

Conflict cloud: challenge assumptions

State a shared objective, represent both legitimate needs fairly, expose the assumptions behind incompatible actions and design a test that checks both needs and unwanted effects.



Large batches and small batches are positions

Fictional workshop: production manager Arun wants large batches to use scarce setup capability responsibly. Customer-service manager Mei wants small batches to respond to changing demand. Both want reliable delivery. Facilitator Sol helps them investigate the apparent conflict without treating either person as the problem.

Your role and the reference condition

Neutral facilitator with both decision owners and affected operators.

Normal: An improvement should meet the legitimate needs behind both positions and preserve necessary quality and safety conditions.

Gap: A proposed compromise batch size has been chosen before anyone tests why each action is believed necessary.

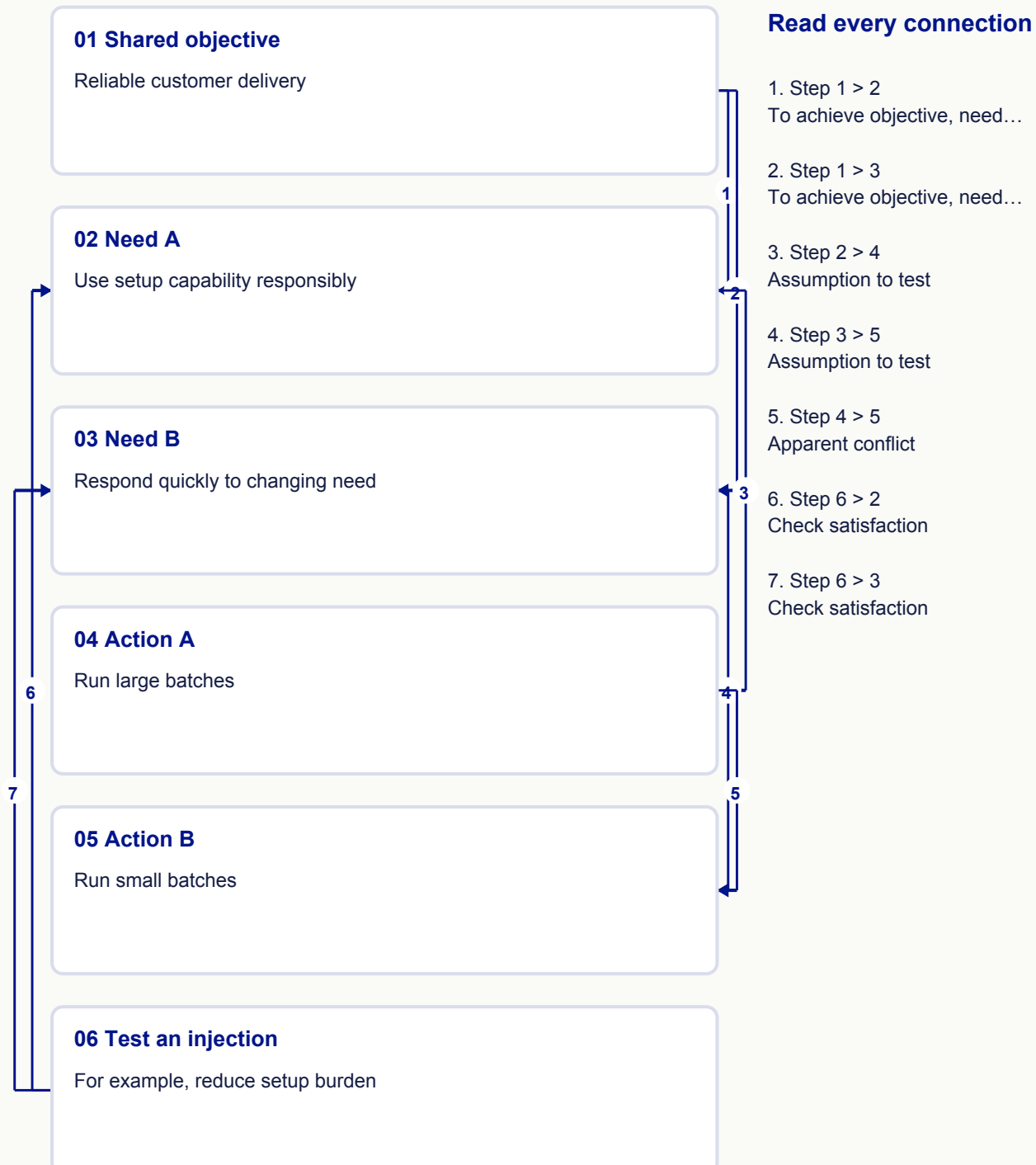
Work within these conditions

1. The cloud represents necessity assumptions to examine, not proof that the arrows are true.
2. The proposed injection is a hypothesis that requires practical validation.

Fictional teaching case. Supplied observations support the exercise; proposed actions are not verified customer results.

See how the method works

Begin by stating an objective both sides can support. Describe each legitimate need and the action each side believes is required to satisfy it. Put the conflicting actions beside each other, then examine the assumptions connecting the boxes. Look for a change that can satisfy both needs without preserving the conflict. That proposed injection remains a hypothesis: test its practical consequences and look for unwanted effects. Do not disguise a preferred solution as neutral logic or assume compromise is the only option. The drawing supports a respectful discussion of policies and beliefs, not a verdict about which person is wrong.



Connected method map: Shared objective, Need A, Need B, Action A, Action B, Test an injection. Every authored connection is shown with a numbered arrow and named legend.

Follow the evidence and decisions

Inspect the supplied case inputs

Cloud element	Case statement
Shared objective	Reliable customer delivery
Need A	Use setup capability responsibly
Need B	Respond quickly to changing need
Action A	Run large batches
Action B	Run small batches
Candidate assumption	Frequent changes must consume excessive stopped time

01 / Agree an objective both parties recognize

Sol asks Arun and Mei to restate the goal in terms both accept: reliable customer delivery under the required operating conditions. She checks that neither side's private target has been substituted.

Why: Without a genuinely shared objective, the diagram can force agreement that does not exist.

Evidence / check: Both owners confirm the objective and the necessary conditions.

02 / Separate needs from actions

Record setup capability and responsiveness as legitimate needs. Place large and small batches as the conflicting proposed actions, using each person's own explanation.

Why: Treating a chosen action as a need can make the conflict look unavoidable. Fair representation allows alternative actions to emerge.

Evidence / check: Two needs and two distinct actions are visible; neither person is blamed.

03 / Expose and test the necessity assumptions

Ask why responsible setup use is believed to require large batches and why responsiveness is believed to require small batches. Investigate actual setup work, mix changes and delivery effects.

Why: An arrow is a claim about necessity. Evidence may show that a specific assumption, such as unavoidable preparation during stopped time, is not always valid.

Evidence / check: Assumption log distinguishes observed facts, beliefs and missing evidence.

04 / Propose an injection that could serve both

The team considers preparing verified changeover kits externally where approved, reducing avoidable stopped preparation while retaining required internal controls. It predicts whether smaller releases could then serve demand without unacceptable setup burden.

Why: The injection addresses an assumption; it is not simply the midpoint between two batch sizes. It remains a proposal until both needs are tested.

Evidence / check: Trial checks setup burden and customer responsiveness, with quality and operator workload retained.

05 / Check unwanted effects and revise

Review missing kits, wrong configurations, extra preparation workload and delivery results during a bounded trial. Accept, adapt or reject the injection with both owners.

Why: A solution that satisfies one need while shifting hidden cost or risk onto another person has not resolved the stated conflict.

Evidence / check: Decision cites evidence for both needs and the necessary conditions.

Completed conflict and assumption record

Element	Statement	Next test
Objective	Reliable delivery	Both owners agree
Need A / action A	Responsible setups / large batches	Is all preparation necessarily internal?
Need B / action B	Responsiveness / small batches	Which release pattern serves actual changes?
Injection	Approved external kit preparation	Measure both needs
Unwanted effects	Readiness/quality/workload	Include in trial review

A minimum processing batch is technically required

Evidence shows an approved process requires a specific processing batch, and no alternative is yet qualified.

Decision

Retain that requirement and explore other assumptions, such as transfer batching or preparation delay, with the responsible owner.

Reasoning

Challenging an assumption does not grant authority to ignore a verified process constraint.

What would change the decision?

The revised cloud distinguishes a validated condition from an untested belief.

Practise with a changed case

Weekly approval versus daily response

Separate fictional office: one manager wants all approval reviews on Friday to use specialist time efficiently; another wants daily decisions to meet customer response promises. Both seek correct, timely commitments. A proposal schedules a short daily review of complete cases, with preparation handled separately.

Element	Case evidence
Need A	Use limited approval expertise responsibly
Need B	Respond within agreed customer window
Actions	Weekly batch / daily review
Candidate injection	Ready cases; short protected daily decision slot

Your task

1. Write the objective, two needs and conflicting actions.
2. Name an assumption that the proposal could challenge.
3. Specify evidence for both needs and an unwanted effect to check.

Use the next page to record your reasoning before reading the answer.

Your practice worksheet

Weekly approval versus daily response

Shared objective

Need/action distinction

Assumption and evidence

Injection prediction

Dual-need and unwanted-effect checks

Complete your reasoning before turning to the answer. Use the separate learner workbook for group practice.

Check your reasoning and transfer it

1. The shared objective is correct, timely customer commitments. Efficient use of expertise and timely response are needs; weekly batching and daily reviewing are proposed actions.
2. One testable assumption is that daily review necessarily wastes more specialist time. Ready-case preparation and a protected slot might alter that relationship.
3. Measure specialist review/preparation burden, decision timeliness and correctness. Check interruptions, incomplete cases and shifted workload; do not declare success from daily meetings alone.

Suggested completed record

Cloud / test element	Statement	Evidence to collect
Need A	Responsible use of expertise	Review/preparation burden
Need B	Timely correct response	Decision timeliness and quality
Assumption	Daily review necessarily inefficient	Test with ready cases
Unwanted effect	Preparation shifted elsewhere	Observe workload and rework

Plausible wrong turns

1. A conflict cloud is not a voting device or proof of causation.
2. A compromise action is not automatically an injection that meets both needs.

Evidence of a sound answer

1. Represent both parties fairly.
2. Test an explicit assumption.
3. Require evidence for both needs and unwanted consequences.

Take the learning back to work

Commitment	Agreed follow-through
Owner	Both decision owners with a neutral facilitator
Record	Agreed cloud, assumption evidence and bounded injection test
Review	At trial agreement and after evidence from the defined test period
Verification evidence	Both legitimate needs met with necessary conditions and unwanted effects examined
If unresolved	Revise the assumptions or injection jointly; do not report a plausible diagram as a validated resolution.

Help someone else apply the method

Prepare

1. Five cloud-element cards and an assumption log
2. Separate trial/undesirable-effect sheet

Minutes	Activity and coaching prompt
4	Agree the shared objective Would both owners sign this wording?
8	Separate positions from needs Why is batch size an action rather than the underlying need?
8	Build the office cloud Which necessity assumption might the daily slot change?
5	Design the test How could the proposal help one side but harm the other?

Debrief

1. Invite each participant to restate the other person's need accurately.
2. Distinguish an untested assumption from a verified process restriction.

Individual or remote practice

Write both sides in respectful first-person language, then test one arrow rather than arguing for a favored action.

Connect the method and check its boundaries

Before application

1. Both parties represented fairly
2. Specific conflict

Outside this lesson

1. A compromise is not necessarily resolution
2. A plausible injection still needs testing

TOCICO: Introduction to Thinking Processes

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Conflict, assumptions and win-win injections; public synopsis only

Public course synopsis only; no claim to have viewed restricted course content.

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