

## **A Case Study in Instructional Design: Arctic Engagement - Meeting with a Tribal Representative**

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### **The Client**

The U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) is the lead Federal agency for homeland security, law enforcement, incident response, and disaster management in the maritime environment. USCG District Seventeen (D17) manages operations throughout Alaska. Our client was the D17 Tribal Liaison, who is responsible for oversight and advising CG commands/units on USCG relationships with Alaska native tribes.

### **Background**

The USCG conducts 11 statutory missions and has a legal mandate to consult and coordinate with federally recognized tribes regarding policies and actions that may affect them. If the USCG ignores this mandate or gets it wrong, the service has the potential to have an adverse effect on government-to-government (G-2-G) relationships. This could adversely affect the CG operations through both political and legal consequences. Additionally, tribal engagement has potential for significant positive benefit to CG operations through regional expertise of the indigenous populations who live in the region.

There are nuanced and complex differences between military and Alaska Native culture. In order to address the sensitive nature of these relationships, D17 has developed Tribal Consultation and Engagement Guidance that includes a requirement for USCG members to meet with federally recognized tribes when conducting routine missions on or near tribal land.

The targeted learners for training are USCG leaders, generally the ranks of First Class Petty Officer to Commander (E-6 to O-5) at USCG field units within D17 who conduct statutory missions at sea or on land in Alaska.

### **The Problem**

The USCG has a long and rich history with Alaska Native tribes, and maintaining these positive relationships are of the utmost importance to USCG leadership. Improperly held meetings with federally recognized tribes or Alaska Native organizations have the potential to adversely affect these relationships and/or cause tribal leaders to seek legal injunctions stopping routine or response operations. These consequences would be detrimental to important USCG missions in the Arctic region (Hargis, 2015). Likewise, poor relationships between the USCG and the tribes can adversely affect the native communities as well.

The D17 Tribal Liaison specifically identified the importance and challenge of effective cross-cultural communication in these meetings. The client also pointed out that the USCG members do not have any formal scenario-based training to help them understand cultural differences and actually apply complex communication skills essential to participate in a meeting successfully.

Our Instructional Design team consisted of three graduate students pursuing the Instructional Design course during spring 2015. We followed the Boise State Bronco Instructional Design (BID) Model (Figure 1), specifically the analysis and design stages, to address the learning and performance problem. BID is a member of the ADDIE family of instructional design models.



## Bronco ID Model

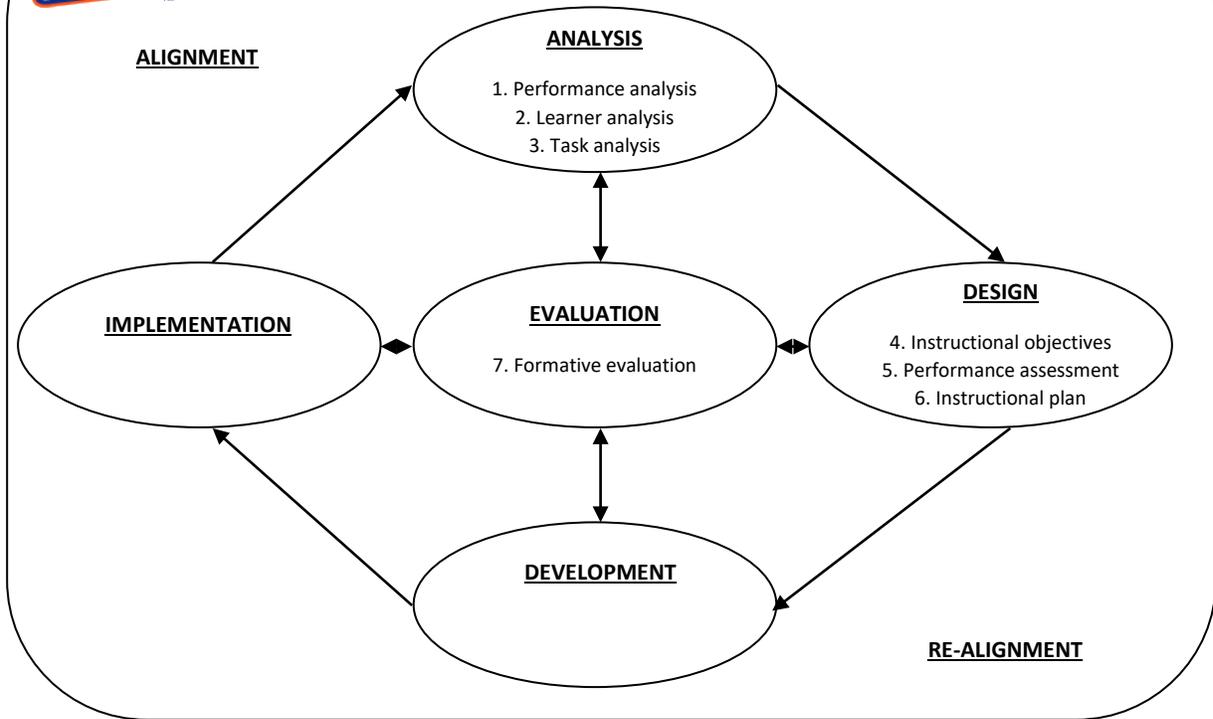


Figure 1. Illustration of the Bronco Instructional Design Model (Stepich & Villachica, 2013).

### Analysis

We began the process by conducting a **Performance and Cause Analysis**. Starting with **Gap Analysis**, we discovered that in 2014 only 34% of the meetings followed the D17 consultation guidelines. The client desired a 90% success rate, and we identified this as evidence of an existing performance gap.

Our next step was an **Organizational Analysis** to build the case for closing the performance gap. Doing so, we connected the performance gap with the strategic business objectives of the USCG to demonstrate that the gap is worth closing. D17 has mandated informal engagement with tribes during the course of routine operations; therefore, USCG leaders at field units must be able to effectively communicate face-to-face with tribal stakeholders regarding what the service is doing and ask how it may affect the tribe. Doing so, they must also be able to effectively solicit and respond to the tribal leaders' perspective and concern. Failure to do so puts relationships between the tribes and the service at risk.

We then conducted a **Cause Analysis** to identify the root causes of the performance gap, along with how they interfered with the performance of CG members. We interviewed exemplary performers to figure out what they do, how they meet with tribal representatives, and why they were successful.

Our interviews revealed that exemplary performers had received an annual awareness briefing, but have not attended formal training on how to hold meetings in ways that produced desired results for both USCG and tribal representatives. However, exemplary performers have typically spent several years (multiple tours) stationed in Alaska and have had the opportunity to see engagement modeled for them, increasing their situational knowledge and confidence. For example, before the meetings they gather background about the community and current issues in the area through their own investigation or by reaching out to the D17 Tribal Liaison. They noted that engagement of tribal representatives is not particularly difficult. However, the participant must do his or her best to understand, respect, and respond to cross-cultural differences.

We found that USCG members are not confident holding meetings with tribal representatives because they are unfamiliar and uncomfortable with native culture and have a fear that they will accidentally offend tribal representatives.

We also found that cross-cultural communications are inherently complex, involving situation recognition, decision-making, and problem solving—all within novel and changing interpersonal communication spaces. Our cause analysis revealed that USCG members would not be able to build skills necessary to effectively engage the tribal representatives during the meetings without opportunities for risk-free practice, coaching (error detection and correction during performance), and feedback after performance.

We concluded that competency in this complex task has not been developed across field units and district personnel. USCG has communicated expectations and information about the cultural background of native tribes and meeting requirements are generally available, but none of these tools helps the CG member truly understand cross-cultural differences and how to apply the complex communication skills required to hold a meeting with a tribal representative successfully. Additionally, the use of a job aid alone is not practical due to the dynamic human communications required. Scenario-based training, coupled with coaching and feedback, will develop appropriate cross-cultural communication skills to improve the performance of USCG members to hold engaging meetings with tribal representatives effectively.

Next, we conducted a **Learner Analysis** by collecting data through interviews of the client, exemplary performers, and a tribal representative to determine:

- **What USCG members already knew:** A basic awareness of cultural differences and general agreement that responding to them effectively is important for both the USCG and the tribes.
- **What they needed to learn:** The complex cross-cultural communication skills essential to hold engaging meetings.
- **What was critical, complex, and difficult about performing these skills in the workplace:** Soliciting the tribal perspective on the USCG missions in the area and responding appropriately to hard questions and concerns without being culturally offensive.
- **What other contextual factors on-the-job or learning environment that affect performance:** Neither the USCG members nor the tribal representatives had a job aid that could be used jointly to facilitate their meetings.

Finally, we conducted a procedural **Task Analysis** to capture all of the steps to holding a meeting. We classified which of the tasks were critical, difficult, or complex that would require training to memory, along with those that the CG members could accomplish by using a job aid, to create a representation of exemplary performance. We included many cautions and hot tips that were particularly important to the tasks. We also used a decision table (Table 1) to identify the flow of decision-making necessary for on-the-job performance:

<i><b>If...</b></i>	<i><b>Then...</b></i>
The representative asks a question about a mission you are participating in...	Talk about it.  <i>Caution: Consider operational security, but remember that many of our missions are overt, educational, and safety-oriented; you should discuss them, unless specifically prohibited by policy.</i>
The representative asks a question about a mission you are not participating in, but familiar with...	Talk about it in connection to the big picture, but clearly identify your role.
The representative asks a question about a mission you are not participating in or familiar with...	Do not specifically talk about it; identify that you are not participating or familiar with that mission.  <i>Hot tip: Document the question for follow up and/or provide a POC who can address it.</i>

*Table 1. Question & Answer protocol decision table.*

### **Design**

Having completed the analysis, we began the design phase by writing **Job-Focused Instructional Objectives** based on Mager’s (1997) three-part method. We specified on-the-job behaviors, conditions, and criteria for the critical task our learners must master (Table 2):

**Behavior:** Solicit the tribal perspective, questions and concerns...

<i><b>Conditions on the job</b></i>	<i><b>Criteria on the job</b></i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Given a long history with the CG</li> <li>• Given cross-cultural differences</li> <li>• In a face-to-face meeting with tribal representatives</li> <li>• Given a team of CG</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As a team, ask/determine if the tribe has questions and/or concerns about the CG missions.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ask if and how the missions could affect subsistence and ways to minimize impacts.</li> <li>○ Allow participants to confer in their own language before responding to you.</li> <li>○ Allow for long periods of silence in the conversation</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<p>personnel from the unit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After both tribal and USCG representatives have introduced themselves.</li> <li>• After explaining the CG missions you are conducting in the area</li> <li>• Given a meeting job aid</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respond to tribal questions and concerns. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Per the job aid for Q&amp;A protocol.</li> <li>○ Restate the issue to confirm your clear understanding.</li> <li>○ Reply with any information you know, without making promises on behalf of the CG or government.</li> <li>○ Document issues for follow-up that the meeting cannot resolve.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Without being culturally offensive. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Do not speak fast, loud, or point at people.</li> <li>○ Do not ask for in-meeting decisions.</li> <li>○ Do not put others down, use jargon or abbreviations.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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*Table 2. Job-Focused Instructional Objective.*

We also developed a job aid to help the learners accomplish the simpler tasks of introducing themselves to the tribal representatives and explaining the USCG mission in the region. This job aid took the form of a guide that both USCG members and tribal representatives could use in the meeting. The meeting packet includes fill-in areas for basic information about the community, previously voiced concerns, a standard straw meeting agenda, and a question and answer protocol to address challenging questions and concerns. The meeting packet helps facilitate introductions by identifying participant names and positions before the meeting and highlighting the missions planned or occurring near tribal lands. It also provides a place to document tribal input regarding potential operational impact on subsistence and follow-up for questions and concerns.

Next, we created an authentic **Performance Assessment Instrument** that mirrored on-the-job performance of meeting with a tribal representative. The process assessment included a checklist of required items that the USCG members must master during a group role-play; with some items to be completed individually and others as a team (Table 3):

<i><b>During the role play, did the TEAM</b></i>	<i><b>During the role play, did the INDIVIDUAL</b></i>
*Explain Coast Guard mission in the area?*	*Reply with any information s/he knew, without making any promises on behalf of the CG or government?*
*Ask if the tribe has questions and concerns about CG missions?*	Restate the tribal concern to confirm clear understanding?
Ask if and how the missions could affect subsistence and ways to minimize impacts?	Document any questions s/he could not answer?

Restate the tribal concern to confirm clear understanding?	Allowed for periods of silence during conversation?
Document any questions the team could not answer?	Did not speak fast, loud, or point at people?
<i>The individual or team will automatically fail the assessment if they do not correctly complete the tasks annotated by *asterisks*</i>	Did not ask the tribe to make a decision on the spot?
	Followed Q&A protocol from Tribal Meeting Job Aid?
	Did not put others down, use jargon or abbreviations?

Table 3. Performance Assessment Checklist to evaluate both teams and individuals.

We then developed an **Instructional Plan** using the analysis documents, job aid, and assessment, based on Merrill’s First Principles of Instruction (2002) (Figure 2). Our instructional plan used a real-life problem scenario and incorporated all four phases of instruction, along with their associated corollaries.

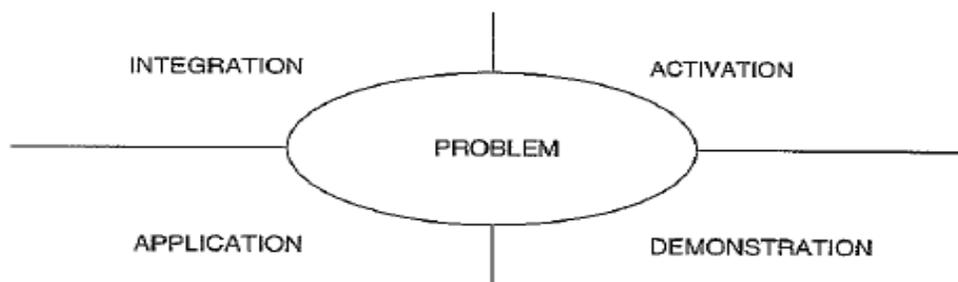


Figure 2. Illustration of Merrill’s First Principles of Instruction (2002).

During the **Activation phase**, the instructor will use two comparative organizers to highlight the cultural similarities and differences of USCG members and Alaska Native communities. This comparison activity links what USCG personnel already know to what they will be learning.

During the **Demonstration phase**, the instructor will introduce the job aid. A subject matter expert (SME), such as an exemplary performer or local tribal representative, will then complete two meeting demonstrations of varying difficulty. The demonstration will include how to use the applicable portions of the job aid, properly interact with a tribal representative and avoid being culturally offensive. The instructor will use a think aloud technique, verbalizing the cautions and hot tips while the SME is demonstrating them, in order to point out what is particularly critical, complex, and difficult about the face-to-face interaction.

During the **Application phase**, the instructor will provide the USCG members with four role-play practice exercises and one assessment scenario. Since the actual meetings normally occur in a group setting with several people from the unit attending, the practices and assessment will occur in teams of 3-4 learners and one SME. The instructor will provide the learners with a scenario card, assign a role at the unit, and

require them to individually present necessary information and answer questions posed by the SME acting as the tribal representative.

During the **Integration phase**, the learners will publicly demonstrate and defend their new knowledge and skills. Each team must develop and present a scenario that best fits their on-the-job application of the new skill. To make it personal, they will choose the most likely mission, location, and type of community concerns that would come up in a meeting and act it out in front of the class. The class will ask questions as necessary and reflect on the performance of each group. We also recommended the development of a central repository of meeting reports to allow for information sharing of feedback and best practices among units throughout Alaska.

### **Formative Evaluation**

We conducted a formative evaluation of our instructional materials to make data-driven decisions on how we can improve our training before our client develops and implements it. Using a series of design reviews, we collected input from our client, team members, classmates, and our instructor to see any possibilities for improvement. The four techniques we used were:

- Technical review by the client: The client SME reviewed our materials to ensure that our analyses aligned with the business need and strategic objectives of our client organization. The SME also reviewed our work for technical accuracy, completeness, and authenticity.
- Production review by our peers: Each team member was responsible for reviewing all deliverables for accuracy, authenticity, and mechanics. Additionally, we posted portions of our project on a shared database for other IDs to review and provide feedback.
- Production review by an ID expert: We received production review and feedback by an ID expert, who reviewed all of our deliverables twice and conducted three meetings with our group to discuss our project. This perspective helped our group gain insight on the accuracy and authenticity of the analysis deliverables we were developing.
- Review by exemplary performers: We sought feedback from exemplary performers who reviewed drafts of our analysis deliverables to check for accuracy and authenticity from the viewpoint of the service members actually out in the field conducting the meetings.

### **Conclusion**

Our client immediately applied aspects our instructional plan by incorporating problem-centered interactive scenarios into the Operation ARCTIC SHIELD tribal awareness briefing to the field and used the role-play exercises for other training events, including a pilot of the application and assessment phases during a tribal affairs workshop for USCG external affairs officers. The client also shared the project with partners at Department of Homeland Security to aid in the development of a department-wide tribal liaison certification program.

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