



# Working Minds: A Practitioner's Guide to Cognitive Task Analysis (MIT Press)

By Beth Crandall, Gary Klein, Robert R. Hoffman

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**Working Minds: A Practitioner's Guide to Cognitive Task Analysis (MIT Press)** By Beth Crandall, Gary Klein, Robert R. Hoffman

Cognitive Task Analysis (CTA) helps researchers understand how cognitive skills and strategies make it possible for people to act effectively and get things done. CTA can yield information people need -- employers faced with personnel issues, market researchers who want to understand the thought processes of consumers, trainers and others who design instructional systems, health care professionals who want to apply lessons learned from errors and accidents, systems analysts developing user specifications, and many other professionals. CTA can show what makes the workplace work -- and what keeps it from working as well as it might.

*Working Minds* is a true handbook, offering a set of tools for doing CTA: methods for collecting data about cognitive processes and events, analyzing them, and communicating them effectively. It covers both the "why" and the "how" of CTA methods, providing examples, guidance, and stories from the authors' own experiences as CTA practitioners. Because effective use of CTA depends on some conceptual grounding in cognitive theory and research -- on knowing what a cognitive perspective can offer -- the book also offers an overview of current research on cognition.

The book provides detailed guidance for planning and carrying out CTA, with chapters on capturing knowledge and capturing the way people reason. It discusses studying cognition in real-world settings and the challenges of rapidly changing technology. And it describes key issues in applying CTA findings in a variety of fields. *Working Minds* makes the methodology of CTA accessible and the skills involved attainable.

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## **Editorial Review**

### Review

Discovering the basis for expertise is a task fraught with difficulties, but Crandall, Klein, and Hoffman provide the practical guidance of experienced CTA practitioners. They uncover their mental models, critical cues, and strategies for organizing knowledge and adapting routines. This book collects the resources one needs to become expert at using new tools to support cognitive work.

**(David Woods, Institute for Ergonomics, Ohio State University)**

This is probably the best guide I have read to capturing the essence of tacit knowledge in decision making. An excellent synthesis of the academic and the practical, and a major contribution to the field.

**(Dave Snowden, Founder, Cognitive Edge)**

What a gem! Finally, those who are interested in understanding how people in organizations acquire, retain, maintain, interpret, represent, and use knowledge in their jobs have a practical set of tools to follow and apply. A refreshing, welcome, and much-needed resource book. Bravo!

**(Eduardo Salas, Department of Psychology and Institute for Simulation & Training, University of Central Florida)**

Cognitive task analysis (CTA) is an immensely important approach to evaluating the development, implementation, and use of complex systems. *Working Minds* is a one-of-a-kind handbook in which highly qualified authors not only provide practical guidance for conducting CTA but also address fundamental cognitive issues that support the techniques. It will prove an extremely valuable resource for practitioners, scientists, systems engineers, and students interested in cognitive systems and workplace evaluation.

**(Vimla L. Patel, Director, Laboratory of Decision Making and Cognition, Columbia University)**

### About the Author

Robert R. Hoffman is Senior Research Scientist at the Florida Institute for Human and Machine Cognition.

Beth Crandall is Senior Technical Director of the Klein Associates Division, Applied Research Associates.

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**Eric Graves:**

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**Ralph Smith:**

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