

Classifying a Scenario Exercise

Using the Scenario Cartwheel*

Before a scenario exercise gets underway, it is important that all participants agree on the nature of the study. There are many ways to structure a scenario exercise, and if different participants have in mind a different structure, then they can end up talking at cross-purposes without realizing it. This activity uses the idea of a “scenario cartwheel” as a graphical organizer for classifying scenarios.

This activity should be carried out early in a scenario exercise. The result is a broad classification of the exercise, which serves as a record of decisions made by the participants. The Scenario Cartwheel diagram should stay up over the course of a workshop as a reminder to participants. It may be necessary to revisit the initial decision as the workshop progresses.

The Activity

The full group discusses the classification of the scenario in three stages. The activity results in a flag (a sticky note) being placed in one of the “boxes” on the outer ring of the Scenario Cartwheel diagram (see Illustration 1).

Materials

- A large sheet of paper (e.g., flip-chart paper) with the Scenario Cartwheel drawn or printed on it.
- A copy of the Scenario Cartwheel for all participants.
- A sticky note.

Procedure

Discuss the classification of the scenario, starting at the center of the cartwheel, and moving outward. (Although if participants want to discuss the classification in a different order, that is OK.)

1. Start at the center: Is the main goal exploration or decision support?
2. Go to the next ring: Will analysis involve a formal procedure (qualitative or quantitative model, Delphi, other formal procedure), or will it be more “intuitive”?

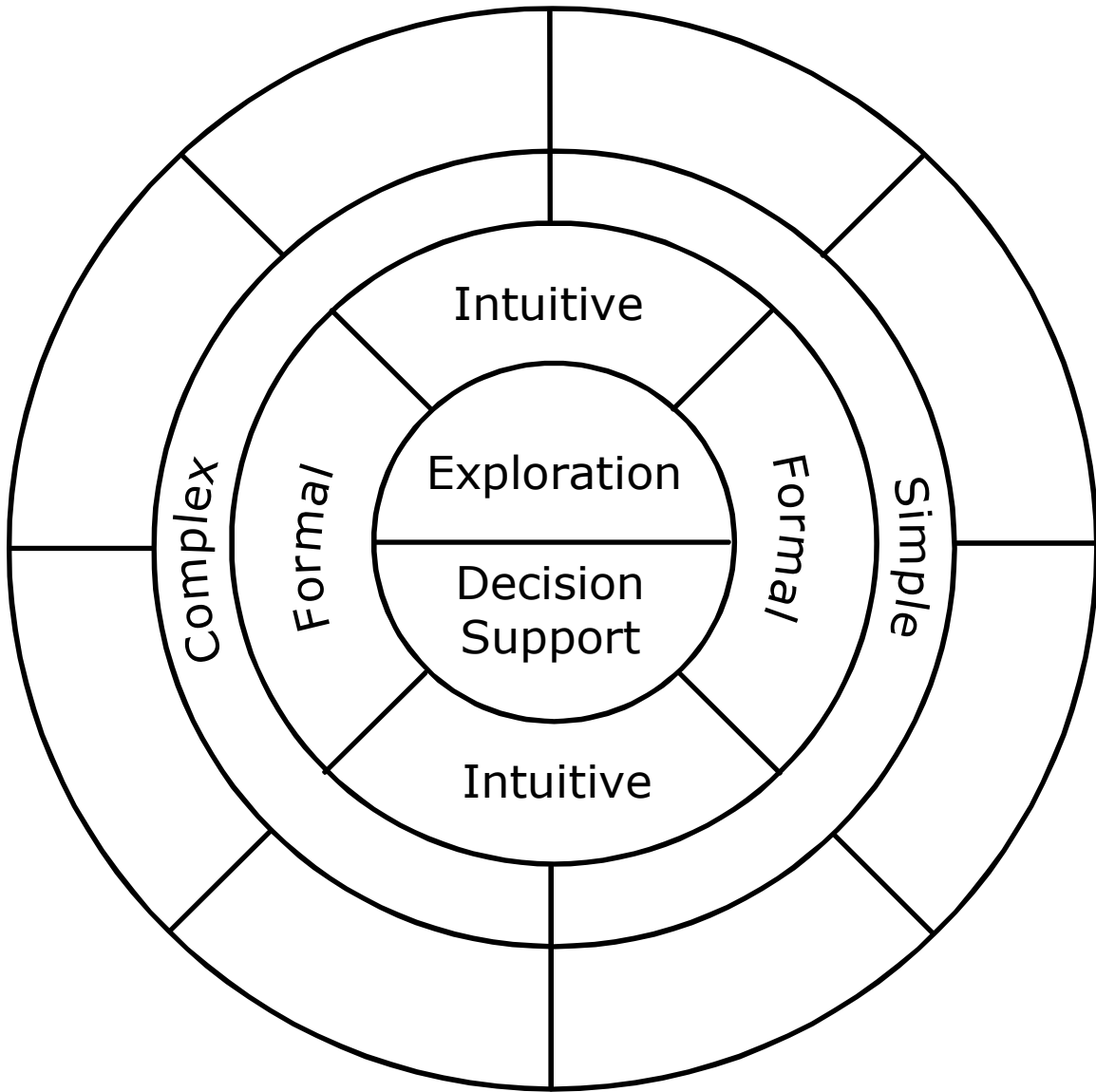
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3. Go to the final ring: Will the analysis be complex (e.g., involving several subanalyses, different groups, etc.) or simple (e.g., conducted entirely within a few sessions)?
4. Place the sticky note in the appropriate box on the edge of the diagram.
5. Ask participants to label their own copies of the diagram.

Wrap-Up

Leave the Scenario Cartwheel diagram up during the workshop, and return to it periodically as necessary.

Scenario Cartwheel



From: van Notten, Phillip W.F., Jan Rotmans, Marjolein B.A. van Asselt, Dale S. Rothman. "An updated scenario typology," *Futures* 35, pp. 423-443. 2003.

Illustration 1. The Scenario Cartwheel