

EL PODER DE LAS HISTORIAS – THE POWER OF STORIES

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Use of storytelling as traditions in Europe (oral traditions)

The act of telling or composing stories or narratives is known as storytelling. Typically, stories are recounted for the aim of amusement, information, or education. The human experience is enriched by the ability to tell stories. Indeed, though it is unlikely to be proven, it has been hypothesized that storytelling arose shortly after the emergence of language.

We do know that stories have been recounted in all civilizations. In Europe, the cave drawings at Lascaux and Chavaux, France, include some of the oldest traces of storytelling. Animals, humans, and other items are shown in the drawings, which date back as long as 30,000 years. They appear to portray visual narrative in certain cases. It's even conceivable that the scenes painted on the cave walls were part of some type of oral tradition.

Oral storytelling is when someone tells a narrative using only their voice and gestures. Oral storytelling, like storytelling itself, is a centuries-old practice that spans cultures. Epic poetry, chants, rhymes, songs, and other types of oral tradition exist. Myths, stories, fables, religion, prayers, proverbs, and directions are all examples.

Epic poetry, such as *The Iliad* in Greek and *The Tale of Gilgamesh* in Sumerian, were initially performed and passed down through word of mouth before being written down. Similarly, Aesop—who, if he existed at all, lived in the sixth century B.C.E.—was very certainly a storyteller. Later Greek writers refer to him and his animal stories, although they were first passed down orally.

From the ancient times the *seanchaí* were also traditional Irish storytellers. They'd go from town to hamlet, repeating legends and wise sayings. They narrated historical legends as well as current events in the area. Tales of kings and heroes are common in Irish oral culture. Today, storytelling looks to be making a comeback, as does interest in narrative. It's a longing for connection as one Irish storyteller explained who believes that narrative fosters real-life connections¹.

¹ National Geographic Society, “Storytelling and Cultural Traditions”, 24 January 2020, in <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/article/storytelling-and-cultural-traditions/12th-grade/>.

The interdisciplinary character of a popular culture agent like storytelling, whether it's interview transcripts or staged tales, has been considered as both a reflection of and a response to society.

The Grimms' stories were then the most extensively distributed and translated work of German literature due to their early reception, which revealed an English romantic interest with German folklore. Oral traditions in English-speaking, Danish-speaking, and Dutch-speaking nations were the first to employ written tales as a springboard for their own framing of German identity. The mutual effect of these two traditions is extremely complex, necessitating a more in-depth examination of the languages and cultures of the tales' early proponents outside of Germany.

The study of oral tradition has revealed that it has a universal and compelling rhetoric. The social function of folklore, particularly the Grimm brothers' approach, may develop national awareness. This form of oral communication, at the very least, is a reflection of culture and may be studied effectively through structural comparison².

Stories may now be told verbally, in printed or handwritten language, as well as through recorded music and pictures. Regardless of the medium, we are all story consumers and have always been.

One explanation to what draws people to tales might be that it gives us a sense of control. That is, it aids us in putting order to events that have occurred in our lives and making meaning of the occurrences of a seemingly random universe. Stories may also help us understand what others are thinking and feeling. To put it another way, they can help us sympathize with others around us. According to research, the more fascinating the tale, the more compassionate individuals become in real life. Stories also enable us to communicate knowledge in a memorable manner, which may have aided our forefathers in cooperating and surviving. We retain things better when we tell a tale rather than just recite dry information.

Stories are everywhere, regardless of the causes. We spend a lot of our time-sharing tales about what we've done, where we've gone, and who we've spent time with. We've been telling stories for as long as history can remember, and we'll probably keep doing it for the rest of our lives³.

² E. COOPER, "Storytelling and German culture", 1996, in <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/article/storytelling-and-cultural-traditions/12th-grade/>.

³ National Geographic Society, "Storytelling and Cultural Traditions", 24 January 2020, in <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/article/storytelling-and-cultural-traditions/12th-grade/>.

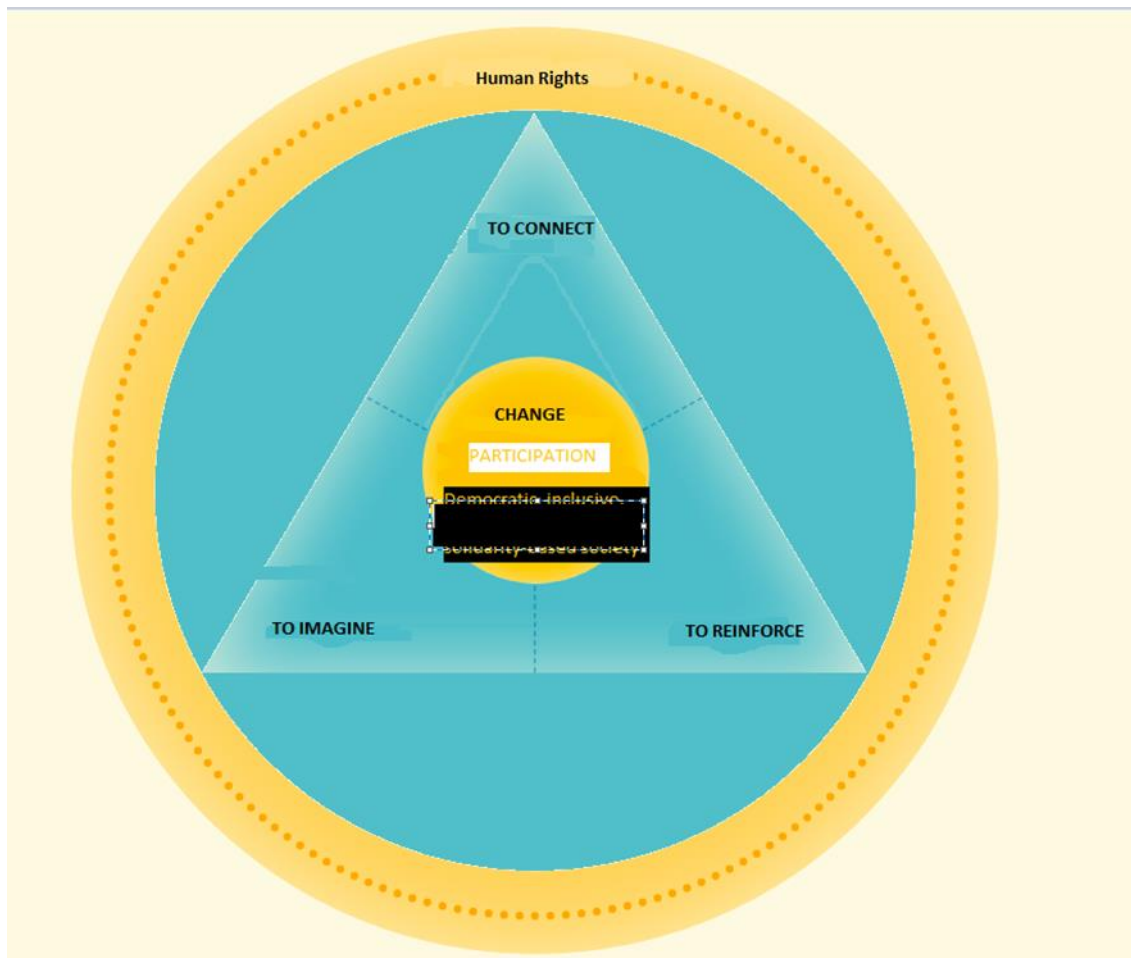


Intergenerational conversations, critical thinking and different perspectives getting values

Social, educational and cultural workers are democratic professionals who offer methodical support to change processes in our society. Telling (life) stories is an important part of this. The specific contribution of social-cultural workers lies in the joint depiction of a desired situation or future and the road towards it, in connecting people, groups and communities and in strengthening the potential for change. In doing so, they focus in storytelling on giving meaning, developing individuals, groups and communities and shaping a democratic, inclusive and sustainable society. In these change processes, social-cultural workers strive for participation. In a number of stories, this ambition is strongly emphasised. Democracy itself is at the core of their socio-cultural work; they are democratic professionals. Human rights form their framework of values. Values that, within a European context, are extremely important to the democratic process.

Human rights offer social-cultural workers a framework of values against which to assess their own efforts and those of others, and to enter into dialogue about them. Freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, self-determination, reasonableness, justice, freedom of expression and respect for other opinions and other ways of life are basic values. These enlightened values and the core aspects of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights have become fundamentally intertwined with the principles of more and more societies.

Human rights does not offer social-cultural workers a rigidly defined framework of values. It offers them values whose specific meaning they can negotiate with those involved. After all, in concrete situations it is not always entirely clear what exactly they can understand by those values here and now, and how they can best interpret those values and rights. The mutual relationship between those values can also present social-cultural workers with dilemmas. Together, however, these values form a framework of values that helps social-cultural workers to focus on giving meaning, on the development of individuals, groups and communities and on shaping a democratic, inclusive and sustainable society. Fig 1



The changes that social-cultural workers envisage with storytelling cover many different themes and go in different directions. In each case, social-cultural workers are guided by the concrete socio-cultural context, the specific people, groups and communities with whom they work and their own contribution.

Democracy and education have a close relationship with each other. One concept presupposes the other and vice versa. The democratic paradigm implies an educational space in which citizens are educated to shape society themselves. As an ideal, education aspires to the development and (self-)empowerment of people. In an implicit, non-formal way, development can be stimulated through storytelling.

What kind of citizens does contemporary democracy raise people to be? What does it mean to be a 'good' citizen? These are questions we should not only answer 'for' someone. We also need to work on practices and stories where we share experiences and insights with people. This also applies to critical thinking and the intergenerational aspect. It is difficult to think critically for someone else, but you can offer questions and stories and look for the possible answers together.



How to change the mindsets of our community through storytelling

Story telling is one of the oldest and most effective forms of communication, just think of the *aoidos* and *rhapsodists* of Ancient Greece, the oral transmission of fundamental works such as the Iliad and the Odyssey, influenced and trained successive generations of Greeks and beyond.

Since childhood, a large part of our education is based on storytelling, we learn our history, our culture and compare it with others, trying to know others to know ourselves better, to place ourselves in the world. More than anything else, stories serve to transmit knowledge, to share experiences in order to present ourselves to the world, to influence and be influenced by others; stories seem to influence our attitudes, our behaviour and ultimately our actions⁴.

What is the real power of stories? The possibility for people to relate, to put themselves in a certain situation and in another's shoes; moreover, positive stories are an important lever to adapt our behaviour to certain contexts, to change it when necessary. At the same time, they are an opportunity for self-knowledge and self-reflection that should not be underestimated⁵.

Obviously, stories with different themes and of different genres have different effects and functions⁶.

Real stories have the power to influence and create empathy, they are the best example of empowerment, of transmission of best practices.

Love stories, like real ones, could influence behaviour and change beliefs that we thought were fixed, by acting on emotions.

Humorous stories, on the other hand, can help to deal more lightly with complex and negative issues and moments.

As we have said, one of the most important characteristics for a story to be effective and to influence behaviour and actions is its relate-ability; in fact, the people who are the most likely to be able to relate to a story are the most likely to be influenced.

⁴ Cfr. K. GRUBER, "GOOD STORYTELLING AT THE BASE OF MODERN SOCIETY", *Particle*, 29 January 2018, in <https://particle.scitech.org.au/people/good-storytelling-base-modern-society/>, consulted on 5/10/2021.

⁵ Cfr. E. FALK, "Why storytelling is an important tool for social change", *Los Angeles Times*, 27 June 2021, in <https://www.latimes.com/opinion/story/2021-06-27/stories-brain-science-memory-social-change>,

⁶ Cfr. K. BOWMAKER, "Storytelling and behaviour change", *The social deck*, in <https://www.thesocialdeck.com.au/blog/storytelling-and-behaviour-change>, consulted on 7/10/2021.

From a scientific point of view, numerous scholars over the years have tried to justify the ability of storytelling to influence behaviours, emotions, and actions⁷ Among them there is Paul Zak, who discovered with his team that character-driven stories inspire behaviour change. In an experiment, Zak found that the physiological response triggered by an emotionally charged story predicts people's attitude to collaborative behaviour. This happens through the production in the brain of two chemicals: cortisol, which allows us to focus in stressful and anxious situations, and oxytocin, which regulates social interactions and is associated with trust and empathy. The amounts released by the brain of these two substances determine the predisposition to change behaviour. Another substance released by the amygdala is dopamine, which aids memory and information processing.

Another important moment to analyse the power of stories is the event, reported by BBC Media Action India, held in San Diego which saw 49 people come together to discuss the communication trends present in stories, especially when they deal with health or social issues. The power of stories, as explained by social psychologist Melanie Green, lies in 'narrative transport', an almost oneiric experience that takes us out of the real world and makes personal change more possible.

In addition, scientists René Weber and Ralf Schmaelzle showed how functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) can be used to analyse the effects of stories on our brains by measuring cerebral blood flow. Their study was about the effectiveness of public service announcements in convincing young adults about the risks of alcohol; the result is that the messages that resounded the most were more likely to engage people's brains⁸.

Finally, a study on the co-operative behaviour of the Aghta, hunter-gatherers in the Philippines, showed how storytelling is a fundamental part of daily life, promoting fairness, social co-operation and teaching social norms⁹.

Stories create connections, communication, pass through the years and remain timeless. As we have already noted, they are fundamental for self-projection, a self-reflection that allows us to get to know ourselves better; moreover, although stories are the lifeblood of different cultures and their traditions, they also convey universal values, creating common grounds making it easier for people to communicate and find commonality with others.

⁷ Cfr. J. PADRE, "The Science of Storytelling: How Storytelling Shapes Our Behavior", 6 August 2018, in <https://www.mediapartners.com/blog/post/the-science-of-storytelling-how-storytelling-shapes-our-behavior>, consulted on 07/10/2021.

⁸ Cfr. R. MITRA, "Tell me a story: narratives, behaviour change and neuroscience", *BBC Media Action*, 20 June 2017, in https://www.comminit.com/job_vacancies/content/tell-me-story-narratives-behaviour-change-and-neuroscience,

⁹ Cfr. J. KLUGER, "How Telling Stories Makes Us Human", *Time*, 5 December 2017, in <https://time.com/5043166/storytelling-evolution/>, consulted on 12/10/2021.

Stories help us to find our place in the world and form our identities in confrontation with others, their power of persuasion, the worldview they contain enable us to act in a certain way, thanks to the ease of remembering and processing information. Besides understanding ourselves, storytelling is an extremely effective opportunity to understand those who are different from us, enriching ourselves in diversity, combating stereotypes, navigating in the patterns of morals, knowledge, worldviews that are different but not exclusive¹⁰.

In today's digital and interconnected world, distinguishing the necessary information is increasingly difficult, the attention threshold has inevitably been lowered and visual content has taken over from textual content. But stories continue to exist, and indeed, thanks to the opportunities provided by new technologies, they could reach more and more people; becoming an opportunity, especially for social media, for neuroscientific analysis of behaviour derived from storytelling.

“If history were taught in the form of stories, it would never be forgotten”.

(Rudyard Kipling)

¹⁰ Cfr. T. CORSON-KNOWLES, “Stories Matter: Why Stories Are Important to Our Lives and Culture”, in <https://www.tckpublishing.com/stories-matter/>, consulted on 14/10/2021.



Stories to bring us closer. Stories to know the trajectory of immigrants

History of immigration to and within Europe¹¹

Immigration to Europe has a long history, but increased substantially in the later 20th century. Western Europe countries, especially, saw high growth in immigration after World War II and many European nations today (particularly those of the EU-15, i.e., Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom) have sizeable immigrant populations, both of European and non-European origin. In contemporary globalization, migrations to Europe have accelerated in speed and scale. Over the last decades, there has been an increase in negative attitudes towards immigration, and many studies have emphasized marked differences in the strength of anti-immigrant attitudes among European countries. Beginning in 2004, the European Union has granted EU citizens a freedom of movement and residence within the EU, and the term "immigrant" has since been used to refer to non-EU citizens, meaning that EU citizens are not to be defined as immigrants within the EU territory. The European Commission defines "immigration" as the action by which a person from a non-EU country establishes his or her usual residence in the territory of a EU country for a period that is or is expected to be at least twelve months. Between 2010 and 2013, around 1.4 million non-EU nationals, excluding asylum seekers and refugees, immigrated into the EU each year using regular means, with a slight decrease since 2010. Historical migration into or within Europe has mostly taken the form of military invasion, but there have been exceptions; these concerns notably population movements within the Roman Empire under the Pax Romana; the Jewish diaspora in Europe was the result of the First Jewish–Roman War of AD 66–73. With the collapse of the Roman Empire, migration was again mostly coupled with warlike invasion, not least during the so-called Migration period (Germanic), the Slavic migrations, the Hungarian conquest of the Carpathian Basin, the Islamic conquests and the Turkic expansion into Eastern Europe (Kipchaks, Tatars, Cumans). The Ottomans once again established a multi-ethnic imperial structure across Western Asia and Southeastern Europe, but Turkification in Southeastern Europe was due more to cultural assimilation than to mass immigration. In the late medieval period, the Romani people moved into Europe both via Anatolia and the Maghreb.

There were substantial population movements within Europe throughout the Early Modern period, mostly in the context of the Reformation and the European wars of religion, and again as a result of World War II.

¹¹from "Immigration to Europe", Wikipedia - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immigration_to_Europe

From the late 15th century until the late 1960s and early 1970s, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Germany, Norway,[3] Sweden,[4] Denmark, Belgium, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom [5] were primarily sources of emigration, sending large numbers of emigrants to the Americas, Australia, Siberia and Southern Africa. A number also went to other European countries (notably France, Switzerland, Germany and Belgium). As living standards in these countries have risen, the trend has reversed and they were a magnet for immigration (most notably from Morocco, Somalia, Egypt to Italy and Greece; from Morocco, Algeria and Latin America to Spain and Portugal; and from Ireland, India, Pakistan, Germany, the United States, Bangladesh, and Jamaica to the United Kingdom).

Opposition to immigration

According to a YouGov poll in 2018, majorities in all seven polled countries were opposed to accepting more migrants: Germany (72%), Denmark (65%), Finland (64%), Sweden (60%), United Kingdom (58%), France (58%) and Norway (52%).[86] A February 2017 poll of 10 000 people in 10 European countries by Chatham House found on average a majority (55%) were opposed to further Muslim immigration, with opposition especially pronounced in a number of countries: Austria (65%), Poland (71%), Hungary (64%), France (61%) and Belgium (64%). Except for Poland, all of those had recently suffered jihadist terror attacks or been at the centre of a refugee crisis. Of those opposed to further Muslim immigration, 3/4 classify themselves as on the right of the political spectrum. Of those self-classifying as on the left of the political spectrum, 1/3 supported a halt.

How do stories help us understand immigrants' experiences?¹²

Sharing immigrant and refugee stories of those people and their families who have been forced to leave the comfort of their homelands. Immigrants and refugees leave their known lives due to war, famine and genocide, among other hardships and disasters. The topic of immigration and refugees is of specific relevance in the current political climate throughout the world. Sharing immigrant and refugee stories is particularly important in our communities, where attitudes towards people who are deemed to be “different” due to language, religion and skin color must not increase.

It is increasingly vital that communities everywhere pay attention to the lives of the refugees and immigrants in their towns and cities. To support immigrant and refugee families, we must find ways to support newcomers and make them feel welcome and encouraged to share their experiences and cultures. We need to encourage immigrants and refugees to tell their stories. One way to do this is by showing that we value sharing immigrant and refugee stories, seen by books that have already been written and published.

¹² from “World of words”, the University of Arizona - <https://wowlit.org/blog/2016/12/05/sharing-immigrant-and-refugee-stories/>

While all the stories share sadness, suffering, fear and frustration, they also provide the readers with insight into the bravery, ingenuity, caring and love of immigrants and refugees. These traits have allowed many people to escape from their homelands and begin new lives with immense possibilities.

Journeys of hope: migration routes into Europe nowadays¹³

Thousands of people, many fleeing persecution and conflict, risk everything, seeking a new life of freedom and opportunity. In 2020, tens of thousands of migrants crossed desert and sea, climbed mountains and walked through forests to reach what has become an increasingly inhospitable Europe. Many of them died, overwhelmed by the waves, or tortured in the detention centres of Libya. More were displaced after the flames of Moria refugee camp in Greece burned everything they had. Each year we see the journeys of tens of thousands more people seeking a new life overseas. Experts, charity workers and NGOs speak about the challenges and risks they face on the main migration routes into Europe.

The Balkan route

The Balkan route crosses mountains and snow-covered forests. It is one of the most perilous journeys for migrants. After the Serbian border with EU countries became virtually impassable in 2018, refugees began trying to reach Croatia via Bosnia and Herzegovina instead. The path usually begins in Turkey, from which migrants attempt to reach Bulgaria or Greece, then North Macedonia or Serbia, then Bosnia, Croatia and Slovenia, from where they can finally reach Italy or Austria.

¹³from The Guardian, 14.01.2021 - <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2021/jan/14/journeys-of-hope-what-will-migration-routes-into-europe-look-like-in-2021>

Greece

The Greek route looks like a relatively short journey from, for instance, some Turkish towns to a Greek island like Lesbos, but involves a potentially deadly sea crossing, usually in an overcrowded dinghy. Stephan Oberreit, from Médecins Sans Frontières says that while arrivals have decreased last year, reports of illegal pushbacks have increased “in a concerning way”. “But let’s be realistic, people will continue to try to cross and risk their lives in the absence of other safer and legal options.”

Central Mediterranean

In 2020, at least 575 people died taking the central Mediterranean route. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) says the real number is considerably higher. People using this route usually depart from Tripoli or Zuwara in Libya, or from Sfax in Tunisia, and make for the Sicilian island of Lampedusa or Malta in small boats. At the start of the pandemic, Italy and Malta declared their ports closed. Rome established “quarantine boats” – ferries on which migrants are placed under quarantine for 14 days, which have been criticised by human rights groups - “There is not the adequate medical care on the ferries that these people badly need and not even legal assistance,” says Oscar Camps, founder of Proactiva Open Arms. “In such a situation, human rights are practically revoked.”

The Channel

Several thousand people attempted to cross the Channel to reach Britain in 2020. London has repeatedly pressed Paris to do more to prevent people leaving France. The home secretary, Priti Patel, and her French counterpart, Gérald Darmanin, said they wanted to make the route unviable and signed a new agreement aimed at curbing the number of migrants crossing the Channel in small boats. More than 8,000 people made the crossing in small boats in 2020, up from almost 1,900 in 2019.

Why do Stories Matter?

As humans, stories are at the fundamental to who we are – sharing them with an audience that listens validates our experiences. By creating a space in which people can share their histories, we are telling them that they matter. Storytelling is part of an exchange between a speaker and an audience. It is important to remember that while speaking is an important part of the transaction, listening matters just as well. When we hear about someone else’s experience or read about other people’s perspectives, we are learning. We may learn something new, or it may reinforce what we already know. Literature teachers often talk about the importance of books as windows and mirrors – windows to new worlds, and mirrors to our own experience. Stories can work that way as well. We humans are unique, precisely because of our capacity to relate to one another through storytelling.

Storytelling on migration¹⁴

“We need stories that inspire and connect us, rather than tearing us further apart; stories that paint a hopeful picture of the future we share and stories told by migrants themselves.” – Michelle Bachelet, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Every migrant has a story of hope, courage, despair, of exile and belonging. Don't we all? But these stories often remain hidden, like the many migrants themselves who are compelled to endure a life in the shadows of our societies, prevented from enjoying the rights and freedoms so many take for granted. It is important how we speak about migrants and that we all – as humans – stand up for the human rights of all migrants everywhere. How do we change the migration narrative from one of fear, division and exclusion to one that reaffirms our shared values and embraces our common humanity?

What habits of mind, heart and dispositions are necessary to live together in a world on the move?¹⁵

There are core dispositions in order to be able to navigate in a world on increasing mobility, diversity, and complexity: - *Understand perspectives: Others and one's own.* Recognizing one's own emotions, thoughts, values, cultural lenses and worldviews – and the multiple influences on them. Acknowledging one's strengths and capacity to contribute to our environments, as well as our proclivity to hold stereotypes or blind-spots. Recognizing that others may have views of the world and of ourselves that are different from our own.

-*Empathize with others, honoring their dignity and seeking to understand their experiences and perspective.* An embodied disposition to share in the experiences and emotions of another person. A disposition to seek to understand their values and worldviews, multiple cultural affiliations, and influences. A disposition to care about who another person is, minimizing “othering” and recognizing other people's human dignity.

-*Recognize, value, and bridge complex emotions, identities, intersections and influences.* Appreciate the dynamism of cultures and perspectives. A disposition to recognize that there is always more than one perspective, that individuals may participate in multiple cultures and that cultures influence one another. An openness and disposition to appreciate intersections, mixture and hybridity in people and cultures.

¹⁴from United Nations Human Rights, Office of the High Commissioner - <https://www.ohchr.org/en/issues/migration/pages/videostories.aspx>

¹⁵From Re-Imagining Migration - <https://reimaginingmigration.org/moving-stories-stories-matter/>

-Inquire about migration with care and nuance. Exhibit care and curiosity about our shared and divergent human experience of migration. Feel connected and belonging to a larger human story, viewing migration as a shared human experience – past present and future. Pose relevant and informed questions, exhibiting curiosity and the desire to learn. *Investigate and recognize patterns across time, place and identities reasoning with diverse sources of evidence.* Gather, weigh and reason with evidence to make sense of migration-related issues or situations seeking out quality sources and media, interpreting them carefully and critically. Consider, for instance, evidence on causes and impacts of migration on individuals, communities and nations, combining disciplinary lenses to make sense of a world on the move. Consider patterns across time, space and identities.

-Form informed and ethical personal positions. Examine matters with compassion, managing complex ideas, contexts and emotions to draw informed conclusions about issues related to migration.

-Communicate and build relationships across difference. Listen openly, empathically and mindfully to the many languages people use to communicate (verbal, visual, body languages); appreciate communicative styles as expressions of identity, culture, and communities of belonging, and recognize that people’s humanity, cultural assets and complex thinking capacities are often vaster than what emerging linguistic competences can show, or how non-dominant forms of expression are often interpreted. *Express with purpose, audience and context in mind.* Use multiple languages to communicate (feelings, values, ideas, stories), express oneself (one’s identity, culture, belonging) in ways that keep purpose, audience and context in mind. Appreciate and engage in cultural and linguistic straddling, code-switching and combining languages to improve communication, and build bonding and bridging relationships within and across groups.

Appreciate and reflect on respectful and inclusive dialogue across race, nationality, gender, religion, and ethnicity. Appreciate respectful dialogue building on the desire to understand and be understood. Recognize, critically, that language can serve as a gatekeeper or a gateway for inclusion and for understanding other people’s lives, cultures, and the world. Recognize and reflect on communication and relational challenges recognizing the source of difficulties (e.g., language of exclusion, differences in communicative norms) and seeking inclusive solutions.

-Recognize Power & Inequities in human experience and migration. Recognize racial, class, religious, ethnic and gender inequities and power disparities regarding self, known and distant others—in daily experiences as well as across past and present, local and global cases of migration. Uphold values of human dignity and diversity that are foundational to inclusive societies, social belonging, and moral development. *Understand one’s own position towards power and inequities.* Understand one’s own

positions to inequities navigating the ideas, feelings, and relationships associated with responding to inequities from specific positions and contexts (e.g. compassion, respect, and admiration towards persons who experience marginalization, as well as pride of one's own family story of migration, freedom and courage to share one's language, values and roots).

-Envisioning inclusive and sustainable societies. Imagine possible equitable and just futures, enriched by the inclusion of marginalized voices in dialogue and relationships that embody the values of human dignity and diversity central to our democratic life.

-Take action to foster inclusive and sustainable societies. Develop a sense of belonging to a learning environment, a community and a society and an inclination to participate regarding issues or situations involving human migration. Be sensitive toward opportunities to act constructively in groups, contexts, and relationships, and a desire and inclination to make a difference.

-Employ understanding, voice and action to foster equitable and inclusive societies. Seek to understand experiences and systems associated with human migration and how earlier change makers have attempted to make a difference. Use the capacity to express one's perspective, experiences, story to change minds. Use civic engagement tools (political action, community projects, digital campaigns) to take informed and compassionate action.

-Reflect and revise our actions. Reflect on actions and strategies (learn from the stories of the past, examining prior attempts, voicing perspectives, engaging others, planning, executing) assess and adjust them to foster wellbeing among immigrant and host communities, foster equitable and inclusive societies strengthening civic life and democratic institutions.

In what ways do stories of migration help us understand who we are?
Why teach about migration? Because it's the story of humankind. It has become evident that as a public we don't know very much about migration, and we sure don't give it the kind of attention it deserves.

It is time to rethink how we approach this issue. The story of migration is the story of humankind. The genetic and paleontological record of human migration is at least 60,000 years old. Researchers know that all humans can trace their origins to Southern Africa, while some homo sapiens migrated across Africa and stayed, others ventured out to the Asia, Australia, Europe, and eventually to the Americas.

This is our shared experience. The stories of these ancient journeys testify to our ingenuity as a species, and as we scrutinize them, they challenge us to think about our identities as individuals, groups, and nations. We are all a people that have been on the move for a long time. Teaching about migration as an ongoing theme in the human condition provides a lens to explore our past and ask new questions. Histories of migration and integration are reminders of the amazing abilities of humans to adapt to new circumstances.

Often histories of migration reveal records of integration, a two-way exchange between newcomers and the dominant society. These are the frequently unexamined stories behind our customs, foods, and language. The history of migration, in fact, is the history of how we became to be who we are today.

If we listen to immigrants' stories with an open mind and heart, we will realize these aren't just migrant stories, they are human stories. They are our stories.