



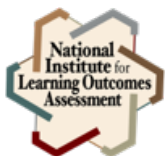
# The Evidence-Based Storytelling Toolkit: Using Assessment Data to Write Your Learning Narrative

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JOE LEVY, NATIONAL LOUIS UNIVERSITY



# WELCOME

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What's the series about?

How will our time together today flow?

In case you are wondering:

- Slides will be shared
- This is being recorded and will be shared
- You can keep the convo going on twitter with #NILOAwebinar
- Google doc of updated resource on the NILOA website and all prior webinars as well:  
<https://www.learningoutcomesassessment.org>



## Community Check-in Recap

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This is not a test of online education. Remember: It's not about learning online; it's about learning in a global pandemic crisis.

Compassion not compliance should drive decisions at this time.

Listen to students and be flexible.

Do not require a higher-level of proof in an online class than you would in face-to-face.



## More Community Check-in Recap

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Don't start from a point of negativity in perceptions of students to create policy. A policy should not be about blocking cheating but enabling learning.

Modify end of course/faculty evaluations and use them as a formative planning tool.

Assessment of student learning is ongoing this semester, the reporting of those efforts is a lower priority that can be postponed or altered.





# Assignment Design Conversations

## Assignment Charrettes in a Time of COVID-19

Assignment charrettes, or structured peer review of assignment design, provide an opportunity for faculty members to come together and discuss, through a structured peer review process, the design of their assignments in relation to learning outcomes, evaluative criteria, and the means by which students are prepared to complete the assignment (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Elements of an Assignment Design Conversation

In the current global pandemic of coronavirus, faculty have taken courses online for the remainder of the Spring semester or term, and are planning now to continue online for the summer and possibly fall. Thus, conversations on modifying assignments are now timelier than ever. Assignment discussions provide a means to:

1. Focus attention on the key learning outcomes of interest within a course and the assignments that allow students to practice or demonstrate their learning – what is it that we really want students to do;
2. Bring faculty together remotely to help with physical distance, but also to problem solve collectively ideas on how to focus and refine assignments for the near term; and
3. Provide professional development and support through community in a time of crisis.

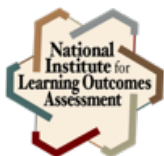
While the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) conducted a [virtual assignment design charrette](#) for several institutions of higher education within Virginia, and made their materials available for others to learn from, such an approach may not work given current faculty and staff constraints including home schooling, access to internet and time, and other situations related to the coronavirus circumstances. As such, we offer a few considerations for modifying an assignment design conversation for the near term.



Assignment: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments From: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What learning outcomes will students demonstrate with this assignment? How does it need to be modified to better align with the learning outcomes of interest?
2. How does the assignment align with the evaluative criteria? Are there mixed signals sent to students?
3. Thinking about the assignment from the point of view of students, what questions or suggestions do you have regarding clarity in instructions, prompt, or purpose?
4. How does this assignment allow for flexible options, alternative demonstrations, and/or culturally responsive demonstrations of learning?
5. How does this assignment need to be modified or adjusted to reflect current faculty and student circumstances and situations in light of COVID-19?
6. What unnecessary constraints, if any, may need to be removed to accommodate learning during a global pandemic crisis?



# Planning with Curriculum Maps



## Program Planning in a Time of COVID-19

Students had already completed a full term and part of the spring when campuses switched to remote instruction in response to coronavirus, or COVID-19. For those students graduating, they had been refining and practicing various institutional and programmatic courses over the entirety of their degree path. For those still on the leading edge of their educational journey, one principle of learning rings very true: that the learning we most desire for our students cannot be acquired in a single class or single experience. Students must run into it over and over again, in different classes, in different ways. Thus, as we look to planning a possibly virtual Fall learning experience for students, faculty and staff need to come together and explore curriculum plans in relation to learning outcomes and assignments. In other words, it is a great time to dust off curriculum maps and use them to engage in future planning for students.

These conversations are not about updating a curriculum map document or starting into a rigorous process of mapping curriculum. Instead, assessment professionals can offer several questions to guide faculty discussions in planning for the summer and fall.

- When our campus made the shift to remote instruction, what learning outcomes had we addressed, and which were left to cover? Basically, what learning outcomes will students need additional application or review in follow-on courses?
- Are the courses planned for next term already addressing those outcomes, or do they need to be modified? How might I rethink my course(s) and assignment(s)?
- How is my course setting students up for learning success in future courses?

Now's the time to return to the basics of assessment and instructional design. Consider discussing the following questions:

- Why does this course even exist?
- What are the learning outcomes that students need from this course that they will apply elsewhere?
- How can we think about learning from a program perspective? Where does this fit into overall curriculum?
- Can we consider this a flipped semester or a flipped summer – where students learn about a concept over the summer and then apply and practice it when they return?

Feel free to pull from this list of questions to assist in conversations on learning in the upcoming sessions/semesters/terms. In addition, ask the students what learning outcomes they think they have acquired and/or where they think they need additional work. This is also an opportunity to



actively involved your students in planning discussions as well as assessment conversations as they have interesting ideas to bring to the table.

## Virtual Discussions for Future Planning

When undertaking programmatic planning conversations based on mapped and aligned curriculum, please consider current virtual constraints. Questions to consider include whether the discussion should be conducted synchronously or asynchronously? What technology should be used?

Given the differences in the lived experience of faculty and staff as well as differences in current ability to offer chunks of undistributed time to a task, virtual discussions of mapping learning may need to be flexible in different ways. For instance, one model may be that faculty come together in a Zoom meeting and discuss learning in specific courses at the same time. However, synchronous sessions may limit faculty involvement due to timing, Internet requirements, and ability to focus. Another model might entail a mapping exercise that is shared in a Google doc, grouped by courses, programs, etc., and made available to faculty over the span of a week or other set amount of time, with questions to guide their engagement with materials. Faculty are then able to add their course/program learning outcomes information and comment as they have time. A further option is a modified course evaluation or survey to faculty, staff, and students to capture what learning students think they have met thus far and what learning they think they need to continue to work on in future terms. It might even be that the best path forward is a combination of various approaches mentioned.

## Resources

For additional mapping considerations and ideas, you can access the [NILOA Mapping webinar recording](#) which is part of the [NILOA webinar series in response to COVID-19](#) (coronavirus) situations. You can also access the [Mapping Learning toolkit](#) for information on what curriculum mapping entails, how to go about doing it, sample maps, and examples from other institutions.

**Please cite as:** National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment. (2020, April). *Program planning in a time of COVID-19*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois and Indiana University, Author.



# Webinar Series – one left to go!

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**Beyond the Looking Glass:  
Tenets of Meaningful Transparency**

**[April 30 Register.](#)**



## Evidence-Based Storytelling

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Evidence of student learning is used in **support of claims or arguments** about **improvement and accountability** told through **stories** to **persuade a specific audience**.



# Why Stories?

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Shadiow (2013) presents a process to see stories “as something other than sentimental anecdotes with thinly veiled lessons” but instead **as a mechanism by which we may reflect on our practices and teaching** (p. viii).

We have a story to tell about the decisions we made during this time, why we made those decisions, and the impact of those decisions on our students and their learning.

We have stories of loss to tell, some may be tragedies, and we need space to tell them.

How will we talk about what we did during this time? About the learning? What stories will our students tell about us?



# Evidence-Based Storytelling Toolkit

[Home](#) / Evidence-Based Storytelling

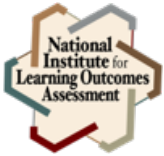
## Evidence-Based Storytelling

NILOA assists institutions in the practice of sharing assessment data through evidence-based narratives utilizing a collaborative, field-tested peer review process. Evidence-based storytelling, informed by the NILOA Transparency Framework, offers an innovative strategy to help institutions meet current accountability and transparency demands.

To better tell institutional assessment stories using evidence of student learning specific to institutional context and audience, NILOA's Evidence-Based Storytelling Toolkit provides questions, tools, and resources for consideration in narrative development. Click on each banner to expand the selection and access each resource.

**Please cite as:** Jankowski, N. A., & Baker, G. (2019, August). *Building a narrative via evidence-based storytelling: A toolkit for practice*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois and Indiana University, National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA).

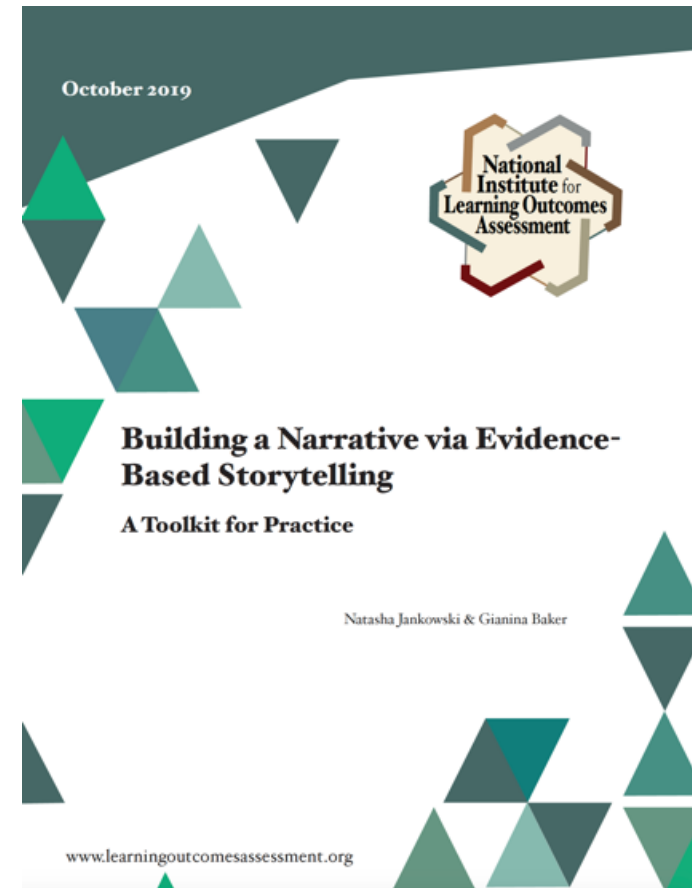
- ▼ Evidence-Based Storytelling Toolkit
- ▼ Examples from Institutions & Organizations



Excellence in  
Assessment  
Designation



- Evidence-Based Storytelling Development
- Tips for Report Writers
- EBST Handout
- Peer Review Process
- Feedback Sheet







# Story Development

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1. Audience

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2. Argument

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3. Evidence

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4. Story and Language

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5. Characters

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6. Plot

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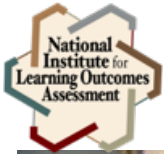
7. Data Visualizations

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8. Awareness and Discoverability

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- And how does that line up with the organizational narrative -



## Communication Planning and Messaging

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Today we are releasing new resources for planning communication and messaging on assessment efforts including:

1. Activity for Developing Clear Statements about the Value of Assessment
2. Activity to Make the Case for Assessment
3. Guiding Questions to Consider for Communication of Assessment
4. Communication Plan Template
5. Outreach Plan Template

What we share

Who we share with

Why we share



1886

NATIONAL  
LOUIS  
UNIVERSITY



# Real-Time Messaging

@joebookslevy

# Faculty and Staff



## Faculty and Staff (cont.)



## Faculty and Staff (cont.)



## Faculty and Staff (cont.)





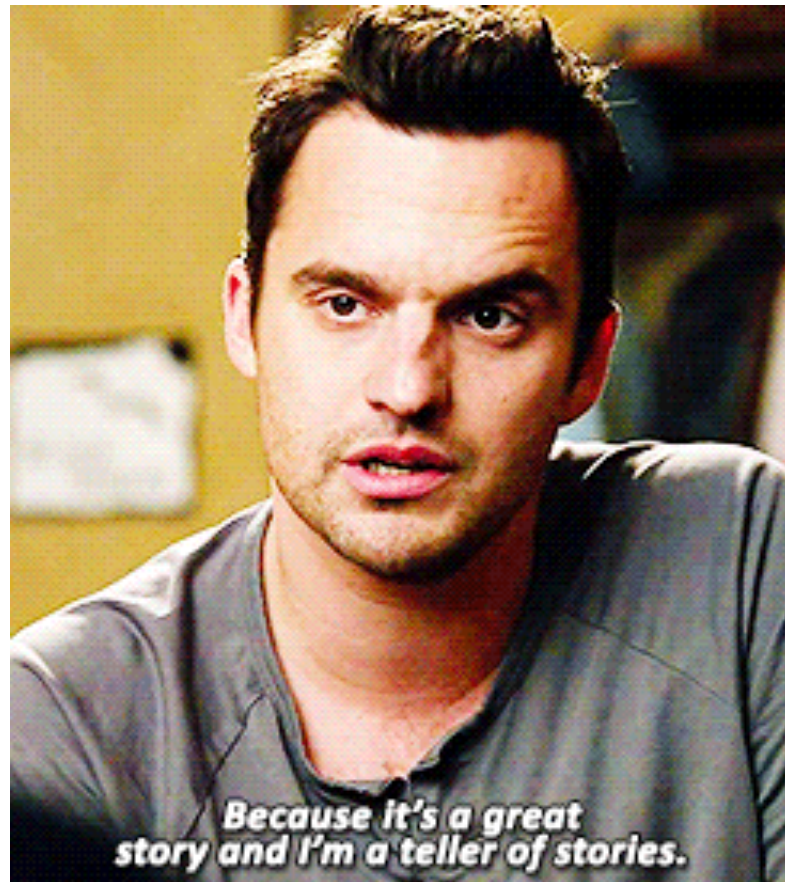
# Assessment Folks



# Assessment Folks



# Keep Telling Stories





# Considerations

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# Reflect Purpose



# Understandable Language





# Length



# Leverage Existing Mechanisms

Syllabi/course maps

Co

Website

Fre

Faculty/

Pus







# Progress & Next Steps

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# Assessment & Accreditation @ NLU

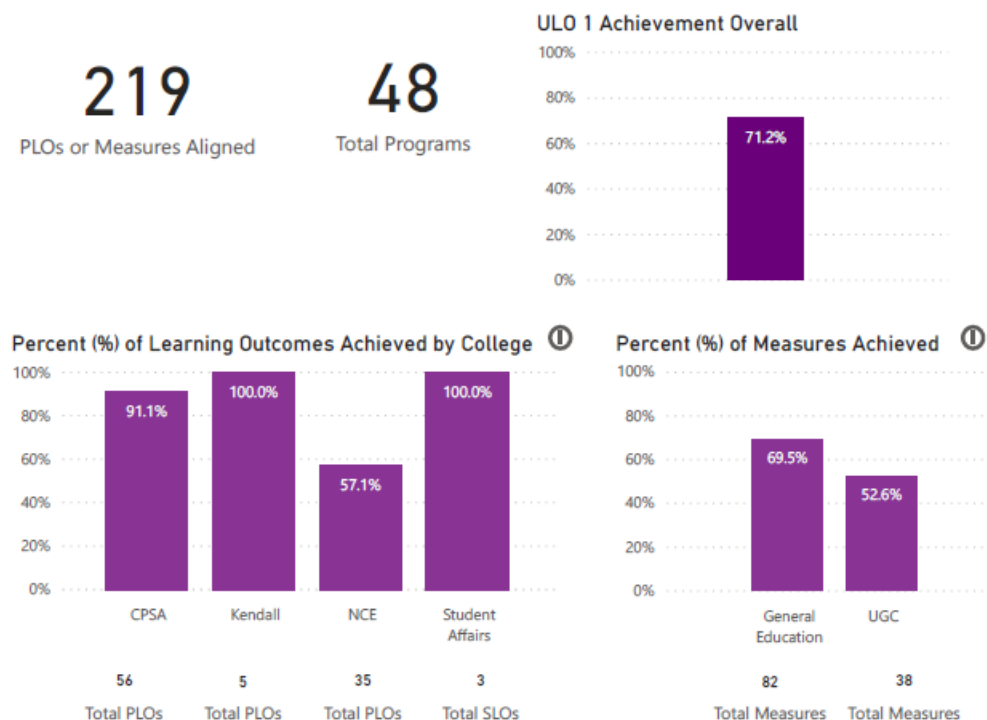


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# Sharing Examples@ NLU

## ULO 1: Specialized Knowledge

Results of program learning outcomes and results of IDEA survey items that map to University Learning Outcome 1.  
 Definition: *This category addresses what students in any specialization or major field of study should demonstrate with respect to that specialization. Tuning, a field-specific effort to map learning outcomes, is necessary to describe the concepts, knowledge areas and accomplishments that students in a particular specialization should demonstrate to earn the degree.*  
 Definition taken from the [full text/description of each ULO document](#).



## Action Plan Items

Programs create action plans based on their assessment results each year. NCE programs create SMART goals for the year and reflect on ways to improve student learning and performance for each measure in their annual reports. UGC programs are provided their data and provided a template to help reflect on key points in the data and ideas for improvement. CPSA, Kendall College, and Student Affairs use an action item template at the end of their assessment reports. Major themes from these action plans and improvement reflections are presented below. These themes provide NLU an overview of the types of work faculty and staff are engaged in to improve learning.

### Main Themes of Action Items

Theme of Action	Total Action Items
Assessment Planning	55
Data collection planning	25
How to use the assessment tool	15
Measurement planning	11
Revise outcomes	4
Assessment Tools	29
Curriculum Modifications	38
Addition of topic or content	4
Emphasize topic	20
Modification or redesign of course or program	9
Student support	5
Data exploring and analysis	15
Improvement Planning	15
Intervention for struggling students	3
Marketing	4
Process or Service Change	15
Results Sharing	15
Training and PD	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>202</b>

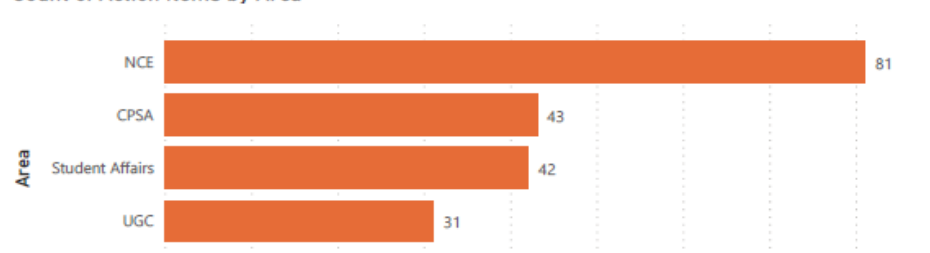
202

Total Action Items Identified

55

Total Programs/Depts with Action Items

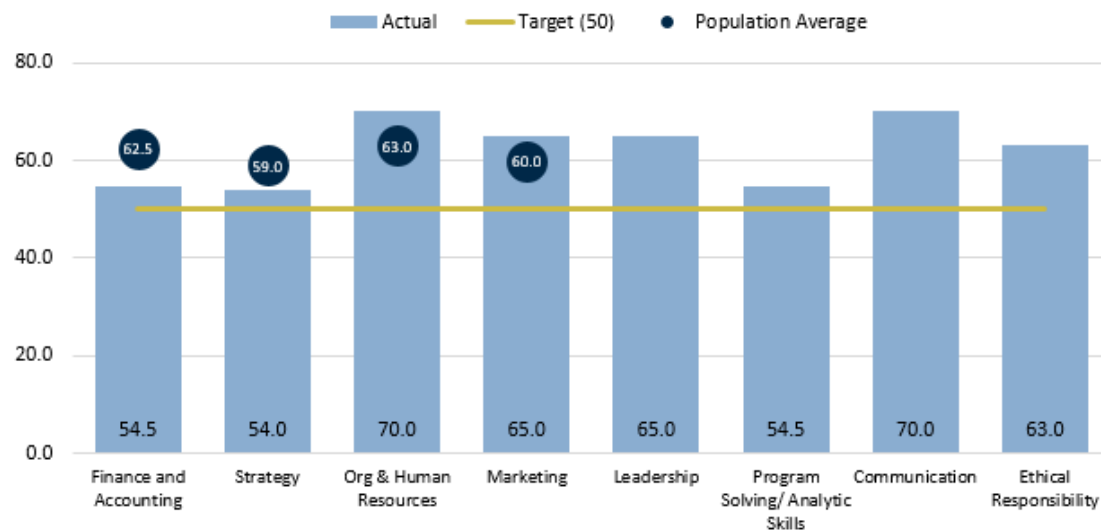
### Count of Action Items by Area



# Sharing Examples@ NLU

## Masters of Business Administration – AY1819 Assessment Led Actions

**AY1819 CompXM** results suggest our MBA students are surpassing our target for success, and scoring close to the population average! Students scored lower in finance and accounting.

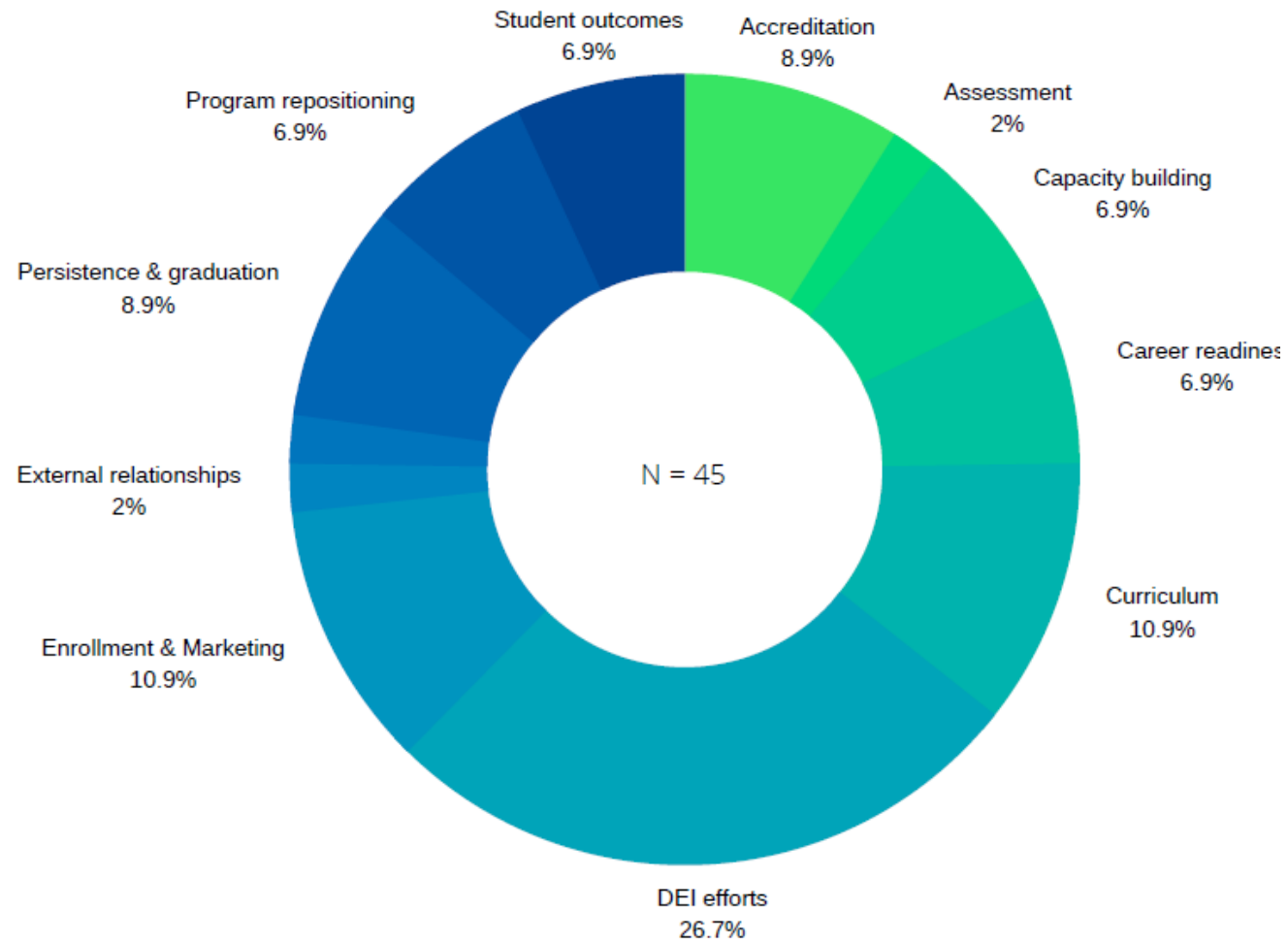


**Action Plan:** To support student performance, course-level improvements were made to MBA 518 (Financial Management) that will provide more in-depth exposure to financial ratios, capital structure analysis, investment decision evaluation, and scenario risk analysis. Because student performance on the Capstone Simulation and CompXM varies markedly across students, we have recommended a linked revision of MBA 501 (Graduate Management Foundations) and MBA 524 (Strategic Management). The revisions would specifically address student preparedness for the program and for the sophisticated

## Program Goals: Thematic Summary

### Top 3 Goals:

1. DEI efforts (12 of 45)
2. Curriculum enhancements (5 of 45)
3. Enrollment & Marketing (5 of 45)



# Sharing Examples@ NLU

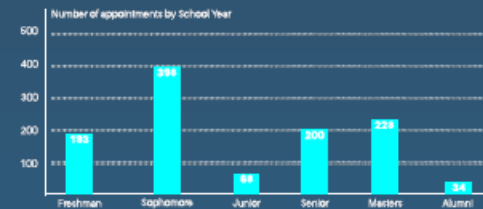
## Career Bridge Overview



Preparing for a rewarding career is not just about creating your resume and practicing for an interview. It takes **strategic mapping** to assess careers of interests, key employers, and a means to **connect to opportunities**. The Career Bridge **partners** with students, alumni, and employers to build such strategies and bridges, hence the name. Connecting great people to great opportunities is what we love to do. Whether you are just beginning to think about your career plans or already have a plan in place, we are here to partner with you to see you **reach your goals!**

## Student Engagement Outcomes

The Career Bridge conducted **1,142** appointments between 3 advisors



Following an appointment with a Career Advisor...



**99%**

Of students were able to define at least one Career Objective that meets their long term plan



**97%**

Of students were able to develop at least one specific job search skill that enhances employment



**100%**

Of students felt they were able to produce a High Quality Resume for job applications



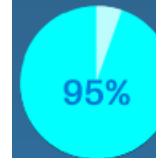
**99%**

Of students felt better able to articulate two strengths in a professional manner



**92%**

Of students felt confident about job search and professional documents - compared to 24% before meeting!



**95%**

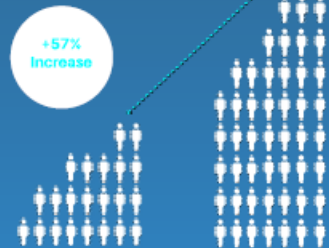
Percentage of students that attended a Career Bridge employer event, and felt they were able to identify at least two employers for potential employment opportunities.



**94%**

Percentage of employers that were "Very Satisfied" or "Satisfied" with students' articulation of at least two strengths in a professional manner for in-field positions.

## Event Attendance



Total event attendance: **997**

Workshop attendance: **676**

Events were scheduled to accommodate both Undergrad and Grad student schedules which typically occurred between 3:00-6:00pm and at times embedded into CAR courses

The Undergraduate College accounted for 68% of total attendance

# Pattern Piecing



@joebookslevy



# Community Catalyst

What stories are we telling **vs not**?  
Who is included as part of the story **vs not**?  
Who is being engaged **vs not**?

To minimize the “**not**”, we can work to  
prioritize how/when to implement changes.





# **Saint Xavier University**

Department of Communication

Telling the story of COMM 101 – Public Speaking at SXU

# Using the NILOA Evidenced - Based Story Telling Took kit – Consider your Audience!

- Primary Audience(s) - Who is the target audience of the narrative (such as administration, policy maker, students, staff, etc.)? Is it internal or external? Are there other audiences who may be interested?
- Secondary Audience – Any other audiences you hope to target?



# SXU's Audiences

- Primary Audiences:
  - General Education Committee
  - Faculty teaching the course
  - Students
  - Dean of College
- Secondary Audience:
  - Accrediting bodies



## Next up in the tool kit: What's your Argument?

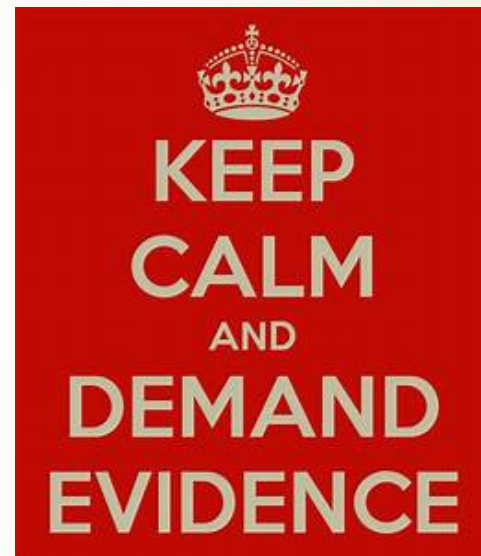
- What argument do you want to make to your target audience(s)?
- What are the goals for the story?
- What do you want the audience(s) to take away from this story?



- GEN ED COMMITTEE – Keep our course as a requirement because it does meet the oral communication outcome well.
- Faculty – especially adjunct faculty. Getting on board to teach the course as designed and actively participating in assessment.
- Students – Convince them the course is worth while.
- Dean – straight up compliance!

## Next up in the tool kit: What's your Evidence?

- What evidence do you have to assert your claims (i.e., data sources, indirect/direct evidence of learning, etc.)?
- For the primary audience, what counts as compelling, actionable evidence?
- Do you have that evidence?
- And is it the evidence that you think they should be aware of?





# We collected speeches delivered in all classes and used this rubric to evaluate

ORAL COMMUNICATION VALUE RUBRIC				
for more information, contact <a href="mailto:oralvalue@aacu.org">oralvalue@aacu.org</a>				
Oral communication is a prepared, planned presentation designed to increase knowledge, foster understanding, or to promote change in the listener's attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors.				
Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark (cell one) level performance.				
	Capstone 4	Milestones 3 2		Benchmark 1
Organization	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is clearly and consistently observable and is skillful and makes the content of the presentation cohesive.	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is clearly and consistently observable within the presentation.	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is intermittently observable within the presentation.	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is not observable within the presentation.
Language	Language choices are imaginative, memorable, and compelling, and enhance the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience.	Language choices are thoughtful and generally support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience.	Language choices are mundane and commonplace and partially support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience.	Language choices are unclear and minimally support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is not appropriate to audience.
Delivery	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation compelling, and speaker appears polished and confident.	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation interesting, and speaker appears comfortable.	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation understandable, and speaker appears tentative.	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) detract from the understandability of the presentation, and speaker appears uncomfortable.
Supporting Material	A variety of types of supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis that significantly supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.	Supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis that generally supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.	Supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis that partially supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.	Insufficient supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make reference to information or analysis that minimally supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.
Central Message	Central message is compelling (precisely stated, appropriately repeated, memorable, and strongly supported.)	Central message is clear and consistent with the supporting material.	Central message is basically understandable but is not often repeated and is not memorable.	Central message can be deduced, but is not explicitly stated in the presentation.

## Formal Assessment Process:

- Artifact Collection (Panopto)
- Adapted VALUE Rubric
- Normed 4 of 39 speeches
- Assessed 28/39 speeches

Oral Communication		Mean
Organization	The speech is well organized and cohesive (introduction, body, and conclusion).	2.598
Language	Language is imaginative, memorable, compelling, and effective.	2.551
Delivery	The posture, gestures, eye-contact, and vocal expression are polished.	2.551
Support	The explanations, examples, illustrations, analogies, and quotations are effective at establishing credibility.	2.673
Message	The central message is compelling, precise, memorable and well supported by the presentation.	2.925

## Assessment Results: Fall 2016





## What We Learned

**TECHNOLOGY  
ISSUES**

**Changed Collection  
Method**

**DIFFERENT GUIDELINES  
AND OBJECTIVES**

**Developed Common  
Assignment**

**ASSIGNMENT TIMING  
IN SEMESTER**

**Suggest “Final”  
Assignment**

## Next up in the tool kit: Story and Language

- What kind of story are you telling? (i.e., compliance, improvement, loss, struggle, quest, tragedy, fantasy, etc.)?
- Is your audience interested in that type of story?
- What context is needed for readers to understand the story?
- What is the setting?



## Next up in the tool kit: Characters

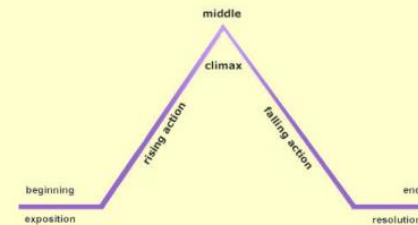
- Who are the character(s) in your story?
- Is there a protagonist in your story— someone who is driving the action and/or someone with whom your audience is likely to identify?
- What are the motivations of the characters?)



## Next up in the tool kit: What's the Plot?

- **Exposition** is the information needed to understand a story.
- **Complication** is the catalyst that begins the major conflict.
- **Climax** is the turning point in the story that occurs when characters try to resolve the complication.
- **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.
- **Conflict** What are we trying to address or overcome? (internal/external barriers)

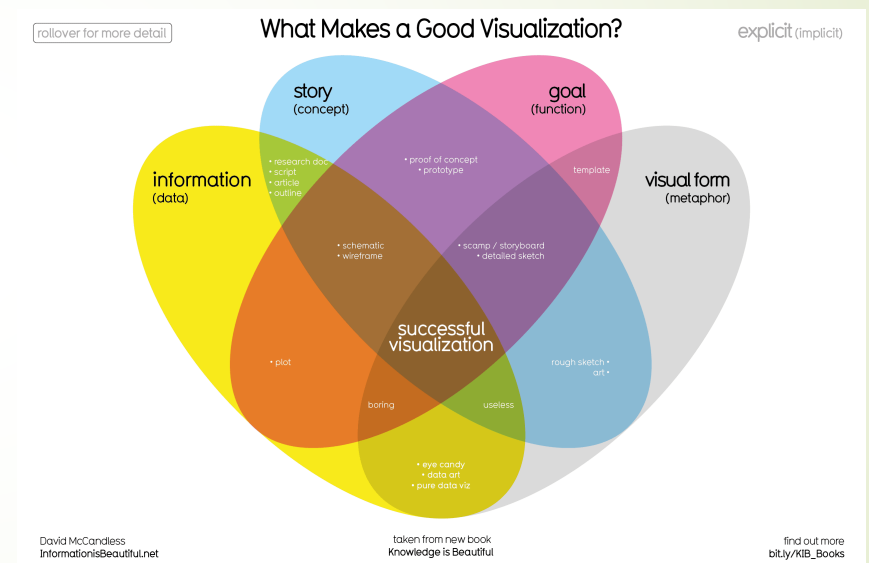
### What is Plot?



Plot is the literary element that describes the structure of a story. It shows the a causal arrangement of events and actions within a story.

# Next Up in the tool Kit: Data Visualizations

- 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)?





# Finally Consider: Awareness and Discoverability

- 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?
- Which means are the best to reach your target audience?
- How will you make them aware of it and how will they find it?
- What usability testing to determine communication fit with your target audiences will you employ?



# SXU's COMM 101 Story Results

- Needs of the various audiences were met (GEN ED endorsed the course, faculty follow a standard syllabus, students evaluate the course positively, the Dean is happy we assessed)
- Our evidence led us to change our assessment procedure making ours a story of improvement and struggle
- Our story is an episodic one, the next episode is in progress. Focusing on the low score in delivery we created a new assignment and new instruction to help us improve.
- Created common assignment
- Speech delivered electronically
- Created additional instruction by producing this instructional video:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mDrp8z-UYEU>



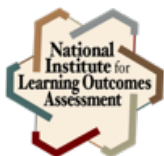


# Crisis Communication Tips

## Telling the assessment story in current times

- Communicate honestly with candor and openness
- Collaborate with credible sources, like NILOA, AAC&U
- Communicate with compassion, concern and empathy
- Accept uncertainty and ambiguity
- Send messages of self-efficacy – “You can do this!”





# Keep Discussing

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**#NILOAwebinar**



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