



Signature in the Schools: The Voices on Blackwell Island

Exercise: Qualities of a Changemaker

Subject(s): Social Studies, English

Goals: Students will be able to:

- Differentiate between fact and opinion.
- Plan and organize writing to address a specific audience and purpose.
- Investigate and explain the ways individuals and groups exert influence on the national government.

Show Connection:

Some of the inhabitants of Blackwell's Asylum possess their own strong characteristics and qualities that make them stand out amongst the crowd in one way or another. These qualities help them speak up and out for what they are passionate about. To better understand how effective these trailblazers were for future generations, students will explore some change makers of their own and the qualities they possess and how they can help lead to change in the world.

Materials:

- Paper
- Pen or Pencil

Description:

- This exercise works best when done following your trip to see *The Voices of Blackwell Island*.
- In *The Voices of Blackwell Island*, the characters all have their own aspirations they reach for in one manner or another beyond the walls of the asylum. Some of these aspirations might seem small and some of them may seem incredibly large. Regardless of their size, these causes are just as valid as any other and they leave an impact on the individuals and community around them.
- What causes and dreams do you recall seeing the characters in the production fight for and pursue? Do these dreams seem antiquated in our modern age now? How might dreams and aspirations
- On a sheet of paper, have students list three female identifying people alive today that they think will be influential for future generations.
- Once they've written down their names, invite them to interrogate their initial responses: *Why did you choose these women?*

Be specific! (Students may write, draw, list out their reasoning however they see fit.)

- Circle back with the students to touch base regarding their choices. What drew you to select this person? What about them and the work they do and what they stand for makes you believe they will be impactful for future generations?
- Send the students back to their papers. Students should now select two qualities they feel that all of these female identifying individuals possess that are their greatest strengths and then write three paragraphs on the following:
 - » How do you see these qualities show up in how they navigate through the world?
 - » How do these qualities affect the work they do and the causes they fight for?
 - » Why do you personally admire these qualities? Do you think you possess them or would you like to try and develop them more for yourself?

Discussion:

- What qualities do you possess, big or small, that you think will be impactful not only on you and the life you live, but on those that are a part of your communities?
- What qualities would you like to possess to have a bigger and more positive impact on your communities? What do you think the roadmap to developing those attributes may be?
- How can you foster growth and development in a quality you feel you might not possess at the moment?