

WORKBOOK 10.1: ANALYTICAL THINKING



Purpose: To provide information to help you use analytical thinking to organize gathered information

The review and organization process is an art, not a science. As an informed law enforcement manager or officer, you must analyze the information you have gathered and make judgments in order to categorize and prioritize the information.

You should develop your analysis from the best information you have collected. Therefore, there are no correct and incorrect answers. You must however, make sure you are analyzing what you know to be facts and not make decisions based on opinion. Factual data must support your conclusions.

Barriers to Analytical Thinking

First, you should be aware of common barriers to analytical thinking. Numerous factors can negatively affect the ability to think analytically. *Table 1: Analytical Thinking Barriers* provides a brief summary of common barriers.

Table 1: Analytical Thinking Barriers

Barrier	Explanation
Inability to control information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Structured analysis is a conscious, visible process of arranging information to improve the ability to assess the meaning and value of incoming information accurately ▪ Structuring: separating and organizing elements of a problem ▪ Externalizing: making main points visible (writing them down)
Assumptions and biases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Are preconceived ideas that influence perception ▪ May be hidden in the subconscious mind ▪ Filter information and block effective decision-making
Deception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some information is intentionally misleading
Pattern recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collecting data and rapidly assembling into a pattern ▪ Pattern is compared with information previously stored to find the closest possible match ▪ This results in a solution that is satisfactory and sufficient but not necessarily the best

Analytical Thinking Processes

Second, you should attempt to use a process that helps you think analytically about your information to determine that your assessment is the best logical choice to reach your desired protection outcomes. *Table 2: Alternative Outcome Thinking Techniques* provides you with information about several processes that will assist you in evaluating your thinking.

Table 2: Alternative Outcome Thinking Techniques

Technique	Explanation	Advantages	Disadvantages
Advocating the opposite view	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Challenging a single, strongly held view ▪ Challenging consensus by building the best possible case for an opposite explanation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Quick and easy ▪ Does not require a team of people to produce ▪ Usually identifies the most uncontested alternate outcome (the “on the other hand” answer) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Does not explore the less acceptable alternate outcome ▪ Does not necessarily eliminate biases and mindsets ▪ May encounter resistance by other analysts
Team A or Team B analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Independent analytic teams contrast two (or more) strongly held views, hypotheses, or judgments by means of a process of presentation and rebuttal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Allows presentation of more points of view and arguments ▪ Additional subject matter expert opinion can be sought ▪ Gives contrasting views to consumer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Requires more time and personnel ▪ Personalities could dominate ▪ Can be divisive
Other team analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Predicting the behavior of another group or individual by trying to replicate how they think or react to an issue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ May dispel biases as you intentionally try NOT to think like yourself ▪ Helps you think like the other person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Requires a high degree of subject matter expertise to replicate the subject’s behavior, culture, sphere of influence

Technique	Explanation	Advantages	Disadvantages
"What if?" analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Taking as a given that an event has occurred, or is going to occur, with potential major effects ▪ Then explaining how it came about or may come about 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Easier than some other techniques ▪ Can and should be used in most situations where some indication of impending change is likely to occur ▪ Identifies warning signs, triggers, and indicators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Potential to provide too many scenarios ▪ May paralyze the process with too many options
High consequence and low probability analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develops a case for a seemingly unlikely event that would have major negative effects if the event actually happened 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Most often used to render an alternative outcome where there are high policy or military consequences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Difficulty in conveying odds to the consumer ▪ Too many highs and lows may cast doubt
Outside-in-thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identifies the full range of outside basic forces, factors, and trends that would have an indirect effect in shaping an issue ▪ Incorporates this broader conceptual framework into the analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provides a high-level perspective to viewing the problem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Aims to dispel assumptions and biases ▪ Even after an in-depth study, a person might still be looking for information to support his or her assumptions, and biases ▪ Some biases are essential and cannot be overlooked ▪ The high-level view may never be proven right or wrong, because it goes on infinitely

Technique	Explanation	Advantages	Disadvantages
Gaming and simulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Allows analysts and policymakers to play roles of actual subjects ▪ Simulates the actions and reactions of main players as methods for anticipating likely outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Beginning to be commonly used in the classroom ▪ Commonly used by military organizations ▪ Human five senses cannot be duplicated by computer research ▪ Role-players will gain an appreciation of the people they are portraying ▪ Often invigorating for role-players to get out of their regular environment and get a hands-on lesson ▪ Helps sharpen skills — at least once or twice a year participate in some simulation or near life-like experience, even if it is just a ride-along with a case agent in the field or with a senior analyst or manager when they make a high-level presentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Could be interpreted as too expensive or time-consuming to do with any regularity