



Archiving Student Stories to Spur Connections In the Classroom

Boston Public Schools:
Office of English Learners & History Department



“Thank God for the opportunity to have my mother bring me after so many years without seeing her. Now, I am working and trying to bring my daughter. It was not easy to leave her in my country.”

Student from BINcA, age 18, from Dominican Republic

Project Description

Partnership:

- BPS Office of English Learners
- BPS Academics: History Department
- Jean-Michel Dissard, Director of *I Learn America*
- Adam Strom, Reimagining Migration

Goals:

- For students in SLIFE and History classes to tell their stories of migration
- For schools and teachers to understand perspectives and narratives of their students

Sequence of Events:

- Teacher Professional Development
- In class storytelling workshop #1
- In class storytelling workshop #2
- Culminating Showcase for students across schools to share their stories

*This pilot project is aimed at encouraging **students** to share their voices while developing strong civic and historical thinking skills and providing **teachers** resources, strategies, and a framework for teaching migration through history, social studies, and storytelling.*

Watch the
Film

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VIEWER'S
GUIDE »

I LEARN (LIBRARY)

A human library inspired by the stories in the film

[Login or Register](#)

Explore our schools

Instructions on how to share your story



loading for ilearnamerica.com...

<http://ilearnamerica.com/human-library/>

What are our students hearing?

- We are being flooded
- They refuse to assimilate/learn English
- They are criminals or terrorists
- They are taking our jobs
- My family came here legally; why can't they?



TOXIC NARRATIVES



- Negative impact on SEL Wellbeing and Academic Performances
- “Otherizing”
- Reinforce prejudicial attitudes
- Legitimize exclusionary behaviors
- Divide society

OUR STORIES



OTHER PEOPLE'S STORIES

THE ACT of STORYTELLING

Teller/Narrator

- Catharsis
- Acknowledgment: from being unseen into visibility
- Empowerment
- Providing alternative perspectives/counter-narratives
- Insights into self

Listener/Audience

- (Potential) insights into:
 - others
 - self
- New perspectives
- Potential to change minds

Reflections

Successes

- Sharing stories between teachers and students fostering deeper connections
- Written and oral language development
- Increasing awareness of individual and collective experiences

Challenges

- Scheduling conflicts
- Conflicting building priorities
- Project timeline



ANGEL FROM EL SALVADOR

YO ME VINE DEL SALVADOR PORQUE HAVIA MUCHA DELINCUENCIA. VINE PARA BUSCAR UN BUEN FUTURO Y PARA ESTAR CON MI FAMILIA. TAMBIEN PARA ESTUDIAR Y SER ALGUIEN EN LA VIDA.

Bright Spots - Teacher Voice

"It is a great way to heal and truly look back on the journey to the United States. Many can relate even if they are not immigrants themselves which focuses on the human aspect when sharing."

- ***BPS Educator, on seeing his students stories come alive through writing.***

"Immigration is such a hot and divisive topic right now. I hope some of the haters are exposed to my students' stories and have more compassion for immigration laws and how immigrants are treated."

- ***BPS Educator, on why immigration is so important these days***



Bright Spots - Student Voice

Yo me sentí feliz y penosa compartir mi historia. Me sentí emocionada cuando escribo mi historia. | *I felt happiness and pain sharing my story. I felt excited when I shared my story*

- Student, East Boston

Lo que me gusto fue que todos compartimos nuestra historia. Me sentí bien porque ellos querían saber algo sobre nuestra vida. | *What I enjoyed was that we all shared our stories. I felt good because they wanted to know something about my life.*

- Student, East Boston



ISLANDINE FROM HAITI

LIFE IN HAITI WAS DIFFICULT. MY FAMILY WAS POOR AND OFTEN WE HAD NO FOOD TO EAT. HERE, I WORK TWO JOBS TO HELP MY FAMILY IN HAITI.

Bright Spots - Student Voice

A mi me gusto mucho este taller porque estamos hablando de nuestra historia en El Salvador. Me sentí bien porque se la pude contar a las persona que pasaron lo mismo que a mi casi. Me siento alegre sobre eso, porque otros estudiantes pueden saber que [no] están solos y que otros pasaron por eso. | *A liked this workshop because we got to tell our history in El Salvador. I felt good because I could tell [my story] to people that went through the same things I did. I felt happy about this, because other students can know they are not alone and that others went through similar things like I did.*

- Student, East Boston

Puedo conectar con otras persona sobre cosas que tenemos igual. | *I could connect with other people around things we had in common.*

- Student, East Boston



JUAN FROM COLOMBIA

MY HEART IS DIVIDED IN TWO PARTS.

Today's Panel

Office of English Learners



Priya Tahiliani
Assistant Superintendent



Genevieve McDonough
EL Instructional Specialist

Reimagining Migration



Adam Strom
Director

History Department



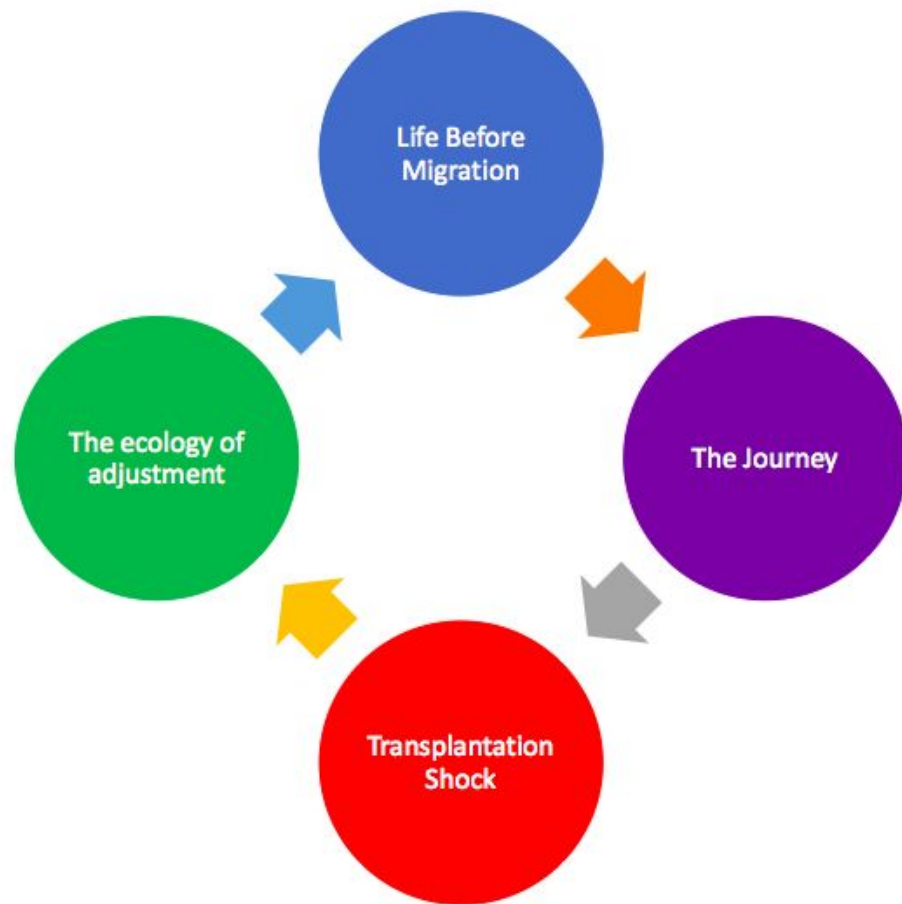
Natacha Scott
Director



Josue Sakata
Assistant Director

Question and Answer







**Session Reflection:
Turn & Talk with a neighbor and
discuss one takeaway from today's
conversation**

Thank You!

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