



4.4 | Analyze: Context Analysis Scenario Answer Key

Here is a summary of how we thought Andy might have responded to this instructional design challenge. We've provided more detail than you probably did in your answer. This is to illustrate the complexity of such situations and how design solutions can become quite complicated (especially those involving global instruction). We also wanted to introduce you to some additional resources on contextual issues that were too extensive for inclusion in *Streamlined ID* (2027).

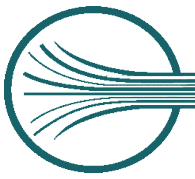
The learners...	How do you think Andy rated his agreement with these statements? (use 0 – 5)		What are the implications for the design of the learning context?
	Current Audience	Future Audience	
...know they need the knowledge/skills that will be covered in the proposed instruction.	5	3-4	Motivation and recruitment will not be a problem, but Andy will need to remind the Chinese associates that the training is linked to career advancement.
...all possess about the same amount of prior knowledge and experience with the content of proposed instruction.	3	5	Some U.S. and German associates may be more familiar with online marketing, so Andy may need to encourage more knowledgeable associates to mentor those who are novices.
...have clear goals in mind for pursuing education/additional knowledge and skills.	4	4	The associates have a fairly clear idea of why they want to learn the material, so explicit statements of relevance should be sufficient for motivation.
...believe in the value of self-improvement and lifelong learning.	5	5	Again, the motivation for continuing to learn is high for all audiences.
...prefer learning environments in which they have a lot of choice and control.	5	2	The U.S. and German associates appreciate choice and control, but Chinese associates are not used to choice in learning experiences. Andy will need to consider this when adjusting the materials for the Chinese learners.
...prefer learning environments in which the path to success is very clear.	5	5	All learners appreciate clear expectations for their performance; therefore, Andy may want to develop a version of the “Guide to Success with Dyna-Grow” for this training program.
...are confident in their abilities to learn.	5	5	Learner confidence will not be an issue.
...are self-aware and understand the type of activities that help them learn best.	4	2-3	U.S. and German associates have experienced more variety and are more aware of their learning preferences. If Andy develops more learner-centered



The learners...	How do you think Andy rated his agreement with these statements? (use 0 – 5)		What are the implications for the design of the learning context?
	Current Audience	Future Audience	
			instruction, he may need to develop a unit to aid Chinese learners in reflecting on their learning processes.
...will participate in this learning experience because they want to rather than because it's required.	5	3	Since the Chinese associates training performance is being linked to promotion, Andy may need to provide more transfer activities to ensure that they use the new knowledge and skills after completing the training.
...are under external pressure to succeed in this instruction.	3	5	Andy should include strategies to help ensure learner success to alleviate the anxiety for Chinese learners.
...have intense demands on their time, professionally and personally.	5	5	Materials will need to be primarily self-paced and asynchronous and should include only essential, need-to-know information.
...live within driving distance of the organization, facilitator and/or instructor.	depends	2	Since driving distance varies for all but the German associates, the training should be designed to be web-based or accessible via the company intranet.
...live within driving distance of each other.	2	2	Again, results indicate that the training should be web-based or accessible via the company intranet.
...are comfortable with technology.	5	5	Results indicate that technology aversion is not likely to be a problem.
...have access to technology and sufficient bandwidth.	5	3-4	Bandwidth limitations may necessitate adjustments to the content when the training is implemented for the Chinese learner audience.
...have previously taken instruction at a distance.	4	3	Since familiarity with online instruction varies across the learner population, Andy will need to make expectations clear and provide easy and intuitive access to both instructional and technical help.

Here are the recommendations that Andy made to his stakeholders:

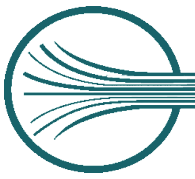
- The performance environment for the sales associates is the online environment available to them in their local territory. Since they will be using equipment that is locally available and operating under the restrictions of local bandwidth and data limits, the training should be individually customizable and designed with these limitations in mind.



- Sales associates will be responsible to their local supervisors and therefore these supervisors should be involved in the design and implementation of the training program. This is particularly important with respect to associates for the Chinese subsidiary since their performance in the training program is being monitored for promotional purposes.
- The training should also be designed with consideration of local supports and performance rewards, as well as the norms for social interaction common to each region.
- In some locations there may be different acceptable ethical standards; however, the training materials should be written to align with the ethical standards established by Dyna-Grow Corporate.
- Results of the learner analysis indicate that sales associates at all locations are likely subject to intense demands on their time from both professional and personal sources. In addition, the Chinese associates are under external pressure to succeed in the training since their job promotions are dependent on their performance.
- Due to these time constraints and pressures, I recommend that the training units be primarily self-paced and include only essential, need-to-know information.
- In addition, the instruction should be designed to help ensure learner success and alleviate anxiety over job performance.

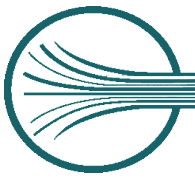
Pedagogical approach

- Because of senior management's stated goals that sales associates demonstrate mastery of the training content, I recommend an **Instructivist approach** to the training program using small units of asynchronous online instruction, each followed by mastery tests with plenty of feedback.
- In addition, the training should incorporate activities that build on learner prior knowledge and experience, provide analogies for new information that relate to the learners' backgrounds, explicitly state how the content is organized, and provide opportunities for the learner to practice the desired knowledge, skills, interpersonal skills, and attitudes.
- Some members of the management team stated that it would also be desirable to build a Community of Practice (CoP) through which learners could continue to interact, following the training program, to share resources and successful sales strategies. Therefore, I also suggest incorporating a **Connectivist approach** by establishing and using CoP activities during the training program. This would provide opportunities for the learners to network and build relationships, and learn the social skills and communication patterns of the field. In the future, the CoP will enable the learners to "tap into" experts in the field who can serve as resources for learning and practice. Its use will help learners establish life-long patterns for learning, encourage them to take an active role in constructing new knowledge, and provide them with an opportunity to establish connections both during and after the training experience.
- Finally, I recommend elements of a **Constructivist approach** using discussion board activities with the global learner audience to encourage interaction and exposure to multiple perspectives. Asynchronous discussion board activities that provide opportunities for the learners to explain their own perspectives and to dialogue with others should reinforce their learning and provide an observable record of their understanding of the content.



Type of instruction

- As noted above, I recommend small units of asynchronous online self-paced instruction. Since asynchronous learning tends to be more flexible than real-time learning and “it allows for flexibility of time, pace and participation” (Vai & Sosulski, 2011, p. 16), and because of future time zone issues that would emerge as the instruction is scaled to address the Asian audiences, I recommend that the majority of the instruction be asynchronous with carefully-planned synchronous activities identified that could be easily inserted if the situation was favorable. Each unit of instruction should be followed by mastery tests with plenty of feedback. Knowledgeable, local facilitators should be assigned to each region to monitor and provide feedback on the mastery tests as well as on asynchronous discussion board conversations.
- In addition, the training should include activities that prompt learners to use the resources available in the Dyna-Grow knowledge management system and intranet, to encourage its use following the training.
- As a result of my needs analysis, I found that there are certain topics that have been proposed for the training program that could potentially create a problem if raised in the Asian implementations of the training program. I recommend we verify the topics that may be considered rude or unacceptable in certain localities and then create stand-alone units that can be included or excluded, based on the judgment of the facilitator.
- For the asynchronous discussion board activities, I recommend we form groups for interaction that represent a mix of cultural groups from different regions. Discussion prompts would be accompanied by individual activities that require learners to explore their own cultural values, expectations, behaviors, traditions, customs, rituals, forms of greeting, cultural signs and symbols and compare them with those of their peer learners. This will prompt them to reflect on and articulate their own culture and prepare them to then discuss other cultures with a higher degree of intellectual objectivity.
- In addition, I recommend that we follow these guidelines for the general units that will be used with all audiences:
 - Avoid references to culturally-bound topics and pop culture, as well as to topics that may be sensitive in the targeted international countries.
 - Use images that are neutral and are chosen with consideration to the dressing norms in all the countries being served, using a standard that is acceptable in all countries. If this is impossible, identify alternatives for the exceptions and seek to design multimedia elements with the need to make adjustments in mind.
 - Use language that is clear and concise and easily translatable. Avoid jargon or slang, and define special terms. Build in additional time to allow for resolving situations resulting from miscommunication. Have the translated materials reviewed for errors and comprehension by native speakers who also have good English skills.
 - Consider possible differences in the expectations that learners have for the training and address the purpose and goals of the instruction explicitly at the beginning of the materials.
 - Consider bandwidth and equipment limitations in future international locations and design the materials with these limits in mind.
 - Keep differences in time zones in mind for any possible synchronous activities.



Recommendations regarding an instructor, facilitator, and/or grader

- As noted above, I recommend the use of knowledgeable, local facilitators for each region. These individuals should be familiar with the demands of the job in their localities and should be trained in online sales and marketing techniques in advance of the training implementation, if necessary.
- Local facilitators will be responsible for monitoring and providing feedback on the mastery tests as well as on asynchronous discussion board conversations. If available potential facilitators are not experienced in online instruction, they should be transported to a regional sales office to participate in online facilitator training.

Learning processes, activities, outcomes, and assessments

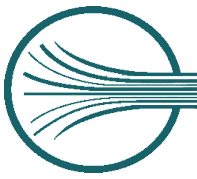
- As noted above, the instruction should consist of activities designed to lead to mastery of objective content, as well as plenty of exercises that illustrate the variability of sales practices based on local norms of behavior and acceptability. It may be difficult to foster a community of practice with the future audience who were more familiar with an information transfer approach to instruction; therefore, activities will require careful planning to encourage shared experience and frank interchange.
- In addition, local politeness rituals and beliefs concerning instructor authority should be considered.
- We should also consider the inclusion of collaborative activities that prepare learners to adapt quickly to changing conditions, to build alliances to address large scale challenges, and to work comfortably in a global information environment. Plans for collaboration, active engagement, group work and ill-structured problem solving should be balanced against learner needs for security, predictability and low tolerance for ambiguity. We should also consider the inclusion of collaborative activities that prepare learners to adapt quickly to changing conditions, to build alliances to address large scale challenges, and to work comfortably in a global information environment.
- The use of case studies and scenarios can often help convince such participants that there may be many appropriate solutions rather than one “right” answer. Therefore, I recommend a mix of assessment strategies that include mastery tests and asynchronous case study discussion board activities.

Delivery, Delivery Method & Technology

- The delivery should be online (web-based), asynchronous and self-paced, but should also be accessible via mobile smart phones and tablets. Any online and locally-based tools used should be selected with consideration to functionality, usability, reliability, cost, supportability, availability in all locations, and accessibility. It should also be capable of scaling to accommodate larger learner audiences.

Instructional Technology

- While learner survey results indicated an adequate comfort level with regards to the use of technology, I recommend we carry out additional investigations once specific technologies are selected to ensure an adequate level of learner readiness. Since “developments in technology often outpace our human ability to adjust” (Neidorf, 2006, p. 37), any efforts to push learners to use new technology could be met with enormous resistance and could compromise the effectiveness of the training program.



- There is an additional concern that bandwidth restrictions in the Asian sales regions could compromise the effectiveness of the instruction; therefore, unless conditions change in the next two years, the training implementation for those regions should avoid excessive multimedia content and large-file-size images.
- The training should be implemented using the company intranet learning management system (LMS), as well as the knowledge management system resources. The discussion board and blog functions of the LMS should be used as well as any other applicable LMS tools, taking care to avoid overwhelming learners with an abundance of new technologies.

Support required

- Development and implementation of this instruction will require corporate Dyna-Grow support to supply sufficient resources and manpower. Consideration should be given to providing compensation or rewards to motivate both facilitators and sales associates.
- Once the support for current company infrastructure is extended to the Asian regions, it should be sufficient to support the planned training program.

References:

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