

Storytelling as Assessment and Assessment as Storytelling: Reading and Writing Equity

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Assessment Reporting/ Results Sharing & Storytelling

When you think of assessment reports & sharing assessment findings...

- What do you think of?
- What does it look like?
- What shapes what goes in the report/ sharing findings?

When you think of stories and storytelling...

- What do you think of?
- What does it look like?
- What shapes what goes into the story?

Story

“means of preserving
common characteristics
of a culture and passing
them on to a
subsequent generation”

Bracketing: Your story should begin and end with significant events. You are capturing a moment in time and reflecting. You cannot reflect in the present as you cannot reflect on the future.

Milestones: Your story is punctuated by events (external and internal). Your story must include these as threads that weave your tapestry and as codas that bring your reader back to the narrative.

Cultural Artifact: Your self-study becomes a cultural artifact by which future generations will understand your institution.

Tensions between Assessment & Storytelling

- Assessment as creative and historical practice
- Recognizing the goals of assessment versus evaluation
- Using storytelling to support improvements and actions at the program/ institutional level



Making the Shift: From Reporting to Storytelling

- Like a rug that pulls a room together
- Don't overcomplicate it
- Think about richness and context



Making the Shift: From Reporting to Storytelling

Consider:

What underlying paradigms are we supporting when “data” is what we communicate?

Some alternative perspectives:

- Henning and Lundquist’s Culturally Responsive Assessment
- Feminist perspective: Scientific inquiry as quilting (M. Flannery, *Qualitative Inquiry*, Oct. 2001)
- Stone, D. Counting: How we use numbers to decide what matters (Live right, 2021)

Example:

One Student's Experience in the Libraries



Storytelling at the Local Level



Shifting Narratives & Connecting Individual to Institutional

"I feel like playing [intramural sports] helps me reduce stress, and also gives me the chance to focus on something outside of school but is still in the same realm."

Bryce Baker
Site Manager/Intramural Sports
Program Assistant
Sophomore | He/Him/His

90%

of Western Michigan University students feel that participating in Campus Recreation at the SRC increased or improved their stress management.

2021-2022 WMU Benchmarking Survey

"I really felt a [sense] of belonging once I was at Western... seeing Western's actions in trying to include everybody and to get people involved in student organizations. I feel like I've grown as a leader."

Alyssa Lozano
Panhellenic E-Board
Junior | She/Her/Hers

62%

of Western Michigan University students feel that participating in campus activities has allowed them to improve their leadership skills.

2021-2022 WMU Benchmarking Survey

Equity as a Continuum

Equity is an uncomfortable and challenging topic in the best of times and especially in our current context. Equity is not a fixed point or destination, there are many on-roads to how one could honor & advance equity. If we work to define equity and think of it not as an outcome, but a mindset which we are driven by, we can focus on continually creating a space where all campus community members can be successful.



**COMPLIANCE/
BASELINE**



**INCLUSION,
ACKNOWLEDGE,
HONOR**



**REMOVE BARRIERS/
ADVANCE JUSTICE**

The Relationship between Assessment, Storytelling, and Equity

- Whose stories are we telling?
 - Decentering Whiteness
 - Connecting individuals to institutional context
- Storytelling as Justice Work: How are these stories being told?
 - Holistic, inclusive
 - Multicultural validity
- Storytelling as Methodology
 - Trust & talking circles
- Equity and Institutional Narrative
- Inspiring Action and Empowering Change

Conclusion & Questions

- What kind of "story" are we telling through our assessment practices?
- How does framing assessment as storytelling change how we approach our work?
- In what ways can we use assessment storytelling to advance equity and justice in our institutions?
- Are we as assessment professionals creative enough in our interpretations to foster meaningful change?

Thank you!



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