

# Strategic Thinking

What is it? Where can I get some?

# What is strategy?

A plan to achieve our goals.

Exists at multiple levels - all linked.

Helps us make wise choices as conditions change.

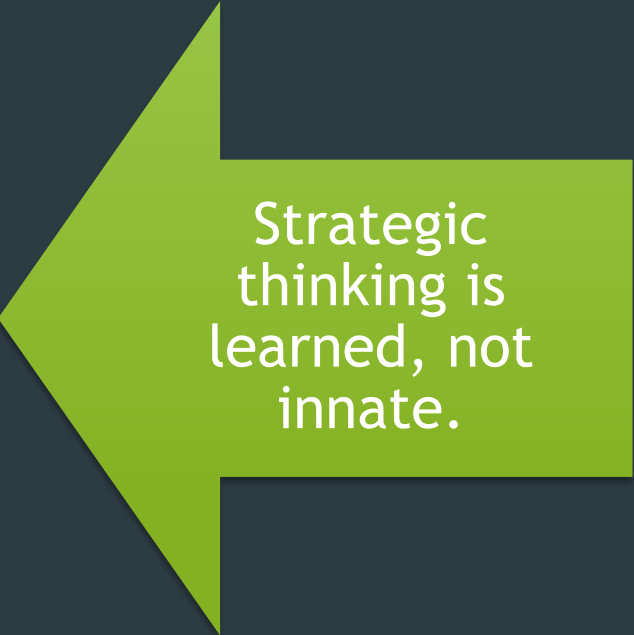
As conditions change, the plan itself evolves.

# What is strategic thinking?

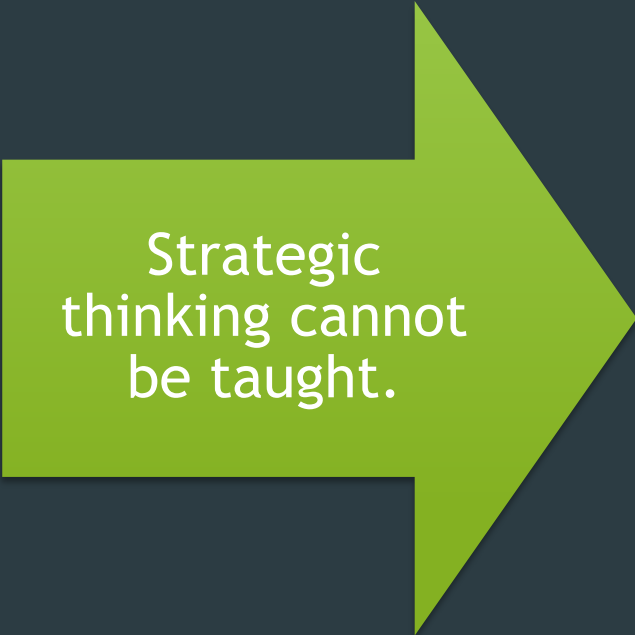
“At this point, there is no generally accepted definition of the term, no common agreement as to its role or importance, and no standardized list of key competencies of strategic thinkers.”

Wikipedia

# What is strategic thinking? Take 2.

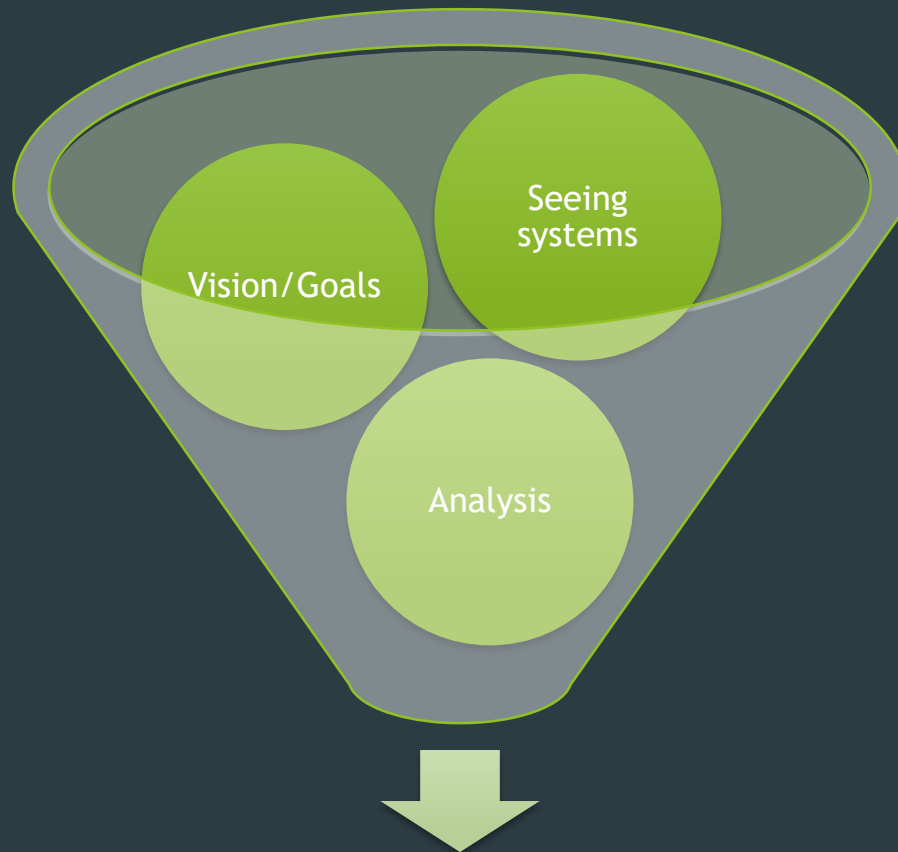


Strategic thinking is learned, not innate.



Strategic thinking cannot be taught.

# What is strategic thinking? Take 3!



**The ability to see what is - and what could be -  
and make choices that lead to desired outcomes.**

# Components of Strategic Thinking

Vision/goal driven.

Analytical.  
(Makes sense of diverse input and data.)

Sees systems.  
(causes, relationships, leverage points)

Focused on long term forces, trends, impacts.

Weighs decisions against criteria.

Thinks across past, present and future.

Anticipates unwanted events and risk.

Allows for “intelligent opportunism”

Questions assumptions, habits and conclusions.

# Key questions that can help

- ▶ What is our goal/purpose?
- ▶ *What key problems, causes and solutions do we exist to address?*
- ▶ *What are past, current and possible future trends?*
- ▶ What are the key opportunities and threats we face? (Where is greatest leverage? Where is greatest risk?)
- ▶ What will it take? What are possible course of action?
- ▶ What are the implications of these choices?
- ▶ What criteria will we use to choose and evaluate a course of action?
- ▶ How does our plan intersect with other goals/plans?

We can benefit from learning  
about things that LIMIT strategic  
thinking

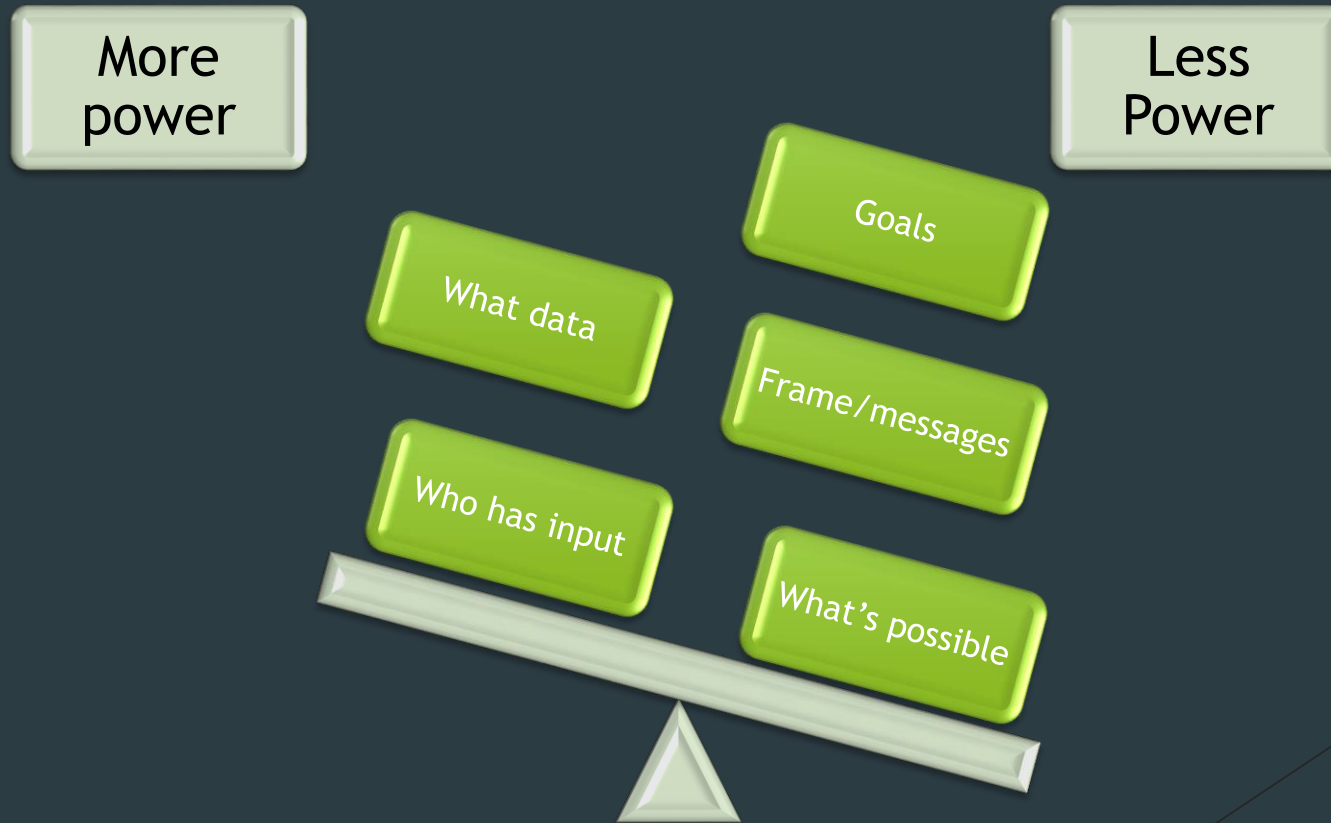




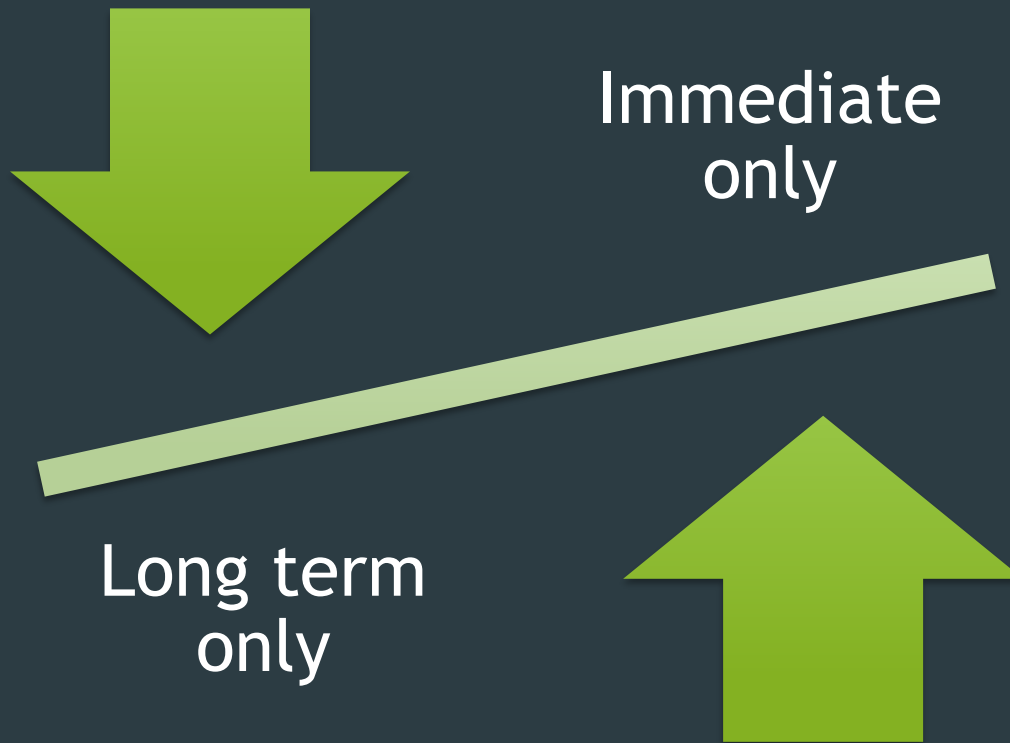
# Lack of shared analysis can limit strategic thinking



# Power relationships can limit strategic thinking



# Over-emphasis on only the long-term or immediate challenges

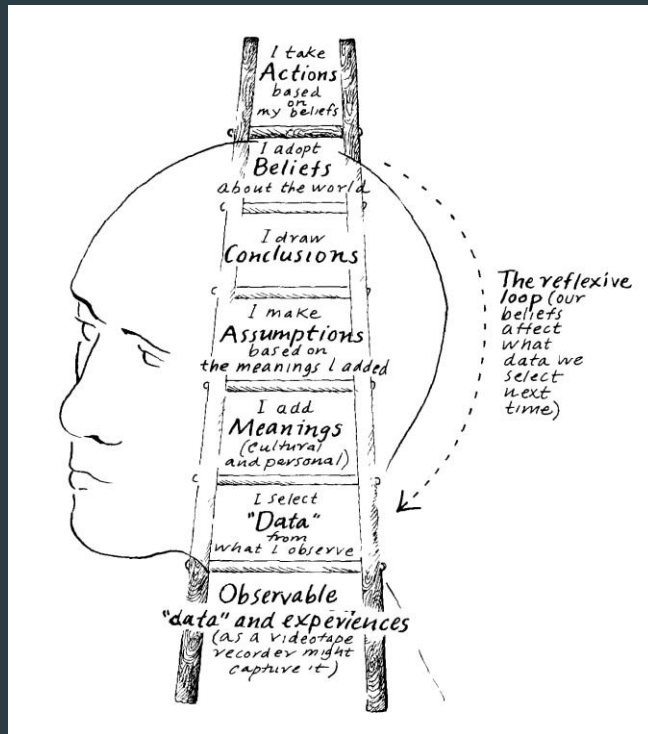


# ANCHORING can limit strategic thinking



- ▶ When faced with a choice, we may ANCHOR on a certain good outcome we think will occur.
- ▶ It can be hard to remain open to other options or implications.
- ▶ Anchoring is often the result of over-the-top urgency to “just do something.”

# Bias can limit strategic thinking



- ▶ We all have biases.
- ▶ We select for information that supports our viewpoint and experiences.
- ▶ We tend to disregard information that doesn't fit our beliefs/values.

# What can I/we do?

## SELF-REFLECTION

- ▶ What are my own strengths and weaknesses related to strategic thinking?
- ▶ What adjustments can I make? How might I improve my own strategic thinking skills and habits?
- ▶ How can I provide more strategic leadership - regardless of the position I hold?

# What can I/we do?

## GROUP REFLECTION

- ▶ How can we (continue to) develop a shared analysis among the staff and board?
- ▶ How can we (continue to) nurture a staff culture that promotes strategic thinking?
- ▶ What skills/habits can we learn to improve our ability to think and work strategically as a staff team?