Anecdote vs. Evidence

	Description	How Used	Strengths /Rationale
Anecdote	Stories told to illustrate a problem or the failure of a policy, such as "My child took the DARE program and it worked to keep her away from drugs."	To justify starting or stopping programs by providing an easily understood story with obvious conclusions and underlying normative or moral principles.	Anecdotes are good for staking out a position on an issue, or for motivating people to believe a certain way. They are less useful as part of serious analysis, because they do not delve deeply into how programs work.
Evidence	Conclusions reached through scientific study of a problem or of the outcomes of a policy.	To justify starting or stopping programs by providing the most scientifically sound information that policy makers can use to make decisions.	Scientific evidence is much stronger than anecdotes in understanding how and why things work the way they do. However, the results of scientific study are often controversial and unpopular, and sometimes run counter to popular expectations.

Theories of Policy Change