

Go-Go Global: Teaching What We Know of Culture and the Negotiation Dance

Wendi L. Adair

Department of Psychology, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, ON, Canada

Keywords

negotiation, culture, international negotiation, negotiation pedagogy, cross-cultural negotiation.

Correspondence

Wendi L. Adair, Department of Psychology, University of Waterloo, 200 University Ave. West, Waterloo, ON, Canada N2L 3G1;
e-mail: wladair@uwaterloo.ca.

Abstract

This article discusses content and methods for bringing recent empirical findings on culture and the negotiation dance into the classroom. Topics include differences between the low and high context negotiation dance, offers as information, avoiding first offer anchors, and negotiation stages. Methods are discussed for teaching these topics using an experimental experiential approach in a culturally homogeneous or culturally diverse negotiation class.

There are multiple forces acting to globalize our lives in the 21st century. In the world of business, companies are crossing national borders with partnerships, mergers, and outsourcing. There are increasing numbers of students studying abroad and employees working abroad, making cross-cultural encounters part of the fabric of our everyday lives. Living in a multi-cultural world inevitably entails social exchange and interdependent decision making with people from other cultural backgrounds. To be effective, today's negotiators need to understand not only how national culture influences negotiation strategy but also how to adapt and manage cultural differences at the negotiation table. This article uses recent research on cross-cultural negotiation interactions to develop content and methods for teaching cross-cultural negotiation skills that are applicable in both work and nonwork settings.

The article will begin with a brief review of how culture is most commonly taught in the negotiation classroom today. Then, relying on the metaphor of negotiation as dance, I will review my recent empirical findings on culture, negotiation strategy, and negotiation stages. I will offer suggestions for how to teach both content and skills in the classroom. Consistent with the experiential learning method, the proposed next generation approach to teaching global negotiation includes developing both an understanding of how culture influences negotiation strategy and the skills to identify and work with the negotiation strategies characteristic of other culture groups.

Thank you to Michael Gross for feedback and suggestions on an earlier version of this paper.

The Current State: Culture in the Negotiation Classroom

The topic of global negotiation is becoming more prevalent in the classroom. When Avruch wrote about the state of culture and negotiation pedagogy in 2000, he noted that classic negotiation texts of the 1980s did not mention culture at all, and those of the 1990s included maybe a brief mention of culture as something to watch out for (Avruch, 2000). Although the topic of culture and negotiation was not unknown in the scholarly community (see, for example, Cohen, 1991; Favre & Rubin, 1993) by 2000 it had not yet reached the mainstream classroom, at least in most business schools. However, recently empirical research and theory development on culture and negotiation have exploded. Negotiation texts used in the classroom today (e.g., Lewicki, Saunders, Barry, & Minton, 2004; Thompson, 2005) devote entire chapters to the topic of culture. And multiple volumes have appeared by negotiation scholars devoted to the topic of global negotiation (e.g., Brett, 2007; Gelfand & Brett, 2004). What is less clear is how scholars studying culture and negotiation teach the knowledge and skills essential to negotiating globally.

Experiential learning has always been at the forefront of negotiation pedagogy (Kolb, 1974; Lewicki, 1997). Since these techniques include engaging in a simulation, analyzing one's experience, and challenging one's existing theories and knowledge, they offer an ideal approach to develop expertise in an area where people's naive theories about negotiation (for example, a fixed-pie bias) often "need to be confronted and largely put to rest" (Lowenstein & Thompson, 2000, p. 400). The experiential learning technique has been found in the majority of negotiation classrooms in four distinct disciplines: law, business, public policy, and international relations (Fortang, 2000). Not surprisingly then, one of the most common means of teaching cross-cultural negotiation is through experiential negotiation simulations. Traditional case analysis is another option chosen by some, but this article will focus on the experiential method and how current research on culture and negotiation can be incorporated into this approach.

A review of negotiation simulations designed to teach cross-cultural negotiations revealed two types of exercises: those that teach cultural preferences and those that teach cultural styles of communication. In the first type of exercise, negotiators are told that they represent companies from different parts of the world. They are given a scenario to negotiate and told their preferences on the negotiable issues. Information about the negotiator's culture is then built into these preferences. For example, the Abhas-Bussan exercise (Patel & Brett, 2007) incorporates Indian preferences for fixed pricing and Japanese preferences for flexible pricing that are related to the nations' economic systems. The Cobalt Systems and Silverlight Electronics exercise (Tinsley, 2007) incorporates U.S. and Korean industrial policies, financial systems, and governmental involvement in the parties' preferences and priorities. Exercises like International Lodging Merger (McLean Parks, 2007) link negotiators' cultural values to their preferences; for example, the collectivist Brazilian negotiator prefers a group incentive structure and the individualist U.S. negotiator prefers incentives that highlight the individual's achievements. This type of negotiation simulation is excellent for teaching how culture at all levels (e.g., economic systems, political environments, organizational structure, ideologies, and values) can affect negotiators' preferences and priorities.

The second kind of negotiation simulation designed to teach culture asks students to assume the communication and interaction style characteristic of a particular national culture. One exercise using this approach that is readily available is the Alpha Beta case (Gladwin, 2007), which instructs negotiators representing the Betan nation to make group decisions, act formally and unemotionally, and be indirect by answering questions ambiguously. Alphan negotiators on the other hand are told to act as individuals, be informal and expressive, and be open and direct. These communication norms are designed to simulate a more Eastern and more Western style of interaction, respectively. Although this kind of simulation is rare, it is excellent to illustrate culture as communication and the challenges of communicating across cultures. Another exercise that illustrates both cultural preferences and cultural style is *The Mexico Venture* (Schroth & Ramirez, 2007).

What appears to be absent from our repertoire of experiential exercises are simulations designed to teach how culture influences negotiation strategy. In this article, negotiation strategy refers specifically to “the action sequences that will lead to the accomplishment of [one’s] goals” (Lewicki et al., 2004, p. 27). For example, in negotiation courses we teach strategies for exchanging information that include building trust, asking questions, and disclosing underlying interests. Research on culture and negotiation has uncovered important differences in the strategies negotiators from different national cultures use to share and gather information. The next direction for cross-cultural negotiation pedagogy is teaching negotiators how to recognize and implement such culturally distinct information exchange strategies. In the next section, I review recent research findings on culture and information exchange strategy as well as culture and negotiation stages. Then, I propose methods for teaching these concepts and skills in the classroom using experiential negotiation simulations.

Recent Research: Culture and Negotiation Strategy and Stages

Empirical research on negotiation reveals that (a) negotiators’ strategies are tied to their national culture (Adair et al., 2004), and (b) negotiation is both interdependent and dynamic (Olekalns & Smith, 2000; Olekalns, Smith, & Walsh, 1996). A useful metaphor for teaching these concepts is that of the negotiation dance (Adair & Brett, 2005). To dance is “to move rhythmically, usually to music, usually to prescribed or improvised steps and gestures” (Free Dictionary, 2008). Just as the music people listen to and the way they move rhythmically to that music can be artifacts of national culture, so the way people view negotiation (Gelfand et al., 2001) and the way they move interdependently at the negotiation table (Adair, 2003) are influenced by national culture. Research shows that culture influences the negotiation strategy of information sharing and that the cultural influence varies as a function of both time and behavioral sequences.

To understand this research, it is necessary to introduce some terminology. First, negotiation strategy is the behavior negotiators use to accomplish cooperative and competitive goals. In my research on cross-cultural negotiation, I measure two kinds of cooperative strategy: priority information and offers, and two kinds of competitive strategy: rational persuasion and affective posturing. Priority information reveals negotiators’ preferences or priorities among issues; for example, a negotiator may say “the most important issue

for me is the financing terms.” Offers consist of single-issue or multi-issue proposals, for example “We are offering a 5-year contract to show our television series, and each episode costs \$45,000.” Affective posturing consists of arguments or positioning based on status or emotion. For example, a negotiator might say “My company has the finest reputation for the production of cartoon series. We have won several awards in the industry.” Rational persuasion consists of arguments based on limits, alternatives, or information. A negotiator using rational persuasion might say, “We cannot pay you everything up front because that is not the industry standard and it is against our policy.”

A second bit of terminology has to do with negotiation sequences. Negotiation sequences are pairs of strategies captured when one negotiator acts and the other negotiator responds. I measure three kinds of sequences: reciprocal, complementary, and structural (Adair & Brett, 2005; Weingart & Olekalns, 2004). A reciprocal sequence occurs when negotiators match each other’s behavior from one speaking turn to the next, for example, an offer–offer sequence. A complementary sequence occurs when negotiators maintain the same strategic approach (e.g., cooperative or competitive) from one speaking turn to the next, but they alter the behavior within that approach. For example, if one negotiator makes an offer and the other responds with priority information, both negotiators are maintaining a cooperative focus. However, the cooperative strategies they use are distinct: priority information happens to be quite direct whereas an offer provides information more indirectly (Adair, Okumura, & Brett, 2001). Thus, examples of complementary strategy sequences by Negotiators 1 and 2 might include Negotiator 1 making an offer and Negotiator 2 responding with priority information or Negotiator 1 using affective posturing and Negotiator 2 responding with rational persuasion. A structural sequence occurs when negotiators switch between a cooperative and competitive approach. Examples include Negotiator 1 using priority information and Negotiator 2 responding with rational persuasion or Negotiator 1 engaging in affective posturing and Negotiator 2 responding with an offer, and of course other strategy combinations in sequence are possible as well.

A third bit of terminology has to do with negotiation stages. Negotiation stages represent time periods in negotiation characterized by a focus on a particular kind of strategy or sequence (Arrow, Poole, Henry, Wheelan, & Mooreland, 2004). Before introducing recent findings on culture and negotiation strategy, sequences, and stages, I explain what aspects of “culture” have been used to predict and explain cultural differences in the negotiation dance.

Low and High Context Cultures

The research presented in this article compares cultures on the basis of a dimension called low versus high context. Low/high context characterizes cultures based on the degree to which they rely on words versus context to convey information (Hall, 1976). In low context cultures, people communicate directly and say in words what they want their listeners to hear. In high context cultures, people communicate more indirectly, relying on cues from the environment, nonverbal communication, and indirect statements to convey information that the listeners infer. For example, in a low context culture a manager who is not pleased with a subordinate’s proposal might explicitly state

his dissatisfaction by saying “This proposal does not seem well developed, and it is not something I am interested in pursuing.” In a high context culture, a manager could convey the same disinterest by uttering a noncommittal “I will consider it” while looking down or away. To an explicit, literal low context communicator, “I will consider it” means “maybe.” But to a seasoned and subtle high context communicator, the fact that “I will consider it” is not a glowing endorsement and is spoken indirectly, while looking away, would lead the listener to infer the manager’s displeasure.

To convey the difference between low and high context cultures, Hall gives the example of a low context U.S. manager whose office is on the executive floor and whose day consists of a series of isolated meetings with individuals or groups who explicitly present their needs and interests. He contrasts this with a high context Japanese executive whose office is located amidst his subordinates, surrounded by the daily activity of his unit. When a Japanese subordinate needs to ask the manager a question, he doesn’t need to provide background and context; the manager is already aware of the context and situation throughout his organization (Hall & Hall, 1990). Thus, contextual information can come from sources other than nonverbal cues; it also includes information from one’s environment that can be gleaned using holistic information processing.

Low context cultures are typically more Western cultures and include the United States, Canada, Great Britain, Australia, and Germany. High context cultures are typically more Eastern cultures and include Japan, China, Korea, Russia, and also Arab and Mediterranean cultures (Hall, 1976; Hall & Hall, 1990). Latin cultures, e.g., Brazil, Mexico, are also high context, but they are more expressive and emotional than the Eastern high context cultures. The empirical research summarized in this article is based on samples of low context negotiators from the United States, Germany, Israel, and Sweden, and high context negotiators from Japan, Hong Kong, Thailand, and Russia.

Research Findings on Indirect Information Sharing With Offers

The idea that offers in negotiation may be used not only as a positional statement as previously conceptualized (Pruitt, 1981), but also as a source of information was introduced by Adair et al. in 2001. The authors argued that negotiators in low context cultures would be more likely to share information directly with explicit statements and negotiators in high context cultures would be more likely to share information indirectly. One source of indirect information, they reasoned, should be offers. This is because although offers in isolation do represent a positional statement (“I’ll pay \$5,000”), offers within the context of other offers provide information on a negotiator’s preferences and priorities, for example, on which issues they are willing to budge. So for example, a negotiator who says “I’ll pay \$5,000 for the car” is merely stating a position. But a negotiator who then follows up with a subsequent offer of “\$5,500 with a guarantee on the car stereo,” is saying that the stereo is an important issue. Price is probably less important, because the negotiator is willing to pay more to insure a working stereo. Because high context negotiators are aware of contextual information and cues, they should be able to convey and extract information on a negotiator’s preferences and priorities based on the offers the negotiator makes. Adair and colleagues found support for these ideas in several studies that will be discussed below.

In their first study on offers as information, Adair et al. (2001) transcribed and process coded transcripts from a complex dyadic negotiation simulation completed by U.S. and Japanese managers. To measure information exchange, they calculated the proportion of a dyad's total communication acts represented by (a) explicit information on preferences and priorities, and (b) different forms of offers. They found that when negotiating with someone from their own culture, U.S. negotiators used significantly more explicit information exchange (direct information) and Japanese negotiators used significantly more offers (indirect information). However, both kinds of dyads negotiated equally impressive integrative solutions, solutions that could only be crafted if negotiators had successfully exchanged substantial information on each others' preferences and priorities. Mediation analyses showed that this differential use of culturally normative information sharing behavior partially accounted for the outcomes attained.

Further evidence that low and high context negotiators differ in their use of explicit statements and offers appeared in a study of reciprocity in four low context and four high context cultures (Adair, 2004). Recall that reciprocal sequences occur when one negotiator uses a particular strategy and the counterpart responds with the same strategy in return. Reciprocity provides more predictive power than plain frequency counts (Putnam, 1990; Weingart & Olekalns, 2004) because it is a measure of whether negotiators are doing the same thing, whether they are in sync. With a varied, representative sample of negotiators from low and high context cultures, Adair (2004) found that low context negotiators used more reciprocal direct information (explicit statements) and high context negotiators used more reciprocal indirect information exchange (via offers).

Finally, the use of offers as information in high context cultures was again supported with an analysis of first offer patterns in the U.S. and Japanese dyads (Adair, Weingart, & Brett, 2007). The authors hypothesized that if Japanese negotiators were using offers as information, then they should start using offers early in their negotiation, and this should help them discover integrative solutions. Analyses revealed that Japanese negotiators did make earlier first offers than U.S. negotiators, and their early first offers helped them achieve integrative solutions. U.S. negotiators who made early first offers on the other hand negotiated suboptimal outcomes. The data suggest that an early first offer acts as an anchor that hinders creative exploration for U.S. negotiators, but for Japanese negotiators it is a signal that information exchange has begun. Together, this body of work provides multiple sources of evidence that negotiators in high context cultures use offers as a source of information.

Based on this research, it is recommended that global negotiation courses cover the content of low versus high context communication and culturally normative negotiation strategies. The next generation skill sets to bring into the classroom include offers as a source of information and avoiding first offer anchors.

Research Findings on Negotiation Stages

Stage models of negotiation aim to account for the general flow of negotiation over time, as characterized by negotiators' strategic focus. Recent research in this area that compares negotiation to dance suggests a four-stage model that accounts for the interplay between a

competitive and cooperative focus that negotiators try to balance (Adair & Brett, 2005). In this work, the authors measured strategic focus by looking at sequences of behaviors, or the pairs of strategies negotiators use when communicating back and forth. They divided transcripts from a 90-minute negotiation simulation into four quarters of equal length (based on the number of speaking turns) and then measured the frequency of different strategy sequences in each quarter. They compared when the occurrence of different strategy sequences peaked for negotiation dyads with different cultural compositions. Some of the findings from this study that can be taught in the cross-cultural negotiation classroom include (a) the universality of negotiation stages, and (b) the form and timing of strategic sequences that predict integrative solutions.

As with the work on offers as information, this research on culture and negotiation stages also compared managerial dyads from low context cultures and high context cultures. Low context dyads included German, Israeli, Swedish, and U.S. pairs; high context dyads included Hong Kong Chinese, Japanese, Russian, and Thai pairs; mixed-context dyads included U.S.-Japanese and U.S.-Hong Kong Chinese pairs. Comparisons were made between the dyad categories low context, high context, and mixed context. The authors measured two different strategic approaches to negotiations: cooperative and competitive. Within each strategic approach they measured two different behaviors. For the cooperative or integrative approach these behaviors were priority information and offers, and for the competitive or distributive approach these two behaviors were affective posturing and rational persuasion. In the transcripts from 90-minute negotiations, the authors coded for these four kinds of communication. Then, the authors measured the frequency of reciprocal, complementary, and structural sequences of these behaviors in the first to fourth quarters or stages of the negotiations.

The study results suggest that although the use of some behaviors varies by culture, the temporal flow of sequences across four stages does not. The authors report a universal negotiation dance that is performed by low context, high context, and mixed-context dyads. In this dance, the first quarter is characterized by reciprocal sequences of affective posturing. The second stage is characterized by reciprocal priority information. The third stage is characterized by structural sequences of priority information and rational persuasion. And the fourth stage is characterized by reciprocal sequences of offers. In other words, competitive elements appear in both the first and third stages. And this pattern is the same for dyads of varying cultural composition.

The study also isolated the first two negotiation stages as critical for the generation of joint gains. In particular, they found that regardless of a dyad's cultural composition, structural sequences of affective persuasion and priority information in the first stage and reciprocal priority information in the second stage were predictive of joint gains. In other words, negotiators that engaged in some affective posturing to establish power dynamics and then quickly turned to information sharing in the first half of negotiation were more likely to generate integrative outcomes.

In terms of culture effects, the authors report several unique cultural elements of the negotiation dance. First, replicating the findings from the offers-as-information studies, high context negotiators reciprocated offers more and priority information less than low context negotiators. Expanding those findings, the authors also discovered that high

context negotiators used more complementary sequences, matching direct with indirect strategies of information exchange. This was noticeable in the first two negotiation stages when information exchange is critical. High context negotiators' flexibility to switch between a high context and a low context negotiation style was also apparent in the patterns for mixed-context dyads, whose strategic sequences matched the low context dance more than the high context one.

Based on this research, it is recommended that global negotiation courses cover the topics of strategy sequences and negotiation stages. Next generation skill sets include managing the flow of negotiation through stages and recognizing and using behavioral sequences to influence strategic focus.

Summary: Key Research Findings

There are two sets of key research findings that address the topic of culture and negotiation process. First, we know that culture affects the strategies negotiators use to exchange information. High context negotiators are more likely than low context negotiators to use offers to exchange information. We know that high context negotiators start using offers early in the negotiation. And we know that when low context negotiators make early offers, their ability to generate integrative solutions is compromised. Second, we know that culture affects how negotiators dance. Low context negotiators are more likely to reciprocate direct behaviors and high context negotiators are more likely to reciprocate indirect behaviors. Also, high context negotiators are more likely than low context negotiators to move in complementary sequences. Third, we know that culture does not impact the four stages of the negotiation dance. Low context, high context, and mixed-context dyads all moved through the same negotiation dance represented by four distinct strategic stages. The next section of the article offers suggestions for how to teach these findings in the classroom.

Techniques for Teaching Culture, Offers as Information, and Negotiation Stages

One of the biggest challenges of teaching the cultural specificity of information sharing strategy and the universality of negotiation stages is how to integrate the material into the experiential method that is so effective in negotiation pedagogy. To do so I propose using an experimental experiential approach, whereby the instructor divides students into groups, some of which receive instruction on how to negotiate (intervention groups) and some of which receive no special instructions (natural groups). Rather than a purely experiential approach, where students are testing their own implicit theories and natural instincts, the experimental experiential approach introduces a manipulation that guides negotiators to use a certain technique. The intervention is designed to allow a more directed debrief session than the purely emergent debrief following a typical experiential exercise. For example, I use this method when teaching first offer anchoring. Students record their initial offers, and, during the debrief session, this information along with negotiators' outcomes can be used to effectively demonstrate the presence or absence of an

anchoring effect. In this article, I propose several similar interventions that can be introduced in the classroom to teach the concepts of culture and using offers as information, avoiding first offer anchoring, and navigating the four-stage negotiation dance.

In addition to providing an intervention, it is advisable to have a comparison group. Sometimes this is a group with no intervention (natural group), and sometimes it is a group with a different intervention. During the debrief and discussion, results are displayed in groups according to experimental condition. The presentation of theory and content is then interspersed throughout a discussion comparing the process and outcomes for the intervention groups versus the natural groups.

The methods introduced below can be taught in a classroom that is largely low context, largely high context, or culturally diverse. The benefit of a culturally diverse classroom is that the instructor can create different kinds of dyads within each experimental condition: low context, high context, and mixed context. This will lead to more avenues for comparison and discussion. All of the concepts are advanced and should be taught only after students have learned the basics of integrative bargaining. They can be taught using any of the complex multi-issue negotiation simulation cases that are available through Northwestern University's Dispute Resolution Research Center.

Teaching Culture and the Use of Offers as Information

Recall the main research finding on offers as information is that to gather information on interests and preferences, high context negotiators exchange offers and low context negotiators talk directly about priorities (Adair et al., 2001). One way to teach the skill of using offers as information is to create an offer tracking mechanism intervention that forces negotiators to pay attention to the flow and transformation of offers. To illustrate, consider a case I use about the sale of rerun rights for a Cartoon show (Brett & Okumura, 2007) in which there are three primary issues: price per episode, financing terms, and the number of times each episode can be shown during the contract (runs). A simple intervention is to provide negotiators with a chart (Table 1) to keep track of offers made by each party (Brett, 2007). Students with this intervention should be instructed in advance to think of the offers as a source of information. Not every offer will contain all three issues, but each offer should be recorded in a new column in chronological order. Students should examine the content of offers and how they change over time to figure out (a) where the other party is willing to move more or less, and (b) what issues might be possible to trade off.

A slightly more structured version of this intervention would insure that negotiators make a sufficient number of offers for the technique to be useful. Recall that negotiators from low context cultures tend to convey most of their information explicitly, reserving offers for later stages in the negotiation. To avoid this tendency, the intervention can include instructions to exchange an offer every three minutes. The instructor should then ring a bell or call out a reminder every three minutes when it is time to exchange an offer.

There are several possibilities for creating comparison groups with this tracking technique. One option is to divide the class in half so that half of the dyads use the tracking

Table 1
Sample Table for Tracking Offers

	Seller offer #1	Buyer offer #2	Seller offer #3	Buyer offer #4	Seller offer #5	Buyer offer #6	Seller offer #7
Price							
Financing							
Runs							
Value to you							

technique (intervention groups) and half negotiate as natural groups. The natural groups would receive no special instructions about how to exchange information or offers. The instructor can then compare the experiences and results of these two different groups. Note that gleaned information from offers may not come easily to most low context negotiators. In a purely low context classroom, you may find dyads that use the forced offer and tracking technique generate lower joint gains than dyads that negotiate in their culturally normative way (direct information first, offers later). You can make the point that it will take practice to use the offer tracking strategy with facility, although low context negotiators tend to get good at this technique fairly quickly.

I recommend creating a sample offer tracking chart for the exercise you are using to illustrate the technique during the debrief session. Using the same Cartoon case example, Table 2 illustrates that over time, the seller is willing to increase runs and decrease price, but not willing to move on the issue of financing. The buyer is willing to move on financing and also price, but not the issue of runs. The table reveals that the most important issue for the seller is financing, and the most important issue for the buyer is runs. This is an obvious place to look for a possible trade-off. Offer tracking can also tell negotiators how to construct a reasonable and optimistic counteroffer. For example the buyer can consider this: What would I need in return if I were to pay this seller in cash? The seller can consider this: What package would be acceptable to me if I were to give this buyer 8 runs?

In a culturally diverse classroom, you can construct both low context dyads and high context dyads in the intervention group and in the natural group. With this approach you can teach the ease of using culturally normative strategies and the flexibility of high context negotiators that makes it easy for them to adapt to the other party in mixed-

Table 2
Example of Illustration for Tracking Offers

	Seller offer #1	Buyer offer #2	Seller offer #3	Buyer offer #4	Seller offer #5	Buyer offer #6	Seller offer #7
Price	\$60,000	\$30,000	\$55,000	\$35,000	\$50,000	\$35,000	\$50,000
Financing	Cash	20% in years 1–5	Cash	25% in years 1–4	Cash	50% down, 25% in years 2–3	Cash
Runs	6	8	7	8	7	8	8

context negotiations. Low context negotiators who learn to use offers as information will become more effective in cross-cultural negotiations and also in domestic negotiations when there is low trust and the other party will not share information explicitly.

A structured approach to teaching offers as information using the tracking mechanism is useful even in a purely high context classroom. While making a lot of offers may be normative, gathering information in this fashion may be below the level of awareness for some high context negotiators. This systematic approach to offer tracking may be quite enlightening. In addition, groups that engage in offer tracking can be compared to groups that receive an intervention instructing them to exchange information directly and explicitly, without making an offer until half of the negotiation period is over. Research suggests that integrative outcomes should not differ for high context negotiators using these two different information exchange mechanisms, but negotiators' experience and accounts of how they reached their solutions should be substantially different. These differences can be brought out in a debrief session highlighting low versus high context communication and information exchange in negotiation.

Teaching Culture and How to Avoid First Offer Anchors

Recall that the main research finding on culture and first offer anchors is that for low context, but not high context, negotiators early first offers hinder information exchange and joint gains (Adair et al., 2007). Another way to teach the concept and skill of offers as information is to teach negotiators not to anchor on an early first offer. Using the experimental experiential approach, this can be achieved with two forms of a process intervention. All dyads would receive an intervention instructing them to (a) make and record a first offer within the first five minutes of negotiating, and (b) continue bringing an offer to the table every three minutes subsequently. Half of the dyads would receive an additional intervention (dual intervention) instructing them to follow the first offer and each subsequent offer by refocusing on direct information exchange, thus encouraging offers in conjunction with information search. The other half of the dyads would not receive any instruction for what to do following the offers (intervention-natural), and it is in this condition that we would expect first offers to act as anchors.

For the debrief session, post results for the dual intervention groups on one side of the room and the intervention-natural groups on the other side of the room. All groups should post who made the first offer, what the offer was, and the negotiation outcomes (buyer's gains, seller's gains, and joint gains [buyer's gains plus seller's gains]). Also students should post what percentage of the total joint gains each party claimed. To identify anchoring effects, look for (a) groups where the negotiated solution favors the party who made the first offer, and (b) groups with smaller joint gain solutions (in these groups an early offer that acted as an anchor would have inhibited exploration of creative solutions). In a primarily low context classroom, there should be more evidence of anchoring in the intervention-natural groups than the dual intervention groups that were asked to refocus on direct information exchange following an offer. However, in a diverse classroom, high context dyads in the intervention-natural condition may avoid anchoring by using offers as information.

A debrief on avoiding first offer anchors should cover the concept of anchoring in negotiation and explain that first offers become anchors when they are perceived as a positional stake from which subsequent concessions are made. This is a common tendency in response to early offers in the West. An alternate conceptualization of early offers—as a piece of information exchanged during a search process (modeled in the dual-intervention condition), is more common in the East where anchoring on first offers is less prevalent (Adair et al., 2007). Low context students who develop skills to avoid first offer anchors will be well prepared to maintain an integrative focus when negotiating cross-culturally with a high context negotiator who makes an early first offer. These concepts are best taught along with a discussion of low versus high context communication.

Teaching Culture and How to Navigate the Four-Stage Negotiation Dance

Research on culture and negotiation as dance suggests that (a) the sequences negotiators use in different stages varies by culture but, (b) passing through a four-stage negotiation dance, one in which the first two stages predict outcome, does not vary by culture (Adair, 2003; Adair & Brett, 2005). These concepts will help students understand that the flow of a negotiation with respect to strategic focus is bound to be basically the same, regardless of the national culture of their counterpart. This should reduce uncertainty and give students confidence in the face of a cross-cultural interaction. Second, understanding the strategic focus of each negotiation stage should allow students to direct and manage the flow of their negotiations through the sequencing that research suggests is most advantageous. Again, the experimental experiential method is recommended to make these points.

Before the negotiation simulation, the instructor should teach students about the four types of negotiation strategy defined above: affective posturing, rational persuasion, priority information, and offers. Once students are comfortable with the definitions, the instructor can distribute role instructions that contain two different interventions. All students should receive the primary intervention which involves dividing the negotiation into four equal time periods. Students in an intervention-natural group would then record the natural course of their negotiation at the end of each time period. Students in a dual-intervention group would also be instructed to focus their behavior on a particular kind of strategy during each time period.

For the intervention-natural groups, indicate they will have 40 minutes (or 60 minutes, depending on the negotiation exercise) that will be divided into four time periods of equal length. At the end of each time period, you will stop them and ask each pair to come to agreement about what kind of strategy (affective posturing, rational influence, priority information, or offers) was used the most in the preceding 10 (or 15) minute period (Table 3). At the end of the negotiation period, they should note their individual gains and joint gains on a worksheet and bring it to the debriefing session.

For the dual intervention group, indicate that for the negotiation simulation they will have 40 minutes (or 60 minutes) that will be divided into four time periods of equal

Table 3
Worksheet for Tracking Negotiation Stages

	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Time 4
Affective posturing				
Rational persuasion				
Priority information				
Offers				

Instructions: At the end of each time period, as indicated by instructor, please mark which behaviors most characterized the preceding time period. You may mark one or two kinds of behaviors, but not more than two.

length. In each time period, they will be instructed to focus on one particular kind of negotiation strategy. In Time 1, they should engage primarily in affective posturing—exchanging information about who they are, their company, their product, etc. In Time 2, they should engage primarily in the direct exchange of information about the issues, their interests, and their priorities. In Time 3, they should focus on introducing offers and using rational persuasion to support their positions. And in Time 4 they should primarily exchange offers. The instructor will need to give a reminder when each time period ends and the next begins. At the end of the negotiation, students should note their individual gains and joint gains on a score card and bring it to the debrief session.

For the debrief session, students in the intervention-natural groups should post their process data. This requires a rather large table, for example, Table 4. It should be apparent that students in the intervention-natural condition for the most part followed the natural sequencing of stages that students in the dual intervention condition were instructed to follow. In a culturally diverse classroom, this point can be emphasized by putting low context, high context, and mixed-context groups in the intervention-natural condition. Graphs from Adair and Brett (2005) can be shown to illustrate how negotiators in low context dyads, high context dyads, and mixed-context dyads all have the tendency to follow this universal negotiation dance characterized by affective posturing, priority information, rational persuasion along with offers, and offers (Adair & Brett, 2005, figures 1, 3, 4, and 5).

Students in all groups should also post their joint gains outcome data. These results should help illustrate how affective posturing in Time 1 and priority information in Time 2 are critical stages that tend to predict joint gains. Unless you have negotiators who are skilled in the offers-as-information strategy, dyads that focused on affective posturing and priority information in Times 1 and 2 should in general generate higher joint gains than groups that focused more on rational persuasion or offers in the early stages. Students that learn the skills to identify strategic focus and pay attention to timing should be well prepared to manage the flow of negotiations through the critical first two stages, regardless of their group’s cultural composition.

Table 4
Template for Posting Stage Tracking Results (with hypothetical results from students)

Behaviors	Dyad 1	Dyad 2	Dyad 3	Dyad 4
Time 1				
Affective posturing	X	X	X	X
Rational persuasion				
Priority information			X	
Offers				
Time 2				
Affective posturing		X		
Rational persuasion			X	
Priority information	X	X	X	X
Offers				
Time 3				
Affective posturing				
Rational persuasion	X	X	X	X
Priority information				
Offers	X	X		
Time 4				
Affective posturing				
Rational persuasion				
Priority information				
Offers	X	X	X	X

There are two final concepts that can be brought into a debrief on culture and negotiation stages. First, although the flow of negotiation through temporal stages is similar across cultures, the degree to which negotiators use particular strategies within the stages does vary by culture. For example, overall, negotiators in high context dyads exchange more offers than negotiators in low context or mixed-context dyads (Adair & Brett, 2005, figure 5). Also, low context negotiators exchange more priority information than negotiators from high context cultures (Adair & Brett, 2005, figure 3). In other words, one part of the negotiation dance that is culture specific is the degree to which certain strategies are emphasized.

Figures 1–5 in Adair and Brett (2005) also illustrate how similar mixed-context dyads are to low context dyads. The tendency for mixed-context dyads to do the low context negotiation dance reflects the tendency for high context negotiators to

adapt to low context negotiators when interacting cross-culturally. This tendency may be related to (a) greater linguistic flexibility in high context cultures (Adair et al., 2001), (b) Eastern values for harmony and adaptation (Morling, Kitayama, & Miyamoto, 2002), and (c) also the fact that most East-West negotiations take place in English. Further evidence of the linguistic flexibility in high context cultures appears in the graph in Adair and Brett (2005, figure 6) depicting levels of complementary information sharing sequences. Negotiators in high context dyads use sequences of offers and priority information more frequently than low context or mixed-context dyads, which tend instead to reciprocate just one or the other form of information exchange. Part of students' next generation skill set should include the ability to recognize variation in cultural styles of communication but also the awareness to question and challenge the tendency for high context negotiators to adapt their approach to the low context style.

Limitations

Using the experimental experiential approach to teach culture and negotiation strategy poses several challenges for instructors that should be noted. First, to create dyads of a particular cultural composition, you need to know if your students are low or high context. These data can be gathered at the start of the term by asking students about their country of origin and years lived outside their country of origin. You can also administer scales measuring norms for indirect communication (for example, Gudykunst et al., 1996; Holtgraves, 1997). Note that I advocate using the existing cultural composition of your class, not trying to prime certain cultural mindsets. However, the content does involve teaching low context negotiators to use high context strategies. While cultural diversity is a plus for teaching these concepts, I find that even in a purely low context classroom students are interested and eager to learn and try these techniques.

A second challenge involves preparation time before class. Clearly, instructors will have to spend some time assigning pairs, making and labeling copies of multiple sets of role instructions, and making handouts for tracking techniques. But, I find the time required is not much more than for your average negotiation, so this limitation is not prohibitive. A more severe challenge involves the logistics of running some of the proposed interventions. Ideally you will have multiple classrooms so you can split up students in different intervention groups, and a teaching assistant to help. If you do not have these resources at your disposal, you might consider running one intervention in one class session and the natural condition or complementary intervention in another class session.

Finally, instructors may be concerned that students' results will not look like the research results. Not to worry. It is rare that every single dyad performs exactly like their intervention would predict. But I am always able to find several groups that follow predictions, and I use those groups to illustrate the concepts, which I back up with the empirical research results. Then, when you have time, you can talk to the dyads with unexpected results and try to figure out what they did differently.

Conclusions

Although the effectiveness of traditional negotiation pedagogy is well established, instructors face the challenge of keeping their methods and content fresh and applicable in a rapidly changing world. The challenge involves identifying new negotiation contexts and new negotiation skills and then developing tools to bring them into the classroom. The cross-cultural negotiation context is one that has already been recognized as an imperative for next generation negotiators. And empirical cross-cultural negotiation research allows us to go beyond descriptive accounts of “how to negotiate in Rome with Romans” to understand the strategies and processes of negotiating in a cross-cultural context.

In a recent article on teaching negotiation, Roy Lewicki calls for instructors to “isolate the key skill components of effective negotiating” and “create training that specifically addresses the underlying skill clusters” (Lewicki, 1997, p. 266). The present article identifies skill clusters that research has shown to be effective in non-Western and mixed-culture contexts, specifically, offers as information and pacing through negotiation stages. A series of interventions is proposed that instructors can use to teach these negotiation skills using an experiential approach that allows students to practice the skills and to compare themselves to negotiators using alternate or natural approaches.

Future Directions

This article focuses primarily on skills related to information exchange and integrative negotiation. But there are many other ways that culture may affect negotiation strategy and communication. For example, Hall’s dimension of low/high context addresses not only how much information is enough, but also cultural differences in style of logic and argument. It is theorized that low context cultures rely more on Aristotelian logic and factual forms of argument, whereas high context cultures rely more on spiral logic and argument based on emotions and ideology (Cohen, 1991; Glenn, Witmeyer, & Stevenson, 1977; Johnstone, 1989). These distinctions clearly have implications for how negotiators in different cultures build arguments and defend their offers (Adair & Brett, 2004). More work is needed to understand the role of culture in the use and effectiveness of specific forms of argument or persuasive appeals. Once we have a better grasp of culture and influence in negotiation, this is another skill cluster that can be taught in the cross-cultural negotiation classroom using a similar experimental experiential approach.

Another way that culture should affect the negotiation dance is with respect to space and nonverbal communication. Space is both a source of information and a means of communicating (Hall, 1966). For example, silence can be a void to be filled (as in low context cultures) or full of meaning in itself (as in high context cultures). Interruptions can be part of everyday dialogue or a verbal intrusion in someone else’s personal space. Ambiguous nonverbal gestures, such as looking away or closing one’s eyes when listening, may contain a wealth of information that is easily misinterpreted. When we have a good understanding of how negotiators use these forms of communication in different cultural contexts, we can also teach nonverbal negotiation skills using the experimental experiential method.

References

- Adair, W. L. (2003). Integrative sequences and negotiation outcome in same- and mixed-culture negotiations. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 14(3), 273–296.
- Adair, W. L. & Brett, J. M. (2004). Culture and negotiation processes. In M. J. Gelfand & J. M. Brett (Eds.), *Handbook of negotiation and culture* (pp. 158–176). Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Adair, W. L., & Brett, J. M. (2005). The negotiation dance: Time, culture, and behavioral sequences in negotiation. *Organization Science*, 16(1), 33–51.
- Adair, W. L., Brett, J. M., Lempereur, A., Okumura, T., Shikhirev, P., Tinsley, C., et al. (2004). Culture and negotiation strategy. *Negotiation Journal*, 20, 87–111.
- Adair, W. L., Okumura, T., & Brett, J. M. (2001). Negotiation behavior when cultures collide: The U.S. and Japan. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86(3), 371–385.
- Adair, W. L., Weingart, L., & Brett, J. M. (2007). The timing and function of offers in U.S. and Japanese negotiations. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 92(4), 1056–1068.
- Arrow, H., Poole, M. S., Henry, K. B., Wheelan, S., & Mooreland, R. L. (2004). Time, change, and development: The temporal perspective on groups. *Small Group Research*, 35(1), 73–105.
- Avruch, K. (2000). Culture and negotiation pedagogy. *Negotiation Journal*, 2000, 339–346.
- Brett, J. M. (2007). *Negotiating globally* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Brett, J. M., & Okumura, T. (2007). Cartoon. In J. M. Brett (Ed.), *Negotiation, teamwork, and decision making exercises* [CD]. Evanston, IL: DRRC, Northwestern University.
- Cohen, R. (1991). *Negotiating across cultures: Communication obstacles in international diplomacy*. Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press.
- Fauvre, G. O., & Rubin, J. R. (1993). *Culture and negotiation: The resolution of water dispute*. Newbury Park: SageFauvre, G.O.
- Fortang, R. S. (2000). Taking stock: An analysis of negotiation pedagogy across four professional fields. *Negotiation Journal*, 16, 325–338.
- Free Dictionary. (2008). *Dance*. Retrieved March 3, 2008, from <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/dance>.
- Gelfand, M. J., & Brett, J. M. (Eds.) (2004). *Handbook of negotiation and culture*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Gelfand, M. J., Nishii, L. H., Holcombe, K. M., Dyer, N., Ohbuchi, K. I., & Fukuno, M. (2001). Cultural influences on cognitive representations of conflict: Interpretations of conflict episodes in the U.S. and Japan. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86, 1059–1074.
- Gladwin, T. (2007). Alpha-Beta. In J. M. Brett (Ed.), *Negotiation, teamwork, and decision making exercises* [CD]. Evanston, IL: DRRC, Northwestern University.
- Glenn, E. S., Witmeyer, D., & Stevenson, K. A. (1977). Cultural styles of persuasion. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 1(3), 52–66.
- Gudykunst, W. B., Matsumoto, Y., Ting-Toomey, S., Nishida, T., Kim, K., & Heyman, S. (1996). The influence of cultural individualism-collectivism, self construals, and individual values on communication styles across cultures. *Human Communication Research*, 22(4), 510–543.
- Hall, E. T. (1966). *The hidden dimension*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.
- Hall, E. T. (1976). *Beyond culture*. Garden City, NY: Anchor.
- Hall, E. T., & Hall, M. R. (1990). *Understanding cultural differences: Germans, French, and Americans*. Boston, MA: Intercultural Press.

- Holtgraves, T. (1997). Styles of language use: Individual and cultural variability in conversational indirectness. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 73(3), 624–637.
- Johnstone, B. (1989). Linguistic strategies and cultural styles for persuasive discourse. In S. Ting Toomey & F. Korzeny (Eds.), *Language, communication, and culture* (pp. 139–156). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Kolb, D. A. (1974). Management and the learning process. In D. A. Kolb, J. M. Rubin, & J. McIntyre (Eds.), *Organizational psychology: A book of readings* (pp. 27–42). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Lewicki, R. J. (1997). Teaching negotiation and dispute resolution in colleges of business: The state of the practice. *Negotiation Journal*, 13, 253–269.
- Lewicki, R. J., Saunders, D. M., Barry, B., & Minton, J. W. (2004). *Essentials of negotiation* (3rd ed.). Boston, MA: McGraw Hill.
- Lowenstein, J., & Thompson, L. (2000). The challenge of learning. *Negotiation Journal*, 16, 399–408.
- McLean Parks, J. (2007). International lodging merger. In J. M. Brett (Ed.), *Negotiation, teamwork, and decision making exercises* [CD]. Evanston, IL: DRRC, Northwestern University.
- Morling, B., Kitayama, S., & Miyamoto, Y. (2002). Cultural practices emphasize influence in the United States and adjustment in Japan. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 28(3), 311–323.
- Olekalns, M., & Smith, P. L. (2000). Understanding optimal outcomes: The role of strategy sequences in competitive negotiations. *Human Communication Research*, 26(4), 527–557.
- Olekalns, M., Smith, P. L., & Walsh, T. (1996). The process of negotiating: Strategy and timing as predictors of outcomes. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 68(1), 68–77.
- Patel, A., & Brett, J. M. (2007). Abhas-Bussan exercise. In J. M. Brett (Ed.), *Negotiation, teamwork, and decision making exercises* [CD]. Evanston, IL: DRRC, Northwestern University.
- Pruitt, D. G. (1981). *Negotiation behaviour*. New York: Academic Press.
- Putnam, L. L. (1990). Reframing integrative and distributive bargaining: A process perspective. In B. H. Sheppard, M. H. Bazerman, & R. J. Lewicki (Eds.), *Research on negotiation in organizations*: (Vol. 2, pp. 3–30). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.
- Schroth, H., & Ramirez, J. (2007). The Mexico venture. In J. M. Brett (Ed.), *Negotiation, teamwork, and decision making exercises* [CD]. Evanston, IL: DRRC, Northwestern University.
- Thompson, L. (2005). *The mind and heart of the negotiator* (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Tinsley, C. (2007). Cobalt systems and Silverlight electronics. In J. M. Brett (Ed.), *Negotiation, teamwork, and decision making exercises* [CD]. Evanston, IL: DRRC, Northwestern University.
- Weingart, L. R., & Olekalns, M. (2004). Communication processes in negotiation: Frequencies, sequences, and phases. In M. J. Gelfand & J. M. Brett (Eds.), *The handbook of negotiation and culture* (pp. 143–157). Stanford, CA: Stanford Business Books.

Wendi L. Adair received her PhD from Northwestern University and is currently Assistant Professor of Psychology at the University of Waterloo. Her research on culture and negotiation appears in several journals including *Journal of Applied Psychology* and *Organization Science* and has been recognized with awards from the International Association for Conflict Management and the American Psychological Association.