



Everyday Advocacy
Shifting the Public Narrative in Literacy Education

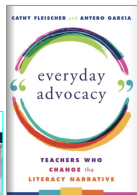
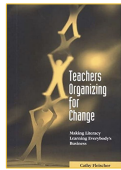
Telling Our Stories
Raising Our Voices
Becoming an Everyday Advocate

WRITE Center Summer 2023 Learning Series
Write - Learn - Lead: Revitalizing Teachers and Teaching
Facilitator: Dr. Cathy Fleischer

MY STORY OF EA

Spotlight Series #2: Professor Andy Buchsbaum - From Activist to Advocate and Back

July 2, 2023 by Lauren Miller



RETHINKING CHANGE

JUST BEING ANGRY, JUST BEING
RESENTFUL, JUST BEING OUTRAGED,
DOES NOT CONSTITUTE REVOLUTION.

-GRACE LEE BOGGS



RETHINKING CHANGE

OPTIMISM IS A POLITICAL ACT. THOSE WHO BENEFIT FROM THE STATUS QUO ARE PERFECTLY HAPPY FOR US TO THINK NOTHING IS GOING TO GET ANY BETTER. IN FACT, THESE DAYS, CYNICISM IS OBEDIENCE.

- ALEX STEFFEN



THE "POPULAR STORY" OF TEACHERS

- "Teachers don't work that hard": short days and long vacations
- "Teachers don't know what works best in their own classrooms" → nationalized or state-mandated curricula; censorship of books and ideas
- "Teachers don't know how to assess students accurately" → nationalized or statewide mandated testing

Everyday people (who read, listen to, and watch) are too often convinced by this story.


The more it's repeated, the more it becomes "truth."

HOW DO WE BEGIN TO CHANGE THE POPULAR NARRATIVE?

- Go public with our own stories
- Find a different frame in which to tell our stories
- Learn strategic ways to change others' thinking
- Work with other teachers to create a cadre of change agents

Lead: Become an Everyday Advocate

WHAT IS EVERYDAY ADVOCACY: everydayadvocacy.org



Home Teacher Stories Getting Started Guiding Principles Learn Prepare Act Opposing Bills Tools & Resources

We are educators.
We know what happens in the world of schools.
It's time to make change happen.

WHAT IS EVERYDAY ADVOCACY

<u>Everyday Advocacy</u>	<u>Legislative Advocacy</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The day-to-day actions teachers can take to change the public narrative surrounding schools, teachers, and learning • Proactive steps designed by teachers to lay the groundwork • Action steps designed by teachers to create change on specific issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions usually undertaken by a larger group to make change: to support/oppose legislative action or candidate; to lobby for a cause • Action steps usually designed by an organized group that invites others (like teachers) to participate • Action steps usually focused on urging action to influence decision makers

WHAT IS EVERYDAY ADVOCACY

A movement by teachers who

- **Commit** to changing the public narrative surrounding education-beginning in our local contexts.
- **Believe** we can and will make a difference in how literacy is taught.
- **Work** to make this a part of our everyday teaching lives.

EVERYDAY ADVOCACY = TEACHERS AS PROFESSIONALS

At one time, this was enough:
Knowing *what* and *how* to teach

Then we moved to:
Articulating to ourselves and our
colleagues *why* we teach in certain
ways

As we move forward:
Strategically informing others about
why we teach in these ways

LET'S GET INTO THE NITTY-GRITTY: THREE CORE IDEAS



CORE IDEA 1: STORYTELLING AS ADVOCACY (THE POWER OF PUBLIC NARRATIVE)

Core Idea 1:
Storytelling

*"Storytelling is how we interact with each other about values;
how we share experiences with each other,
counsel each other, comfort each other, and
inspire each other to action."*

--Marshall Ganz



GANZ'S PUBLIC NARRATIVE: STORY OF SELF, US, NOW

- **Story of self** communicates *who I am*
- **Story of us** communicates *who we are*
- **Story of now** transforms the present into a time of challenge and hope: *what we can do* if we work together

PUBLIC NARRATIVE IN ACTION: USING GANZ'S STRUCTURE TO TELL OUR STORIES TO THE PUBLIC

Story of self: *Who am I as a teacher?*

Story of us: *Who are we as teachers?*

- How does my story resonate with the stories of other teachers?
- How do our collective stories articulate the values of a community?

Story of now: *What can we do if we work together?*

- How can we use these collective stories to move forward? to make change?
- What is our issue?
- Who needs to hear about our issue? How do we tell our story in a way that will reach those audiences?
- What are our action steps?

LET'S TRY IT: WHAT'S YOUR STORY OF SELF?



SA Playbook

- **Write** an individual story of no more than one paragraph about **a great teaching moment** (~8 minutes).
- **After you write, think about:** (~2 minutes)
 - What made it successful?
 - What are the values that underlie its success?
 - How does that story compare to the current narrative on public education?

WHAT'S OUR STORY OF US?



Individuals:

- Waterfall the stories (cut and paste into the chat)
- Pick 3-5 stories to read from the waterfall

Writing Project groups:

- Join with 2 others and read their stories

Think about what you notice:

- What **themes** or **key terms** cross the stories?
- What **values** do we share?

(10 min for this)

WHAT'S OUR STORY OF US?



Write a note in your Playbook about what you notice:

What shared themes, values, and key terms help define the Story of Us/The Story of Teachers?

(5 min)

WHAT'S OUR STORY OF NOW?

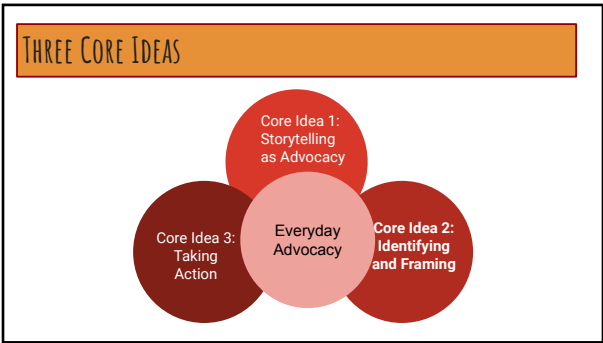


Where do these stories lead us? How might they help *someone else* understand a different story of teaching?

Write in your playbook and/or in the chat:

- Q1:** With **whom** could we/should we share our stories?
- Q2:** What **about our stories** would resonate with our audience?
- **Q3:** What **genres** for sharing would best speak to that audience?

The more we talk to others,
the more our stories become a new public narrative
about teaching and learning.



STORYTELLING → IDENTIFYING AND FRAMING

Core Idea 2
Identifying
and
Framing

First, we identify our issue:

- What is an issue about education that connects to your story of self or us?
 - something that you are passionate about
 - something that keeps you up at night
 - something that you want to help others understand

Next, we think about our audience:

- Who needs to hear about this issue?

THEN WE FRAME OUR ISSUE:

- Narrow our focus from a **general concern** (i.e., “testing is bad”) to a **specific issue** (i.e., “teaching to the test leads to overemphasis on a very narrow set of skills”)
- Figure out **what public misunderstanding allows this concern to persist** (i.e., “testing is the only fair way to evaluate how kids are doing”)
- Consider how to **re-frame the issue** to represent the values that are both true to your beliefs and that will help build others’ understandings

REFRAMING "TESTING" FOR VARIOUS AUDIENCES

Public narrative: *Testing is the only fair way to measure what kids are learning*

- **Community cut:** *Standardized testing promotes certain ways of thinking, so kids who grow up in a context of multiple-choice responses will not truly become the active, flexible, critically thinking citizens or workers we need.*
- **Parent cut:** *Standardized testing takes away too many weeks of school each year, time that could be better spent with actual instruction.*
- **Administrator cut:** *Assessing teachers on a student's performance on a single standardized test is an unfair picture of a teacher's quality.*

REFRAMING EDUCATIONAL ISSUES TO BUILD NEW PUBLIC NARRATIVES

Public Frame of Education	Reframe
Teacher as caring hero who single handedly saves students	Teacher as part of a larger system that relies on interdependence to provide strong educational opportunities
College readiness as series of discrete and linear skills	College readiness as habits of mind
Students as passive recipients of knowledge	Students as active participants in creating knowledge

AFTER THE WEBINAR . . .



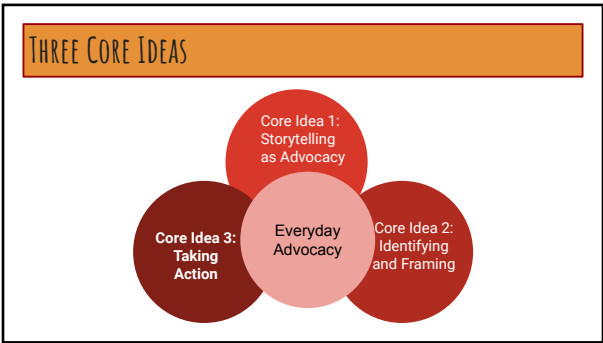
Think about these 3 steps:

Step 1: What is your concern, the burning issue that keeps you up at night? Try to move from the broad topic you began with to a more focused issue.

Step 2: How does that concern connect to

- Your specific context
- Your "story of us" shared values

Step 3: How can you frame and cut your issue to the audience you want to reach? Who is the audience you want to convince? How can you frame the issue to reach that audience?



IF WE HAD TIME FOR A FULL WORKSHOP...

Core
Idea 3:
Taking
Action

Proactive work

- **Build awareness:** sowing the seeds of change
- **Find and develop allies:** “beyond the usual suspects”

Action oriented work

- **Discover who is in charge:** How are decisions made? Who makes the decisions? Who might have influence on the decision makers?
- **Create an Action Plan:** Your blueprint for change
- **Develop Strategy:** How to share your message with a target audience in order to achieve your desired results
- **Identify tactics:** Specific actions we take to create change: proactive tactics that lay the groundwork; action steps that influence decision makers



WHAT'S MOST IMPORTANT

Changing the narrative about teachers, teaching, and student learning by reaching out to others and showing them what we actually do—beginning with our individual stories.

And when each of us adds a little bit, we can create an alternative narrative to that “popular story.”

**When we don't author our own story,
someone else will.**
