



Learning Solutions, April 2009

Reader Reactions

Readers loved the STARS model (*Learning Solutions*, January 2009), saying it “really works” and is a useful and easy approach to ensuring all the right players are involved. One reader encourages us to clarify who has the final say at each point—a great reminder!

Keep your comments coming! [Click here](#) to let us know what you think about making it REAL.

Making Instructional Design REAL

Have you ever sat through a course which was not engaging and had minimal activities? How much information did you retain?

Worse yet, have you ever delivered a course, and the participants seemed bored and uninterested? In this edition of *Learning Solutions*, you will learn a model for making instructional design **REAL**.

R is for reality-based

This is critical. Be sure your course teaches what the audience needs and the audience needs what is being taught *and* they will use what they learn very soon. If learning is too theoretical or won't be applied within days, re-evaluate your approach. Considering the following information during the needs assessment phase will help ensure the course is pertinent and timely:

- Who is the target audience?
- What do they need to do differently on the job?
- When do they need to start doing it?
- What are the consequences if they don't perform to the new standards?
- What might be preventing their success?
- Do all members of the target audience need to know the same information and perform the same skills?



Irene Stern Frielich
President

Solution Highlights

At EnVision we are continually improving our processes.

We've developed a variation of the traditional ADDIE (Assessment, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation) instructional design model which we call “ADDIE with Agility.”

Our “nested” model enables us to design more rapidly and at lower cost to the client.

For more information about our approach, drop me a note at solutions@envision-performance.com.

Your Business Needs. Our Learning Solutions. Improved Employee Performance.

E is for engaging

Learners want to be engaged and need to easily understand how what they are learning is meaningful to them. So, design engaging interactions throughout the course that address this need. You can set the stage by starting out with “what’s in it for me” information.

For example, if you are delivering a course on writing performance reviews you could post a flip chart listing challenges commonly faced by managers writing reviews. As participants enter the classroom, ask them to check off all those challenges they’ve encountered and to add any not listed. You now know which topics to emphasize.

Remind learners throughout the course how the content will benefit them. Better yet, have learners tell you! For example, after you’ve identified and practiced ways to manage a challenging employee situation during a performance review discussion, you could ask learners, “How will this be helpful to you?” Eliciting just a couple of responses will help engage your audience and get them thinking about how they will use the knowledge and skills being taught.

A is for action-oriented

Action-oriented design, quite simply, helps learners learn. It also helps them process and apply what they are learning thus increasing learning effectiveness. Ideally, you will include a significant activity relating to each learning objective. Consider the following as you design your course:

- Are participants working in activities for at least half the class? If not, think of more ways to have learners apply the concepts and skills being taught.
- Activities where learners need to move around helps the learning process even more. For example, if you are teaching about a work process, have learners recreate the process flowchart by standing in the correct order around the room based on their assigned step. Then ask them to explain what is involved in their step and what data or items are passed to the next step.
- At a loss for an activity? After covering a topic, ask pairs to summarize three key points they just learned, or ask them to state one thing they’ll do differently at work.

Quick Links

[Instructional Design](#)

[Project Management](#)

[Take the Surprises Out of Project Management](#)

[More about EnVision](#)



L is for learner-focused

As the instructional designer (or the instructor), it is your job to focus on the learner's perspective rather than trainer's. Turn courses with lots of lecture (or, in e-learning, lots of reading) into learner-centric events. Consider the following questions:

- Are you eliciting information from the learners, leveraging what they already know and reinforcing that knowledge?
- How are learners practicing required job skills in a safe classroom environment?
- What concerns does the learner have about the new information? How is that being addressed in the course?

Making it **REAL**—**R**eality-based, **E**ngaging, **A**ction-oriented, and **L**earner-focused—is one way to help ensure your course design will be effective. Use the **REAL** checklist anytime you design a course.

