

## Causal Modelling: Student Reflections

Student: **[00:00]** In problem solving, a causal model allows you to break down the idea. Because when you're just thinking about it in your head, like, you, you have one or two solutions or, like, possibilities.

Student: This is, like, never ending.

Student: But when you have—when you use this, it's never ending. So what our main idea was, was how does homework not get done? And obviously there's many ways. But basically, like, you could be lazy. But that is going to link to another idea. So basically it's a big loop that loops around and links to other ideas. So basically everything links and it loops, so it breaks down and it's much more simpler to look at all your options when you're thinking.

Student: **[00:40]** Well I really like causal modelling because you can take your original idea, then you can track it using all the other base ideas. Such as—there's a movie based on it or people have told other people to buy it. And the basic idea is how the book becomes a best seller. And I really like causal modelling because I hate how when things get all messy and confused and mixed together. So this really helps me track which ideas are from which ones, such as social media belongs to—the content is what people like or there's a movie based on it. And it's also really good for, like, showing how you think.

Student: **[01:33]** Okay, so basically causal models of your identity is basically, like, taking your name and figuring out, like, kind of, like, where you got your name and stuff that leads up to where your identity is.

Student: Like, how you became you. Like, everything that led up. So, like, example, you take, like, your mom or your dad, and then, like, from that you take, like, swimming and athletic, and that's where you get what you like to do.

Student: And then you could also take, like, all your friends that have an input into what you like to do now. Like, say your friend got you to do, say, like, volleyball then maybe you'll start liking volleyball and then, yeah.

Student: Like, for example, up here. So, she put opposite me and then, like, the Leviathan at Canada's Wonderland, which gave her, like, courage, so, she could become, like, fearless and she had more courage.

Student: And then, basically, you can cut it up into, like, the clothes you wear, the music you listen to that all, like, is part of your identity. It makes you you.

Student: And, like, if that wasn't there ...

Student: You could be a completely different person.

Student: Well, yeah. What would you be like today?

Student: This is different than just writing a story about ourselves. Because you can actually trail everything back, and figure out different things. And say, like, from—she, she might, like, like TV and, maybe that'll—to cooking shows, and then she'll also realize that she loves cooking and stuff like that.

Student: Like, stuff you never knew about yourself ...

Student: That you just remember by doing this.

Teacher: So what I like about causal modelling as a tool for learners is that it helps them see the complexity in ideas. And it allows them to explore problems and ideas in many, many different directions. It causes them to think a little bit more deeply. So if you were to read the reflections that students wrote about causal modelling, they'll talk about insights they gained because they were able to use the model to trace threads that they never were aware—that existed previously. They also might use it to break down a concept in science or a concept in, in history. It just is a tool that al—allows them to access the information that's, that's hidden away inside themselves and understand complexity.

So with the causal models in the class, it—that was—as a teacher was remarkable for me to watch because we had students—actually Victoria, remember? For the full first day, you said ...

Student: (Inaudible).

Teacher: "I have no idea what has caused me to be the person who I am today." And it took you until the next day to begin recognizing, "Okay, this is—these are the influences in my life." And I think it was Lauren who talked about—she never realized how much influence her dance teacher had had on you, right? Or Noel, your, your stepfather, what, what influence he's had—impact he's had on your life. So kids gained insight through exploring their identity in causal modelling.

Teacher: **[04:16]** So once we had explored causal modelling and, and seen how we might use this in the classroom, we decided to go in a, a different direction. And I asked the students to take a story that was familiar, in this case, Little Red Riding Hood. And not just create a plot graph; but use causal modelling to help them get better understanding of the depth of the story and motivations of characters, what's happening in the background. And it's very difficult for writers, especially young writers to develop the depth and detail in a story. So this is a tool for help them to consider how they might develop that deeper understanding of stories they are writing or stories they are, are reading.

So we looked at what would cause the story of Little Red Riding Hood to happen. What—Grandma sick. Well, why is Grandma sick? Maybe she got food poisoning. Maybe she got it from a, from a bad apple. Why would a mother ask a child to go into the woods where there's a wolf? What could possibly cause that—that to happen? And the kids were—this released their imagination and creativity. So it could—came from everything. Well maybe she actually hated her daughter. Maybe the mother suffered from mental illness and, and had poor judgment-making skills. Maybe the mo—mother was suffering from depression. So it was a way for them to access depth to the characters that are in story in a deeper way. It was a, it was a fun thing for the kids to do. And all of them recognized this as a useful tool for then framing their stories in a different way.

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