The Stakeholders

Key Stakeholders	Role	Concerns
Frank Tawl, a US-based university professor – and expert – on instructional design **Semra Senbetto**, a US-based private ID consultant, and expert on integrating diverse cultural scenarios into her learning products	Designers & SMEs	• Find ways to implement active training techniques, such as simulation, roleplaying, and case studies into an existing curriculum that functions inside of a cultural norm of lecture-based training. Individual objectives to support this include: • Content mastery for Singaporean trainers of new ID materials and skills. • Attitude adjustment so that trainers will embrace the right learning strategy, including interactive techniques, for the right material – including performative evaluation. • Content delivery should be effective, and should motivate the mature training customers; additionally, determine whether US or Singaporean trainers should facilitate updated materials.
The Singapore government cares about its training teams	Client	• Training institutes, including a national university, Teacher Training Institute, National Training Center, should use modern training methods to get the right skills to the right students effectively.
Singaporean professors and trainers, who have no formal experience with instructional design, but do have experience delivering and adapting training from existing materials	Audience	• Professors and trainers at the various locations believe that US designers are worth listening to and have championed whatever work they received within their programs. However, they have had little exposure to actively designing their own materials, rather modifying the US materials they have received. • They are nervous to try to change course on how they design and implement training, partially due to an inbuilt cultural desire to avoid public shame. They have eliminated the interactive components of the program as a workaround and are not confident about the interactive methods suggested by the designers. • Trainers have little time to learn new methods as they all work full-time, and are skeptical that new instructional techniques will not advance their careers.
Mature Singaporean students, 40+ years old	Audience	• Students will retire by age 55, and do not want to learn an entirely new set of skills through a foreign set of learning techniques at their age/experience level.

First ID Problem: Implementation

The first design problem presented in this case is of implementation. The analysis that has been performed by the design team has created a clear understanding of the concerns of each stakeholder. The design and development of the materials that are in use have been created by US-based professionals within the ID field, and appear to include the requisite interactive materials to support any lecture-based lessons.

However, the trainers refuse to implement the materials as-is, and choose to modify to meet both their needs and the perceived needs of their audience. By eliminating the interactive components of the training, these trainers are limiting the development of new skills by their students. If the trainers can be convinced to deliver the materials in an unmodified fashion, it will be a big first step towards meeting the government's training goals. Their implementation also leaves much to be desired with respect to their audience, whose extant blasé attitude towards it is exacerbated by their muted presentation style.

Second ID Problem: Evaluation

The removal of alternative assessment methods from the training program has directly contributed to a lack of actionable data. The only way in which data is currently being collected does not test for the applications of newly-acquired skills, and does not find any kind of total result to the learning. There are no mechanisms for full testing, instead only checking for a quick regurgitation of information that has been provided in a nonresponsive format.

This presents an apparent problem: how can the trainers be sure that the training is working? More importantly, how can the government be sure that the expense of the trainers is worth the cost? If the trainers cannot prove their worth, it is possible that they will be

removed from their positions at the various institutions. Another effect of this assessment style is that it does not provide ongoing checks for continued application of new materials – nor does it seek to find out student opinion on the courses.

Case-Specific Constraints

There are three case-specific constraints that contribute to the implementation and evaluation problems: first, the influence of specific cultural mores on the delivery of educational materials and the verification of learning within Singapore; second, the "short timer's syndrome" that can be found within the learning population; that is, how to motivate learning in mostly unmotivated, late-career professionals; and third, the lack of dedicated outside time as they work towards completing their own advanced degrees.

The case provides multiple examples of how US instructional designers are institutionally respected. The government wants to jump behind the use of systematized learning design, as championed by the US approach. This contributes to the reason why the trainers do not put up any notable barrier to the use of US materials. However, the societal fear of public shame permeates throughout Singapore, and preventing humiliation is the centerpiece of why the implementation and evaluation problems have manifested. The continued modification of the well-respected US-developed materials, with its interactive methods mediates this fear, both for the trainers' individual needs and the needs of those attending their classes.

A motivated learning population is an intense problem to solve. It is not as though the employees that are learning the new skills do not need them, as they have an average of 15 years of remaining employment. From the employee view, retirement is much closer than when they started, and feel that the diminishing returns associated with improving their skills will be

a waste. With their experience, it is likely that many of these employees are in higher positions, and feel they deserve the respect due someone of their status – even though continuing to develop their skills will lead to lower-level or less experienced employees receiving advice from them that is better suited to current problems. Their intransigence is further influenced by the potential for public shame. If an employee of 30 years attempts to solve a problem by acting in a role-playing situation and gets it wrong, this is grounds for their colleagues to dismiss them due to the stink of failure.

The issue of time is ever-present in the implementation of instructional design projects: Frank and Semra's project is no different. There will be little leeway outside of normal work hours to gain any traction on evangelizing their methods within the training population, who will in turn must evangelize them to a group of students that are unwilling to jump in and scared of repercussions. Training the trainers is a difficult proposition under the best of circumstances, but trying to do while they may have a minimal amount of out-of-classroom time is even more difficult. There are solutions to these problems, but they will not be easy – implementing a new system into an embedded social reality is hard work, and is why the case-specific constraints are fully intertwined with the design challenges.

1. **Proceed slowly.** Implementation of the new methods must be staged to not "rock the boat." The trainers and their governmental bosses are interested in applying the US methods, but approaching a population that fears failure with the potential for public failure must be carefully walked. Careful planning is paramount to ensure adoption does not cause anyone to be overly skittish and scatter. This is also important to managing the time restraints across the personnel who will be implementing new methods.

2. **Find new rewards to motivate your learners.** When social status is important, finding ways to show off your newest accomplishments will enable implementation to be a positive rather than a negative.

3. **Continuously monitor progress.** When working within such a strictly organized group, progress will need to be shown to continue to get buy-in from the client and audiences. Different standards will be required for these groups, but all of them will need to see the progress to continue to motivate them to challenge assumptions of learning.

Readings and Experience

Commisceo (2016) provides further insight into suspicions that are raised in the text. Within a physically small island, there are multiple world cultures and a variety of languages and experiences that contribute to Singaporean society. The desire for inclusion in the group, combined with an intense respect for elders, is reflected in the case; a more experienced worker would certainly tumble far down the social ladder for failing in a public setting. Also, the trainers' seeming lack of resistance to the design team's planned implementation strategy during the analysis phase could have simply been a desire to avoid conflict; this could also have been why one of the few objections presented was the lack of time.

Frank and Semra are trying to apply their successful methods of teaching to an entirely different cultural context. Ngeow and Kong (2002) do not advocate for the equal application of learning without taking into consideration local behaviors. Cultural variation is important, and both the methodical implementation of a modified US program and the understanding that changes may need to happen once we have data that can give the designers new angles of attack for their plan. They are in a unique position to accomplish this, as they are expert-level

instructional designers, where one has focused on diversity while the other has concentrated on applying learning systems design where needed. Proceeding down this path will require careful planning (Cheong, Wettasinghe, & Murphy, 2006), and the application of theory as a guidepost uses active learning is a way to create an engaging learning experience (Elson, 2010) can try to push motivation to unmotivated learners in a new way. Retiring the lecture model will allow for better absorption of the materials by the students (Lowe, 2011), and in conjunction with better evaluation models, can prove to the government that the training is working towards a long-term goal with excellent results.

Working within a global community has never been an abstract problem for me to solve; it has been an integral part of my career. I have worked closely with individuals from 10+ countries, including managing a small group of Londoners, a one-man team based out of Bangalore, a larger team in Atlanta, and three in California – simultaneously. Communicating with each of these regions was difficult for different reasons, but navigating the cultural norms presented by each of these groups was a significant challenge. Aside from time zone adjustments, I had to listen much more carefully to what the British group was saying to interpret the subtleties of what they meant rather than just what they said, while the Atlanta group never hesitated to tell you exactly how they felt, but with a smile. The Californian team was laid back and generally accepting of whatever tasks needed to get done, but would not put in massive amounts of effort when compared to the individual output of our Bangalore-based employee. I had to stop and ask questions to ensure that I was providing the right work to the right people at the right locations, but when I began to acknowledge the differences in how these individuals spoke and worked, and what they wanted to work on, I could motivate them

to get more done at a faster rate. When a worldwide organization is working at speed, a follow-the-sun development cycle can greatly increase the output over each group working separately on individual tasks.

Solution 1: Pilot testing the US materials as-is with US and Singaporean trainers

- **Solution:** Frank and Semra need to run a pilot of the unadulterated program with a single class of the desired learning audience. They can then evaluate their performance at whatever new skills were taught and confirm whether the correctly implemented US programming worked in Singapore.
- **Design Issues Solution:** The implementation issue is resolved through a test implementation, under the hypothesis that this can resolve some of the issues seen through the modified version of the program. The evaluation results will confirm the efficacy of the program and the engagement of students with the material.
- **Case-Specific Issues Solution:** Semra's expertise should allow her to determine whether there are any impeding factors on the implementation through observation, which she can use to evaluate the success of the US style. Frank can evaluate how well the materials worked through a series of anonymous surveys which verify opinion, usefulness, and understanding. Frank should deliver the pilot to prevent any of the other instructors from feeling like they must change for a potential waste of time. Frank and Semra can use their data to make the case to the government as to what next steps need to be taken. They will need to prove that they can motivate the learners in their own class through social pressures and social desirability – the government will approve of them and give them a certificate, for example – before moving to larger audiences.

Solution 2: Phased rollout of the US materials to allow for modification and updates

- **Solution:** If the government is quite serious about adoption, then Frank and Semra may simply be tasked with moving forward. Under these circumstances, they should proceed to slowly roll out a series of heavily publicized changes to the curriculum that showcase why the new interactive components are included – and why they are a good thing throughout.
- **Design Issues Solution:** The desired curriculum is implemented. Evaluation of performance based on the new curriculum can begin, which can then feed in to the improvement of the materials and further localizing them for Singapore's market.
- **Case-Specific Issues Solution:** The government will need to work with Semra to find ways to positively motivate the students within the new interactive learning environment. This will involve a kind of badging or certificate system, which Frank will promote to the trainers. At the same time, Frank will need to work on a parallel certificate system that will allow the trainers to show some pride in their updated skill set. Frank will need to dedicate a training session for these trainers, and after the train-the-trainer workshop, he will be able to begin evaluating their performance rather than all the students directly.

	Pros for Solution	Cons for Solution
Solution 1: Pilot tests	• Easy implementation schedule • Meets needs of client while probing into needs for audiences • Respects need for community through small pilot program with lower chance for shame • Lower stakes for failure, higher opportunity for success	• Small data sample to work with • Potentially does not meet client need with enough expediency • Isolates small group away from the larger whole; may make them feel separated for negative reasons • Negative results cause extremely negative participant reactions
Solution 2: Phasing in	• Client needs are fully met with implementation • New materials brought in see success and a new view • Employees are happier and more engaged due to new skills and the respect it brings them	• Difficult implementation schedule • Potential for complete failure during implementation and alienation of all students and trainers alike • Government money wasted and all US materials are no longer engaged in Singaporean training exercises

Final Recommendation

I recommend the first solution – the pilot test. The pilot will let Frank and Semra gather the opinion data they need to work their way towards a full implementation. Modifications must be made to the material for it to work as well in the Singapore market as it did in the US. The pilot lets them test and iterate until they have a product that is modified enough to have a better chance of being embraced by their stoic audiences. Finding ways to motivate them socially, whether that is through certificates or other public acclaim, creates the social value that is required for this to expand. This is the best solution because it allows for limited failure in an experimental phase of the project, and minimizes financial risk while looking at a paradigm shift within Singapore's government-sponsored training environments. A closer collaboration between US designers and Singaporean trainers allows for new ideas to flow in both directions, and ultimately this exchange of ideas sees positive influences in both directions.

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