Are You a Systems Thinker?
Crosswalk to the literature and SLA competencies.
The Systems Thinking Perspective Project.

The attached crosswalk is intended to illustrate connections
between systems thinking, personal assessment and the competencies
our profession has highlighted as laudable and required for success in
the information fields. The SLA competencies serve as grounding for the
value of systems thinking concepts in relation to expertise in our profession (1).

The articles mapped to in the "Related literature and web resources" column of the Crosswalk have been selected
from the brief bibliography accompanying this site (2). In the crosswalk, these articles are also linked to the
various personal assessment probes (3). The articles and web resources were chosen because they either
illustrate or support the value of adopting the behavior(s) suggested by the associated assessment probes.
Certainly other pertinent articles exist; however we felt this set provides readers a start in learning more about
systems thinking behaviors they have yet to demonstrate in their own professional work. Note that these articles
are intended to go beyond the systems thinking work by Peter Senge and his colleagues, but we urge you to
refer to his works for additional ideas and support.

Site visitors are encouraged to contribute to this table with suggested supportive literature via the Systems
Thinking Perspective Project blog.

1. Competencies for Information Professionals. Washington, DC. Special Libraries Association. 2003
   http://www.sla.org/PDFs/Competencies2003_revised.pdf
2. Systems Thinking Perspective Project webliography: see this page.
3. Systems Thinking Perspective Project: Behaviors that Drive Innovation in Information Delivery
   http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=88692854536

1. Interconnectedness

A system is a group of interacting and interdependent components that form a unified whole. Systems thinking emphasizes the relationships between a system's parts, rather than the parts themselves.

How do you view your work and your priorities in relation to those of other departments in your organization?

Systems Thinking Assessment Probe	SLA Competencies	Related Literature and Web Resources
I see my overall contribution as integral to the workings of the entire organization, not just a service for clients that approach me.	A1; A2; A8; B4;C1;P1	Argyris (1991); Cooper (1998); Corliss (2005); Ray (2000); Roberts (1993);
I consider time spent outside the information center conversing with current and potential customers about their information needs and experiences time well spent.	A5; A6; B2; C1; C2; P1; P7; P12; P10	Garvin (1993); Edgeplace (web); Isaacs (1993)
I actively participate in planning meetings for new initiatives in my organization	A1; A8; B1; C1; P1; P5; P11; D1; D2	Cooper (1998); Corliss (2005); Duck (1993); Isaacs (1993); Kim (1995); Warren (1999)
I actively participate in project start-up activities in my organization.	A1; A8; B1; C1; P1; P5; P11; D1; D2	Isaacs (1993)
When considering strategic planning, or personal/ professional goal setting in the context of strategic planning, I look beyond the information center to see the impact of my work on the entire organization.	A1; A3; A4; A7; C1; C2; C3; C5; D1; D3; P2	Corliss (2005); Duck (1993); Garvin (1993); Kim (1995); Ray (2000)

#2 **Partnership and Leverage**

Tapping the insights and knowledge of all persons in the organization helps to identify leverage points for producing the best business results.

Do you increase your leverage and effectiveness through partnering with other departments and individuals?

Systems Thinking Assessment Probe	SLA Competencies	Related Literature and Web Resources
I build partnerships and collegial relationships outside of the information center. (i.e. Knowing what is going on around you can help reveal opportunities for influence and reward.)	A1; B2; B5; P5	Duck (1993); Garvin (1993)
In order to check alignment with organizational priorities and to brainstorm ideas for increasing the effectiveness of the information center, I regularly participate in open dialogue with management. (ie employ brainstorming and dialogue tools to look for opportunities that yield the best return.)	A1; A2; A4; P3; P7; C1	Crawford-Mason (2004); Garvin (1993); Meadows (1997); Webber (1999)
I have identified key stakeholders within the organization and communicate with them frequently to assess how information center products and services support creative thinking and innovation.	A7; P3; P9	Garvin (1993); Kim (1995); Meadows (1997)
I am confident I can articulate the challenges facing the information center and solicit potential solutions from management. (That is, by understanding their needs and a deeper level in conjunction with information center development, opportunities can be identified)	A2; A4; P3	Denning (2004); Gardner (1993); Regar (2004); Ray (2000); Wolstenhome (1994)
I periodically ask myself if I am making my assumptions and opinions explicit when speaking with colleagues.	A5; P3; P6	Argyris (1991); Isaacs (1993); The Ladder (1998)
I honestly believe I make my assumptions and opinions explicit when speaking with clients about projects we are undertaking together. (ie by creating a clean slate -- open and honest communication is facilitated and leverage opportunities can be revealed).	A5; P3; P6	Bellinger (web);I Edgeplace (web); Garvin (1993); Isaacs (1993); The Ladder (1998)

3. Personal Mastery

Personal Mastery refers to individual learning. It involves defining a clear vision of what one wishes to achieve and setting about to accomplish that

How do you encourage learning and knowledge sharing behaviors in your environment?

Systems Thinking Assessment Probe	SLA Competencies	Related Literature and Web Resources
I value and make a conscious effort to spend time with experts in other departments to observe their daily activities in order to inform my own thinking about how information and knowledge sharing can improve their work.	B2;C2;P5;P7; P11;P12	Garvin (1993)
I communicate with experts in other departments—both in person and electronically-- to share my expertise with them as I learn more about their work.		Crawford-Mason (2004); Duck (1993); Garvin (1993)
I seek opinions of staff and colleagues from a variety of departments to obtain a broad range of potential solutions to problems.	A5; A7; C1; P7; P6; P12	Garvin (1993); Sharma (2003); Webber (1999); Wolstenhome (1994)
I routinely share what I learn from conferences and colleagues outside the organization with my staff and other colleagues and encourage them to share their insights and evidence with others.	A5; A6; P10; P12	Garvin (1993); Isaacs (1993); Sharma (2003)

4. Discussion and Dialogue

Do discussions with colleagues invite alternative ways of viewing problems and suggestions for new ways of working?

Inquiry, conversation, listening and understanding in an atmosphere of trust and respect can lead to breakthroughs and creative energy.

Systems Thinking Assessment Probe	SLA Competencies	Related Literature and Web Resources
I view admissions of mistakes as healthy rather than as a sign of weakness or failure on the part of an individual.	A5; P3; P6	Argyris (1991); Argyris (1995); Broersma (1995); Cooper (1998); Isaacs (1993); Leape (1994)
When there is a process failure, I seek to identify and understand the root causes of the problem, and then work on solutions.	A5; P6;	Argyris (1991); Corliss (2005); Garvin (1993); Sterman (2001); Tucker (2003)
I seek, though communication and partnership, solutions to problems that can be developed and implemented thoughtfully and in a non-threatening environment.	A5; A7; C1; D4; P3; P8; P11	Argyris (1991); Duck (1993); Garvin (1993) Sterman (2001); Tucker (2003); Webber (1999)
I carefully review difficult conversations in order to understand participants' mental models, and thus improve my part in subsequent conversations.		Isaacs (1993)