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SusTelling | Open Educational Resource | Module 2 | Handout SusTelling Effects

The sound bites and comments on storytelling articles give an impression of how recipients engage with the content. Not every article has every type of effect on the audience's experience and behavior, but an article can produce several types of effects. This handout presents an overview of various effects of storytelling. This compilation is based on the empirical results of the Storytelling in Sustainability Communication project (Fischer et al. (2021, in progress) and on earlier work on narratives by Früh and Frey (2014).

EFFECT TYPES	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES	FURTHER READING
COGNITIVE EFFECTS	<p>These are effects on memory processes, the extent of a person's knowledge, their understanding of contexts or how they process information about the story.</p> <p>Improving the reception of media articles can lead to a better processing of the content or a better understanding of certain types of content.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Processing of content on the basis of prior knowledge: Contents of the media articles are compared with existing information and knowledge that one already has.● Evaluation of information quality or value of knowledge● Critical reflection on content aspects of media articles	<p>Roller, C. M., & Schreiner, R. (1985). The effects of narrative and expository organizational guideline on sixth-grade children's comprehension of expository and narrative prose. <i>Reading Psychology: An International Quarterly</i>, 6(1-2), 27-42. DOI: 10.1080/0270271850060104</p>
ATTITUDINAL EFFECTS	<p>Effects on attitudes refers to an effect on the evaluations that a person makes about a topic/object, content or person. Evaluations can be formed by the reception of a story, but they can also be detached from the narrower context of the story (e.g., in that new insights from the story are transferred to other contexts). The media articles stimulate an evaluation of the narrative. This in turn can lead to a reflection of existing beliefs, opinions and attitudes on sustainability issues. In the process new and changed convictions, opinions and attitudes emerge (e.g. electric cars are not a solution because they pollute the environment too much). And, for example, individuals can develop their own solutions or formulate demands as to</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Evaluation of the message: The content, topic or message of a story is evaluated and the recipient expresses how they feel about it.● Critical reflection: A critical analysis of the message is expressed.● Claim/ demand: The recipients express conclusions and demand-like statements, which often call for individual, political or social action.	<p>McQueen, A., Kreuter, M. W., Kalesan, B., & Alcaraz, K. I. (2011). Understanding narrative effects: the impact of breast cancer survivor stories on message processing, stances, and beliefs among African American women. <i>Health Psychology</i>, 30(6), 674. DOI: 10.1037/a0025395.</p>



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	how problems in the area of sustainability can be overcome.		
EMOTIONAL EFFECTS	The media articles result in emotional reactions, such as outrage, disgust, joy, sadness, confusion or dismay.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Outrage: rejection or moral interpretation of the information or the nature of the narrative representation.● Interest: Addressees express they feel curious and desire to discover more about a topic.● Subjective relevance of media content (e.g., if one derives a personal benefit from the information or feels personally affected).	Adaval, R., & Wyer Jr, R. S. (1998). The role of narratives in consumer information processing. <i>Journal of Consumer Psychology</i> , 7(3), 207-245. DOI: 10.1207/s15327663jcp0703_01
MOTIVATIONAL EFFECTS	The content of the media articles can act as an impetus to rethink or change one's own behavior or actions, for example, a greater willingness to buy goods without packaging. Individuals could also resolve to spend more money on food or to buy fewer consumer goods overall. A positive influence on the behavioral intentions of recipients can be provided by solutions for non-sustainable lifestyles formulated in the context of sus-telling. The intentions can, but need not, be directed towards change in the desired "more sustainable" direction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Activation: Media articles are stimuli for rethinking topics or convictions or encouraging people to act in a more sustainable way. This can also lead to further engagement with the topic of the media article (e.g., information search, research, discussions).● Solution orientation: Solutions for problems to sustainable lifestyles formulated in media articles lead to recipients developing concrete intentions to change their own behavior/ actions.	Greene, K., & Brinn, L. S. (2003). Messages influencing college women's tanning bed use: Statistical versus narrative evidence format and a self-assessment to increase perceived susceptibility. <i>Journal of Health Communication</i> , 8(5), 443-461. DOI: 10.1080/713852118.
BEHAVIORAL EFFECTS	People who are exposed to a narrative may change their actual behavior after the reception, i.e., they buy less food with unnecessary packaging, they attend or organize demonstrations for change in the food industry or organize informational events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Addressees report in direct connection with media articles that they have changed their behavior	Ricketts, M., Shanteau, J., McSpadden, B., & Fernandez-Medina, K. M. (2010). Using stories to battle unintentional injuries: Narratives in safety and health communication. <i>Social Science & Medicine</i> , 70(9), 1441- 1449. DOI: 10.1016/j.socscimed.2009.12.036
PHYSIOLOGICAL EFFECTS	Stories can have a positive or negative effect on an individual's physiology.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● For example, narration can have a positive effect on a person's	Yabe, M., Oshima, S., Eifuku, S., Taira, M., Kobayashi, K., Yabe, H., & Niwa, S. I. (2018). Effects of storytelling on the childhood brain: near-infrared spectroscopic comparison



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COMPLEX EFFECTS	Complex effects is a mixed category of effects, which cannot be clearly assigned to one or the other category, as they contain cognitive, attitudinal and/or emotional effects.	<p>physiological stress levels (such as lowering cortisol levels).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Identification with the main characters of the story or with a brand of consumer good, company or organization such as Fridays for Future● Strong empathy with the fictional world of a story so that the real world fades out; the addressees become part of the narrative, i.e. perception is focused on the events in the narrative.	<p>with the effects of picture-book reading. Fukushima Journal of Medical Science, 64(3), 125-132. DOI: 10.5387/fms.2018-11.</p> <p>Wentzel, D., Tomczak, T., & Herrmann, A. (2010). The moderating effect of manipulative intent and cognitive resources on the evaluation of narrative ads. Psychology & Marketing, 27(5), 510-530. DOI: 10.1002/mar.20341</p>
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NOTE: FISCHER, D., SUNDERMANN, A., FÜCKER, S., & SELM, H. (Eds.) (2021, FORTHCOMING). STORYTELLING IN DER NACHHALTIGKEITSKOMMUNIKATION. MÜNCHEN: OEKOM. FRÜH, W., & FREY, F. (2014). *NARRATION UND STORYTELLING: THEORIE UND EMPIRISCHE BEFUNDE*. KÖLN: HERBERT VON HALEM VERLAG.