A close-up photograph of a wooden pencil with a sharpened lead tip, resting diagonally on a document. The document features a line graph with a vertical axis labeled '100' and '50', and a horizontal axis with years '1993' and '1998'. The pencil is positioned over the graph, and the background is softly blurred.

Conquering the LEAF/CLEA Exam

SKILL SET 16 AND 17

About the Instructor/Course

- Instructor – Jenny Zawitz Jennifer.Zawitz@gmail.com
- CLEA Study Guide: https://www.iaca.net/assets/Files/CLEA_program_outline.pdf
- LEAF Study Guide: https://www.iaca.net/assets/docs/en_2021-LEAF-Program_Outline.pdf
- Exploring Crime Analysis: Readings on Essential Skills (3rd Edition) - IACA
- Each month will cover a different section of the study guide
- Intended as a supplement NOT a substitute for the texts and the Essential Skills classes
 - This course will help you focus your studying, but the courses and text will provide the actual understanding you need to pass the tests



Effective Analytical Writing

SKILL SET 16



Effective Writing Basics

- Key Elements: objectivity, accurate identification of the audience, organization, determining relevant information, clear purpose, concrete and specific terms
- Must understand technique and style, along with how to apply the elements
- Why do we care? Success of the project depends not only on the accuracy of the information but also the manner in which it is presented
- Expository Writing: exposes and idea or point of view by giving detailed explanations and definitions.
- Analytical Writing: expository narrative one step further is the primary writing style of crime analysts
- Note: we are in the communication phase of the analytical cycle for this month
- Book provides great sample of the different types of writing (chapter 16)

Writing Styles

- Creative/Descriptive Writing: tells a story that may or may not be based on fact. Simply provides narration (does not inform, persuade, or justify). Ex: novels.
- Expository Writing: has objective, direct, and specific content. Explains who, what, when, where, why, and how. Intended to inform, provide detailed information about a specific topic. Ideas should be clearly identified and presented. Narrow topic easily identified by the reader.
- Analytical Writing: form of expository writing. Takes the details, facts, and figures AND **draws conclusions for the reader**. Subject matter is analyzed for the reader.
- Crime analysis writing is effective when it incorporates elements of good writing – sufficient supporting details, clearly identified problems and purpose, logical organization, communicating a sense of completion, and demonstrating an understanding of technique and style. Consider reasoning fallacies and use problem-solving techniques to ensure your argument is strong and accurate.

Writing Styles – What is What?

- Ex: Lock your doors and your windows or you may be the next victim of the latest series of burglaries. While you are gone, your house is at risk. Hide your jewelry.
- Ex: An increase in burglaries has been identified in CITY between the hours of 0800 and 1000 in blocks A and B. Entry has been through unlocked doors.
- Ex: During the last month, a 150% increase in burglaries (n=15) has been observed in blocks A and B. Burglaries have occurred between 0800-1000 through unlocked doors. Given the property taken and the requirement of a vehicle to remove them, this suggests the suspect may live within the gated community or associate with a resident. It is recommended that the information be disseminated to the residents of the target area with anti-theft tips.

Creative/Descriptive

Expository

Analytical (draws a conclusion)

Objectivity

- Objectivity means free from opinion, personal feelings, and prejudices. Require detail, unbiased, fair writing.
- Subjectivity involves the influences of personal interest, prejudices, and emotions.
- Crime analyst writing is based on data that has been identified, compiled, and analyzed to be sorted and evaluated in a variety of ways. This process is inherently subjective. Summarizing the facts and turning them into useful information requires some interpretation about what should or should not be included and what conclusions or recommendations follow the data.
- Therefore, crime analysis writing is an expository analytical writing style with a degree of subjectivity.
- Can meet the objectivity metric by avoiding writing in the first person (using “I think”), third person (“the committee thinks”), and phrase the conclusion as an assertion supported by evidence (“Implementation of an eight beat shift equally distributed by calls for service supports the deployment of two officers per shift per beat to provide equal coverage”).
- Third person writing may be appropriate when you are a member of a committee asked to make a recommendation.
- Regardless of the person, conclusions must always be supported by facts.

Identification of Audience and Purpose

- Who is your audience and why do they need to know?
- May include supervisors, other analysts, administrations, public, patrol/investigations, etc.
- Reader's level of knowledge helps determine how much background information to include, along with the level of detail and vocabulary (be aware of acronyms)
- Purpose: what outcome are you anticipating? By definition, the purpose of analytical writing is to present facts, explain a process, or define a concept. Needs to be immediately clear to your audience. May need to break down the overall topic into subtopics and identify issues associated with each one. Request feedback to help you determine if your purpose was clearly understood.


Details and Language

- Details: determining relevant information. Consider what your audience needs to know and what they don't. Consider each audience and what each might need to know.
- Language: strong language skills promote greater understanding of your material and a greater chance that you will achieve your desired results. Choose concrete and specific terms.
 - Abstract vs. Concrete terms (opposites) and General vs. Specific terms (range)
 - Abstract terms: ideas or concepts aka non-tangibles. Ex: good, bad, many, successful. Can mean different things to different readers and should be used as little as possible in analytical writing.
 - Concrete terms: describe tangible objects or events. Ex: prison, gun, knife, pencils. Concepts are stable.
 - General vs. specific terms: general terms can be confusing and vague when they describe broad categories of objects or events. Ex: crime. More specific = violent crime, homicide, domestic homicide. Specific terms have a clearer meaning and can create greater, audience-specific interest.
- For crime analysis writing, want to use concrete terms that are as specific as possible based on your audience.

Organizing Your Writing

- Executive Summary: method of organizing your analytical writing that allows readers to immediately find the information they are looking for. Includes important results and conclusions of a report and summarizes them.
- Analytical Outline: method of organizing that allows the readers to find what they are looking for quickly and easily in an outline form (as opposed to a paragraph/page of an exec summary)
- Great for quarterly reports to quickly analyze key data points followed by actual data.
- Advantages:
 - Readers find what they need quickly and easily
 - Get readers attention by beginning with concrete results
 - Immediately expose readers to your point of view so it won't be misunderstood
 - Writing will be shorter and easier to write
 - Avoid cluttering writing with minor details which now go in the appendices

Style and Technique

- Must be adapted to the intended audience and purpose
 - Clarity: writing is uncomplicated, straightforward, and easy to understand. Error free standard of writing conventions (grammar, spelling, punctuation, and paragraph spacing)
 - Coherent writing: intelligible and articulate. Use transitions, pronouns, repetition, and parallel structures to ensure ideas are linked to one another and have a logical order.
 - Consistency: same tone is maintained throughout the document (formal or informal, personal or professional)
 - Concise writing: condenses meaning into the fewest possible words. Ties back to choices of detail inclusion. Use active voice and statements in positive form.
- 

Problem Identification

- Must first clarify the problem
- Larger problems may also have subproblems to be addressed
- Must be relevant to our purpose
- New problems may also surface during the problem-solving process
- If using scientific process, problem is presented as a hypothesis
- Problem solving techniques presented on the next slides are reviewed as “right brain” and “left brain” techniques by the author.

Problem-Solving Techniques (Left Brain)

- Analysis: identification of the components of a situation and consideration of relationships among the parts – linear problem-solving technique.
- Categorizing/Classifying: identifying and selecting rules to group objects, events, people, etc.
- Challenging Assumptions: direct confrontation of ideas/opinions/attitudes previously taken for granted.
- Evaluating/Judging: comparison to a standard and making judgement of value or worth.
- Inductive/Deductive Reasoning: systematic and logical development of rules or concepts either from specific instances to larger concepts or larger concepts to a specific situation.
- Thinking Aloud: verbalizing a problem and the solution while a partner listens for errors in thinking/understanding
- Network Analysis: relationships among activities, events, resources, and timelines are developed and charted. Ex: event flow chart
- Task Analysis: consider skills and knowledge required to learn or perform a task. Ex: money laundering activity flow chart.

Problem-Solving Techniques (Right Brain)

- Brainstorming: spontaneously generating as many ideas on a subject as possible
- Imaging/Visualization: producing mental pictures of the total problem or specific parts of the problem. Ex: mind map which shows your problem at the core with questions branching out.
- Incubation: put aside the problem, do something else, and allow mind to unconsciously consider it.
- Outrageous Provocation: making a statement that is known to be absolutely incorrect and then considering it hoping to bridge a new idea.
- Overload: considering a large number of facts/details until the brain becomes overwhelmed and looks for patterns.
- Random Word Technique: select a word randomly from the dictionary and juxtaposing it with a problem statement, then brainstorming the relationships.
- Synthesizing: combining parts or elements into a new, original pattern.
- Taking Another's Perspective: deliberately taking on another person's point of view.

Reasoning Fallacies

- Ad hominem Argument: attacking the person(s) rather than the idea or argument.
- False Dilemma: presenting either/or choice when there are more than two options
- Oversimplification: common in crime analysis – describe a problem as a broad category (robbery) rather than in specific situational terms (convenience store robberies)
- Divert Attention from the Issue: blaming an agency's shortcomings for one's inefficiency as a crime analyst.
- Appeals to Questionable Authority: forming arguments based on ideas from authorities who lack credibility.
- Confusing What Should Be with What Is: lack of acceptance of reality and over-idealization.
- Confusing Naming with Explanation: common fallacy in crime analysis. Listing the crime instead of explaining who, what, where, when, why, and how.

Analytical Products

SKILL SET 17



Tactical Analysis Publication

- Notify police agencies about the existence of a pattern or series and describe its relevant characteristics
- May suggest potential suspects, forecast future events, provide investigative leads, and suggest possible strategies.
- Appeal to line-level personnel and immediate supervisors.
- Provide enough information for officers and detectives to take personal individual initiative and provide enough information for supervisors to plan broader tactics.
- Many crime analyst publications take the form of multi-purpose bulletins issued weekly/daily which combine all types of publications.

Strategic Analysis Publications

- Publications that track and describe trends: periodic statistical reports that show changes in crime and analyze the most severe change. Quantitative aspects of crime and disorder
- Publications that analyze problems: combine police data with primary data collected by the analyst to explore the underlying causes and potential solutions of long-term or chronic problems.
- Can be created for the public as well as departmental consumption
- Aim to assist long-term planning and to direct problem-solving efforts
- Write them with higher-level supervisors, command staff, and even non-police audiences in mind.

Administrative Analysis Publication

- Usually based on individual requests in response to a specific question
- Analyst interpretation is key
- Most requestors seek simple data, but without explanation, the data may be misinterpreted or misapplied
- Balance what the person requests and what they need
- Operations Analysis Publications: Study police allocation of resources, workload distribution, staffing, and officer productivity.
 - Speak primarily to police administrators and executives. Balance qualitative and quantitative data.
- Publications may be published to an intranet site which may require hyperlinks for updated reports. Can benefit officers in the field by giving them real time information that they can access from anywhere. Can be a challenge depending on formatting, language required, and ability to replicate reports for outside parties.

Considerations for Effective Crime Analysis Products

- Know your audience – may need to tailor your generic bulletin to your specific audience
- Keep it brief
- Illustrate and entertain – use visuals, maps, mug shots, photos of wanted persons, etc.
- Interpret and explain data. Use analysis and commentary to help clarify statistics and data
- Effective writing – use jokes, slang and novelties sparingly or not at all.
- Understand the rules of grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
- Use the active voice
- Favor specific over vague or general
- Favor descriptive verbs and nouns over adjectives and adverbs

Design and Layout (Printed Content)

- Know what you have available and how to use it.
 - Lists, tables, borders, shading, images, graphs and charts, text formatting, etc.
- Use color with care – think about black and white vs. color and photocopies
- Limit your use of fonts – no more than two per document (one for titles and one for text)
- Use lists to break up paragraphs and present information in chunks (bullets/numbers)
- Bold key words and phrases (vehicle/suspect info, recommendations). Not too much
- Arrange tabular data in tables (don't use tabs or spaces)
- Use borders and shading to attract attention and draw the eye (agency name in border)
- Edit your images
- Use text boxes to carefully position text and objects (can position text over objects)
- White space makes your documents less intimidating (i.e. don't cram too much in your bulletin)

Design and Layout (Online Content)

- Never require horizontal scrolling (and eliminate any scrolling if possible)
- Design with the user's resolution in mind. Readers will probably have monitors set at 1024 x 768 or 800 x 600 so don't cram too much in the screen space
- Use hyperlinks (can add context without taking up more space and allows for different readers with different interests to get more information or ignore extensive detail if not needed)
- Smaller paragraphs, more emphasis – again brevity and white space are key. Readers may often scan online text rather than read it, so bold important points
- Design with printing in mind. Some people insist on printing so don't mess with the window's width
- If you must design a specific layout, use a table. You can specify the number of pixels, ensuring that all users will see the same thing regardless of screen resolution or browser window size.

Design and Layout (Email Content)

- Per the book: do not design complex e-mail layouts.
- Users probably won't see the e-mail's HTML format the way you do
- Different email programs render layouts in different ways depending on server and client settings
- Users may also not be able to see images in the email (may be attachments), text formatting, or hyperlinks
- If you must, use CAPS instead of bolding and carefully label attachments for images and visual aids
- Users also tend to scan more and absorb less in an effort to clear emails quickly
- Use a descriptive subject header

Additional Points for Bulletins

- Dissemination: encouraging people and supervisors to read = key
- Regularity builds readership – publish regular bulletins so people know when to expect information to come.
- Don't make your readers search for your products. Use consistent titles in emails/links on the intranet so users can find them.
- Try multiple means of dissemination. Email your bulletin, and print out copies to put around the roll call room/tack them onto bulletin boards
- Look for stakeholders outside of your agency. Can send this to groups (with departmental permission) that may also benefit from the information. Ex: neighborhood groups – crime stats
- Ask for feedback.

Conclusions

- Read the books and take the classes to strengthen understanding.
- Try to apply the things learned to your every day work to “make them stick”.
- Use the study guides.
 - <https://iaca.net/about-clea/> (links for program outline and study guides here)
 - <https://iaca.net/about-leaf/> (links for program outline and study guides here)
- Next month: Applied Crime Series Analysis (Skill Set 18) and Overall Review.

Any questions?

