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Revisiting Sun Tzu in the Information Overload Age for Applied Intelligence Education: Stop Answering, Find Good Questions

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ABSTRACT: Sun Tzu's 'Art of War' is an illustration of the Chinese Strategic Mode of thinking. Today, faced with Information Overload it is unclear if the model of "Foreknowledge" is as relevant as it once was. The method we used in this paper is Action Research to compare an Occidental approach and an Asian approach. The results obtained are applied suggestions to Intelligence Education. The contribution is to show how to step away from the epistemic of the information-centric approach to shift to a more multi-centric approach. We identified anchors such as strategic and critical questioning, identifying source people we do not yet know, and uncertainty-acceptance and bounded rationality. The implications are numerous. We are not so much dependent on the information available as associated with Big Data and software. Our suggestions can be used in Small and Medium-Sized Organizations and do not necessitate resources associated with Large Organizations.

KEYWORDS: Applied Intelligence Education, Sun Tzu, Competitive Intelligence, strategic questioning, information.

Introduction

The 'Art of War'ⁱ was written by the Chinese general Sun Tzu centuries ago and continues to be a standard text for the study of Intelligence Education. The concept of 'Foreknowledge' in particular - 'observe your environment and you will win your battles' - has been used as a cornerstone for discourses and practices in Intelligence for Business, Law Enforcement and National Security.

In this context, we are faced with a gap between our capacity and our intention. Baumard (2012) noticed that 'the art of being right overtook that of reflection' (p. 175). We want to notice, we want to observe the environment to win 'battles' but the representation of the environment is much richer today in terms of informationⁱⁱ and the battles are more diverse than ever before. 'Noticing noticing' (Neugarten, 2008) in small organizations allows the identification of postures and beliefs, different from the traditional discourse that is usually associated with large organizations.

Our resources to observe the environment have improved over time, but our increasing information needs in today's complex environments continue to push capabilities to the limit. Until in the past, our challenge is not lack of information, but an information explosion. So the question is: In the Information Overload Age, how can we adjust our thinking to better inform ourselvesⁱⁱⁱ and our leaders? How can Sun Tzu's Art of War enlighten us today? Considering Information Overload, can we use Sun Tzu's Art of War today in the same manner we have done in the past?

The focus of this article is 'how to think and how to inform oneself' differently', in a position of information asymmetry^{iv}, for intelligence matters in small organizations^v during other periods than in 'peace'^{vi}.

How shall we think and inform ourselves professionally when we suffer from Information Overload and from Missing Information? In France, since the 90's, Occidental Competitive Intelligence discourses have not succeeded in influencing small companies. There were epistemological misleadings (Frion, 2012).

How can we use the Chinese Strategic thinking mode derived from SunTzu's work^{vii}, to produce an operational system when we want to think or to inform ourselves, in an Occidental environment, when a company experiences Information Asymmetry?

Sun Tzu's work has been considered an Art and has not been modelized with clear success. Should we try and modelize it?

Our aim is to help occidental leaders to question themselves and to choose between two approaches,

and by doing so, offer a modern contribution to Applied Intelligence Education. Our challenge is determining when should we use the Occidental approach based on modelization and when should we use the Asian approach based on the potential of the situation?

The authors are also trying to understand similarities and differences in order to identify the transferable skills across the Intelligence Fields. Sun Tzu was an Army general and his book was written with direct military purposes. We try and use Sun Tzu's legacy for Competitive Intelligence in particular for small organizations experiencing information asymmetry. This article is directly dedicated to Intelligence Education for Business, but can be adapted for the Police and for the Military.

Our research method is mainly Action Research with these two approaches, each being put forward by one of the two authors.

We will present the major criteria to select the Modeling Approach and the Potential of Situation Approach, as well as a combination of methods along the continuum between the two.

It is difficult to understand the world today; simple situations are rare. It cannot be taken in simple parts: It is complex (Morin, 1986). There is a need for a global approach to think and to inform ourselves, as well as a necessity for ad hoc techniques and methods, when established processes are determined to be inappropriate or ineffective.

Background related work

The Art of War has been studied, translated and adapted since before the Information Age. In today's environment, it is important that many major and implicit considerations be identified and made explicit.

Foreknowledge

The scene: Sun Tzu is leading an army on behalf of a Sovereign. He is using a variety of people within and outside his army to collect data. Military training teaches to fight, as well as how to observe the environment in order to secure and cease opportunities. He is using simple soldiers, civilians, scouts and spies to maintain situational awareness. Many Intelligence Education works are based on the input-output model. Information is sought, gathered and processed. Objectivity is key; no preconceived idea can be accepted. In today's environment, technology is a cornerstone in the process. Many works deal with Information Searching on a system, sometimes as a substitute to Human Intelligence. The human dimension is often ignored, except in a few contributions, such as illustrated by Baumard (2012), Boutin (2006 & 2007) or Bulinge (2009). Still, there is an epistemic opacity on how we think and how we

inform ourselves. Even in Intelligence matters, some people consider that every single bit of information should be considered, gathered, checked and used. Consequently, Intelligence organizations or team function like a data gathering and data crunching fusion center, rather than as the analysis center they were often intended to be. They target and filter data/information/intelligence. As Sun Tzu demonstrated, his information requirements were already defined in his orders from his Sovereign, therefore, it is not information that comes first but issues-driven orders from a political leader. The way we read Sun Tzu in the Occident is very information-centered. Focusing on information is misinterpreting or over interpreting (Eco, 1992) Sun Tzu's text.

Spies

In Chapter XIII of the Art of War, Sun Tzu describes the use of spies. Today, conducting competitive intelligence activities for business purposes is legal; however, we always exercise caution not to stray into illegal activities. The value of studying the Art of War in this context, is to understand the different aspects of the use of spies, legal and illegal, in order to recognize and prevent these techniques from being used against us.

Information Overload (IO)

The detrimental impact of Information Overload on an organization has been neglected or ignored. Information Overload is defined here as a feeling of too much information during too short a period of time for a project that is too important to be ignored or to do a quick review of the information available. Not many works refer to Information Overload in Corporate Intelligence, Police and National Security as an Intelligence Education literature. IO is one symptom of the Information Asymmetry.

Size of the organizations

The suggestions from The Art of War have mainly been prepared for large organizations. Sun Tzu refers to an army of a hundred thousand men.

Oriental and Occidental modes

There has been a lack of knowledge, misreading or disregard for the fact that this text was written in an oriental style and is one illustration of a different strategic thinking mode that was generally unfamiliar to the West. It should not be read as an occidental book, with a beginning and an end. It is more a list of thoughts and experiences, presented in a poetic style.

Reading mode

We agree with other authors who contend that Sun Tzu' Art of War should not be read literally. Lévi points out the challenge of translation (2011). For him, one cannot modelize the Chinese Strategic Mode from the Art of War with an Occidental point of view. How can we take advantage of a book we cannot apply as a model? How can we use speech forms such as metaphors, oxymorons and paradoxes^{viii} in an operational way?

Jullien (2002) shows that the Art of War is the expression of the Chinese mode of thinking that is different from the Occidental one (with the limit of not suggesting an operating mode to learn to think differently).

As for Couderc, he provides a deep Text Analysis (2012). He mentions that the ancient Chinese language does not clearly allow us to express an idea. The plasticity of the text, obscurity and ambiguity, made it possible for Sun Tzu'Art of War to live on through centuries.

Modelling or not modelling^{ix}

Shall we try and modelize a text that is using so many poetic representations? This text is considered here as not modelizable. So how are we going to suggest operational hints if we can't modelize it?

Thinking Modes

Major postures in Intelligence such as the Chinese Strategic Mode primarily observe the potential of the situation whereas the Occidental Strategic Mode is based on modelizing. In addition to these two modes, we identified other factors that are sometimes taken into account, such as behaviors, beliefs, organizations, methods, theories, tools and techniques based on a variety of modes and conditions such as luck, serendipity, exposition, provocation, totality of information, repeating what has been done before, looking for homogeneous solutions, making waves or no scandal to name a few. A combination of - some of - them can be useful during a long project whereas during a short activity, beliefs and actions that are not aligned, may create pitfalls. Table 1 presents a brief comparison between the Occidental and the Chinese Strategic Mode.

Table 1: The Chinese and Occidental Strategic Modes to apply Sun Tsu's Art of War

	'Means-end' logic Occidental Strategic Mode	'Condition-consequences' logic Chinese Strategic Mode
Purpose	Destruction of the enemy (Check game) Accomplishment and liberty of individuals (realization of 'I')	Destruction of the enemy (Go game) Success of the group / family: harmony between the places of individuals and society (achievement of 'my role')
Strategy	'Confrontation with the opponent' The environment is transformed by the actions of the actors Objective: convince	Encirclement by the reduction of the room for manoeuver of the opponent' Actors are transformed by the environment Objective: suggest
Relation to the model General representations of things and time Values and beliefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Modelize reality - Distinction (separation and complementarity) between theory and practice - Impose a shape to the reality Materialism, a 'objectivated' world Conscience of the subject, of the individual Linear time Rationality and technological progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adapt the shape to the real - Use of reality prevails over theorization of reality Interdependent world, mysticism. Conscience of the group, community spirit. Immutable circular time Pragmatism, moral and spiritual progress
Opportunities detection	The detection of opportunities based on the reference to a model set by force to reality by the will of the actors	Actors submit to reality. No opportunity outside the process
Approach Description of the World	1. First, definition of the goal, 2. Gather the means, 3. Look for opportunities and ways. Principle of non-contradiction Operating mode: reductionism and logical argumentation	1. Identification of the potentiality of the situation, 2. Anticipation of the consequences by the detection of opportunities 3. Outline the actions depending on the conditions of the environment. Third included logic Operating Mode: aphorisms and metaphors, adjustments, in perspective

Source: Jean-Maurice Bruneau, based on Jullien (1996, 2002)

Conceptual framework model design

Sun Tzu's Art of War is considered valuable and insights are believed to be transferable to Business.

The models we use

We used the works of Jullien (2002) and Herrigel (1953/2004) in particular to address epistemology in intercultural approaches, in particular between the Chinese Strategic Mode of Sun Tzu to create knowledge, and a more Occidental way with modelization.

The main theories we use

User-oriented. Dervin & Nilan (1986) are regularly cited as a change in paradigm from system-oriented research to user-oriented research. Frion & Frion (2008) mention that the person who is looking for information is an actor or even a Director with the intellectual building of the 'Staging of Information'.

We also use Small groups sociology rather than focusing on large groups, and the lack of fulfilment theory from Gödel.

The frameworks we use

Informational Asymmetry: Information is not purely and perfectly distributed among the actors. Small companies generally have less information and fewer resources than larger ones.

Systemism: The Chinese thinking mode is interested in processes.

Complexity: We opt out from the epistemological point of view of objectivity and adopt a more complex position, assuming our subjectivity. In particular, we use the work done by Morin (1986).

We consider 'How to think and how to inform ourselves' and not 'data/information/knowledge management', 'mastering information' or any information-centric approach.

Indetermination postulate: There is no predefined information and predefined goal.

Tier-included logic: The person who is watching the environment is part of the environment and influences it.

Economic warfare: The authors distinguish periods of 'war' and periods of 'peace' for companies.

The hypothesis we make

Information is not always a given. The authors would like to stress that this article refers to Intelligence for Business, Police and National Security and not to data/information/knowledge management. Intelligence is taken here as a rare occasion. We often don't know what to expect. Is it very different

from monitoring the web with deterministic keywords and the 'matching process' among large quantities of information available.

The company does not know the topic very well to start with. It simply cannot start analyzing the first information available. On the contrary, we need to start by asking questions. By doing so, we try and push away the limits that a neophyte can have.

Impossible validation. Frion & Frion (2008) say we cannot validate information, because we would need to validate the validation of the validation in a vicious circle attaining no more than a point of reference. We can just believe in references. The validating process misleads us. They suggest Staging or Directing the information scene with a list of criteria to select the information subject to acceptance. We decrease some analysis after the information and we increase the questioning prior to the information.

Responsibility Principle

Authors use the Responsibility Principle from Hans Jonas (1979/1985) to question our future. How shall we inform ourselves today and tomorrow? Looking at any data available on the web would not be responsible today when we face Information Overload. Not looking would not be responsible either. Looking responsibly, ethically, is what we try to achieve.

Operational versus true

Authors are researcher-practitioners. They study to practice in a more operational way and are not so interested in a theoretical truth.

Small companies are not just large ones on a small scale. They have unique ways of thinking and informing themselves due to their limited access to information and resources.

We reject the progress paradigm in relation to information gathering: For the authors, the progress paradigm that says 'more information is better' is simplistic and misleading. The authors take into account the human dimension and the operational constraints and consequently consider that more information is not necessarily better.

The authors summarized in Table 2, the general Pros & Cons of classical views on modelization and opportunity seizing.

Table 2: Pros & Cons Classical views on modelization and opportunity seizing

	Pros	Cons or To Be Addressed
Opportunity seizing	<p>Thinking rather than Informing Oneself because thinking is synonymous with analyzing the information available (mainly with or after the information).</p> <p>Allow opportunities to be seized.</p> <p>Contextual.</p> <p>Difficult to teach.</p> <p>Adapted for small projects and topics that can be handled by one person or a small group.</p> <p>Weak signals.</p> <p>Does not need hierarchy to be run as long as the leader welcomes weak signals.</p>	<p>'If one does not know to which port one is sailing no wind is favorable' Seneca</p> <p>Not so well adapted for large projects when there is a lot of information or a lot of constraints to review.</p> <p>No beginning and no end.</p> <p>Risk of over-interpretation of the information available.</p> <p>Some negligible information is taken into account.</p> <p>Time consuming to process 'all' the data/environment.</p> <p>Feeling of not leading the process.</p> <p>Work Interruptions.</p> <p>Incitation to stay in the Known Known and the Known Unknown.</p>
Modelization	<p>Informing Oneself rather than Thinking because Informing Oneself is synonymous with working before or without the information available to start with.</p> <p>Not many questions asked, we follow the plan.</p> <p>Avoid/limit Work Interruptions.</p> <p>Easy to teach.</p> <p>There is a beginning, there is an end.</p> <p>No need to process 'all' the data/environment, just the one we need.</p> <p>Feeling of leading the process.</p> <p>Strong signals.</p>	<p>Fragility of the Check List effect.</p> <p>Risk of forgetfulness and blindspots.</p> <p>Does not allow opportunities out of the model.</p> <p>Not contextual.</p> <p>Lack of spontaneity.</p> <p>Lack of use of luck.</p> <p>Incitation to go to the Known Unknown.</p>

The Research Method

Our Research Method was built in a succession of steps.

We started by regularly discussing our observations on Intelligence Education, allowing us to use the appropriate method.

Our main observations are as follows.

What is the Art of War?

Sun Tzu's Art of War is regularly quoted in a centuries-old context. There has been no real new examination or point of view expressed despite the recent changes of the Information Age.

The Chinese Strategic Mode aims at observing the potential of a situation, by observing the internal and external environment.

Sun Tzu's Art of War cannot be modeled. We should try other ways to make the most of it in the Occidental world rather than to make models out of it.

Information Overload and Lack of Information

Many people suffer from Information Overload. At the same time, they also suffer from a lack of information, in particular on strategic issues. Today, it is frequent to have a feeling of too much information. How can we apply some precepts from a period prior to the Information Overload to aid us with the challenges we face today in Small Organizations?

Small organizations

Small businesses generally represent a larger proportion of the actors compared to a much smaller proportion of larger organizations. Still, small organizations are often given the same suggestions than larger ones. They are relatively ignored in Scientific Research compared to large organizations.

For instance, students who are leaving their school or their university to join start-ups or to launch new businesses, have been mainly trained to join a large firm. These start-up have less information than the large companies and still they can be very innovative, before many of them are bought by a large firm. Some small organizations take advantage of this situation and favorably benefit from Information Asymmetry.

Information Asymmetry

Small organizations have developed ways and means to think and to inform themselves differently from larger ones. Small companies are used to thinking and informing themselves without or before information. Large companies are more used to thinking and informing themselves with and after information. For instance, data bases and Big Data, are really topics keep large organizations awake at night rather than small ones. Small companies are less likely to use consultants than are larger companies. Generally, small companies possess less investigative methods and means than larger ones, and have less time to spare for activities outside producing, selling and administrating the company. Small organizations experience an Information Asymmetry that influences the types of intelligence to which they have access and are able to use.

Types of intelligence

When confronted with large amounts of data, like on the web, one can develop one's intelligence by analyzing and connecting it. People consider that you just need to dig into it, targeting and filtering the information, and nuggets will surely be found

eventually. Connect the dots. When confronted with smaller and even small quantities of data, one can develop a different form of intelligence, specifically by making assumptions, without being sure of receiving the information they think they need. Two major types of intelligence should be studied in particular: Intelligence with or after information and intelligence without or before information. Different types of intelligence will need a specific validation of information.

Validation of information

Strictly speaking, information cannot be validated. We cannot validate information, we can just believe in references. The validating process misleads us. We suggest Staging or Directing the information scene with a list of criteria to identify the information subject to acceptance. By doing so, we increase the questioning prior to information and decrease some analyses after the information. This becomes an intellectual building of the "Staging of Information" (Frion & Frion, 2008.) Of course this can be a risky process. However, if we do not participate in the validation process, we face cognitive biases we could otherwise limit or avoid.

Cognitive Bias toward the 'Strategic Void'

Members of large companies can easily suffer from information Overload in general and from cognitive biases such as the Confirmation Bias in particular.

According to Baumard (2012), the beliefs of larger organizations are no more robust as those of smaller organizations. By the nature of their organization, large companies tend to work with more established norms, standards and guidelines so that they tend to reject high value incongruous information. The nature of large organizations produces some 'strategic void'. Large companies do not work with physical perceptions as much as small ones do.

Physical perception

Members of Small companies are usually more directly impacted by customers and other physical elements from the realities of their markets. They tend to experience more physical perceptions such as a lack of comfort, uncertainty and solitude while doing their job. Physical perception seems to be very useful in different ways in the Industrial and Information Age.

Industrial and Information Age states of mind

The mastering of information is often taken as a reference to achieve or to get close to. Mastering

includes various assumptions such as art, control, virtuosity and superiority. The Mastering of Information is often understood by its control subjacent meaning. The denial of surprises, of incongruous information and of the unknown are relevant signs that the current state of mind is a heritage from the Industrial Age.

What is the Information Age state of mind? We observe that people try to adapt from the Industrial Age state of mind to the Information Age. Awkwardly and out of pique, many people seek more data to solve problems. Indeed, Big Data will certainly address some of our current endemic problems as well as amplifying some others that have not been addressed properly. As an example, web searching skills have been rather poor for the last twenty years, creating poor habits and weak beliefs and the authors do not see why they would spontaneously be corrected with Big Data.

The authors have observed the way many members of companies in Occident-mainly in France- usually think and inform themselves. After having acknowledged and presented a short list of the salient elements the authors took into consideration, it is time to turn to the method chosen.

The method chosen

The authors wanted to go over a contemplative approach of observing gaps between a discourse and its effects and to be in a position to propose new ways of improvement. They introduced the Chinese Strategic Mode in their missions and lectures and made empirical observations in Small companies when they think and inform themselves.

The authors also introduced Sun Tzu's Art of War in missions and training sessions with small companies.

The authors used the Action Research method.

Bruneau started from the Chinese Strategic Mode and relied heavily on Sun Tzu's precepts, sometimes with the use of physically feeling the effect of information and situations. He started from the Asian side with Sun Tzu and walked along towards Occidental companies.

Frion started from the old Occidental Mindset and started to include the Asian influence of Sun Tzu and also walked along towards Occidental companies. He worked with more than two hundred very small and small enterprises on commercial aspects, using Competitive Intelligence, over the period 2009-2014 in a regional program called 'Dinamic Entreprises' in France.

The two approaches used the 'Participant Observer' method separately and with different populations.

Sometimes a group was divided in two subgroups, one using the traditional and Occidental approach whereas the other group was introduced to some precepts from Sun Tzu, in order to compare the results.

The authors often compared their results over a period between 2010 and 2014. They also worked together in 2014 with a group of students with Bruneau as a teacher and Frion as a customer over a few months. The authors observed the participants and also themselves. They had distinct approaches and compatible goals.

These two approaches are not quantitative approaches. They are described in detailed below.

Since our work is due to be used in Applied Intelligence Education, the authors are presenting two practical hints to revisit Sun Tzu's Art of War. At the beginning, they seem to be in opposition; still they share some of Sun Tzu's heritage, objectives, beliefs and results.

We will present Bruneau's approach first and then Frion's, and we will compare them in a table in order to produce a working document and help to assist in applying the appropriate approach to a specific situation.

Bruneau's approach

Success Story

A five-person firm is specialized in soil biological analysis. Its clients are mainly farmers. This very small company is competing with multinational firms and international institutes in agronomic research. Despite its world class recognized expertise this company does not receive any public or private funding and still, strives to grow. This company is clearly in a situation of Information Asymmetry.

In this context, Sun Tzu's precepts such as aphorisms and metaphors were used to facilitate the questioning. As an example, "This knowledge cannot be elicited from spirits; it cannot be obtained inductively from experience, nor by any deductive calculation" (Chapter XIII on the use of Spies) suggests raising an incongruous question like 'has my competitor already done the investigation I intend to launch?' The questioning that follows will lead to factual hypotheses such as: is there a PowerPoint file on the web that would present the marketing efforts of Company X on soil quality control? While hypothesis check is carried out, surprises often emerge. In our case, we found that a competitor had prepared a document presenting the typology of the various tailored offers on the market, prepared.

This approach is based on the idea that actors submit to the reality of the environment. The culture of Resource Management to reach a goal is neglected in favor of reality exploitation. In the absence of many investigation resources, such as consulting,

expensive databases, large sophisticated personal network, this little company only adapts to the shape of reality without being able to make it or to change it.

Questioning works in a cascade, based on Sun Tzu's precepts selected at random. This channeling of Sun Tzu's precepts produces creativity in the questioning. It favors the generation of pertinent questions for which the absence of answer becomes an issue. Priority is given to these questions, which are disturbing, paradoxical or incongruous. Based on these types of questioning, more possible factual hypotheses are produced. Then an invalidation process is organized and provides additional outcomes that could not be imagined with a more classical needs assessment. As an example: A file from a real estate office that is specialized in vineyards from which winegrowers shall soon retire and need a soil analysis before they can sell their property.

The goal of this approach is contrary to the one that starts by defining the information needs. Indeed, it consists of eliminating the search for answers and avoids some cognitive biases such as the confirmation bias.

Exploitation of the competitive reality prevails over theorizing. It is more a logic of 'condition-consequence'. This leads the small firm to canvass for new customers conditioned by the results of the investigation.

Based on this Success Story and on collaborative explication process in working together, the two authors have structured some guidelines and a list of insights.

Action Items / Steps

- Step 1: Explicitly identify the unknown elements of the environment by developing a list of questions - for which the absence of an answer becomes an issue.
- Step 2: Use Sun Tzu's precepts as stimuli to improve the questions. For each 'inspired' question, produce four or five factual hypothesis.
- Step 3: Sun Tzu's precepts are left to chance, with no specific order. Questions chain themselves in a series, matching them to factual hypothesis. Verification gives some answers and allows more precision to the subsequent questions and hypothesis.
- Step 4: Divide questions in two types. One for players and sources possessing knowledge of the field investigated. The other one for the topic of the investigation.
- Step 5: A first exploration is prepared and a dead line is given. Identify the players with

experience in the field who are available and who could possibly answer the critical questions for this step.

- Step 6: Prepare the meetings and get in touch with these players. Turn the critical questions into precise hypothesis so that implicit knowledge can emerge from the players.
- Step 7: Interview the people from the field and consolidate their answers. This last step makes the potential of the situation emerge without pre-conceived ideas. The specificity of the answers helps to bring out operational elements. Lasting questions that remain with no answer can also be very enlightening.

Example from Frion

A small company was curious to know if its main competitor would be to for sale in the next couple of years. Two people gathered around the president of this company to work on this topic of special interest. Frion suggested his Methodological Information Resistance (temporarily) method or Mir(t): For a short period of time, the team started by Methodologically Resisting the compulsion of acquiring Information on the potential target.

Instead, the team identified a strategic question symbolizing the precise goal. This question was prepared during a one hour discussion made of a succession of attempts. Originally, the question was: 'Is our competitor going to be for sale soon?' The second attempt became: 'What are the three main options for our competitor in the next couple of years?' The third attempt turned to: 'How can our company increase its production capacity and secure its current margins within the next five years with internal or external growth?' The team was glad to have moved from the first question to the second and third question. The first question seemed useless by this time.

Then the team started strategic questioning and identified a list of ten significant questions in order to approach and to encircle the topic to be addressed. Two hours were necessary to identify the items to be considered, to give them precision, and to turn them into questions. The President did not take part in this second step until the list of questions was presented to him. Two questions were disregarded: One seemed useless for the president and one was already answered. The president had some information he forgot to give to his team and the Strategic Questioning step gave him the opportunity to discuss this extra information. One question was added. Four questions were discussed and slightly modified to reach a more incisive question. The initial question of the goal was reviewed and modified slightly to include adjustments that emerged during the strategic questioning.

Then, for each question, a prototype was elaborated. The first one needed one hour. The following ones took approximately fifteen minutes each on average. A list of Missing Information was identified, profiles of sources people - Human sources - were modeled. Accesses - ways, means and tools - to contact these people were prepared as scenarios. When the First Best approaches were identified - the most promising ones - the team experienced a moment of excitement with laughter and little shouts that Frion calls the 'Success syndrome.' After a quick estimation of time and effort that would be necessary for this operation, the team realized that resources and time would be too limited. The initial command was reviewed and modified one more time, with an agreement that this final adaptation of the strategy was still very good and was worth doing. The seeking started and sources people were contacted. Good surprises emerged from some interviews and some questions from the strategic questioning list were considered unnecessary at this time. Finally, the company decided to launch an internal growth plan over the next few years instead of waiting for the competitor to be potentially for sale.

Frion's approach

Since information is not necessarily a good thing in general and in a situation of general Information Overload in particular, a temporary Methodological Information Refusal -or resistance- is used first (Frion, 2012). Frion's method suggests a temporary actionable strategic questioning or an agile questioning before information (Frion, 2009a).

The method is made of three subsequent steps.

Step 1: The Command. The command is discussed and reformulated to reach a second then a third version and not taking the first version for granted. The command is a question, as it is action-oriented rather than a list of Intelligence requirements that is more knowledge-oriented. With a question, it is usually easier to understand the point of what we are looking for and when we reach this point. One working principle is that 'a leader doesn't clearly know what he wants to start with.' The reformulation is compulsory.

Step 2: The Strategic Questioning. Instead of analyzing the existing data, one person or a small group of persons tries to find approximately ten right ways to go about the 'problem'. The leader does not take part in the process at the beginning. It starts with brainstorming to identify concerns, refines and adds precision to these concerns, and ends in finalizing precise questions regarding these concerns. We try and ask questions and identify what we would like to learn-what is missing in order to move on. Going from step 1 to step 2 can involve a confirmation bias, however the questions in step two are useful to identify what has not been said so far and what has been believed either consciously or unconsciously. The leader is given this list of ten questions. He

usually already knows the answer for one of them, is not interested in two of them, may add another question and modifies three or four of them. If the leader only says the questions are ok, the exercise is doomed to fail: He needs to get involved in the questioning process. The question from step 1 is usually modified with a longer description and more precise wording. After a general picture is developed, we dive into a more analytical approach taking the context into consideration.

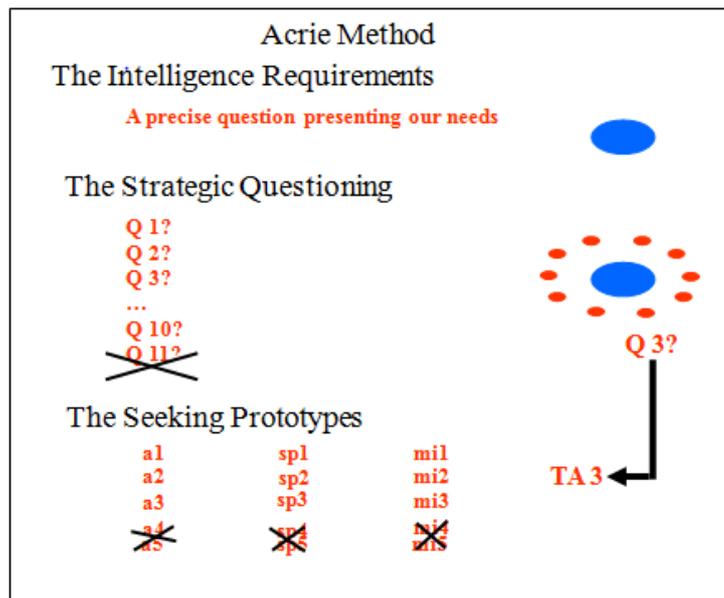
Step 3: The Information Seeking Prototype. For each question of step 2, there is an information seeking prototype. It starts with the identification of the most suitable format to give as an answer to address this question. This format can be a short memo, a table, a pie chart, a picture, a conversation with an expert, a verbatim explanation, among others. In this document we intend to produce to fit our leader's cognitive style, we identify three best missing information that would fill this content. For each piece of missing information, we modelize the profile of a source person. We want source persons and not access. Source persons are in the best position to help us reformulating a poorly developed question. For each source person, we produce a scenario or a script to approach this person. How is he or is she going to react to my questions? He or she must not tell me a secret and it must be the person in charge for this matter. Sometimes we need to ask a portion of the command to figure out the big question without asking for it directly. It is a framework rather than a strict procedure. The idea is to keep it simple and to develop relations between the leader and the task force. Through a succession of three main tasks, we produce loops and reviews at different levels. The command evolves throughout the process and it is 'easy' to adjust to the 'new' formulation of the command because we do not invest a lot of time in processing data.

At step A1, A2, A3, the scenario goes to the point of two indicators to be met:

- Subcontracting: A seeking prototype can be subcontracted to someone from our team without major difficulty. Thus, it has to be well presented and explained with details.
- Success syndrome. A physical syndrome of success must be experienced before the interviews start. No Success Syndrome, no seeking.

In fact this approach provides so much preparation that the participant must feel an easiness to act with or without surprise, a bit like the Art of Archery (Herrigel, 1953) with a Zen approach.

Figure 1: Acrie method



Various constraints are identified or explicitly asked and this situation will provoke ideas to reach the predefined goal. At each step, there is an ambition to formulate or to identify the best question, the best Source Person, the best access. This First Best technique mobilizes the energy of the game of the 'treasure hunt'.

This method is particularly adapted to on-the-spot questions and rather not for monitoring purposes.

We try and avoid or limit different mistakes and cognitive biases:

- the sticky information to start with;
- the confirmation bias when a popular information is repeated;
- we avoid the validation fallacy, among others.

Comparison between Bruneau and Frion

There is a long list of similarities, shared beliefs and similar results and another one with differences.

Major noticeable similarities

Both approaches aim at improving, skills, business behaviors, and a sustainable activity. Both rely heavily on Human Behaviors. Therefore, they need to be taught during an action-training period over a few weeks: 3 days minimum between 3 to 9 weeks for Bruneau, and 5 days between 5 and 8 weeks for Frion.

The maximum impact of the two approaches is at the beginning, whereas in the classical CI approach a major impact can be seen later.

The two approaches can be used with a new topic, with people who do not particularly Fear Of Missing Out (FOMO). Missions like canvassing on export or on unknown markets, economic war, innovation, R&D, start-up launching are particularly adapted.

Small companies or small team inside of larger ones, will benefit from these two approaches, in particular when they face Information Asymmetry.

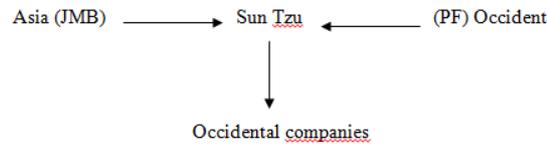
Both approaches can provoke serendipity. With Bruneau's methods it can spring at the beginning and with Frion, it usually appears at the end, during interviews. In both cases, the main idea is not to find answers, it is rather to have our first questions contradicted and improved. Answers will eventually join.

Both approaches save the time that is usually spend with the classical Competitive intelligence approach to gather a lot of information prior to analysis and distribution. There is no ongoing and tedious monitoring. No software is necessary; the Internet is not necessarily used as a cornerstone. Electricity is an option: These two approaches can be realized with a place to gather physically in a quiet environment, with a small team.

A combat or a game energy will be expected with both approaches.

Figure 2 shows that both approaches aimed at improving Occidental companies. Bruneau starts from the Oriental prospective and Frion from the Occidental one.

Figure 2: the Oriental and Occidental prospective



Major noticeable differences

With Bruneau's approach, the profile of the participants is key. Some people will subscribe to this approach, in particular if they already have a liking for non-deterministic activities such as: Art, horse riding or hunting.

With Frion's approach, there can be a clear time for ending the task because constraints are helping to design the work to be done. Different profiles of persons can jump into this approach.

When shall we use these two approaches to think and to inform ourselves of Intelligence matters?

We identify 4 main situations:

1. We ought to observe the potential of the situation
2. We ought to modelize
3. We ought to use both
4. Undetermined

To keep it simple, we have written a few words for each choice. This synthesis needs to be read as a comparison and not as an eternal truth.

How to choose between the two approaches

One and only one of these two approaches can be launched at the same time. They are based on very different assumptions and would inevitably clash if used together without great care.

People who are visionary, innovators, pioneers and users leaders with naturally enjoy more Bruneau's approach. In particular if they come from complex activities where uncertainty is accepted and when structuring is needed.

Obligation is more based on Means with Bruneau's approach and more on Result with Frion's one.

As far as the environment is concerned, with Bruneau's approach, people consider that the environment is taken as it is whereas with Frion's approach, it can be changed.

Long term issues will probably benefit more from Bruneau's approach. In order to use extensively the potential of Frion's approach, the leader must be actively participating three times during the process.

People who consider that Information Overload is so present and so annoying that they believe information is not so much a good thing today as it used to be when we didn't have so much of it, these persons might be happy to try the Methodological and Temporary Information Resistance Mir(t) from Frion, as a starting point. People who want to identify and reformulate their needs rather than waiting for the best from the environment, will also probably enjoy Frion's approach.

Objectivists and positivists will happily turn to Bruneau, and subjectivists and constructivists will turn to Frion.

Surfers will turn to Bruneau, planners will turn to Frion.

None of these two approaches is rejecting the other point of view, still both of them stress differently on as it can be shown in table 4.

Table 4: Trial and error vs. Modelling

	Trial and error	Modelling
Bruneau	80%	20%
Frion	20%	80%

Each author possesses his own justifications to prefer his own approach and none of them tried and convince the other one. Both respect and admire the other's approach and enriched their own in the process of this comparison.

When one of these two approaches has been experienced with no great success, the other one is probably a good alternative to revamp the motivation as well as a mean to keep on working on the initial mission with a second chance.

Some situations are more undetermined and do not particularly call for any of these two approaches. When people want to know 'everything', when a very strict administrative process is running, when Internet searching is the only possible way to think or to inform oneself, when there is necessity to use many resources from various places in a large organization, when people are not ready to lose one's grip for a short period of time, then the authors recommend not to put much hope in their approaches.

After having described our method, we will turn to the results of this research.

Results

Both authors received various level of enthusiastic welcome from many companies. Some members of these companies expressed their disagreement with these new approaches but they represent a small chunk of the population studied. Although the appreciation was positive, the authors verified that trained people tend to go back to their good old ways if the 'coach' or their leader does not make sure the new approach carries on as shown.

Possessed by the information

Both authors of this article observed that the word 'information' was present in many sentences when discussions were going on the topics of thinking and informing oneself. People think first and foremost with or after 'information'.

Outside information, there seemed to be no way out. Therefore, the authors concluded that many people were possessed by information, that is they cannot imagine thinking or informing themselves without or before information. Authors regret that information is only considered as a raw material.

Sun Tzu is putting forward the model of 'Foreknowledge' in Chapter XIII on Spies - foreknowledge and not information. Sun Tzu's approach is more postured-centered and knowledge-centered than information-centered.

Nowadays, there should not only be information to be taken into account. Information should not be the center of our professional universe. With Information Overload in particular, a complex situation is emerging. There is no unique center, there are several ones: We are facing a Hubble revolution. Information is an important dimension but thinking and informing ourselves cannot be reduced to the single dimension of information.

Incongruous strategic information

This research confirms the results of Jones (1989) and Baumard (2012) relative to incongruous strategic information. Indeed, in the Art of War, speech forms such as oxymorons and metaphors provoke unexpected combinations of words and ideas that proved to be useful to stimulate the thinking process. They can be used as starting points for strategic questioning as well as critical questioning.

It is the opposite with the use of databases, Big Data, and Internet web 'key-word matching' techniques, that is looking for similarities.

Various possibilities can be used to monitor the environment, in particular three of them:

- The classical one in Competitive

Intelligence is looking around for information, as much as possible, targeting and filtering it;

- Looking for the unknown through a strategic questioning;
- Making assumptions and hypothesis; modelizing the environment.

Before monitoring the environment, one could consider these alternatives and select the most appropriate one with regards to his situation.

Distancing

Both authors influenced their audience to dismiss information available to provoke more strategic questioning, at least for a short period of time. Bruneau used physical exercises, feelings, poetry or loosening one's grip. Frion used weaning or his (Temporary) Methodological Information Resistance. These techniques allowed people to focus on to questions rather than the answers. It seemed to reduce the number and the intensity of cognitive biases such as confirmation bias. As Baumard states 'dominant logic channels the observation on signals that reinforce our expectations and remove strategic attention from contradictory signals' (Baumard, p. 140).

The use of Sun Tzu's Art of War appeared to be a good opportunity to encourage people to think differently, and to get out of the closed and simple system of targeting and filtering data.

There is a unique and short period of time during which we can think 'before' and 'without' information on a new topic. Once we have the first pieces of information on a new topic one cannot pretend to think without being under the influence of what he has just learned.

Our current Information Management is usually more concerned with answers than with questions.

Good surprise

The authors have experienced with success the value of being surprised, feeling insecure during a cognitive process, and to commute between one's comfort zone and a lack of comfort. Different frameworks, sometimes opposite ones, are the cornerstones of the reform of the strategic thinking as Baumard describes it, as well as putting forward atypical behaviors and impertinence (p. 152).

'What defines the strategic dimension is the capacity to reveal what is surprising, what is disturbing, what does not fit to the existing beliefs' (Baumard, p. 153).

Toxicity of information

The authors confirm the potential toxicity of information available (Taleb, 2005), based on a relatively poor information-centered approach, with not much prior questioning. Thinking differently,

questioning ourselves individually and collectively, and questioning the environment, have the potential to enrich our approaches. Recently with the information explosion, information has proved to be potentially useful but the amount of information available makes us shift from the interest of accumulating information towards questioning a situation. When small companies face too much information, it is toxic. When they face deceptive information in tiny quantities it can also be toxic. So, small companies very often were inclined to be intoxicated by information or 'infoxicated'.

Responsibility and accountability

Theoretically, information can be a good thing and it has often been stated that we need to inform ourselves. But today this theoretical dimension is overtaken by the applied dimension: Small companies destroy more value with information than they produce value with it. This has been witnessed most frequently with the proliferation of emails. Only a small number of emails are considered useful and creating value whereas the largest proportion of emails are said to be counter-productive, destroying more value than they may create. It is therefore our responsibility to reconsider some weak messages such as 'we need information to think.'

Both our approaches showed we need to flee from the 'nice to know approach' with large quantities of information to the 'vital to know' based on what is usually missing and really needed. In the future, we could become accountable for the information we lack and for the information we unnecessarily accumulate with no applied outcomes.

Profitability

Is it more profitable to possess large amounts of data? The authors interviewed many people and they did not find any convincing direct or indirect link between information possession and profitability. On the other hand, companies mentioned ever growing costs in acquiring, handling, processing, sharing, memorizing, and cleaning data, with and without Information Technology.

Structuring uncertainty

The authors revealed the known uncertainty and the unknown one. Uncertainty was presented as a valuable period of time to explore the potential of a situation (Bruneau) or our needs (Frion). With different approaches the authors reached the same conclusion: They helped and structured uncertainty for a beneficial effect.

How can small companies benefit from Sun Tzu's Art of War precepts?

For whom is it vital? Companies that do not have many resource nor competences to access a lot of information, can use some precepts from Sun Tzu's Art of War. Here is a short list of these situations:

during the strategic move of a competitor on a market, when the company is striving to survive, to make an urgent and important decision, to choose a supplier for a key element, to identify a threat, when a local authority is locked up on its territory for a larger scope issue, when a small organization cannot afford to work with a consultant or with an expert.

Explication of a list of beliefs:

When a simple situation happens, when there is no doubt it is a simple situation, then a simple response can be operated. When a situation is not simple, when no automatic procedure can face the situation, we can have recourse to a principle or to a motto, in order to draw a line of conduct without a long period of potentially useless discussions.

Here is a short list of them that the authors experience with good results.

- 'I am not certain and it's ok' (Bruneau);
- 'Less data is better than more' (Frion);
- 'Information is toxic' (Taleb);
- A large proportion of the success in Intelligence is in identifying what and where to look at (Bruneau);
- Processing large amounts of data/information is frequently tiresome and counterproductive (Frion);
- 'Don't use the word 'all' and denounce the spirit of 'totality' as not strategic' (Frion);
- 'Stop answering, find good questions' (Bruneau).

These short sentences do not represent the truth but rather illustrate working principles. When in doubt, they can help getting started. If people do not adopt their own motto, when they face complicated situations, they will revamp some motto from their memory, their education, their habits, and these spontaneous mottos could be inappropriate.

Working on these mottos is useful introspection, although it is easy to stay in the dark for particularly complex situations.

Sun Tzu's Art of War is not compulsory.

The authors do not pretend their approach can be used unconditionally. The actual information-centered approach can still be used. The authors identify the following conditions that call for the traditional target-filter input-output approach:

- When information exists as a raw material;
- When information is available;
- When resources are available;
- When key-word standardization is acceptable on mature topics;
- When context is not very important (there is almost no context on a query on a system);
- When continuity of work is preferred to

- 'made on the spot' thinking;
- When there is a logic of result rather than a more philosophical questioning approach;
- When the human dimension is negligible;
- When a decision is taken in cold blood with facts and only facts;
- When rationality is not bounded, without cognitive biases, without errors of judgment;
- When we want to know everything;
- When information can be simply transformed into knowledge;
- When information is unconditionally a good thing and when the Progress Paradigm applies.
- When we can/should work in silos and mutilate the thinking process, such as in particularly secret discussions.

As a shortcut, we could say we can use the traditional Competitive Intelligence discourse when 'more information is better'.

Totality of information

Do we need the totality of information to think or to inform ourselves? Does Sun Tzu observe everything?

Table 3: The use of the word 'all' in the Art of War vs. other references in Intelligence

Field	Competitive Intelligence	Police	Military	Sun Tzu
Reports / Books / Manuals	5 French official Reports (Harbulot 1990, Martre 1994, Carayon 2004, Mongereau 2006, Buquen 2012)	Practice Advice on Analysis (Asso. of Chief Police Officers and Nat. Policing Improvement Agency, UK (2008).	Field Manuel 2-22-3, Land Force (Human Intelligence Collector Operations)	The Art of War
% per page (occurrences over p.)	74% per page (543 over 728p.)	52% per page (76 over 145p.)	119% per page (452 over 384p.)	55% per page (28 over 51p.)
% per word	0,26% per word (287 543)	0,19% per word (38 564)	0,29 per word (157 123)	0,25 per word (10 968)

It seems obvious that the reference to 'all' doesn't bother the different authors in Intelligence reports, books or manuals. Working in Intelligence would therefore consider gathering all the information. It is sometimes clearly written as such, but not in the Art of War. Still, we identified that the myth of totality is present in the intelligence documents we studied here.

The mean for the different documents in Table 3, shows that the word 'all' is 0,24% of the words. With 0,25%, Sun Tzu is just a little bit above the mean.

The authors are aware that the idea of totality in Occident is different than the one in Asia. In particular, the Taoist and Buddhist philosophies have not much in common with the Occidental mode. In

He definitely observes the global environment and he does not reduce his environment to some specific indicators, avoiding the rest in the meantime.

Since an interview isn't an option, we can only refer to his text. Sun Tzu used the word 'all' 28 times in his Art of War (Giles, 1910). Apparently, he is in a state of mind as if he wanted to know everything. How does it compare to other intelligence reports?

In France, with the five first official report on Competitive Intelligence, the number of times we can read the word 'all', that is, 'tous, tout, toute, toutes', is 74% per page. With the Art of War translated by Lionel Giles, the percentage to take is 'per word' and not 'per page' because the case of the words is much larger in The Art of War. The percentage of 'all' per word, in Sun Tzu's Art of War is 0,255%. It is very similar to 0,264% per word in the first five French CI official reports.

Asia, the idea of 'all' could be seen as to lose one's grip, whereas the Occidental view would rather mean the control.

A last result has been obtained, in the shape of a working document presenting and comparing Bruneau's approach and Frion's, in order to discover Sun Tzu's work from two different perspectives, to apply a specific approach according to various situations, for a very similar effect.

Discussion and implications

Three levels of discussion and implications will be presented, for Science, for Companies, and for Applied Intelligence Education.

Discussion and implications for science

Scientifically speaking, this article is adding some knowledge to the intercultural study of Occidental and Oriental business cultures, to the study of Small Organizations and to Intelligence Studies. The two authors have humbly expressed their approaches, their methods, their practices and their beliefs. Two authors, two very different ways of thinking and still, one common suggestion to use Sun Tzu's Art of War with strategic questioning.

What is most noticeable is their suggestions to use Sun Tzu's Art of War by an Occidental audience despite the impossible modelling of the masterpiece studied.

In particular, when they release the constraint of the information-centric approach of Normal Science, other disciplines like psychology, sociology, information science and communication, can be enriched by this research. The two authors humbly contribute to a complex approach, by including as fundamental two dimensions in particular: Information Overload and a more human oriented approach.

Research would benefit from more frequent and more robust 'points of view' exposed, explained, and discussed. Indeed some fundamental beliefs such as 'is information a good thing' is usually not addressed and it can be difficult to follow a scientific article and its operational suggestions when some fundamental issues are kept in an epistemic opacity.

There is a tendency to stick to 'information', working on acquiring it and analyzing it. There are rather new approaches that stress communication and not only 'information' (Libaert & Moinet, 2013) or Data Science (Big Data for instance). We subscribe to a more communicational approach and we also reckon the potential for technical and informational approaches for large organizations. Still, our main concern in this article is to work on Information Asymmetry in small organizations.

Both authors are willing to consider some conventional and unconventional topics. Still they include a temporality in their approach so that these topics are brought to the table within a methodology: Bruneau will address this concern with an uncomfortable Strategic Questioning to start with, whereas Frion will start by a Methodological Information Resistance (Temporarily.) Both authors are crediting innovation and the discontinuity of the Information Age after the Industrial Age. When topics are inextricable or orthogonal, the authors suggest the use of another Thinking Mode, a new angle of vision, a new posture, a paradoxical questioning, to stimulate reflection and to create an appropriate new frame of reference.

Besides the public good that science can represent, discussions and implications for small companies need to be carried on.

Discussion and implications for small companies

Sun Tzu was in the Military and his books are directly dedicated to prepare, to avoid or to direct a war. He did not write a book on peace keeping. The topic of 'war' can be sensitive in some civilian companies and it can be tricky to use war metaphors to convince civilians, in particular antimilitarists. And yet, some lessons can be adapted and drawn from the Military. As an example, during Special Forces trainings, the idea of 'one bullet to kill' is used rather than the image of a 'hail of bullets' with a machine gun. The image of 'one bullet to kill' in a Military context could be adapted by 'one vital question to ask'. The figure 'one' should be understood here as a small number, between one and ten approximately.

Comfort and lack of comfort

There is general trend that emphasizes comfort and that tries to eradicate lack of comfort in companies. However in chaining up questions and hypothesis, one can clarify the nature of uncertainty. Along the way, with a learning process, uncertainty can vanish or diminish at least.

According to Bruneau, looking for a physical lack of comfort is a simple and often useful way to explain the gap between the known and the unknown. From an uncomfortable situation, we don't know what will be learned: We don't know what we don't know. It is radically different than starting from a comfortable situation when we know what we know.

According to Frion, starting from the comfort of a model also necessitates a level discomfort, in particular during the interviews of Source People: Indeed there is an additional advantage to just receiving an answer during an interview, and that is when the Source Person calls our question into question. We learn more from a call into question than from an answer! The value is greater, the advance is more significant, the focus defocuses, and the way of thinking is improved.

During targeted interviews we are specifically monitoring indicators of physical reaction with the Source Persons, because these physical reactions are usually spontaneous and reveal indicators before a sentence is said in reply to the question asked.

Discussion and implications for Applied Intelligence Education

A list of concerns and beliefs has been developed that should be taken into consideration in Intelligence for Business, Police and Military. Still this article is dedicated to Business applications.

The discourse on Competitive Intelligence over the last twenty years was evaluated as a failure for Small companies (Frion, 2012). Many assumptions in this discourse were evaluated as weak or wrong. Therefore the discourse did not reach the 'applied' level and remained at the 'theoretical' level. In particular, the discourse ignored Information Overload and usually emphasized the need for more information without setting any limit apart from focusing and targeting. The authors condemn the conventional discourse based on these false collective beliefs.

The use of Sun Tzu's Art of War precepts can be a good opportunity to refresh our view on Competitive Intelligence in explicit beliefs and assumptions.

The two authors consider that Intelligence Education needs to give more room to the following fundamental topics in particular: the human and cultural dimensions (individually and collectively), the feeling of Information Overload, the value of questioning over information in some cases. Reviewing the Chinese Strategic Mode in the light of these two topics will also contribute to opening up the barriers that have been excluding topics so far. Using Sun Tzu's precepts in a creative process is a way to access the incongruous nature of strategy.

In particular, accepting the third-included approach will improve the vision of contradiction that is excessively considered as a bad thing.

Looking for contradictions could actually improve our understanding of others' needs and we can better understand the information available as well as the missing information. Also we contribute to building and fostering a collaborative and interdependent conscience and way to work with different cultures, accepting that someone can think and inform himself differently without being wrong.

Limits

The main limits to this article are presented in the following list of questioning:

- Ancient Chinese language is elliptical and may be hard to understand;
- Moving from Chinese ideograms to an alphabetical system can be puzzling;
- Military and business share some common topics and also retain specificities;
- Ancient thinking mode is used for a modern thinking mode: How can we adapt an old discourse to the evolutions in business, in technology and in sociology for instance;
- Use of poetic style to contribute to a business style;
- Diversity of translations;
- Two languages used: The authors of this article are French and the writing is in English.

Inevitably, some questions remain unanswered when we try and use Sun Tzu's Art of War in today's business live. The two authors humbly recognize this.

This research was realized by two French researcher-practitioners and might need to be tested and evaluated by researchers from other countries to see if the results can be replicated.

On initial examinations, the two approaches presented by the two authors seem to be in opposition. With a closer look, Bruneau's approach is not only observing the potential of the situation and Frion's approach is not only about modelling.

Each of these two approaches needs some conditions to be used. If these conditions are not met, then, these approaches might not be relevant and even worse they could be misleading and out of the Responsibility Principle for the future.

Both of the approaches are counter-intuitive. Therefore, they can attract the attention of atypical persons like explorers and early adopters of innovation. People who have an artistic sensibility will tend to join in quicker. Followers will have more difficulties in adopting them. Clearly there is a barrier of entry related to culture, psychology and competences in particular.

Agreement and disagreement

Although the two authors reach a common ground and declare together that questioning is better than information, they diverge on the intensity in the way they include some constraints.

In particular, Bruneau considers that the 'evaluation of needs' will most certainly start with the evaluation of what we know and that will induce cognitive biases such as the confirmation bias. Indeed, Frion reckons that when identifying needs, the tendency can be seen to keep the investigation within the scope of what is already known. On the contrary, Bruneau argues that the incongruous question can make the reflection start from a new point of view, with no obvious preconceived idea, and new assumptions can emerge. However Frion also argues that with the Mir(t) approach it is possible to limit or to eradicate this concern.

Both authors shared a real commitment to their different approaches and neither changed his mind. Still both authors learned a great deal on the best conditions in which to apply their own approaches, and their limits, and they gained a better methodology for explaining their own point of view.

Both authors are willing to present the two approaches to use Sun Tzu's Art of War, including information Overload, on top of the classical way to use it, ignoring the information explosion.

There is no such thing as a universal method. There are different methods to apply to different situations, and some are more appropriate to small companies that suffer from information asymmetry.

The effectiveness of Sun Tzu's legacy is inversely proportional to the size of the company. The Art of War is less relevant to large companies that rely on the action of planning. Interestingly enough, small companies are potentially better suited to use Sun Tzu's work despite their lack of resources and competences.

Conclusion and Research agenda

Sun Tzu is still a valuable source of inspiration today for Applied Intelligence Education. However, we should not apply the Occidental representation of his "Foreknowledge" model in a straightforward manner, before considering the implications of Information Overload.

Sun Tzu's approach is more postured-centered and knowledge-centered than information-centered.

This article presented two accomplished approaches to Applied Intelligence Education including terms, practical details and returns on the experience required to operate them. These two approaches can contribute to Intelligence Education, with the following main concerns: ease of use, adding value, inexpensive to run, profitability, responsibility and durability. Therefore it can become vital for some small organizations to apply it.

This article shows that Sun Tzu's Art of War can be used from different points of view for a common apprenticeship - more human oriented - to think and to inform oneself differently, with alternation of control and loosening one's grip.

Small organizations, experiencing uncertainty, lack of time to practice classical Competitive Intelligence, and facing Information Asymmetry, will benefit from either of the two approaches presented above.

It is often more operational to raise questions than to look for answers. Doing so is also more profitable in terms of time and money. It usually brings more value than crawling the web.

The two approaches remain very different. Bruneau starts from Orient and goes to Occident whereas Frion start from Occident and also goes to Occident.

Still the two approaches are very similar regarding fundamentals. Both Bruneau and Frion are dedicated to applied actions for strategic questioning. In companies experiencing information asymmetry, stop answering questions and find good questions: A big question is often better than big data.

Both of these two approaches can be beneficial and the authors don't believe one is better than the other, nor that only one is good for any given situation.

How shall we choose?

There are some objective conditions and there is also the idea of a bet. These two approaches are a bet and this bet is usually subconscious. We would be better off if we could consider these two approaches and see if the one we usually choose is aligned to our usual conditions. When it is not, we know that we can have another approach to try.

A bit of both approaches can be a good combination in a time line.

In the very short term, a Temporarily Methodological Information Resistance should be applied first, even during a short period of time, in order to have once and only once the possibility to think 'before' and 'without' information.

In a longer term, observing the potential of the situation should be applied, 'with' and 'after information' in order to avoid blind spots.

Various situations give us different options in using Sun Tzu's Art of War.

We need to consider not only information but also other key intelligence influences such as: time, crisis, aim, and information availability, among other things.

We need to consider how we inform ourselves and not only how we manage information.

We need to inform ourselves more on how we inform ourselves.

Whatever the method we use, we need to think more about the way we think.

The contribution of the authors is more appropriate for small companies in a position of Information asymmetry. Still they believe that large companies can also adapt these findings to their benefit.

It is not a Copernican revolution. A more complex revolution is emerging: a Hubble revolution. We tested different approaches with Companies. We believe many assumptions also hold for Police forces and National Security.

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Endnotes

- i Sun Tzu's Art of War is an illustration of the Chinese Strategic Mode.
- ii In this article we consider the word information as a convenient and generic term for sign, signals, data, information, knowledge and intelligence. They share at least one attribute that is the progress paradigm. It has been commonly believed so far that more 'information' is better.
- iii In this article we distinguish 'thinking' from 'informing oneself'. For the time being, 'thinking' rather means analyzing information available and 'informing oneself' rather means looking for missing information.
- iv Information Asymmetry is mainly used here as a situation when a small company has much less information and resources than a large firm.
- v By Small Organizations, the authors refer to (Very) Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, local administration, professionals like plumbers or lawyers, with no team dedicated to Business Intelligence or Competitive Intelligence.
- vi War and peace. This article presents and suggests behaviors, topics and methods for war times. By war times, the authors mean periods with surprises, crises, battles, treachery, spies and enemies such as competitive moves, lures, innovation, illegal practices from a competitor, anti and counter intelligence from a competitor, rumors and e-reputation. This article is not primarily dedicated to 'peace times' for companies idealized as in a few example like administrative behavior, knowledge management, production efficiency, norms and regulation, in pure and perfect information situation when markets are showing no significant sign of change.
- vii Sun Tzu's name can vary in time and space. For convenience, we are using the most used name. Other writings exist, such as Sun Tze, Sun Tzu (Amiot, Chung, Fayard, Giles, Griffith, Levi, Phélizon), Sun Zu, Sun Zi (Lavis), Sun Wu (Lavis, Chung), Souen tse(u) (Levi), Sun Wou (Levi) and sometimes Sun Pin (Levi) or Master Sun (Phélizon). Indeed, it is difficult to adapt a Chinese sound in French or in English. Sun Zi was not selected here for convenience in this article, despite an official orthography in Pinyin.
- viii Example of an oxymoron: 'The general who is skilled in defense hides in the most secret recesses of the earth; he who is skilled in attack flashes forth from the topmost heights of heaven' (chapter 4.) Antithetical terms are put together.
 Example of a metaphor: 'Military tactics are like unto water; for water in its natural course runs away from high places and hasten downwards. Si on war, the way is to avoid what is strong and to strike at what is weak. Water shapes its course according to the nature of the ground over which it flows; the soldier works out his victory in relation to the foe whom he is facing. Therefore, just as water retains no constant shape, so in warfare there are no constant conditions (Chapter 6.) Two realities are put together.
 Example of a chiasmus: 'That general is skillful in attack whose opponent does not know what to defend; and he is skillful in defense whose opponent does not know what to attack' (chapter 6.) The use of two consecutive phrases in which the second is an inverted version of the first.
 Example of a comparison: 'A victorious army opposed to a routed one, is as a pound's weight placed in the scale against a single grain' (chapter 4.)
- ix Modelling is defined here as an attempt to list variables, relations and considerations suitable for imitation
- x Kuhn, p. 5 "normal science, the activity in which most scientists inevitably spend almost all their time, is predicated on the assumption that the scientific community knows what the world is like."