Amplifying Our Voice: Leading Boldly for Our Students, Our Professions, and Our Union

COM 313
Leading with Your Story: Using Your Authentic Voice to Galvanize and Inspire

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NEA Leadership Competencies: ADVOCACY and COMMUNICATION

- Level 1: Foundational
- Level 2: Mobilizing & Power

NEA Leadership Competency themes:
- Engages and builds mutually beneficial relationships to advance advocacy
- Develops individual communication approach and style to fit appropriate audience
- Acts as an effective speaker
- Identifies and utilizes appropriate messages in acting as a compelling advocate
NEA Strategic Goal and Organizational Priorities

• NEA Strategic Goal
  – advancing opportunities that will identify, organize, and engage new and early career educators; amplify the voices of all educators, support our members’ professional growth, and promote social justice for our students, communities and our nation;
  – securing a pro-public education environment for students, educators, and families.

• NEA Organizational Priorities
  – Early Career Educator
  – Racial Justice in Education
  – My School, My Voice
Goals/Expected Outcomes

• To help you use your stories to speak out more effectively for students, educators, and public education

• To help you connect with the public, give them insight into the challenges and realities educators and students face, and motivate them to join our cause

• To help you promote social justice for our students, communities, and nation
Let’s break some ice!
Why tell a story?

• From cave paintings to Instagram posts to speeches, stories have been a primary way of communicating since early civilization.

• Leaders galvanize and “rally the troops” with stories. Cold, hard facts and statistics rarely inspire, excite, or motivate.

• A story entertains, enlightens, and educates by making an emotional connection with audience.
Why tell a story?

• Stories teach us lessons, moral values, and how to make choices.
  • Think of some of the stories you’ve known forever...Little Red Riding Hood (Be wary of strangers), Chicken Little (If you’re known to lie, you’ll never be believed)

• If you don’t tell your own story....someone else will! (And you may not like it)
As a ____, I am deeply committed to the success of every student.

Students are at the center of everything we do.

QUALITY
Every student should have caring, qualified, and committed educators.

OPPORTUNITY
All students, regardless of where they live, deserve the support, tools, and time to learn.

STUDENT SUCCESS
Good education inspires students’ natural curiosity, imagination, and desire to learn.
Hello
my name is
Intros with Impact
Elements of a story

Stories need a beginning, middle, and an end.

“Stories don’t have a middle or an end anymore. They usually have a beginning that never stops beginning.”—Steven Spielberg

Stories need events and characters. They must have color, feelings, and action to pull in the reader. Include details, but make sure they are the right ones.

Talk people, not policy. Keep numbers, statistics, and processes to a minimum. And no jargon allowed!
Elements of a story

Stories need events and characters. They must have color, feelings, and action to pull in the reader. Include details, but make sure they are the

A “small” story can have a huge impact; it doesn’t have to be flamboyant or exciting.

“Simple but heartfelt stories are often the most effective.”—C. Ramsdell

Include a call to action: What do you want people to think, do, or believe after they hear your story?
Example
Example
Example
Exorcising Jargon

• Every profession has jargon: shortcut language and insider words/phrases.

• Jargon may be convenient, but it sucks the life out of a story!

What jargon do you and your colleagues use?
Would someone new to/outside your profession understand it?
What “real people” words are good replacements for jargon?
I'm a high school science teacher and I've been teaching in the same room, which has carpet, for the last 20 years. I have seasonal allergies.

When my classroom flooded and the carpet was removed and replaced with other flooring, my allergies were gone. I realized my classroom was sick. It was making me sick, and it was making my students sick.

Other classrooms still have carpet. We need the funding to treat our classrooms and we need legislators to pass legislation with funding to remediate this issue.
• Think of an issue you want to talk about. Is it about **Opportunity**, **Student Success**, or **Quality**? (Refer to NEA Message Frame.)
• What story could you tell about this issue?
• Choose an audience.
• How do you want the audience to feel? What do you want people to think, believe, or do (call to action)?
• Use the handout to begin developing your story. Remember to put sights, sounds, **color**, **emotions**, and **action** into it!

“If you mean it, it helps you be clear.” —Peggy Noonan, Ronald Reagan’s speechwriter
• What is the storyteller’s issue?
• What details (sights, sounds, feelings) does the storyteller evoke? What resonated w/you?
• Does the storyteller need to add details? What kind?
• Did details, jargon, or polarizing words get in the way, confuse you, or distract you?
• After hearing the story, what do you think you’re meant to do, think, or believe?
• Would this story resonate with the storyteller’s chosen audience?
Just remember...

• The best leaders are authentic, and they motivate and inspire with stories. Don’t load a story up with numbers, stats, and jargon; load it up with **passion**!

• Your story won’t by itself fix the problem, but it gets the conversation going. So don’t feel the pressure to cover every single angle.

• You are the most trusted voices on education; that makes you leaders. You have powerful stories to tell. Don’t be so humble—share them!
The content from this session can be used in the following ways in your current position/role:

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• To help you promote social justice for our students, communities, and nation
In Closing...

• Please complete the evaluation for COM313 by using the NEA Summit Mobile App!

• Please visit the Leadership Development Resources website at www.nea.org/leadershipdevelopment

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