



Key Advice

Instructions for Story Circles

Two story circles are conducted, each with strict time management. Assign a timekeeper and a group leader for each circle to oversee the timing and facilitate the process, including managing 'flashbacks'. Encourage students to listen intently, as they will be required to recall and participate. They are permitted to take hand-written notes to aid in this process.

Some guidelines for students to tell their story (Denning, 2005 as cited in Deardorff, 2020) are:

- Be yourself;
- Maintain confidentiality;
- Speak from your own experience only;
- Be genuine and authentic;
- Keep your sharing simple, clear, and focused;
- Uphold positive intent;
- Be comfortable in your own style (i.e., sit, stand, use gestures); and
- Talk with others in your group as a fellow human.

Step 1: individual reflection

Each student reflects for 10 minutes on the questions:

1. Which aspects of your identity do you think about most often? Which aspects do you think about least often?
2. Which have the strongest effect on how you perceive yourself?
3. Which have the greatest effect on how others perceive you?
4. Can you think of a life story that illustrates your position on the Wheel of Power?

Step 2: illustrative life stories

Students build on their initial exploration of their position on the Wheel in Step 1 by sharing an illustrative life story. In turn, the students talk for 3 minutes on their life experiences related to their position on the Wheel of Power and the aspects of their identity they are willing to share.

Flashbacks #1: After everyone has presented, the listeners will be asked to briefly recount what they found most memorable from each individual. E.g. Student #1 receives a flashback from all students, then student #2, student #3 and so on. Each listener has a maximum of 15 seconds per flashback per speaker. Participants are encouraged to reflect on the most striking or memorable aspect of each peer's life story.

Optional variation: this exercise encourages students to transition from a cognitive grasp of power dynamics to an experiential and embodied comprehension. If the classroom atmosphere is conducive and all participants feel comfortable, you could reconstruct the Wheel of Power physically to incorporate an embodied element, following these guidelines:



- Positioning: guide the class to arrange themselves into the formation of the Wheel of Power, standing in positions that reflect their personal discussions of identity and power dynamics. This might necessitate some negotiation, as students determine their relative positions based on the various identity factors they've shared.
- Orientation: have all students face towards the centre of the circle. Then, instruct those in the centre to turn outward, facing their peers in the outer layers of the Wheel. This setup symbolises the differential perspective and experiences within the power spectrum.
- Discussion: facilitate a conversation among students about the relative advantages and disadvantages of their positions in the context of conducting research. Emphasise the value of diverse viewpoints, noting how a marginalised stance can provide unique insights that might be overlooked by those in more privileged positions.

Considerations for Facilitation

- Ensure that the activity is entirely voluntary, with alternative options for those who may feel uncomfortable participating in this manner.
- Prepare to moderate the discussion sensitively, recognising the vulnerability involved in physically embodying power dynamics.
- Use this as an opportunity to foster a deeper dialogue on inclusivity and empathy in research practices, encouraging students to reflect on how their positions might influence their approach to and understanding of their subjects.