

Developing Organizational Simulations

George C. Thornton III
Colorado State University

Colorado State University

*39th International Congress on Assessment Center Methods, San Diego California,
November 3 -5, 2015.*



“Make or Buy” Reasons to Make

- Need for organization-specific content
- Need to revise frequently
- Need for high security
- Financial constraints preclude buying
- Desire for staff to build exercises



Purposes of this presentation

- Show how theory can be practical
- Guidance on how to build reliable and valid simulations
- Model for planning, designing, and evaluating simulation exercises



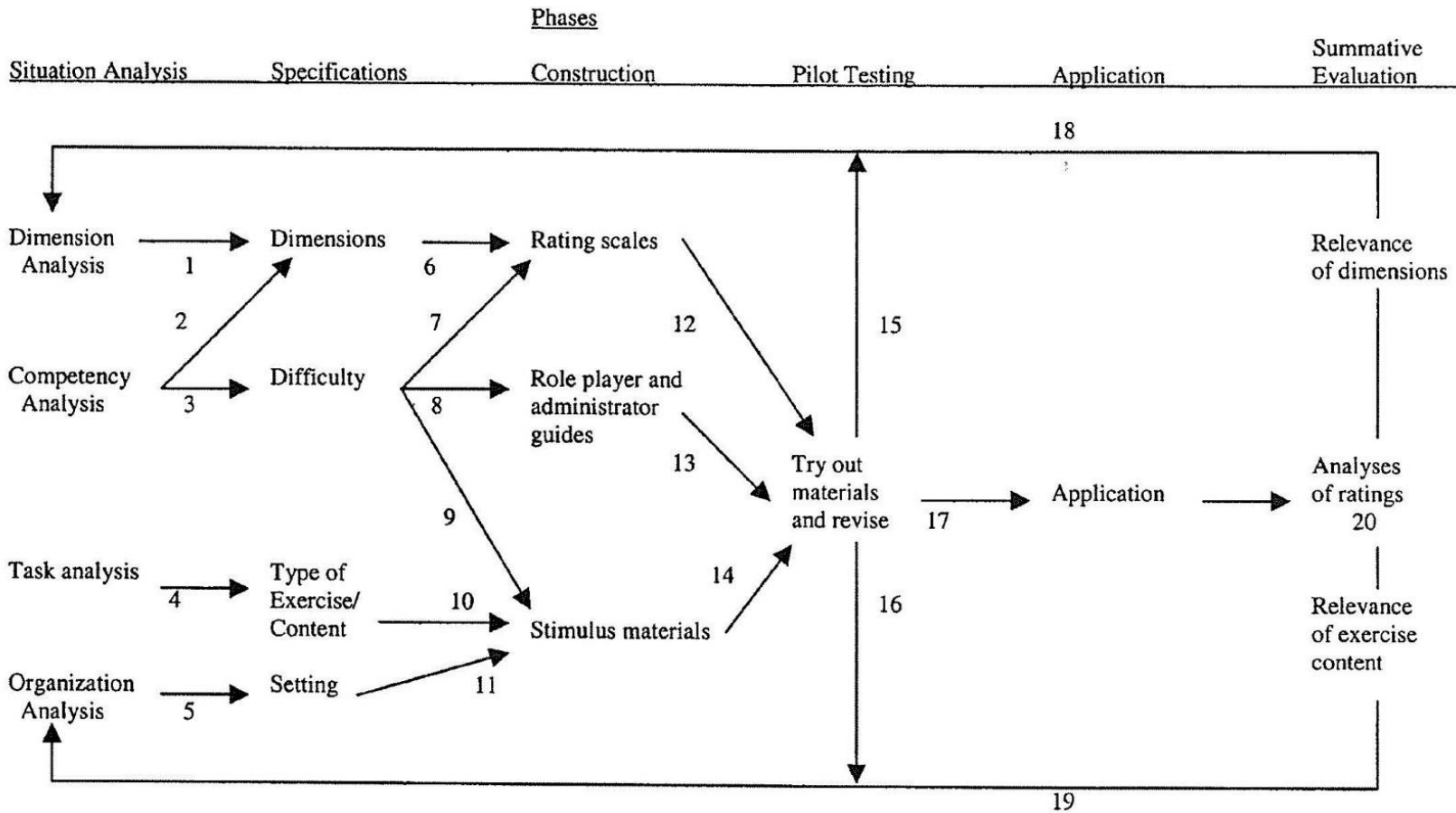


FIG. 2.1. Model for Constructing Simulation Exercises.

Situation Analysis

Dimension analysis

Attributes, skills, competencies

Competence analysis

Level of dimension, difficulty

Task analysis

Duties, activities

Organization analysis

Industry, climate, TM philosophy



Specifications

Definition of dimensions, competencies

“Problem analysis” differs across jobs

Difficulty level expected

Minimal screening or Excellence

Type of exercises and content

Type: In-box, case study, role play

Content: problem with employee or process

Setting

Bank, manufacturing, service

Stable or turbulent environment



Construction

Build rating scales

- Definition of dimension

- BARs: generic for all dimensions,
exercise-specific

Build guides for role player, administer, assessors

Build stimulus materials

- Instructions: oral, written, video-tape

- Content in the items of in-box, case

- Follow up questions for assessors

Application of Trait Activation Theory (TAT)

Gamification



**“There’s nothing so practical than
a good theory!”**

Kurt Lewin

Trait Activation Theory (TAT)

Build materials to elicit behaviors relevant to dimensions

Gamification

Include elements of games in simulations



Pilot Testing

Application

Summative Evaluation



Roles of Technology in Simulations

Presentation of stimulus material

Recording of responses

Scoring



Three “take away” points:

1. A model for developing organizational simulations helps
2. Gather a wide variety of information when studying job requirements.
3. Theories are practical when building organizational simulations.



References

Povah, N. & Thornton, G.C. (Eds.), (2011). *Assessment and development centres: Strategies for global talent management*. Farnham, England: Grower. Chapter 4.

Schlebusch, S. & Roodt, G. (Eds.) (2008). *Assessment centres: Unlocking potential for growth*. Randburg, South Africa: Knowres. Chapter 6.
Designing Simulations

Thornton, G.C. III & Mueller-Hanson, R.A. (2004). *Developing organizational simulations: A guide for practitioners and students*. Mahwah, NJ: Earlaum.



THANK YOU!

Questions?

Comments?

Please contact me:

George.Thornton@colostate.edu

