**Toolkit for Social Justice Education –**

**5 Essential Components**

Identify and explain how and why/not your curriculum addresses the elements of Social Justice Education.

|  |
| --- |
| **CONTENT MASTERY/FACTUAL INFORMATION**: Students learn the significance of broad and varied information acquisition through data collection, historical contextualization, and micro-macro levels of content analysis. Leads to a student centered classroom, with thinking that connects individuals/community to the larger society.  In our unit study of Coney Island, fourth graders focus on the multiple aspects of Coney Island’s influence in Brooklyn, New York City, and beyond. Through activating prior knowledge of Coney Island and connecting it with newly acquired content, students learn its significance in an authentic and relevant way that they can connect to. Through the multiple diverse student-centered groups taking place throughout the unit, students have the opportunity to learn from one another; this cooperation gives students the tools to respect, listen, and accept differing opinions and beliefs of others. |
| **CRITICAL ANALYSIS (Systems of Oppression)** Students learn the significance of **P5**  **Process = Perspective + Positioning + Power + Possibility**  Prepares students to take action  In the classroom, students learn the systems of oppression in context of their Coney Island unit by developing a sense of perspective, positioning, power, and possibility in their thinking and actions. Students see a variety of perspectives through group work and also by putting themselves in the shoes of the oppressed (the “freak show” we cover in our unit). By understanding the varying positions of those within the system of oppression, they gain a greater sense of empathy in their academic and social communities. In addition, power dynamics are brought into play throughout the unit where both immigration and freak shows are concerned by understanding why these people were laughed at and prejudiced against. Students will understand the concept of race, socioeconomic status, disability, etc in the context of who had the power in early American society and why immigrants and “freak shows” were looked at as outsiders. Students will also look at the possibility of immigrants and “freak shows” to exist as parts of society rather than outsiders; further, they will examine how the gap is closing and how everyone should have equal rights. They will see how far possibilities of outsiders have come and how far they still have yet to go. |
| **ACTION AND SOCIAL CHANGE**: Students learn that their knowledge is empowering, which transforms them into authentic change agents. Provides hope and possibility.  Students are given a great deal of responsibility throughout the Coney Island unit that allows them to take control of their learning. In doing so, we allow a great deal of flexibility in projects and discussion, yet challenge students so they can pursue greater levels of thinking. Through delving into a topic such as Coney Island, it is important to reflect on things that students already know about (Nathan’s hot dogs and the amusement park) but research more behind the scenes information that is not completely known by the public. This allows students to realize that there is more that meets the eye, which transforms them into active thinkers who dig below the surface. Students will realize that every moment in history has multiple perspectives which must be considered; they will realize that, after all, this combination of perspectives is what pushed America to be what it is today. |
| **PERSONAL REFLECTION (EDUCATOR/STUDENTS)**: Educators and students learn to examine and recognize the relationships of power, privilege, biases, domination, imposition, oppression and the impact on individual/institutional/systemic levels. Leads to the development of a socially just classroom environment.  Students will be constantly reflecting with each other and teachers to better understand the impact of Coney Island on every aspect of the population that visited and continues to visit the site. We will examine the multiple aspects of Coney Island over time that demonstrates when and who was coming to Coney Island throughout its history, and why. Further, we will look at changes in Coney Island’s population (both visiting and residing) to determine the impact of socioeconomic systems. |
| **MULTICULTURAL GROUP DYNAMICS**: Culturally relevant learning/teaching environment is customized, built on an understanding/recognition of group dynamics and impact of teaching on social identities. Leads to cross-cultural communication; dialogue on diversity issues.  Over the course of the unit, students will reflect and share personal beliefs and opinions with the class based on what we are learning about the cultural impact of those who settle in Coney Island. This allows them to relate to others, but also to learn something new about themselves. Students have the opportunity to work with a variety of peers within the classroom, exploring diverse group dynamics; further, they become accustomed to differing views and experiences with culture, broadening their knowledge of Coney Island as well as their immediate classmates (and also the culture that surrounds us in the present). |