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| **Discipline:** All | **Type:** In-class or Take-home project  | **Time Commitment:**One class period or multiple sessions  | **Category:** The Living Building; Equity, Justice & Sustainability |
| **Big Ideas:** [Documentary Storytelling](https://serve-learn-sustain.gatech.edu/big-idea/digital-storytelling-documentary-media); [Interconnectedness](https://serve-learn-sustain.gatech.edu/big-idea/interconnectedness); [Voice & Agency](https://serve-learn-sustain.gatech.edu/big-idea/voice-agency) |
| **OVERVIEW:** This tool facilitates meaningful discussions on equity through the lens of storytelling. The goal of the tool is to help science and technology students use narrative as a method of quickly testing ideas. As Jeremy Ackerman claims, “Telling a story is a much faster way of rapid prototyping than actually trying to create prototypes.” By creating and shaping stories we can learn more about ourselves, others, and the problems we seek to solve. As we know, “the United States is rich with the stories of the diverse groups that make up this country. […] Not all stories, however, are equally acknowledged, affirmed or valued.” (*The Storytelling Project*, Lee Anne Bell and Rosemarie Roberts). By creating and shaping stories to serve the goals of their discipline students will acquire a better understanding of what equity means, where it lacks, and how to foster it. This tool embraces those concepts so that students are able to see how their discipline intersects with equity and also so they can see how storytelling can be a useful tool for progress.The first draft of this tool was developed by Kent Linthicum, Jeremy Ackerman, Julie Hugonny and Michael Nitsche (Kendeda Building Teaching Fellows Spring ‘20) with the help of <https://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/stp_curriculum.pdf>  |
| **INSTRUCTIONS:** 1. This activity begins with a short in-class discussion.
2. Then student teams create stories that focus on equity as it relates to their discipline.
3. Then students present their stories to the class.

Note: These activities focus on the Equity Petal of the [Living Building Challenge](https://living-future.org/lbc/basics/); however, you can modify most content to fit any of the other petals. |
| **SLS STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES & ASSESSMENT:**The Serve-Learn-Sustain toolkit teaching tools are designed to help students achieve not only SLS student learning outcomes (SLOs), but also the unique learning outcomes for your own courses. Reflection, concept maps, rubrics, and other assessment methods are shown to improve student learning For resources on how to assess your students’ work, please review our [Assessment Tools](http://serve-learn-sustain.gatech.edu/tool-category/assessment). **This tool achieves SLO 1, 2, & 3. See the end of this tool for further details.** |
| **Want Help?**Kent Linthicum is the contact for this tool. You can reach him at kent.linthicum@lmc.gatech.edu |

Storytelling Equity

# Optional Before Class Activities

Before using this toolkit in class, consider having your class read or watch:

* Randy Olson's talk during Great Challenges Day at TEDMED 2013 <<https://youtu.be/ERB7ITvabA4>>
* The equity petal for the Kendeda Building, especially if the class takes place in the building <<https://livingbuilding.gatech.edu/equity-petal>>

Also, consider having students write out answers to these questions:

* How would you define equity?
* What is the difference between equity and equality?
* How does your discipline contribute to equity and inequity?
* How does the Kendeda Building foster equity?
* Do you see places where the Kendeda building could do more? Better?

For instructors who want to know more, consider reading:

* *Storytelling for Social Justice: Connecting Narrative and the Arts in Antiracist Teaching* (2019), edited by Lee Anne Bell < <https://gatech-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/1q23lps/TN_cdi_proquest_ebookcentral_EBC5884081>>
* *Houston, We Have a Narrative: Why Science Needs Stor*y (2015), by Randy Olson <https://gatech-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/8rislh/01GALI\_USG\_ALMA7199631050002931>

# In-Class Activity

### **1.** To begin with, create (or bring in) a simple story for the class/discipline. This story should represent a core issue or challenge in your discipline, especially a challenge that connects with or affects people.

### *For example, in a civil engineering class, a story might be: “A nearby road suffered damage from recent rains, and needs repair. But it never had a sidewalk. Therefore, the road needs to be redesigned with a sidewalk.”*

*Or, another example, in a computer programming class, a story might be: “A client requests a user interface for a new program, and they want it to be easy to use. But the information they want to display is too complex for a simple interface. Therefore, the user interface is not going to be able to display all the information the client wants.”*

*A third example, in an architecture course, might be: “A building needs an interior ramp to be ADA accessible, and the owners want the ramp’s users to feel valued. But the building has limited space. Therefore, the ramp will need to occupy a central place in the building’s construction.”*

To create this story, ask the class,

* How does our class/discipline affect people?
* What are some critical ways people interact with the knowledge/products of our class/discipline?
* What are some difficulties people might have with that knowledge or those products?

Given that you will be introducing the “*And...But...Therefore*” method of storytelling soon, it would be ideal to model that structure of storytelling and it may be helpful to explicitly introduce it. The goal for this section is to create a template story that can be used and further developed by students. Alternatively, you could offer the students a chance to take the ideas generated from the questions above to craft their own stories using the template discussed above and in step #4, rather than having one class-wide story.

### **2.** Then as a class, define:

### Equity

### Diversity

### Inclusion

### It may be helpful to introduce or discuss as a class how concepts within your domain specifically might impact the story you are constructing.

### Also, if you are going to give your class multiple ways to present their story, consider asking them: *How do we tell stories? What mediums support story telling? How does the choice of medium contribute to telling and understanding the story?* And providing a list of mediums: written word (poem, short story, novel), video, performance, social media post, song, visuals (painting, picture, graffiti, collage, storyboard), etc.

**3.** In teams,have the students retell the class story from step #1 from their own perspective. What difficulties or challenges might they face in that story? (i.e. what is their ‘but’ in step #4). Emphasize to the students that they are not expected to talk to classmates about things they feel uncomfortable sharing (e.g. a LGBTQIA student who is not ‘out’ or a student of color that does not want to be the representative of their race). Let the students determine what kind of story they want to tell about themselves.

Then ask the students to collaboratively retell the story using other elements of equity, diversity, and inclusion they have not covered. Emphasize the goal here is merely to imagine how another person might experience the same challenge. Students are not expected to try and represent or speak for people of different backgrounds. The goal here is to iterate and imagine how other people experience the world, while being respectful.

If you are letting your students pick a method of storytelling, have them do so here, asking them to consider what medium will suit the story they want to tell best? If you are assigning them a method, tell them now.

**4.** Tell the students to write a story in their groups. The goal for the story to weave together the experiences of people with the discipline to see how the discipline needs to consider diversity, equity, and inclusion. This story can capture the experiences of one person or multiple people with respect to the challenge at hand. Have the students use the “*And... But... Therefore*” method. This method, as described by Olson, is a simple way to tell a story and is well suited for communicating science and technology issues through narrative. The structure is as follows:

* Hook—this is the setup of the story. What is going on?
* And—this is the relevant data to the story. What does the audience need to know?
* But—this is the issue or the problem of the story. What is the conflict?
* Therefore—this is the resolution of the story. How is the conflict solved? (Credit Randy Olson)

The goal of these stories is not to be art, but rather to use narrative as a way of rapid prototyping to think about issues or problems faced by a discipline or field.

**5.** Have students present their stories. If you are using this toolkit for a single class day, then consider leaving the last third of the class for student presentations (with the other two thirds dedicated to the introduction of the material—steps one through two—and time for students to write their stories—steps three and four).

If you are doing this over multiple class days, then have the first day dedicated to steps #1 through #4. Have students work on the stories for homework. And then have a dedicated day focused on refining presentations, peer review, and comments.

If the assignment is going to be graded, consider using the [WCP Assessment Rubric](https://wpa2018kong.wordpress.ncsu.edu/files/2018/02/Screen-Shot-2018-03-27-at-11.01.17-AM.png), which is flexible enough to grade all mediums of work and at multiple skill levels.

# After Class Activities

Once you have finished this toolkit, consider asking your class these questions:

* In what ways does your design or problem-solving process interface with people?
* What ideas, services, or products does your discipline produce?
* How do people access them?
* In what ways might that access shift or change when we consider questions of sex, gender, race, class, religion, ability, etc.?
* Do the products of your discipline privilege certain qualities?
* Are the ways that the things your discipline creates not equally accessible?
* What did you discover about this problem or your discipline by thinking about them through narrative?

Consider finding additional readings or media to review that describe people with different experiences. These resources are provided as examples of existing materials that may be helpful.

* Immersive Storytelling about being blind <<https://around.uoregon.edu/content/exploring-life-blind-through-multimedia-storytelling>>
	+ Here is that student's project
	<[https://www.seeingthroughhearing.com/abbys-dream-journey/>](https://www.seeingthroughhearing.com/abbys-dream-journey/%3E)
* Deaf Poets Society TED talk <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0LZGYwDO-QE>>
* A Day in the Life of a Deaf Child <<https://www.theatlantic.com/video/index/571291/deaf-children-school/>>
* Transgender storytelling at Sparkaction <<https://sparkaction.org/content/storytelling-toolkit-transgender-and-gender-nonconforming-youth-and-their-families>>
	+ They also have a 20 page toolkit <<http://transgenderlawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/TRUTH-Storytelling-Toolkit-FINAL-Dec-2015.pdf>> on using storytelling for transgender representation

# References

Randy Olson, *Narrative Is Everything: The ABT Framework and Narrative Evolution* (2019).

SLS Student Learning Outcomes

1. Identify relationships among ecological, social, and economic systems.
2. Demonstrate skills needed to work effectively in different types of communities.
3. Evaluate how decisions impact the sustainability of communities.
4. Describe how to use their discipline to make communities more sustainable.\*

\* *Note:* SLO 4 is intended to be used by upper division, project-based courses such as Capstone.