

A Critical thinking aspect of Systems thinking versus Analytical thinking.

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Abstract

In this module we critique decision making systems. We will go beyond decision making (problem solving) techniques into models of analyzing systems. The predominant decision making model has an analytical base and has been well covered in our education system. The analytical model as taught is rational, linear, and easily understood for solving simple and uncomplicated problems. Unfortunately, today's leaders are not faced with easily understood and uncomplicated problems. In today's society the rapid changes in technology, education, and globalization generate many issues that legislators face that may not be totally rational, linear, and simple. The principles of analytical decision making are largely ineffective in today's rapidly changing social, cultural, and political environment. More and more, educators and organizations are turning to a systemic way of dealing with problems. Leaders may find that a systemic technique valuable for use in evaluating a situation and suggesting alternatives. Systemic thinking is a technique that leaders can use to enhance the tenets of critical thinking needed to consider complicated issues that may not have an easily identifiable solution. By using a model that has inputs, process, output, and feedback to consider an issue, we can learn to look into items that may be related and not previously considered. This model may allow us to consider delays, feedback loops, and unintended consequences that may not emerge from simply defining a problem, generating alternatives, choosing an alternative, implementing an alternative, and seeing if the alternative has solved the problem."