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FIRST NOTICE
This isn't a new concept


- Most of Decision-Making the information contained in this training course was first published in a paper titled "Contextual Intuition" by Lt. Frank Borelli in or about the year 2009.
- Contextual Intuition, now being termed Contextual Decision Making by other instructors, grew from an understanding and application of Boyd's Decision-Making Cycle COMBINED WITH a structured methodology for debriefing an operator/officer on HOW they made subconscious decisions they weren't even aware of.
- This debriefing process is called "Micro-Moment Debriefing" and follows a very specific process using a customized graphic.



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A picture is worth 10,000 words.
- Frederick R. Barnard

- If you think of the eyes and brain as a video-taping system, you can assign a "frame rate" to what you see.
- Hollywood uses a minimum of 28 frames per second (fps).
- Below 18fps our brains can perceive "chop" or break up of visual stream.
- Between 15-18fps, perception disorientation can occur causing dizziness, headache, nausea and other physiological responses.
- At >28fps we perceive "smooth motion."
- For the sake of math, we're going to assign a frame rate of 10fps.



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Evaluating justification of action

Really, we're justifying the decision (more on OODA later)

- To evaluate an officer's action for justification, we would have to review everything they saw, heard, smelt, felt and said. (Depending on circumstance, taste may also have to be considered)
- The complete interaction between officer and subject, from beginning to end, would have to be considered.
- Some instances, even highly controversial ones, have involvement times exceeding 90 minutes or more.
- For the purposes of this presentation, we're going to use just 5 minutes.



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Evaluating Just Five Minutes

We don't have enough time or words

- Five minutes is 300 seconds
- At a frame rate of 10 frames per second, that's 3,000 frames - every one of them is different in some minute way and is ONLY visual.
- Words have to be used to articulate and describe every other sensory input - smell, taste, felt, heard.
- At 10,000 words "per picture" (frame), that's 30 MILLION words.
- To put that in perspective, Herman Melville's "Moby Dick" was approximately 215,000 words. So, 140 times that long for a five-minute interaction.



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Filtering the Information

Everything is a matter of perspective

- Let's for a moment assume that we COULD compile and read 30M words to accompany 3,000 pictures to give us a holistic presentation of a five-minute event.
- We still COULD NOT perceive everything exactly as the involved officer did unless we had his/her exact same knowledge, experience, background, training and education.
- We would have to experience and put ourselves in the identical emotional state, fatigue state, hunger state, etc.
- We still cannot fathom what the officer perceives moment to moment as the conflict evolves very quickly.



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What We Can Do

To best serve the officer before and therefore during the conflict

- We can properly train and equip the officer as best possible to emerge victorious in every conflict.
- We can structure his/her training to take greatest advantage of subconscious decision making.
- We can use micro-moment debriefing techniques after the conflict to empower the officer to most efficiently articulate and justify actions (see separate program for micro-moment debriefing techniques).
- We can ensure that no judgments of justification on use of force are rendered until such time as the dynamics of the situation "through the eyes of the officer" are fully understood.



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The Contemporary Situation

All Law Enforcement Professionals are warriors first

- While society in general doesn't like seeing any police officer use force, the reality is that it happens in the course of an officer's duties as they protect themselves or others or have to affect an arrest.
- No matter how much we hope for lawful compliance, there are subjects who choose to resist arrest, attack officers, or commit acts of violence against innocents.
- Officers have to act in a physically aggressive, sometimes violent fashion to protect themselves, to protect others, or to gain control over a given situation.



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Train the Brain AND The Body

Appropriate Decisions enacted by Fit Bodies

- Most of society understands that officers are trained in a variety of physical conflict skills.
- Many believe that officers are taught these skills with a focus on ensuring minimal harm to combative subjects.
- The skills aren't inherently harmful or not.
- The skills applied, or force used, is identified as justified or not, excessive or not dependent on justification and circumstance.
- Hence, the decision drives the action, and the decision-making process determines justification or not.



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Structure to Train the Brain

It has to be done right "from the ground up"

- Depending on circumstance, officers think in a variety of ways. Planning is different from executing.
- Two commonly recognized but vastly different types of thought are LINEAR and ABSTRACT, sometimes also called INTUITIVE.
- LINEAR is tied to conscious directed thought and logic.
- ABSTRACT or INTUITIVE is tied to subconscious awareness and associative thinking, sometimes incorporating emotion-based responses.



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End Video 1 for Contextual Decision Making course

Video 2: Thought Process & Competency Levels



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Contextual Decision Making

Video 2: Thought Process & Competency Levels



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Defining the Terminology Foundation

Necessary to understand moving forward (there will be more)

- LINEAR: of, relating to, or based on depending on sequential development (linear thinking).
- INTUITIVE: known or perceived by intuition (had an intuitive awareness).
- INTUITION: the power or faculty of attaining to direct knowledge or cognition without evident rational thought and inference.



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Linear Thought Process

A to B to C to D and so on

- Linear thinking is a conscious process by which thoughts are linked in a logical progression.
- People use linear thought process for some types of learning, especially when learning skills that build upon one another.
- Each step requires mastery before the next step can be attempted.
- As the steps are reviewed and repeated, the skill set is mastered.



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Four Levels of Competency

Do you know what you don't know?

- Before recognizing the four levels of competency, we need to define a few terms:
 - Competence: The quality or state of being competent.
 - Competent: Having requisite or adequate ability or qualities.
 - Incompetent: Lacking the qualities needed for effective action.
 - Conscious: Done or acting with critical awareness.
 - Unconscious: Free from self-awareness; not consciously held or deliberately planned or carried out.



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Four Levels of Competency

Do you know what you don't know?

- Level 1 - Unconscious Incompetent: At this level the individual in question is not even aware that they fail to possess mastery of a skill or even that the skill exists. Using the words in the definitions previously given, they are "free from self-awareness" of their "lacking the qualities needed for effective action."
- Level 2 - Conscious Incompetent: At this level the individual has become aware of the skill and their lack of it. They have a "critical awareness" of their "lacking the qualities needed for effective action."



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Four Levels of Competency

You know what you know

- Level 3 - Conscious Competent: At this level the individual has learned the skill sufficiently to perform it with focused thought. They are "acting with critical awareness" to perform with "adequate ability." At this level skills are usually performed very slowly so that the individual can consider each step in the skill set and ensure correct performance through attention to each detail.
- Level 4 - Unconscious Competent: At this level the individual has mastered the skill, having learned it and performed it through so many repetitions as to have made second nature. They are "free from self-awareness" of their possessing "requisite or adequate ability or qualities." Their successful performance of a given skill is "not subconsciously held or deliberately planned or carried out."



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Linear Thinking vs Intuitive Thinking

Connecting the dots in a different way

- Intuitive thinking is a subconscious process by which seemingly unrelated thoughts or events are connected by the subconscious mind, without any control from the individual.
- Investigators take benefit from intuitive thought when they are examining one crime, observe a particular characteristic of the criminal's operation (modus operandi) and then make a connection to a different crime that has the same or similar characteristic(s).
- By abstractly connecting a characteristic (or characteristics) of two otherwise apparently unrelated crimes, the investigator builds his information base by pulling data from both investigations together.



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Is One Better Than The Other?

Balance is All

- Both types of thought process have pros and cons, strengths and weaknesses for the officer/operator.
- Philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) labeled linear thinkers "Apollonian" while he called abstract (intuitive) thinkers "Dionysian." He labeled those equally capable of each "Odyssean."
- The truly successful officer/operator has to be an Odyssean.
- Failure to successfully function in both thought processes will ultimately result in failure, possibly injury and/or death.



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End Video 2 for Contextual Decision Making course

Video 3: Processing Data Consciously vs. Subconsciously



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Contextual Decision Making

Video 3: Processing Data: Consciously vs. Subconsciously



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OODA Loops & Decisions

Faster and faster in smaller circles?

- Documented by Col. John Boyd, USAF (1927-1997) and commonly referred to as "Boyd's Cycle," is a four-step repetitive loop as follows:
 - Observation
 - Orientation
 - Decision
 - Action
- Repeated until resolution of an event, OODA Loops are a circular process by which all humans assess situations, measure personal implications, make a decision on the best course of action and then execute that action.



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Consciously Processing Data

It can be too slow in any threat situation

- The conscious mind processes bits of data in sequence (linearly).
- The conscious mind can manage and process about 7 bits of data, +/- 2, before beginning to mishandle or "drop" data.
- When the individual's conscious sequential processing ability is overloaded and data starts to get dropped, the decisions made become progressively less applicable.
- Once the conscious decisions made are based on inaccurate or non-applicable data to the current circumstance, the individual is losing the conflict/challenge.
- When facing a potentially lethal threat, the inability to move through OODA Loops at a faster pace than one's opponent is literally crippling.



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Apollonians - Linear Thinkers

- Linear thinking is the basis of most logic disciplines.
- Beliefs and/or data packets are analyzed, and each conclusion serves as the foundation upon which the next evaluation process is built.
- Linear thinking is essential to proper training methodology, analysis of a given situation, reviewing past performance and planning future actions based on lessons learned.
- Linear thinking as applied to physical skills should only be part of the learning process, NOT the operational usage.
- In high-risk combative environments, conscious linear thought is too slow and will cripple the operator's/officer's chances of survival much less victory.



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Apollonions and Planning

All planning is linear into multiple branches of options

- Logically processing information is mandatory for calculating potential outcomes of given actions.
- Linear thinking is an essential skill for operational planning when multiple outcomes, and attached optional actions, must be considered and addressed.
- Planning is an inherently logical process that must consider possible situational changes and incorporate realistic alternative responses.
- Linear thought is a comparatively slow process.
- If "no plan survives first contact with the enemy," (von Moltke) then the accompanying linear thought process won't survive either.
- In a quickly evolving conflict situation, the officer/operator cannot depend on the linear thought process.



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Apollonians in "Battle"

They'll always lose the fight

- We see that any combatant, operator or officer functioning in a high-risk dynamic environment, one which is constantly changing, continually evolving, cannot afford to think in a purely linearly fashion.
- If s/he tries to do so, or is never trained to do otherwise, then the ability to emerge victorious in a conflict is severely minimized.
- Even if the enemy faced is poorly trained, the operator/officer will lose the conflict simply because they haven't been trained to make and act on timely and appropriate decisions.



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Dionysian: Intuitive Thinkers

The subconscious super-computer

- The intuitive thought process - making connections between seemingly unrelated items - is a function of the subconscious mind.
- Subconscious is defined as "existing in the mind but not immediately available to consciousness."
- Because the intuitive thought process is not consciously controlled and is based on data not available to the conscious mind, it is largely viewed as an undisciplined process through which connections are made as a result of "pure luck."
- Because no documented process exists to show how the conclusion was reached, the conclusion itself is dismissed as coincidental or unverifiable and therefore invalid.



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Dionysians Often Dismissed

The term "feelings" misapplied

- Commonly identified with an emotional connection, many intuitive thinkers are labeled as "transparent" or "vulnerable."
- The dismissive outlook assumes that intuitive thinkers make decisions based on how they feel rather than what they think.
- There is an important distinction between "feelings" in terms of emotions and "feelings" in terms of intuition.
- Emotions are a mixture of physiological and psychological responses to an external stimuli.
- Intuition, used here, is a subconscious response to circumstances and data that are not recognized by the conscious mind.



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Dionysians: Intuition not Emotion

One is highly valuable, the other a distraction

- Emotions can be distracting for the operator/officer.
- In high risk compressed time situations, acknowledging fear in a way that degrades speed of process and performance is a hinderance.
- If "something just doesn't feel right," is it intuition? Or is it an emotional reaction to the unknown?
- It is easy to see the confusion possible in terminology when someone describe "a feeling."



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End Video 3 for Contextual Decision Making course


Video 4: Training Intuitive Decision Making



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Contextual Decision Making


Video 4: Training Intuitive Decision Making



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Intuitive Decision-Making Imperative
Otherwise, you're just going too slow


- Intuition is a subconscious function.
- Where the conscious mind can only manage about 7 (+/- 2) data bits and has to process them linearly (in sequence), the subconscious mind manages hundreds if not thousands of data bits in parallel, greatly accelerating the OODA / decision making process.
- To process all that data in an efficient fashion, the subconscious mind has to have the experience and knowledge necessary.
- To apply the decisions efficiently, necessary skill sets have to be mastered to the Unconscious Competence level.



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Contextual Intuition / Decision Making
Different names for the same process

- Context is defined as "The interrelated conditions in which something exists or occurs."
- In other words, it's our surrounding environment. We experience (observe) that environment through our five senses.
- How quickly we orient ourselves to our environment (orient) depends on our experiential background with the same or similar environments.
- Because of the speed of subconscious processing, OODA loops can be completed in an accelerated fashion, empowering faster appropriate decisions leading to more effective actions.



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Intuition Doesn't "Just Happen"

It requires training and familiarization in context

- Imperative to the accelerated decision-making process of intuition is requisite proper training.
- While linear thinking is used in classroom settings to learn basic knowledge, practical application in space/time repetition is necessary to:
 - Feed the operator/officer's "data cache" (memory) with situations and circumstances they may experience in the course of their duties, and
 - Connect the intuitive decision-making process to the Unconscious Competent skill sets for real world application.



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Speed Is Survival

And often, even better, victory

- Since "no plan survives first contact with the enemy," Contextual Intuition or Decision Making is imperative to adapt to the dynamic rapidly evolving high risk threats our officers/operators can face today.
- To apply the intuitive decisions made, all related skill sets have to be mastered, through constant practice and application, to the Unconscious Competent level.
- In today's world, no matter the job or mission, the operator/officer has to be able, after the fact, to justify all uses of force and articulate what they perceived to arrive at the decisions they did.
- Justifying subconscious decisions requires a specialized (micro-moment) debriefing process (see applicable course).



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Be An Odyssean: Think Both Ways

Linear required for planning; Intuitive required for execution

- Linear thinking is necessary to gain knowledge upon which to build skills.
- Linear thinking is necessary for logistical planning and identifying mission needs.
- Linear thinking is necessary for skills analysis and to identify suitable personnel for a given task.
- Linear thinking is necessary to identify potential timelines, goals, desired outcomes and circumstance branching possibilities.



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Be An Odyssean: Think Both Ways

Survival / Victory requires rapid but applicable adaptability

- Contextual Intuition or Contextual Decision Making is necessary for operators/officers to adapt to rapidly changing circumstances.
- The actions of those operators/officers may/will be the cause of the change in circumstance.
- As one half of the cause-and-effect relationship in any conflict, the opponent will also perform actions that change the circumstance, and the operator/officer has to be able to adapt to the change, cycle through as many OODA loops as necessary and act in a manner that defeats the opponent's intent.



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How Do We Create an Odyssean?

Can we train both linear and intuitive processing?

- The answer is a resounding YES but only if some assumptions are correct:
 - The person being trained must possess the proper physical and mental attributes to master the requisite knowledge and skills, with application at the Unconscious Competent level.
 - They must be instructed in the difference between linear and intuitive thoughts process.
 - They must thoroughly understand Boyd's Cycle or OODA process.
 - They must be taught how all of that must seamlessly interact to achieve victory in conflict situations.



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End Video 4 for Contextual Decision Making course


Video 5: Benefits of Contextual Decision Making



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Contextual Decision Making


Video 5: Benefits of Contextual Decision Making



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Train to Empower Contextual Intuition
This means changing a lot of traditional “training”


- The example used: teaching a rookie officer to draw and present his/her weapon AS they seek cover.
- Typically, a rookie officer is given classroom instruction about the difference between cover and concealment. These are knowledge objectives. They aren't skill objectives until the knowledge is applied.
- Rookie officers are also given classroom training on how to draw and present a weapon, detailing the steps such as grip, holster release, draw, presentation to eye level and sight acquisition leading to sight picture.
- None of this is typically taught in a practical manner until the rookie officer is on the square range and given an actual weapon to manipulate.



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Train to Empower Contextual Intuition
This means changing a lot of “traditional” training

- WHAT IF...
 - What if the rookie officer was issued a complete duty belt set on the first day of the academy, and...
 - What if the rookie officer was taught all of the knowledge and practical skills in the first week of the academy, and...
 - What if the rookie officer, upon hearing the command "THREAT!" (Or whatever you choose) has to seek cover, draw and present a blue gun throughout the academy.
 - By the time that rookie got to the range, no time would have to be spent teaching them how to draw, how to seek cover, how to present the weapon and acquire sight picture.



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What Did Such Training Empower?

How did we help the rookie perform more efficiently?

- Assuming that our training is validated and delivered correctly, the rookie should be a Consciously Competent shooter, but an Unconsciously Competent weapon manipulator.
- That same rookie now gets put into projected simulation training to develop judgment and incorporate all of the requisite communication skills added to the survival skills of seeking cover and presenting their weapon under threat.
- By moving the bulk of weapon skills to the subconscious mind, we have freed the conscious mind to begin learning, linearly, assessment of threats and situations that empower applicable use of force decisions.
- This means less load on the conscious mind = less data dropped or mishandled = more appropriate and correct use of force decisions.



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The Cost of Developing Such a Program

Is well worth it in the long run

- Developing such an immersive program would require agencies to perform an in-depth evaluation of their current program to identify:
 - What learning objectives are knowledge objectives and which are skill objectives.
 - Which skill objectives should be trained to the Unconscious Competent level ("second nature").
 - Which skill objectives are foundational and need to be combined for proper use, i.e. weapon presentation + seeking cover + plus communication + threat identification.



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What Are The Benefits of Such Structure?

Some hidden, but some obvious

- Skill evaluation, normally done with less time and tested to a minimal level, can be changed to increase performance requirements.
- Time lost to remedial skill training would be minimized because training would be done daily throughout the academy.
- Testing failures that initially rely heavily on conscious processing would be minimized because testing would occur after the skills had been trained to an Unconscious Competence level.
- Early identification of trainees who have performance deficiencies in foundational skill sets would be increased, either allowing for greater remedial training or, if necessary, dismissal - thereby freeing up resources.



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The Trainee Benefits Are Even Greater

If it helps them survive the streets...

- The mastery of skill sets will proportionately increase his/her survival rate in conflict situations.
- If the basic skills are mastered earlier in the training process, the conscious mind is freed up to focus on building next level skills.
- Repeated training evolutions will help the trainee to move through the OODA process faster and faster, increasing their efficiency of appropriate decision making.
- By increasing efficiency of academy training, we lessen the load on the Field Training Officer, empowering them to focus on judgment and professional performance concerns.



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Applying Contextual Intuition Theory to Use of Force Selection

Reducing Liability From the Beginning of a Career



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Use of Force: The Most Liability Laiden Part

Everything we do carries liability, but use of force is greatest

- An agency's Use of Force policy is the central building block for virtually all officer/citizen/suspect interactions.
- It behooves policy makers and agency leaders to both write policy and provide training that best leverages how the human brain learns and functions.
- Unfortunately, almost all previous graphics used to illustrate Use of Force escalations display or use a linear progression; a progression slow to process and restricted to the conscious mind.
- Because of the potentially large number of variables that an officer has to consider before selecting a force level, subconscious decision making is far faster.



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You Have to Show the Relationship

“If/Then” or “First/Then” Statements show justification

- To justify an officer’s use of force, both the officer and the agency have to be able to demonstrate that the force was legal, justified and appropriate to the task or threat presented.
- Few, if any, use of force escalation models show the behavior(s) of the citizen/suspect.
- An effective and empowering model is not linear but instead can be used in a linear fashion for training and reference purposes, but abstractly for efficient processing by the subconscious mind under high stress and time compressed instances.

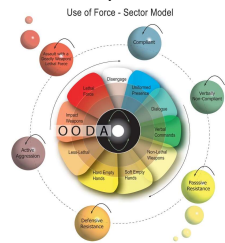


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Non-Traditional but Applicable

Force Sector Model (created by Mr. Ken Good)

- Imagine the officer in the middle so that making a force choice is ONE step and in response to the corresponding subject behavior(s).
- As the subject behavior(s) change the officer’s force choice does as well.
- Each change and choice forces a completion of the OODA Loop until incident closes.
- The subject’s behavior determines close of incident and final outcome.



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That concludes this course on Contextual Decision Making.

“Micro Moment Debriefing Protocol” is the next recommended course.



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