**Circle Of Oppression Model**

(This Model provides a framework for educators to assess their curriculum on issues related to social justice. What steps can educators take to remove barriers that exclude marginalized groups in classrooms, schools, communities?)

*Developed by Pat Russo, SUNY Oswego*

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**What does it mean to teach for social justice?**

- recognize oppression its many forms
- take action in classrooms and schools to prevent these cycles from occurring
- take an active stance to break the cycle of oppression
- create an environment that enables all students to feel accepted and included
- teach students to recognize and resist forms of oppression in schools, communities, and the world at large

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**Online Resources**

Educators for Social Responsibility:
http://www.esrnational.org/index.php

NYSUT Speak Up/Speak Out Curricula:
http://www.nysut.org/cps/rde/xchg/nysut/hs.xsl/rfk.htm

Rethinking Schools
http://www.rethinkingschools.org

Social Justice Training Institute
http://www.sjti.org

Teaching for Change.org:
http://www.teachingforchange.org

Teaching Tolerance
http://www.teachingtolerance.com

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**The Syracuse Teachers Association, and New York State United Teachers, invite you to join us as we take action to **

**Speak Up and Speak Out**

**on issues related to Social Justice...**

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"Every time we turn our heads the other way when we see the law flouted; when we tolerate what we know to be wrong; when we close our eyes and ears to the corrupt because we are too busy, or too frightened; when we fail to speak up and speak out – we strike a blow against freedom and decency and justice."

Robert F. Kennedy, Champion for Social Justice

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**Take a Stand – Join Us Now**

**Together we can make a difference!**

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*STA Committee for Social Justice Education*
What can educators do... to break the cycle of oppression in schools and society?

Become an Activist for Social Change

- Begin with the assumption that all children can learn, and all families want the best for their children.
- Critically examine teaching practices and curricular materials that include and privilege some groups while marginalizing or excluding others.
- Teach children to value differences, recognize injustice, and take action against injustice when they see it.
- Expand your professional knowledge about issues of oppression and marginalization.
- Take a stance in your personal and professional lives against oppression in society.
- Collaborate and dialogue with other teachers who teach for social justice and engage in a critical analysis about issues of social justice in education.
- Encourage school leaders to take a stance and develop a zero tolerance policy against slurs/violent acts toward marginalized groups.

Race/Multiculturalism

- Include curricular materials that accurately portray people of color, and their contributions to society.
- Find out about cultural backgrounds of families and find ways to support them beyond a “celebration of diversity.”
- Acknowledge holidays of religious groups in addition to Christian holidays.
- Teach about racial slurs and racist attitudes, and establish a zero tolerance policy against them in your school.
- Avoid making assumptions about students based on race.

“Multicultural education needs to be accompanied by a deep commitment to social justice and equal access to resources. Multicultural education needs, in short, to be about much more than ethnic tidbits and cultural sensitivity...” — Sonia Nieto

Gender

- Help students see how traditional gender roles limit options for both boys and girls.
- Include information about the history and contributions of women in our society.
- Help students learn about the history of oppression, past and current, toward women in the US and other countries.
- Show examples of men and women who have served as allies in the struggle against sexism.
- Avoid making assumptions about students based on gender.

Sexuality

- Provide representations of all sorts of family structures in class discussions.
- Help students see how traditional gender roles may lead to invisibility and discrediting of LGBT people.
- Create and/or participate in a LGBT support group in your school or community.
- Teach about LGBT slurs and violence toward LGBTs, and establish a zero tolerance policy against these in your school.
- Have curricular materials that accurately portray the existence, struggles and contributions of LGBT people.
- Do not assume that all students and parents are heterosexuals.

Social Class

- Pay attention to how assignments might favor middle class students and put others at a disadvantage.
- Demonstrate and value how lower class workers contribute to our society.
- Help students critically examine their environment and learn to recognize inequities of resources.
- Find ways to communicate effectively with all families and include them in their child’s education.
- Teach students about roles of power that relate to class issues so all children have a chance to succeed.
- Help students see how some classes are privileged and others are at a disadvantage.
- Avoid making assumptions about students based on class.

“Any viable notion of critical pedagogy should affirm and enrich the meaning, language and knowledge forms that students actually use to negotiate and inform their lives.” — Henry Giroux

Ability

- Help students critically examine their environment and identify places where access is limited to some people.
- Learn about the history, contributions and current issues of people with disabilities.
- Find ways to fully include all students in your classrooms and schools.
- Identify ways to modify instruction to fit the needs of all students.
- Speak out against bias/slurs toward people with a disability and develop a zero tolerance policy against this in your school.
- Avoid making assumptions about students based on a perceived or identified disability.

“Too often, what comes before... to proceed in social justice, is... the sense of injustice... You say, my God, that’s unfair, that’s unjust. And if you say it’s unjust, you can say something is inhumane, or something is an infringement on somebody else’s freedom, then you can say, what? This is a terrible deficiency, what can I do to repair it?” — Maxine Greene