

Problem Setting Narrative (PSN)

This project involves students visually mapping and composing a written narrative that describes the various inputs and/or pathways that “feed” a problem of public concern. You will produce two deliverables and also deliver an informal presentation to a group of your classmates to receive revision feedback.

Deliverable 1 – V-Chart Mapping

You will complete a v-chart map that frames your selected problem and visualizes argumentative pathways for addressing the problem (see attached student example). To begin your map, you will need to develop keywords and keyword phrases to populate the macro/micro labels that you will use to signal the argument structure of your proposed reasoning pathways. When creating these labels, you will need to be mindful of the relationships between the macro/micro sections to ensure that the labels offer meaningful distinctions both vertically and horizontally on the map and also create comparable, apples-to-apples relationships on the vertical and horizontal pathways.

In Week 1 of this assignment, you will complete a draft of the v-chart map for peer review. You will revise the v-chart during Week 2 of the assignment while you compose your narrative.

Deliverable 2 - Narrative Composing

To describe your reasoning processes in developing the v-chart map, you will compose a narrative that tells the story of your v-chart, i.e., describes how and why you framed the public issue in the manner you did as well as how and why you developed and named your macro/micro labels to establish the vertical and horizontal relationships on each reasoning pathway. As part of this discussion, you will comment on the range of names you considered for your labels and note how the labels, though related, offer different argument pathways for addressing the narrative. To limit the scope of your narrative, you will select 2 of the pathways to describe in detail and note how they relate to the other pathways on the v-chart map.

When composing the narrative, your goal is not to provide a play-by-play breakdown of what you did—your goal is to describe your reasoning process so that I can see your mind at work. Doing so will enable me to provide more targeted feedback to guide your revision process. To structure your narrative, I encourage you to model the layout of your v-chart map and use the language from your labels as your headers and sub-headers.

In Week 2 of this assignment, you will compose a draft of your narrative for peer review. You will revise the narrative during Week 3 of the assignment.

Informal Presentation

During our Week 3 class sessions, I will create groups of 4-5 students for informal presentations of your problem setting work. You will have 5 minutes to describe your v-chart mapping and composing, and your group members will have the opportunity to ask questions and offer feedback for revision.