

Election 2020: Supporting Each Other in Structuring Student Conversations on Controversial Topics



Thank you to our colleagues who participated in this discussion today!

- Rachel Shanley-LIN grade 2 teacher
- Michelle Vail-PRE Math Coach
- Liz Adamo-PRE grade 4 teacher
- Jen Kingston-WHE grade 4 teacher
- Peter Budmen- PRE grade 5 teacher
- Jill Herwig-GMS Health Teacher
- Danny Gallucci-SBA Math Teacher

- Marissa Gambale-GMS Math teacher
- Mark Fellowes-RHS History teacher
- Andrew Turchon-RHS History teacher
- Tara Boyd-RHS Social Worker
- Stephanie Porrazzo-ELEM Consulting Teacher
- Ashley Waterberg-SBA Social Worker

Objectives and Agenda

Objectives

PWBAT utilizes structures such as norms and protocols to facilitate civil discourse

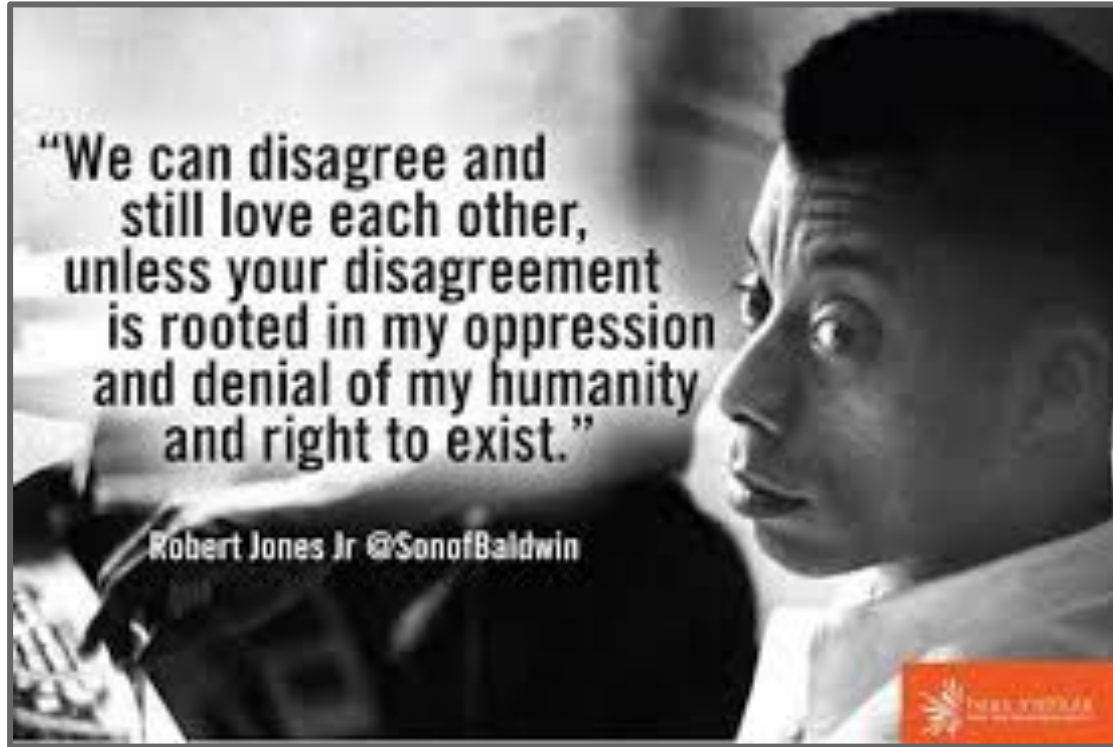
PWBAT identify and implement resources for civil discourse

Agenda

- Norms
- Limitations
- General Ideas on Difficult Conversations
- Resources for our work
- The Final Word Protocol-lower stakes
- Fishbowl Discussion-higher stakes

Norms

- Monitor your own “air time”
- Actively listen to your colleagues ideas even if they differ greatly from your own
- Be honest and speak your mind
- Challenge yourself to think beyond what you’ve always done
- Call in instead of calling out
- Speak your truth but understand that words have an impact



What speech might *not be* within the bounds of reflective and thoughtful discourse in this classrooms (meeting, etc.)?

General Thoughts for Having Conversations Around Controversial Topics

1. **Know yourself**-where are you coming from? What topics do you find difficult to discuss with students?
2. **Build a culture of trust**
3. **Establish Clear Guidelines**
 - Norms for discussion
 - Unacceptable speech
 - How will we hold each other accountable?
4. **Caregiver communication**-how will caregivers be made aware of what we are discussing?

Resources for Our Work

<u>Fostering Civil Discourse (Facing History and Ourselves)</u>	How do we talk about issues that matter within the classroom? This is a guide from <i>Facing History</i> .
<u>Speaking up Without Tearing Down</u>	Article from <i>Teaching Tolerance</i> about calling in as opposed to calling out.
<u>Election 2020: Engaging Students in Civic Discourse</u>	John Hopkins University-best practices for engaging students in civic discourse in the lead-up to the election.
<u>General Election Resources and Letter</u>	Letter from director with related election resources.
<u>School Reform Initiative Discussion Protocols (by tag)</u>	"Structured processes to support focused and productive conversations, build collective understanding, and drive school improvement." These protocols can be modified . They can be used for adults (as well as with students).

The Final Word Protocol

1. Get into a group of 4 or 5.
2. Have an important quote identified to share. Your quote should come from one of the resources for today:

[Fostering Civil Discourse \(Facing History and Ourselves\)](#)

[Speaking up Without Tearing Down](#)

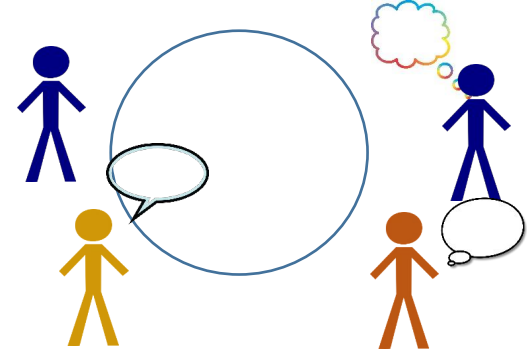
[Election 2020: Engaging Students in Civic Discourse](#)

3. Choose a timer.

2. The first person shares their quote and why they chose it (2 mins).



3. Each person offers a response to the quote (1 min max per person).

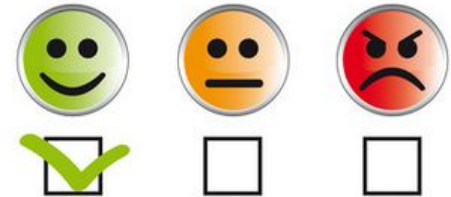


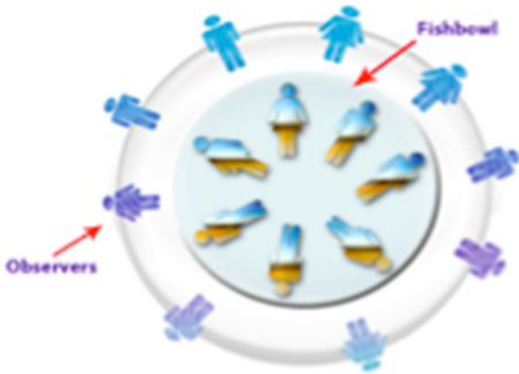
4. In no more than **one minute** the presenter responds to what has been said. Now what is she/he thinking?



5. The next person in the circle then begins by sharing what struck him or her most from the text. *Proceed around the circle, responding to this next presenter's quote in the same way as the first presenter's. This process continues until each person has had a round with his or her quote.*

6. End by debriefing the process in your small group.

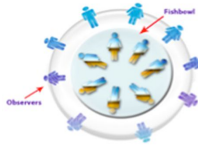




Directions

1. Look at the questions for your group, **prepare your thoughts individually. (6 minutes)**
2. Before the fishbowl discussion begins, **turn to a neighbor and talk** about your ideas and opinions related to the readings. **(5 minutes- remote breakout rooms)**
3. **Form the inner and outer circles.** The inner circle will **talk** about the ideas and opinions raised when conversing with their partner. The outer circle **takes notes** on the discussion/lists questions. **(10 minutes) In remote setting, the outer circle turns their cameras off.**
4. After the **inner circle** finishes their discussion, the **outer circle** shares comments/questions. **(5 minutes)**
5. The inner/outer circles rotate and the process repeats

Fishbowl Discussion Question



Educators will draw on information from the three readings for today (slide seven) as well as from their personal experience.

1. What have been some things you have done to create safe spaces for difficult conversations (remote and/or in-person)?
2. Can/should educators keep their personal opinions out of discussions of this nature?
3. How do you handle derogatory comments/slurs/stereotypes when they occur in a class discussion (remote and/or in-person)?