Branching Role Plays: Strategies for Successful Development and Implementation

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Overview

- Online Simulation Assessments

- Branching Role Play Overview

- Sample Items and Assessment Structure

- Branching Role Play Development Challenges

- Addressing Development Challenges

- Recommendations and Lessons Learned

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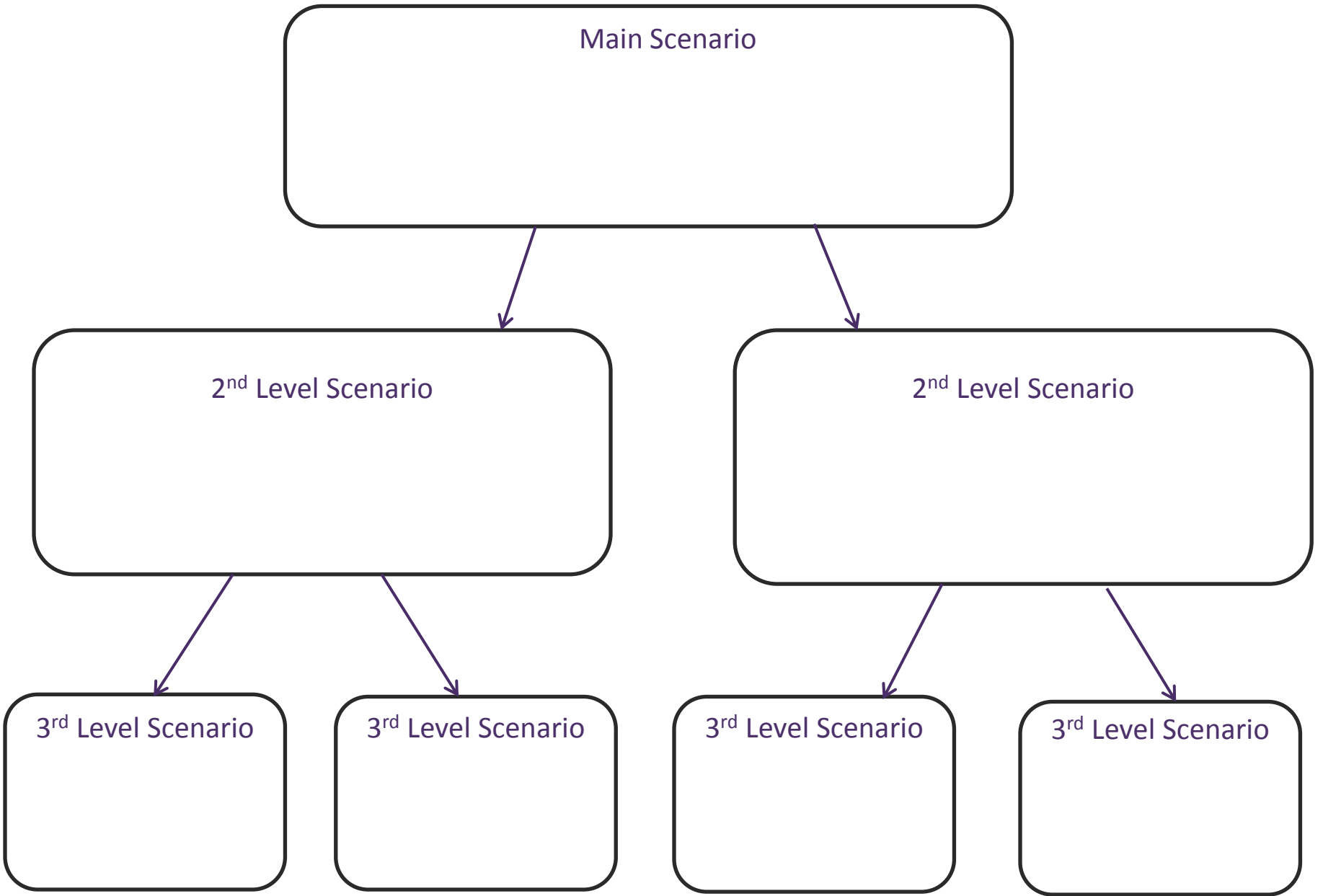
Online Simulation Assessments

- Provide realistic, job-related situations

- Effective way to measure a range of required competencies

- No assessors required to administer and evaluate

- Reduced time to score candidates due to use of standardized scoring key

- No obvious right/wrong answer

- Positive test taker reactions

Branching Role Plays

- Role play assessments have been used extensively to assess a variety of competencies
  - Require role players, assessors

- Branching Role Plays
  - Can be delivered online, unproctored
  - Presents response options varying in effectiveness
  - Assessment adapts to participant's responses
  - Branches among possible scenarios
  - Provides realistic unfolding of events
  - Automated scoring
  - Reduces item exposure (compared to traditional SJTs)

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Branching Role Plays

- Variety of presentation options
  - Animation (2D, 3D)
  - Video

- Choose response based on the scenario
  - What is most effective
  - Most effective/Least effective
  - What would you say

- Branching Role Plays discussed today: 2 purposes
  - Development
  - Selection

Scenario

You supervise a team of employees that vary widely in age, experience, and personality. While they tend to get along and work well together, it is not uncommon for you to have to help them work past their different work styles. Today, Lisa, one of your newest team members comes to you for some assistance. She has been working with your top performer Timothy and one of your other trusted employees, Diana.

Questions

Given the scenario, pick the option that most closely matches how **you** would respond.

○ Lisa, I wouldn't worry too much about the issue with Timothy and Diana. I'm sure they are both just trying to help you out.

○ Well, Lisa, I'm really pleased to hear you say how you much you've enjoyed the last couple months. I am disappointed to hear that there's some conflict within my unit and that you are suffering the consequences of it.

○ Great. Let's focus on this issue with Diana and Timothy then. I want to get this resolved as soon as possible, so we can all focus on the work - that's what is most important.

○ I certainly don't want you to feel uncomfortable at work. Before we discuss that, I do want to mention that it's good to hear you reflect positively on the last couple months.

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Branching Role Plays

- Development
  - Live actor videos
  - Developed to measure leadership competencies
  - Provide feedback to test takers
  - Scored on option you choose

- Selection
  - Animated videos
  - Developed to measure competencies needed for project managers
  - Interpersonal Skills, Teamwork, Decision Making
  - Scoring considers most and least effective

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Branching Role Play Development Steps

- Develop descriptions of scenarios

- Develop response options

- Write scripts for scenarios

- Create videos

- Collect effectiveness ratings for response options

- Pilot test and finalize test

- Implementation

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BRP Development Challenges

- Content development is complex
  - No standard development methodology
  - Working with SMEs to develop content
  - What makes a "good item"

- Conceptual clarity of underlying constructs
  - Scenarios have to be realistic
  - Assessment had to assess competencies from an existing model that couldn't be modified

- Measurement and scoring considerations
  - Providing construct-level scoring/feedback
  - Determining best scoring method

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Content Development is Complex

- No standard development methodology
  - Application of methods from other types of simulations and Situational Judgment Tests (SJTs)
  - Application of traditional role play exercise methods

- Working with SMEs to develop content
  - Explaining the structure of the assessment
  - Getting SMEs engaged to get good scenario content
    - Working in groups
    - Encouraging creativity…to a point

- What makes a "good item"
  - Developing sufficiently complex scenarios
  - Amount of initial content needed

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Main Scenario (1)

You are leading a project and assigned tasks to team members. Michael disagrees with your decision about the task assignments and wants to discuss it with you.

Stick with your original decision.

Open up the conversation.

2nd Level Scenario (1.1)

Michael is still frustrated and doesn't think you are listening to his point of view. He tries to tell you again.

2nd Level Scenario (1.2)

Michael calms down and tells you his concerns about Ben.

Tell Michael you won't discuss the assignments.

Explain your reasoning behind the assignments/ Listen to Michael

Tell Michael you won't change your mind

Explain your reasoning/ continue the conversation

3rd Level Scenario (1.1a)

Michael is still angry that you aren't listening.

3rd Level Scenario (1.1b)

Michael is glad you listened and voices his ideas for the team.

3rd Level Scenario (1.2a)

Michael becomes upset and thinks you are not understanding his point of view.

3rd Level Scenario (1.2b)

Michael understands but remains uncomfortable with the situation.

Conceptual Clarity

- Construct-driven development approach
  - Construct-driven development approach
  - Focusing on specific competency within each scenario

- A priori identifying behaviors that represent low and high performance to guide SMEs
  - Helped focus SMEs to develop content efficiently
  - Provided them with an end-goal (e.g., Did we sufficiently cover a wide variety of behaviors that relate to Competency X?)

Measurement and Scoring

- Providing construct-level scoring/feedback

- Determining response option instruction
  - Application of SJT research on response option instructions
  - Response option to branch the scenario vs. for scoring

- Scoring method
  - Item type similar to Situational Judgment Tests
  - How to score so maximum/minimum scores are equivalent across branches, particularly when item scoring considers effectiveness ratings

Recommendations and Lessons Learned

- Carefully plan things down to the details from the beginning

- Practice developing scenarios before meeting with SMEs to ensure preparedness

- Decide upon and depict branching structure and associated maps early on

- Plan for SME involvement in development and review to provide context and credibility

- Select your scoring and feedback approaches to align with the assessment's intended use

- Clear instructions and practice items are key for successful implementation

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Contact Information

Thank you!

Questions?

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