
On Teaching

The Effectiveness of Negotiation Training

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In the last twenty-five years negotiation has become widely recognized both as a topic of serious research and as an essential, frequently used set of skills. Organizations currently spend tens of billions of dollars annually on training, and mounting evidence suggests that training in interpersonal and problem-solving domains typically has a significantly positive effect. But little systematic research has been conducted concerning the actual effectiveness of negotiation training. This article reviews the available evidence regarding the effectiveness of negotiation training using four levels of outcome measurement. While far less prevalent than one would wish, existing evidence suggests that negotiation training can have positive effects. In this article, I review the specific effects of different teaching methods, and recommend additional research.

Key words: negotiation training, training outcomes, negotiation pedagogy, training investment.

Introduction

In the last twenty-five years negotiation has become widely recognized both as a topic of serious research and as an essential, frequently used set

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of skills (Lax and Sebenius 1986; Susskind and Cruikshank 1987; Fisher, Ury, and Patton 1991; Wall and Blum 1991; Bazerman and Neale 1992; Thompson 2001). Given that organizations in the United States alone spent an estimated \$129 billion on learning and development in 2006 (Rivera and Paradise 2006), it seems possible that organizations globally have spent billions of dollars on negotiation training over the last decade. Presumably such investment is designed to help trainees to become better negotiators and thus to improve the outcomes, processes, and relationships associated with their negotiations.

Despite the growth of the field and the investment in negotiation training by organizations, and despite mounting evidence that training in interpersonal and problem-solving domains typically has a significant and positive effect (Arthur et al. 2003), little systematic research has been carried out concerning the effectiveness of negotiation training. In 1995, Morton Deutsch summarized the state of knowledge about negotiation training effectiveness in this way:

There is an appalling lack of research on the various aspects of training in this field. We haven't begun to collect the type of data that answers such questions as who benefits and how, and through what type of training, for how long, by what trainers, and in what circumstances (quoted in Coleman and Lim 2001: 364).

In the thirteen years since this rather harsh assessment, somewhat more has been learned, if not as much as one might hope.¹ The purpose of this article is to review what is currently known about the effectiveness of negotiation training. It is divided into three parts. The first section reviews what has been meant by *negotiation training*, in pedagogical terms. More specifically it discusses both *what* has been taught and *how* it has been taught. In this section, I also review the kinds of outcomes that organizations and researchers have sought to measure and outline the challenges associated with each type of measurement. In the second section, I review the available research on the *effects* of negotiation training, including intervening variables. In the final section, I present conclusions and remaining questions, and recommend further research and measurement, at both the individual and organizational levels.

What Is Meant by “Negotiation Training”?

Evolution of the Field

To assess the effectiveness of negotiation training, one must first define what that term encompasses, which involves addressing two related questions. First, what concepts and skills are commonly taught in negotiation training? Second, how are those concepts and skills transmitted, demonstrated, and transferred to training participants?

Negotiation can be defined as a process in which two or more parties seek agreement on what each shall give to, and take from, the other(s) (Rubin and Brown 1975; Thompson 1990a).

A number of scholars have traced the development of theories of bargaining and negotiation from their roots in game theory and social exchange to a more recent emphasis on collaborative problem solving based on careful preparation and the exploration of ways to create gains for all sides. The published negotiation and bargaining literature prior to 1980 consisted of hundreds of game theory based experiments that explored the results of bargaining and game choices under various conditions, among different personalities, and with different media and situational limitations (for reviews see Rubin and Brown 1975; Pruitt and Rubin 1986).

An emergent theory of negotiation was described in Howard Raiffa's (1982) *The Art and Science of Negotiation* and in Roger Fisher and William Ury's (1981) *Getting to Yes*. This approach, resting on earlier work by R. Duncan Luce and Raiffa (1957), Robert Blake and Jane Mouton (1962), and Richard Walton and Robert McKersie (1965) argued that too often negotiations produced suboptimal outcomes (relative to value that could have been created), risked or worsened relationships, and generated needless impasses. They advocated new approaches designed to help parties discover underlying interests and invent options for joint gain; the approach was variously labeled "principled negotiation" (e.g., Fisher and Ury 1981) the "mutual gains approach" (Susskind and Cruikshank 1987), and later "win-win negotiation" (for reviews see Lewicki, Weiss, and Lewin 1992 and Lewicki 2000).

Some central themes explored by these researchers included the creation and distribution of value, the importance of moving beyond positions to addressing underlying interests, the suboptimality of most outcomes, the irrationality of many negotiator assumptions, and the importance of achieving results while maintaining long-term relationships. David Lax and James Sebenius's (1986) *The Manager as Negotiator* echoed this approach while emphasizing the tension between creating joint gains and claiming an individual share of those gains. For the sake of simplicity I will call this approach the "value creation approach" (VCA).

Over the years extensive research has led to both theory building and prescriptive advice in two areas: decision-making processes and biases (Raiffa 1982; Bazerman and Neale 1992; Thompson 2001) and in the social psychology of interpersonal problem solving (Blake and Mouton 1962; Pruitt 1981; Pruitt and Rubin 1986; Bazerman et al. 2000; Thompson 2001). Controlled experiments carried out by Max Bazerman and his colleagues (Bazerman, Magliozzi, and Neale 1985; Bazerman and Neale 1992) and by Leigh Thompson (1990b, 1991, 2001), among others, have exposed many cognitive errors that most negotiators make, including the "fixed-pie" assumption, the phenomenon of "anchoring and adjustment," and the tendency to escalate investment or threat based on sunk costs. The systematic

documentation of such errors has generally supported the argument that intuitive approaches to negotiation are likely to generate inferior outcomes over the long run and to adversely affect relationships in both the short and long term. In more recent years it seems that research is trending more toward an emphasis on interpersonal and emotional processes (Lewicki 2000).

While there is a shared commitment to research and theory building among adherents to the value creation approach, there are pedagogical differences. Some proponents tend to view value creation and relationship improvement as goals that will nearly always leave parties better off, therefore claiming that value becomes a secondary, less important exercise. The prescription that follows is to seek *always* to create value; the allocation of that value will take care of itself if done according to objective criteria that all parties can identify (Fisher, Ury, and Patton 1991). Other scholars perceive an inherent tension between value creation and value distribution (Thomas and Kilmann 1974; Lax and Sebenius 1986; Allred 2000; Mnookin, Peppet, and Tulumello 2003). The prescriptions that follow from this perception concern ways to manage this tension. Both sets of scholars would agree, however, that careful preparation and the creation of value are both critical processes in negotiation that are often missing from actual negotiation processes and analyses.

A second area of disagreement among proponents of value creation centers on the validity and importance of individual differences. Some scholars (Shell 1999, 2001; Allred 2000) have argued that people characteristically possess distinct and consistent “styles” of negotiation that predict how they will approach negotiations generally. They point to data that show that people rate themselves fairly consistently on style questionnaires and that others tend to see them in the ways they see themselves (Allred 2000). Some scholars have argued that understanding one’s style and its limitations represents a fundamental negotiation competence (e.g., Shell 1999).

Others scholars (Barry and Friedman 1998) have found that personality styles have little effect on negotiation choices and outcomes and that situational factors are far more powerful as predictors of negotiator behavior. Lee Ross and Andrew Ward (1996) provided support for this view in a series of studies. They instructed dormitory counselors at Stanford to nominate the most and least competitive students in the dormitory; students were randomly assigned to play a version of the prisoner’s dilemma. Although the payouts and instructions were always the same, some students played a version entitled “The Community Game” while others played a version called “The Wall Street Game.” The dorm counselors, when asked to predict how students would behave, were convinced that personality would prevail. But perceived personalities had no significant effect; instead, the title of the game predicted two-thirds of the time what any student —

regardless of how competitive he or she was perceived to be — would choose to do. When given the chance to revise their predictions, after having seen the data from the first study, the dorm counselors remained convinced that, for a second cohort of students, personality would matter much more than the name of the game. Again, the data proved them wrong. As Lee Ross and his colleagues have demonstrated (Ross and Nisbett 1991) there is a pervasive tendency, particularly in western cultures, to over-attribute others' behaviors to personal traits and attitudes, failing to account for the power of both situational forces and the ways that people construe situations differently.

Finally, a third pedagogical difference within proponents of value-creation approaches to negotiation concerns the advisability of “tailored” training curricula to meet the needs of each particular audience. Tailored training involves consulting training clients in advance about the kinds of negotiations they have had and will have, then selecting (and sometimes creating) exercises and cases that are realistic for the particular audience and issues and vignettes that are familiar to them. In contrast, a standard approach to training involves delivering a fixed or “off-the-shelf” set of slides, simulations, and cases that are then debriefed in ways that impart a central or critical set of ideas, which remain the same across audiences. No empirical data are available to directly assess the relative effectiveness of these two approaches with respect to negotiation, but a meta-analysis of 103 leadership development programs by Doris Collins and Elwood Holton (2004) concluded that outcome effect sizes were larger when training objectives were tailored to address organizational objectives and strategies.

Tactical Approaches to Negotiation

Although the academic literature across many disciplines has to some degree coalesced around a theory of value creation, there seems to be no common approach to conceptualizing negotiation *outside* of value-creation approaches (Lewicki, Saunders, and Minton 1999; Lewicki 2000). Best-selling advice books continue to provide “tools and tactics” for getting more from the deal (e.g., Cohen 1980; Karrass 1970, 1995; Dawson 1995; Camp 2002). And a great many workshops and trainers continue to provide tips for “outwitting” counterparts — for example, opening with exaggerated demands, starting with “no,” forcing them to make the first offer, making offers that expire in a short period of time, and so forth.

Arguably one of the most serious empirical explorations of effective negotiation behavior (outside the laboratory) was carried out in England by the Huthwaite Group (a sales research firm). Neil Rackham and John Carlisle (1978) compared forty-nine expert negotiators with a control group of average negotiators. To be considered expert, the subjects had to be viewed by their own constituents and by their counterparts as effective across multiple negotiations. Expert negotiators were found to spend twice

as much time asking questions as average negotiators (20 percent of the time overall versus 10 percent). They also talked more about their feelings, spent twice as much time summarizing to check understanding, used fewer arguments to support their proposals, and made only half as many counterproposals in response to a proposal. Finally, average negotiators made irritating statements (e.g., “I’m sure you’ll agree that this is a very reasonable offer”) six times as often as experts.

While this line of research has the potential to be extremely fruitful in describing specific behaviors that occur during skilled negotiation, only one other study seems to have adopted the method of beginning with outcome variables and then identifying behaviors or tactics associated with them. Gerald Williams (1993) found that lawyers who sought win-win outcomes for their clients were more likely to be rated by others as effective in achieving positive outcomes than were lawyers who were more aggressive or “win-lose” oriented in their style. Nevertheless, one quarter of the aggressive negotiators were rated as highly effective.

Many books that provide tactical advice contain little or no reference to such empirical studies. The basis for these prescriptions instead rests almost entirely on anecdote and the experience of the authors and/or trainers. Not all tactical approaches assume a win-lose framework — some focus on tactics to promote cooperation and empathy, such as deep listening and “I statements.” Nevertheless, the win-lose framework remains far more prevalent among advice books and training workshops that are aimed at legal and business audiences.

How many studies have been published to date comparing the effects of tactical negotiation training to the effects of training by adherents of value creating approaches? None, it seems. Academic researchers and proponents of the VCA approach point to a substantial body of research suggesting that traditional bargaining strategies most often involve mistaken assumptions and unconscious biases that lead to suboptimal outcomes, and that people who seek benefits only for themselves generally end up with worse outcomes than those who seek joint benefits (e.g., Greenhalgh and Neslin 1983; Ben-Yoav and Pruitt 1984; Fry 1985; Bazerman and Neale 1992; Bazerman et al. 2000; Thompson 2001).

Proponents of tactical approaches argue that the experimental evidence on which the value-creation approaches rests derives from overly constrained, nongeneralizable studies that are removed from the nature and context of “real-world” negotiation problems. Given the mutual distrust between advocates of these two approaches, it is striking that their comparative effectiveness remains unexplored, at least in published form.

A Hybrid Approach: Best and Strategic Practices

A hybrid approach to identifying effective negotiation practice has been pursued by Keith Allred (2000). Allred draws from the VCA and from the

behavioral analysis of Rackham and Carlisle (1978) to advance and test a set of “best practices” (applicable in all negotiation situations) and “strategic practices” (tactics that are appropriate or effective in some situations only). Allred is aligned most closely with Lax and Sebenius (1986) who, as mentioned earlier, prescribe both an overarching strategy and a set of tactics for addressing the tension between creating and claiming value. Allred described a series of studies involving 360-degree feedback with 110 public policy students who took part in a scorable negotiation simulation. He found that subjects who were perceived by others to use best practices more often, and who themselves reported deploying strategic practices more variably, scored higher in the simulation. In an unpublished study, Allred and Brian Mandell (2000) found that subjects who viewed themselves as cooperative while others saw them as competitive received lower overall ratings of their negotiation capabilities by others. Although more work is needed to assess the predictive validity of Allred’s framework in real-world negotiations, it represents an important effort to combine theory, behavioral competencies, and data into a pedagogical framework that can be systematically deconstructed and evaluated at the level of actions and behaviors.

There is a paucity — indeed, an absence — of published research comparing the relative effectiveness of negotiators who subscribe to (and teach) different approaches to negotiation as well as a paucity of research concerning the relative effectiveness of different training programs and firms. In other fields (such as psychotherapy), such comparative “treatment” studies have been underway for several decades and have in some cases provided important information to consumers about the relative effectiveness of therapies for different kinds of problems. It would seem profitable for the field of negotiation to move in this direction.

How Have Negotiation Concepts and Skills Been Taught?

Beyond the issue of starting assumptions and theories of how best to negotiate lies the question of how best to teach negotiation — in other words, setting aside the question of what *should* be taught, *how* should it be taught? Many tools and modes for teaching negotiation have been developed: lectures, PowerPoint slides, case studies, theoretical readings, simulations with general and/or confidential role instructions, self-assessment tools, scripted videos, and scripted or unscripted role-play demonstrations.

With respect to teaching the VCA, systematic reviews of university and professional school curricula suggest that the most common single technique is the use of simulations and role-play exercises (Fortgang 2000; Loewenstein and Thompson 2000; Susskind and Corburn 2000). Such exercises are designed to help reveal training participants’ naïve theories of negotiation, to give them opportunities to try new skills, and to illustrate the relevance and application of underlying principles and themes (Loewenstein and Thompson 2000). Some simulations are set up to create

scorable outcomes among a fixed set of options, which permits comparison of choices and outcomes between individuals and groups. Other simulations give subjects more opportunity to construct terms of the agreement subjectively (Susskind and Corburn 2000). The assumption in either case is that simulation negotiations help trainees to learn through experience.

Other teaching methods used at university-based negotiation programs across a variety of fields include didactic lecture with accompanying PowerPoint slides, case analysis, practice-based readings, theory-based readings, discussion of readings, self-assessment tools, internships, use of videotape, analogical reasoning exercises, and observational learning (Fortgang 2000; Nadler, Thompson, and Van Boven 2003). Evidence concerning the differential effectiveness of these methods is reviewed in the following section.

Although there is little systematic data or documentation, anecdotal evidence suggests that the tactical approach to negotiation instruction involves the use of lecture and anecdotes to impart “tricks” for claiming value (e.g., waiting for the first offer, sitting in the higher seat, use of a “back room boss” to refuse concessions, and using favorite “principles” that yield self-serving value). Stories and cases illustrate the successful use of each tactic. There seems to be no theoretical framework *per se*; the emphasis is on learning techniques and tactics that can be selectively deployed to soften, manipulate, or intimidate the other side into making concessions.

What Does It Mean for Negotiation Training to Be “Effective”?

A third key variable to define is what it means for negotiation training to be *effective*. Effectiveness turns out to be a difficult thing to define. The traditional model for assessing training outcomes, first advanced by Donald Kirkpatrick in 1959, describes different *levels* of outcome measurement. In Kirkpatrick’s model there are four levels: Level One (reaction), Level Two (learning), Level Three (behavior change/application), and Level Four (impact) (Kirkpatrick 1959).

As Patricia Phillips and Jack Phillips have noted, most training programs are assessed only at Level One. A simple rating or evaluation sheet is given to participants, and reactions to the course, the materials, the instructor(s), and the learning environment are collected. Phillips and Phillips (2002) contended that in most cases this is an appropriate measurement strategy; they argued that in only 10–15 percent of programs, in which the cost of the training is substantial and the effects of the training are likely to be complex and critical to organizational objectives, should measurement beyond this level be carried out.

Level One measures of training tend to focus on how much participants enjoyed the training, how useful they believed it to be, and how difficult or challenging they perceived the materials to be (Warr and Bunce 1995). In most cases, nothing beyond Level One measurement is attempted, for a

variety of reasons, including the time involved, the lack of perceived strategic benefit, and lack of design expertise on the part of trainers or human resource professionals. Still, more organizations have recently turned to return on investment (ROI) as a critical new aspect of evaluating training generally. As Lawrence Susskind (2004) has recently noted, negotiation, which involves the capacity to secure strategic gains for the organization, is an area where long-term measurement and follow-up is warranted.

In general, Level One reactions have been poor predictors of the impact of skills training at follow-up, although George Alliger and his colleagues found that ratings of how *useful* and relevant the training was turned out to be better predictors of future skill use than did participants' *enjoyment* of the training. As the authors put it, "liking does not equate to learning or performing" (1997: 353). Moreover, usefulness was a better predictor of on-the-job skill use than was the ability to perform the skill(s) at the end of the training. The authors speculated that this may be because the ratings of training usefulness require participants to anticipate constraints in their work environments. Nevertheless, these findings derive from meta-analysis of a wide range of trainings, rather than from a focus on negotiation training outcomes, an area in which the literature is scant.

The Effects and Effectiveness of Negotiation Training

Since Deutsch's lament nearly ten years ago, there has been a modest accumulation of empirical research on the direct effects of negotiation training. The majority of studies have been conducted in the laboratory, using simulated negotiations to measure pre- and post-intervention performance. Studies have examined the effects of different kinds of approaches to training (didactic, analogical, and observational) but few have looked at the long-term behavioral or financial impact of systematic negotiation training. Those that have are now reviewed, categorized according to the kind of outcome measure used: reaction, learning, application, and impact.

Participant Reactions to Training

Level One measures are focused on participant reactions to training, including how much they liked it (enjoyment), how challenging it was, and how useful it was. Although Level One measures are frequently used in the field, they are infrequently used in published empirical literature. Consequently, there are few data to report at this level with respect to negotiation training. One might infer, given the continuing popularity of negotiation training programs that participants find the training useful, and marketing materials attest to this. But such data are not in the public domain and therefore cannot be reviewed here.

Jeffrey Loewenstein and Leigh Thompson (2000) reported that a group of executives were very confident that they had learned new skills from a full-day negotiation training seminar, though no specific reaction measure

was reported. Consistent with findings from the broader training evaluation literature (Alliger et al. 1997), the group did no better at the end of the day on a scorable exercise than they had in the beginning: 90 percent of them left money on the table in a multi-issue integrative bargaining exercise.

Similarly, Roy Lewicki (2000) reported that executives in a negotiation workshop reacted well to the training but reported no specific outcome measures.

Demonstrated Learning of New Concepts or Skills

Level Two outcomes refer to measures that tap the ability of trainees to demonstrate skill or knowledge in relevant areas, immediately following training by demonstrating the ability to solve a problem or by answering test questions directly.

Leaf Van Boven and Thompson (2003) found that didactic training and experiential training had different effects on trainees' mental models of negotiation. They found that participants who did well at a multi-issue scorable game were more likely to have "exchange information" as a central concept. They also found that participants who received experiential training (a chance to negotiate before receiving additional information about potential settlements) developed mental models that resembled those held by negotiators who had previously successfully negotiated an integrative agreement. Those who did not get the chance to negotiate themselves held mental models that more closely resembled negotiators who had failed to reach agreement.

Thompson, Dedre Gentner, and Loewenstein (2000) found that management students who were given case studies to compare were more likely than other students to transfer the principles from the cases to actual negotiations, resulting in better joint outcomes. This might be said to constitute a sort of post-training learning, although the training "treatment" was quite brief and simple.

Learning through experience appears to occur regularly when people are given a chance to negotiate repeatedly. Thompson (1991) found that negotiators engaged in a series of multi-issue negotiations reached more integrative agreements as they completed more transactions. This result, like those previously mentioned, suggests that experiential teaching methods can lead to increased ability to seize on potential joint gains.

Additional evidence suggests, however, that past experience can also inhibit the discovery of integrative outcomes. Thompson (1990b) found that when negotiators first engaged in a distributive bargaining task, they subsequently performed worse on a series of integrative bargaining tasks. Similarly, Thompson and Terri DeHapport (1994) found that even when negotiators were given feedback (full disclosure after a negotiation about their counterparts' actual interests), they failed to adjust their approach to subsequent similar negotiation exercises. Similar findings have occurred in other experiments (Thompson 1990b, 1991).

The cumulative experimental data strongly suggest that negotiators have trouble modifying erroneous assumptions about the nature of the negotiation task at hand (e.g., the notion that the negotiation might not require division of a “fixed pie” of value, or that some interests might be compatible) and that they are particularly bad at failing to discover compatible interests (Thompson 1990a, 2001). As cognitive psychologists have documented, subjects who encounter a particular situation tend to be reminded of past situations that share the same surface features (people, places, and issues) rather than the same underlying themes or structures or principles (Gick and Holyoak 1983; Gentner, Ratterman, and Forbus 1993; Gillespie et al. 1999). The learning “interventions” in many of these experimental settings were so brief and one-dimensional (e.g., revealing trade-offs that counterparts were willing to make), however, that arguably it might not be equated with more comprehensive training.

In short, the literature on direct Level Two (learning) outcomes following negotiation training reports mixed results. Mediating variables with respect to learning outcomes (i.e., conditions or interventions that change the degree of learning that occurs in response to negotiation training) are present and include teaching methods, participant learning environment, and participant self-efficacy.

Teaching Methods

Analogical Reasoning. Few studies have been published concerning the differential effects of pedagogical approaches on negotiation learning outcomes, and these have been primarily been the product of work by Leigh Thompson and her colleagues. James Gillespie and his colleagues (1999) summarized the literature on problem-solving skill transfer and found that while the overall picture was rather gloomy (see Reeves and Weisberg 1994 for a review), some reason for optimism could be found regarding the use of analogous learning. Several recent studies (Gillespie et al. 1999; Loewenstein, Thompson, and Gentner 1999; Thompson, Gentner, and Loewenstein 2000; Nadler, Thompson, and Van Boven 2003; Moran, Bereby-Meyer, and Bazerman 2008) suggest that analogical reasoning may facilitate knowledge transfer. More specifically, case studies appear to have greater effect on subsequent problem-solving skills when multiple cases are used to elicit and *compare* principles that underlie the particular details of each case. When cases are examined individually, without comparing the structural or theoretical similarities and differences between them, researchers have found that subsequent problem solving does not improve.

Observational Learning. Although it has only recently been examined in the context of negotiation training, observational learning appears

to be another promising technique for teaching negotiation skills. Janice Nadler, Thompson, and Van Boven (2003) tested four learning approaches using negotiation simulation. In the experiment, undergraduate students were randomly assigned to dyadic negotiation simulations, with better individual performance creating more opportunities to win significant cash prizes at the end of the semester. The first simulation involved a salary negotiation; the second involved a real estate development. Between negotiations, subjects were either given one of four learning experiences or were assigned to a control group that simply completed a process check. In Condition One, didactic learning, they were given a page from a textbook summarizing key principles of integrative negotiation. In Condition Two, information revelation, they were allowed to see their counterparts' confidential instructions and payoff sheet from the first exercise, with their own payoff schedule printed on the same page. In Condition Three, analogical, participants were given two short vignettes, which while different from one another contextually, each involved discovery of trade-offs, although that term was not explicitly mentioned. Finally, in Condition Four, observational, participants were shown a videotape of the negotiation scenario they had just completed that featured actors reaching a fully integrative agreement by exchanging information about the issues that were most and least important to each. After the learning manipulation, participants in all conditions were asked to write an open-ended essay about what had happened in the first negotiation and those responses were coded for depth of understanding.

Subjects in the observational condition had the highest joint gains in the subsequent negotiation, followed by those in the analogical condition. Subjects in the didactic and information revelation conditions did no better than the control group. Although subjects who received information about counterparts' payoffs, perhaps unsurprisingly, described their counterparts' interests well, this did not result in higher joint gains at the bargaining table.

Most intriguing was the result that subjects in the observational group displayed little understanding of what had happened in the first condition — not one participant in this group generated open-ended written responses that were coded as somewhat or fully insightful — but they nonetheless showed the highest overall joint gains. This would seem to suggest that implicit learning is at work; a fairly large literature regarding human memory and the neuroscience of memory systems has suggested that different kinds of knowledge are encoded and stored in different ways (Lewicki, Czyzewska, and Hoffman 1987; Stadler 1989; Anderson and Fincham 1994). For example, bicycle riding and swimming are not skills easily learned through reading a set of guidelines or a manual or memorizing lists of skills or understanding the principles that make it

possible. It may be that learning to negotiate requires more than the mere recognition of new frameworks or ideas; rather, it may require seeing and undertaking complex sequences of interrelated behaviors.

Participant Learning Environment and Goals

What participants learn from negotiation training appears to be moderated in important ways by participants' learning goals and their learning environment. Yoella Bereby-Meyer, Simone Moran, and Esther Unger-Aviram (2004) found that giving small teams different instructions around learning and performance resulted in differential negotiation outcomes. Forty teams of three people were divided into four experimental groups with ten teams each. Five teams in each group assumed the role of sellers in a simulated "free market" with opportunities for multiple integrative negotiations (Bazerman, Magliozzi, and Neale 1985), and five teams assumed the role of buyers.

Teams in Group One were given a *learning orientation*, which encouraged them to create a learning process that would create improvement in their personal and team negotiation skills. Specifically, they were told to try to have open discussions, to hold themselves open for criticism, to seek to identify errors without criticizing, and to hold themselves accountable for both their own and their team's outcomes. They were also given a three-minute period after each transaction for the purposes of discussing what had occurred.

Teams in Group Two were given a *performance orientation*, which encouraged them to achieve the maximum total gain for their company. In addition, they were told to try to preserve and use pre-existing information, to prevent criticism, to avoid mistakes, and to hold themselves accountable for their own individual tasks. They were given three minutes after each transaction but were not told what to do during that period.

Teams in Group Three were also given a performance orientation (told to achieve the maximum total goal for their company) but, like the teams in Group One, were given a discussion period after each transaction. Teams in Group Four simply participated in the negotiation exercise without prior instructions and with no discussion periods.

The results were striking. Each team reached more valuable agreements toward the end of the simulation than they had at the outset. But the learning approach specified at the outset made an enormous difference. Teams in Group One achieved higher total profits than teams from all other groups, who performed similarly to one another. Moreover, teams who were encouraged to maximize gains actually fared *worse* than the control group teams; apparently, experience without learning led to adoption of maladaptive behaviors that persisted throughout the exercise. Thus, it would appear that rules and processes for group discussion could significantly affect the amount of learning that takes place, as demonstrated by subsequent performance in a similar negotiation task.

Participant Self-Efficacy

Marilyn Gist, Cynthia Kay Stevens, and Anna Bavetta (Gist, Stevens, and Bavetta 1991; Stevens and Gist 1997) have found that at least one personality variable — self-efficacy — affected performance following negotiation training. In one study (1991), subjects were given four hours of salary negotiation training from “an experienced trainer” who was also a professional negotiator. Training methods included lecture, discussion, and modeling of various tactics for negotiating.

The tactics were drawn from Fisher and Ury (1981) and from Chester Karrass (1970) and included five “assertive” and five “defensive” behavioral strategies. Two of the tactics involved proposing (contingent and noncontingent) options for mutual gain and one proffered tactic was to directly appeal to employers’ interests. The other seven tactics fall most closely into the “conventional approach” (e.g., use of prolonged silence to indicate displeasure with an offer, and “broken-record” reiteration of main arguments). Thus, the pedagogical framework appears to have been atheoretical. Participants then engaged in a simulated, scorable thirty-minute salary negotiation with a trained confederate of the experimenter who always opened with the same offer and was authorized to increase the amount of the salary offer in response to use of any one of the previously modeled tactics.

In the week following the training, subjects were assigned to one of two “skill maintenance” workshops — a goal-setting workshop or a self-management workshop. Neither introduced new material; both reviewed the ten “strategies” for negotiation. In the goal-setting workshop, participants were encouraged to set challenging performance goals for a second negotiation simulation that was to take place six weeks later (95 percent did set goals for themselves). In the self-management group, participants were trained in how to set goals, anticipate and overcome obstacles, and monitor and motivate themselves to promote interim accomplishments. Six weeks later, participants again negotiated for a salary, this time with a second confederate. The salary agreed to was the dependent variable in both simulations.

Self-efficacy was measured prior to both negotiation exercises using a ten-point scale that measured subjects’ confidence that they could achieve various salary levels (with a rating of 1 meaning “no confidence” up to a rating of 10 meaning “high confidence”).² Prior to the second simulation, researchers also obtained measures of goal setting or self-management using a checklist of behaviors. Subjects higher in self-efficacy obtained higher salaries in both the first and second negotiations, and self-efficacy independently predicted how well subjects did even after the (potentially influential) effects of first-round outcomes were taken into account.

Self-efficacy also interacted with the post-training workshop conditions: high- and low-efficacy subjects in the self-management workshop did

not differ in their second-round performances, while for subjects assigned to the goal-setting session, self-efficacy level produced significantly different outcomes. Unfortunately, because the negotiation training occurred prior to the first negotiation simulation, and no control group was used, the direct effects of negotiation training on performance were not available. As a whole, the study suggests that training and post-training interventions may have different effects on subjects who differ in their beliefs about their abilities to negotiate effectively.

A second study (Stevens and Gist 1997) used the same experimental paradigm but varied the content of the post-training skill maintenance sessions: this time they focused on encouraging subjects to use the future negotiation (again six weeks later) as a chance to practice their skills (mastery condition) or to get the best possible outcome (performance condition). Again participants' sense of their own self-efficacy interacted with condition. Subjects high in self-efficacy achieved similar outcomes from the second negotiation regardless of which skill maintenance strategy they had used in the six-week interim; those low in self-efficacy fared significantly worse in the performance condition, while those in the mastery condition did just as well as the self-efficacy subjects. A further analysis revealed that cognitive withdrawal (tuning out, not thinking about the future negotiation, and therefore not rehearsing) mediated this outcome.

Studies in which learning was tested immediately following training and then compared to a baseline (pretraining) measure have been conducted in training areas other than negotiation (see Alliger et al. 1997), but it would seem that no negotiation training studies have been published to date in which these data are reported.

Application/Transfer of Skills to New Challenge/Task

What are the effects of negotiation training once participants are back in their workplaces? Peter Coleman and Ying Ying Joanne Lim (2001) gave sixty-four graduate students at Columbia Teachers College who also held jobs a twenty-hour course over three weekends on conflict resolution, while forty-two similar students who did not take the course served as a control group. Half of the participants in each group received multisource feedback (from self, a friend, a supervisor, and a subordinate or colleague) before the course, and half of those in the training also received it afterward; this arrangement allowed for the statistical isolation of any confounding effects created by administering of the feedback instrument, and no such effects were found. The items on the feedback instrument were designed to tap conflict-related feelings and behaviors.

The effects of the training were significant. Four weeks after the first measurement, training participants reported feeling significantly fewer negative emotions in conflict situations, had a more positive view of conflict, and reported a more constructive work climate after the training.

Perhaps more significant, their *raters* (observers who knew the subjects well) reported that participants used more “uniting” and “informing” behaviors in conflict situations than they had before the training. Supervisors and subordinates reported more constructive outcomes to conflicts that participants were involved in. It is worth noting that participant attitudes appeared to change more than behaviors; nonetheless, significant changes in participant behaviors were observed by both the subjects themselves and by their raters.

This is an important study because it is the *only one to date* that has examined transferability of course skills over time, using raters who work with and know the participants. The outcome is an encouraging one for negotiation trainers.

Lewicki (2000) reported that forty high-potential sales people *thought* they had improved their skills significantly following a negotiation course, but when monitored by the trainer and by their supervisors, it turned out they could not use skills effectively with either simulated or real customers. Lewicki reported that the participants required six months of intensive follow-up to make significant changes in behavior. And Bruce Patton (2000) anecdotally reported that students who have taken a semester-long course class do better than experienced business people in negotiating valuable settlements, but no data are readily available.

Impact of Behavior Changes on Organizational Outcome Goals

Consultants and practitioners have turned in recent years to the problem of whether training affects relevant business performance measures. Jeffrey Pfeffer and Robert Sutton (1999) reported a number of cases in which companies have paid dearly for training and advice but nothing seems to change for their employees.

With respect to negotiation training, the data are scarce; only one study could be found in the literature to date. Ferdinand Tesoro (1998) conducted a systematic study at computer manufacturer Dell into ROI for a group of sales professionals who attended a negotiation training class. The training pedagogy is not reported in detail but appears to have focused on a mix of mutual gains techniques as well as other tactics and techniques, with a particular focus on sales issues. A control group was enrolled in order to compare the effects of training to the effects of no training in an identical time frame. Tesoro reported significant performance gains for the participants in the training group, including a 525 percent ROI on the cost of the training (\$699 per individual). The projected annual revenue gain to Dell, based on the observed differences between the training and control group, amounted to \$1.5 million.

As reported above, Coleman and Lim (2001), using a graduate student population who also held jobs, found a significant effect on behavior in the

workplace. The dependent variables in this case were perceptual in nature rather than quantitative/financial, but nonetheless a case could be made that this represents an “impact” on workplace goals. This is the only other study that could be located on the Level Four (impact of behavioral change on organizational outcomes) outcomes from negotiation training. This is unfortunate because understanding the impact that training can be expected to have is a matter of growing concern to the organizations who collectively spend billions on it. But it is not entirely surprising: studies of Level Three and Level Four effects require a commitment by organizations to credibly monitor and/or measure behavior, analyze the effects of behavior on other outcomes of interest, and (importantly) control for other factors that might also influence behavior and/or outcomes. As advertising firms can attest, such studies are difficult to carry out and the problem of “disaggregating” effects (i.e., establishing the unique contribution each potential cause of an outcome) makes it a particularly thorny issue.

Organizations might, in the meantime, take heart in one study conducted by Bassi et al. (2002) that examined training investment patterns in 575 publicly traded firms in the United States, using data from 1996 to 1998. The study found that an increase of \$680 per employee in training expenditures raised a company’s total shareholder return by an average of 6 percent, even after controlling for many other factors.

What prevents training from producing the desired effects and improvements? Phillips and Phillips (2002) pointed to several reasons why training generally can fail to have an impact on specific organizational objectives. These include:

1. A lack of clear training objectives that are aligned with organizational objectives.
2. Failure to recognize structural problems that prevent change (e.g., misaligned incentive structures, lack of clarity about goals and priorities, or lack of time to try new approaches).
3. Failure to invest in follow-up, including goal setting, feedback, and coaching for trainees once they are back in the workplace.
4. A lack of involvement and commitment from senior executives.

These observations suggest that organizations can increase the chances that training will have an impact by ensuring that certain conditions before and after the training are put into place. But more systematic research on the effects of these mediating variables is clearly warranted.

Conclusions and Recommendations

A review of the direct effects of negotiation training across Kirkpatrick’s (1959) four levels of evaluation suggests reasons for optimism, but more

work remains to be done. Few studies of satisfaction ratings or other Level One (reaction) measures have been published.

At Levels Two and Three (learning and behavior change), researchers have begun to undertake important work on the effects of mediating variables, including how people learn and apply complex new behaviors. The work of Nadler, Thompson, and Van Boven (2003) suggests that showing people examples of successful and unsuccessful negotiations may be a critical tool in helping them to learn new behaviors, not just new ideas.

At Level Four (impact) only the study by Tesoro (1998) has demonstrated tangible ROI from training in negotiation. Anecdotal evidence suggests that training can result in substantial savings for organizations, and the substantial ongoing investment in training can be construed as reflecting perceived value, but practitioners have generally failed to document the transfer and impact of training skills using carefully designed research (e.g., use of control groups).

Research from the training outcomes literature (beyond negotiation training) suggests that more work is warranted on the mediating and/or moderating effects of individual differences on training outcomes. For example, Carter (2002) found that subjects with high verbal comprehension ability learned more from lectures, and those with higher general reasoning ability learned more from case studies. Trainee motivation to learn may also be an important variable: in a sizable review, Colquitt, LePine, and Noe (2000) concluded that trainee motivation to learn predicts both knowledge demonstration and skills acquisition.

Gender may also be an important variable that interacts with training. Evidence suggests that women construe conflict in more relational terms while men construe it in terms of a resource transaction (Pinkley 1990), and that compared to men, women are more likely to see themselves as similar to a negotiation counterpart, to engage in more self-derogation during negotiations, and to rate themselves less favorably (see Thompson 1990a for a review and articles on gender and negotiation elsewhere in this issue). Such differences suggest that training could — intentionally or unintentionally — exert differential effects on men and women.

Six Tentative Conclusions

I suggest that six tentative claims can be made in view of the literature to date, but they must remain tentative because so much research remains to be done. First, although research to date is scarcer than one would wish, the overall trend appears to be that negotiation training can have a demonstrable effect on both behaviors and business goals in real world environments. Meta-analyses of training outcomes from the literature beyond negotiation also suggest this likelihood (see, e.g., Salas and Cannon-Bowers 2001; Arthur et al. 2003).

Second, learning process environment can affect the degree to which groups of learners are able to capitalize on negotiation experience and improve their subsequent negotiation performance. Training that does not account for the learning environment and the challenges to implementing new practices is more likely to fail than training that identifies such impediments and assists participants in overcoming them.

Third, with respect to pedagogical effectiveness, using multiple or comparative case studies for the purposes of comparing underlying principles or problems works better than reviewing single cases.

Fourth, both case studies and observational learning appear to produce more effective negotiation behaviors than do lecture and information revelation (e.g., seeing everyone's instructions and payoff sheets in a simulation exercise). But while observing productive behaviors produces better subsequent performance, it does not produce insight as to how and why performances were better.

Fifth, people who are higher in self-efficacy (i.e., who feel they have more control over self-relevant outcomes in their environment) may benefit more from training than people who feel less in control over self-relevant outcomes in their work environment.

And finally, it is important to align training with organizational goals; when an audience feels that training has been "useful" it is more likely to transfer the skills it has learned.

From the tentative nature of these claims, recommendations naturally follow. There is a clear need for well-designed outcome studies that can demonstrate the effects of training at all levels of measurement, but particularly Levels Three and Four. The ability to create value, the ability to negotiate efficiently, and the ability to maintain or improve relationships all clearly have value to organizations and nations. Serious investment in research that documents how these abilities could be taught would seem to be a worthwhile undertaking for institutions and for societies. Such investment should note the following specific needs that remain with respect to our knowledge in this area.

The Need to Examine Multiple Outcome Variables. To date, nearly all empirical research on negotiation learning and transfer has looked at quantitative measures of individual or joint gain. Some researchers have examined efficiency, operationalized as the number of transactions completed in a fixed period of time (Bazerman, Magliozzi, and Neale 1985). But the quality of the relationships at the end of the negotiation is often left unexamined. Researchers need to find more ways to operationalize and assess the impact of different training approaches on the state of the relationship or relationships that exist at the end of negotiations. This seems particularly important because much of the empirical literature

uses subjects who are students or strangers with little at stake in terms of future social interactions, yet most professional negotiators operate in a context in which ongoing relationships are normative and influential in shaping the behaviors of the negotiators.

The Need to Translate an “Approach” into a Set of Measurable, Teachable Behaviors. Some work has been done to date to operationalize a general theory of negotiation (which I have called the VCA) into a set of measurable behaviors that are considered desirable. Allred (2000) has provided a behavioral framework based in part on the VCA, but more work is needed to refine and test the effects of behaviors on negotiation outcomes (relating to gains, efficiency, relationship quality, and organizational goals) as well as the effects of training methods and content on resultant behaviors. Similarly, working “backward” to re-examine the kinds of behaviors displayed by successful negotiators, particularly across cultures, would seem to be a fruitful undertaking. More work could be done to link the behaviors identified in Rackham and Carlisle’s (1978) study to the mutual gains framework (or any other theoretical approach) and to test the effects of training on these different behaviors; it may be, for example, that some behaviors are more “teachable” than others, or that they can be best taught through differing methods.

Consolidating general proficiency into a set of demonstrable, instrumental behaviors (often called “competencies”) is a widely used performance management technique in corporate settings. Linking competency models in specific organizational settings to more general research in the academy could yield large benefits for researchers and practitioners alike.

The Need to Assess Methods for Sustaining Post-Training Gains. Marshall Goldsmith (2003), one of America’s best-known executive coaches, shares unpublished data in his talks to executive audiences. The data show a simple linear trend: the more follow up that occurs after an executive is assessed, the more he or she is likely to make a significant improvement in a behavioral target area. This echoes Phillips and Phillips (2002) and suggests that training is most likely to succeed when there is active follow-up and support to ensure that ideas and behaviors are transferred into the (often complex and high-pressured) work environment. The enormous growth of spending in recent years on executive coaching services suggest that organizations have understood that desirable gains are more likely to become permanent when ongoing support and guidance are provided to employees. Important work remains to be done, however, to systematically demonstrate the value of this undertaking.

NOTES

1. For this review, I searched the following databases: ERIC, PsycInfo, ABI Inform, as well as roughly three dozen organizational, training, human resource, and leadership journals. I performed key word searches on the following combinations: negotiation and outcome/effect/impact; negotiation and training; training and outcome/effect/impact; training and conflict; teaching and conflict/negotiation; negotiation and evaluation; training and evaluation; training and investment. I also interviewed Max Bazerman, Michael Wheeler, Lawrence Susskind, David Brown, and David Fairman. I thank them for their valuable guidance.

2. In theory, self-efficacy is less global than self-confidence; it refers to the confidence one has in being able to effect or achieve specific behavioral outcomes (e.g., Can I quit smoking? Can I become a better soccer player?).

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