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## **Chapter IV**

# **Cultural Wisdom and Hindsight: Instructional Design and Delivery on the Run**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This chapter describes a real situation in Asia where an instructional designer encounters numerous unexpected challenges and cultural experiences. The experiences are described, along with advice for anyone intending to take a similar path. It is expected that many of the experiences could make interesting case studies for students studying instructional design.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

If you have ever phoned your telecommunications provider to connect a new phone or to query a phone bill, you may be able to relate to the nature of the software package used for such tasks. Thousands of telecommunications customer service representatives (CSRs) worldwide use such software to

provide products and services to telecommunications customers (corporate, business, and residential) and to resolve associated queries that customers may have. The software system described in this passage is widely used for these tasks. It is a highly flexible system, and each telecommunications organization using the software has different products and services and different interfaces into the system; therefore, customized on-site CSR training is necessary for each implementation.

The organizational benefits of a well-trained CSR can perhaps best be judged by considering the consequences of a poorly trained CSR. If products and services are not provisioned correctly, then the number of internal and external queries will multiply exponentially, thus increasing the workload of the CSR.

The vendor who provides the system primarily delivers core IT training for new implementations. CSR training is a new opportunity which is performed on the customers' site, rather than in traditional classrooms on vendor premises. Setting up a training room in a normal vendor classroom is a complex operation involving computer communication, databases, and operating systems. There are usually good support processes in place for vendor classroom training. Many resources are available whose combined expertise ensures a smooth set up and ongoing support for the duration of the training. This is not so for customized CSR on-site training. There are many technical challenges — servers must be set up, communication between the servers and the students' PCs must be established, a myriad of software must be loaded, training databases must be set up so that implementation databases are not impacted, backups must be taken so that the training databases can be refreshed — this list is indicative rather than exhaustive as each site is entirely different, with different interfaces and modules implemented. There is little support available from the implementation team, as the timing of training usually coincides with tight implementation deadlines — i.e., training is delivered “just in time,” and the implementation team is excessively busy at this phase of the project ensuring “on time” live implementation. For all of these reasons, on-site trainers need good lines of communication (email, phone, intranet) back to the office.

Customized training naturally necessitates customized instructional design. Many of us who have studied instructional design formally have learned of the different phases involved — Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation (ADDIE). There is an ADDIE process in use by the vendor organization. It has been devised over a period of time for the core IT training traditionally offered. The analysis phase focuses solely on task and content analysis. The output of the task analysis is used at the design phase to formulate

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