USER STORIES

BUILDING IN EQUITY AND IMPACT FROM THE START

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CONTEXT

As a part of the IMLS-funded Library Integration in Institutional Learning Analytics (LIILA) grant project, librarians, students, and learning analytics experts brainstormed and prioritized nearly 100 user stories to inspire and guide academic library engagement in learning analytics initiatives. In doing so, we realized the power of using user stories to guide assessment and research and the role user stories can play in centering equity and impact in assessment practice.

USER STORIES

AS (WHO) ... I WANT (WHAT) ... SO THAT (WHY)

- Originated as a methodology for describing system capabilities or outputs from a user perspective.
- Describe who the user is, what the user needs to accomplish, and why that outcome is desirable.
- Place focus on the outcome of the work you do, not the work itself.

USER STORIES ARE...

FLEXIBLE
Focus broadly on large audiences or tailor to specific populations.

ADAPTABLE
Adapt to campuswide or very precise questions or needs.

SIMPLE
3 parts (actor + object + explanation).

	WHO (PERSON / ACTOR)	WHAT (GOAL)	WHY (PURPOSE / OUTCOME / REASON)
USER STORIES	AS A Student	I WANT TO know whether using resources provided by the library will save me money on textbooks	IN ORDER TO determine if I can afford to stay in school or accumulate less debt.
	AS AN Academic Advisor	I WANT TO understand which students did not participate in incoming student orientation	IN ORDER TO develop better strategies for reaching all incoming students and to make sure they have a sense of belonging.
	AS AN Administrator	I WANT TO understand which of my unit's engagement activities increase the odds for student success for different populations	IN ORDER TO tailor our services and outreach programs to better support students in achieving their education goals.

	WHO (PERSON / ACTOR)	WHAT (GOAL)	WHY (PURPOSE / OUTCOME / REASON)
EACH ELEMENT CENTERS EQUITY BY...	Focusing on a discrete user community with identifiable characteristics.	Focusing on the action which increases the likelihood of implementing change.	Providing a framework to make sure the research is being done for the right reasons.
EACH ELEMENT CENTERS IMPACT BY...	Identifying the person who needs to make or direct a change.	Identifying a research question that can be acted upon for positive change.	Focusing on a defined purpose, goal, or outcome.

KEY TASKS FOR USING USER STORIES

Scan this QR Code to access your own copy of the User Stories Worksheet.

1. IDENTIFY QUESTIONS TO ANSWER & PROBLEMS TO SOLVE

LARGER INSTITUTIONAL ISSUE/CONCERN	WAYS YOUR UNIT CAN HELP	KEY PROBLEMS	KEY QUESTIONS
Student retention rates are low. Students may benefit from more personalized support services.	Library research consultations are one way students can get personalized help.	Few students participate in library research consultations.	Are students who engage in research consultations more likely to be retained for a second year of study? Are there different behaviors for different student subpopulations?

2. DESIGN USER STORIES TO FOCUS ON IMPACT

WHO (PERSON / ACTOR)	WHAT (GOAL)	WHY (PURPOSE / OUTCOME / REASON)
As a librarian,	I want to know whether students who participate in library research consultations are more likely to be retained for a second year of study	so that I can encourage more students and faculty to interact with reference librarians via research consultations.

3. IDENTIFY SOURCES THAT WILL RESPOND TO YOUR USER STORIES

UNIT DATA	INSTITUTIONAL DATA	OTHER DATA
Student IDs; Participation in Research interactions	Course registration, Faculty instructors, Retention rates, Demographic data, College, Admission status	Course syllabi

4. CONVERT DATA TO DECISIONS AND ACTIONS

PURPOSE / OUTCOME / REASON	WHAT CONCRETE STEPS COULD YOU TAKE?
I can encourage more students to participate in research consultations with librarians.	Create marketing materials to share with students that include tangible findings that illustrate the relationship between reference interactions, student learning, and retention. Create materials to share with faculty to encourage research interactions as part of assignment or syllabus design

5. TAKE ACTION: IDENTIFY QUESTIONS TO ANSWER & PROBLEMS TO SOLVE

GOALS	QUESTIONS TO ASK

ACTION STEP	RESOURCES NEEDED	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES	TIMEFRAME

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