course based in Blackboard (Bb) 7.0. Whether in Bb, or some other platform such as WebCT, many of the same organizing tips apply to any online course, especially clear navigation, and simplicity. Among the course navigation buttons is the Projects button that opens into a webpage including the following folders and links:

- General Instructions and Deadlines – Html and Word documents describe the overall flow and requirements of the group project. All deadlines for the project are included in the General Instructions, however specific details for management and union groups’ assignments, and the passwords for their restricted files are in separate instructions posted to their groups’ secure file exchange that can only be accessed by their members.
- A Video Introduction to the Simulation – made with Serious Magic, the one minute forty-four second video clip shows the students scenes of the hotel, views of Minneapolis, and a greeting by the instructor, to give some realism and context to the simulation. Compressed files versions for dial-up and high speed connections are available.
- The Zinnia Main Website link – unpackages a Zip file of the information provided by the text publisher for the simulation. Using the local zip file instead of the online link to the author’s website allows the instructor to customize information from semester to semester.
- Bargaining Plan Worksheet - for downloading blank worksheet forms, modified by the instructor from the forms provided with the text.
- Links for downloading the Labor Contract Word document, and the Excel costing spreadsheets – the same documents are available inside the main website Zip file, but this provides access with less navigation through the website.
- Reference Files – supplemental information about policies, issues, the city, etc. that students have asked for over the years.
- Other Supporting information as needed, such as how to determine how many employees are working part-time or other questions that come up from time to time.
- A Sample Peer Evaluation – the sample survey shows students how participation in the project will be evaluated by every member within a Team for every other member, including self-evaluations. (The actual peer evaluations are in separate course-sites by Team, utilizing the Quiz function in Blackboard.)

There seems to be a constant tension between students wanting more information and students complaining about having too much information to read, so balance is important and “optional/supplemental” features are labeled as such.

## **GROUP PAGES AND COMMUNICATIONS**

As previously mentioned, students are assigned to union or management groups based on geographic proximity (the course is offered to students in two cities) when possible, and on scheduling compatibility to facilitate face-to-face meetings. At the same time, students are told that as an online course, there is no requirement that students meet face-to-face for any portion of the negotiation project. Should union and management groups want to meet physically, they

may do so only if all members of both groups are able to meet, or some other arrangements are made to include students who can't be physically present. For example, one student from out-of-state took part in negotiations via an open cell phone. Other groups have sent email comments back and forth from the negotiation meetings to the remote students, or kept a running text dialogue via the Team chat room, or Discussion Board.

Typically there are four to six Teams of paired Union and Management groups in each section of the course. In the Group Pages, there are two levels for each student: (1) the Union or Management group's site with email, discussion board, file exchange, and chat functions for communicating with members within the group, and (2) a team-level page incorporating the same functions for communicating with members of the other group in the team.

One problem students have encountered is that the firewalls protecting the lab computers may block Java script functions, so the Bb chat functions can't be used. Rather than have students get frustrated, they are advised of potential problems with the chat function, and the chat function is not a required part of the group communication assignment.

When groups are formed in Week 4, a temporary Group Spokesperson is assigned who is responsible for emailing all members and initiating the dialogue to select a permanent Spokesperson and an official Records Keeper. The group Spokesperson is given discussion board administrative rights to add forums, and delete threads. The Record Keeper's role is to make sure that someone in the group is responsible for maintaining the latest version of issues, proposals, and changes during the negotiation process. Other group members are not given formal roles, though some do self-select roles such as CFO, HR Manager, or Steward because of the special expertise or contribution they bring to the simulation.

## **NEGOTIATING ONLINE**

Once bargaining plans are approved for both groups in a Team, an email is sent to all members giving permission for the Team to begin bargaining. In that message, the rules of engagement are explained. First and foremost, groups may not simply exchange complete bargaining plans, and any groups found to have done so will fail the course. They are instructed to use the communications tools in the Team site (most use the discussion board and email, some use the chat room if it works at their school), or if they to meet face-to-face, the Team members are to review each Article to settle harmony items that neither side wants to reopen, thereby ending up with the issues they want to discuss. By tradition, the union then presents its first issue and proposal, starting off the negotiation process. In interest-based bargaining, a wide ranging brainstorming session of all members ensues until a solution is agreed upon, while in traditional bargaining the initial positions on an issue are stated and defended, working toward compromise until one side accepts the other side's position.

Students are encouraged to contact the instructor with questions during the process, however, the midnight deadline at the end of the week is absolute and no negotiations or changes may occur after that time.

## EVALUATING THE PROJECT AND ASSIGNING GRADES

Evaluation of the labor negotiation projects can be approached from a number of different perspectives and some might consider it more art than science. Overall, the author considers two major aspects of the project: is the final contract “livable,” and did each group attain the majority of its goals from the bargaining plan within their ranges. Livability means that neither side is unduly hurt by the contract changes, nor is either side likely to be resentful about the other group, essentially ending up with a “good” contract. Also, the language used has to be clear and precise enough so the final intent is understood without opening a Pandora’s Box of new problems. If the group did an adequate job of researching its issues, considered probable responses by the other side to its proposals, and negotiated seriously during talks, the group will settle most of its issues within their defined ranges.

Management groups are responsible for turning in the edited labor agreement (a Word document using the Edit/Track changes function with deleted clauses crossed out, and new language inserted in a different color font), and tables showing estimates of some costs over the life of the contract. Cost estimates are limited mostly to those calculated in the Excel spreadsheet covering wages, vacations, other benefits, and the updated Wage Schedule showing changes to hourly wages for each job classification. If cost estimates are made for non-spreadsheet items, students are required to give brief, logical explanations of how the numbers were arrived at, and the assumptions made.

Union groups are responsible for writing a Ratification Speech explaining to rank and file union members why they should vote in favor of the contract the group has just negotiated. Surprisingly, truthfulness and accuracy in portraying what was agreed upon has sometimes lost out to persuasiveness in these speeches, so the instructions specifically hold the union groups responsible for accurate content. Lying to their members about the benefits or shortcomings of the new contract is severely penalized.

The management group posts the final revised labor agreement to the Team File Exchange, or it is sent as an email attachment to all members on both sides, and each student must send the instructor an email saying that he or she has reviewed the contract and agrees that it contains the articles and clauses accepted during negotiations. This holds all members accountable for the contents of the contract, and links the contract to the cost estimates and ratification speech. Students are told that if it isn’t in the contract, it doesn’t exist. There have been times when the members of a union group sent emails agreeing with the final contract, but a clause or crucial word (such as “paid” or “unpaid”) was missing, setting up a discrepancy between what the contract said, and what the group said it agreed to in the Ratification speech. In those cases, the Spokesperson from each group is contacted to explain the situation. If it was an innocent clerical error, the group may be given an opportunity to fix the problem and resubmit a corrected document, or the responsible group may be marked down for deliberate falsification or misrepresentation of what the parties agreed to.

Grades for the project are based upon active participation of group members, the clarity and completeness of the negotiation plans and settlements, and are influenced by peer evaluations. Assigning grades for the negotiation project is a two step process. First, each union

or management group is given a grade out of 100 points for its work on the project, and those points serve as the baseline grade for all group members. The second step involves determining individual grades earned by incorporating the peer evaluation information. Active participation and contribution are stressed, so members who don't contribute find their grades proportionately reduced from the overall group grade, up to failure of the project if the student made no substantive contribution, and failure of the project is an automatic failure of the course. Table 2 lists the Peer Evaluation questions and ratings that are the asked. Most questions have scale options ranging from contributed little to made superior contributions, and include an "I don't know this person" or "Does not apply" option. By using the quiz function in Blackboard (in separate course sites for each Team), summary information such as frequencies of specific responses can be calculated for each student in a Team, and the Bb Gradebook will show if a student did not complete the evaluation for a particular person.

### **Table 2. Online Labor Negotiation Peer Evaluation Questions**

**INSTRUCTIONS:** (1) Consider each member's contribution to the negotiation project on the following 10 dimensions by selecting the response that best reflects your rating of his/her work. (2) There is room for additional comments at the end of the survey (item 11). (3) When you are done, click the Submit button.

The evaluations are confidential, and the instructor will be the only person with access to review scores and comments.

Question 1: Communicating with team members.

Question 2: Share of tasks assumed

Question 3: Contribution to researching and developing negotiation proposal plan by determining contract deficiencies or needs, defining issues, prioritizing importance of issues.

Question 4: Worked with Excel spreadsheet to cost out preliminary options and issues in negotiation plan.

Question 5: Contribution of solutions and ideas during negotiations.

Question 6: Participation (on-line or in person) in the Negotiation Process.

Question 7: Costing out final provisions of revised contract (rate Management members only).

Question 8: Writing of final contract clauses agreed upon.

Question 9: Writing of Union ratification speech (rate Union members only)

Question 10: Overall contribution to the success of the project. Give each person a grade based on his or her contribution.

- a. F - below 60%: Dead Weight, no contribution to success.
- b. D - 60-69%: Slacker, did as little as possible to get by.
- c. C - 70-79%: Average, dependable help.
- d. B - 80-89%: Above Average, made a significant difference.
- e. A - 90-100%: Star, really into the project and key player.
- f. I had no contact with this individual.

Question 11 (Short Answer / Essay): Use the space provided to write any additional comments you wish to make about this group member's contributions to the success of the project.

In an effort to grade the project objectively, the following weights are used for each component of the project: Development of bargaining plans and bargaining ranges - 40%; Negotiation and approval of the revised labor agreement - 40%; and Supporting work (contract revisions/cost estimates; union ratification speech) - 20%. This weighting scheme puts most of the grade on the preparation and negotiated results, with less on the final documentation which can sometimes suffer as the end of the semester approaches, and commitments in other classes and projects intensify. A sample of the rating form used is shown in Table 3.

**Table 3. Negotiation Project Rating Sheet**

**MGMT-HR 340 LABOR NEGOTIATION PROJECT GRADING SHEET**

Traditional Model / Interest-based Model

<b>Mgt. Group # -- /100</b>	<b>Union Group # -- /100</b>
(Member names)	(Member names)
<b>Mgt. Bargaining Plan – /40</b>	<b>Union Bargaining Plan – /40</b>
<b>Comments:</b> (May include comments about clarity of issues, reasonableness of bargaining ranges, timeliness of plan submission, concern over potential outcomes from proposals.)	<b>Comments:</b> (Same topics as shown in left column)
<b>Quality of Labor Agreement – /40</b>	<b>Quality of Labor Agreement – /40</b>
<b>Comments:</b> (Were priority issues settled within bargaining ranges? Were accepted changes written clearly? Was the final agreement livable? Were overall goals achieved?) Issue #1: Issue #2: Issue #3: Issue #4: Issue #5: Issue #6:	<b>Comments:</b> (Same questions as shown in left column.) Issue #1: Issue #2: Issue #3: Issue #4: Issue #5: Issue #6:
<b>Editing of Contract &amp; Cost Estimates - /20</b>	<b>Ratification Speech - /20</b>
<b>Comments:</b> (Did management make accurate estimates of the costs of the final contract changes? Were they submitted in required format?)	<b>Comments:</b> (Was the speech accurate? Will it persuade members to vote for the contract? Was it formatted correctly?)

**SUMMARY**

Negotiating a collective bargaining agreement is a challenging exercise for students, whether face-to-face or online. Taking a labor relations course online needn't be a barrier to this rich learning experience. It just takes planning, a bit more time, and lots of communication between instructor and students, and among students. For many students, it is their first encounter with labor-management agreements and detailed human resources policies. Because it

involves both union and management perspectives, individual biases and political beliefs often influence the attitudes students bring to the project, so part of the learning process is a broadening of their perspectives.

Important skills for the instructor include being flexible where possible, but clear about absolute deadlines, using lots of positive encouragement and giving gentle reminders about specific instructions or lessons, and explaining things in a different way or providing additional examples to help guide students to successful completion of the course.

Although there may be some grumbling and frustration expressed while drafting issues and revising bargaining plans, most students end up evaluating the project as fun, interesting, and a memorable experience. Each semester students learn about compromise and finding creative solutions to workplace problems, all in the context of settling a new labor agreement.

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