

Moving Stories:

An Educator's Guide to Connecting and Engaging Our Moving Stories

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**Re-Imagining
Migration**

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
WHY WE MUST CONNECT	3
Social and Emotional Skills, Academic Learning and Standards	3
Where we must connect	5
Facilitating classroom connections	5
Facilitating familial conversations	5
How to listen	6
Reflecting on being a respectful interviewer	7
Respectful interviewing	8
General Guidelines for Interviewing	8
Respecting different levels of disclosure	9
Sample interview suggestions	10
For younger students	11
For older students	12
Moving Stories Questions	12
QUESTION SET ONE: My Migration Story	13
QUESTION SET TWO: The Children of Im/migrants	15
QUESTION SET THREE: Family Migration Stories Across Generations	17
Connecting After the Interview	17
Reflecting on our shared narratives	18
From Listening to Action	20
Managing Difficult Conversations	21

Introduction

We live in incontestably contentious times. Listening and connecting across differences – whether ideological, social, or racial—has become seemingly more difficult than ever. And yet, the stakes of not connecting and engaging in acts of understanding have deep and divisive implications for social-emotional development, human relationships, and our civic society.

At Re-Imagining Migration, we believe that (im)migration is an experience that almost everyone in the United States shares somewhere in their family history. Whether it is recent or generations ago; by choice or through forced migration, for adventure, to seek a better life; or for refuge--with the exception of native peoples--migration is at the center of nearly every family history.

Reflecting upon our Moving Stories, listening to one another explore, relating to those experiences, and learning from those narratives is a powerful way to find common ground.

In this guide, we will begin by considering some reasons WHY seeking connection around our Moving Stories is so fundamentally important. We will then consider various critical spaces of understanding WHERE understanding is essential and where (mis)understanding(s) can take place and may become derailed. The focus of this guide will then turn to HOW to facilitate these connections in a variety of practical ways

Why we must connect

At a time when more than a quarter of the children in our educational system are of immigrant origin, many students are experiencing polarized and stereotype-ridden public narratives about their (and their families') place in our nation. Finding ways to facilitate the flourishing and successful social inclusion of immigrant origin children and youth is both a demographic and a democratic imperative.

Despite the rapid growth in the number of young people from immigrant families and the challenging circumstances they face, many adults that serve them do not understand them or feel ill-prepared to serve their needs. Concurrently, xenophobia and myths about immigration are on the rise leading to incidents of school bullying. Inside and outside of classrooms, misunderstandings about newcomers sew division, undermining social, economic, and democratic prospects for us all.

Young people – whether they are part of an arriving or receiving culture – strive to form their identities as learners, community members, and change-makers in an era of mass migration. Finding ways to connect, listen, and engage around narratives of migration provides a crucial opportunity for immigrant-origin students to feel supported in their social, emotional, academic, and civic growth AND for their peers to explore their own families' migration histories, their misperceptions around migration, and to find common ground.

Social and Emotional Skills, Academic Learning and Standards

Social, emotional, cognitive, linguistic, and academic domains of child development are all intertwined, both in the brain and in behavior, and are essential to the learning process. A growing

body of research has come to show that student success is associated with learning environments that nurture socio-emotional development (SEL). The intent and goal of engaging in connecting, listening, and engaging activities is to specifically nurture cognitive-socio-emotional-and civic dispositions toward:

- Being empathic & taking perspective.
- Appreciating and engaging in respectful dialogue across difference;
- Being curious and inquiry driven.
- Becoming aware and sensitive to inequities.
- Taking action to foster inclusive, participatory, and sustainable democratic communities.

Engaging in Moving Stories activities and our accompanying lesson set will help promote several essential college and career-ready dispositions including helping to develop:

- Students who are curious and prepared to inquire about the ways that migration impacts individuals, communities, and nations.
- Students who are empathetic to individuals and communities who are navigating the changes that come with mass migration.
- Students who recognize their own perspectives and can understand the views of others about issues of migration across a range of histories and geographies.
- Students who recognize the importance of working to build bridges between newcomers and receiving communities.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS: Engaging in Moving Stories activities and our accompanying lesson set will help promote the following speaking and listening skills as defined in the Common Core State Standards.

- Students will practice Initiating and participating in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- Students will work with peers to set rules for collegial decision-making and (e.g., informal consensus, taking votes on critical issues, presentation of alternate views), clear goals and deadlines, and individual roles as needed.
- Students will practice responding thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their

own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.

- Students will practice adapting their speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.
- Students who can articulate changes and continuities of the experience of migrations

Where we must connect

Psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner proposed a highly influential theory of ecological influences on human development. He suggested that children are profoundly affected by various intersecting levels of their social environments. Distal social influences --political, economic, and media representations, and the like --have trickle-down effects on children, their families, neighborhoods, and schools which in turn have deep implications for the life opportunities of children as they develop. [See [Re-Imagining Migration's Culturally Relevant Guide for Supporting Immigrant Origin Students](#) for more detail about the Bronfenbrenner Ecological Developmental Model].

Of course, the most immediate level of daily interactions--family, peers and school--play an important and most readily apparent role in experience. As such, while being conscious of what is going on in the world, we should be taking action at levels of influence in which the children interact on a daily basis

Facilitating classroom connections

Schools and classrooms are spaces in which diverse groups of students regularly come in contact and (optimally) can come to know and understand one another—recognizing that perceived differences are less than imagined. Engaging in connecting and listening around Moving Stories is an opportunity to be exposed to new perspectives, experiences, and ways of thinking. Imagining other’s dilemmas and as psychologist Hiro Yoshikawa says, “explicitly plac[ing] oneself in the position” of others, followed by well-managed classroom dialogues, is a promising strategy where deep learning can happen.

As politicians and social media enact an ethos of discord, divisiveness, and hatred, educators can and must foster classrooms that are what educator Michelle Fine has so eloquently termed “sites of possibilities” where an ethic of civility and respect are modeled daily. At a time when it seems everyone is shouting, the classroom must be a place of careful listening (see [A Lesson in Civility](#)).

Facilitating familial conversations

Many of the teacher’s we have spoken to report that their second-generation students simply do not know much about their family’s immigrant origin stories. There may be many reasons for which immigrant-origin students are disconnected from their family’s stories of migration. Parents and family members may not speak of these stories for a variety of reasons. The everyday pressures of day-to-day life sometimes often get in the way of sitting down together to reflect about prior experiences. Parents and caretakers may wish to shield their children from traumatic experiences. And sometimes, students’ home language atrophies to the point that only very basic needs and interests are communicated (e.g., “I need a new pair of shoes;” or “can you pass the rice?”). Asking questions of

family and community members about experiences in the country of origin and about Moving Stories provides opportunities for families to talk with one another at a deeper level.

Similarly, even though the United States is fundamentally a nation of immigrants, many who are several generations out from that experience have simply not given the Moving Stories of their familial experiences much (if any) thought. Nonetheless, as we have noted, our collective Moving Stories provide a potential for connection and perspective taking around a shared experience and offer an opportunity for finding common ground in a time of divisiveness.

By engaging in Moving Stories, we interrupt the cycle of silence by celebrating everyday family stories of migration. By exploring family narratives of migration, we are planting seeds for students to learn about themselves and their family. Recognizing and exploring these narratives is a fundamental tool to helping students better understand and communicate with their families.

And by sharing these stories with peers and teachers that respectfully and carefully listen in validating experiences students may feel more visible and connected with one another.

How to listen

In order to effectively connect, we learn to be careful, thoughtful, and respectful listeners. To engage meaningfully in connecting over Moving Stories requires doing so both within the classroom as well as in the course of the interview.

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION NORMS. An important prerequisite for listening and connecting is to set the stage for these conversations within the classroom. Educators can take a variety of strategies as they set the norms and expectations for participation in their classroom or learning space. While some schools have explicit standards, we find it helpful to build upon classroom relationships and to articulate class discussion norms in order to make clear jointly agreed-upon expectations for all learners. Classroom norm agreements can be particularly helpful in those moments in which you find that someone has broken class norms (e.g., by sharing a private comment from a peer or responding improperly to a fellow student's comment).

Educational researchers have found that establishing classroom norms is an effective way to promote a positive learning environment. We think they are particularly important when lessons touch on sensitive personal, political or historical themes.

What are classroom norms and agreements? Why might they be useful? And, how do you create one? Think of classroom norms and agreements as formal expressions of expectations and even rules that are agreed to by all members of the classroom community. Many educators like to have their students co-construct these with them and then have each member of the community affirmatively agree to abide by the document. Some educators have each student sign the contract and post it.

At Re-Imagining Migration, we have developed a few sample discussion norms and agreements that can serve as a guideline.

Promoting a Culture of Inquiry, Perspective-Taking, and Empathy

Class Discussion Norms

Listen for Understanding with Respect

- Appreciate the diverse perspectives that we all bring
- Assume good intentions while trying to understand what someone is trying to say
- Ask questions for clarification if you don't understand

Assume Responsibility for Shared Learning by:

- Using language that brings people together
- Monitoring your air time and allow space for others to participate
- Speaking and sharing insights from the first person, particularly if something makes you uncomfortable

Here are two other resources that provide detailed lessons for creating classroom norms and agreements:

- [Facing History and Ourselves: Contracting](#)
- [Peace First: Creating Shared Classroom Rules through a Classroom Contract](#)

A few additional notes that are worth thinking about:

- It is helpful to frame expectations in positive language.
- While we prefer positive, over negative, reinforcement, it is useful to consider the consequences if students don't adhere to the norms and agreements. Thus, you might want to help students have an idea of what kinds of behaviors would violate norms.
- Finally, once you have created the agreement, return to the agreement occasionally, both for positive reinforcement, as well as a reminder if/when the agreement is violated.

Reflecting on being a respectful interviewer

At the heart of the Moving Stories exercise is a paired interview and one important life-long skill that engaging in Moving Stories conversations can develop in students is the ability to become a thoughtful interviewer. These are skills that some folks come into the world with naturally but that most need a little bit of scaffolding to learn.

What Does and Does Not Work.

An important first step is to ask students to reflect upon what makes for good querying and good listening.

Ask students to reflect upon the following:

1-Think about a time when someone has asked you questions about yourself and you enjoyed the exchange. What about the way in which you were asked questions made you feel comfortable? What made you feel like you were being carefully listened to?

2-Now think about a time when someone has asked you questions about yourself and you felt uncomfortable. What about the way in which you were asked questions made you feel uncomfortable?

3-Then, have students pair and share and then come back and discuss. Ask the students to discuss some take-home lessons. What do they think they might want to do or not do when they ask their family or peers questions?

Respectful interviewing

Below we articulate what we have found to be helpful guidelines to help your students become respectful interviewers. Good interviewing begins by being a careful and focused listener. It also requires thoughtful and respectful posing of questions. As students pursue their interviews, they should be reminded of the following:

General Guidelines for Interviewing

- ✓ Always be courteous and respectful to your interviewee (whether a family member, a peer, a community member, or anyone else).
- ✓ As you learn about other's stories and cultures, be genuinely:
 - Interested in hearing their story.
 - Curious to learn about their cultural background.
- ✓ These Moving Stories conversations are an opportunity for the interviewee to feel understood and for you to understand them and:
 - To come to appreciate differences of experience, and
 - To seek to see similarities in our common experiences.
- ✓ Listen empathically and mindfully to the many languages people use to communicate, including words and body language.

- ✓ If you are bilingual, encourage your interviewer to tell their story in the language in which they are most comfortable,
- ✓ Treat your interviewee in the way you would want to be treated!

During the Interview

- ✓ Practice empathic and mindful listening
 - Be fully present in your own body language and eye contact. Out of respect, give your undivided attention (no checking cell phones during the conversation).
 - Make eye contact, smile, nod, and use encouraging body language to reassure the interviewee and support the telling of their story.
 - Suspend your judgments and listen in order to understand deeply.
- ✓ Be comfortable with silence. Interviewees sometimes need time to collect their thoughts. Give them time and avoid interruptions. Remember you are there to capture their Moving Stories.
- ✓ Be patient—sometimes the interviewee needs a moment to gather their thoughts.
- ✓ Ask follow-up questions either to draw out a bit more information if the person does not say much (for example, can you tell me a little more?) OR if something is not clear (like Who was that? Or When did that happen?).
- ✓ Always respect an interviewee’s request/decision to skip questions, move on, or discontinue the interview.
 - Watch for hesitant body language and do not push the interviewee to reveal beyond their comfort zone (see Respecting Levels of Comfort in Disclosing, below).
- ✓ Give the interviewee the “final word.” Ask if your interviewee wants to add anything else at the end of the interview.
- ✓ Be sure to thank the interviewee for the interview!

Respecting different levels of disclosure

As we engage in these Moving Story conversations, it is essential that we recognize that not everyone is at the same place. Some students have simply never thought about their Moving Stories. Some have

a vague awareness that it is part of their family's experience but sense it is an uncomfortable topic. Still, others are acutely aware of their Moving Stories because it is part of their daily lived experiences and may be worried that by engaging in Moving Stories conversations, they might reveal something that could put their family in jeopardy (as in the case of when a family member is undocumented). As such, it is essential that we recognize the boundaries of stories and signal to our students that they only need to reveal what they feel comfortable sharing.

While being heard, and listened to with respect, can be a transformational experience, at the same time, as educators we must recognize that some of our students may have complicated histories that are part of their story or their families' story. Students should be allowed full discretion in their decisions of what to share or not to share around details of their lives and their family's experiences. Some students may have traumatic histories that they are not ready to discuss or relive. Other students may not have proper authorization to be in the country or have family members without legal paperwork. Students should be respected and supported around whether or not to share those details out loud among their peers; essential is the issue of how trustworthy is the context of sharing. Students should be honored and provided full respect to reveal only as much as they feel they wish (and are ready) to disclose. They must not be pushed to speak out loud further than they are ready. Students should be allowed to write or draw or express themselves as they are most comfortable and not penalized by reticence (either by shaming or grading).

Harvard University scholar Danielle Allen has been studying social change in the digital age for over eight years. In the course of important work around storytelling. Professor Allen and her research team have developed a deceptively simple and relevant question upon which to reflect as others seek to know more about you. As students prepare to be interviewed by a classmate, encourage them to think, ahead of time, about the question-- ["how much should I share?"](#)

Have students consider the advantages and disadvantages of sharing different parts of their stories publicly. We believe sharing our stories can be empowering, but we want students to be thoughtful about their own actions. Sharing some stories can put us at risk, or stir up trauma. If students haven't thought about this question ahead of time, they can sometimes feel unprepared or put on the spot.

You can have students write their responses in a journal. Some may wish to share their thoughts about this question in pairs or small groups, whereas, in other classrooms, teachers may want to keep this as a solo activity.

To recap:

- Make sure the sharing environment is safe and respectful;
- Make sure that everyone knows that they only need to share as much as they want to share;
- Make sure everyone knows that they can opt-out at any point;
- Make sure that everyone knows that they can choose alternative forms of sharing such as drawing, poetry, journaling, etc.;
- Make sure that everyone knows that they do not have to make their stories public;

- Make sure there is a list of people to talk to in case issues arise including the school guidance counselor, social worker, clergy, or other trusted adults.

Sample interview suggestions

The team at Re-Imagining Migration, has developed a series of questions to help students reflect on both families and one another’s Moving Stories. The first set of questions have been designed for younger students (K-5th grade) and is focused on asking questions to family members. The later set, is designed for interviewing peers and with scaffolding can be used with older grades right into adulthood.

For younger students

Younger students can be introduced to the family interview process through an inspirational read-aloud.

To launch the assignment: We suggest teachers introduce students to the excitement and possibilities of exploring family and community stories by starting with a read-aloud of *Island Girl* by Junot Diaz.

Island Girl is a beautifully illustrated storybook about a class whose teacher assigns them the task of drawing a picture of “where they are originally from.” The story centers around Lola who remembers little of her original homeland and is thus worried she won’t be able to complete the assignment. She realizes that by talking with her family and members of her community, she will be able to piece together memories. She asks many questions of her family and neighbors, learns bits and pieces of what folks “remember most” and then proudly completes her assignment.

We encourage teachers to read this beautifully illustrated book “live” with your students. If you do not have the book, you may also find it nicely [read aloud in English](#). *Island Born* is also available in Spanish under the title *Lola*; here is a link to the book being [read aloud in Spanish](#).

A follow-up class discussion

After reading *Island Born*. After reading the story, you might have a class discussion to provoke a conversation and reflection focusing on initial ambivalence and feelings of mastery and empowerment to be helpful.

Below are some suggested queries for the class of younger students:

- How do you think Lola was feeling when Ms. Obi first assigned the class to draw the picture of “her first country”? Why do you think she felt that way?
- What did Lola do to try to learn about her first country?
- What did Lola learn after she talked to her family and neighbors?
- How did she feel after she talked to her family and neighbors? And why do you think her feelings changed?
- How did she feel while she was drawing the island?
- And how did she feel when she showed her drawing to Ms. Obi and her classmates?

Doing the interview with family members. THEN encourage students to pick a family member they would like to ask and then ONE question they would like to ask and report back on that conversation.

Here is a list of suggested questions that younger students may find engaging:

Can you tell me about:

- a favorite place you would visit when you were little?
- your favorite food?
- about your mother (father; grandmother; grandfather; sisters and brothers)?
- your childhood hero?
- your favorite song?
- your favorite story?
- your best friend?
- what school was like?
- someone or something you took care of?
- what the place you grew up was like?
- In what ways were you helpful in your family when you were a child?
- something you did when you were young you were proud of?
- something you worried about when you were young?
- something you dreamt about when you were little?

For older students

Older students should be encouraged to engage in a Moving Story conversation with a peer to learn about their Moving Story. This will provide an opportunity to reflect about shared experiences and common ground.

To launch the assignment: We suggest that in preparation, educators ask students to reflect about their OWN Moving Story. Ask them to spend 5-10 minutes reflecting about the following question: There is a story behind every decision to migrate. What is your (or your family's) story? Students may jot down ideas, draw, or questions they may have.

Then ask them to read through the list of interview questions below. Ask students to pick a family member who may know more than they do and go home to ask them about a few questions. We suggest that the educator and class pick which questions students are most curious about and that the same questions be focused on by all students in the class--at least for the first assignment. This process will allow the opportunity to be prepared for the peer interview and for a rich, shared experience in which to engage in the class discussion.

Review the sharing and contracting guideline. Before students begin interviewing one another, the sharing and contracting guidelines should be reviewed.

Pairing off students for the Moving Stories conversations. Thoughtfully pair of peers for the Moving Stories conversation. Friends will naturally want to pair off with one another but more learning will happen if students are paired off according to different experiences--like different familial countries of origin or different generations of migration. DO watch out for power dynamics--students who tend to bully or humiliate their peers should be paired with similarly strong personalities.

Once students are paired off, they should begin by reading through this menu of questions that the class has selected.

Moving Stories Questions

The questions on the following pages were designed these questions to allow for a wide range of interpretations of what it means to migrate. By definition, to migrate is to move. However, not every migration story is the same. Moving from one neighborhood to another, while sharing some common elements with other migration stories, is quite different from the migration story of a refugee, immigrant, displaced person. or someone forced to migrate through the Middle Passage and Slavery. We also recognize that the emotional impact and weight of migration stories are not the same for everybody, turn to earlier sections of this guide for suggestions on how to create an emotionally safe space for the Moving Stories interview.

QUESTION SET ONE: My Migration Story

Use these questions as a starting point if the interview subject has a personal experience with moving or migration that they would like to share. Before conducting the interview, review the following with your interviewee to make sure they feel comfortable with the questions and choose the most appropriate ones. It might be helpful to give them a few minutes to reflect before beginning the interview.

Motivation for Migrating

- There is a story behind every decision to migrate. What was yours (or your parents)?
- What were your (or your parents) hopes for your new life here?
- Why did you choose to come to this country instead of somewhere else?

The Journey

- Who did you come with and who did you leave behind? Did anyone come ahead of you?
- What was the most difficult part about leaving?
- What was your journey to this new country or community like?
- What was the most difficult part of coming here?
- What was it like when you first arrived?
- What most surprised you?
- What did you miss most about the country you came from?
- Who was most helpful with getting you settled?
- Migration can be hard. Where did you find strength in difficult times?
- How do you think that migration has changed you?

Hopes and Realities

- As time has passed, how does your experience compare to what you expected?
- What have been your biggest challenges?
- What have been your greatest sources of joy?
- Overall, how do you think your family is doing after the migration?
- Can you think of times when you have felt unwelcome as an immigrant? What about when you have felt welcomed?
- Do you have a story about someone you care about that was deported?
- What is the thing you are proudest of so far and why?
- What are you hoping to accomplish in the future?
- What do you think may get in the way of those dreams?
- What do you think may help your dreams come true?
- In what ways do you think migration has made you a stronger person?

Advice

- If someone you knew were planning on coming to this country or community, what would you tell them to expect?
- What advice would you give them about whether or not they should come?
- If they decided to come, what advice would you give them about how to make the best of their experience?
- What do you wish more people knew about immigrants or others that are new to the community?
- What are the 2 or 3 most important things that people could do to make the process of coming to a new country or community better?
- Is there anything you would like to add that that has not been asked?

QUESTION SET TWO: The Children of Im/migrants

Use these questions if the interview subject is the child or family member of im/migrants who migrated to the country or to a new community. Before conducting the interview, review the following with your interviewee to make sure they feel comfortable with the questions and choose the most appropriate ones. It might be helpful to give them a few minutes to reflect before beginning the interview.

Motivation for Migrating

- There is a story behind every decision to migrate. What do you know about your family's story?
- What did your family hope for in their new life here?
- Why did your family choose to come to this country or community instead of somewhere else?

The Journey

- What members of your family came with you and who was left behind?
- Did anyone come ahead of your family?
- What was most difficult for your family about leaving?
- What was the journey to this new country (or community) like?
- What was the most difficult for your family about arriving?
- What does the family talk about having most surprising them when they first arrived?
- What does the family talk about having missed most about the country or community they left behind?
- Who was most helpful with getting your family settled in?
- Migration can be hard. Where did your family gain strength in difficult times?
- How do you think your family was changed by migration?

Hopes and Realities

- How do you think your family's experience compares to their expectations?
- What has been your family's biggest challenges?
- What have been your family's biggest sources of joy?
- Overall, how do you think your family is doing after the migration?
- Can you think of times when your family has felt unwelcome because they are newcomers? What about when they have felt welcomed?
- Do you have a story about someone you care about that was deported? What do you think your family is most proud of having accomplished?
- What do you think are your family's hopes and dreams for the future?
- What do you think may get in the way of your family's dreams?
- What do you think may help your family's dreams come true?
- In what ways do you think your family's migration has made YOU a stronger person?

Advice

- If someone you knew were planning on coming to this country or community, what would you tell them to expect?
- What advice would you give them about whether or not they should come?
- If they decided to come, what advice would you give them about how to make the best of their experience?
- What do you wish more people knew about im/migrants?
- What are the 2 or 3 most important things that people could do to make the process of coming to a new country better?
- Is there anything you would like to add that that has not been asked?

QUESTION SET THREE: Family Migration Stories Across Generations

Use these questions if the interview subject's family members or distant relatives migrated generations ago. It is important to recognize that many families have stories of forced migration such as descendants of enslaved Africans, American Indian families that were violently driven from their lands, those targeted during 20th and 21st-century genocides and ethnic cleansing as well people whose ancestors were deported. Before conducting the interview, review the following with your interviewee to make sure they feel comfortable with the questions and choose the most appropriate ones. It might be helpful to give them a few minutes to reflect before beginning the interview.

The Moving Story

- What is your family's story about coming to this country and community?
- Where did they come from and where did they first settle? Why?
- Was the decision to come theirs or someone else's?
- Did your family stay in one place or have they moved around? How did they come to live where they are now?

The Journey

- Has your family shared stories about the most difficult part of their journey?
- What have you heard about what they missed most?
- What do you know about your family name—like its history, origins, or changes?
- What traditions from your family's country—like celebrations, foods, or songs—do you still enjoy?
- Do you have family heirlooms, scrapbooks, or mementos that tell your families' moving story?

Hopes and Realities

- What were your relative(s)' dreams in coming here? How did those dreams compare with reality?
- What people or events helped, or got in the way, of achieving those dreams?
- Did your family ever feel unwelcome because they were newcomers, outsiders, or because of their identities?
- Were there people or communities that made them feel welcomed?
- How would things be different for your family if they hadn't migrated?
- Do you have a story about someone you know or care about who was deported?

Reflection

- Have you ever considered tracing your roots or going back to your family's homeland or home community?
- Do you see connections between your family story and that of today's im/immigrants?
- Is there anything you would like to add that has not been asked?

Connecting After the Interview

Suggestions for group follow up discussions.

Initial Reflections.

There are many ways to approach reflecting on what is being shared, revealed, and learned during the exchange of Moving Stories. Here we share just a few:

PZ's 3 Whys. One promising strategy has been developed by Harvard's Graduate School of Education's Project Zero which has created a series of classroom thinking routines. [PZ Thinking Routines](#)

A Thinking Routine that Re-imagining Migration finds particularly helpful is one that guides students through three steps to consider around the importance of a narrative (or any topic under consideration).

Guide the students to consider the following:

- Why might this story matter to me?
- Why might it matter to people around me?
- Why might it matter to the world?

Selecting a Detail & Engaging in a Town Hall Circle. Another strategy is to ask interviewees to, in writing, to reflect on a comment or detail from their partner's story that they found particularly interesting or powerful that their partner will be comfortable with them sharing in a group

In a large group consider allowing each student to share some of their responses. Encourage students to share a quotation from their partner's words directly. A particularly moving teaching strategy you might adapt for this debrief is a [Town Hall Circle](#).

The Fishbowl Technique. Another way to encourage students to learn about each other's stories is to have them listen to a set number of answers, or interviews, from the Moving Stories website and to have them record their responses in a journal or in a class discussion. One strategy that might be particularly apt for this kind of debrief would be a fishbowl discussion. Here is a link to a description of the [Fishbowl Teaching Strategy](#). As a prompt for the discussion, ask students:

- What similarities did they notice between the stories?
- What differences did they notice?
- What themes, dilemmas, or challenges did they notice from across the different stories?

Reflecting on our shared narratives

Connecting and reflecting around migration raises fundamental questions about our shared human experience: Who are we? Where do we come from? Why do people leave their homes? What is the meaning of borders? Who is responsible for the people who straddle more than one nation? What is my responsibility in constructing welcoming and inclusive societies?

The [Re-Imagining Migration Learning Arc](#) has been designed to provide a framework to guide young people's explorations as they reflect upon their Moving Stories. We invite educators to use the questions to design learning experiences, interdisciplinary curricula, and academic inquiry following the design. While we believe there is lasting educational value in following the entire learning arc, we recognize that educators may choose to concentrate on particular questions or subsections of the arc.



Here -- [A Learning Arc of Revealing Questions](#) -- you will find a link to a guide to systematically reflecting around each of these guiding questions.

Sharing what we learn

Simply engaging in Moving Story connecting conversation is a useful exercise for the reasons we have described above. And, sometimes educators may wish to have students present what they have learned into some kind of format.

We recommend that this decision be guided both by educator learning goals as well as by student interests. There are many ways in which students can present what they have learned and we strongly suggest that educators provide a menu of options. How students share what they have learned, either from their families or their peers, may vary according to:

- students ages and grade level
- student linguistic abilities (writing and oral)
- student learning styles
- student interests
- teacher learning goals and alignment with curriculum

Here are just a few suggestions:

- Draw a picture (like Lola did)
- Write a short story or essay

- Create a short book. Here is a link to easy steps to creating [‘Family Memory’ storybooks developed by the Smithsonian Learning Lab.](#)
- Create an [Accordion book](#). This practice allows students to reveal (and keep hidden) what they choose in the narrating and representing of their story.
- Share a family artifact and write a short description of why it is important—See this [Tenement Museum link](#) for further ideas.
- Create posters with words or images from the Moving Stories and post them in a school and/or distribute them to local businesses and across the community to display.
- Create a Moving Stories night at school bringing the community together to hear and share stories.

Everyone should have fun with this assignment! The hope is that this will set students on a journey of inquiry and conversation that lasts well beyond this assignment.

From Listening to Action

Connecting, listening, and storytelling can play an essential role in bringing about social change. [Ashoka](#)--an organization dedicated to empowering change makers--maintains that there is a strong connection between storytelling, connecting around our shared humanity, and social change. In [A Changemaker's Guide to Storytelling: How to Engage Heads, Hearts and Hands to Drive Change](#), the authors explain, “[Narratives] allow us to envision and showcase the change we want to see in the world.”

Here we provide some suggestions for helping your students move from sharing, connecting, and listening, and sharing stories to taking action.

- Begin by asking students to reflect on the relationship between stories and civic action. Ask THEM to share all the ways that stories can be used as tools of social change. Can they think of examples of how people have used personal stories to inspire social change?
- Ask students to review the [Ten Questions for Change Makers](#). You can either introduce the questions ([they offer a free downloadable poster here](#)) or have students watch this [7-minute video](#) with Danielle Allen introducing the questions to teachers. Regardless of how you introduce the questions, review the questions with your students to make sure they are clear on their meaning.
- In groups, or on their own, ask your students to think about an aspect of a story they heard, either their own, their partner’s, or from a classmate, that they would like to see changed. It could be a policy, or it could be about an interaction between individuals and groups or another issue or experience related to migration;
- Individually, or in groups, have students fill in this graphic organizer from page 15 of [the Ten Questions for Changemakers Guide](#) to assist them in the development of an action civics plan.

- Have students return to their own story that they shared during their interview. Ask them, how might they use their story to help inspire the change they seek? Is there something in their story already that they can further develop, or do they want to add to their story? Give students time to prepare a three-minute presentation of their story that could help drive their action civics project forward.
- As an educator, you should decide if you want to give students class time or credit to work on their project. Regardless of your choice, give students an opportunity to share their refined presentations with their peers, either just those in your class or at an assembly or another school event with parents and members of the community.

For additional guidance in helping student's use their stories as part of a commentary on social issues, see the blog and video [Educating for Democracy from the Teaching Channel website.](#)

Managing Difficult Conversations

While migration is a shared human experience and a fundamental foundation narrative of the United States, sadly, (im)migration has become a divisive and contentious topic in recent years. We would argue it is important to avoid this issue because it affects so many of our students (well over a quarter of our nation's children) and because it provides an opportunity for us to seek common ground.

Managed well, using the guidelines we have outlined, these conversations are extraordinary learning opportunities and are deeply engaging.

That said, it is possible that conversations around this topic may become heated or derailed. Below we make suggestions for managing difficult conversations, should this issue arise.

Start with a **reminder of the Classroom Discussion Norms** (see above)

Remind students that:

- Differences of opinion are encouraged, but/and:
 - Put downs of others are never acceptable!
 - Framing of opinions should be from the first person (based on one's own experience)
 - Backed with some evidence
- Students should be reminded that **learning to listen as at least as important as learning to opine**
- Genuine, respectful questions should be asked of one another with the purpose of seeking understanding the other's point of view

- Students should ask themselves, **why am I so sure?** They should consider how they came to their opinions and be encouraged to expand their sources of evidence.
- Students should be encouraged to **look for common ground**.
- It is also possible that common ground will not be found. When appropriate leave the debate with, “through this conversation, while we don’t see eye to eye on this, we have listened and learned from one another.”

Below are some excellent resources developed to help educators work through strategies to manage civil discourse in classrooms around contentious issues:

- [New York Times’ Talking Across Divides: 10 Ways to Encourage Civil Classroom Conversations on Difficult Topics](#)
- [Teaching Tolerance’s Civil Discourse in the Classroom](#)
- [Facing History and Ourselves Fostering Civil Discourse](#)