

Storytelling for Change: Telling Your Story

OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

This module helps scientists learn to craft and tell a story that engages and influences a community. They learn to pay attention to rhetorical elements of audience and message, to use narrative notions of tension and counternarrative, and to refine strong presentation skills. Through an iterative, feedback-rich process of telling and re-telling their personal stories for their peers, scientists learn how to present themselves to their audience in a way that can change perceptions of their science, its goals, values, who gets to be a scientist and how it happens. Scientists are supported in delivering their stories at face-to-face events and in developing digital stories for dissemination on the web and via social media.

OBJECTIVES

1. Learn how narrative works in crafting a story that engages and compels an audience.
2. Understand how to use a story to influence how communities perceive and relate to a scientific field.

RESOURCES

1. [Slides](#)
2. Video: [The Power of Personal Narrative](#)
3. Videos: [Geoscience Ambassadors](#)

ACTIVITY

Reflection

1. Before meeting as a group, ask your participants to do some reflective journaling to think about their personal experience in a narrative sense. Example reflection prompts include:
 - a. What are unique aspects to your pathway story?
 - b. What “tensions” in your life have driven you over time along your pathway?

- c. How did you grapple with these tensions, resolve them, or how do they still drive you?
- d. What “characters,” events, circumstances or aspects of society cause these tensions, or help you deal with or resolve them?
- e. Who/what has helped you learn, change, adapt, see things differently, or make decisions along your pathway?
- f. What about your pathway experience might others relate to?
- g. What have you learned through dealing with your “tensions” that others should know?
- h. What aspects of your story maybe go against our normal understanding of where you come from, what the geosciences is, or how or why one becomes a geosciences
- i. In what ways might your story change people, change the field?

Story workshop: Guide participants through cycles of storytelling and feedback.

2. On their own: Participants practice telling a part of their pathway story that they think others could relate to and learn from. They record themselves telling a two minute version of their story that they are willing to share with other participants for feedback.
3. As a group: Participants share their video stories with each other, gathering feedback. Prompts may include:
 - a. Are potential audiences clear?
 - b. Are messages clear?
 - c. Is the story engaging?
 - d. What opportunities for connection and change do you see in the story?
 - e. What do you like?
 - f. What was confusing, or what could be improved or clarified?
 - g. What would you like to know more about?

EXAMPLE ASSESSMENT

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree: (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree)

- I enjoyed participating in this activity.
- I would recommend this to a friend or colleague.

Please rate your gains in the following areas: (No gain, Little gain, Moderate gain, Great gain, Not applicable)

- An understanding of what can be done to influence perceptions of and relations to your scientific field.
- An understanding of how narrative works in crafting a story that engages and compels an audience.
- An understanding of how to use a story to influence the way that an individual or community perceives or relates to a scientific field.

Relative to before your participation in this activity, how likely are you now to: (Much less likely, Somewhat less likely, The same, More likely, Much more likely)

- To use the story of your own experience to influence who is included in your field.
- To use the story of your own experience to influence what your field does.
- Learn more about your community or your field and how their relationship could be changed.

How do you plan to use your story?

To whom do you plan to tell your story, and how many people do you expect will hear it?

What do you hope to change with your story?

What did you learn in this activity? Did anything surprise you?

What was most useful to you about this activity?

What recommendations do you have for improving this activity?

How can we support you in your activities going forward?

ADAPT AND REUSE THIS RESOURCE

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