



Brave

Guidelines for Reflection with
Teachers and Student Teachers

About 'Brave'

Brave is a 4-part series of digital storytelling videos, featuring Ashley, Moses and Roxanna, as they explore the themes of identity, belonging, racism and creating a better future.

The videos are part of ongoing work in DCU's Centre for Human Rights & Citizenship Education (CHRCE) that is exploring the experiences of children and young people growing up in Ireland with second-generation migrant and ethnic minority backgrounds (Machowska-Kosciak & Barry, 2022).

We designed 'Brave' **specifically for use in teacher education programmes** to support teachers and student teachers to encounter diverse experiences of growing up and going to school in Ireland, and to reflect individually and collectively on the themes of identity, belonging and racism in schools.

**Part 1:
Representation**
(10.37 mins)

**Part 2:
Identity**
(9.35 mins)

**Part 3:
Racism**
(6.00 mins)

**Part 4:
Creating a
Better Future**
(8.42 mins)

In Ireland, teachers and school leaders come from predominantly majority, white ethnic, Catholic backgrounds (Adebayo and Heinz, 2023; Darmody and Smyth, 2016) and a number of initiatives are underway to diversify the teaching population in order for it to be more representative of the student population.

In the meantime, it is hoped that the stories of Ashley, Moses and Roxanna, contribute to teachers' and student teachers' deeper understandings of identity, belonging, discrimination and racism for children and young people in classrooms across the country.

About the Guidelines

The guidelines are intended to provide you with some important, yet light touch, support in using one or all of the digital storytelling videos. They have been created in collaboration with a number of DCU colleagues who piloted the videos and activities with student teachers in DCU and with teachers as part of CPD programmes.

Essentially, the videos were created to provide both encounters with diverse experiences and stimulus for reflection and discussion. These guidelines include some key questions, suggested activities and top tips to frame their use and to support ethical, open and rich listening and responding.

Step 1

Thinking about identity, belonging, privilege and racism

First, we encourage you to spend time yourself watching the videos and noting how you respond to them. In addition, reflect critically on your own identity, positionality and privilege, both in relation to the students you will work with, and also in relation to the themes of the videos. To what extent does your own identity and position as an educator support and/or limit your understanding of the experiences of the young people featured in the videos? Consider working alongside a colleague in the design and use of the videos with students. Watch the videos together and share your responses.

Second, consider the groups of students you might like to use these videos with. Reflect on how you can integrate the videos into your wider module or programme and, of course, on how you might create a conducive and supportive environment for all students to engage and respond. Draw on the top tips on Page 9 and 10 to support this.

Step 2

Facilitating reflection and discussion

At its most simple, the videos were created to be used each in their own right, on its own. Each video speaks to a particular theme (see Page 2) and simply, we suggest that you invite your students to watch and to listen. Follow the viewing with time for reflection and paired or small group discussion. See some suggested activities below. The activities can be used as standalone activities or combined in a number of ways. We strongly recommend that if you choose to use the videos and activities, that you do so, as part of a wider course or module with related themes.

Importantly, we suggest that it is not necessary, or sometimes desirable, to hold a whole class discussion, following the activities below. Alternatively, it might be appropriate for you to circulate to individuals/pairs/groups as they hold their discussion and to listen.

Ask them if they would be happy to share some of their discussion with the wider class, or if you can share elements of their discussion as a collective response.

Some suggested activities

- 1. Open paired discussion.** Assign A or B to each person. Following viewing, A is invited to respond to the stories, uninterrupted. B listens. You can assign 3 minutes for this. B then responds to what A has said. Following on, A and B can swap roles.

Step 2

Facilitating reflection and discussion

- 2. Guided individual reflection.** Provide each person with 3 post-its. Invite them to write a response to the stories based on the following questions – what did you find interesting? What did you find surprising/shocking? A question I now have. Invite participants to share their reflections in pairs or groups of four.



- 3. Think, pair, share.** Below are some prompts and questions you can consider using:
 - One of the themes of the stories is representation. What do the scenes and images in the stories tell us about Ashley, Moses and Roxanna? How are they represented? What do these representations tell us about Identity?
 - Consider your own identity and experiences. How do they relate to Ashley, Moses and Roxanna? How does your own identity limit how you can relate?
 - How do the stories that Ashley, Moses and Roxanna tell relate to schools today?
 - What, if any, are the implications for you as a student teacher/ teacher/school community?
 - What else would you like to know/understand? How might you find this out?

Step 3

Moving forward

Oftentimes, many people who have listened to the stories and discussed them in groups, also want to consider what they can do and how they can respond as student teachers and teachers. This is something you can discuss with them, and of course, there are several possible avenues and directions. There are also several existing supports and initiatives. We have listed some below.


Ideas for individual teachers/student teachers

- As a very first step, we encourage student teachers and teachers to **actively seek out and listen to as many diverse perspectives as possible**. As educators, we should all continue to be aware of and to challenge our blindspots and to develop our knowledge and understanding of belonging, representation and race and the impact it has on our classrooms and students.
- **Tackling Controversial Issues.**  This is a very useful resource that can serve as a guide and reference point for teachers as they think about and plan for the use of discussion-based activities relating to sensitive and controversial topics. Although it was printed in 2012 and created for post primary school teachers, it provides invaluable guidance and practical ideas that can be adapted to many different classroom contexts.
- **Addressing Inclusion: Effectively Challenging Racism in schools.**  Scotland has developed many good practice initiatives and guidance for schools and this guidebook provides a lot of practical support for schools.

Step 3

Moving forward

Programmes and ideas for schools

- **Whole school community.** To ensure that all students feel like they belong in our schools and to respond effectively to discrimination and racism, requires the whole school community. Identify other colleagues who are interested in this area, speak to your school leaders, can you identify one action or step you can take to start?
- **The Yellow Flag programme.**  This is an example of one initiative running in Ireland that supports primary and secondary schools to be more inclusive of all cultures and ethnicities, celebrate diversity and challenge racism and discrimination.
- **Curriculum development:** as curriculum areas are reviewed and evaluated in schools, identify opportunities for wider culturally diverse representation in content, pedagogy, resources and materials. This is irrespective of the student profile in a school. For example, what books and picturebooks are students engaging with, what countries are studied in Geography and how, and what historical periods, people or events dominate your school history?

We would also love to hear from you. The ‘Brave’ videos and these guidelines were developed and designed as a collaborative effort, with ongoing conversations with colleagues. We would be delighted to hear from you if you use these materials. Let us know what worked well and what you did differently!

Top Tips

- **Consider first your own identity and positionality.** This is an important first step. See Page 4 for more.
- **Clarity of purpose.** Ensure that you and the students are very clear about why you are using the videos as part of their module or programme and the reflective nature of the discussion activities.
- **Consider the most vulnerable students in your group.** The themes and stories explored in these videos are emotive and may be distressing for some of your students. Consider these students first as you prepare to use the videos. Do you need to talk to them first?
- **Let the visuals do some of the talking!** Having drawn on Photovoice methodology to inform the videos, we were keen that the key themes can be explored as much in the images portrayed, as the words used. Consider inviting the group you are working with to observe the images and discuss how they relate to the themes. What one image might your students choose to represent their feelings of identity, belonging or discrimination? Perhaps some students might like to respond visually?
- **The wider context.** Ideally, the videos, reflection and discussion should be allocated at least one full seminar of approximately 50-100 mins. In addition, we strongly recommend that this seminar is part of a wider and relevant course or module. In DCU, we use it as part of modules related to teacher identity, sociology of education and courses on preparing students to teach about culture, diversity and anti-racism education. This allows students and teachers to become familiar with research and statistics related to identity and race in Ireland and to place Ashley, Moses and Roxanna's stories, in a wider, more critical context.

- **Less is more.** It is best to leave as much time as possible to screen one of the videos and then leave time for individual reflection and some paired or group discussion. We have found that students only need a few simple but critical prompts or questions. Avoid trying to fit the videos or discussion into too small a space.
- **Moving forward.** Whilst these videos and materials are developed to support reflection and discussion, consider providing your students with some useful links and next steps, in order to help them actively address inclusion and exclusion in their education setting. We provide some on Page 7 and 8.
- **Creating a safe and supportive space.** Many guidelines and materials already stress the importance of safe spaces for discussion. Consider what that means for you as an educator. How might you hold that safe space with your particular group of students? Do you have or need a class contract? How might seating support discussion?
- **Include Part 4.** We understand that time is always limited in the classroom and the videos have been designed as four standalone pieces. However, in order to provide a fuller representation of Ashley, Moses and Roxanna, and to provide some insights into possible ways forward for everyone, we encourage you to include Part 4.



These guidelines have been compiled by Maria Barry and Malgosia Machowska-Kosciak. Many thanks are due to Ben Mallon, Niamh McGuirk, Saibh ní Loinsigh, and Rowan Oberman for piloting the videos and offering ideas and suggestions.

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