

# Advocacy and Agency: Building Your Storytelling Skills



Webinar  
January 19, 2023

If you can see the  
slide and hear the  
music, you are all set.

**Welcome! We will begin shortly.**

All attendees are muted upon entry.  
Please use the chat feature for comments  
and questions during the webinar.

# Thank you for joining us

**The webinar will be recorded and available.**

All webinar registrants will receive a follow-up email that will include the webinar slide deck, recording, and other resources mentioned during the presentation.

Please introduce yourselves in the chat box

- Your name
- Your location
- Your role in the educational sector



[@learningforward](https://twitter.com/@learningforward)

# Thank you for joining us

**Melinda George**

Moderator

Chief Policy Officer

Learning Forward

Washington, DC



# Let's check in

1. Describe your proficiency with advocacy:
  - Love it – Avid advocate
  - Willing to try – New to the game
  - Not my job – But tell me why I should
2. In the past six months I have had to advocate on behalf of something in my district:
  - Yes
  - No
3. In the chat box, share your most recent advocacy experience.



# Participants will ...

- Share tips and strategies for effective storytelling
- Discuss the power of data in changing hearts and minds
- Learn from colleagues about storytelling strategies that have worked

# Stats from Virtual Advocacy Day

- Advocates from 20 States
- 100+ advocates for the morning workshop
- 40+ advocates in meetings with Congressional offices



# Advocacy

POWERED  
by TITLE II

[What is Title II?](#) [Take Action](#) [Recent Updates](#) [Supporting Research](#) [Share Your Story](#) [Contact Us](#)

POWERED  
by TITLE II

On this site, advocates will find:

- Background facts and data on Title II
- Tools to support your advocacy
- The latest news on Title II
- Research on the effectiveness of professional learning

Let's begin...



- Visit the PoweredbyTitleII website
- Share your story. Send an email. Call your representative.
- What's your go-to professional learning story?





# Panel discussion



**Suzanne Bouffard**

Senior Vice President  
Communications and  
Publications

Learning Forward

Boston, MA



**Mary Beth Currie**

Coordinator of Special  
Projects

New Jersey Principals  
and Supervisors  
Association/Foundation  
for Educational  
Administration

Monroe Township, NJ



**Ayesha Farag**

Assistant Superintendent  
for Elementary Education

Newton Public Schools

Newton, MA



**Tina Lupton**

Executive Director of  
Teacher Effectiveness

Winston-Salem/Forsyth  
County Schools

Greensboro, NC



# What makes a story compelling?



**Suzanne Bouffard**  
Senior Vice President  
Communications and Publications

What makes you  
pay attention?

What makes you  
remember it later?



# Storytelling tips



- Know your goals
- Know your audience
- Tap into emotions
- Back them up with data
- Be specific
- Be organized





# How to hone your storytelling skills



- Read and listen to true stories
- Notice moments that could make good stories
- Talk with colleagues about your stories and theirs
- Keep a written or audio journal
- Practice!



# Examples and resources



## Articles from *The Learning Professional*

- [What I wish I had known as a new teacher](#)
- [Becoming a teacher again made me a better coach](#)
- [Students on the margins](#)

## Tools from Learning Forward

- [Powered by Title II](#)
- [Virtual Advocacy Day webinar](#)

## Other examples of great storytelling

- [The Moth](#)
- [TED talks](#)
- Op-eds (e.g. in [Education Week](#), newspapers)

## Key Points

- Know specifically what you want
- Describe why it is critical to the success of your school or program
- Know every nuance of your proposal
- Know audience, their background, and what is important to them
- Research and gather data so that your approach is specific to them and meets their needs
- Add emotion to your appeal

## Key Points

- Gather allies and trusted messengers
- Identify who can spread your message to groups that you do not routinely encounter
- Ask for help!
- Prepare an “elevator speech” so you can describe your proposal in 30 seconds
- Be persistent



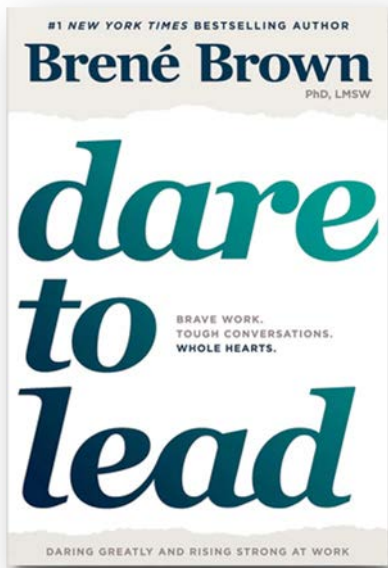
# Storytelling and Advocacy: Guiding Questions

- **What am I advocating for and why?**
  - Current vs. desired state
  - Clarity of the ask
  - Centering student needs and benefits to students
- **Who is my audience and what do they care about? What influences them?**
  - Head
  - Heart
  - Hands
- **What stories/anecdotes are compelling?**
  - Making connections
  - Evoking emotion or motivation

**Ayesha Farag**  
Assistant Superintendent  
for Elementary Education

# Storytelling and Advocacy: Guiding Questions

- **Who am I? What do I bring?**
  - Your voice, background, perspective, and experience
  - Beliefs, vision, values
  - Honesty and authenticity
- **Whose voice/story/perspective needs to be heard?**
  - Missing voices/perspectives
  - Collaboration with others



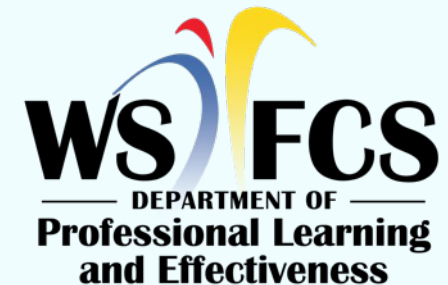
*Daring  
leaders who  
live into  
their values  
are never  
silent about  
hard things.*

## Advocacy requires a level of:

- **Vulnerability**
- **Authenticity**
- **Courage**
- **Awareness**

Tina Lupton

Executive Director of  
Teacher Effectiveness



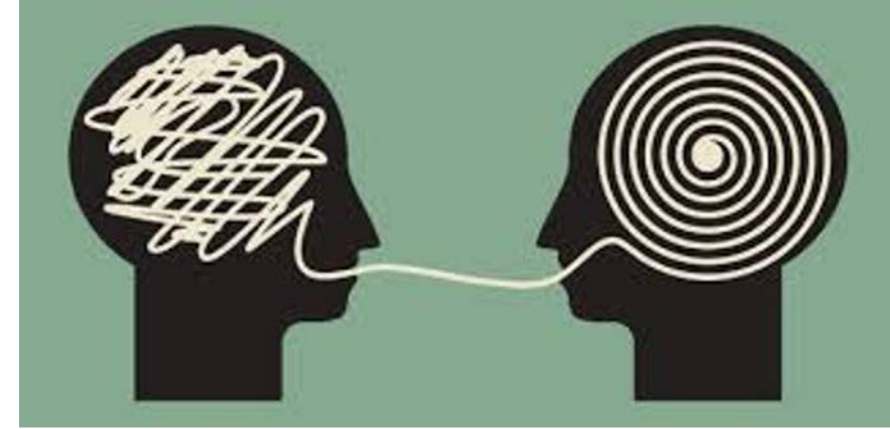


**How we grow as a professional is limited to our perception.**



# How do we change our perception?

Through others, we are meant to tell stories. . .



- “The truth about stories is that that’s all we are.” (King, 2003, p. 32)
- “We are made of story. When we talk to each other, we tell each other stories about what we believe to be important and true.” (Boje, 1991)
- “Talking to each other is how people think together.” (Wheatley, 2002)

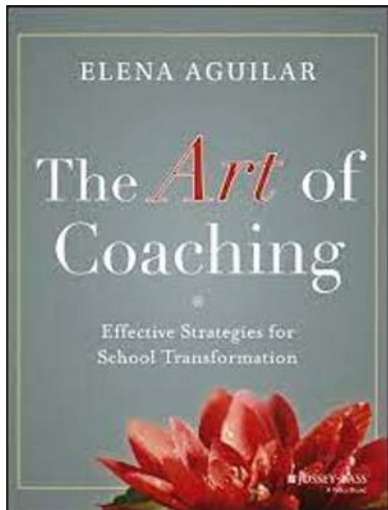
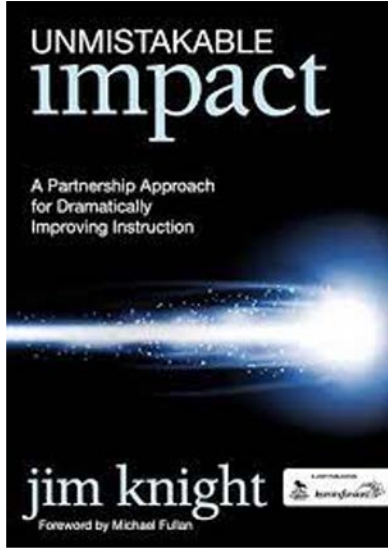
. . . and it is through these stories and conversations that we can build our organizations together.

# Effective storytelling techniques

- Effective storytellers draw the listener in and inspire curiosity.
- Stories need to be debriefed to a degree to help some listeners make explicit connections.
- **Concise**. Cut out every word that you can. Short stories are powerful.
- **Vivid**. Have you included enough details to paint a rich picture for your point?
- **Emotional**. Will the story touch hearts and minds?
- Most importantly — **your story**. Minimize the use of other people's stories.



# Advocacy Lives in Progress through Partnership



- Studying and researching various coaching styles has supported connecting with others and storytelling
  - Jim Knight
  - Elena Aguilar
- Networking
- Professional learning
- Community organizations
- Advocacy can happen at any level to have an impact



# Discussion and Questions



Let us hear from you

**Please fill out our  
post-webinar  
survey**

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/R2LN3VW>



# 2023 Call for proposals

## Apply to present at the 2023 Annual Conference



[Submit a proposal.](#)

Deadline to submit a proposal: **January 31, 2023**

Interested in submitting a proposal to present at Learning Forward's 2023 Annual Conference at the Gaylord National in Washington, DC? The **2023 Call for Proposals** is open and will close at noon EST on Tuesday, January 31, 2023. To learn more about how to submit a proposal, login to the [Conference Proposal System](#) and select Instructions in the menu.

# Mark your calendars

**Online  
course:**

**January 23, 24, & 25  
3–5 pm ET**

**Introduction to Standards for  
Professional Learning**

## **Webinars:**

**Thursday  
February 2  
3 pm ET**

**Trauma-informed  
practices**

**Thursday  
February 16  
3 pm ET**

**How PL improves  
teacher and student  
outcomes**

**Thursday  
March 2  
3 pm ET**

**Relationally skilled  
leading**



# Online resources

Look for follow-up resources, including a recording of this webinar and slides:

- Read latest issue of [The Learning Professional](#)
- Check out the [Learning Forward blog](#)
- Use the planner at [Professional Learning State and District Planner](#)



**Top 15 blogs reflect high-quality professional learning priorities**

Dec 22, 2022 | Gail Paul | Advocacy/policy



At Learning Forward, our blog posts tend to feel more like lively conversations with our colleagues, partners, and clients. The blog is a space where Learning Forward staff members and guest authors endeavor to share timely and highly relevant insights for the benefit of our readers to keep them connected to resources and tools that can help them in their schools and districts.

The image is a screenshot of a web application titled 'Professional Learning State and District Planner'. It features a search bar at the top and a main content area with a large graphic of a green arrow pointing upwards and to the right, set against a background of a green circular gauge. Below the graphic, there is a text box with the title 'Professional Learning State and District Planner' and a subtitle 'The Title IIA Equity Multiplier: Leveraging Curriculum, Instructional Materials, and Professional Learning for All Students and Educators'. There are two buttons: 'State Education Agency (SEA)' and 'Local Education Agency (LEA)'. Below this is a section titled 'Professional Learning System Framework' which contains five colored boxes representing stages: Stage 1 (Define the Vision), Stage 2 (Examine Evidence to Drive Improvement), Stage 3 (Design and Implement the Learning Plan), Stage 4 (Support and Monitor), and Stage 5 (Scale and Institutionalize). Each stage box also lists 'State Level (SEA)' and 'Local Level (LEA)'.

A person is holding a large, dark blue speech bubble. Inside the bubble, the text "WHAT'S YOUR STORY?" is written in a bold, light blue, sans-serif font. The person's hands are visible at the top of the bubble, and they are wearing a light-colored, ribbed top. The background is a light, neutral color.

**WHAT'S YOUR  
STORY?**

**Thank you!**