Critical Thinking

Question at Issue

• What is the one central question?
  – Specifics not generalities
  – Rifle vs. shotgun
• Moving Target
  – Often, the question will change as the critical thinking process progresses.

Purpose

• What’s the point of the exercise?
  – A non-trivial pursuit
• The primary goal is…
  to make the very best decision possible
• “Reasoned Judgment”

Information

• Research multiple, credible, and relevant media and sources
  – Print, video, audio, & Internet
  – Government, industry, news media, trade and non-governmental organizations, histories, experts, knowledgeable folks, etc.
• Critical analysis is required
  – Data-> Information-> Knowledge

Concepts

• What are the ideological foundations upon which the problem and solution(s) are based?
• Abstract or general idea(s) generalized from particular instances
• If necessary, “turn over a few rocks”
**Points of View**

- What do other people have to say about this problem area?
  - Must be credible & relevant to issue
  - Break out of the expected peer group comfort zone
  - Seek ideas outside the perspective(s) of “the usual suspects”

**Implications & Consequences**

- Analysis of
  - Cause & Effect
  - “What If”s
- “Necessary Consequences”
- Investigate both primary and secondary effects

**Assumptions**

- Supposition of truth
  - Basically, all those “facts” taken for granted
- Judgments & opinions
- Avoid “subjective preferences”

**Interpretation & Inference**

- Conclusion phase of process
  - Supported by facts, premises, reasoned judgments, etc.
  - Chain of logic
- Present in understandable terms