

Building Your Public Narrative

Miami Dade County Civics Academy 2026

Session 4: Civic Engagement in Action

Public Narrative Preview

(Based on Marshall Ganz's work: The Story of Self, Us, and Now)

Purpose:

This preview helps you connect your personal motivation, shared community values, and the urgency of the work students will do in the mapping activity.

Story of Self

- Your story of self explains why this work matters to you.

Prompts:

- What experience first made you care about community, belonging, or civic action?
- What moment helped you understand that local issues are connected to larger systems?
- Why is it important to help students see themselves as community actors?

Story of Us

- Your story of us explains why this work matters to the group.

Prompts:

- What shared values show up in this room or in this community?
- What strengths, relationships, or institutions already exist here?
- What do we already know about our communities that can guide action?

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Story of Now

- Your story of now explains why this moment calls for action.

Prompts:

- What is the central challenge or question we are naming today?
- What assets will students identify and connect during the mapping activity?
- What is the next step that moves reflection into civic engagement?

Sample Framing Statement

"Today we begin with the idea that communities are not defined only by their needs. They are also shaped by the people, places, institutions, and relationships already present. As students map their own communities, they will identify assets, reflect on what matters to them, and begin to see how local knowledge can become civic action."