



Building a Narrative via Evidence-Based Storytelling

1. **Audience:** For whom is this narrative written? (i.e., internal/external audiences) Are there other audiences who may be interested in the report? What counts as evidence for the different audiences of the report? In what type of story are the different audiences interested in? What are your goal(s) for this story, targeted to this audience?

Primary audience:

- a. Evidence:
- b. Type of story:

Secondary audience(s):

- a. Evidence:
- b. Type of story:

2. **What kind of story are you telling?** (i.e., compliance, improvement, loss, struggle, quest, tragedy, fantasy, etc.) What context is needed for readers to understand the story? What is the setting?

- a. What do you want the audience(s) to take away from this story?

- b. The language you choose is important with the type of story you are telling. What is the tone of your story? How familiar is your audience with the back story? Is the language appropriate for your target audience(s)?

3. **Who are the character(s) in your story?** (Is there a protagonist in your story—someone who is driving the action and/or someone with whom your audience is likely to identify? What are the motivations of the characters?)

Note: Characterization is the information that the author gives the reader about the characters themselves. What context do readers need to understand your characters? Are there any preconceived notions about the characters that need to be addressed early in the narrative?



4. **What is the plot?** (The plot is the causal sequence of events and includes setting and conflict.)
 - a. Plot elements include:
 1. **Exposition** is the information needed to understand a story.
 2. **Complication** is the catalyst that begins the major conflict.
 3. **Climax** is the turning point in the story that occurs when characters try to resolve the complication.
 4. **Resolution** is the set of events that bring the story to a close. However, not all stories have a resolution – it could be a cliff hanger.
 - b. Setting: What is the context? Any important circumstances or conditions to include?
 - c. Conflict: What are we trying to address or overcome? (internal/external barriers)
 - d. Potential uses of the data: How might readers use the information provided moving forward?

5. **What evidence do you have to assert your claims?** (i.e., data sources, indirect/direct measures of student learning, etc.). *Remember audience(s)—some audiences are not interested in the methodology but need information in order to trust the data source in part of a larger argument being made—depending on focus, different amounts and types of information/evidence are needed.

6. Based on the story you crafted, what is the best **medium through which to share it**? Video, written narrative, shorter visual image pieces, a combination, others? How will you engage in usability testing to determine communication fit with your target audiences?



7. If you are using visuals in your narrative – are they appropriate? Do they support the story you are trying to share or detract from it? Did you make meaning of them for the reader, or are you presenting the visuals and expecting your reader or listener to make sense of them (and is there enough presented visually to enable this approach)?

8. How will you make your target audience(s) aware of the story?

Additional Reflective Questions:

- What story is the institution trying to tell internally and externally? Is the story clear to a variety of audiences?
- Are there conflicting stories being presented from different sources or venues?
- Who is the institution telling the story to OR which audience(s) are you trying to persuade?
- What is the argument being made to each audience?
- Who is involved in locating evidence, selecting evidence, and engaging with evidence to make meaning for the institution and the story?
- What organizational structures and processes support the review of evidence to include in the institutional story?
- How does the institutional culture, mission, and goals inform the story presented?
- What evidence and elements are most important to tell the story? Where are there gaps and what additional evidence is required to tell a different story?