

Problem Analysis Questionnaire

1	Explore the problem: gap between current reality and desired state Describe the problem What is the problem? Who says there's a problem? When did it start? What are the symptoms, and where are they seen? Describe your objectives What do you want? Why do you want it? What would that get you? What are the major issues to be decided?
2	Identify stakeholders Who is the decision maker? Who may be affected by the problem? When considering alternatives, who... ...will be affected? ...must be involved in implementing? ...would be able to stop implementation?
3	Identify constraints What are the constraints? (time, money, resources...) What criteria must potential solutions meet? What must be preserved with any solution?
4	Define problem environment (uncontrolled variables) What is the problem environment? What changes have occurred recently? (Why is this a problem now?) What seem to be the major causal factors in this situation? What are likely side effects of the new situation?
5	Explore options: alternative solutions (controllable variables) How could we get there? What are some more options? What are the pros and cons of each option?

Some general tips:

- Notice all of the open questions here (who, what, when, where, why, how). It is important to keep an open mind and questioning attitude throughout the problem-solving process.
- For complex problems, there will probably be different areas of focus at different times, and iteration between these sets of questions.
- Be sure to question constraints, and seek creative solutions to "cons".