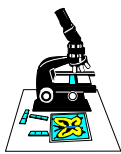


Chapter 2: Analytical Thinking vs. Synthetical Thinking

Importance to Use Synthetical Thinking with Analytical Thinking



2.1 Importance to Use Synthetical Thinking with Analytical Thinking

Analysis is a powerful thinking tool - for understanding the parts of a situation. It's just not that crash-hot for understanding how those parts work together.

When we break things down into smaller and smaller components, we tend to lose sight of the interactions between them.

It's a case of **"When the only tool you have is a hammer, every problem begins to look like a nail"** - and we end up with analysis paralysis. Analysis paralysis is when a vicious cycle is set up, as shown in Figure 2.1.

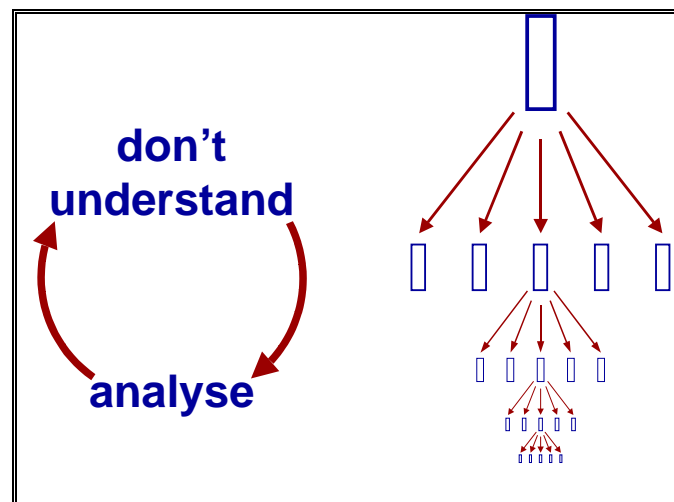
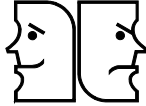


Figure 2.1: Analysis paralysis

Analysis makes the interactions less visible, so insight diminishes, we analyze things further - and things go from bad to worse.

What our society needs is **a thinking tool specifically designed for making sense of Interactions**- a thinking tool for making sense of how things work together. That tool is **synthesis** - seeing how things work together. Synthesis is more than putting things back together again after you've taken them apart: It's understanding how things **work** together.

Difference
between
Analytical
Thinking and
Synthetical
Thinking



2.2 Difference between Analytical Thinking and Synthetical Thinking

According to Bartlett (2001) it can be differentiated between Analytical Thinking and Synthetical Thinking as following:

1. Analytical thinking **enables us to understand the parts of the situation.** Synthetical thinking enables us to understand how they work together.
2. Analytical thinking **breaks things down into their component parts;** synthetical thinking finds the patterns across those component parts.
3. Analysis is about **identifying differences,** **synthesis** is about finding similarities, as shown in Figure 2.2.

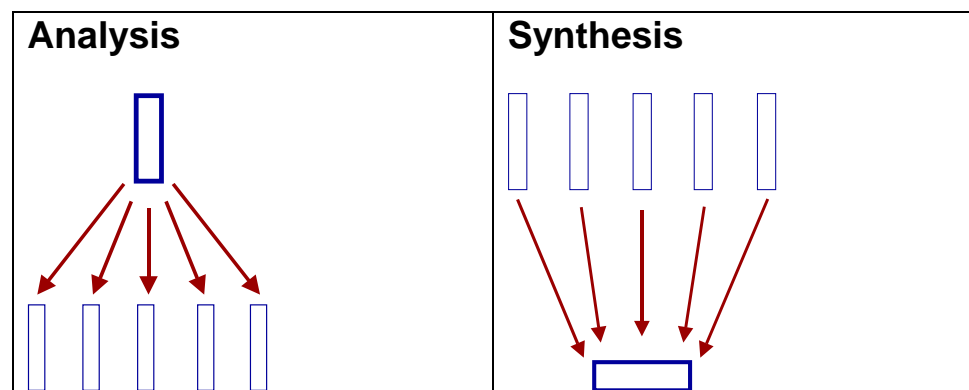


Figure 2.2: Analysis and synthesis

4. Analytical thinking is the easy bit. We've been taught to do it from birth. Synthetical thinking is harder because we haven't been taught to do it deliberately. We do it unconsciously all the time, of course - we wouldn't get very far if we didn't - because everything is systemic and needs to be approached systemically.
5. Synthetical thinking is a lot harder than analytical thinking because the Interactions are harder to deal with and it is dynamic rather than static.
6. Synthetical thinking is deliberately finding repeating patterns (or common themes) across a system or situation. Although analytical thinking enables us to find those repeating patterns and common themes too, it doesn't do so directly - or anywhere near as effectively - because analysis is more focused on identifying differences than similarities.

In sum we need both analysis and synthesis. Each is of only limited value without the other - in a systemic world. Systemic thinking is nothing more than a combination of analytical thinking and synthetical thinking.