



Breaking News

Another school shooting turns policy focus back to guns

March 12, 2018

Learning Objectives:

- Systematically consider the complexities of this policy issue. *This is distinct from developing a plan.* The distinction is essential because our default mode is to jump to action before we really understand the relevant components of the issue.
 - Identify and map key relationships, challenges, resources, pressures, avenues of engagement, opportunities, political and cultural landmines, and other variables that define the dynamic and complex environment in which this policy issue lives.
 - Discuss and reflect on discoveries, generate questions rather than conclusions.
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Why Situational Mapping?

Mapping forces us to acknowledge and appreciate the “complications, messiness, and denseness of actual situations.” The process helps to sharpen visibility of the complex and dynamic nature of the environment in which government and politics takes place.

-Adapted from Adele Clarke, “Situational Analysis,” *Symbolic Interaction*, 26:4 (2003).

Your Group’s Task:

Do NOT jump to your preferred “solution,” but rather engage in the mapping process...

1. Each group member, working alone, should make a “messy map” on a piece of scratch paper. This involves brainstorming as many “things to consider” as possible regarding the policy issue. *The list of “things to consider” found on the back of this sheet will help with this process.* [5 minutes]
2. Once “messy” maps are completed, discuss similarities and differences between them. Consider how they might be integrated into a broader picture of the policy situation. [5 minutes]
3. On large poster paper, create a map that visually identifies and explores the relationships between and among key elements and reflects the dynamic and complex factors and environment you must consider when analyzing this issue. [20 minutes]

4. When completed, please tape the map to the wall for display. They are not self-explanatory, but rather serve as touchstones for explanation and discussion. So once completed, do a “gallery walk” by circulating around the room to view and ask questions about other maps. Please be sure that one or two group members stands by your group’s map to discuss it and answer questions. [15 minutes]
5. We will finish by coming back together into one group to debrief and discuss. [15 minutes]

“Things to Consider”:

Your responsibilities : collective and individual
Your role(s): collective and individual
Resources: human, financial, physical, intangible
Individual human actors: key individuals in situation, experience, personalities, etc.
Nonhuman elements: structured roles, laws, rules, norms, incentive structures, infrastructure, technologies, specialized information, etc.
Collective human elements/actors: particular groups, organizations, etc.
Implicated/silent actors: individuals and groups passively involved
Expectations: of actors, moral/ethical elements, mass media, popular culture, etc.
Political/economic elements: local/regional/national governments, industries, political parties, political ideologies, non-governmental organizations, politicized issues, etc.
Sociocultural/symbolic elements: religion, race, sexuality, gender, ethnicity, nationality, class, and other influential symbols
Temporal elements: past history, crises, pre- or post-election, trajectory, etc.
Spatial elements: spaces in the situation, geography, local vs. regional vs. national, etc.
Other major issues/debates in the current public discourse
Dominant narratives or stories: regarding individual or collective human actors, and/or nonhuman elements: how these are variously perceived by others
Other kinds of elements?

Adapted from Adele Clarke, “Situational Analysis,” *Symbolic Interaction*, 26:4 (2003): 564.