

title page;

Trade Negotiations: Teaching Consensus

Dr Helen Hawthorne

Senior Lecturer in Politics

HEA Fellow

Department of Law and Politics

Middlesex University

The Burroughs

Hendon

NW4 4BT

Email – h.hawthorne@mdx.ac.uk

ORCID Id - 0000-0003-2874-1997

Twitter - @HelHawthorne

Funding details – n/a

Disclosure statement – n/a

Biographical Note:

Dr Helen Hawthorne is a Senior Lecturer at Middlesex University where she teaches on a variety of undergraduate and postgraduate modules. Previously she taught at City University London, where she also completed her PhD looking at the role of least developed countries in the World Trade Organisation. Her current research focuses on partnerships in the context of the Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Word Count - 8078

Abstract

International negotiations, particularly in international organisations with a large number of members, can be long and fraught. Reaching consensus between a large number of countries is not an easy task and this point is often ignored in news reports relating to international negotiations. This article argues that when teaching students about the conduct of international negotiations, their understanding can be greatly enhanced by the use of active learning techniques such as role playing, simulations and games. However, much of the literature describes simulations which take time to prepare and are often run over several hours or days. This article argues that we need to develop shorter, seminar length simulations which students can relate to, in order to help their understanding of the issues and processes around negotiations. Highlighting the consensus process in the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and drawing on experience of teaching students about the WTO, this article elaborates a seminar length exercise which can be used to illustrate some of the negotiation processes in the WTO, while at the same time teaching students about the process and difficulties of consensus building with a familiar scenario.

Keywords: World Trade Organisation, active learning, simulations, coalitions and consensus.

JEL codes;

Main text

Introduction

The recent Brexit debates have highlighted the fact that complex negotiations, particularly those related to trade, can take several years to complete. This is a fact which is understood by trade negotiators and scholars of international institutions but not necessarily by the general public or students who may lack an understanding of the amount of time negotiations take and their complexity. Recent social media reports have highlighted this issue. For example, in a

blog post Dunt noted that the EU-Canada deal ‘a nuts-and-bolts, goods-only trade deal, took five years to negotiate and two to ratify’ (Dunt, 2018).¹ The key issue with trade deals particularly within the WTO is that they rely on the members reaching consensus, which is often a difficult task amongst a large number of countries and this point is often ignored in news reports relating to international trade negotiations. Despite the effective shelving of the Doha Round, reaching agreements by consensus remains a key part of the decision making process within the WTO as was highlighted recently during the process to appoint a new Director General (WTO, 2021). The issue has also surfaced during the discussions on intellectual property waivers for Covid vaccines (Ungphakorn, 2021).² The importance of consensus in decision-making in the WTO means that it is an essential concept for students to grasp. Given this situation, it is essential that students of International Political Economy (IPE) gain some insight into the negotiations process and the length of time it takes to achieve consensus. This paper argues that in order to achieve this we need to incorporate active learning methods into our teaching practice to give students a chance to experience and gain insights into the complex and ‘messy’ process of negotiations.

Many international politics and IPE courses do incorporate active learning experiences often in the form of simulations and these are reflected in a growing body of literature (for example Lowry, 1999; Truscott et al, 2000; Grummel, 2003; Asal, 2005; Kelle, 2008; Bobot and Goergen, 2010; Wedig, 2010; Steagall et al, 2012 and Brown, 2018). The other issue identified in the literature is that these are often sessions lasting at least a day or running over a semester which can pose additional difficulties in terms of resourcing (Moizer et al 2009) and that they are often less common in IPE (Baranoski and Weir, 2015). This article argues that we need to develop shorter, seminar length simulations of 50 minutes to two hours which

¹ Ian Dunt is editor of the website Politics.co.uk.

² Peter Ungphakorn was a member of the WTO Secretariat for over 18 years.

students can relate to, in order to help their understanding of the issues and processes around WTO negotiations; and to increase their engagement with the topics they are studying. A review of the literature relating to simulations indicates that few articles which look at active learning sessions relate to seminar length activities, Brown (2018) being a notable exception. This article aims to fill this gap.

Drawing on experience of teaching students about the WTO, this article incorporates a seminar length exercise which usually follows an introductory lecture on trade and the WTO and is part of a broad introduction to IPE module. The exercise can be used to illustrate some of the negotiation processes in the WTO, while at the same time teaching students about the difficulties of consensus building. The seminar simulation incorporates a negotiating situation and highlights learning points related to WTO negotiations, it does not focus specifically on WTO issues. Instead it relates to a situation that students can identify with as an analogy in order to aid their understanding of the difficulties of reaching consensus. The use of this analogy allows the mapping ‘of a familiar concept... to an unfamiliar one’ (Young and Leinhardt, 2001: 156) and this is what differentiates this paper from others in the simulations literature. The paper is divided into four sections. The first section looks in more detail at the benefits of active learning before briefly reviewing some of the literature relating to the incorporation of simulations in teaching International Politics. Section two examines the idea of consensus from a WTO point of view. Section three elaborates on the seminar exercise which can be used to give students some experience of negotiations aimed at reaching consensus.³ Section four concludes the paper, emphasizing some of the learning points from it.

³ Although this paper looks at negotiations and consensus from the point of view of the WTO, the seminar exercise described could be adapted for use with other international organisations, which also rely on consensus, such as the UN and the EU. For example, Hage (2013) notes that ‘although qualified-majority voting

Literature Review: Active Learning in Teaching

This section briefly reviews some of the literature on active learning and simulations. It introduces the benefits of active learning before focusing in more detail on the literature relating to simulations and the assessment of these. In particular it focuses on literature which features negotiation simulations and highlights what these simulations do well and where the literature could be enhanced.

The research into active learning stems in part from constructivist ideas which sees active or participative learning as a key way to engage students – if we can engage students in learning in a way that helps them understand its relevance and enjoy the process of learning, they should do better in the course overall and be keen to engage more with the topics. As well as helping with student engagement, active learning is also linked to increased memory retention by students and to the process of ‘deep’ rather than ‘surface learning as described by Marton and Saljo (1976). Traditional teaching on more theoretical subjects such as IPE has tended to follow the standard academic path of lectures followed by seminars where students discuss the subject or theory at hand, but simulations are now being incorporated more into teaching practice. Despite this increasing focus, the use of games and simulations in teaching are not new (Cruickshank and Telfer, 1980; Shaw, 2010; Clayton and Gizelis, 2010; Plass et al, 2015). The literature highlights a focus on using games and simulations which dates back to the 1950s (Bobot and Goergen 2010). Evidence of this focus can also be found in the teaching and learning sections of the International Studies Association (ISA) and the British International Studies Association (BISA), particularly in relation to foreign policy or strategic

is possible, member states in the Council of European Union (EU) still adopt most policies by consensus’ (p.481).

studies (Kelle, 2008; Shaw, 2010) and in two special issues on simulations in the Journal of Political Science Education (Baranowski and Weir, 2015; 392).

A number of benefits of active learning have been identified by researchers which include its potential to increase 'deep' as opposed to surface learning, aiding memory retention and motivating students to learn (Howie and Bagnall, 2013; Marton and Saljo, 1976 and 2005; Cherney, 2008; Aggarwal and Wu, 2019). Of particular relevance to simulations is the idea of 'experiencing' (Exley, 2013) - experiential learning has been seen as 'very effective' (Aggarwal and Wu, 2019). Indeed a recent strand of the literature focuses on the use of electronic games and board games in teaching (Plass et al, 2015; Sardone and Devlin-Scherer, 2016) which are considered to have a 'positive' and energizing effect on learning (Sardone and Devlin-Scherer, 2016: 216 and 221). In terms of board games, these are seen as 'a good starting point' offering 'an approachable format to deal with current issues or traditionally taught content' (Sardone and Devlin-Scherer, 2016: 221). Board games can also offer an element of familiarity to the students. For example, Ansoms and Geenen (2012a and 2012b) look at the use of a board game called 'Development MONOPOLY' to teach students about poverty and inequality and highlight a rich strand of work on the use of 'modified MONOPOLY' in teaching situations (Ansom and Geenen, 2012a; 715). In terms of the advantages of using games in the classroom, Ansoms and Geenen found that 'Games increase student's motivation and their interest in learning, they promote individual discovery and provide an excellent technique for affective and conceptual learning, they enhance cooperation and communication between students, and they create a more positive socioemotional classroom environment' (Ansom and Geenen, 2012a: 720).

The key issue in the use of both games and simulations in IPE is the notion of play and the idea of learning through play, which is seen as 'the essential activity in games' and one which 'has long been thought of as a critical element in human development', especially in terms of

‘cognitive development and learning’ (Plass et al, 2015:259). The literature shows the positive impact that the use of games and simulations can have in teaching, a finding that is reinforced in the international politics literature by McCarthy (2014) who looked specifically at games and simulations to teach abstract concepts in World Politics with 149 undergraduate students. McCarthy’s findings suggest that ‘an active-learning activity ... promotes greater student learning than reading and lecture alone’ (McCarthy, 2014). This is particularly useful validation of the approach and is further echoed by Lee and Shirkey (2017).

Whilst much of the literature focuses on the benefits of using games and simulations it is important to note that there can be barriers to using these. Moizer et al (2009) build on previous work by Lean et al (2006) related to barriers to using games and simulation in higher education. Three key barriers include suitability, resources and risks. Games and simulations need to be suitable to meet learning outcomes, they can be more resource intensive than traditional teaching methods in terms of preparation, delivery and assessment, something which becomes apparent in Kelle’s (2008) arms control simulation. They can also create risks including student resistance and negative reactions, especially when students are feeling unsure. Moizer et al (2009) argue that the barriers can be addressed via internal support mechanisms including free up time, training and development, informal learning by sharing practices and resource support. In addition, as this paper argues, the inclusion of seminar length simulation activities can help to address some of these barriers to the use of active learning, particularly in terms of preparation time.

In looking at games and simulations relating to IPE and trade negotiations, most of the literature focuses on activities which take place over several hours or days, such as those highlighted by Lowry (1999), Truscott et al (2000), Bobot and Goergen (2010), Steagall et al (2012) and Meschoulam et al (2019). Few articles focus on shorter seminar length simulation activities. This lack of short seminar length activities was highlighted in a review of papers on simulations by Baranowski and Weir (2015). Of the 27 papers they reviewed, only five were for simulations lasting less than two hours and none related to IPE. Two seminar activities which are linked to trade include the frequently cited Prisoner's Dilemma exercise and Jensen's (2016) on the origins of goods. The prisoner's dilemma game is often used in the literature in relation to negotiations and game theory, and is an exercise which could be played in a seminar setting. However, as Hoekman and Kostecki (2001) point out 'while a convenient illustration, the Prisoner's Dilemma is a very special and narrow game, in that there is only a single outcome that makes players better off, and there are only two players' (p.110). Whilst the two player issue can be modified in a seminar class so that the exercise can be run with two groups, the literature does not always focus on the negotiation elements of the process (for examples see Pappas, 2011 and Workshop Bank, 2019). Jensen (2016) does provide an example of a seminar exercise linked to trade, but it does not include a negotiations component to the exercise, so is not helpful in the context of consensus. Brown (2018) also represents a notable exception, as his work focuses on negotiations and is designed to be seminar length, but the focus is on climate negotiations rather than trade. Brown does however, advocate for games and simulations to be developed that are short and easy to implement in order to offer students 'a vibrant, participatory learning experience' (Brown, 2018: 520). This paper meets Brown's challenge by presenting a negotiations game that can be played in a single seminar session, meaning that preparation time can be minimised, along with costs.

Helping learners to make connections between issues is perhaps ‘the most important part of the learning process’ (Clapper, 2018: 3) in order to achieve this, the literature on simulations also highlights the importance of assessing the achievement of the learning objectives that the simulation is designed to meet. This issue was initially raised by Smith and Boyer (1996) and has received much focus in recent years. For example Raymond and Usherwood (2013) argued the assessment of simulations should ‘be approached in a more systematic fashion’ and that they should be designed and framed around learning outcomes. A view backed by Baranowski and Weir (2005). Indeed, the literature indicates that many longer or multiday simulations are often framed around pre and/or post simulation questionnaires (Shellman and Turan, 2006; Baranowski, 2006; Steagall et al, 2012; Lee and Shirkey, 2017) or reflective elements (essays or blog) (Shellman and Turan, 2003; McCarthy, 2014; Frank and Genauer, 2019) or both (Kelle, 2008; Meschoulam et al, 2019). This does pose questions for single session simulations, however, Levin-Banchik (2018: 354) highlights that the ‘post simulation debriefing can be an effective teaching tool in terms of knowledge retention, even 3 months after the simulation’ and can help with the attainment of teaching goals. Thus, the debriefing performs a key part of evaluating the activities and is a ‘fundamental’ or ‘crucial’ part of a simulation, providing students with a chance to reflect on what they have learnt from the process (Bobot and Goergen, 2010; Shaw, 2010; Der Sahakian et al, 2015). This opportunity for reflection was also highlighted by Kolb and Fry (1975) who noted its importance in helping students to make sense of the experience and link it to broader concepts and alternative course of action. Providing the learning outcomes and objectives are reinforced by the simulation and an effective debriefing is held, it is possible to conduct a single session simulation without pre and post simulation questionnaires, but some form of assessment is a key part of simulations. For seminar length simulations, Kelle’s use of minute papers at the end of the session works well (Kelle, 2008: 379)

An additional way to help students to make connections between issues (Clapper, 2018) is by incorporating some form of analogy into the simulation. Many of the simulations described in the literature use some form of analogy to help the students understand and gain insights into the negotiating process. Many also try to replicate the real negotiations to some extent e.g. Kelle (2008) and Brown (2018). This works well where the whole module is focused on a particular topic for example Kelle (2008) or Youde (2008) and where the preparation for the simulation can be built in to the teaching process, for example where students have time to research the negotiating position of a particular country and put forward proposals such as described in Kaufman (1998). However, for short seminar length simulations this situation may not be possible. In this situation a simulation completely based on an analogy may be beneficial as it has the advantage of linking old concepts which students are familiar with to new ones (Sidney and Thompson, 2019; Young and Leinhardt, 2001: 156). This is an area in which the literature is lacking and where this paper aims to fill the gap.

Evidence from the literature cited above suggests that games and simulations are a key way to engage students and to get them actively involved in a module or a particular topic. The evidence would also seem to indicate that the type of activity i.e. game, simulation or role play is not important - the inclusion of any of these activities will aid teaching and learning provided that they are properly planned and explained to the learners and include some form of de-briefing after the activity. However, the literature lacks an inclusion of seminar length activities. Seminar length activities are particularly useful to counter some of the barriers to the use of simulations and role plays such as preparation time and cost as highlighted above.

Consensus in the WTO: What is Consensus?

Having reviewed some of the benefits and issues around active learning, this section now looks in closer detail at the decision making process within the WTO and the issue of consensus. It focuses on the reasons behind the use of consensus, the problems it may create particularly for developing countries and the use of negotiating groups or coalitions of countries within the WTO. This provides the background to the simulation exercise elaborated in section three and highlights some of the important issues that the simulation aims to make students aware of.

In WTO negotiations, consensus is used as the basis for decision-making between the organisation's 164 members and 'decisions are made by the entire membership' (WTO, 2019a). The use of consensus within the WTO continued the practise used in the GATT (WTO, 1999: 8; WTO; 2019a; Hoekman and Kostecki, 2001: 56; Narlikar, 2003: 36). Indeed, Hoekman and Kostechi (2001) note that 'consensus was the modus operandi of the GATT' (p.56). It is important to note that 'consensus does not mean unanimity', but signifies that no delegation physically present ... has a fundamental objection on an issue' (Hoekman and Kostechi, 2001:57). This view is reinforced in the WTO *Legal Texts* which state that consensus is reached 'if no Member, present at the meeting when the decision is taken, formally objects to the proposed decision' (WTO, 1999: 8). In trade terms this means that theoretically all countries have an equal say in the WTO's negotiations as each country has one vote in the trade organisation. The benefits of using consensus, as Hoekman and Kostecki (2001) argue, is that it 'can help enhance the legitimacy of decisions' as they 'are taken collectively' (p.57), which means that each member of the organisation has an equal voice. It also 'forces countries to negotiate and come up with a deal that all members can accept', reducing the risk of key players later withdrawing from the agreement or 'being forced to accept obligations against their will' (Ungphakorn, 2021). However, as Narlikar (2003) argues there are four main problems with consensus decision-making, especially for

developing countries. First, in order to take part in decision-making countries must be present, thus countries with no representation in Geneva may struggle to have a voice unless they arrange for a representative to attend key meetings.⁴ Second, consensus is indicated via ‘an open show of hands rather than a secret ballot’ which could inhibit developing countries from openly dissenting and result in abstention from voting, a view reinforced by Odell (2007: 14). Third, the need to reach consensus historically led to developed countries holding meetings with only invited participants – typically these meetings, often referred to as ‘Green Room’ meetings or ‘Mini-Ministerials’, were comprised of ‘the major OECD members and a small number of developing countries’ (Hoekman, 2002: 31) – but are now more representative.⁵ Fourth, although the WTO agreements do allow for majority voting in some circumstances this was not the established norm in the GATT, and it was felt that any attempt to use it by developing countries would lead to developed countries bypassing the organisation and hence it was rarely used (Narlikar, 2003: 36; also see WTO, 2019a and Ungphakorn, 2021). Wolfe (2009: 847) highlights a further problem with the use of consensus, noting that the practice in the WTO means that the negotiation process is often slower than it could be. However, Wolfe (2009) also notes that if voting were to be used this would raise a number of other political issues including who would cast the vote for each country, which issues would be voted on and what would happen if a major member lost a vote (p.847-848).

One common practice that several writers cite as a way for developing or smaller countries to have more influence in international negotiations is via the formation of coalitions with like-minded countries (see Hoekman and Kostecki, 2001: 57; Narlikar, 2003; and Odell, 2007).

⁴ This problem typically affects the very small developing countries who do not have diplomatic missions based in Geneva. To help combat this the WTO holds specific ‘Geneva Weeks’ for these countries. The countries without missions in Geneva (as at May 2019) are: Antigua and Barbuda; Belize; Dominica; Grenada; Guinea-Bissau; Papua New Guinea; Saint Kitts and Nevis; Saint Lucia; Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; Samoa; Sao Tome and Principe (WTO observer); Suriname; and Tonga (WTO, 2019b).

⁵ For more on Green Room meetings and mini-ministerials see Jawara and Kwa (2003) and Wolfe (2004). Green room meetings are held in Geneva, while mini-ministerials are more ad hoc and occur on the fringes of other major event e.g. OECD meetings.

For developing countries, coalitions offer the chance to increase their negotiating leverage by maximising ‘their joint bargaining power’ which gives them the opportunity to ‘block efforts to move in a direction they oppose’ (Hoekman and Kostecki, 2001: 119 and 478). Narlikar (2003: 2) reinforces this view arguing that coalitions are important ‘as instruments for gaining advantage in international negotiations’ particularly for the weaker countries in an international organisation. The study of coalitions or negotiating groups in the WTO was spearheaded by Narlikar (2003) and has been a focus of several scholars including Odell (2007) and Hawthorne (2013), but they are not unique to the trade organisation with notable examples being the G77 in UNCTAD and the Non-Aligned Movement in the UN (Narlikar, 2003).

In terms of trade negotiations, especially for the Uruguay Round and the Doha Round, the issue of consensus has also been linked to the idea that nothing is agreed between members until everything is agreed due to the introduction of the Single Undertaking in the Doha Declaration (WTO, 2001). Sally (2004: 109) describes the Single Undertaking as ‘another Uruguay Round innovation’, although Wolfe (2009: 838) notes that the Tokyo Round Declaration ‘used a similar phrase’ stating that ‘the negotiations shall be considered as one undertaking’ (see footnotes p.839). The Single Undertaking and the complexity of the trade topics being negotiated means that negotiations can take a long time if there are multiple issues for members to agree upon, as noted by Wolfe (2009). For example, the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations which established the WTO took over 15 years to complete due to its complexity and the difficulties of reaching agreement. Similarly, the Doha Round was still unresolved after the same period of time and has now been effectively shelved. In terms of teaching and active learning, the implications of the above review of decision making within the WTO for teaching students about consensus are that any proposed exercise would

need to take account of the issues in reaching consensus, including coalitions and the Single Undertaking.

Consensus Simulation - Example Seminar

For undergraduates or students new to a topic, active learning can be particularly useful for engaging students with the topic. This section argues that there is a need to employ some simple games or simulations exercises in seminar classes to help students better understand political economy issues and how these affect people. The three reasons for doing this are first to help to scaffold the student's basic knowledge and give them a base to build on for the rest of the course. Linking the simulations to an analogy or situation that students are familiar with is a good way to develop their understanding of issues in IPE. Second, if the students enjoy participating in these seminar activities this will increase their commitment to the course and encourage them to read more. Finally, the increased commitment to the course should be reflected in increased attendance, as students will want to be part of the activities which will help to encourage the feeling of a 'community of learning' in classes.

This section of the paper focuses on a simulation exercise which can be used in a seminar typically 50 minutes long. The seminar follows an introductory lecture on the WTO which includes a brief review of the organisation's history, structure and negotiating processes including the importance of coalitions. The lecture is key to introducing the ideas and issues to be highlighted in the seminar exercise and is part of the setup for the simulation. Smith and Boyer (1996) noted that 'the principal disadvantage of using simulations is that the teacher must sacrifice a degree of breadth in substantive coverage in return for a deeper level of student understanding on more narrow topics' (p.691). The consensus exercise tries to put this

into practice by focusing on the WTO negotiation process rather than the complex work of the organisation. It was felt that by focusing on this aspect of the organisation the students would gain a deeper understanding of the politics of the process and the power plays within the organisation as well as the issues of coalitions and their impact on negotiations. The learning objectives of the exercise are first to demonstrate to the students the difficulties of reaching consensus in a negotiating situation; second to aid students understanding of the WTO process of consensus building; and finally to help them understand how negotiating coalitions form and the power derived from these.

The exercise is one which I have developed and refined over several years in teaching both undergraduate and post-graduate students about the WTO. A brief outline of the exercise is shown in Figure 1 below. The exercise has several benefits. First, it only has one final outcome that makes players better off i.e. it is a single undertaking, so while it does not solve the prisoner's dilemma issue highlighted earlier, it does have the advantage of allowing for multiple players. This means that a whole seminar class can participate, and it has been used with seminar groups ranging from ten to thirty people. Second, a key benefit of the seminar exercise is that it highlights the point made by Hoekman and Kostechi (2001) that 'achieving consensus among such a large number of countries is not a simple matter' (p.60). The nature of the exercise also means that students will still learn about the WTO negotiations process even if consensus is not achieved. Third, the additional benefit of the exercise is that it can easily be run using a white board or flipchart sheets which significantly simplifies the preparation process, as well as minimising the costs involved. Fourth, each student joins the game as themselves so there is no need to assign roles, provide background information on negotiations or complex technical information. The simulation exercise has been deliberately kept 'simple' (Gummel, 2003) and linked to a situation that students are familiar with as the trade component of this module is only a one week introduction to the topic.

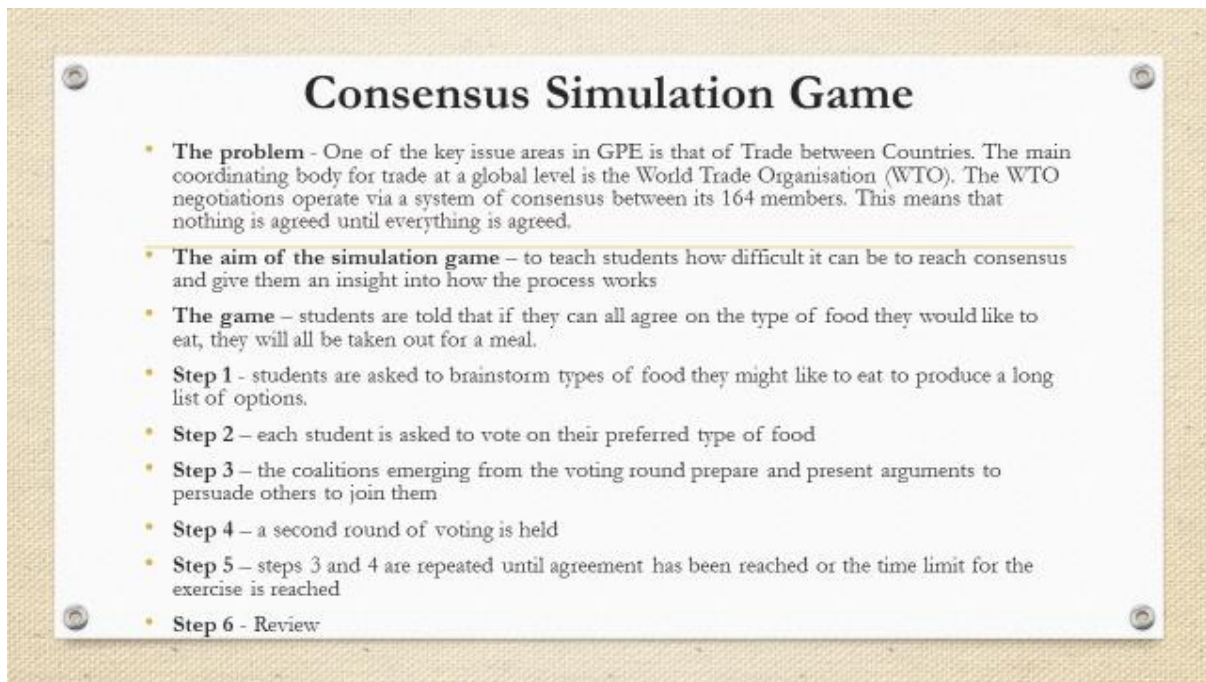


Figure 1 – Consensus Simulation Game

In addition, the exercise links to the four stages of a trade negotiation identified by Hoekman and Kostecki (2001:p.113). These stages are referred to as ‘catalyst, prenegotiation, negotiation and postnegotiation’. The catalyst stage occurs when students are told the potential outcome of the negotiations i.e. that if they can all agree on the type of food they would like to eat, they will be taken out for a meal. This simple scenario was chosen because it is a situation that students can easily identify with and the chance of a free meal represents the ‘pay-off’ for a successful negotiation. The prenegotiation stage is the first step in the exercise and involves getting the students to brainstorm types of food they might like to eat to produce a long list of food preferences to be used as initial negotiating options.⁶ This can be done by asking each student individually or asking the class as a whole to suggest different types of food for example pizza, Thai, sushi, Indian etc. Asking the whole class allows the more dominant members to get their options on the negotiating list first, but I have found asking each student individually also allows the quieter students to have an input into the

⁶ Also see Kaufman (1998: 65)

options. Once each student has suggested a food type and a reasonable list has been generated – ideally 10-15 options - the negotiation phase begins with each student asked to openly vote on their preferred type of food from the list, reflecting the ‘voting’ practice in the WTO. The preferences can easily be recorded using a simple tally method on the whiteboard or flipchart.⁷ As the students vote there will be some coalescing around certain options, with several students agreeing that they would like to eat the same type of food. More popular food options will obviously have bigger groups or a larger number of votes attached to them. For the purposes of the exercise, the students choosing the same food type can be seen as a coalition – these can be equated to negotiating coalitions in the WTO, a point which the instructor should highlight to the class. Students in these groups are encouraged to work together to persuade other students to join them in their food choice coalition. As a learning point, this gives the lecturer the opportunity to discuss how coalitions operate in negotiations and how they attempt to then build further consensus with other groups which could be via side payments or exchange of concession on different issues.

The coalitions that emerge from the voting round are given five minutes to prepare and present arguments to persuade other students to join them. The students are free to decide what the best or most persuasive arguments should be to encourage others to join them. In past teaching experience, these have ranged from cost effectiveness, amount of choice on offer (for example Italian food would encompass pizza and pasta, while Mediterranean food could encompass a range of food options), to the likelihood of success of a particularly popular choice. Once these arguments have been presented to the class by the coalitions, a second round of open voting is held which gives students the opportunity to change their preferences if they wish to or if they have been persuaded by their colleagues arguments. The

⁷ Equally voting could be done electronically if desired, although this might mean that votes are not as open as they would be in the WTO.

second round of voting can again be recorded as a simple tally count using a different colour pen to differentiate the votes. The results of this round usually show a change in the size of some of the coalition groups, with students often persuaded to move from smaller groups to the larger coalitions. Alternatively, students can introduce new food options to the negotiations which on one occasion resulted in the formation of a new ‘chicken’ coalition in an attempt to break the negotiation deadlock again reflecting the practice in the WTO. The negotiating rounds of coalitions presenting their arguments and voting can be repeated until either agreement of the whole class is reached, or the allotted time for the exercise has been reached, which may depend on the length of the seminar or the number of participants. In a 50 minute seminar, a couple of voting rounds are usually possible. To introduce an element of the power imbalances that operate in the WTO, some coalitions could be given additional time to present their arguments to the group or could be encouraged to reach an agreement between themselves excluding other coalitions to demonstrate the move towards plurilateral agreements which has been seen in the WTO with ‘talks among only part of the membership’ (Ungphakorn, 2021).⁸ As indicated earlier, in terms of the learning objectives for the process, it does not actually matter whether the whole class has reached an agreement or not, and it can actually be more helpful to the review process if they haven’t! A lack of agreement at the end of the negotiation time gives the students the opportunity to ‘fail’ which Youde (2008) and Brown (2018) both argue is an important part of the learning process especially in regard to negotiations.

The review/debriefing process for the exercise is something that has been incorporated more recently to the exercise and represents the postnegotiation phase. It provides the opportunity

⁸ The parallel with plurilaterals, as suggested by Peter Ungphakorn, would be for the plurilateral members to go to the restaurant of their choice without the other students.

to explain some of the findings from the simulation to the students and to relate it more to the WTO decision-making process and to the lecture. As well as highlighting the operation of coalitions in negotiations, the review process allows further links to the process of trade negotiations. For example, on one occasion one student refused to change his vote while the rest of the class all agreed on the type of food they wanted. In this case, the nature of consensus and the Single Undertaking, meant that because he had formally objected, consensus could not be reached (WTO, 1999:8), the negotiations could not be completed and thus no one was rewarded. The review process can also be used to highlight to the students the difficulty of reaching consensus among several people on one simple issue i.e. the type of food to eat. Although this is a highly simplified version of the trade negotiations process, it does give students some experience and insight into the difficulty of reaching an agreement. If the students did reach consensus quickly (which hasn't been the case so far in my seminars), the activity could be extended by then getting them to agree on the area of the city to eat in, the day of the week to go out, the individual restaurant and how to deal with food allergies. This extension exercise would have the added advantage of highlighting the complexity of negotiations when more issues or a need for special treatment are incorporated in to the negotiations. Linking the review process to the WTO negotiations as outlined in section two above, and to the lecture helped to generate questions about the WTO and coalitions from the students during the review especially regarding what happens in a deadlock situation which provides scope for a direct link to be made to previous WTO negotiation rounds. The review process has also allowed students to reflect on what they could have done differently to enable consensus to be reached. In some cases this has prompted a recognition that they did not want to concede or negotiate but wanted their preference to 'win', thus ignoring the fact that no-one won unless there was consensus.

To date the debrief has been the only evaluation method used for this simulation. One area in which the exercise would be enhanced for future use, is by linking it to some form of assessment in order to gauge and assess student learning further. Ideally this would be in the format of a minute paper (Kelle, 2008: 382; Kille, 2002: 280) where students comment briefly on the lessons they can draw from the simulation, anything that surprised them about the process, the things that stood out from the simulation and anything they would like to change about the simulation. The inclusion of this assessment exercise would have the benefit of providing the lecturer with more effective and actionable feedback of both the exercise and the initial lecture ensuring that the learning outcomes are met.

Conclusions

This paper has argued that in order to give students practical experiences of different situations, we need to incorporate some element of active learning into our teaching. This element of the active learning activity provides students with a greater understanding of the difficulties of international trade negotiations and the different approaches actors can take to solving political problems in an increasingly interdependent world. The paper also argues that these active learning simulations do not have to be time intensive exercises, but can be devised as short single session simulations to enhance learning and reinforce parts of a lecture. Inclusion of a debrief session is essential to consolidate learning and allow students some space to reflect on what they have learnt.

The seminar exercise described in this article usually follows an introductory lecture on trade and the WTO, which is part of a broad introduction to IPE module. The exercise was developed as a way to teach students about negotiating processes so that they could understand these without the depth of knowledge required to negotiate on WTO issues such as

tariffs or market access concessions. Consensus forms a key part of the decision-making process within the WTO, which means it is an essential concept for students to grasp. The benefits of the seminar exercise described are that students have an opportunity to experience the issues and difficulties of trying to reach consensus which helps them understand why international decisions take time and cannot 'just be decided'. Although the simulation in its current form is very simple, if incorporated in a more trade focused module it could be used as an introduction to the negotiation process and developed to focus on more trade related issues.

Acknowledgements:

The author is indebted to the anonymous reviewer who helped to develop and improve this paper, to Mr Peter Ungphakorn for his helpful suggestions and encouragement and most importantly to my students for engaging and participating in this exercise.

References:

- Aggarwal, R and Wu, Y. (2019). Challenges in Implementing Experiential Learning in IB Education, *Journal of Teaching in International Business*, Vol 30(1), 1-5.
- Ansoms, A and Geenan, S. (2012a). Simulating Poverty and Inequality Dynamics in Developing Countries, *Simulation and Gaming*, 43(6), 713-728.

Ansoms, A and Geenan, S. (2012b). DEVELOPMENT MONOPOLY: A Simulation Game on Poverty and Inequality, *Simulation and Gaming*, 43(6), 853-862.

Baranowski, M. (2006). Single Session Simulations: The Effectiveness of Short Congressional Simulations in Introductory American Government Classes, *Journal of Political Science Education*, 2, 33-49.

Baranowski, M and Weir, K. (2015). Political Simulations: What we know, What we think we know, and what we still need to know, *Journal of Political Science Education*, 11, 391-403.

Bobot, L and Goergen, A. (2010). Case Study: Teaching European Negotiations: The EU Chocolate Directive Simulation, *International Negotiation*, Vol 15 (2010), 301-323.

Brown, J M. (2018) Efficient, Adaptable Simulation: A case study of a Climate Negotiation Game, *Journal of Political Science Education*, 14(4), 511-522.

Cherney, I. (2008). The effects of active learning on students' memories for course content, *Active learning in Higher Education*, Vol 9(2), 152-171.

Clapper, T C. (2018). Capitalising on the most important part of a Learning Session: The Experience, *Simulation and Gaming*, Vol 49(1), 3-7.

Clayton, G and Gizelis, T. (2010). *Learning through Simulation or Simulated Learning? An Investigation into the Effectiveness of Simulations as a Teaching Tool in Higher Education*, available at <https://www.bisa.ac.uk/files/Prizes/ClaytonGizelisBISAPAPER.pdf> accessed on [17/12/2018](#).

Cruickshank, D R and Telfer, R. (1980). Classroom Games and Simulations, *Theory into Practice*, 19:1, 75-80.

Der Sahakian, G, Alinier, G, Savoldelli, G, Oriot, D, Jaffrelot, M and Lecomte, F. (2015). Setting conditions for Productive Debriefing, *Simulation and Gaming*, Vol 46(2), 197-208.

Dunt, I. 2018. 'Last-gasp Brexit deal fix will poison our politics for years', available at <http://www.politics.co.uk/blogs/2018/10/18/last-gasp-brexit-deal-fix-will-poison-our-politics-for-years> accessed on 19/10/2018.

Esty, D. (2002). The World Trade Organisation's Legitimacy Crisis, *World Trade Review*, 1 (1), March 2002.

Exley, K. (2013). Encouraging Student Participation and Interaction, *Reflections*, Queens University Belfast Centre for Educational Development, December 2013, p.1-3 available at <https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/CentreforEducationalDevelopment/FilestoreDONOTDELETE/Filetoupload,432480,en.pdf> accessed on 01/09/2018.

Frank, R and Genauer, J. (2019). A Classroom Simulation of the Syrian Conflict, *PS: Political Science and Politics*, October 2019, 737-742.

Grummel, J A. (2003) Using Simulation to Teach Decision-Making within the Policy Process, *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 36(4), 787-789.

Hage, F M. (2013). Coalition-Building and Consensus in the Council of the European Union, *British Journal of Political Science*, 43(3), 481-504.

Hawthorne, H. (2013). *Least Developed Countries and the WTO: Special Treatment in Trade*, Palgrave Macmillan.

Hoekman, B M. (2002). Strengthening the Global Trade Architecture, *World Trade Review*, 1 (1), 23-45.

Hoekman, B M and Kostecki, M M. (2001). *The Political Economy of the World Trading System*, 2nd Edition, Oxford University Press.

Hoekman, B and Leidy, M P. (1993). What to Expect from Regional and Multilateral Trade Negotiations: A Public Choice Perspective, *CEPR Discussion Papers 747*, C.E.P.R. Discussion Papers.

Howie, P and Bagnall, R. (2013). A critique of the deep and surface approaches to learning model, *Teaching in Higher Education: Critical Perspectives*, 18 (4), 389-400.

Jawara, F and Kwa, A. (2003). *Behind the scenes at the WTO: The Real World of International Trade Negotiations*, London: Zed Books.

Jensen, S. (2016). Motivating the study of international trade: A classroom activity, *The Journal of Economic Education*, 47(4), 311-316.

Kaufman, J P. (1998) Using Simulation as a Tool to Teach about International Negotiation, *International Negotiation*, 3, 59-75.

Kelle, A. (2008) Experiential Learning in an Arms Control Simulation, *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 41, 379-385.

Kille, K J. (2002) Simulating the Creation of a New International Human Rights Treaty: Active Learning in the International Studies Classroom, *International Studies Perspective*, 3(3), 271-290.

Kolb, D and Fry, R. (1975). Toward an Applied Theory of Experiential Learning. In *Theories of Group Processes*, edited by C L. Cooper. London, UK: John Wiley.

Lean, J., Moizer, J., Towler, M., & Abbey, C. (2006). Simulations and games: Use and barriers in higher education. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 7(3), 227–242.

Lee, M and Shirkey, Z C. (2017). Going Beyond the Existing Consensus: The Use of Games in International Relations Education, *CUNY Academic Works*, available at <http://academicworks.cuny.edu/hc-pubs/281> accessed on 13/08/2019.

Levin-Banchik, L. (2018). Assessing Knowledge Retention, with and without Simulations, *Journal of Political Science Education*, 14(3), 341-359.

Lis, J. (2019). Liam Fox wants children to learn about global trade. But it's Brexiters who need the lessons. *The Guardian*, 16 July 2019, available at <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/jul/16/liam-fox-children-global-trade-brexiters-facts-brexit> accessed on 06/08/2019.

Lowry, P E. (1999). Model GATT: A role-playing Simulation Course, *Journal of Economic Education*, Spring 1999, pp.119-126.

Marton, F and Saljo, R. (1976). On Qualitative Differences in Learning: I-Outcome and Process, *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 46, 4-11.

McCarthy, M M. (2014). The Role of Games and Simulations to Teach Abstract Concepts of Anarchy, Cooperation and Conflict in World Politics, *Journal of Political Science Education*, Vol 10, 400-413.

Meschoulam, M, Muhech, A, Naanous, T, Quintanilla, S, Aguilar, R, Ochoa, J and Rodas, C. (2019). The Complexity of Multilateral Negotiations: Problem or Opportunity? A Qualitative Study of Five Simulations with Mexican Students, *International Studies Perspectives*, 20, 265-286.

Moizer, J, Lean, J, Towler, M and Abbey, C. (2009). Simulations and Games: Overcoming the barriers to their use in higher education, *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 10 (3), 207-224.

Narlikar, A. (2003). *International Trade and Developing Countries: Bargaining Coalitions in the GATT and WTO*, Routledge/RIPE Studies in Global Political Economy.

Odell, J S. (2007). 'Growing Power meets frustration in the Doha Round's first four years.' In *Developing Countries and Global Trade Negotiations* edited by L. Crump and S J. Maswood. Routledge

Pappas, P. (2011). Prisoner's Dilemma – A Game Theory Simulation, available at <https://peterpappas.com/2011/04/prisoners-dilemma-a-game-theory-simulation.html> accessed on 09/08/2019.

Plass, J L, Homer, B D and Kinzer, C K. (2015). 'Foundations of Game-Based Learning', *Educational Psychologist*, 50(4), 258-283.

Raymond, C and Usherwood, S. (2013). Assessments in Simulations, *Journal of Political Science Education*, 9, 156-167.

Roberts, L. (2019). Trade should be taught on the national curriculum, Liam Fox MP says. *The Telegraph*, 15 July 2019. Accessed 06/08/2019.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/07/14/trade-should-taught-national-curriculum-liam-fox-mp-says/>

Sally, R. (2004). The WTO in Perspective. In *Trade Politics*, 2nd Edition, edited by B. Hocking and S. McGuire. Routledge.

Sardone, N B and Devlin-Scherer, R. (2016). Let the (Board) Games Begin: Creative Ways to Enhance Teaching and Learning, *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas*, 89(6), 215-222.

Shaw, C M. (2010). 'Designing and Using Simulations and Role-Play Exercises.' In *The International Studies Encyclopedia* edited by R A Denmark and R Marlin-Bennett. Wiley-Blackwell Publishing, DOI: 10.1093/acref/9780191842665.001.0001

Shellman, S and Turan, K (2003). The Cyprus Crisis: A multilateral bargaining simulation, *Simulation and Gaming*, 34(2) June 2003, 281-291.

Shellman, S and Turan, K (2006). Do Simulations Enhance Student Learning? An Empirical Evaluation of an IR Simulation, *Journal of Political Science Education*, 2, 19-32.

Sidney, P G and Thompson, C A. (2019). Implicit Analogies in Learning: Supporting Transfer by Warming Up, *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 28(6), 619-625.

Smith, E and Boyer, M (1996). Designing In-Class Simulations, *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 29, 690-694.

Steagall, J, Jares, T and Gallo, A. (2012). Teaching Real-World Political Economy: Simulating a WTO Negotiation, *Journal of Teaching in International Business*, 23, 46-58.

Truscott, M H, Hemant, R, and Young, C. (2000). 'Enhancing the macroeconomics course: An experiential learning approach', *Journal of Economic Education*, 31 (1), 60–65.

Ungphakorn, P. (2018). Twitter post from @CoppetainPU, 10th December 2018 at 11:12pm, accessed via <https://twitter.com/CoppetainPU/status/1072267936159670272?s=09> on 11/12/2018.

Ungphakorn, P. (2021) 'Voting in the WTO? It won't happen: Why nothing has changed on voting in the WTO and why it would destroy the WTO if it happened', Blog post accessed via <https://tradebetablog.wordpress.com/2021/05/19/voting-in-the-wto-it-wont-happen/> on 07/07/21.

Wedig, T. (2010). Getting the Most from Classroom Simulations: Strategies for Maximising Learning Outcomes, *PS: Political Science and Politics*, July 2010, 547-555.

Wolfe, R. (2004). Informal Political Engagement in the WTO: Are Mini-Ministerials a good idea? In *Trade Policy Research 2004* edited by J Cutis and D. Cuiariak, Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Canada 2004.

Wolfe, R. (2009). 'The WTO Single Undertaking as a Negotiating Technique and Constitutive Metaphor', *Journal of International Economic Law*, 12(4), 835-858.

Workshop Bank. (2019). 'Prisoner's Dilemma (aka Reds & Blues).' Accessed 09/08/2019. <https://workshopbank.com/prisoners-dilemma>

World Trade Organisation. (1999). *The Legal Texts: The Results of the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations*, Cambridge University Press.

World Trade Organisation. (2001). *Doha Ministerial Declaration*, adopted on 14 November 2001, WT/MIN(01)/DEC/1, accessed via https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/minist_e/min01_e/mindecl_e.htm on 09/08/2019.

World Trade Organisation. (2019a). 'How the WTO is organised', The WTO in brief, accessed via https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/whatis_e/inbrief_e/inbr_e.htm on 30/09/2019.

World Trade Organisation. (2019b). 'WTO organises 'Geneva Weeks' for non-resident delegations', Development: Geneva Week, accessed via https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/devel_e/genwk_e.htm on 30/09/2019.

World Trade Organisation. (2021). 'History is made: Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala chosen as Director-General', accessed via https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news21_e/dgno_15feb21_e.htm on 08/07/2021.

Youde, J. (2008). Crushing their Dreams?: Simulations and Student Idealism, *International Studies Perspectives*, 9(3), 348-356.

Young, K M and Leinhardt, G. (1998). Wildflower, Sheep and Democracy: The role of analogy in the Teaching and Learning of History in Learning and Reasoning in History, *International Review of History Education* edited by Voss, J F and Carretero, M, Woburn Press.

appendices