

Script for GMB Session

This script was adapted from the scripts available on Scriptapedia:

<https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Scriptapedia>

This script is an abbreviated version of the more detailed versions available on Scriptapedia. If you decide to do a group model building (GMB) session, it is recommended to review the additional information on Scriptapedia, as well as the book by Hovmand, listed in the supporting resources.

I. Introductions

- a) Explain the agenda and overview of the day
- b) Present the goal of the session and explain the roles
- c) Everyone introduces themselves
- d) Introduce the problem

II. Reference Mode/Defining the Problem

Start by showing an example of a reference mode and explaining the concepts of dynamics. The video on reference modes should prepare participants for this activity.

Question: What do you think is the problem that we should be mapping?

Question: How does it change over time?

Question: How do you want to change the pattern? (ie. From the status quo or from an undesired behaviour?)

Outcome: come to consensus about the problem and draw a reference mode.

III. Variable Elicitation

Purpose: To elicit key variables that become the inputs for other activities.

Instructions: Brainstorm reasons for the problem identified from the reference mode activity (eg. Barriers to achieving social connectedness in X neighborhood). (The video on variable elicitation will assist with this)

Outcome: Consensus on a prioritized list of variables related to the reference mode problem

Steps:

1. Write the task focusing question on the whiteboard:

“What are the key variables affecting social connectedness in X neighborhood”

2. Ask the participants to write as many problem-related variables as they can on the sheets of paper. Participants are given a few minutes to work individually on their lists.
3. Once they have finished individual brainstorming, go around the room and ask each person to share a variable. Write the variables on the board.
4. Discuss which variables are most important and rank them. Identify the top 15 variables.

IV. Connection Circles

Purpose: To see important variables and connections between variables. To demonstrate the concept of interconnectedness and causal relationships.

Materials needed:

1. Sheets of large paper (such as butcher block paper) with blank connection circles (1 per small group)
2. Dark thick tipped markers (1 per person)
3. Photocopies of variable list (1 per person)
4. Example of completed connection circle on paper or in presentation slide format.

Outputs: Connection circles

Steps:

1. At the start of the exercise, separate participants into small groups and give each group one blank connection circle, a set of thick tipped markers and a photocopy of the variable list.
2. Introduce the Connection Circle exercise (The video on connection circles will assist with this). Provide the instructions and give the groups about 15mins to create their connection circles. Suggested instructions are listed below:
 - *The goal of our first exercise is to identify the variables and connections between them that are important in the system affecting the low social connectedness in X neighborhood.*
 - *We are going to draw a connection circle. A connection circle is a visual tool that can help us identify and understand problems and see the connections in a system.*
 - *You will pick two variables that are connected and draw a line with an arrow pointing in the direction of influence. The arrow shows causality and it can indicate both a positive or a negative situation.(Provide an example).*
 - *Next, you will pick another set of variables that are connected and draw an arrow to show causality.*
 - *There are several points to keep in mind before we start.*

- *First, if you want to have a connection that goes in both directions, draw two separate lines, one going in one direction and the other going in the other direction. Remember that the arrow shows the direction of influence, or of causation. The arrow can represent something positive or negative.*
- *Second, it may be easier to bend some of the lines to make them easier to follow, and that's OK.*
- *Third, the variables and connections can be based on the data sharing or your own experiences.*
- *Fourth, this connection circle is the overall or combined group picture of what may be happening for the issue of low social connectedness. Some variables and connections may be common to all communities. Other variables and connections may be specific to only one community or group.*

3. After connection circles are completed, ask the groups to rank their top five connections on their connection circles.
4. Have the groups share their connection circles with everyone.

V. Introduction to Causal Loop Diagrams (CLD)

Purpose: To provide instructions on how to do a CLD. The video on CLD101 will assist with this.

VI. Creating the CLD

Goal: To create a CLD and come to consensus about variable links, directions, and feedback loops.

Roles: This part of the workshop will require a facilitator familiar with modeling and a modeller that can use software in real-time. There should also be a notetaker documenting the discussion and deliverables.

Set-up: It's easiest to do the modelling using a projector set-up and having the model projected on the wall the wall for everyone to see as it's being built.

Steps

Step 1: remind the group of the problem variable (refer to the reference mode of the behaviour)

Step 2: Remind the group of the list of variables elicited before.

Step 3: Build the model

Output: A CLD that everyone agrees on.

VII. Break

Use the break time to fix up the CLD, and make it easier to follow.

VIII. Model Review

Purpose:

- To summarizing dynamic insights and stories
- To clarify fuzzy ideas or capturing additional information about model structure needed to formulate the model
- To eliciting feedback from participants

Outcome:

- A revised causal loop diagram that is based on an initial discussion
- A shared understanding of the changes in the model and insights that have emerged

IX. Action Ideas

Purpose: To identify and prioritize actions

Outputs: A prioritized list of potential actions

Steps:

1. Explain leverage points. (read the article by Donella Meadows in supporting resources)
2. Ask groups to take 20 minutes to identify as many actions as they can that could impact the model from the previous exercise.

Provide the following instructions:

For each action, I want you to tell us:

- (a) describe the action,*
- (b) identify where it would impact the model,*
- (c) identify how easy or hard it is to implement, and*
- (d) if successfully implemented, how much impact might this have on the [topic].*

3. The facilitator then asks groups to share their actions, one at a time and in a round robin fashion starting with their most important action. If another group has already identified that action, then they should select their next most important action.

X. Closing and Next Steps

- Thank everyone for their participation and contributions
- Explain next steps:
 - o Model cleanup and review: compare notes from session to model and see if anything was missed
 - o Will send them the final model
 - o Encourage them to use the model for presentations and planning
- Discuss future meetings and who will be engaged
- Questions or thoughts from the participants?