

Public Narrative in Times of Pandemic

Santiago Rincón-Gallardo

The intent of a CASS Learning Guide is to apply research, deepen understanding and enhance professional practice within the Alberta context. With a focus on optimum learning for all students, a Learning Guide provides an opportunity to grow system leader knowledge, resulting in quality school leadership and quality teaching throughout Alberta.

Summary Points

Introduction to Public Narrative

“Leadership is accepting responsibility for enabling others to achieve shared purpose under conditions of uncertainty” Marshall Ganz

Strategy – How you turn what you have into what you need to get what you want. (engaging the head)

Public Narrative is about mobilizing/engaging the heart.

Public Narrative is important when facing a challenge and when you need to bring people in with you to achieve shared purpose. “Why to act” Public Narrative propels us to take action.

Public Narrative represents how we communicate values, mobilize emotion and enable agency. Stories help us feel the emotions that remind us of our values. Based on Marshall Ganz Harvard School of Business

- **Story of Self** – our call to leadership
- **Story of Us** – shared values and experiences
- **Story of Now** – urgent call to action

Public narrative addresses Building Effective Relationships, Visionary Leadership and Supporting Effective Governance. Depending on your narrative, you can address any other competency.

[Watch the recording here](#)

Introduction to Public Narrative and Unpacking an Example

Start to 34:28

Sketching out your own Public Narrative (Coaching)

Start at 35:04

Example of Public Narrative

Maung's story of self, us, and now

[Watch the video here](#)

Sketching out your own Public Narrative - Steps

1. What is the most important challenge I'm facing for which I need to draw broad commitment or support? (e.g., re-entry) Identify moments when you “felt” (e.g., loss, happiness, wonder, aha moment) or some emotion that you can share as the start of your story and a way to personalize the message.
2. What will the world look like if we successfully tackle the challenge? Think about how you will engage multiple perspectives so that the future is built on the collective work of your team.
3. What strategic choice do I want to ask others to make?

-Begin with your own story - personalize the narrative with your own experiences. (e.g. vs. just describing events or actions). Share and model the commitment or action you are taking as a result of your experiences and story.

[Presentation slides](#)

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Participants reflections – CASS collective wisdom*

*A summary of participants thinking and key take-aways:

- System leaders sharing reflections on example of public narrative: how the personalization of the public narrative, based on personal story, reflects our own values; Your narrative also models how you are taking action and building a sense of urgency for others to take action. Lived experience provides us our own call to action - specific to our call to leadership (e.g. our narrative and actions speak to our call to leadership)
- System leaders sharing their key take-aways on the value and purpose of creating public narrative at this time.
- Shape our narrative with key messages about our continued focus on student learning and the incredible flexibility and innovation demonstrated by our educators so far.
- My big takeaway is that focusing on a narrative and especially knowing the Story of Self really helps our discussions.

- Continue to use my heart to make connections and bridge with my communities.
- Important to know your ‘strategic’ choice and let others know the ‘why’ behind the choices you are making.
- Small stories with details that illuminate the moral imperative behind a challenge is helpful to connect people into a larger collective story and effort to resolve challenges. - Helping staff to stay grounded given the uncertainty. So much unknown when we are typically in the known.
- Moral imperative that we support people and help them to move forward, what’s right for our students and for our staff especially as we focus on reentry.
- Beginning the process of the narrative requires us to think about personalizing the experience to make it meaningful. Everyone has a "story".

Research to Practice

Questions for reflection and dialogue within your context.

Considering the messages on “Public Narrative” shared in the presentation and as summarized:

1. What is the public narrative you wish to create to share at this time in your own context? What are you hoping to achieve as a result of creating and sharing your public narrative?
2. What might you do to support others to create and share their own public narrative? How can public narrative assure the public and stakeholders about stories of practice occurring in your school authority?
3. How can creating a Public Narrative exemplify professional practice as identified in the SLQS and the CASS System Education Leader Practice Profile?

<https://cassalberta.ca/resources/practice-profile/>

Additional Supports for System Leadership Capacity

CASS Professional Learning, Resources and Research <https://cassalberta.ca/>

This learning opportunity is most directly link to the SLQS competencies indicated below.

- Building Effective Relationships
- Modeling Commitment to Professional Learning
- Visionary Leadership
- Leading Learning
- Ensuring First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education for All Students
- School Authority Operations and Resources
- Supporting Effective Governance