Developing Brave Spaces in the Classroom

REBECCA MATTIS-PINARD
CHIEF DIVERSITY OFFICER & TITLE IX COORDINATOR

SARAH NELSON WRIGHT
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA ARTS
DIRECTOR, THERESA LANG CENTER FOR PRODUCING
Goals

- Understand importance of considering race in the classroom
- Develop awareness of how we may be upholding white supremacist values in the classroom through silence
- Model how to interrupt the culture of racial silence for students and colleagues
- Devise strategies for how to begin developing honest and productive conversations around race
Ground Rules and Strategies for Dialogue

- Confidentiality
- Own intentions and impact
- Work to recognize your privileges
- Literacy moments
- Use moments of discomfort to inquire deeper
- Intellect vs Feelings
- Challenge with Care
- Keep focus on race for today’s session
- Be ok with lack of closure
Mingle Huddle

- How do you feel when you talk about race or racism?
- The last time I talked about race/racism at MMC was...
- One challenge I am facing in addressing race/racism at MMC is
- Why do our students experience a silence around race at MMC?
Definition of Racism

- A system of social structures which provides or denies access, safety, resources and power based on race categories and produces and reproduces race-based inequities.

- It affects us individually, is built into our institutions and is woven into the fabric of our culture.

- Adapted from Border Crossers Talking About Race training
Students Thoughts on Race

What word comes to mind when you think about discussions of race at MMC?

Respond at PollEv.com/rebeccap064  Text REBECCAP064 to 37607 once to join, then text your message
Safe Space vs Brave Space

- Safe Space: a place or environment in which a person or category of people can feel confident that they will not be exposed to discrimination, criticism, harassment, or any other emotional or physical harm.

- Brave Space: a place to come together to have hard conversations and hear each other out - even and especially when that is challenging.
Strategies to Develop Brave Spaces

- Set the Tone Early On
- Breathe
- Don’t Avoid the Issue
- Inquire
- Continue the Conversation
- Intervene
- Apply a Racial Equity Lens
- Follow Up

- Adapted from BorderCrossers Strategies for Creating Racial Equity in Classrooms and Schools
In groups, discuss:

- What have you done or are currently doing to develop brave spaces in your classrooms?
- How can you better develop brave spaces around race in your classrooms?
Case Studies

Work in a group to discuss strategies for each situation then present to the larger group.

- What is challenging about this moment?
- What is the learning goal for a moment like this?
- What possible action do you take?
- How do you feel in this moment?
- What kind of resources do you wish you had at MMC regarding race and pedagogy.
“When I dare to be powerful, to use my strength in the service of my vision, then it becomes less and less important whether I am afraid.”

- Audre Lorde