National Model United Nations:

Building Political and Self Efficacy[1]

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1. Introduction

In Model United Nations (MUN) simulations, students playing the role of Member State (MS) ambassadors in different United Nations (UN) bodies have the potential to build their own political and personal (self) efficacy. For National Model United Nations (NMUN) New York (NY) in 2019, Kobe City University of Foreign Studies (KCUFS) partnered with Westfälische Hochschule to represent the Islamic Republic of Iran (IR of Iran). Through the use of observations, notes and student reflections this paper will report upon the personal growth of students within the context of this partnership.

1.1 Background to NMUN

NMUN's mission is to: "…advance understanding of the UN and contemporary global issues through quality educational programs that emphasize collaboration and cooperative conflict resolution and prepares participants for active global citizenship". NMUN is a platform for "addressing global concerns in a real-world context" (NMUN, 2019). The NMUN homepage states that it started in 1927 as the intercollegiate Model League Simulation transitioning to MUN in 1943 and now has over 6000 students participating. It is the largest and oldest intercollegiate MUN Conference.

School groups can choose between two 30-hour conferences, which are held on two separate weeks, known as Week A or Week B. In 2019, our schools elected to attend Week A from March 24-28. There were students from 125 countries participating, with over 50% from outside the United States using English as a lingua franca. Member States are assigned depending on the size of the delegation. Each individual university delegation and partnering delegation is allowed to choose up to 10 countries during the application process and indicate the regions that they would like to represent.

None of the participating universities are supposed to represent their home country, as the purpose of MUN participation is to build intercultural understanding and knowledge through the experience of representing the interests of other MSs. Also, each university should choose a MS that they have not previously represented to ensure continued and deepened learning within their community. Even though every delegation submits their top 10 choices, they may be assigned a MS that was not in their initial "wish list" since the MUN organizers need to assign countries bearing in mind balance for the entire conference.

1.2 The KCUFS and Westfälische Hochschule Delegation Partnership

KCUFS and Westfälische Hochschule together agreed on a list of countries that they wanted to represent the most. The KCUFS NMUN 2019 delegation had eight students that were selected through an application process. Four students who had experienced NMUN were chosen to partner with four inexperienced students. With our partner university, we divided the committees and KCUFS represented GA3 (General Assembly Third Committee), UNICEF (The United Nations Children's Fund), UNESCO (The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), and CCPCJ (The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice). Westfälische Hochschule represented the remaining 12 committees. GA3 was the only large committee and the others were medium size.

When some universities partner, they share a committee and arrange for students to prepare in tandem. For our joint delegation, we decided to prepare our delegates independently. Each university created its own closed-group Facebook Page for its part of the delegation but enabled members of each university to belong to both. The reason for separate pages is for the use of posts as part of each institution's credit bearing

classes. Model United Nations is a credit bearing class at both KCUFS and Westfälische Hochschule and we each follow our own syllabi.

The KCUFS class for NMUN New York lasts three months beginning in mid-December with students meeting once or twice a week for six hours, followed by three-day long meetings referred to as policy days as well as two 8-hour mock conferences. The classes are team taught by faculty and experienced MUN students (Nishide & Smith, 2017) and are structured to follow a flipped learning model (Tatsuki & Zenuk-Nishide, 2018).

Delegates also have the support of student mentors for each committee, who help them with research and the writing process for position papers, policy development and speeches. Delegates meet face-to-face with mentors in Japan and use many on-line platforms including FaceTime, SKYPE, Dropbox, Line, and Google Docs. Every class begins with a reflection on their research progress and partnership. The mock conference ends with a debriefing to examine what they could and could not do well during the conference, as well as deciding on actions they will take to improve. During the NMUN conference, joint delegation debriefing sessions are held to learn about what took place in each committee and to share what the delegates planned for the next day.

1.3 Defining Self and Political Efficacy

Bandura (1997) defines self or personal efficacy as an individual's belief about their ability to learn and perform actions at a certain level. Also, Bandura states that self efficacy is developed by interpreting information in four different ways: 1) by evaluating previous performances; 2) by evaluating observational experiences provided by others; 3) by appraising verbal judgments made by others; and 4) by interpreting their own emotional and physical state as a confidence signal when contemplating action.

Campbell et al. (1954, p. 187) state that political efficacy is:

> The feeling that individual political action does have, or can have an impact upon the political process, i.e., that it is worthwhile to perform one's civic duties. It is feeling

that political and social change is possible, and the individual citizen can play a part in bringing about this change.

Through factor analysis it has been identified that political efficacy has two dimensions, but it is usually studied as one construct (Levy, 2011). One dimension is external political efficacy (Aish & Joreskog, 1990; Balch, 1974; Zimmerman, 1989) where the belief is that an individual's actions can have an influence on governmental decisions; and another dimension is internal political efficacy (Miller et al., 1980) where the individual believes that they can understand and competently participate in political processes. Like Lay and Smarick (2006) and Levy (2011), we would also support the claim that simulations like MUN build and enhance political efficacy. Political efficacy includes the confidence to make a difference politically through spoken and written discourse.

To examine the experiences of building political and self efficacy of the eight KCUFS students who represented the IR of Iran in NMUN New York in 2019, sources of the analysis will include final written and oral reflections during the preparation phase and after the conference, conference speeches and position papers. This study used qualitative methodology to explore the self and political efficacy phenomena with the intention of identifying emergent themes important to the students that would not have been able to be assessed in a quantitative study.

2. Representing the IR of Iran

Our KCUFS delegation initially was not happy when they were told that they would represent the IR of Iran. They always hope to represent a country that is looked upon favourably by others, with allies. The KCUFS had that experience in NMUN China 2018, where they represented Norway and Sweden both of which have a high quality of life and are widely well regarded in the world community. Since KCUFS began participating in NMUN in 2008, we had never chosen or been assigned to a Member State for which the global view was overwhelmingly negative (Pew Research Center's Global Attitudes Project, 2019). The students understood well what research fellows for the IR of Iran at the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), Therme and Alsairafi (2019), state:

…. U.S. sanctions are strengthening the hand of Iran's conservative factions, they are also exacerbating the country's severe challenges. Growing regional tensions between Iran and its allies, on one side, and the U.S. and its Middle Eastern partners, on the other, create an unstable environment, making it very difficult for Iranian officials to effectively develop and reform the economy. Due to this instability, the regime finds itself forced to choose between a more democratic political system that is focused on socio-economic development and a securitized theocratic state that is merely focused on the revolution's survival… Iran's foreign policy is still based on a pragmatic understanding with Russia and China and the search for a modus vivendi with European countries to limit the negative effects of hostile relations between Tehran and Washington.

Experienced NMUN leaders, who were supporting the class, as well as the delegates themselves, feared that they would have a negative experience by representing the IR of Iran. They feared they would be isolated in committee and not be able to join working groups for the conference. They believed that they would not be able to communicate much for the five conference days and that would have a negative effect on our KCUFS MUN community. Concerning the research process, they were worried that they would not be able to access the information they needed on the IR of Iran. Also, the KCUFS leaders and delegates all felt it would be very difficult to represent a country that is accused of so many human rights violations in terms of their own personal beliefs and values. During NMUN conferences, delegates are required to "craft and then advocate positions with which they may or may not agree, while developing a deeper capacity for empathy and creative problem solving" (NMUN, 2019).

Delegates reported on their initial feelings and thoughts on representing the IR of Iran:

> *I felt representing Iran would be difficult…I knew Iran is one of the most controversial countries in the world.* (NH)

> *I was nervous in the sense that I was not sure if I had enough confidence in myself or this year's delegation representing a country with such a complex background on which so much global attention is being paid recently, one reason of that being the fact that everyone knew this delegation had one of the "lowest capacities" in the last few years,*

considering the maximum number of NMUNs anyone had experienced was only one…there was no doubt it was going to be a challenge even though I did not know how well we would be able to execute it. (FH)

Honestly, I didn't know about Iran so much and representing [a] country, which is supporting Hezbollah or Hamas, which are recognized as "terrorists" by international society itself made me feel difficulties at first. (HJ)

Before representing Iran, I had a feeling that Iran is a country that has a hard situation and is very different from us… (YK)

It was tough because Iran had way too different political views or beliefs from Japan's, and I had not known about the country itself before I started to research. (YNi)

It has a complex political relations and stance because of its history and religion, and it was a quite different situation than what I had done in the last NMUN [represented Norway at NMUN China]. (YNa)

3. Learning

3.1 Changes in Perception

All of the KCUFS delegates' perceptions on the IR of Iran changed during the preparation and conference as they developed political and self-efficacy. They developed an appreciation of differing perspectives, thereby expanding their worldview and as the NMUN homepage states "discovered the human side of international relations and diplomacy" (NMUN, 2019). This was accomplished through research of the IR of Iran's beliefs, values, history, relationships, policies and actions on issues. Time was given in class to discuss their understanding of the IR of Iran and to become aware of additional research they needed. Knowledge and understanding built over time. KCUFS delegates stated:

At first, I had certain misconceptions of Iran, however during my research as I learned more about Iran and discovered in-depth about its relationships with other Member States. I found flaws in the statements made by certain Member States with a lot of political leverage concerning Iran. So during the conference, I felt emotionally invested in protecting and promoting my country. (CT)

However, as I spent the time on research, my perception of Iran was gradually changed. I was interested in the unique political system such as Supreme Leader. At the same time, I found that my perception and the way of thinking were quite Americanized or westernized. For example on human rights. I wondered why non-western counties such as Middle East have to obey the western ideas… Each region has each norms and principles. It was a great opportunity to learn mysterious west Asian counties Iran. If I didn't participate NMUN, I would never researched Iran by myself. (RS)

While researching, I could find how much my perspective is westernized and those thoughts are unfair to Iran. After I realized it, I really enjoyed researching about Iran, especially in terms of how "Iran justifies their thoughts against the strong westernized norms". (HJ)

I got interested in the political relationships between Member States on issues related to Iran and gradually enjoyed being an Iranian delegate….Iran had its only policy and I liked it. (YNi)

Doing Iran, I knew…that the westernized perspective should not be the standard. (YK)

After all, I do believe the entire delegation did an outstanding job of playing the role of an Iranian diplomat and I am so glad as well as thankful to have had the opportunity to take on such a challenge. Through this NMUN, I got to study not only about Iran but the entire Middle East and the history and culture surrounding Islam. …I have become interested in learning more about those. (FH)

3.2 Building the Political and Self Efficacy to Remain in Character

Delegates have to build political and self-efficacy to remain in character to represent the government of the MS they are assigned. According to the NMUN Homepage, their definition of remaining in character is:

…advocating your assigned country's position in a manner consistent with economic, social, and geopolitical constraints. Although being in character involves the accurate presentation of your country's diplomatic style, delegates should not model inappropriate stereotypes or character traits. Any undiplomatic behavior is inherently out

of character for United Nations delegates. Delegates are to emulate the work of diplomats, not the sometimes more theatrical presentations of Heads of State/Government to the General Assembly (and media) during the general debate each fall; speeches by Heads of State/Government are political in nature and sometimes aimed as much at domestic audiences as at their UN counterparts. In addition, delegates must remember that any observation, comment or complaint regarding another delegate's portrayal of his/her national or organizational character is highly inappropriate, and such comments are themselves inherently out of character for a diplomat. Yelling, standing on chairs and other examples of unprofessional behavior are not characteristics of model diplomats. Remaining in character includes consistent and accurate diplomacy and caucusing in a manner consistent with the country's position and power, i.e., behind-the-scenes negotiator vs. in-the-forefront debater. (NMUN, 2019)

To better prepare our delegates to represent the IR of Iran, besides having them discuss the country generally from their research, we had them follow the news and discuss it in class. Secondly, we were able to meet and converse with Iranian diaspora (however, for the safety of the people involved we will not reveal if it was on-line or face-to-face). Also, we did not make recordings or take pictures to protect each informant's anonymity. We were especially interested in learning about Iran from a civilian's perspective. Questions from each committee were sent in advance. It was very important for our NMUN community to understand that for the Iranian diaspora, the discussing of human rights activities could be seen as against their own national security or colluding against the system if the points of view expressed differed from that of the government.

At the same time that we were meeting with Iranian diaspora, Iranian lawyer Nasrin Sotoudeh was being sentenced to 38 years in prison and 148 lashes for defending women who removed their headscarves, a situation that we in "western democracies" see as a violation of human rights (New York Times, 2019). The first-time faculty advisors also wondered if accepting the mission to represent IR of Iran was ethical or not based on the many human rights violations we were encountering. In their questions to the IR of Iran diaspora, committee delegates shared questions and summaries of what they found in their research on the IR of Iran that reflected both government and nongovernment points of view. In their research notes, students kept

quotations and references to be able to quickly refer to them as necessary on shared Google Docs.

Our NMUN New York partners from Germany were able to travel to the IR of Iran's Embassy in Berlin and through their support we were able to secure a visit for the entire delegation to the IR of Iran Permanent Mission to the UN in New York. Depending on political events or crises we realized that the visit could be cancelled at any time. We were able to visit the Permanent Mission of the IR of Iran for two hours and meet with two diplomats. Questions from our delegation and our partners were collated and sent before our visit, as requested.

Before the mission visit, we discussed how to speak and act diplomatically. Out of respect for the IR of Iran, all female delegation members wore headscarves and covered their arms and legs. We posted on our Delegation's Facebook page how to wear a headscarf for the reference of all of our members. We were all surprised how welcoming the diplomats were and that they allowed us to take photos and notes. They gave their own perspective but also showed research to support their claims by independent UN agencies and organizations. The Permanent Mission diplomats and the diaspora that we met with both believed that the re-imposed sanctions of the United States in 2018 were misguided. The United States re-imposed all the sanctions on Iran that had been lifted under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) targeting "critical sectors of Iran's economy, such as the energy, shipping and shipbuilding, and financial sectors" (U.S. Department of The Treasury, 2019) that are crippling the economy (BBC News 2019; World Bank Group, 2018).

Delegates were able to ask questions and wanted to know how to respond to certain issues and also what the diplomats thought about ideas that they wanted to add to their working papers. The IR of Iran diplomats discussed the actions of Israel and the United States. Our KCUFS UNICEF delegation asked if the religious leaders do or could help to ensure that children are not victims of violence, and the mosques could be used as safe spaces for children. The diplomats thought this was a good idea as they deal with peace and security issues.

On the last day of the conference our delegation was awarded a "Distinguished Delegation Award" given only to 10% of all delegations in honour of how we represented the IR of Iran (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Distinguished Delegation Award

We immediately emailed the Ambassadors at the Permanent Mission of the IR of Iran and we got this instant reply, "I would like to congratulate you and your students for this important achievement. For their hard work and your wise advice for sure the students deserved to achieve the reward. All the Best, to you and your students" (PMOI, March 28, 2019).

Staying in character at NMUN was difficult for delegates but they were able to develop confidence and communicative strategies.

> *The most challenging part was definitely staying in character, since Iran is a Member State that is not afraid of saying no or being blunt. Sometimes I had to tell delegates that it would be difficult to incorporate some parts of their ideas, but I was still able to stay friendly without creating animosity.* (CT)

One of the delegates stated she was successful in that she was able to avoid being disliked, and still stayed in character. Delegates successfully created authentic speeches through the process of research examining speeches made at the UN by the IR of Iran that had been recorded and preserved in written archives. Like in the agenda setting speech of CCPCJ, they all started with "In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful".

In the NMUN NY conference, delegates have to prepare for three agendas on a committee topic. The first speeches and negotiating in the conference are to set the committee agenda. Before the conference, each committee ranks their agenda choices, and then prepares to advocate their position. Out of three possible agendas that could be discussed, CCPCJ favoured discussing Agenda 2 on the topic of "Improving Coordination in Preventing and Combating Migrant Smuggling" because, based on their research, "As a Member State that is an origin, transit, and destination country of smuggled migrants in the region, Iran views this topic with utmost urgency" (FH). They also showed their understanding of the situation of smuggled migrants in the world, "Since the year 2000, there have been more than 60,000 recorded migrant deaths, most of them presumably those who were smuggled across borders. And we have no way of knowing how many unrecorded deaths there have been." In CCPCJ's Agenda setting pre-written speech, the delegate coloured and wrote between asterix marks the gesture she wanted to do: "Iran would like to discuss *hand*" and also coloured words that she wanted to emphasize "more than 60,000 recorded migrant deaths". Note that lines were left between ideas for the delegate to pause during delivery.

> *In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.*

Thank you honourable Chair and distinguished delegates.
I represent the Islamic Republic of Iran and appreciate this opportunity to work with you today. Iran would like to discuss *hand* Agenda 2 first on the topic of "Improving Coordination in Preventing and Combating Migrant Smuggling."

Since the year 2000, there have been more than 60000-recorded migrant deaths, most of them presumably those who were smuggled across borders. And we have no way of knowing how many unrecorded deaths there have been.

As a Member State that is an origin, transit, and destination country of smuggled migrants in the region, Iran views this topic with utmost urgency.

Fellow delegates, due to the transnational nature of the crime, international cooperation is indispensable in the fight against migrant smuggling.

Not only do we need to work hand in hand, it is also vital we address this issue under Agenda 2 NOW, because the number of vulnerable people who feel there is no other choice but to turn to smugglers has hit an all-time high.

Let us save the lives of those who look to migrate, simply to find a better life.

If you are interested in speaking with us, please feel free to approach us.
Thank you.

This agenda setting speech demonstrated the CCPCJ delegates self and political efficacy.

3.3 Self and Political Efficacy in Negotiation Strategies

As NMUN Delegates, students were able to develop personal and political efficacy through negotiation. Roloff et al. (2008) define negotiation skills as "a unique form of social interaction that incorporates argumentation, and information exchange into reaching agreements and working out future interdependence" (p. 804). Many scholars concur that the oral communication skills needed in negotiation are diplomacy, coalition formation, persuasion, argumentation and debate skills, as well as resilience for when negotiation fails (Crossley-Frolick, 2010; Elias, 2014; Obendorf &

Randerson, 2013; Spector, 2006). Self-efficacy for negotiating is an important learning outcome for negotiation based MUN simulations. Delegates spend most of the simulation negotiating.

In NMUN events, delegates spend more than 30 hours in sessions, which offer numerous opportunities to better their negotiating skills. In the NMUN social context, participants continuously are engaging with and observing others. Engaging with others creates situations ripe for social persuasion, in which participants are supported and receive feedback from other delegates. Through NMUN, delegates have many opportunities to interpret their physical and emotional states when communicating to state and support their position. Therefore, high self-efficacy supports the future development of skills by motivating students to engage in tasks, to work harder, and to have resilience when faced with difficulties (Zepke et al., 2010).

Through MUN events in general, students representing a MS can participate in democratic processes (Stroupe & Sabato, 2004) advocating through negotiation issues of concern and understanding political and global challenges (Morrell, 2005). Reflections by delegates representing the IR of Iran demonstrate that they had moments of high political and self-efficacy during the negotiation process. To be successful is a combination of both. Delegates have to be communicatively competent in political and global issues in English.

A GA3 delegate explains how he tried to keep the IR of Iran's policy in the action plan in the form of a clause in the working paper.

> First, I participated in big working group E called "Global alliance ". In the working group (WG), we divided into four sub-WGs. I joined the cooperation and finance sub-WG…. After merging, I talked and explained my clause with many MSs [Member States], and tried to keep my clause. (RS)

Another GA3 delegate demonstrates the self-efficacy of being able to contribute to the writing of a working paper to make it more cohesive and coherent. As a bilingual speaker of Japanese and English she felt confident to be able to contribute critically to the editing process and encourage others who had less confidence. Also, she displayed

political efficacy by ensuring that Israel, an enemy of the IR of Iran, had no power of influence on the working paper that would become a resolution.

> *I was successful at contributing to the Working Paper, convincing other delegates, and incorporating their ideas into the Working Paper well enough to flow without inconsistencies. I was also able to work with an experienced delegate during the last stages of drafting the Working Paper, going over clauses together to make sure that the Working Paper flowed well. I would say that that most memorable moment I had was when I found out that Israel had joined my WG. I stuck to the leader since I knew that Israel would approach the leader at some point, and I could let my presence known. When Israel approached the leader and I and found that I was Iran, she immediately left.* (CT)

A UNICEF delegate had to negotiate to keep her idea in a working paper and even though she was a first-time NMUN participant, she felt confident enough to add to the editing process of the final draft.

> *To find a working group was to introduce my policy for each delegate and found the one who had kind of similar idea as me. I contributed to writing the working paper [WP] by writing my idea down on the google docs first and I explained my policy deeply. Also, when the group leader (Austria) was writing down all the ideas we had, I was always next to her not to miss anything.   Then, I explained what was going on if somebody was not able to understand it and when I found some errors or something wrong, I asked one who had that policy or ideas…. My policy was once deleted from the WP because mine was similar to others' (but basically different), but I had explained it before that, so the delegates who understood my policy helped me once again to put mine on the paper…. I tried to ask many questions to others. The only thing I could do as a delegate of Iran was to make a resolution that Iran could agree on. When I found something bad for Iran, I went to ask others the meaning of it, and I was successful at changing words in the WP (ex: calls upon →suggests).* (YNi)

A delegate of UNESCO felt confident that she could threaten to leave a working group that she was with if they did not remove or change a clause [idea] that did not follow the IR of Iran's policy. This showed her political and self-efficacy.

...when we tried to convince other WG [working group] members to delete problematic clauses [in the working paper and draft resolution] reminding that we would leave [Not be a sponsor (author)] if they wouldn't do that.... Finally, I left my first WG because of our differences of thoughts about the terrorism definition and database for recording terrorism actions, so the number of WGs, which the Iranian delegate joined, was only one in total. (I tried to convince the WG members to delete the parts of database and definition showing specific reasons and deep explanations reminding that my idea was the core of the WP again and again, but they didn't agree on that completely).... [HJ]

The experienced UNESCO delegate supported her inexperienced partner's learning by giving her roles that she could do; even when it meant letting her take over. She played the role of an advisor to her group as she was confident that she knew the mandate, past actions of her committee and agenda, and possessed editing skills. She was not intimidated by native speakers who had better proficiency skills but lacked substantive knowledge to keep persuading them that she knew more, even though they tried to ignore her as she was a non-native speaker of English. She even took an action by approaching the Chair to intervene on her behalf. In her reflection, the delegate mentioned that they had read position papers of all of the MSs to determine what their focus was on each of the three committee agendas. They felt confident that this helped them to negotiate and find WGs. They also determined the relationship of each MS to the IR of Iran.

Until the first informal session of the last day starts, I was in a WG, which focuses on the empowerment of cultural diversity, which created by me. Y [Partner] and I made a list of the MS, which talk about similar topics to us in their PPs before our departure to NY, and I used it to make WG to create it effectively. My contribution of WG was not as being strong leader, but as a kind of adviser as who knows about UNESCO's mandate/past actions and the agenda. I tried to make the directions of the topics on the WP correct following the UNESCO's mandate from the first discussion to last, but the native speakers (most of the delegates are from the US) were getting to avoid listening to me and started to let all clauses be on the WP without considering the contents. I was not satisfied with it at all and included chair to justify my statement, but I didn't feel it worked. After I put my idea and checked other contents (it was okay at that time), Y and I exchanged our own WGs because her WG was not to be doing well due to there were no

experienced delegates. So, I asked Y to keep checking what my WG work on and making sure there are no substantive changes on my clauses. In Y's WG, I played the role of a sub-leader who points out the parts which needs to be improved and check formatting. [HJ]

One of the delegates learned that she had to really follow the flow of the WG herself and not just take things for granted that other MS ambassadors were doing what they said they would do. She was able to question group members and make suggestions that would benefit the IR of Iran.

During the conference, I learned the importance of the communication between Working Group members. Some members were doing what I didn't expect and they didn't tell me anything about that. After I realized about the situation, I tried to communicate with and talked to them as much as I could and grasped what was happening accurately. (YN)

Even though she knew she had great leadership skills, a CCPCJ delegate played the role of supporting others who wanted to be leaders.   Slowly, because of her skills and knowledge she naturally came to lead the group. She was also able to show her political efficacy when she was going over clauses with the United States, to determine if they were acceptable to them both. The CCPCJ delegates were chosen by their peers as best delegates in the committee, for showing leadership, staying in character, and knowing the rules.

I joined a working group that consisted of India, Japan, Morocco, and South Africa. I could not find people I wanted to work with before the end of the 1st session, but the next morning, I almost instantly joined the abovementioned group because I knew I could not spend any more time debating with whom to work. Iran's international relations with all of these Member States seemed neutral at worst, and because I figured no one had similar policies as mine, which meant that I could essentially join any group. Because, by the time I had decided to stick to this working group, South Africa and Japan seemed like they were actively trying to become the "working group leader" by facilitating the discussion, creating a shared Google Doc, etc., I did not feel the need to try unnecessarily hard to steal the role of a leader. Therefore, I was very actively contributing to the conversation, especially substantively, but was not leading the group. However, since I was helping out others a lot with formulating their clauses and

providing them information on precedents relating to their proposals, my presence became more and more prevalent in the group throughout the working paper process….My most memorable negotiation moment was when the delegate of the United States and I came together to check each clause of each other's working paper to make sure our proposals were compatible enough for the two groups to merge. I asked a few words to be altered and pointed out a couple mistakes their paper had. The negotiation went quite smoothly and successfully, at least for Iran. (FH)

There were strategies which delegates tried (such as contacting delegates by email) that they were confident would work well to further communication, but ultimately did not work well in that committee.

At the beginning I tried to form a Working Group together with a MS that had very similar ideas with mine, and I contacted people through notes and emails, but unfortunately, I did not receive any replies; I think it is because at the point that people started forming cliques with those that had the same agenda precedence, it was difficult to find people willing to split off. (CT)

Delegates had suggestions for our preparation to better raise student's political self-efficacy. One idea was to do committee agendas for the mock-conferences that they thought would not be chosen instead of focusing on the agenda they believed would be chosen. This was suggested because in the NMUN NY 2019 conference, UNICEF's committee chose the agenda that our delegates never thought would be chosen and thus, the one they prepared the least for. They felt less confident going into the meeting because of this and had to prepare their strategy more for the conference after the first session. It is difficult to guess which agenda will be chosen and there are agendas that are more important to MS than others.

Another idea was to spend more time on the countries' recent issues in the news generally as everyone had developed their policies that they wanted to propose for working papers well and they had been critiqued many times. Also, delegates suggested to rewatch speeches made by the country's diplomats together. This would help them act and articulate more like the country they represent. With this idea we would return full circle to when we started to learn about the country.

Through their position papers, all delegates were able to gain political and self-efficacy. NMUN states position paper criteria on their home page. The position paper written by the student delegates representing the IR of Iran in UNICEF was recognized for their outstanding preconference preparation by NMUN. As non-native speakers of English and limited MUN experience these students have indeed demonstrated their ability to research and write effectively (Zenuk-Nishide, 2018).

Position papers are a critical part of delegate preparation. They require delegates to illustrate their knowledge of the agenda topics at hand, affirm the positions their country takes on these topics, and recommend courses of action to effectively address contemporary global problems. For the Conference Staff, position papers provide the best indication of which issues capture delegates' interest, and help Directors and Assistant Directors design a strategy for the facilitation of committee debate. In addition, position papers often identify which delegates are best prepared for the Conference and are most likely to take a strong leadership role in committee sessions.

Additionally, the NMUN Board of Directors grants separate Position Paper Awards in recognition of outstanding pre-conference preparation. In order to be considered for a Position Paper Award, delegations must have met the published email/postmark deadline. The following criteria are used by the conference staff to evaluate Position Papers:

> Overall quality of writing, proper style, grammar, etc.
> Reference to relevant resolutions/documents
> General consistency with bloc/geopolitical constraints
> Consistency with the constraints of the United Nations
> Analysis of issues, rather than reiteration of the Committee Background Guide

Position papers clearly demonstrated committee delegate's political efficacy of the MS they represented.

4. Concluding Remarks

When delegates begin to prepare for a MUN conference, they are usually faced with a MS in a new region. Even if they have experience, they belong to a different committee,

which is part of a UN body that has its own specific mandates. That means what separates experienced from inexperienced delegates is their familiarity with the rules of procedure, and genres of speech making, position paper writing, policymaking, and resolution writing. Experienced delegates also know how to research and negotiate in sessions. Delegates have to build almost all of their knowledge of country background and substantive issues of the meeting to which they are assigned. By having experienced students paired with inexperienced students in a committee, they were both able to develop their own personal efficacy. The experienced students took leadership for the first time in their committee, and the inexperienced delegates received coaching from their partners, mentors and other advisors. Everyone gained political efficacy through learning and gaining expertise about the IR of Iran.

One student who had experience in NMUN China stated

> *…I could have done almost all things I wanted to do during the preparation time…I prepared more than I did in the last NMUN… I learned a lot about how to write a PP and Clauses as in NMUN China, I relied on my partner a lot on that point, Also, during research, I took notes on almost everything I found even if it seemed not so directly related to what I was looking for as sometimes, such information was helpful not only for me, but also for my partner. In the conference, I grasped the conference flow almost all the time. I couldn't do it at all in the NMUN China, so it was very successful for me.*
> (YNa)

Duchatelet et al. (2017) also found that students who have attended the same simulation more than once show significantly higher efficacy in negotiating skills than students who are participating in a simulation for the first time. This suggests repeated experiences in a similar simulation might result in higher political and personal efficacy. Nevertheless, all MUN delegates, whether experienced or inexperienced, were able to improve their political and personal efficacy thanks to preparation by faculty mentors in a credit-bearing class, and valuable input from the IR of Iran experts, as well as the opportunity to join a multinational conference—NMUN New York, 2019.

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