

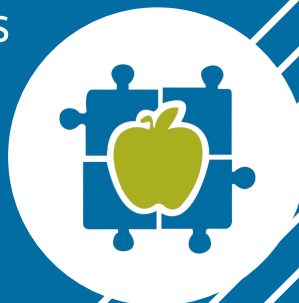
WORCESTER EDUCATION COLLABORATIVE

FOSTERING CIVIL DISCOURSE

Educator's Guide: How do we talk about issues that matter?

With Elizabeth Carroll

Facing History and Ourselves



About Facing History & Ourselves

The mission of Facing History and Ourselves is to use the lessons of history and current events to stand up to bigotry and hate.

Fostering civil discourse is a necessity in today's classroom and the implications and consequences of how well that is done determine how well students, when they become adults, can build well-adjusted, productive, and inclusive families and communities.

Pedagogical Triangle for Historical and Civic Understanding

Civic responsibility and participation are developed by three mutually reinforcing principles:

- intellectual rigor
- emotional engagement, and
- ethical reflection.
- Students realize that choices come with implications and consequences for oneself and others.

Creating a “Brave” Space for Civil Discourse

A “brave” space maintains the four priorities of a trauma-informed classroom:

- Connectedness
- Predictability
- Flexibility
- Empowerment
- Teachers and students co-create and commit to a “brave” space in which all members are invited to and empowered to contribute as equals.
- As the members of the “brave” space are valued and respected, different perspectives are invited, valued, and respected.

Four Steps to Creating the “Brave” Space:

1. **Start with Yourself**--examining our own beliefs and perspectives and owning those in the “brave” space. Being increasingly cognizant of how our beliefs and perspectives may impact students.
2. **Building community & connection**--the foundation for fostering civil discourse. Setting norms--the “ground rules” for the discussion and relationships within the classroom.
3. **Facilitate Reflective Conversations**--providing opportunities for:
 - personal reflection (journaling)



- small-group discussions (Big Paper, Save the Last Word for Me) and
- full-class discussions (Jamboard, Wraparound, Barometer).

4. **Debrief**--Meta Reflections and takeaways.

Introducing the “Brave” Space through a poem:

- Poem--” Invitation to Brave Space” by Micky ScottBey Jones
- Pick a line or two that is most significant to you and tell why--what does it mean in our lives; in our community; why is it relevant?
- Ex. “We all carry scars and we have all caused wounds”
 - Just as the actions of others have hurt us, our actions have hurt others.
 - Taking responsibility for our own feelings; taking responsibility and positive action--rather than blaming.
 - All the choices that we make--All that we think, say and do-- have consequences and implications for ourselves and others.

Facilitating a Reflective Conversation with Jamboard by Google

Connect, Extend, Challenge

- Students can post ideas on Jamboard--a graffiti board activity for questions on an issue from the lenses of the head, the heart, and the conscience. (How we think about something; how we feel about something; how we manage our behavior ethically.)

Applicability across the academic disciplines:

- The Brave Space and Civil Discourse is for any and every class and for every school--not just history class.

To find out more:

- <https://www.facinghistory.org/>
- PDF for Fostering Civil Discourse: How Can We Talk About Issues That Matter?
<https://bit.ly/3sJYfsI>
- PDF for connect, extend, challenge activity
<https://bit.ly/3kG1Cy4>

