CAUSAL MAP GARDEN

!! Beyond causal mapping

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STORYTELLING OVERVIEW FROM GEMINI

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flashcards #storytelling

> **, "Evidence gives stories substance, :: but stories give evidence meaning,"** (https://assessmentinstitute.indianapolis.iu.edu/overview/institute-files/2021-institute/handouts-wednesday-2021/22P_jankowski_handout.pdf)

**

Adaptive Collective Sensemaking

A compelling and concrete rationale for the utility of storytelling in evaluation and social science emerges from evolutionary and cognitive perspectives. Bietti, Tilston, and Bangerter propose that the distinct adaptive value of storytelling is = rooted in its capacity for "making sense of non-routine, uncertain, or novel situations".3 This process, which they term "adaptive collective sensemaking," enables groups to collaboratively interpret and respond to new information or unexpected events.** =

If storytelling serves as a fundamental human mechanism for "adaptive collective sensemaking," particularly in uncertain or novel contexts :: its systematic integration into program evaluation can transform the evaluative exercise. Instead of being a purely

retrospective judgment, evaluation can become a dynamic tool for ongoing program learning,

#narrative_inquiry

narrative_inquiry vs #storytelling

"Narrative Inquiry" is recognized as a formal qualitative research methodology. Its primary focus is on understanding how individuals construct meaning from their lived experiences, typically through sustained, in-depth engagement with their personal stories. Narrative inquiry is systematic in its approach to the collection (e.g., through interviews, journals, field notes, letters) and analysis of these "field texts".6 In contrast, "storytelling" as a general activity in evaluation ? might encompass a broader range of practices, including the strategic use of anecdotes for communication or stakeholder engagement.11 Mattingly and Lawlor offer features that characterize a story or narrative—such as being "event-centered," "historically particular," concerning "human action," and possessing "plots"—which help differentiate them

a serious framework for #storytelling ? :: #narrative_inquiry

Donald Polkinghorne

"narrative smoothing" :: the process of refining and organizing collected narrative data to clearly address the research question—

"Diachronic Organization," :: the chronological structuring of narrative accounts to reveal developmental trajectories or sequences of event

Exploring "Narrative Knowing" and the Emplotment of Human Action

Donald Polkinghorne's contributions to narrative theory and methodology emphasize "narrative knowing" :: the idea that human beings understand themselves, their experiences, and their actions primarily through the construction of narratives or "plots".5

He argued that human action is often best understood through the lens of emplotment, :: suggesting that we live storied lives.

Polkinghorne introduced the concept of "narrative rationality," :: grasping the meaning of a whole (such as a life or a significant event) by seeing it as a "dialectic integration of its parts," where individual actions and events gain significance from their place within an overarching narrative structure.40 For researchers,

he also provided a useful methodological distinction between :: "narrative analysis" (or "analysis by means of narrative"), where the researcher actively synthesizes disparate data elements into a coherent narrative

account, and "analysis of narratives," where the researcher examines pre-existing stories**

D. Jean Clandinin,

often in collaboration with F. Michael Connelly, has been central to defining narrative inquiry as a :: profoundly relational methodology. Their work emphasizes understanding "experience and story in qualitative research," highlighting the co-constructed nature of narratives between researcher and participant**

**

2.2. Spotlight on Specific Techniques:

2.2.1. Most Significant Change (MSC)**

Photovoice

engaging in group discussions to analyze the meaning and context of these images (often using structured facilitation techniques like the 'SHOWED' acronym: :: What do you See here? What is really Happening? How does this relate to Our lives? Why does this concern, problem, or strength Exist? What can we Do about it?),

**Patton ::

strongly advocates for qualitative methods, including storytelling, arguing that they "tell the program's story by capturing and communicating the participants' stories" **Patton, storytelling** and the cultivation of "evaluative thinking" 27, :: he positions storytelling as a critical cognitive and communicative tool. Stories, by humanizing data, providing rich context, and illustrating complex dynamics in relatable terms 11, enable stakeholders to more effectively process and engage with complex evaluation information.**

**

Catherine Kohler Riessman: Establishing Rigorous Analytical Frameworks for Narrative Research

Catherine Kohler Riessman has made seminal contributions to the field of narrative inquiry by developing and articulating systematic and detailed frameworks for the analysis of narratives within the human sciences.** ?

thematic_analysis

structural_analysis

dialogic/performance_analysis how is it cocreated?

Jerome Bruner: Conceptualizing Narrative as a Fundamental Mode of Human Thought and Meaning Construction

Jerome Bruner, an exceptionally influential psychologist, advanced the understanding that narrative is not merely a literary form or a way of communicating information, but a fundamental "mode of thought" and a primary cognitive tool through which human beings organize their experiences, understand the world, and derive meaning.3 One of his most significant contributions in this area was the distinction between two primary modes of cognitive functioning 39: ?

1. Narrative Thought: This mode deals with the particularities of human experience, focusing on intentions, actions, and the temporally and causally structured sequences of events that constitute lived reality. It is concerned with verisimilitude and the interpretation of meaning in specific contexts.
2. Paradigmatic Thought (or Logico-Scientific Thought):

**

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theorymaker

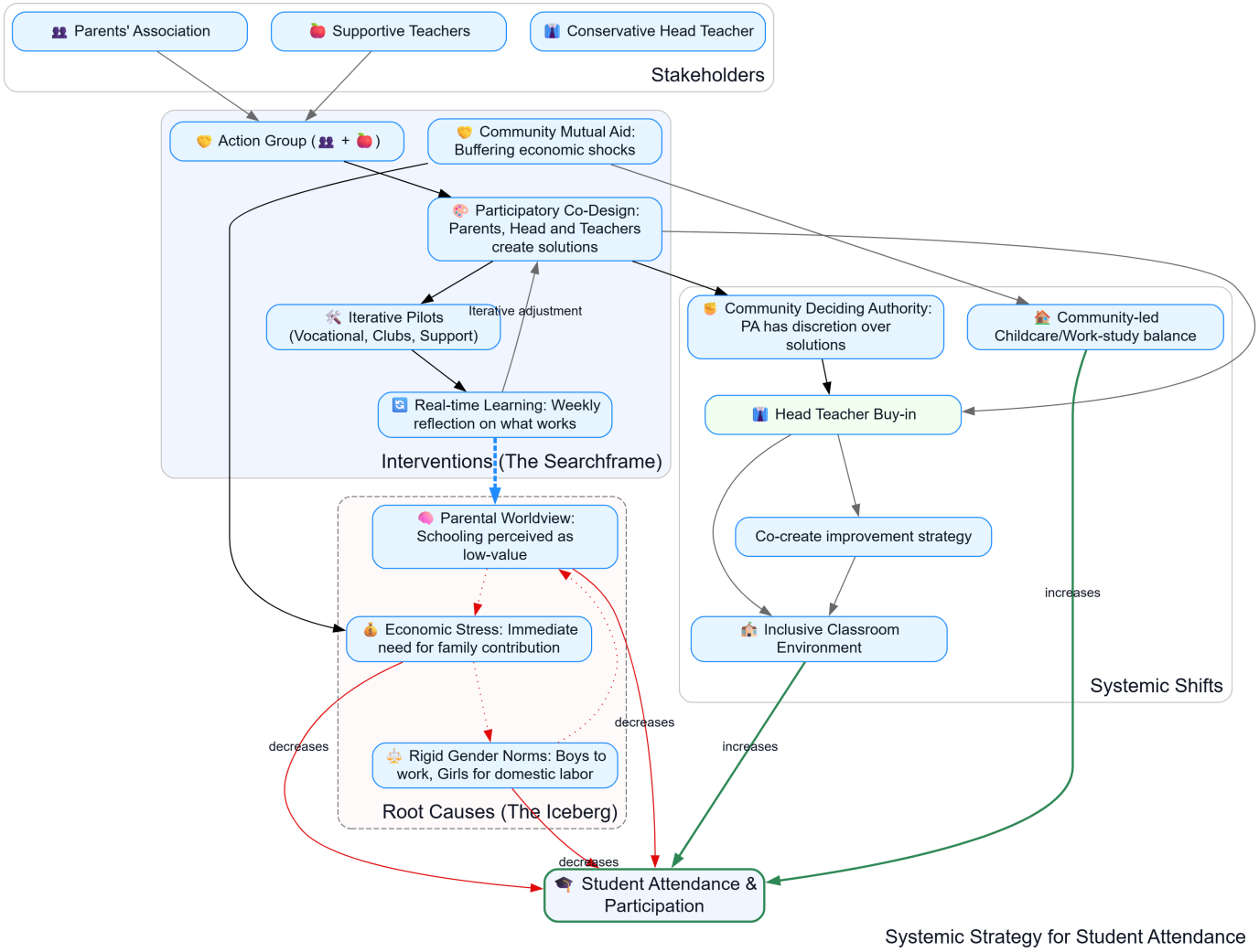
Theorymaker example

20 Dec 2025

i am member of an active parents' association. we have a good relationship with teachers but the head teacher is very conservative. we want to address a massive problem of non-attendance especially among boys. i want a theory of change how we can address this growing problem

yeah but don't forget the girls! also you forgot to show the problem and how it is maintained. add stuff about their parents etc and their worldview etc

no but why does head teacher buy in? combine sustained attendance and obsenteeism into one



THEORYMAKER

19 Dec 2025

1) The smallest possible map is like this

```
A:: Cause
B:: Effect
A -> B
```

2) Comments (important)

- `#` starts a comment.
- Everything after `#` on that line is ignored.

This also means: **don't use `#` for hex colours** (`#ff0000`) because it will be treated as a comment.

3) Settings (styles at the top)

Settings look like `Key: Value` and usually go near the top.

Common settings:

- **Title**: text title shown above the diagram.
- **Background**: background colour (named colour or `rgb(r,g,b)`).
- **Default box colour**: default node fill colour.
- **Default box border**: default node border, like `1px solid gray`.
- **Default link colour**: default link/arrow colour.
- **Default link style**: `solid | dotted | dashed | bold`.
- **Default link width**: a number (interpreted like px), e.g. `2`.
- **Default box shape**: `rounded` for rounded nodes.
- **Default box shadow**: `none | subtle | medium | strong`.
- **Direction**: `top-bottom | bottom-top | left-right | right-left`.
- **Label wrap**: wraps node labels after N characters (best-effort).
- **Rank gap / Node gap**: spacing controls (small numbers like `2`–`8` are typical).

Colour rules (keep it simple):

- Use **named colours** like `red`, `aliceblue`, `seagreen`, `dimgray`, etc.
- Or use **`rgb(r,g,b)`**, e.g. `rgb(255, 0, 0)`.

Example style block:

```
Background: aliceblue
Default box colour: wheat
Default box shape: rounded
Default box border: 1px dotted dimgray
Default link colour: dimgray
Default link style: dotted
Default link width: 2
Default box shadow: subtle
Direction: left-right
```

4) Nodes

Define a node like this:

ID:: Label

- **ID** is a short name you use in links (like `A`, `B2`, `MyNode`).
- **Label** is what you see in the diagram (can include spaces).

Examples:

```
A:: A short label
B:: A longer label with spaces
```

5) Links (arrows)

Links look like this:

```
A -> B
```

You can create multiple links in one line using `|`:

```
A -> B | C
A | Q -> B
A | Q -> B | C
```

(That last one creates the full cross-product: A→B, A→C, Q→B, Q→C.)

Optional link label + border:

```
A -> B [increases | 1px dotted gray]
```

Optional link label style + size (use `key=value` inside the brackets):

```
A -> B [label=increases | border=1px dotted gray | label style=italic | label size=10]
```

6) Grouping boxes (optional)

Grouping boxes are just lines starting with dashes:

- `--Label` opens a grouping box (level 1)
- `----Label` opens a nested grouping box (level 2)
- `----` closes the most recent level-2 grouping box
- `--` closes the most recent level-1 grouping box (and anything nested)

Example:

```
--Drivers
A:: Training quality
B:: Tool usability
--

--Outcomes
C:: Adoption
D:: Error rate
--

A | B -> C | D
```

7) Styling nodes inline (optional)

You can put a small “style list” after a node label:

```
A:: Hello [colour=red | border=2px dashed dimgray | shape=rounded]
```

Supported node attributes:

- `colour=...` (or `color=...`): fill colour
- `background=...`: fill colour (alias)
- `border=...`: border like `2px solid gray`
- `shape=rounded`: rounded corners

8) Border syntax (for nodes and links)

Border text is:

```
WIDTH STYLE COLOUR
```

Examples:

```
1px solid blue
2px dotted gray
```