

Hovmand et al. (2011): “Scriptapedia: A Handbook of Scripts for Developing Structured Group Model Building Sessions”

Introduced is the periodically updated open-source handbook of scripts called Scriptapedia. Scripts are defined in the paper as “standardized protocols” in group model building (GMB) to construct policy-oriented system dynamics models with client groups. Scripts are used to improve practice in GMB sessions. They can open “the black box of modeling interventions”, by providing a shared language for policy interventions. Beside that the paper mentions five different themes GMB is addressing to:

1. The different roles of the modeling team.
2. Scripts as organizing basic units in GMB.
3. Mapping sequences of scripts into a GMB plan (“ScriptsMap”).
4. Scripts as a starting point to evaluate GMB belonging to different contexts.
5. Process Diagrams to make temporal sequence diagrams in GMB visible.

Scriptapedia

Scriptapedia is created to develop scripts in a collaborative environment with the goal to create an online published handbook for scripts. Each script is formalized in the same way in a script template. In the following the main elements of templates are described:

- **Description:** “Abstract” of the script, 1-2 sentences.
- **Script status:** Best practice, Promising practice, under development.
- **Context:** Where in the GMB the script is used.
- **Purpose:** Problem-framing, mapping-initiation, variables/feedback loops/stocks-elicitation, reference-mode creation, etc.
- **Nature of group task:** Divergent, Convergent, Evaluative, Presentation.
- **Time:** Required duration.
- **Materials needed:** Markers, overhead, flip chart, etc.
- **Inputs/outputs of scripts:** Behavior over time graphs, concept model, etc.
- **Team roles required:** Naming needed GMB roles.
- **Who is in the room:** Every person which is required.
- **Steps:** How-to sequences of the script.
- **Evaluation criteria:** Criteria for successful execution of the script.
- **Authors/Script history/Revisions/References**

Uses, Misuses and Misunderstandings of Scripts

- Scripts should not be followed mechanically: They are not “substitute for the nonspecific factors involved with facilitating a group process.”
- GMB remains a complex social interaction and need professional background to be executed in the right way.
- There is still much room for improvisation.

Potential Issues and Limitations

- Only knowing scripts as a System Dynamics “lite” version.
- Scripts can lead to false confidence.
- Scripts have the potential to reinforce attribution errors.
- Authors may not benefit from the developed script on the open-source platform.
- Difficulties to state which scripts are of “best-practice”.