



**the  
To&Through  
project**

**College Videos and  
Guiding Lesson Plans**



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**CHICAGO**

**UEI** URBAN  
EDUCATION  
INSTITUTE

## Background and Context

### *The To&Through Project*

The To&Through Project is a partnership between the University of Chicago’s Urban Education Institute and Network for College Success that brings together expertise across the key domains of research, data, and professional learning. It provides educators, policymakers, and families with information and resources on the milestones that matter most for college success so that, together, we can give every ninth grader who aspires to earn a college degree the opportunity and support to do so.

### *College Videos and Guiding Lessons*

The college videos and the accompanying curriculum were created as a resource for practitioners serving high schools in Chicago Public Schools. All participants in the video are CPS graduates who have attended or are still attending a 2-year or 4-year post-secondary institution.

The intended audience for the videos and lesson plans are 11th or 12th grade students who identify as students of color, first in their families to attend college, and from low-income backgrounds. However, the videos and lesson plans can be adjusted to suit the needs of all schools and students.

There are five facilitator’s guides that accompany the To&Through College Videos, which have been designated into “Days” to indicate the recommended sequence of the videos and lessons. The first four facilitator’s guides utilize the thematic videos and the last one requires students to watch the biographical videos of the young men and women who appear in the thematic videos. Additionally, there are two “Optional Lessons” that have been included in the curriculum to serve as scaffolding for important conversations and activities that take place in subsequent lesson plans. It is highly recommended that the “Optional Lessons” are facilitated to ensure there is a baseline for students when moving forward with complex topics.

The recommended time frame for this curriculum is two weeks if all the videos and activities are used. However, the lessons can be adjusted to be shortened or extended as deemed necessary. It is highly encouraged to adjust the lesson plans to meet the needs of the facilitator and/or students.

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## Optional Lesson A: Identity

### Facilitator's Guide

<p><b>Key Questions for this Session:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Who are you (student)?</li> <li>What are some of the many different aspects that make up who you (student) are?</li> </ul> <p><b>Key Takeaways for Students (SWBAT):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students will understand that people are complicated and that there are many different facets to one person's identity</li> <li>Students will begin to think of their own identities in a more complicated way as well as their peers</li> </ul>	<p><b>Potential Challenges:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This is mostly an interactive lesson where students will have a chance to play a game and also disclose information about themselves—teacher should gauge the level of comfort/connection of the students and tailor the lesson accordingly</li> <li><b>Friendship Bingo</b> - The squares can and should be adjusted according to the dynamics of the class (i.e. if students know each other really well then the squares can be adjusted to be less surface-level facts)</li> </ul> <p><b>"If you really knew me"</b> can stay light or go deep depending on how comfortable teacher is facilitating and how the students feel disclosing personal information—the teacher can set the tone by modeling an example.</p>
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### Suggested Activities and Time Breakdowns

Time	Minutes	Activity
00:00-00:12	12	<p><b>Friendship Bingo!</b> Students will have 10 minutes to go around and find a peer who can sign one of their bingo squares. One person cannot sign multiple boxes on a single sheet. The first person to get their entire box filled and shout bingo is the winner.</p> <p><b>Debrief:</b> Teacher will ask the class if they found out any new information about one of their peers that surprised them. Emphasize that there are many different aspects to who we are and that not all of them come out in a school setting.</p>
00:12-00:22	10	<p><b>Identity Circles:</b> Building off of Friendship Bingo, teacher will pass out Identity Circles handout and ask students to reflect on the different aspects of their identity that make up who they are. Students will take some time to work quietly on their identity circles.</p>
00:22-00:42	20	<p><b>Closing Activity: "If you really knew me..."</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher will instruct the class to sit in a circle facing in</li> <li>Teacher should explain to the students the rules of the game: no talking when someone else is talking, be honest, and don't feel pressured to share something you are uncomfortable sharing</li> <li>Teacher should start the activity by completing the sentence "If you really knew me..."</li> <li>This should go for two or three rounds depending on number of participants</li> </ul> <p><b>Debrief:</b> Teacher should ask students for their thoughts and reactions to the activity (Were you surprised by your peers' answers? Was it hard sharing something? Why? Why not?).</p>

\* There should be a binder for each student to keep their worksheets in and refer back to in future lessons.

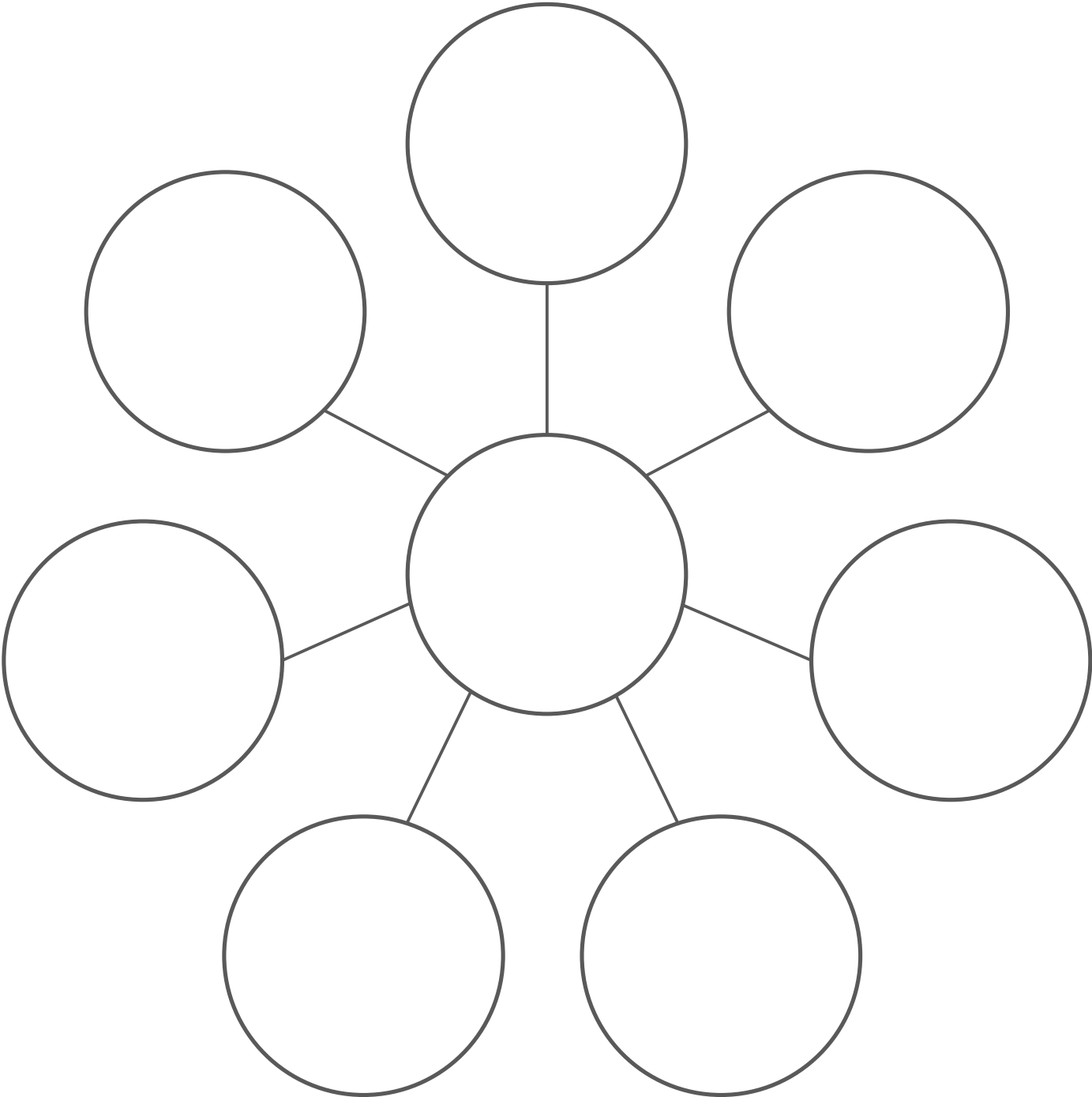
## Friendship Bingo!

*Directions:*

Each bingo square has a different characteristic or trait. Find a classmate who has that trait and have him/her sign off on that square! One person cannot sign multiple squares on your sheet! The first person to have all their squares signed and shouts bingo is the winner!

<b>OLDEST CHILD IN THE FAMILY</b>	<b>PLAYS AN INSTRUMENT</b>	<b>KNOWS HOW TO SKATEBOARD</b>	<b>SPEAKS MORE THAN ONE LANGUAGE</b>
<b>LOVES BEYONCÉ</b>	<b>HAS THE SAME FAVORITE MOVIE AS YOU</b>	<b>FIRST ONE IN THEIR FAMILY TO GO TO COLLEGE</b>	<b>LOVES TO COOK</b>
<b>BINGE WATCHES NETFLIX</b>	<b>KNOWS ALL THE LYRICS TO "DESPACITO"</b>	<b>HAS A PET</b>	<b>HAS TRAVELED OUTSIDE OF ILLINOIS</b>
<b>BORN IN ANOTHER COUNTRY</b>	<b>HAS BEEN TO A CUBS GAME</b>	<b>LEFTY</b>	<b>OLDER SIBLING GOES TO COLLEGE</b>

Identity Circles



## Day 1: To&Through Video — Why College?

### Facilitator's Guide

#### Key Questions for this Session:

- What are some of the reasons that the young people in the video give for why they chose college?
- Every person has their own reasons for pursuing higher ed (as the video highlights)—what are your (student) reasons for choosing college?

#### Key Takeaways for Students (SWBAT):

- Students will be able to think more critically about their various reasons for choosing college
- Students will understand that there are many powerful motivators that push people to achieve their goals. These different motivators can be categorized as “hopeful or fearful” motivators
- Students will feel more comfortable talking about their “fearful” motivators for wanting to go to college instead of just their “hopeful” motivators
- Students’ reasons/motivators for wanting to go to college will hopefully be reinforced.

#### Potential Challenges:

- There may be students who feel they don’t want to go to college and therefore will be disengaged from video/activity—this can be an opportunity to explore why students feel they don’t want to go to college. Instead of forcing such students to fill out a tree for college, have students fill it out with a different goal in mind.
- Students may feel that “fearful” motivators are not as good as “hopeful” motivators—it is important to emphasize that both are equally powerful and can have positive results depending on the context and how each motivator affects the individual. It is also worth highlighting that having a good amount of both is important.

### Suggested Activities and Time Breakdowns

Time	Minutes	Activity
00:00-00:05	5	Icebreaker
00:05-0:09	4	T&T Video: <a href="#">Why College?</a>
00:09-00:21	12	<b>Class Debrief of Video</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher will ask the class: What are some of the reasons that the people in the video gave for choosing to go to college?</li> <li>• Teacher should write their responses on the board and group the reasons into two categories: hopeful and fearful motivators.</li> <li>• Using the video and debrief notes, Teacher will highlight that people are motivated by different things and two powerful motivators can be categorized into “hopeful and fearful.” Teacher should provide anecdotal example to solidify understanding.</li> </ul>
00:21-00:36	15	<b>Individual Activity:</b> Students reflect on their own reasons for wanting to go to college and separate these reasons into hopeful and fearful motivators. <b>Pair Share:</b> After students have had sufficient time to reflect and write down their motivators, have them turn to a partner and discuss.
00:36-00:46	10	<b>Class Debrief:</b> Ask students to share their motivators for choosing to go to college. Were any students surprised by their hopeful/fearful motivators?

\* The hopes/fears worksheet should be kept in their advisory binders to refer back to in future lessons.





## Hopes & Fears

Directions:

What are the different reasons that *you* want to go to college? Create a list of your own reasons for wanting to go to college. Then use the tree chart below to separate these reasons into hopeful and fearful motivators.

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## Day 2: To&Through Video – [The College Transition + Challenges to College](#) *Facilitator's Guide*

<p><b>Key Questions for this Session:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are your immediate emotions when you think about college?</li> <li>• Why do you feel that way?</li> <li>• What are some actionable items that you (student) can do to manage those feelings?</li> </ul> <p><b>Key Takeaways for Students (SWBAT):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will be able to see both within the smaller community of their classrooms as well as a part of a larger group that their feelings toward college and reasons for those feelings are completely normal/valid</li> <li>• Students will be able to identify with the video and hopefully find resources/action items that they did not know of before to help manage their feelings about college</li> </ul>	<p><b>Potential Challenges:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many students will have the same emotions about college (e.g. excited, nervous, confused, worried, etc)—and this is good. The point of the lesson however is to not only highlight that many people feel the same way, but the reasons for these feelings are also very similar</li> <li>• There needs to be enough time for the closing activity for students to work on actionable items for their emotions+reasons</li> </ul>
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### Suggested Activities and Time Breakdowns

Time	Minutes	Activity
00:00-00:03	3	<b>Lesson One Recap</b>
00:03-00:23	20	<p><b>Class Activity:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher can write the word “College” on the whiteboard and ask students to come up to the whiteboard and write down what their immediate feelings are when they think of college. Encourage students to “like” an emotion already written down by a peer by placing a check mark next to the word if they agree with that emotion.</li> <li>• After all the students have gone up to the board, teacher should pass out the College/Emotions T-Chart to the students and ask them to pick at least three emotions from the board that they feel are true for them and then write the reasons for those feelings.</li> <li>• After about 5-7 minutes, teacher should ask students to share what emotions they picked and their reasons. It will be important here for the teacher to ask for students to show signs of agreement when students share their reasons so students can see they are not alone in these emotions and why they feel this way.</li> </ul>
00:23-00:31	8	<p><b>T&amp;T Video: <a href="#">College Transition + Challenges to College</a></b></p> <p>Students should be directed to refer to their T-Chart throughout the video and place “likes” next to their answers if the video participants name similar emotions+reasons</p>
00:31-00:45	14	<p><b>Class Debrief of Video</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher should ask students for some examples of the emotions+reasons that the students identified with from the video. Teacher should connect answers to show that the students’ worries, excitement, anxieties, fears, etc. are all normal/valid and transcends to others outside their classroom</li> <li>• Referring back to the T-Chart, teacher should ask students to choose a different colored pen and now go through the T-Chart and write down action items the video presented to help video participants manage their worries/concerns. Students can work alone or in pairs to find action items.</li> </ul>



EMOTIONS

REASONS


## Optional Lesson B: The Single Story

### *Facilitator's Guide*

#### Key Questions for this Session:

- What is a single story? Why does the speaker say that it is dangerous?
- What kind of single stories do our students perceive as others having about them?
- Are these single stories good or bad? Why or why not?
- How do these perceived single stories about themselves affect the students?

#### Key Takeaways for Students (SWBAT):

- There are single stories (stereotypes) of people and things everywhere and they affect our everyday lives. For example, the single story of who is a “typical” college student is a stereotype that is not necessarily true
- Students will be able to identify the single story that we have of a typical college student
- The “single story” needs to be fully understood and processed by students for Optional Lesson C

#### Potential Challenges:

- Students may have a difficult time understanding the “single story” TED talk—do not fixate on the nitty gritty of the speaker’s message. Just guide students to understanding that a “single story” is another term for stereotypes
- It will be important to highlight that positive stereotypes (or single stories) can be just as dangerous as negative ones.
- Drawing a connection of the single story to the stereotypes or “single stories” we have of the typical college student and how that can be dangerous is important

### Suggested Activities and Time Breakdowns

**Pre-Activity Prep:** Students will need post-its and lined paper to write on

Time	Minutes	Activity
00:00-00:03	3	<b>Quick Start:</b> Teacher hands out a post-it to each student and ask them to write three things they immediately think of when they think of a typical college student.
00:03-00:15	12	<b>Video:</b> <a href="#">TED Talk – Danger of the Single Story (2:58-13:20)</a>
00:15-00:22	7	<b>Class Debrief of Video</b> What is the speaker talking about? What is a single story? Why is it dangerous?
00:22-00:37	15	<b>Class Discussion: What is a single story we have about college students?</b> Ask students to look at what they wrote for the three things they think of when they think of a typical college student. Do we have a single story of the typical college student? Is this dangerous? Why? Why not?
00:37-00:45	8	<b>Reflection Write-Up</b> Consider your identity circles worksheet that you filled out in the previous class and what is written on your post-it. Does what you have written on your post-it match what you have down in your identity circles? If yes, how so? If no, why not?

## Day 3: To&Through Video – Cultural Barriers to College

### Facilitator's Guide

<p><b>Key Questions for this Session:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What kind of single stories do our students perceive others having about them?</li> <li>• Are these single stories good or bad? Why or why not?</li> <li>• Why do single stories about you (student) matter when it comes to college?</li> </ul> <p><b>Key Takeaways for Students (SWBAT):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building off of the previous day's lesson about the danger of the single story, students will be able to consider single stories that others might have of them</li> <li>• Students will be able to connect how single stories/ stereotypes can be a barrier for them in a higher-ed setting</li> </ul>	<p><b>Potential Challenges:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Video talks about cultural barriers in a very general way but the implicit message is that the participants faced a lot of racism in college—students' awareness/consciousness may not be at a point where they can easily pick up on this on their own</li> <li>• Most video participants can be perceived as Black—this could possibly pose a problem to students who are non-Black as not identifying with these barriers in college (i.e. they believe it is only an issue for Black students).</li> <li>• The last activity asks students to create a counter story to reject the single stories that were discussed today. Although there are many, many single stories that we reject, the teacher should encourage students to choose one single story for the purpose of this activity. Teacher should model an example of a “counter story” for the last activity</li> </ul>
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### Suggested Activities and Time Breakdowns

Time	Minutes	Activity
00:00-00:05	3	<b>Recap of TED Talk:</b> The Danger of a Single Story OR if Optional Lesson B was not used, there should be a class-based discussions on stereotypes and why all stereotypes are bad (including positive stereotypes)
00:03-00:21	18	<b>Class Discussion:</b> <b>Point 1:</b> Teacher should have students sit in a circle facing in. Students should be asked to do a quick recap of the previous lesson on the single story (stereotypes) and what our single story of the typical college student is. Following the recap, teacher should ask students what are some single stories that others may have of them? Teacher can model an example to help the discussion if students seem hesitant/confused. <b>Point 2:</b> After students have discussed some single stories that others may have of them, teacher should shift the discussion to why these single stories matter in terms of college
00:21-00:24	3	<b>T&amp;T Video:</b> <a href="#">Cultural Barriers to College Transition</a>
00:24-00:37	13	<b>Class Video Debrief:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial reactions to the video? Questions? Was anybody surprised? Why or why not?</li> <li>• What are some of the single stories/stereotypes that the video participants had to overcome in college?</li> </ul>
00:37-00:45	8	<b>My Counter Story</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instruct students to consider the single stories (stereotypes) discussed today.</li> <li>• Have students construct a “counter story”</li> <li>• Questions students should consider: What is a single story that they reject? What is the counter story that they want to offer?</li> </ul>

\* Counter story should be saved in a binder for students to reference later

## My Counter Story

Directions:

Consider the single stories that were discussed in today's class and how they are dangerous. Use the remainder of the class time to create a personal counter story statement that rejects the single story.

Note: Although there are many, many single stories that we reject, for the purpose of this activity, choose one single story to reject and write a counter story.

I reject the single story that:

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And my counter story is:

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## Day 4: To&Through Video – College Advice + School Life Balance

### Facilitator's Guide

#### Key Questions for this Session:

- Reflecting on the past few days, what are some things you (student) found to be helpful?
- Are there any changes in goals/hopes/fears?
- What lingering questions do students have?
- Do students have any new questions? Do students have any new feelings about college?

#### Key Takeaways for Students (SWBAT):

- Students will be able to reflect on the past few class discussions around college and identify their own goals toward college
- Students will be able to articulate at least one helpful insight/piece of advice that they've learned through this process
- Students should have more questions about (or clarity about their feelings toward) college

#### Potential Challenges:

- This day is primarily focused on reflection and requires students to be silent for most of the time (Reflection doodle and Gallery Walk). It is important to set the tone at the beginning of the period to make sure students have sufficient time and space to complete the activities.
- Students may have questions on “how” to fill out the reflection doodle—teacher should emphasize that the doodle is just a tool that the students can choose to use however they wish. The teacher can also fill out a doodle to provide as a sample...

### Suggested Activities and Time Breakdowns

**Pre-Activity Prep:** Before the students enter the classroom, the teacher should prepare 4 large post-it pads. Each pad should have the following statements:

- Something I feel excited/happy about...
- Something I feel nervous/worried about...
- Questions I still have...
- The most helpful thing I learned was...

Each post-it pad should be placed on random walls in the classroom with enough space for students to write on them.

Time	Minutes	Activity
00:00-00:10	10	<p><b>Class Activity: Reflection Doodle</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a quick group recap on what the class has been talking about the past few days with the T&amp;T videos</li> <li>• Pass out Reflection Doodle to students and take the next 10 minutes to reflect on what they've talked about and learned. The Reflection Doodle is a tool the students can use in any way they desire. Encourage students to do what works best for them.</li> <li>• In the last minute or so, ask students to come up with some questions that might still be lingering if they have not done so already</li> </ul>

### Suggested Activities and Time Breakdowns (continued)

00:10-00:15	5	<b>T&amp;T Video: <a href="#">College Advice + School Life Balance</a></b>
00:15-00:22	7	<p><b>Class Video Debrief:</b> Ask for initial thoughts or reactions to the advice video. If students are quiet, the teacher can ask more probing questions such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What advice did you find helpful?</li> <li>• Did they answer any of the questions that you have written down?</li> </ul>
00:22-00:44	20	<p><b>Closing Activity: Gallery Walk</b> Ask students to silently walk around the room and write down responses to the topics on the large post-it pads in regards to college. Encourage students to “like” their peers’ responses if they agree by placing a check mark next to it</p> <p>At the last five minutes, ask students to stop where they are and have student volunteers read out some of the things that were written on the post-its.</p> <p>**These post-its could be used to inform future lessons/discussions</p>



# Reflection Doodle



My goals and aspirations as a:



Questions I have:



Something I learned from my peers:



Real steps I can take toward my goals:

My hopes:



Some hurdles I might face:



My roots:

## Days 5, 6, and 7: Final Project — Bio Videos

### Facilitator's Guide

#### Key Questions for this Session:

- Why do you want to pursue a college degree?
- Who or what is your biggest source of support?
- Whose advice/story from the T&T videos did you find most helpful? Why?
- Lastly, what is a counter story that you would like to share? You can use the one that you created from the previous lessons or create a brand new one.

#### Key Takeaways for Students (SWBAT):

- Students will be able to watch the T&T [Bio videos](#) of individual participants and create a project that is a culmination of the all the activities up until this point using a medium of their choice
- Students should be encouraged to be creative in their project and should be given leeway to express themselves as they choose

#### Potential Challenges:

- Understanding the “counter story”: Counter stories are stories that are deliberately constructed to challenge dominant narratives in society and offer ways to interrupt the status quo and work for change.
- “It is a method of telling the stories of those people whose experiences are not often told”

### Suggested Activities and Time Breakdowns

**Pre-Activity Prep:** Laptops and headphones should be provided for students to watch the T&T [Bio videos](#) on their own

**Final Project:** The final project for the T&T College Videos will ask students to create their own “Bio Video” which they will present to the class in a 3-minute presentation. Students will answer the following questions:

1. Why do you want to pursue a college degree?
2. What are your hopes and fears about college?
3. Whose advice/story from the T&T videos did you find most helpful? Why?
4. Lastly, what is a counter story that you would like to share? You can use the one that you created from the previous lessons or create a brand new one.

If students are uncomfortable with creating a video, teacher should encourage students to find a different medium of expressing themselves that still addresses the three questions. There are no restrictions and students should be encouraged to get as creative as possible.

Time	Minutes	Day 5 Activity
00:00-00:45	45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give directions for final project to students and inform them that they will have two class periods to finish the project. The project is meant to be a culmination of everything they discussed and worked on and they are encouraged to look over their notes/activities from previous lessons</li> <li>• Remainder of time on Day 5 should be spent “researching” for their projects.</li> <li>• Before students can move forward with their projects, they should first watch the T&amp;T Bio videos for inspiration and for their answer to Question 3</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In the last minute or so, ask students to come up with some questions that might still be lingering if they have not done so already</li> </ul>
<b>Time</b>	<b>Minutes</b>	<b>Day 6 Activity</b>
00:00-00:45	45	<p>Students will use the second day to finish up their research and start producing their final projects.</p> <p>Note: Teacher should collect information on this day as to what kind of project the student will be presenting (e.g. video, essay, visual art, poetry, etc.)</p>
		<b>Day 7 Activity</b>
		<p>Students will present their final projects to the class.</p> <p>Depending on number of students in the class, the presentations may require an additional day.</p>