

TOOL

# Analyzing a Situation Through the Lenses

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# Analyzing a Situation Through the Lenses

## **Purpose**

This tool supports you in stepping back from a situation and analyzing it through multiple lenses so you can generate deeper insight and identify more effective coaching moves.

## **When to Use**

Use this tool when you feel stuck in your interpretation of a situation, when you're making quick judgments, or when you want to expand your perspective before or after a coaching conversation.

## **How to Use It**

Select one or more lenses and use the reflection prompts to examine the situation. Capture your thinking in the analysis column, then identify questions you could ask your client. You don't need to use every lens, choose the ones that help you see something new.

# Analyzing a Situation Through the Lenses

Adult Learning Lens	
Reflection Prompts	Analysis
One or two assumptions that help me understand the situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Problems of change are problems of learning.</i></li> <li>• <i>People must feel safe to learn.</i></li> </ul>
Insights from this assumption	<i>The assumptions from the AL lens feel relevant here. I wonder if Mahesh feels safe as a learner with me. I wonder what he needs to learn in order to incorporate PBL.</i>
One or two questions from the lens that feel relevant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Where are the gaps? Skill? Knowledge? Will?</i></li> <li>• <i>What strengths can be built upon?</i></li> </ul>
Questions I could ask this client	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>I'm curious to understand, when you consider the skills required for PBL, what you feel you know how to do?</i></li> <li>• <i>I'm curious about your will to teach PBL. On a scale of 1-10, where's your will level?</i></li> </ul>

Change Management Lens	
Reflection Prompts	Analysis
One or two assumptions that help me understand the situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Building on strengths can lead to positive change.</i></li> <li>• <i>For successful change to occur, there needs to be leadership, vision, skills, incentives, resources, and a clear plan of action.</i></li> </ul>
Insights from this assumption	<i>I wonder if our plan of action is clear enough; I wonder if Mahesh has the skills or feels the incentive to implement PBL. I want to surface Mahesh's strengths.</i>
One or two questions from the lens that feel relevant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What are the opportunities for leveraging change?</i></li> <li>• <i>What incentives are in place for people to change?</i></li> </ul>
Questions I could ask this client	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What would need to be true for you to be willing to incorporate PBL? What would you need to know or understand? What support would you need?</i></li> <li>• <i>What's your understanding of why we're implementing PBL?</i></li> </ul>

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Inquiry Lens	
Reflection Prompts	Analysis
One or two assumptions that help me understand the situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The way we pose the question determines the nature of the answer.</i></li> <li>• <i>The way we define the problem dictates how we define the solution.</i></li> </ul>
Insights from this assumption	<i>I've been thinking that Mahesh is the problem—that he is resistant to implementing PBL is the problem. This has led me to come to conclusions about what's going on for him.</i>
One or two questions from the lens that feel relevant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Who is defining the problem?</i></li> <li>• <i>From which perspective am I seeing this situation?</i></li> </ul>
Questions I could ask this client	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>I'm curious how you see the situation. To me it looks like you're not willing to implement PBL, but I want to understand your perspective.</i></li> </ul>

Systems Thinking Lens	
Reflection Prompts	Analysis
One or two assumptions that help me understand the situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Whatever is happening in a moment is exactly what is supposed to happen in the system as it is. If we understand these interactions, we can intervene to change them.</i></li> <li>• <i>Conflict and tension in a system are necessary and natural.</i></li> </ul>
Insights from this assumption	<i>Mahesh is part of a system. I haven't thought about the larger system and considered the leverage points in the system as a whole. I also recognize that Mahesh's reluctance to implement PBL might be beneficial if it reveals other tension points in the system.</i>
One or two questions from the lens that feel relevant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>How did this system generate the behavior we're seeing?</i></li> <li>• <i>If we shift our perspective, what might we understand about this situation?</i></li> </ul>
Questions I could ask this client	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What do you think we could have done differently in the roll out of PBL?</i></li> </ul>

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Emotional Intelligence Lens	
Reflection Prompts	Analysis
One or two assumptions that help me understand the situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotional intelligence allows us to speak about emotions, ask for help, and establish boundaries.</li> <li>• Emotional intelligence is the foundation of emotional resilience, adaptability, and flexibility.</li> </ul>
Insights from this assumption	<i>I hadn't thought about how Mahesh's EI is at play here. I hadn't considered what he was feeling, or how his emotions might be contributing to his experience. I also hadn't thought about how my feelings are affecting the situation—I hadn't recognized that I've been frustrated with Mahesh.</i>
One or two questions from the lens that feel relevant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What indicators are there that people are aware of their emotions?</li> <li>• Where is fear present?</li> </ul>
Questions I could ask this client	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell me about how you've experienced the rollout of PBL. What feelings have come up for you in this process?</li> <li>• What are your fears about PBL?</li> </ul>

Lens of Compassion	
Reflection Prompts	Analysis
One or two assumptions that help me understand the situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curiosity, humility, and trust foster the development of compassion.</li> </ul>
Insights from this assumption	<i>I wonder how I can deepen my compassion for Mahesh. I wonder if my compassion has been wavering as I've become frustrated with him.</i>
One or two questions from the lens that feel relevant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can listening help us cultivate compassion?</li> <li>• How do we support others to discover their best qualities?</li> </ul>
Questions I could ask this client	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can I support you?</li> </ul>

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Equity Lens	
Reflection Prompts	Analysis
One or two assumptions that help me understand the situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Systemic oppression manifests in economic, political, social, and cultural systems and in interpersonal relationships.</i></li> </ul>
Insights from this assumption	<p><i>I wonder how his identity experiences might be at play. Mahesh came from an upper middle class background and his students were all low-income, and I wonder about how this affects his beliefs about instruction, management, and student needs. I also wonder about the cultural and racial differences between Mahesh and his students and how those play out in his classroom. Finally, I'm reflecting on the differences between us—it feels like there are so many differences when I consider our race, ethnicity, linguistic background, gender, class background, religion, and the regions where we grew up, among others. I wonder how these differences might be shaping how I coach Mahesh, and how he feels about me.</i></p>
One or two questions from the lens that feel relevant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>How safe is it for people from marginalized communities to share their truths?</i></li> <li>• <i>What comes up for me around coaching and leading across difference?</i></li> </ul>
Questions I could ask this client	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>I want to acknowledge the difference in our identity markers. I'm curious how you think this difference might be at play, or your identity experiences, in this situation?</i></li> <li>• <i>I'm curious about your comfort level with speaking your truth here. I'm wondering if you feel like you're heard, or if you feel safe to share your perspectives.</i></li> <li>• <i>I'm curious how you think your identity shapes who you are with your students?</i></li> </ul>

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Systems Thinking Lens	
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