

It is generally understood that hardware—be it metal and plastic, or bone and muscle—has its engineering. It is less understood that process (or “function”) has its form of engineering as well.

Much of “process engineering” comes from study of processes in either manufacturing/construction, or computers, or transportation. The process of manufacturing a car or an airplane, or building a skyscraper has many thousands of steps. Similar steps in computer processing are represented by many thousands of lines of code. A bus or airline schedule has hundreds of departures and destinations. In all of these processes, bewildering numbers of connections, sequences and interactions must cooperate.

In contrast to this macro-analysis, most human performance analysis tends to be on a micro- level. Analysis of tennis, golf, baseball, boxing, skiing, etc. generally focuses on a single action, like a swing or a punch. Scenario building, on the other hand, such as done for military or police, or other high-consequence activities, thinks on this larger scale, one of process or tactic.

Tactic Relies upon Logistics

In basic terms, tactic is arranging so that one's own assets and liabilities have an advantage over the other's arrangement of assets and liabilities. Assets and liabilities (A&L) synergize with each other—the whole becomes more than the parts.

Tactic includes organizing our own A&L, and also upsetting the other's organization of A&L. In military terms, this might be securing our supply lines while

disrupting the enemy's, or laying down suppressing fire during an attack. In Wing Chun, a parallel would be maintaining our CenterLine while breaking the Other's, or trapping his hands while hitting. In either case, A&L must arrive on-time—that is logistics.

Resources are always limited—physical resources like time, strength and endurance, and cognitive resources like working memory. The situation is ever-changing, so we need both the hand and the idea of how to use it instantly available. Think of it too late, and we might as well not have it.

We have to solve his puzzle before he solves ours.

Solving the Puzzles

Wing Chun is known for its “sticking” and its “trapping”. But since Wing Chun players want to be able to escape the trapping done by their partners, the traps can be solved. This suggests that we think of them rather as puzzles. They do not have to remain secured for long—just long enough to hit. So what is important is not that they are inescapable, but that we give the other player too little time to solve the puzzle.

“How You Slice It”

A complex subject like Wing Chun can be “sliced” or broken up and organized in many ways. “Four Gates Theory” is one useful approach to Wing Chun. The Four Gates model divides the work on a spatial basis, by what region of space the technique is used in. In this way Four Gates resembles a “zone defense” in basketball, or regional divisions in a corporation.