

## Lesson Plan: Introduction to Rhetorical Data Studies

### Overview

This lesson introduces students to rhetorical data studies to help deepen their understanding of how this critical and productive framework can be useful for analyzing and generating data advocacy projects. During this lesson plan, students have opportunities to review key concepts related to rhetorical data studies; explore the rhetorical dimensions of data and data advocacy; and consider best practices and possible roadmaps for doing data advocacy.

### Learning Goals

- Gain familiarity with rhetorical data studies as a framework for analyzing and generating data advocacy projects.
- Identify and understand key concepts related to rhetorical data studies .
- Critically reflect on data storytelling and advocacy from a rhetorical perspective in order to develop an ethical eye toward data use and its relations to communication, power, and justice.

### Readings

Gries, Laurie. 2024. "A Rhetorical Data Studies Approach to Data Advocacy." (Accessible in the DA4All Toolkit).

### Sequence of Activities

- 1. Rhetorical Data Studies Bingo (30 minutes)**
- 2. Group Activity on the Ethics of Data Storytelling and Data Advocacy (10 minutes)**
- 2. Share and Discuss (20 minutes)**

### **3. Identifying Best Practices for Doing Data Advocacy (15 minutes)**

#### **Time Needed**

1 hour and 15 minutes per activity

#### *Instructor Note*

Prior to this sequence of activities, students should have read “A Rhetorical Data Studies Approach to Data Storytelling and Advocacy” (Gries) and thought about the guiding questions posed at the beginning of the reading.

Students should also have completed a free-writing activity in response to the following prompt: In “A Rhetorical Data Studies Approach to Data Advocacy”, Laurie Gries spells out the ethical implications of doing data advocacy work and encourages readers to think rhetorically and ethically throughout all stages of the research and writing process—from data collection to data storytelling. In your own words, freewrite what it means to think rhetorically and ethically about data. Identify what it looks like to do data advocacy and negotiate the rhetorical politics of accountability from a rhetorical data studies perspective. Feel free to paraphrase from the readings, but if you do try to jot down page numbers so you remember where you got the idea from and can share with the class.

#### **Activities**

##### **1. Rhetorical Data Studies Bingo (30 minutes)**

As a whole class, play rhetorical theory bingo to help students recognize and familiarize themselves with key concepts from the Rhetorical Data Studies reading by Laurie Gries and to develop a shared vocabulary for discussing and enacting data advocacy.

Instructions for this game can be located [here](#) in the DA4All Toolkit.

## **2. Thinking Ethically and Rhetorically about Data Storytelling and Data Advocacy (10 minutes)**

Break students up into small groups and ask them to take 10 minutes to share their responses to the assigned prompt they freewrote in response to “A Rhetorical Data Studies Approach to Data Advocacy” by Laurie Gries (see Instructor Note above).

## **3. Share and Discuss (20 minutes)**

As a whole class, ask students to share and discuss their thoughts about thinking rhetorically and ethically about data, data storytelling, and data advocacy, making sure that they point to specific spots in the reading to support their ideas. Take time to discuss ideas that both resonate with students and may cause confusion or pause for them. The goal is to walk away from this discussion with a clear idea of what a rhetorical data studies approach offers data advocacy, how it helps data advocates negotiate the rhetorical politics of accountability, and what it impresses upon us to be conscious of throughout our data research and storytelling processes.

## **4. Identifying Best Rhetorical Practices for Doing Data Advocacy (15 minutes)**

Based on the prior discussion, work with the whole class to come up with a list of best practices for doing data advocacy. Record the list in a Google Doc, Padlet, or Webpage on your LMS so students can see the list unfold in front of them and access in the future. You may choose to have students add one or two best practices on their own before having a whole class discussion about best practices.