

## Exercise 9.8: conduct an SWD working session

Participant instructions, for use with *storytelling with data: let's practice!*

### Project work: how to focus your time

Choose a project to focus on today. This can be on your own or in a group. Read through the *storytelling with data process*. Determine how you'd like to spend the next 75 minutes when it comes to putting one or more of the storytelling with data lessons into practice. Spend time sketching this out.

Here are some ideas of how you might use your time:

#### Lesson 1: understand the context

Articulate the Big Idea or craft a storyboard.

#### Lesson 2: choose an appropriate visual

Draw various views of your data and identify which will enable you to best make your point.

#### Lesson 3: eliminate clutter

Is there anything that isn't adding value? Identify unnecessary elements and remove them.

#### Lesson 4: focus attention

How will you indicate to your audience where you want them to look? Plan your use of position, size, color, and other means of contrast to strategically direct your audience's attention.

#### Lesson 5: think like a designer

Final polishing will take place in your tools—your mock-up design can be rough. Still, give thought to how you'll organize elements to create structure and use words to make data accessible.

#### Lesson 6: tell a story

Sketch out the components of your story along the narrative arc. Where and how will data fit in? How can tension and conflict help you capture and maintain your audience's attention? What pithy, repeatable phrase could you create to help your message stick with your audience?

Keep it low-tech: pens and paper are at your disposal (but please keep laptops closed!). Use your colleagues in the room as brainstorm partners or to solicit feedback from as you go along. Be creative and have fun!

### Present back: share with group

You will have roughly five minutes to share a piece of what you've crafted or planned with the group. We will continue to be low tech: hand write or draw visuals to support what you'd like to present to the group for feedback.

Your present back should include:

1. A brief explanation of the background. This should incorporate the intended audience, overall goal/objective, key decision(s) to be made, and what success looks like.
2. How you've applied a storytelling with data lesson to your project. This could mean focusing on any of the following: your Big Idea, storyboard, ideas of how to best visualize the data, a comparison of how you had been looking at data and what changes you'll make, how you'll focus attention, or the overarching story you'll tell. This doesn't have to be fully executed; rather, well-formed ideas on what changes you'll make or the approach you plan to take are fine. Draw and make use of the pens/paper/stickies so everyone can see what you're envisioning. Frame the specific feedback you'd like from the group to help you continue to refine.