When Youth Dialogue: A Pedagogic Framework for Changing the Conversation About Migration

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Abstract

How should educators teach about one of the most complex and pressing issues of our times? This paper presents an empirically-grounded framework to help educators understand the opportunities and challenges of engaging youth around the topic of migration, including migration involving refugees. It stresses the importance of inviting youth to dialogue in ways that involve *slowing down*, *sharing stories*, and *making connections*.

The framework emerged from a design-based research study involving an experimental online learning community and curriculum on the topic of human migration. Posts and comments involving 140 teens from seven countries were closely analyzed using a modified grounded theory approach that incorporated constructivist principles. 14 interviews with participating educators also informed the analysis.

The framework proposes that youth be supported to develop (1) **curiosity and engagement** about individual migration stories and migration in general, (2) **nuanced understanding** of the complex and diverse factors that help shape historical and contemporary migration experiences, and (3) **critical awareness** of their own and others' perspectives on migration and migrants. A visual representation is provided. Specific examples of student dialogue are unpacked to illustrate the framework, with discussion of the following cognitive and affective challenges: "the Three O's" of **overgeneralization, overconfidence,** and **othering**. The paper argues that youth of all backgrounds need opportunities to learn about migration in ways that allow them to leverage their various experiences and perspectives and engage with one another in meaningful, authentic ways.

Keywords

migration, migrants, refugees, education, dialogue, intercultural

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Introduction

How can educators engage students around a topic that in many parts of the world has become both pressing and contentious, in part because of the sheer number of people who are on the move on our planet (Abel & Sander, 2014; Banks, 2017; Migration Policy Institute, 2017) and in part because of public and media discourse about migration in the Global North, that tends to sensationalize or over-simplify migration despite it being an inherent part of human history (Marlowe, 2018; Suarez-Orozco, Louie & Suro, 2011)? How can educators help young people—including those who have recently migrated—understand the complexity of the topic and the diversity of forces and personal experiences involved? Simply put: how can educators help young people to change the conversation about migration?

To the authors' knowledge, the study reported on here is the first to explicitly apply design-based research principles to help build theory about teaching migration via the careful examination of student work and dialogue. Like other design-based approaches to educational research, the study simultaneously seeks to develop an effective teaching and learning intervention *and* use this intervention as a "natural laboratory" to understand the learning taking place and to build theory (Anderson & Shattuck, 2012; The Design-Based Research Collective, 2003; Sandoval & Bell, 2004).

The paper presents an empirically-grounded framework designed to offer guidance in terms of inviting young people to learn both with and from one another in nuanced ways about the complex topic of migration. While the framework was developed in an online context, the principles put forth are relevant to other kinds of teaching and learning contexts including non-formal ones. The framework proposes that young people be supported to develop (1) **curiosity and engagement** – regarding migration in general and individual stories, (2) **nuanced understanding** of the complex and diverse factors that help shape historical and contemporary migration, and (3) **critical awareness** of their own and others' perspectives on migration and migrants. Challenges are also discussed: what the authors call "the Three O's" of **overgeneralization, overconfidence,** and **othering**. It is suggested that youth of all backgrounds would benefit from opportunities to learn about migration in ways that allow them to leverage their various experiences and perspectives and engage with one another in meaningful, authentic ways.

In what follows, the need for a pedagogic framework is explained and the context for the research is described: an experimental online learning community called Out of Eden Learn which brings youth together from around the world to engage in intercultural learning experiences. Further conceptual framing for the research is provided, followed by the research methods. A visual representation of the pedagogic model, designed to be an orienting tool for educators, is presented and then unpacked using examples of student work. Finally, the implications of the study are discussed.

The Need for a Pedagogic Framework

Human migration is an age-old phenomenon and an inherent part of what it means to be human (Appiah, 2006; Rodriguez, 2012; over

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recent decades, the overall scale and scope of people on the move today is unprecedented Salopek, 2013). While international migration figures have remained proportionately stable (Abel & Sander, 2014). Behind these statistics are real people, often migrating for very different reasons and facing very different challenges and circumstances. A young man, who had arrived as a child refugee in the United States, returning to Liberia to discover his roots and make an impact on his country (Shin, 2016); teenage youth fleeing gang violence in Honduras and making their way towards the United States border (Renaud & Renaud, 2015); survivors of conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo seeking asylum in Uganda (Bah, 2016); a young girl with a Lebanese mother and Palestinian father, being raised in a refugee camp in Beirut (Global Lives Project, 2009).

The complex drivers behind this increase in migration—such as globalization, technological advances, climate change, and new and ongoing geo-political disputes— mean that migration flows are unlikely to diminish anytime soon. Included within these migration events are ones less often featured in the news media, such as lateral moves for jobs, or voluntary migration undertaken by those from wealthy countries in the Global North. Regardless of where they live, young people today are likely to spend their lives in contexts that are shaped, one way or another, by historical and contemporary forces of migration and the interchange of ideas, products, technologies, cultures, and languages. Given that many experts believe that education today should help prepare young people to understand and engage in the complex, globally-connected world in which we all live, young people, whatever their personal circumstances, presumably need opportunities to think in meaningful ways about such an important topic (Boix Mansilla & Jackson, 2011; OECD, 2018; Reimers, 2016).

There is also a strong moral imperative to engage youth around human migration. Despite migration being a constant feature of human history, it is becoming "more and more controversial" (Marchetti, 2018), with the receivers' points of view dominating the normative literature. Over the past decades, increasing political and legal barriers have been erected to constrain the flow of people, even as global elites crisscross the world, courtesy of developments in transport, technology, and finance. Government policies towards immigration vary by government yet are generally guided by the "Market Model" which stresses fulfilling labor needs over other considerations. Relatedly, many countries have witnessed increased xenophobia and protectionism among voters, who, often fueled by politicians and media sources, may associate migration with international terrorism (Boucher, 2018; Ngai, 2004). It is imperative that young people are supported to navigate this sensitive topic and interrogate different perspectives, representations, and stories related to it.

Young people and their educators also need support because, as is often the case with major contemporary issues, the complexity of the topic is rarely reflected in public and media discourse. Media representations, and even migration scholarship, contribute to oversimplified stories that dominate contemporary understandings of migration. For instance, a preoccupation with "extraordinary stories of adversity" can lead to the overlooking of everyday experiences (Marlowe, 2018, p.2) or "good news" stories (Suárez-Orozco, Louie &Suro, 2011). Meanwhile, a "crisis model" pervades how refugees are discussed and treated by the law, which contributes to them being narrowly perceived as "racialized criminal subjects and racialized subjects in need of intervention" (Vasquez, Bosworth & Parmar,

2018). Suárez-Orozco and colleagues (2011) note that perceptions about migration are dominated by a preoccupation with undocumented migrants, even though in the United States, for example, they account for less than a third of all immigration; they claim that the American public is conditioned to associate migration with "chaos, controversy, and criminality" (p.6).

More subtly, academics and journalists alike have tended to focus on individual narratives rather than attending to the kinds of broader structural forces that help determine the trajectory of individual migrants, with the effect that migrants tend to be portrayed as protagonists in charge of their own destinies (ibid.). Accounts also tend to overlook the complexity of migration at the individual psychological level by focusing on physical location and material well-being; in reality many migrants, including refugees, simultaneously "belong" in more than one place (Morley, 2000) and experience rich, hybrid identities and aspirations (Dryden-Peterson, 2017; Facing History and Ourselves, 2008, Knight, 2011).

Background to the Study: An Online Laboratory

Out of Eden Learn is an online laboratory and research and educational initiative, developed by Project Zero at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Out of Eden Learn supports young people to develop essential skills and dispositions for participating in a globally interconnected world. It is grounded in various pedagogical approaches developed at Project Zero—ones broadly informed by the concepts of slow looking, historical thinking, visible thinking, active learning, and promoting thoughtful peer-to-peer dialogue. Out of Eden Learn is also a collaboration with journalist Paul Salopek, a National Geographic Fellow. Through his slow journalism project, called the Out of Eden Walk, Salopek is retracing, on foot, the migratory pathways of ancient humans across the globe. The online platform engages students from diverse backgrounds to participate in meaningful learning experiences together, in ways that disrupt potential "echo chamber" effects of the Internet (Pariser, 2011; Zuckerman, 2013) while tapping into the opportunities the Internet presents for connecting people across difference. Students from different locations are placed together into learning groups, each consisting of approximately six classes, to participate in curricula that involve them doing activities in their local communities and then engaging in substantive, asynchronous dialogue on a customized digital platform about those activities. Once a teacher registers a class free of charge on the platform and is assigned to a learning group, their students are issued a code to enter into a protected online space. Students create their own profiles, using pseudonyms to protect their privacy. They post and comment on other students' work within their learning group in ways reminiscent of mainstream social media platforms. For this study, all students communicated in English.

Three core learning principles are emphasized across all Out of Eden Learn curricula. Young people are invited to: (1) ***slow down*** *to observe the world carefully and listen attentively to others*; (2) ***exchange stories and perspectives*** *about people, place, and identity*; and (3) ***make connections*** *between their individual lives and larger human stories and systems*. These principles foster the kinds of skills and dispositions that are important for young people to develop in our complex, interconnected, and rapidly changing world, including critical thinking, perspective-taking, online communication skills, appreciation of

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diverse cultures, and nuanced understandings of cultural difference (Boix Mansilla & Jackson, 2011; OECD, 2018).

The Out of Eden Learn Stories of Human Migration curriculum was first piloted in the spring of 2016 (Dawes Duraisingh, August 2016). Figure 1 provides an overview of the version of the curriculum experienced by students in this study. The curriculum was intended to leverage the promising pedagogic model and platform of Out of Eden Learn in order to convene diverse youth around the topic of human migration. While the curriculum was designed to be open-ended enough to allow individual students to carve out their own learning pathways and make personal connections to the topic, it also incorporated a significant number of resources involving firsthand narratives regarding migrant and refugee experiences and promoted substantive understanding of the topic. The curriculum seeks to encourage young people to think about migration expansively and in ways implicating their own lives, regardless of whether or not they consider themselves to be migrants. Moreover, the curriculum deliberately begins by tapping into students' own experiences and knowledge about migration in a bid to engage them around the topic.

The curriculum progressively becomes more outward looking, with the fourth activity inviting students to learn about or reach out to people they do not already know well; however, as part of the iterative design process, this last activity has since been amended to one that supports students to reflect on and synthesize their learning in ways that reflect the framework presented in this paper. The emphasis on students' own experiences and connection-making accords well with broad student-centered and place-based pedagogies (Crumly, 2015; Dewey, 1997; Gruenewald, 2003).

Figure 1

An overview of the Stories of Human Migration Curriculum

Situating the Proposed Model Within a Broader Educational Landscape

This section explains how the model relates to existing practices related to engaging young people around the topic of human migration, and how the study design relates to prior theory and research.

Efforts to Engage Youth Around the Topic of Human Migration

Numerous individuals and institutions, including Facing History and Ourselves, Migrantas, Pulitzer Center for Crisis Reporting, The Advocates for Human Rights, the UNHCR, and Voice of Witness are concerned with developing thoughtful migration-related educational materials that might serve as a counterpoint to the kinds of prevailing public narratives described above and/or invite young people to ask critical questions about migration and how it is represented. Voice of Witness, for instance, uses oral histories to bring attention to human rights issues; their curriculum introduces migrant voices into classroom conversations about migration as a way to humanize political debates about the issues. Similarly, The Advocates for Human Rights Immigrant Stories curriculum offers lessons based on videos created by immigrants, and provides a historical overview of immigration policy and immigrant experience in the United States as a way to help contextualize and humanize conversations about migration. One notable new initiative, Re-imagining Migration, explicitly aims to shift the ways in which migration is viewed and talked about in contemporary society, in part by providing important historical context and points of comparison**.**

This study is based on an experimental educational intervention that likewise sought to change the conversation about migration among young people but within an online environment that connected youth with one another and enabled them to learn from one another's stories and perspectives. Design-based research approaches enable researchers to explore new pedagogic possibilities in authentic contexts that reflect real-world possibilities and complexities (The Design-Based Research Collective, 2003). There is an urgent need to offer young people opportunities to engage thoughtfully around the topic of human migration, and educators need new tools and approaches now. Furthermore, this kind of research goes well beyond designing, testing, and/or evaluating a single program or intervention: there is a concern to understand and distill broader principles that could be applied in other contexts and indeed, the pedagogic framework presented here is intended to have wide applicability. The design and research components of Out of Eden Learn are inseparable and will continue to inform one another through ongoing iterative cycles (Dawes Duraisingh, Kane & Sheya, 2018 March; 2018 April).

Related Educational Theory and Research

Design-based research builds on existing knowledge and research to try to create promising learning conditions before studying what learners choose to do in that environment and then iterating on the design. This study draws on constructivist, learner-centered education principles - many of which have been central to and even articulated by Project Zero where this study was based (e.g., Blythe, 1998; Gardner, 1985; Tishman, 2018; Tishman, Jay & Perkins, 1993). That is, young people are seen to actively construct knowledge rather than passively receive it, and productive learning environments are seen to be ones in which individual students are given opportunities to develop their own ideas and "thinking dispositions" through a variety of modalities. At the same time, the curriculum was influenced by

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research related to progression in historical understanding (Ashby, Gordon & Lee, 2005; Lee & Shemilt, 2003; 2004) in terms of envisaging what nuanced understanding of migration could look like, and how students might interpret different accounts related to it.

Given the massive influence of the media and the problematic ways in which migration is often depicted, aspects of the study were also inspired by critical media literature (Baker-Bell, Stanborough & Everett, 2017; Goldman, Booker & McDermott, 2008; Morrell, 2013; Morrell & Duncan-Andrade, 2007). Critical media pedagogy equips young people to interrogate the media that surrounds them and encourages them to create and share their own media to tell their stories and those of their communities. The advent of social media and other online venues makes the role of the news media more immediate and far reaching and raises new concerns about the provenance and veracity of so-called news sources; it also provides opportunities for new voices to be heard and may even provide a space for young people to proactively address the impact of having their stories—and the stories of their communities—misrepresented in the news media (Baker-Bell, Stanbrough & Everett, 2017; Jenkins et al., 2016).

The study should also be situated within a broader movement loosely labeled global education or global citizenship education (Boix Mansilla & Jackson, 2011; Gaudelli, 2016; Hull & Hellmich, 2017) and, more specifically, global digital exchange. This trend manifests itself in many ways and to varying degrees in schools and informal learning environments. In this case, the actual topic of migration is one of global relevance. Meanwhile, the act of placing youth together in online dialogue reflects the proliferation of global digital exchange programs that seek to connect youth from around the world (e.g., e-Twinning, Global Cities, Global Nomads, iEARN, Reach the World). While this study was not designed to embody or promote a particular approach to global education, it is compatible with theories related to the rehabilitated concept of *cosmopolitanism* (Appiah, 2006; Hansen, 2011; Hull & Hellmich, 2017), that seeks to go beyond tolerating difference "to reimagining, appreciating, and learning with it" (Hansen, 2011, p.1). Indeed, the study's online laboratory arguably exemplifies what others have dubbed "everyday cosmopolitanism" in that students' learning is rooted in authentic, ground-level conversations with other youth (Hull & Stornaiuolo, 2014; James, 2016, September), in ways designed to encourage them to open up and engage with one another. The concept of changing the conversation reflects broader attempts to promote digital media literacy and civic action among youth online (James, Gruner & Mullen, 2016). It is also informed by efforts to promote greater moral sensitivity and respectful curiosity that can otherwise be conspicuously lacking in online spaces (James, 2016; Kreikemeier & James, 2018).

Methods

As noted above, this study adopted a design-based research approach, whereby practice and research were intertwined. The specific data came from three primary sources: semi-structured interviews with educators, student post-survey responses, and student work and comments posted on the Out of Eden Learn platform.

Interviews were conducted with 14 high school educators who had implemented the Stories of Human Migration curriculum: see Appendix A for a streamlined version of the protocol. They came from Argentina, Australia, Canada, Indonesia, Singapore, and seven geographically disparate US states. The interviews were conducted in English via Skype, audio-recorded, and transcribed during the spring of 2017. The questions touched on the teachers' motivations for participating, their own and their students' learning experiences, and

how the curriculum fit into the bigger picture of their teaching. For the purposes of this paper, the transcripts were analyzed to look for signs of resonance with student work and survey responses, and to provide important contextual information regarding how educators were interpreting and implementing the curriculum. One teacher in the Bronx, New York, for example, incorporated it into a course on Public Humanities and also invited her students—many of whom were migrants—to create spoken word poetry about their learning experiences. Another teacher, based in Utah in the United States wove it into a photography course because he wanted his students to broaden their horizons and learn to listen carefully to other people's stories. Meanwhile, English language teachers in Indonesia and Australia were looking for compelling ways to help their students develop language skills and engage with a relevant contemporary issue. In all cases, the teachers chose to enroll their classes in the study. It was then up to the teachers if they made participation a mandatory part of their curriculum or something optional for their students.

The two learning groups with the highest levels of participation were selected in order to examine student work, out of a total of eight groups: one from fall 2016 and one from spring 2017. The 140 students in the sample, all teens, came from Argentina, Australia, Canada, China, Indonesia, Singapore, and the United States (five different states). The pseudonymous nature of the platform meant that detailed demographic data were not collected for individual students. However, some students were enrolled in elite private institutions while others attended public schools, and some were in classes that were racially and ethnically diverse while others were in more demographically homogenous settings. Their learning contexts included history, social studies, journalism, photography, and English language classes. Meanwhile, post-survey responses from 65 students from a variety of learning groups were collected. The post-survey was designed to capture what students thought they had learned about human migration, their overall experiences, and what, if anything, they thought they might now do differently (Appendix B). Some but not all of the survey responses were by the same students whose work and comments were analyzed.

Student work from the platform, with all accompanying comments, was exported from the platform—that is, the data were converted from a social media format into a spreadsheet for initial analysis. The student work included their visual and written responses to the activities outlined in Figure 1 above, with all posts and comments in English. In total, the authors examined 485 pieces of student work, as well as accompanying dialogue threads. The initial analysis involved the three authors open coding 50 pieces of student work and associated dialogue threads. The coding was loosely informed by a constructivist approach to grounded theory which involved line-by-line coding and using the gerund form to describe closely what the authors were seeing in the data without imposing prior expectations or assumptions (Charmaz, 2006). The authors took careful note of what they saw students *doing* (e.g., making personal connections to peers' migration stories or critically analyzing news articles) and *saying* (e.g., stating that they had learned the importance of trying to understand other people's perspectives or that they now felt motivated to follow migration in the news more carefully). The authors' analytic approach was inevitably informed by their educational aspirations in that they were likely to notice students doing things that reflected the learning goals of the curriculum design; however, they also wanted to learn about the possibilities of students' thinking about migration more open-endedly and in this sense, the online space served as a laboratory for more naturalistic

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investigation. It is important to note that for practical reasons the data were already collected when the analysis began: therefore, initial analyses could not inform subsequent rounds of data collection as is typically the case in the use of grounded theory.

Emergent themes were consolidated into an initial codebook comprised of ten primary categories and 44 sub codes. The ten primary categories were as follows: understanding complexity, connection making, expressing interest, awareness of positionality, exploring identity, showing critical awareness, willingness to engage, insensitivity or explicit lack of interest, over generalizations or simplistic statements, and not applying critical thinking skills to sources of information. Using this initial codebook, the authors divided up the entire data set by student class and analyzed the data using coding software, periodically meeting to compare findings and review puzzles with the codebook. The 65 sets of survey responses were also divided among the three authors and analyzed in the same way; the survey responses complemented the publicly posted work and comments in that they served as private reflections and yielded insights, for example, into how students thought their perspectives on migration had shifted. The codebook was further streamlined to remove redundancies, with the ten primary categories consolidated into three categories, which at this point were labelled respectful curiosity and engagement, nuanced understanding, and critical awareness, including self-awareness. The codebook contained definitions of the three main categories, the subcodes which the authors believed fell within the scope of and helped explicate each of the three main categories, notes about inclusion and exclusion criteria, and examples of each code. The authors also developed an initial visual representation of the revised codes and subcodes in the spirit of sharing emerging findings with educators and developing a useful tool for them (Dawes Duraisingh, Kane & Sheya, 2017, September).

Next, the authors re-coded their assigned portions of the set of 485 pieces according to the revised categories. 76 pieces of student work were also coded independently by all three authors to establish consistency in coding. While practical limitations prevented the authors from arriving at a precise inter-rater reliability statistic, there was a high degree of consensus among them, with any remaining ambiguities of application being resolved and the codes further clarified and refined. Most ambiguities involved the "negative" codes, which involved a judgement call in terms of which comments strayed into overgeneralization, overconfidence, and/or othering, as discussed in a later section below. The pedagogic framework was then revised in light of this further coding (Dawes Duraisingh, Kane & Sheya, 2018, March) (Figure 2).

Findings

The visual representation presented in Figure 2 is intended to evoke the metaphor of a kaleidoscope: the various parts are interconnected and can come together as well as expand or recombine in different ways. The framework is intended as a roadmap or set of aspirations. It is not suggested that every student be expected to demonstrate every aspect of the diagram; however, taken together the elements form a composite of the richest and most encouraging work, comments, and reflections from the data that were analyzed for this study. The diagram is color-coded according to three broad aspects of learning. The pink shapes represent the affective or attitudinal qualities the researchers saw develop among young people as they engaged around the topic of human migration; the blue shapes represent the kinds of substantive understandings they developed; the green shapes convey the dimensions of critical awareness that are

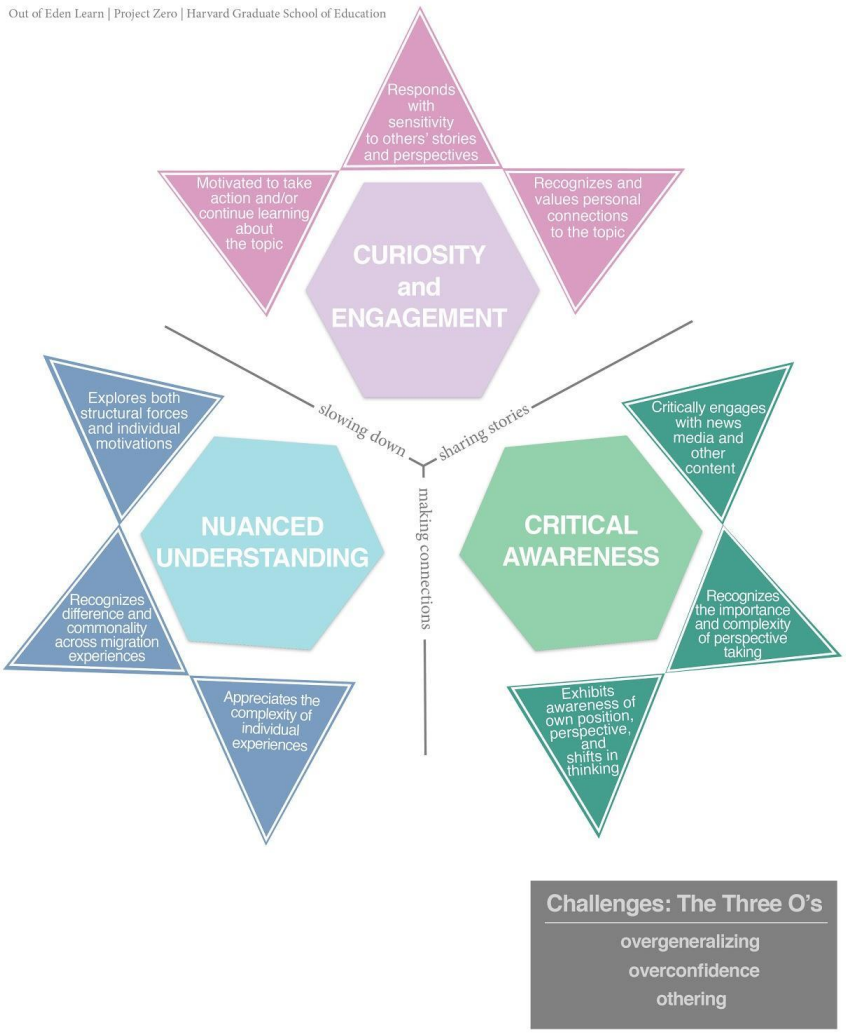

Figure 2

A visual representation of the Out of Eden Learn pedagogic framework for engaging young people around the topic of human migration (Dawes Duraisingh, Kane & Sheya, 2017)

important for navigating this topic in insightful and sensitive ways. At the center of the diagram and stretching across it are the core design principles of the intervention, which aspired to help foster the attitudes, understandings, and capacities identified. Below the kaleidoscope, in gray, are the Three O's of overgeneralization, overconfidence, and othering, which were identified as challenges.

In what follows, the dimension of Curiosity and Engagement is first unpacked, in part because the majority of students made comments that reflected this dimension of the framework. Next, a synthesis of the potential challenges is presented: the Three O's of overgeneralization, overconfidence, and othering. The remaining two categories -

Nuanced Understanding and Critical Awareness - are then discussed.

Curiosity and Engagement

This category is concerned with students' stances or attitudes towards the topic. Are students asking questions of one another that are respectful in tone and which suggest a genuine desire to find out more about their own and other people's stories, lives, and perspectives? Are they listening respectfully and empathetically to one another, especially when peers are sharing their own or their loved one's stories of migration? Where appropriate, are they actively making connections to their own experiences? The framework takes a broad approach towards students' actions or intentions to engage, which may or may not be explicitly civic in nature: for example, do students express an interest in getting involved in discussions or debates, learning or sharing more about the topic, or taking some kind of civic action?

Responds With Sensitivity to Others' Stories and Perspectives

This triangle is about being attuned and attentive to what others are saying, as well as responding to them thoughtfully and with respect. Importantly, it invokes the act of listening. First and foremost, students responded with warmth and appreciation to one another, recognizing and honoring their peers' work and expressing genuine gratitude for the opportunity to dialogue. The following examples are typical: *"First off, wow. The detail and time you put into the drawing of your Personal Migration Stories is phenomenal!"; "Hello mag816! I really enjoyed reading your post! I am amazed at the amount of effort you put into the video!"; "Thank you for taking time to read my post and leaving me some comments."* Students also expressed admiration and even reverence for students who shared their own or other people's migration stories, specifically naming what they appreciated. For instance:

> *I find it so interesting that even throughout the hardships you faced, not just with the move, but also your parents' divorce, that you kept a positive outlook on the journey itself. You were introduced to new people and new things and you embraced that, I admire that so much!*

Sometimes students responded with sensitivity to one another by asking questions to explore an issue and/or consider another perspective:

> *This is a very thought provoking post. I agree with you that borders are a big part of our society today … If you were an immigrant from another country trying to get into America and you had the same name as a known terrorist and they wouldn't let you in, how would you feel?*

In other cases, their questions seemed designed to elicit deeper emotional sharing. *A student said, "It must of [sic] been hard, going all the way from Africa to the United States. How was it adjusting to the new environment? Why did you move?" or "What was the hardest thing you had to adjust to, the new culture, people, living arrangements, etc.?"*

In some cases, rather than endorsing a post or asking questions, students responded with sensitivity by pushing back or holding their ground. Maintaining a respectful tone, this student expresses disagreement and even raises a moral challenge related to the structural issues that can determine immigrant experiences:

> *I see your point definitely, but I personally do not agree with it… I do agree with your views on legal immigration as opposed to illegal, but I do believe it is important to remember that not everyone has the same opportunities or abilities, and that sometimes it's necessary to break rules in order to survive.*

Another student respectfully maintains her position when challenged by another student*: "I see what you're saying, but it is still a belief of mine that in a lot of cases, privacy can be based off of fear of being judged. I am just stating my opinion and observations from my life."*

Recognizes and Values Personal Connections to the Topic

This component is about more than making connections between one's own life or family story and those of other people, though that is certainly important and to be encouraged. It is also about feeling part of or included in the bigger and unfolding story of human migration, which in one way or another ultimately implicates us all.

There were numerous instances of students making connections, noting similarities, relating empathetically, and saying things like, *"Your story reminds me of mine."* Beyond these more interpersonal connections, students also reported they were now seeing the world and the people in it as connected, making statements like*, "It changed my thinking of the world. Having heard different stories portrays a sense of togetherness which I never knew before,"*[and] "*I learned that we humanity need to come together and recognize each other as one."*

Often students responded to stories by making connections to their own lived experiences. This student connects to another's story and then goes on to discuss human nature more broadly, as well as her perception of the current political climate in the United States.

> *I really like this story. Seeing [your neighbor] overcome all of his odds gave me a wonderful feeling of happiness for him, and I really enjoyed learning more about him (through you!). I too can connect with this on a personal level. In the summer of 2010, my mother fell ill with cancer and I had to move with her temporarily to Seoul. I started third grade there, and despite the class being 100% Korean, I was bullied a lot during my time there. When an outsider tries to enter a tight-knit community, they can face a lot of hostility and, in your case, potentially abuse based on their appearance. It is a huge obstacle which prevents humans from interacting with each other positively and productively, and with the election of our new president, I don't see that ending any time soon.*

Motivated to take action and/or continue learning about the topic

This triangle points to future-looking shifts in motivation or engagement. "Engagement" is defined broadly to include things such as keeping attuned to current news stories involving migration, making an effort to be thoughtful and supportive to newcomers, or advocating and/or volunteering for organizations that work with or are run by refugee and migrant communities. Some students reported that they gained skills *related* to taking action. One student suggested that she now felt better equipped to participate in online dialogue: *"Now I'm better at interacting with people on social media and I have more knowledge of human migration."* Most of the evidence for this aspect of the framework comes from individual student survey data.

Students' critical engagement with news media was a notable outcome of the learning experience and will be further unpacked below in the *critical awareness* section. Here, the findings focus on students' inclinations to *do* something, either new or differently. Numerous students reported gaining critical skills which have changed the ways they read and interpret news media: *"I now read media outlets with more "caution" knowing that it is important to*

have an opinion of your own rather than having it easily swayed by how media portrays certain issues" or *"I read with an open mind and I don't believe everything I read."*

Meanwhile, some students reported feeling empowered and equipped to discuss the topic of migration with friends and family members - for example, *"Now that I know of this situation I love discussing with my grandparents. This was something I did not discuss before, but now I can do it."* Another student expressed that she is more attentive to topics connected to migration and "can give deeper opinions" when she engages in conversations around migration. Several claimed that they were now making more effort to engage with migrant students in their school communities. For instance, one student said,

> *Because of the current immigration issues in the United States and this learning experience I find myself more involved in the news media and just interacting with the people around me who have different cultures and backgrounds and asking them what they think as well as conversing with them in general about this topic.*

Many students also indicated an intention or desire to take civic action, and even grappled with the complexity of doing so. Some specifically mentioned advocating for more action on issues pertaining to the Syrian refugee crisis: *"I hope President Trump sends more people and gets more involved because these arena't just people, they are human beings just like us and deserve the help we can give them. "*Others" spoke more generally about being kind to strangers or newcomers: *"perhaps we can offer them a kind word, a smile or perhaps even instructions on other ways to reach their destination if they are in a rush! I think a small action will go a long way!"* The following student grapples with complexity and uncertainty and even elicits help from other participants to come up with ways to offer help:

> *I think that it is very important to not just notice what is happening with the refugees, but to show that there is some hope for the migrants. I am wondering though what you think people should do to help these refugees? Like many people, I do want to help these refugees, but many people do not understand how to.*

The Three O's: Overgeneralization, Overconfidence, and Othering

Before proceeding to the positive cognitive aspects of the framework—namely, nuanced understanding and critical awareness—it is important to discuss some challenges associated with engaging youth around the topic of migration and indeed, of engaging them in intercultural dialogue more generally. The authors' distilled coding categories for these challenges are the three O's: overgeneralization, overconfidence, and othering.

Overgeneralization involves students defaulting to single stories about migration or migrants, making sweeping or vague statements about migrants, and glossing over similarities and/or differences among different migration stories. **Overconfidence** is characterized by students showing a lack of appropriate humility about their own knowledge about the topic, over-asserting themselves as representatives of particular groups, or assuming that their own experiences and/or perspectives are the default. **Othering**, meanwhile, involves a tendency to romanticize or exotify other people's lives or circumstances or to make migrants an object of pity in uncritical or even disrespectful ways that appear to cross the line from thoughtful compassion.

While conceptually distinct, in practice the three O's are often intertwined. Furthermore, overgeneralization, overconfidence, and

othering could appear in comments that otherwise reflected the more positive elements of curiosity and engagement, nuanced understanding, or critical awareness. As noted in the methods section, the authors had difficulty reaching agreement as to when a post or comment strayed into the territory of one or more of the three O's. For instance, given the high number of US students participating in the program, it is perhaps unsurprising that several comments tapped into the idea of the American Dream, in ways that could sound overgeneralizing or overconfident. In the following example, the student's comment was probably intended to endorse or validate a story that another student had shared: *"Stories like this are always so nice to hear. Anyone can make it in America if they work hard, despite hardship; America is the land of opportunity."* However, the comment arguably sounds patronizing, particularly to those who don't feel that this overarching narrative is representative of their individual experiences.

In other cases, it was difficult to distinguish between pity and empathy. One student, describing her growing awareness of migration issues after reading various news articles stated, *"I realized how hard life is for these people. I now know that even if this situation seems so unreal, it happens every day."* Here there is overgeneralizing at play but the phrase "these people" also puts a distance between herself and the people she has learned about in ways that hint at othering and assume that none of her peers have had direct experience of migration. Sometimes students' comments suggested othering and overgeneralizing in less subtle ways. In particular, students expressed binary ways of thinking about migrant experiences and issues related to migration, often in ways reflective of dominant political and media discourses in the Global North. For example, one student set up a binary between what constitutes "desirable" versus "undesirable" migrants:

> *From my point of view immigrants can be a problem as well as a solution it depends of [sic] what kind of people they are, if they have studied and they work to help the countries, they are a solution, but if they haven't studied and the government is spending the money on people that don't work and only make problems they are a problem.*

It is understandable that there would be challenges associated with engaging diverse youth around the complex and potentially sensitive topic of migration. Intercultural encounters, while essential, are rife with risk: "misunderstandings, misreadings, and misjudgements are endemic in cosmopolitan-minded human interaction, as they are in most forms of communication that come to mind" (Hansen, 2014, p.9). Some of the associated challenges involve our human proclivity for latching onto single stories (Adiche, 2009; Kahnemann, 2011), our tendency to favor people like ourselves and stereotype those who appear different, and the cognitive and affective difficulties of perspective taking (Boix Mansilla, 2015, January; Dawes Duraisingh, 2015, February). In this study, all communication was in English meaning that English language learners (ELLs) were not given the opportunity to fully convey the nuance of their thinking in their native languages. For native English speakers and ELLs alike, linguistic norms or turns of phrase probably created unintended problems. Further, the students in this study were in their early to late teens: an age when they are developmentally primed to distill life lessons and establish their own values in ways that can come across as overconfident or even patronizing (Erikson, 1968; Nakkula & Toshalis, 2006). Additionally, the immediacy of "insider" first-hand accounts, a feature of this study, can

lead to an exaggerated sense of learning the "truth" about certain cultures and the replacing of one single story with another. In this context, however, the majority of problematic comments were made about resources such as articles, videos, and other multimedia content that were part of the curriculum, rather than directly to or about other participating students and their stories.

Nuanced Understanding

This category is concerned with students' substantive understanding of historical and contemporary migration. Do they show awareness of some of the ways in which the will or determination of individual people interact with much bigger structural forces that are beyond their personal control—for example, climate change, war, economic forces, or religious or political persecution? Do students demonstrate an understanding that individual migration experiences or people's perceptions of migration are shaped by context—be that historical, geographical, political, economic, social, or religious? And do they appreciate that there is great diversity in terms of how different migration experiences play out, both across different contexts and situations and within the same communities or groups of migrants?

Explores Both Structural Forces and Individual Motivation

This first triangle is intended to represent a broad range of understandings related to the kinds of push and pull factors involved in human migration. The richest student work took account of individual human agency *and* bigger forces or contexts at play when explaining particular migration stories. For instance, one student described how her mother migrated from Albania to the United States, escaping a Communist regime that was persecuting her family. Her mother had obtained a job at the US embassy because she was an outstanding student; she then succeeded in winning a scholarship to study at a US university. The student's description accounts both for the broader political situation in Eastern Europe at the time and the individual lived experiences and desires of her mother. Other students shared stories that showed how family friends or relatives were caught up in historical and economic forces that were bigger than themselves, even if they ultimately made some pivotal choices for themselves.

Recognizes Difference and Commonality Across Migration Experiences

The second triangle points to the wide diversity of migration experiences across humanity, as shaped by different historical, geographic, and political contexts. This aspect of understanding appears to be enhanced when peers from different contexts share stories with one another: students commented in the surveys, for instance, that they had learned from reading different posts that migration experiences can be extremely varied. At the same time, students may notice unexpected resonances across migration stories.

Students often reflected on the sheer diversity of migration stories. One student described her mother's largely positive experience of migrating from Malaysia to Singapore but pointed out: *"However, this is not representative of all the migrants. I have been researching about rural-urban migration in China and India recently, and though the migration does allow for more job opportunities, it does have many downsides and impacts on the person and the country."* One student spoke specifically about how the ability to read different stories broadened her understanding of migration: *"Hello! Thank you for sharing about your grandparents' story! … It was quite interesting to realise that migration might not always be long term and more about the different reasons why people migrate and what migration is like in other countries."* Others drew parallels between the

past and present. Lambasting the conservative news media in the United States, one student stated, *"The refugees today are similar to the refugees escaping Nazi Germany in the past."*

Appreciates the Complexity of Individual Experiences

The third triangle points to the complexity of how individuals *experience* migration. Individual migration stories can involve a dynamic blend, for example, of loss and gain, fear and hope, and connection to the old as well as adaptation to the new. One student described how her stepmother migrated as a child from Cambodia as a refugee from the Vietnam War. The journey involved walking to a series of refugee camps until they reached Thailand and from there on to the United States. The student describes how that experience still shapes her stepmother's behavior: *"When she was crossing the border, her mother took all their clothes in order to sew pockets in the bands to make sure that they could keep their valuables. Yay still sews pockets in her bras to keep her money in."* Students often shared stories that reflected the ways in which migrants develop new cultural practices without relinquishing practices related to their heritage.

Other students shared their own experiences and the complexity of emotions involved. For instance, one student recounted how he left Mexico City for a smaller town for his father's work. However, his parents divorced shortly afterwards and he returned to Mexico City. Later on, his mother met a man from Argentina, got married and they all moved to Buenos Aires. He commented: *"At first I was very shy so it was difficult for me to adapt to the new form of life but even so this journey made me see the different traditions of people and let me make new good friends and I am proud of it."* Another student spoke of his family relocating from New York to California for his father's work at the end of 2nd grade. *"Moving was probably one of the hardest things I have ever done. I remember it being so hard to leave my friends, house, school and everything I knew."* In this context, some of the richest dialogue was born of students sharing their own life lessons and firsthand migration stories.

Critical Awareness

This category is fundamentally about perspective-taking. It is one thing for students to care about migration and to understand its complexity: it is another for them to think critically and reflectively about their own and other people's perspectives on migration. One aspect of this category concerns critical media literacy: do students show an ability to engage critically and discerningly with media stories and other sources about migration, rather than dealing with them as straightforward pieces of information? Do they recognize that understanding other people's perspectives is challenging and are they sensitive to the limits of their own understanding regarding the topic of migration and people's migration experiences? Are they able to reflect on the ways in which their *own* perspectives have been shaped by context and experience? Some aspects of critical awareness can be difficult for young people, and indeed adults, to develop but it is vital for educators to try to foster these capacities in their students to help them navigate the complexity of the world today.

Critically Engages With News Media

When completing activities that explicitly invited them to engage in analysis of news media, students responded with different levels of complexity. For example, some emphasized figuring out the "truth" - not a trivial task in the current news media climate. For example, one student commented on the way in which "*word choice can be manipulated*," adding, *"It is really*

kind of scary, because how can anyone really know the truth about immigrants in Turkey if articles on the topic voice opinion instead of facts!" Meanwhile, other students commented on which kinds of media they believed more trustworthy than others, at times associating level of detail with "thoroughness of facts" or declaring some genres such as oral interviews or videos more inherently trustworthy than written articles. Some students expressed awareness of and concern for how media can "dehumanize" refugees and other migrants. Others were suspicious of the media or government in a different way, accusing them of hiding or withholding information; others seemed to determine the trustworthiness of news media sources according to their own political assumptions. The most nuanced responses involved students actively considering the specifics of individual pieces: the purpose, intended audience, likely perspective or affiliations of the author, and/or use and effect of particular language and visuals**.** They analyzed the tone and visuals of specific news sources and how certain moves made by journalists were intended to elicit particular emotions or reactions by news consumers, whether it be sympathy, rage, or indignation. As indicated in the section on Curiosity and Engagement, some students also reported changing their news media consumption habits and practices.

Recognizes the Importance and Complexity of Perspective-taking

Perspective-taking is a crucial aspect of critical awareness - that is, students valuing opportunities to try to understand other people's perspectives, while also being aware that perspective-taking is not a simple task. People's perspectives are shaped by a complex and shifting combination of factors including personal background, life experiences, social contexts and movements, systemic forces, and interactions with different narratives and perspectives.

Young people need to be introduced to different perspectives in order to develop new perspectives on their own lives and world views—something that many students recognized as being inherently valuable to them. Many students reflected both on the platform and in their surveys that reading other students' posts alerted them to new things, either in the world at large or in their own environments. One student appreciated the opportunity to learn from a variety of migration stories. *"I was able to see different perspectives and other stories that were unique. I was also able to share my own thoughts at the same time. This was a very different experience [to be able to] look at stories through different perspectives of different people."*

While the authors believe that young people should be encouraged to try to understand different perspectives, for participants who have not actively migrated themselves, understanding the perspectives of those caught up in forced migration is not an easy cognitive or emotional task. Some students acknowledged this difficulty and even expressed reservations on the grounds that they might unwittingly offend; they saw the need to be sensitive and not assume knowledge, particularly given the sensitivity of migration as an issue:

> *I think that it is challenging to discuss these topics because there's always the chance that you might unknowingly say something that offends someone else, but it wasn't intended that way … I had to think hard about what I posted in case that it could offend someone, which is the last thing that I wanted.*

Exhibits Awareness of Own Position, Perspective, and Shifts in Thinking

The content of the third triangle is intended to capture students' ability and willingness to reflect on their own relationship to and understanding of migration, and how their relationship and thinking may be evolving or developing over time. They recognize that their own perceptions of migration are at least in part shaped by their own identities, backgrounds, and life experiences.

One aspect of this dimension is students experiencing or embracing shifts in their perspectives regarding the topic of migration and/or shifts in their perceptions of migrants. For instance, one student left a comment for a peer: *"Wow I really enjoyed this post! You took this to a unique place that dealt with pressing social issues. I never really considered the negative borders that are around that I can't even see."* Another reflected in their survey, *"There was one poem that really hit me; it was a poem that took the views from an immigrant and a citizen of the United States and it really spoke to me and helped me realize both sides."* While this comment may oversimplify the range of possible opinions about migration, and refers specifically to the US context, it indicates an openness to looking at the topic from various vantage points. Some students spoke about considering individuals in a new way or hesitating to think they know their story: *"Yes, I think about the students who come to our school from other countries much differently. Some of them could have gone through a lot to come here in search of a better life, and I wouldn't even know it."*

Some reflected on the process of learning, and new habits of mind or attitudes that they developed as a result of engaging with other students around the topic of migration. One student reflected on the impact of a particular exchange: *"As a result of my participation in this learning journey, I have begun to make an effort to become less judgmental and more understanding because I, now, have reflected on and realized my bad habit of subconsciously enforcing my own biases on others."* Another student said *"I feel that my participation in this learning journey taught me to consider the similarities and differences between cultures more so I could look at issues from multiple perspectives."* Trying to take account of other or new perspectives sometimes led to shifts in perceptions or previously held assumptions. Some students actively used the opportunity to reflect on themselves in new ways, including how their own perspectives on the world had been shaped. One student, for instance, commented in the survey:

> *my interaction with [name] was one that I felt was extremely important because her insights really opened up my eyes, to understand and reflect on my own biases … reading about her experience where her first impression was proven wrong, made me reflect about the times in which I stubbornly labeled people by my first impressions of them.*

In this case, a peer talking about an impression being overcome provided an opportunity for her to reflect on her own tendency to make assumptions based on first impressions.

A few students commented in more meta ways about how their own experiences and cultural context impacted their perceptions of migration. One student noted our limited ability to grasp other people's experiences: *"rules, norms, and boundaries or the ways in which we move around are culturally generated and our perception of what is normal is shaped by the environments in which we grew up."* One student, who personally experienced moving to Canada from England, described how culture shock helped him to develop an ability to draw

comparisons among cultures and to not make assumptions about certain features of life.

Implications

Migration is an essential part of being human. Yet at this critical moment—one marked by vast numbers of people on the move, divisive rhetoric, and the lightning-quick relaying of opinions and information around the world—it is perhaps more important than ever to offer educators guidance on how to engage youth around this significant yet potentially sensitive topic. This framework, grounded in an analysis of how young people actually responded to an experimental online curriculum that invited them to slow down, share stories, and make connections, highlights some of the opportunities and challenges involved. It is intended as an orienting tool or compass for educators and their students in many different contexts. It invites educators to support young people to develop curiosity and engagement, nuanced understanding, and critical awareness about migration and migrants. It also cautions against the Three O's of overgeneralization, overconfidence, and othering.

Inevitably the framework has limitations. While the study involved students located in different parts of the world and efforts were made to avoid the curriculum being overly US-centric, approximately half of the student participants were located in the United States, which impacted the types and range of experiences shared. A disproportionate number of resources were also created by organizations situated in the United States, even if they concerned stories taking place in other parts of the world. Further research could determine the usefulness and resonance of the framework for educators and students located in contexts not included in this study. While recent migrants, including refugees, participated in the study, the majority of students were learning *about* migration rather than sharing their firsthand experiences of the kinds of global migration generally referred to by politicians and the media: how would the learning experiences have been different if the majority of participants were recent migrants?

In addition, some essential aspects of the framework could be further developed and expanded. For example, it is vital to offer young people ample support and opportunities to analyze media reports on migration and to critically examine the ways in which migration and migrants are represented. Students also need learning experiences that foster other elements of critical awareness such as perspective-taking and self-awareness. For contexts in which opportunities for online learning are limited, the framework could be applied to develop strategies for in-person sharing of sensitive migration stories, as well as to promote dialogue around these stories. Indeed, further investigation could lead to the development of additional practical applications and pedagogic tools for all aspects of the framework in ways that might complement work that is already going on in the field.

The authors believe that the gesture of inviting young people to share their migration stories, and to listen carefully to those of others, has the potential to promote more nuanced, informed understanding of the topic of migration, as well as enhanced critical awareness. In this sense, the study builds on existing and emerging work on global digital exchange to show how such programs can be leveraged to build substantive knowledge about an important and timely topic in ways that draw inspiration from student-centered pedagogies. Contemporary conditions demand that young people be given meaningful opportunities to engage around the topic of migration in ways that honor their individual perspectives and lived experiences. Young people need to learn both with and from each other so that they might develop the capacity and inclination to both participate in—and more importantly—

change the conversation about migrants and migration.

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Sarah Sheya is a researcher and media specialist at Project Zero at the Harvard Graduate School of Education where she coordinates the Out of Eden Learn Project. She previously worked in the nonprofit sector as a youth program director and educator. Her fields of study include multimedia journalism, Arab studies, and the Arabic language.

Emi Kane is Director of Programs for the Abundance Foundation. She has a background as a journalist, educator, and facilitator and has worked with Out of Eden Learn since its inception.

Appendix A

Interview protocol for educators

- What initially drew you as an educator to the migration learning journey? Was it what you expected?
- What would you say were some highlights for you of this learning journey?
- Were there any particular challenges or disappointments for you?
- What has been the biggest takeaway from this learning journey for you as an educator?
- I know you were participating in the migration learning journey in the context of … [e.g., your 11th grade English course]. Can you say a bit about how the migration learning journey connected to what you were already doing in the classroom?
- Did you adapt or supplement the learning journey to suit your learning context in any way?
- Would you say this learning journey fit in with other learning approaches, priorities or values emphasized at your school – or did you maybe feel that you were going "out on a limb" or even doing something at odds with how things are usually done at your school?
- When you told your students about this learning journey, how did you explain the purpose of doing it to them? What was your students' initial reaction?
- How would you describe your students' level of engagement or interest in this learning journey overall?
- Were there particular resources or activities or moments of the learning journey that they seemed particularly engaged in? Why do you think that was? Did anything else particularly engage them?
- Conversely, which aspects of the learning journey seemed less appealing to them? Why do you think that was? Was there anything else that didn't really engage them?
- Did you notice any differences across students in terms of their level of engagement, interest, or participation? Why do you think that might have been?
- What do you think your students got out of taking the migration learning journey?
- Is there anything you think they will carry with them after the learning journey or maybe apply to other areas of their lives?

Appendix B

Post-survey questions for students

- Did you learn anything new about human migration by participating in this learning journey? If so, please describe an example of something you learned. What contributed to your learning? Please be specific.
- Was there a specific interaction with another student or other students that felt important to you on this learning journey? If so, please describe.
- What aspects of this learning journey did you particularly like or appreciate? (You might want to think about platform design, curriculum activities, specific resources, interactions with other students, or something else.)
- Based on your experiences during this learning journey, what do you think is challenging in terms of learning about or discussing the topic of human migration?
- Are you doing anything differently now as a result of participating in this learning journey (e.g., in the ways in which you interpret news media, interact with people around you, interact on social media, talk about migration, think about the world)? Please explain.
- Do you have any suggestions for how we might improve or change this learning journey?
- How much do you think you learned about human migration by participating in this learning journey? (Likert scale: Nothing, a little bit, a fair amount, a lot)
- Now that you've participated in this learning journey, how much more are you following the topic of human migration in the news? (Likert scale: No more than before, a little bit more, quite a bit more, a lot more)