

1.4 CREATING A BRAVE SPACE

Essential Question(s): What is my role in creating and participating in a brave space for myself and others?

Overview

Educators want a welcoming classroom where every student feels appreciated, supported and able to express their ideas. While creating a safe space has been the focus for a long time, we are now calling on educators and students to create “brave spaces.” These are spaces where everyone feels that they can contribute, they will be heard and they are willing to challenge and be challenged. Conversations about current events, politics and race (among others) can be difficult, but learning is likely to occur when the classroom is a brave space and everyone is willing to consider a new way of seeing things. The practice of establishing and maintaining a brave space in the classroom is one that can be reinforced and applies to learning beyond civics.

Snapshot

What Students Will Learn:

In this lesson, students will learn what a brave space is and will pledge an action toward creating and/or participating in a brave space classroom.

Standard(s):

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.1
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.2

Time: 50 minutes





Key Vocabulary

brave space
confidentiality
impacts
intentions
privilege

Objectives

- Visualize what “brave space” means.
- Discuss the definition of brave space.
- Learn the brave space requirements.
- Pledge one action to creating and/or participating in a brave space.

Differentiation

- Depending on your class model, you can have students participate in a traditional gallery walk where they are able to analyze the pictures around the room at their own pace, or you can have students at a specific station for a carousel activity.
- For students who need additional scaffolding, pair them before the activity. This is a useful way for students to get to know each other and to collaborate.

What’s Needed

- Writing utensil and paper or 1:1 technology
- Computer, screen or projector
- Prepare the warm up question in Step #1, questions in Step #3 and the prompts in Step #8 to be displayed for whole class viewing.
- Prepare “Brave Space Gallery Walk Image” for whole class viewing. Read through the lesson and decide the best method for displaying images—gallery walk or carousel (see Step #7).
- Prepare the “Brave Space” sheet to be projected for whole class viewing or make enough copies for each student.

Classroom Setup

- A gallery walk works best if there is space for student flow to both observe the viewing items and to move around. Post the “Brave Space Gallery Walk Image,” on the walls around the room or put them on desktops, ideally clear of other items.
- If using the Carousel method, seating should be in small groups with a table or writing surface in the middle. The picture should be in the middle and visible to everyone seated around the table.

Direct Teaching

1. As students come into the classroom, welcome them and ask them to complete the warm up question that you have displayed:

Write about a time when you did not feel welcome. It could have happened at school, outside of school, during a sports game, or other activity. How did it make you feel?

Depending on your classroom, you can have students complete this by writing a few sentences, having an informal discussion with their neighbor or having a whole class discussion.

2. Ask students to underline the key words about how it made them feel. Next, have them “popcorn” those words and phrases into the classroom space. Then ask if any students are willing to share out more about their experience.

Note: The term “popcorn” is a strategy for sharing ideas from as many different voices as possible. One person shares a quick, laser-sharp response to a prompt, and then the next person shares a different idea, and so on.

3. Display the following questions and have students answer them on a piece of paper.

In a classroom space ...

- What do I need to feel safe? What do others need to do?
- What do I need to participate? What do I need from others?
- What do I need to challenge myself? What do I need from others?

Tell students to hold on to these ideas for the time being because the group will be returning to them later in the class period.

4. Review the essential question for the day:

What is my role in creating and participating in a brave space for myself and others?

Make reference to the opening journal reflection, which the class will be building on throughout the day.

5. Ask students, “What is a brave space?” Have students think about it in terms of what “brave” means and what “space” means. Once they have had time to think, ask a few students to share.

Note: You can have students think about a discussion they participated in that was complicated and/or difficult, like the one they might have had about what it means to be “American” if you previously conducted lesson “[1.1 Civics and the United States of America](#).” Ask students if they were in a brave space during that discussion? If not, what was needed to make it braver?”

6. Explain to students that they will be participating in a gallery walk today. You can say:

A gallery walk is an activity where you move around the room and read/look at the contents posted on the wall. Today, you will be looking at pictures related to brave spaces. You can move around the room at your own pace, but keep in mind that you have a total of 20 minutes to look at all six pictures. While you are looking at the pictures, write about how you think they relate to brave spaces. Begin your gallery walk.

Consider asking students to jot down their observations of what is missing from the gallery of pictures.

7. Partner students and have them discuss what they saw and any questions they might have. Consider using these sentence prompts:

Partner A: I think these pictures represent brave spaces because _____.

Partner B: I see. I think they represent brave spaces because _____.

Partner A: One thing that surprised me was _____.

Partner B: Yes, one question I have is _____.

8. Reconvene the whole class. Ask students/pairs the following questions:

- What did you notice about the pictures in relation to brave spaces?
- What questions do you have?
- What are your ideas about how the pictures do or do not represent brave spaces?
- What is a “brave space”?

9. Facilitate a short discussion from students’ answers above. Refer to the “**Brave Space**” sheet, affirming what students share—ensuring that you connect their ideas to the ten ideas listed. Then, tell students that you are going to share some ideas to reflect on and practice creating and participating in a brave space. Share these 10 ideas with students by projecting the “Brave Space” sheet or distributing a copy to each student to review together.

| Consider posting the “Brave Space” sheet in your classroom as a reminder and a point of reference.

10. Ask students if there is anything not reflected on this list that they feel would be an important addition. And note that, like the U.S. Constitution, this list should ideally be a living, breathing document. If things come up throughout the semester or school year, the classroom group should feel empowered and responsible to suggest and make changes or additions to the list as classroom dynamics and needs shift. (Even if students do not initiate making suggestions in the coming weeks, the teacher should be intentional in modeling the revisiting: “Just checking in to see if there is anything we need to do to uphold this list. Is there anything we need to add?” The revisit is especially helpful when and if challenging or controversial topics are explored.)

| **Optional:** Depending on the ages of the students, if there is time, it can be powerful to elicit the qualities of brave spaces rather than immediately sharing them. The students will have experiences about what those spaces do or do not look like. They could create a list in small groups and then share with the whole class or do it all as a whole class. Then the 10 items above can be shared to see what they would want to add from that list.

Closing

End the lesson by explaining to students the importance of brave spaces. Have them complete the following prompt:

In order to create and participate in a brave space for my classmates and for myself, I need to (Stop/Start/Continue) doing _____.

Explain they can pick one of the “Stop/Start/Continue” or they can do all three.

BRAVE SPACE GALLERY WALK IMAGE



BRAVE SPACE GALLERY WALK IMAGE



BRAVE SPACE GALLERY WALK IMAGE



BRAVE SPACE GALLERY WALK IMAGE



BRAVE SPACE GALLERY WALK IMAGE



BRAVE SPACE GALLERY WALK IMAGE



BRAVE SPACE

Ten things to pay attention to when creating and participating in a brave space.

1. Welcome multiple viewpoints.

Be open to hearing and understanding new ideas and perspectives. Speak from your own experience by using “I” statements. Ask questions to understand the sources of disagreements.

2. Own your intentions and your impacts.

Respect each other’s experiences and feelings by taking responsibility for the impact of your words. On the other side, if you have a strong reaction to something, let the group know. Be open to dialogue.

3. Work to recognize your privileges.

Use this space to recognize and investigate your privileges (for example: race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ability). Honor the different experiences we all bring to this space.

4. Take risks.

Lean into discomfort. We are all in process. Challenge yourself to contribute even if it is not perfectly formulated.

5. Make space.

Share speaking time and try to speak after others who have not spoken. Take space if you sometimes hold back and do not participate as much as others.

6. Notice and name group dynamics in the moment.

We are all responsible for this space. Be aware of how others are responding or not responding. Ask for a “time out” or dialogue if needed.



7. Actively listen.

Use your energy to listen to what is said before thinking about how to respond. Notice when defensiveness and denial arise.

8. Challenge with care.

Find ways to respectfully challenge others and be open to challenges to your own views. Think about how to question ideas without personal attacks.

9. Commit to confidentiality.

Do not share the specifics of what people say but also take responsibility for sharing important messages and themes outside the class. One way to think about this is: “stories stay, lessons leave.”

10. Break it down.

Use simple language and background information when necessary. Ask for clarification if needed.