

Counter-Narrative Project Planning

Purpose: Help educators or students design a simple, powerful intervention that shifts a harmful or limiting narrative in their school or classroom environment.

Use the **Counter-Narrative Canvas** below as your guide.

The Counter-Narrative Canvas

Step	Prompt / Guide
1. Problem	What issue, belief, or stereotype are you seeing in your context?
2. Dominant Narrative	What is the “mainstream story” or assumption about this issue or group?
3. Counter-Narrative	What new story do you want to tell or show? What truth needs to be heard?
4. Audience	Who needs to hear or see this new story? Who can be impacted by it?
5. Strategy	How will you share the counter-narrative? (project, video, poster, lesson, etc.)
6. Intended Impact	What change or reflection do you hope to generate through this counter-narrative?

Example of a Completed Canvas (Teacher-Led Project)

Step	Example Answer
Problem	Students with disabilities are often underestimated by peers and excluded socially.
Dominant Narrative	“They can’t participate like the rest of the class.”
Counter-Narrative	“Every student contributes uniquely — inclusion benefits everyone, not just some.”
Audience	All students and teachers in the school.
Strategy	Students create an exhibition called “ <i>Different, Not Less</i> ” with videos, interviews, and artwork from classmates with and without disabilities.
Intended Impact	Increase empathy and inclusion; reduce stigma and bullying; shift school culture.

How to Implement the Canvas with Participants

1. **Introduce the concept of counter-narratives** with real-world examples (e.g., media, literature, education).
2. **Model the canvas** using a completed example (like above).
3. Ask participants (teachers or students) to reflect on:
 - What harmful narrative exists in your context?
 - What new truth is not being told?
4. In pairs or groups, they complete the canvas on paper or digitally.
5. Facilitate a **gallery walk or fishbowl** to share the ideas.
6. Optionally, select a few projects to implement or prototype in the following weeks.

Bonus: Project Ideas for Teachers and Students

- **Podcast:** Invite students to tell their “untold stories” and publish them in a series.
- **Visual Campaign:** Posters, memes, and murals featuring empowering counter-messages.
- **Lesson Hackathon:** Redesign a textbook lesson that presents a one-sided story, adding missing perspectives.
- **Public Event:** Organize a *Counter-Narrative Day* where students present visual or performance pieces.