MAPPING HUMAN MIGRATION: SETTING THE EDUCATIONAL AGENDA
WHY MAPPING HUMAN MIGRATION?

Across post-industrial nations, migration is reaching historic proportions, placing immigrant-origin children at the forefront of rapidly changing educational landscapes (UNDP, 2009). In the United States, one of every four children under the age of 18, has an immigrant parent (Child Trends, 2014); by 2050, one in three children will reside in an immigrant headed family (Pew Hispanic Center, 2013). While some immigrant-origin students and their peers are thriving in schools and communities, many struggle (Suárez-Orozco, Yoshikawa, & Tseng, 2015) to find their place in the new land and in shifting cultural landscapes.

Schools play a unique role in supporting the healthy integration of children and youth. They are the gathering place where “newcomers” and “old-timers” meet and are expected to learn about the world. And yet, most educators have never received any preparation in how to best serve immigrant-origin students. Today’s sparse and fragmented treatment of human migration in K-12 schools and cultural institutions fails to prepare our youth to understand one of the most pressing civic issues of our time, and to develop the competence and dispositions needed to navigate a world of increasing diversity and complexity. To be effective, educators teaching about migration will need a paradigmatic change in their approach to this complex and ubiquitous issue.

Crafting a new framework to teach about and through migration demands that we find our place in the dynamic and hybrid interdisciplinary space between the wisdom of our most experienced practitioners –teachers, artists, museum educators—and the work of leading contemporary scholars of migration, human development and education. So on April 16-17, 2019, with the support of the Spencer Foundation, our Re-imagining Migration team hosted the Mapping Human Migration seminar at Harvard. We asked: What are the some of the key revealing questions, powerful perspectives, persisting resistances, and promising pedagogies that we will need t understand to prepare our young and ourselves for a world on the move?

In this visual synthesis, we invite you to walk with us though key moments along these two days and, when desirable, to take your time to linger over ideas that unveil new possibilities for you and for the people and institutions seeking to strengthen the social and cultural fabric of contemporary societies being shaped by people on the move.

Verónica Boix-Mansilla with Adam Strom, Carola Suárez-Orozco and Marcelo Suárez-Orozco,
Listening Talking Learning
Veronica Boix-Mansilla

“We have a commitment to reconnect serious scholarship with practice and to bring the most significant issues of our time into the classroom for careful consideration by teachers and youth.”
“How do we complicate that which is familiar without the drive or the impulse to be vulgar in the reductionism of the issues at stake? How do we acknowledge the human complexity that has gone into the making of immigration as a defining issue in our cities, in our schools”

“Immigration, we love it, looking backwards. It’s photoshopped, it’s nice, looking backwards. In the here and now, at every turn, there has been massive anxiety.”
“One of the questions we have to come back to is what should schools be doing? Once we know who we are teaching, or what we think we know about them, then what should we do with their resources, their culture, their linguistic resources?”

“Things do occur in cycles and my hope is that one day we will get out of this cycle that we are in but who knows when that will happen, and until that time, we have to figure out what to do and how to respond. Schools are going to need lots of help in that work.”
MIGRATION STORIES

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF STORIES IN OUR UNDERSTANDING OF HUMAN MIGRATION?

Nancy Lemke, *Only 8 1/2 of Millions*
Adam Strom

“Sometimes we think that somebody’s got a story and we don’t recognize that other people have a story. A lot of schools are doing projects around immigration stories and it always becomes the newcomers who the ones who are supposed to tell the stories and then everybody else is like “I’m going to watch.” It’s very powerful for the newcomers to tell their story but how are we going to build a bridge if some kids are on display and the other kids are passive. So how do we engage in authentic conversation.”
Moving Stories Activity
Carola Suárez-Orozco

“What do these toxic narratives do? They otherize, they distance. They make it ‘them’ versus ‘us.’ They reinforce lots of prejudicial attitudes. We all have our prejudgments in there, it’s hard to get away from them, and it simply reinforces those ideas. And it legitimizes all sorts of exclusionary practices and policies. It also serves to divide our society. If it’s ‘us’ versus ‘them,’ then there’s division.”
“A lot of the students at our schools said, when we asked in what ways do you feel connected to other students at the school, they said ‘because of our backgrounds, because of our ethnic backgrounds.’ Then when we asked ‘what is your moving story?’ they said they did not have one or they did not know. That to me presents a paradox in that these kids feel connected to each other on some level because of their shared experience, but what is the school and society doing to shut down that conversation before it might have even begun.”
Paola Uccelli

“This idea that we hear someone and make assumptions, this is how our human mind works, this is how we have evolved to think, but we have to stop and rethink. In education, this is particularly central. Teachers and schools and systems need to actively and intentionally interrupt those natural and biased attitudes we bring with us.”
WHERE DO WE COME FROM?
Taking the long view on human migration

National Geographic's Genographic Project
Miguel Vilar

“If you know where to look and if you know what you’re looking for, you can reconstruct the story of a society based on one person’s DNA.”

“By looking at DNA of people whose story was stolen from them, their identity was completely stolen, we can help them uncover their own migration story.”
Emily Veres

“Behind each string are so many people – we acknowledged the whole but also the individual”

(Emily’s student)

A map Emily’s students created documenting migration through biology
WHY DO PEOPLE LEAVE THEIR HOME?

FORCES, CAUSES, CONSEQUENCES
“Migration flows are not unidirectional. We like to talk about it as if people leave their home country and they move to a host country and ‘what was the dynamic in the home country that pushed you?’ and ‘what was the dynamic in the host country that pulled you?’ … Migration is actually more complicated than that. There are transnational ties that connect people, and there’s often many more moves, people often move back and forth… For some people who decide to migrate the transnational ties are really formalized through agencies, through organizations that control movements and for others it’s more informal information that is shared between family members and friends.”
Judi Freeman

“What do we do in this world that we can’t make any sense of right now. I bring that up because my students are really, really struggling with this. I think they’re stuck... They’re stuck in a way that I haven’t seen them stuck since I started teaching. And they’re stuck because everything is coming at them... It’s all about the lack of control over their world. The students trying to make sense of the world when information is coming at them from so many different angles and so many different places, don’t (a) know where to start, (b) what’s real and what isn’t, and (c) even if they can figure those two things out, don't know what to do about it.”

Photograph by: Kim Kyung-Hoon
BORDERS
Exploring Exclusion, Inclusion, Meanings and Representations

JR. Giant Picnic
“In Dream City everything is doubled, everything is various. You have no choice but to cross borders and speak in tongues. That’s how you get from your mother to your father, from talking to one set of folks who think you’re not black enough to another who figure you insufficiently white. It’s the kind of town where the wise man says ‘I’ cautiously, because ‘I’ feels like too straight and singular a phoneme to represent the true multiplicity of his experience. Instead, citizens of Dream City prefer to use the collective pronoun ‘we.’”

Zadie Smith, *Speaking in Tongues*
Arzu Mistry

“What are the visible and invisible borders? Race is a border, language is a border, gender and identity there are so many borders around that. What I have been reading is making me think – what is my position in relation to that border? Am I engaging with the border by being in it? Am I looking at the border from a side of superiority? Am I looking at the border from a side of inferiority?”
Once we began using exchange as an orienting concept, we realized that ideas you own but are not your own can be used to create new meanings.

Switch roles, who is in charge of these truths? Does the uncertainty of what I can do more precious?

The lazy brackish water now pushes pulled to another place, in bikinis, laughing in bikinis, on their own, momentary and fluid, exchange on a physical but nurturing difference.

Exchange as art

Using maps as a tool for critical thinking, we wonder:

How do we educate the public about the future when the world is so uncertain?

What can maps do to help us understand our place in the world?

How can we create a map that is relevant to different audiences?

Liminal space

Exchange as love

Trading zones

Translation

Fault lines

The tricky middle

Causality

Swap

Perspective

Dialogue

Brackish water

Negotiating equity
Lynn Russell

“We are here always to build bridges, open people’s and students’ minds, rather than to close things down.”

“Art and storytelling help develop empathy, understanding, and help people take perspective.”
“Have you ever been stopped from entering or visiting a place? If so, what did it feel like? If not, how do you think it might feel like to be prohibited from entering a place of crossing a border? These could range from country or state borders to more everyday borders like fences, gates, walls, or even social borders that are invisible. How, if at all, is your movement restricted in your everyday life?”
Stephanie Norby

“The danger some children and families might be in for telling their own stories makes it important to tell these stories (stories through art and history) so they can see that there is a connection and they can learn how other people have managed to overcome similar kinds of problems.”

“The other thing that museums or libraries or other community organizations can do is they can be part of having a conversation about another kind of world.”
Who is responsible for people in the in-betweens?
Jacqueline Bhabha

"Nobody is born ambiguous. People are made to feel ambiguous. There is a humanitarian right to protection if your own state turns into an abuser or a predator."

“The belief in obligations to strangers is very deep rooted... This idea that we have duties to outsiders is not just a left-wing mantra, it is a very deeply held human, religious, and spiritual conviction.”
Viola Georgi

“Deportations from schools and kindergartens, even kindergartens, are particularly inhumane because they break the function of these facilities as protective spaces for children. Not only the deported child but also the whole school environment is traumatized. Fortunately, deportations executed from classrooms by the police are extremely seldom in Germany. But what’s happening every day in Germany and European classrooms at this moment is that students, new classmates show up and disappear just all of a sudden. So that’s something children these days really have to deal with.”
Understanding Immigrant Learners-Language, Socio-Emotional, and Civic Perspectives

Aliza Nisenbaum
Carola Suárez-Orozco

“One of the advantages of immigrant children, one of the true sources of resilience, is that ability to take perspective. If we’re fish in a bowl, we only know the water, we can’t see another way of being or imagine another space. And immigrant children are forced into (multiple spaces). It is a distinct advantage, that’s the up side. The down side is that you can never fully not question what you’re in, the place you’re in.”
“62% of educators noted indirect effects on other students. So on the students who are sitting in a seat where one day the seat next to them was empty. So a student who is a US citizen, who is a classmate of this other student... sees how the next day the other student is not there. I don’t think we often think about how are other students in these classroom environments being affected and we talk a lot about wanting to be inclusive and the narrative of exclusion but there are many students who are being very inclusive of these students and they do miss when these students are suddenly no longer in their environment, they are their friends, they are their classmates, they are their peers, so that absence is really felt strongly by the students and by the school community."

“84% of educators thought that these issues (about migration) needed to be discussed in their school and with the school community and 73% said that they had not done so”
RECEIVING AND INTEGRATION

A Conversation
“Students who are feeling the effects of the threat of immigration enforcement deeply, their own sense of anxiety about their wellbeing, about their future, also about their need to take responsibility if their parents were deported. In some cases, principles talked about students whose parents were deported and then having to live on their own and somehow make do. In many cases, principles talked about, since these are high school students, the anxiety and stress about needing to care for or worrying about needing to care for their younger siblings.”
Acknowledgements

This Visual synthesis was prepared by Isabella Guerra-Uccelli and Verónica Boix-Mansilla

We greatly appreciate colleagues and friends who contributed to a thoughtful and honest deliberation about the state of the art in research and practice in the education of our immigrant-origin children and their peers.

We thank Devon Wilson for his video documentation and Lindsey Michelle Williams for her beautiful Photographs.

We also thank Aakanksha Gupta and Ingrid Villanueva who offered invaluable project coordination, documentation and administrative support respectively.
To learn more about our work and remain up to date please visit us at...

https://reimaginingmigration.org/