

Developing an Online Branching Learning Activity

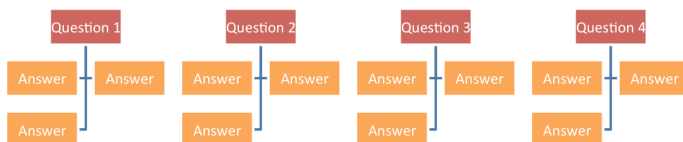
Using branching in an online activity allows for the creation of engaging and real-world scenarios. In a scenario, the learner is placed in a scene or situation that is similar to what they face on the job. They are generally asked to respond to a **challenge** and **choose** which action they would take or what they would say. Based on the **consequences** of that choice, the scenario proceeds to the next decision point, and so on, until the story ends.

Generally, the learner can work through a scenario multiple times, making different choices to achieve different outcomes, so that they are learning by doing, in a risk-free environment. However, if the scenario will be used in a graded activity, this setting is completely optional.

The number of possible branching “paths” the learner may take and the number of possible “destinations” depends on the complexity of the scenario. The two general types of paths for creating a scenario – one is **simple** and one is **complex**. There are ways to mix and match the two types of scenario pathways, as well. The learning content and objectives will largely determine how the scenario should play out.

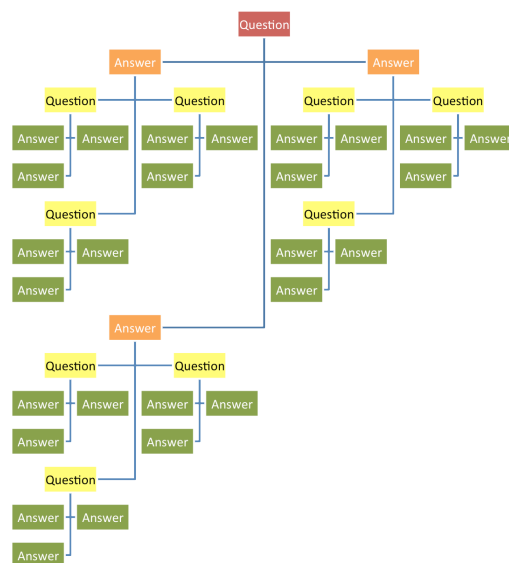
Simple Scenario

Multiple choices per question, though different answers result in only different feedback, not different questions



Complex Scenario

Multiple choices per question, though different answers result in different questions and feedback only presented at the end of the last question (just like the real world).



How can I build a branching activity?

Two tools immediately available to UCSF staff and faculty for building branching scenarios are the Articulate Studio and the Lesson activity that is a native Activity in the CLE. Branching in Articulate Studio can be done with Presenter or with Quizmaker for a graded product. These software tools are compared on the following page.

The way the table works:

The scenario text appears in a table, with numbers that correlate to the numbered elements on the flowchart.

Each challenge has an answer choice that is a “Fail” leading to retry, an “OK” answer that will lead to another Challenge, or a “Success” that will lead to another Challenge.

The feedback messages for each “Success” and “Fail/Retry” terminal are also provided. Blue-colored rows indicate the most correct path.

Using Articulate

Map out the scenario ahead of time with the table before moving to the software

Take advantage of setting up slides at beginning and then, duplicating slides (use Slide Masters)

Each slide should/could have a home button

Remove the entire side bar, including Menu

Slide Properties: Advance by user, Free navigation, Customize the Prev/Next button for each slide

On restart – Never resume

Setup / Context			Notes
Narrated introduction to the sequence of challenges			Optional development directions, FYIs for SME reviewers, etc.
Challenge	Choices	Consequences	Notes
1 Gladys is late to work for the third time this month. Up till now, you haven't spoken to her about this problem. [Description of character's facial expression or gestures and images/environment on screen]	A. You bring her into your office and ask her why she is having problems getting to work on time.	GO TO 3	Development notes, FYIs for SME reviewers, etc.
	B. You approach her at her desk and ask her what's wrong.	GO TO 2	
	C. You tell her that, per company policy, she will be fired the next time she is late.	FAIL/RETRY Feedback: She starts to cry and runs to the ladies' room. Try this scenario again.	
2 She looks around defensively, to see who might be listening in. [Description of character's facial expression or gestures and images/environment on screen]	A. You bring her into your office and ask her why she is having problems getting to work on time.	GO TO 3	
	B. If it's that private, maybe it's something you don't want to hear about. You ask if she'd be more comfortable talking with someone from HR.	GO TO 4	
	C. You say that the team would <i>prefer</i> for her not to be late, and that she is running out of chances.	FAIL/RETRY Feedback: She starts to cry and runs to the ladies' room. Try this scenario again.	

3 She tells you that her car broke down and the bus sometimes doesn't come on time. [Description of character's facial expression or gestures and images/environment on screen]	A. You ask if she's approached any of her co-workers about carpooling, or if she has looked at the ride-share chat room on the company intranet.	SUCCESS Feedback: Good job! If she's shy about talking to others, encourage her to begin with the chat room.	
	B. You offer to help her review the bus schedule and plan a timetable for the next time her car breaks down.	PASS Feedback: Coaching your employee on how to think ahead is one good approach, but might another choice be better? Try repeating this question.	
	C. You ask how much she thinks it will cost to get her car running.	FAIL/RETRY Feedback: Where are you going with this? Are you going to offer to pay for the repairs yourself? Try this scenario again.	
4 She says no, it's nothing like that, and promises not to be late again. [Description of character's facial expression or gestures and images/environment on screen]	A. You ask if she can tell you what's going on now, in the privacy of your office.	GO TO 3	
	B. You tell her she really should talk to someone in HR, and offer to make an appointment for her later in the day.	PASS Feedback: While this approach isn't wrong, you should be able to handle the situation yourself. You might want to try this scenario again.	

	C. You ask if she really feels comfortable making that promise, since she's been late three times already this month.	FAIL/RETRY Feedback: She starts to cry and runs to the ladies' room. Try this scenario again.	
5 Xxxx [Description of character's facial expression or gestures and images/environment on screen]	A.	GO TO ###	
	B.	GO TO ###	
	C.	GO TO ###	
6 Xxxx [Description of character's facial expression or gestures and images/environment on screen]	A.	SUCCESS Feedback: xxxxxx	
	B.	PASS/FAIL Feedback: xxxxxx	
	C.	FAIL/RETRY Feedback: xxxxxx	

End of Scenario