## Developing Global Leadership Skills with Model United Nations (MUN)

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#### **Abstract**

This paper summarizes the symposium contributions as they were presented at the Asian Conference on Language Learning held in Kobe:

- (1) Lori Zenuk-Nishide, *MUN and Opportunities in Japan;* For 15 years, the author has used MUN an EMI curriculum with Japanese students and continued this as Conference Organizer for NMUN Japan in 2016. MUN and related opportunities in Japan will be provided along with research into the positive effects of participation on learner self-efficacy.
- (2) Sonoko Saito, *Global Jinzai and the Value of Participating in MUN for Japanese Universities;* This paper explains the benefits and challenges of MUN in the context of "Global Jinzai Education" for Japanese universities. Many skills developed in MUN match the factors suggested by "Council on Promotion of Human Resource for Globalization Development" to belong to "Global Jinzai," or the workforce with a global mind.
- (3) Neil McClelland, *Preparing Delegates for NMUN 2016 A First-time Experience*; The author describes his experiences supporting student-delegates through the various stages of preparing for the NMUN Conference in November 2016. By highlighting web-based resources that proved useful, the paper covers the process of researching and writing an effective Position Paper in advance of the Conference.
- (4) Donna Tatsuki, *Flipped Classroom, CLIL and Model UN Simulations;* The author offers a case study on how a cohort of 28 students (Japanese and non-Japanese L1s) from a consortium of Japan-based universities were prepared for the National Model United Nations during five intensive workshops held over a four-month period in a flipped classroom CLIL framework.

Keywords: Model UN simulations, English as a Medium of Instruction, Global Jinzai, Flipped Classroom, CLIL, negotiation, academic writing

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#### Introduction

In November of 2016, the National Model United Nations (NMUN) came to Japan for the first time ever. The year 2016 was auspicious as it was the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Japan's membership in the United Nations. More than 380 student delegates from universities in eleven countries met in Kobe to discuss current international concerns in English. This paper offers perspectives on the event from the point of view of two of the event organizers and two faculty advisors who prepared delegates to participate. In the first section (MUN and Opportunities in Japan), Lori Zenuk-Nishide gives an overview of what MUN simulations are, the range of benefits they provide, and a description of MUN opportunities available. Section two by Sonoko Saito (Global Jinzai and the Value of Participating in MUN for Japanese Universities) considers the value of MUN activities in the effort of fostering "Global Jinzai" —a key priority of MEXT. The third section by Neil McClelland (Preparing Delegates for NMUN 2016 – A First-time Experience) delves into the preparation process with a specific focus on position paper writing. Finally, Donna Tatsuki (Flipped Classroom, CLIL and Model UN Simulations) does a case study of one cohort of delegates that was prepared for NMUN, providing a glimpse of MUN as flipped learning in a CLIL setting.

# Section 1: MUN and Opportunities in Japan (Zenuk-Nishide)

#### What is MUN?

The participation in MUN simulations builds global citizenship. According to NMUN.org "Experiential learning [simulation] that provides students with a better understanding of the inner workings of the UN and a forum to hone skills in diplomacy, negotiation, critical thinking, compromise, public speaking, writing and research" (NMUN/NCCA, 2017, n.p). The flow of a MUN meeting is summarized in Figure 1.

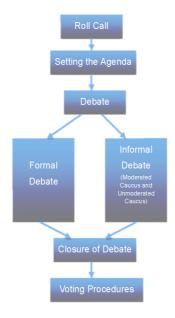


Figure 1. Flow of the Meeting

#### What are benefits of MUN?

The participants in a MUN simulation gain knowledge and expertise in unfamiliar topics in a context where they have autonomy over their learning. This establishes the mutually supporting influences of personal growth, increased willingness to communicate, increased competence, and increased self-efficacy (Zenuk-Nishide & Tatsuki, 2012). They learn 21<sup>st</sup> century skills in a carefully designed step-by-step process. First and fundamentally, they develop research and reading skills in their quest to become experts on the topics and agendas set by the meeting as well as the actions and policies of the country within the UN body they are representing. Next, along with learning the formulaic speech required to obey the rules of meeting procedure, they learn the skills of negotiation (stating positions, conflict resolution, cooperation and consensus building) followed by speech and intensive listening to enable persuasive argumentation. This leads to an enhanced ability to write position papers and resolutions because of improved critical thinking skills (Zenuk-Nishide, 2015). Autonomous learning ignites a self-motived desire to attain mastery of new skills or challenges and orients to sustained, life-long learning (Zenuk-Nishide, 2016).

Learning, knowledge accumulation and skill building are not the only benefits however. A far deeper and profound benefit is the development of a sense of global citizenship. This occurs through the acquisition of knowledge and understanding in areas of social justice, diversity, sustainability, the relationship of globalization to interdependence and the mechanisms of peace and conflict. Furthermore, the ability to practice global citizenship requires the skills of respect, conflict resolution and a dedication to challenge injustice or inequalities. The third pillar of global citizenship concerns the shaping of values and attitudes by developing both a sense of identity and self-esteem while nurturing empathy and a respect for diversity with a certainty in the belief that people can make a difference (Oxfam, 2015).

## **Exploring MUN opportunities**

There are many ways to get involved in MUN events. In Japan, one of the best events is JUEMUN (Japan University English Model United Nations), established in 2010. The two hosting universities, Kobe City University of Foreign Studies and Kyoto University of Foreign Studies alternate as hosts for the event. University students from anywhere in the world may participate assuming they have at least a midintermediate level of English, a willingness to communicate and interest in international relations/global affairs. Universities are encouraged to support MUN classes, seminars or projects not only so that faculty and students are enabled to join, but because the fostering of global citizenship and the increased collaboration between universities are among MEXT's most important educational goals. At the high school level is the annual Kansai High School Model UN, which was founded by the author and her colleagues in 1990 at Kyoto Gaidai Nishi High School.

At the global level, participation in the various NMUN events (New York, Washington D.C., or off-shore) push student delegates to even higher levels of competence and personal development. The NMUN Japan event hosted by Kobe City University was the first such global event in Japan. Thanks to the success of the event, it has been announced that in 2020, NMUN will return to Japan, hosted again by Kobe City University of Foreign Studies.

# Section 2: Global Jinzai and the Value of Participating in MUN for Japanese Universities (Saito)

This section discusses the value of Model United Nations for Japanese universities by placing the activity in the context of Japan's attempt in fostering younger generations having global minds called "Global Jinzai." This part of paper is based on the 2016 experience of a group of students and faculty members at the University of Kitakyushu joining a National Model United Nations (NMUN) conference coorganized by a US based NPO and the host university, Kobe City University of Foreign Studies. Our project aimed at exploring appropriate ways and systems in which Japanese universities could use MUN activities to foster "Global Jinzai." The possibility of developing collaborative relationships among universities, along with the exploration of teaching and learning methods such as active-learning, was also addressed

The NMUN conference was held in Kobe, for the first time in Japan, to mark the 60th anniversary year of Japan's acquiring the membership of the UN. Noting this opportunity for the students, a group of researchers at the University of Kitakyushu advertised the event, and as a result, recruited four students to be part of a project. The project was based on research started in 2015, but as project leader I had become acquainted with MUN in 2011 during a visit to Old Dominion University in the US, where MUN is widely facilitated. The project is also indebted to the University of Kitakyushu, which supported the project in the form of an intra-university research grant. The University is the municipal university of Kitakyushu City established as a foreign studies college in 1946 and has been committed to bringing up generations capable of contributing to the well-being of the international community. It is one of the universities chosen for "Go Global Japan Project" in 2012, a project launched by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology.

# Factors of "Global Jinzai" nurtured through MUN

What is "Global Jinzai"? "The Council on Promotion of Human Resource for Globalization Development," an advisory board with the Chief Cabinet Secretary as Chairperson, addressed the issue of its definition. The English translation of "Global Jinzai" in their report is "global human resources," and they suggested factors in "Global Jinzai" that "Japan must develop and utilize as it goes forth in this globalized economy and society." According to the final report in 2012, they are "linguistic and communication skills" (Factor I), "self-direction and positiveness, a spirit for challenge, cooperativeness and flexibility, a sense of responsibility and mission" (Factor II), and "understanding of other cultures and a sense of identity as a Japanese" (Factor III). Additionally, the Council further explored the measuring standard for Factor I and gave five levels. The advanced two levels, the levels 4 (linguistic skills for bilateral negotiations) and 5 (linguistic skills for multilateral negotiations) are particularly relevant to MUN. The Council also mentioned more qualities that are required for "core individuals for future Japanese society" such as "broad and well cultivated mind and profound expertise, willingness to find and solve problems, teamwork and leadership skills (to bring together persons of various backgrounds), publicmindedness, moral sensibilities, and media-literacy."

These factors and qualities can be developed through MUN preparations and conferences. By simulating UN systems as part of the delegation of an assigned country, students go through a procedure taken by the international society to reach a collective will to address certain issues. Example topics are "the Elimination of Weapons of Mass Destruction" and "Meeting the Sustainable Development Goals for All Nations and Peoples and All Segments of Society" (from NMUN Japan agendas) and participants need to know the subject well through extensive research. Until about a month before the conference, when the position paper submission deadline is set, students work on position papers. They refer to both online and off-line materials to find out their appropriate position. All submitted papers become accessible for participants to read for what others have to say. Reading skills are intensely trained together with research skills and media-literacy.

Once the conference is open, formal and informal debates take place alternately, where participants explain their own positions, propose policies, negotiate with others to reach consensus. They employ different types of communication; public speaking and bilateral and multilateral negotiations. With negotiations proceeding, they begin to write draft resolutions in cooperation with others. In addition to Factors I, II, and III, the qualities anticipated in "core individuals for future Japanese society" together with high level communication skills are expected to develop through MUN activities. It is also notable that most part of the preparations and discussions are done through participants' active learning with some leading instructions by instructors.

According to the comments of MUN participants, they themselves seem to become aware of their growth including enhanced linguistic and communication skills, research skills, knowledge in international relations, expanded global views by being exposed to a variety of "Englishes" and perspectives, and enhanced self-confidence and motivation for further learning as they came to see correctly what they could and could not do. The four-day MUN experience also seems to have a positive impact on scores in English proficiency tests, which is worth further exploration. A conference is beneficial for students as a place of networking as well, getting to know students in their age group from different parts of the world, at home and abroad.

# Aspects to be explored

While the benefits of MUN for "Global Jinzai" seem convincing, there are also challenges to be addressed. For example, university administrative support, both financial and administrative, are necessary to make students' MUN participation sustainable. Japan's geographical location would make joining many of the conferences abroad long-distance international travel. It is expected that the level of responsibility to be shouldered onto universities becomes even higher, when the global situation is becoming unstable and unpredictable. The financial burden cannot be ignored either. In addition to making the international MUN experience attractive and rewarding enough for students, the program should ideally be able to help participants finance the travel expenses.

The number of nationwide conferences like JUEMUN (Japan University English Model UN) should ideally increase to give students in Japan more chances to be involved in MUN. Also, if more international students in Japan participate in such events, domestic MUN would be even more dynamic. Effective public relations and

supporting systems should favorably be devised. As MUN is an international activity, commitment to the activity would strengthen the tie among the universities and students within and outside Japan. The ways to build specific academic ties are worth pursuing as well.

As for diversity, the discussions seem to be very much influenced by English language ability of native speakers. On the other hand, a variety of Englishes were actively exchanged in the conference rooms, which impressed some of the participants from our group. MUN could be a relevant place to explore the issue of World Englishes.

With evident benefits of MUN for nurturing "Global Jinzai" in Japan, it is worth addressing the challenges that seem to exist. The Seventh UN Secretary General Kofi Annan regarded education as the key to global peace and wellbeing. MUN is committed to this international effort, and university education in Japan taking an active part in the effort seems relevant and appropriate.

# Section 3: Preparing Delegates for NMUN 2016 – A First-time Experience (McClelland)

This section presents a brief overview of the author's experience helping Japanese undergraduates at one university prepare for NMUN 2016. By far the most challenging aspect is composing an initial 'Position Paper' that outlines the standpoint of the assigned country on the topics covered by the NMUN committees. Indeed, this is an especially demanding task for Japanese students, as many essential reference materials are only available in English. Thus, while the NMUN preparation guide provides excellent advice for delegates, it clearly requires adaptation to the needs of students tackling the activity in a second language. In summary, it was found that an initial focus on published evaluations of a country's past performance greatly helped students produce a Position Paper in the time available.

### The university

The discussion starts with a brief description of the university and rationale for participating in NMUN. The University of Kitakyushu is a mid-sized university in West Japan (See Figure 2). In 2016, the university was ranked 183 nationally overall, but 14 for English Education. This reflects a long-standing reputation for a quality English education program that dates to its original founding as a foreign language college. In other respects, the University of Kitakyushu is a typical city-funded, public university in Japan.



Figure 2 Location of the University of Kitakyushu

In 2012 the university was adopted as a Type B *Global-Jinzai* institution (MEXT, 2012) leading to initiation of a five-year 'Global Education' program. For the administration, this fulfilled two goals; first raising the profile of the university locally, and second bolstering existing opportunities for students with good language skills. In line with this new program, some members of faculty further independently started a cross-departmental project to help students to participate in Model United Nations (MUN) in English.

# Writing a position paper

The first task facing prospective delegates is to write a Position Paper outlining their country's standpoint on the topics covered in the NMUN committees. This is a fairly daunting task, as delegates not only have to research general information about the country, but also past and current actions by the Government relating to the various committee topics. Further, the Position Paper must be written from the point of view of the Government represented. In brief, the Position Paper is a maximum of two pages, with an introduction followed by overviews of the topics addressed. Each topic section further needs to include: (1) a 'problem statement' introducing the problems and standpoint of the country; (2) a 'precedent statement' describing past initiatives, domestic and international; and, (3) an 'intention statement' outlining possible solutions or recommendations. An additional challenge for delegates is that each of these 'statements' needs to be supported by references to existing laws, treaties, UN resolutions, or regional initiatives.

# The NMUN preparation guide

To assist delegates in their research, the *NMUN Position Paper Guide* (NMUN, 2016b, pp. 4-6) provides extensive advice, which is summarized in the flow diagram shown in Figure 3. While this constitutes a comprehensive and useful list, it is clearly written under the assumption that the documents mentioned would be accessible to prospective delegates. Those from language backgrounds other than English, however, are likely to face considerable hurdles in handling such an extensive research agenda, and careful consideration should be given to the balance of research done in English versus the delegates' first language.

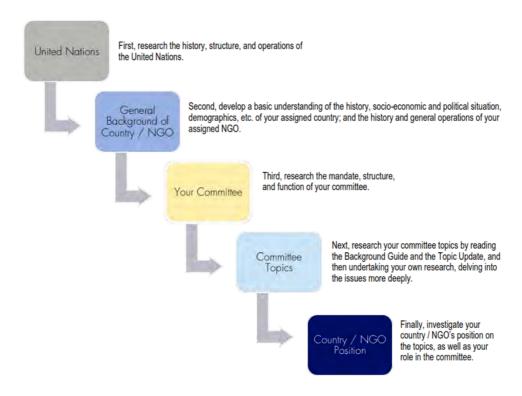


Figure 3. NMUN Guide to Effective Conference Preparation

#### Adapting to the needs of Japanese students

The key to successful preparation for NMUN is clearly to optimize the time spent researching. For Japanese students, the first three steps in Figure 3 can be easily handled in their first language. However, the last two steps; "Committee Topics" and "Country/NGO Position" present more of a challenge. In relation to "Committee Topics", the Background Guide is a substantial document written entirely in English, while much of the information for the "Country Position" is only available in the four languages of the UN, or perhaps that country's language alone. To complicate further, it is possible that a Government may anyway have taken no action at all on many of the topics covered. It is thus necessary for delegates, not only to understand the committee topics, but also to match them to the interests and past actions of their assigned country.

One solution is for delegates to start their research by first seeking out past evaluations of their country's progress. Fortunately, excellent resources exist, especially for topics related to the 2000 UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and subsequent UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Both these fall under the auspice of the UN Development Program (UNDP) and are thus evaluated regularly. Probably the best resource available is the by-country evaluation of the MDGs (UNDP, 2016). In addition to highlighting which topics are a priority for each country, these reports often also include details about both past UN support and participation in regional initiatives. In this way delegates avoid spending time researching topics that cannot be included in the Position Paper due to inaction by their country, while at the same time identifying the important UN and regional initiatives.

A second strategy found to help delegates focus their research efforts, is to adopt a simple structure that emphasizes only essential information. At minimum, the topic outline needs to include: (1) a country-specific problem statement; (2) a description of the international context; (3) an account of past domestic and regional actions; and, (4) a statement of future intention. By starting their research with past evaluations, delegates can easily identify which aspects of the topics are a priority and what kind of specific problems have been dealt with up to now (part (1) of the topic outline). Further, they should get an overview of past domestic actions, such as relevant legislation or support for NGO activities, and contributions to regional initiatives (part (3) of the topic outline). Delegates can then develop a feel for the international context around their country by further researching the organizations and agreements mentioned (part (2) of the topic outline). Perhaps the most difficult section of the topic outline for delegates to write is part (4), the statement of intention. While they may need to investigate additional sources for specific statements by their Government, the analysis of past actions should also give a strong idea of future directions. The main point is that by conforming to a simple structure for writing the topic statements, delegates can focus their research to find the most immediately relevant information necessary.

In summary, the experience of mentoring delegates to NMUN 2016 leads to three basic recommendations for adapting the activity to Japanese students. First is to encourage delegates to do as much as possible using their first language. Second is to start with past evaluations of the country's performance, as a way of identifying problems and issues and past actions by the Government. Third is to adopt a format for writing the position paper that covers; (1) the problem, (2) the international context, (3) past actions by the country, and (4) future intentions, for each NMUN topic. By adopting these strategies, it was found that delegates were able to research and produce a Position Paper in a timely and efficient manner.

### Section 4: Flipped Classroom, CLIL and Model UN Simulations (Tatsuki)

The other sections in this paper have covered many of the details of what takes place during an MUN event and some of the outcomes. This section will make the MUN—CLIL connection and will argue that effective preparation for a MUN event best takes place in a Flipped Classroom environment. It will close with recommendations of resources that might be utilized to develop a MUN-CLIL Repository.

#### The CLIL connection to MUN

Participation in a Model UN Simulation is quintessentially CLIL because it requires in depth research on countries, socio/political issues, the development of written and spoken skills to negotiate proposals, build alliances and the use of critical thinking for innovation to find creative solutions to real world problems. This is of great importance since the future is in the hands of our students: They absolutely must have opportunities to take leadership and practice the art of diplomacy in a safe supportive context.

# **Defining 'Flipped Learning'**

According to the Flipped Learning Network Hub (2014):

Flipped Learning is a pedagogical approach in which first contact with new concepts moves from the group learning space to the individual learning space in the form of structured activity, and the resulting group space is transformed into a dynamic, interactive learning environment where the educator guides students as they apply concepts and engage creatively in the subject matter.

Likely good teachers have been doing something like flipped learning for a long time. Frankly, despite the recent technology hype, flipped learning and flipped classrooms do not require the use of much technology. There have been a number of misconceptions. One particularly egregious misconception is that many people wrongly believe flipped learning requires videos. Flipped learning has become almost indelibly identified with the use of video. This is a problem because it could be discouraging some educators from trying a flipped classroom design.

According Robert Talbert (2017) "flipped learning does not require video. In fact, it's possible to have a highly effective flipped learning environment without any video whatsoever, or even much in the way of high technology in the first place" (page). In fact, the concept of flipped learning was in force many years before video was widely available. The point is that one MAY use video to flip a class but there is no evidence that one MUST use video, or sophisticated technology of any kind for that matter.

Flipped teaching for flipped learning resembles coaching more than teaching. The Flip Learning page describes four ideological pillars, which are paraphrased here: 1) a flexible environment in which students participate in the decision of when where and with whom to learn outside the classroom, 2) a commitment to learner centered approaches, 3) a constantly evolving and developing content that is created and curated through learner and instructor efforts, and 4) a professional educator who nurtures the development of a learning community by providing pertinent feedback and direction in order to scaffold learner interactions and abilities both in and outside of the classroom.

It may be helpful to think of it schematically (see Figure 4). Activities outside the class are represented by the objects on the left and inside the class on the right.

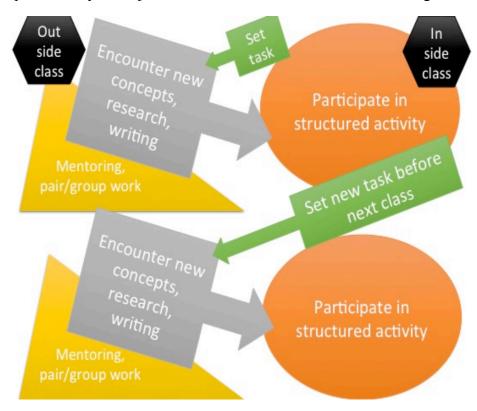


Figure 4. Inside and Outside the Flipped Class Visualized

The teacher/instructor sets a task (researching, activity, experience, writing, reading) for the learner to accomplish before the next class meeting. The learner is free to decide how to accomplish the task but is encouraged to work with others (who may be peers or mentors) and may contact the instructor for support or resources. The thus prepared learners come to class ready to share what they have learned and prepared to engage in a structured activity designed to apply what was acquired before class. At the end of class a new task is set and the cycle repeats.

### Case study: A 'Flipped Classroom' in preparation for NMUN

After a stringent screening process of testing assessing and interviewing, students engaged in educational contracting by which they promised to work cooperatively and flexibly with mentors and teachers and other group members in order to effectively prepare for the MUN event. Furthermore, they had to promise to attend and fully participate in five three-hour intensive class sessions. Pair mentoring, group work and individual research was done off campus, at student homes, and by Skype. Table 1 summarizes the activities of each session:

Table 1. Overview of sessions and flow of intensive MUN preparation

<interview contracting,="" educational="" researching="" screening,=""></interview>	
Session 1	self introductions; meet/greet; pairs fill out country profiles; share in
	regional blocks; student mentors introduce position paper (PP)
	contents and research methods; practice formal debate procedure
<do agenda;="" committee="" each="" in="" mandate,="" p="" paragraph;="" read<="" research:="" summary=""></do>	
background guide; prepare PP outline; meet with partner share goals for MUN>	
Session 2	share research with your committee on each agenda; student mentors
	take Q & A on PP context and citation style; also Q&A to reduce
	pressure, anxiety; practice meeting transitions/motions
<research and="" communicate="" partner="" pp;="" with="" write=""></research>	
Session 3	practice writing Working Paper (WP) as a precursor to draft
	resolutions using UN stylistic Conventions (preambulatory phrases
	and operative clauses), meet in regional and committee blocks for
	peer feedback and brainstorming
<research and="" communicate="" partner="" pp;="" with="" write=""></research>	
Session 4	meet in regional and committee blocks for peer feedback and
	brainstorming, practice meeting transitions/motions
<nmun event="" simulation=""></nmun>	
Session 5	Debriefing, Reflection, Evaluation

# **Building a MUN-CLIL repository**

Numerous online, public resources are available freely to educators and learners who are preparing for a MUN event. Obviously the UN itself is the first source to consult: The Dag Hammarskiold Library < http://research.un.org/en>; the Official Documents Search (for Past UN Resolutions) < http://www.un.org/en/documents/ods/>; International Treaties and conventions < https://treaties.un.org>; and so on. Individual nations/governments also offer materials freely: U.S. State Department background notes <a href="http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/">http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/</a>>, The World Fact Book (CIA of the U.S.A.) < https://www.cia.gov/Library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ve.html> and media outlets also offer resources: **BBC** Country <a href="http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/country">http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/country</a> profiles/default.stm>; Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty http://www.rferl.org/ among others. For even more resources, visit the following websites: NMUN Japan Background Guides & Resolutions http://www.nmun.org/nmun japan16.html; NMUN Preparation Guides & Resources http://www.nmun.org/ny preparations.html; Japan University English Model UN (http://juemun.org); American Model United Nations https://www.amun.org/; Model UN in a Box Simulation Guide https://www.amun.org/simulation-guide/

#### Conclusion

"Model United Nations all begin with the same rules and protocols but they quickly emerge as a dynamically co-created experience, every one of which is unique, unlike no other" (Zenuk-Nishide, 2011, p. 5). Model UN simulations provide an academic forum for the discussion of global concerns in a context that closely parallels the "real world" of global policy meetings. Through the participation in a MUN, students develop understanding of the inner workings of the UN as they build skill in diplomacy and compromise. It is our hope that this paper will convince readers of the

profound value of MUN events and encourage some to bring this opportunity to their students.

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