

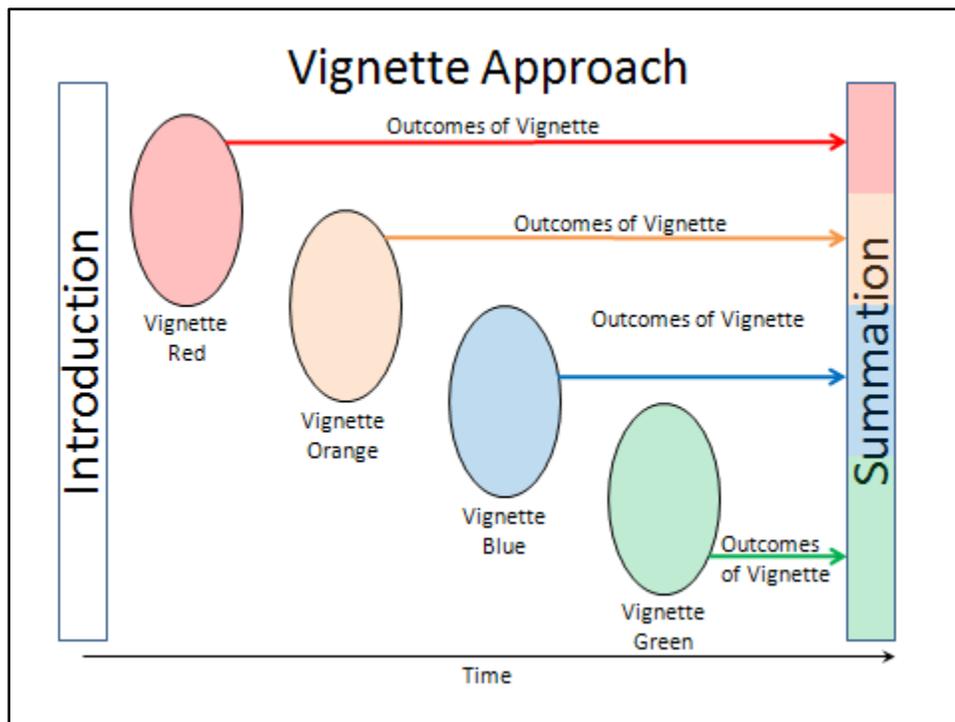
SCENARIO APPROACH OPTIONS

OPTIONS FOR DEVELOPING AN EXERCISE SCENARIO

A scenario is not a specific forecast of the future but a story with an explicit purpose. Scenarios designed by planners to drive exercise play are storylines shaped by objectives, and informed by relevant situational and organizational issues germane to exercise participants. Scenarios provide a plausible, contextual backdrop with sufficient detail to frame and drive exercise discussions, inform decisions, and prompt player activity.

Exercise designers can use several methods to establish the simulated context that drives player discussions and actions during a tabletop exercise (TTX). Two of the most common approaches, vignettes and problem threads, are described below.

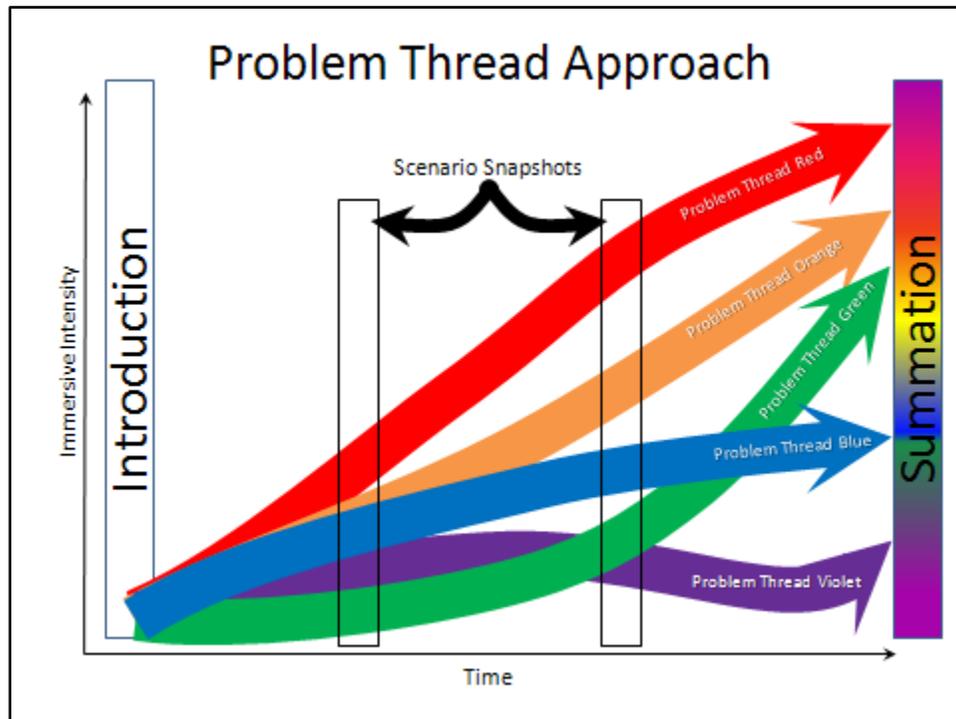
Vignette Approach



A vignette approach is one option for presenting a scenario to exercise participants. As shown in the diagram above vignettes are individual scenario elements isolated from other exercise elements but are not necessarily linked into the development of the larger overall scenario. This format is employed when a high fidelity, narrow scope setting is preferred to address a very specific issue. During a TTX, vignettes are presented at the level of detail deemed necessary for eliciting specific player reactions to meet exercise objectives. Typically, vignettes provide a high-level overview in describing an incident used to illustrate or identify a particular issue or

element. Oftentimes, several vignettes, each lasting approximately 30–60 minutes, are wrapped together during a shorter duration TTX to examine unique elements of a larger issue. As these are isolated entities no other influences distract the content of this vignette and a more focused examination of a subject can be achieved. At the summation of the exercise, the outcome of each vignette is independently addressed and commonalities amongst one or more vignettes highlighted.

Problem Thread Approach



The above diagram highlights a second approach for developing a scenario based on problem threads. A problem thread is a continuum of events all tied to a single issue. Collectively it is an answer to the question "Who does what to whom?", and as such it is characterized by initiator, action, target, and effect." This thread can increase in intensity revealing initial event elements (sometimes referred to as indicators and warnings), to the exposure of intermediate effects, to a climactic disclosure of significant consequences. In this approach, several problem threads occur simultaneously with the opportunity to affect other problem threads. Scenario "snapshots" are provided to the players detailing the events of all problem threads. Armed with scenario problem thread information, players can effectively and intelligently conduct their discussions as prompted by facilitator questions. During the summation players have the opportunity to discuss the comprehensive interaction of all problem threads.