
Belonging to Build Equitable Practices

— Dr. Nikole Hollins-Sims —

Language Matters!

What is Equity?

Every learner has **access** to the educational resources and rigor they need at the **right moment** in their education across race, gender, ethnicity, religion, language, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, family background and/or family income.

www.ccsso.org

www.aspeninstitute.org/education



What does the field say?

- “Equity does not apply to me...we are a rural district and don’t have racial diversity...”
- “This is indoctrination....and pushing an agenda”
- “We aren’t doing equity, we’re focused on trauma and mental health...”
- “Here’s one more thing, where can I get training to check this off....”
- “We can’t say the word equity or SEL...”

Equity Terms

- **Culturally Relevant Pedagogy** Lessons and teaching where students accept and affirm their cultural identity while developing critical perspectives that challenge inequities that schools and other institutions perpetuate.
- **Culturally Responsive Teaching** A pedagogy that recognizes the importance of including students' cultural references in all aspects of learning.
- **Inclusive environments** Spaces that foster a sense of belonging through a culture of dignity.

Source: Belonging Through a Culture of Dignity, Cobb & Krownapple, 2019

Source: <https://mneep.org/word/> Race Equity Glossary

Additional Terms, cont.

- **Microaggressions** -- *Everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership.* - Derald Wing Sue, Ph.D.
- Examples:
 - Failing to learn to pronounce or continuing to mispronounce the names of students after they have corrected you.
 - Using the term “illegals” to reference undocumented students.
 - Using heteronormative metaphors or examples in class.
 - Hosting debates in class that place students from groups who may represent a minority opinion in class in a difficult position.
 - Complimenting non-white students on their use of “good English”.

Source: [Microaggressions in the Classroom.pdf\(messiah.edu\)](#)

Bias and Disproportionate Outcomes

- Less than 15% of American men are over six feet tall, yet almost 60% of corporate CEOs are over six feet tall. (Ross, 2008)
- 13% of the U.S. population is black, yet 40% of those incarcerated are black. (OCR, 2015)
- 3% of advertising creative directors are women, yet 50.8% of the American population are female.

Disproportionality in Education - Behavior

“Black students made up 13.6 percent of Pennsylvania students, but received almost half of OSSs (48.25 percent)” (ACLU of PA, 2015, p. 21).

“Students with disabilities are almost twice as likely as non-disabled students to receive OSS – 11.1 percent vs. 5.7 percent” (Losen & Martinez, 2013)

“Pennsylvania is one of 11 states (and D.C.) where the difference in suspension rates between Black and White students (a “suspension gap”) is higher than the national average for both male and female students” (ACLU of PA, 2015, p. 14).

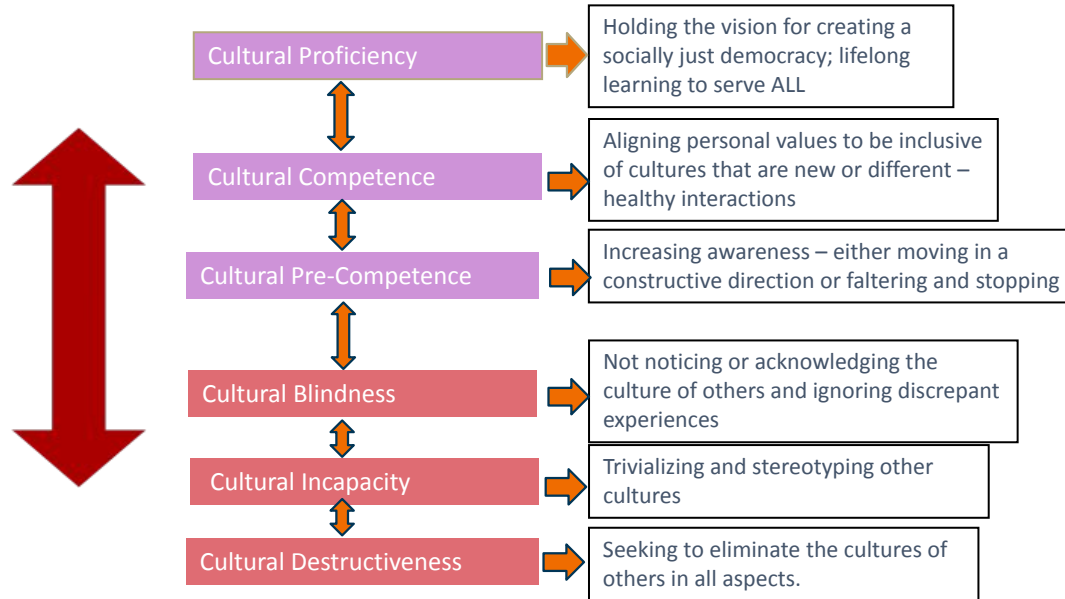
Educational Inequities

- Societal Inequity
- Socioeconomic Inequity
- Cultural Inequity
- Familial Inequity
- Programmatic Inequity
- Staffing Inequity
- Instructional Inequity
- Assessment Inequity
- Linguistic Inequity



Approximately 25% of all K-12 public school students did **not** have access to an Internet connection or an adequate device to access online materials at home (Kelley & Sisneros, 2020).

The Cultural Proficiency Continuum

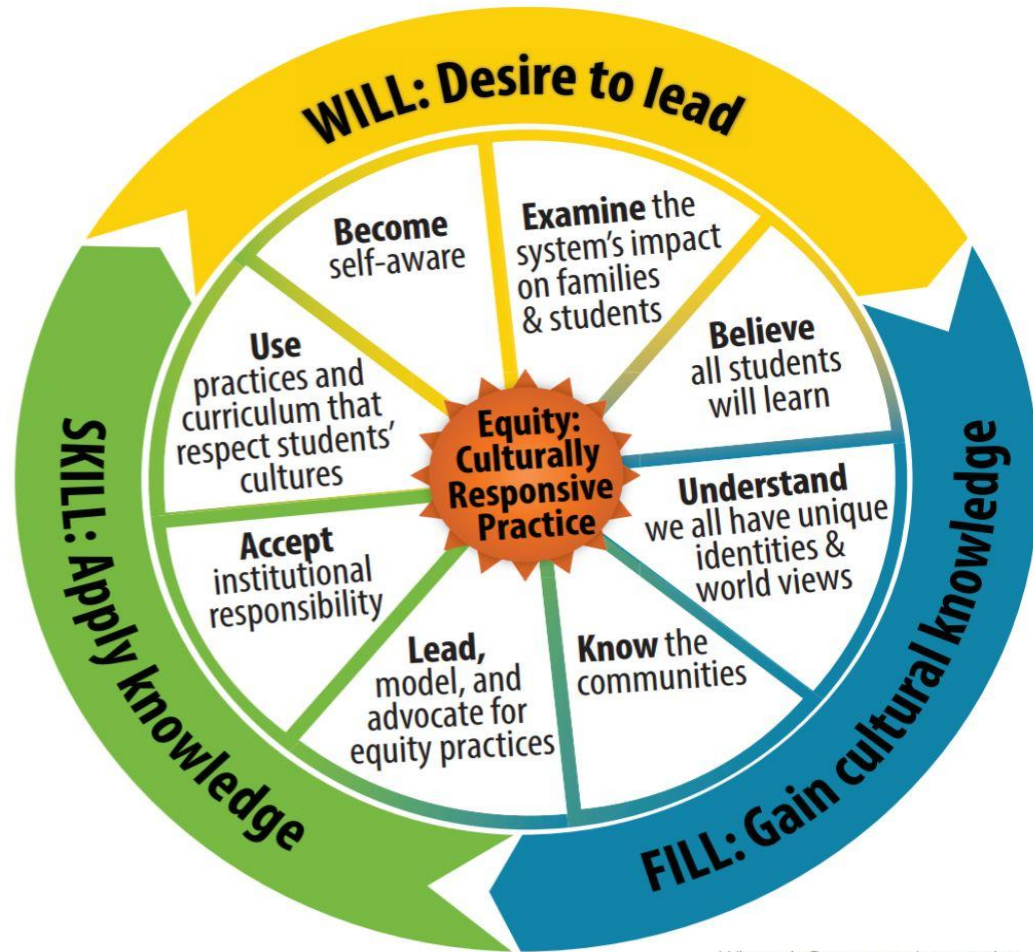


Adapted from: Cultural Proficiency for School Leadership by Lindsey, Robins & Terrell, 2019

What is Belonging?

Experiencing appreciation, validation, acceptance, and fair treatment within an environment. When people feel that they belong, they aren't distracted and worried about being treated as a stereotype or a singular part of their multidimensional personhood.

Source: Belonging Through a Culture of Dignity, Cobb & Krownapple, 2019



EQUITABLE PRACTICES HUB

To do their best, students must feel safe at school. A healthy and safe environment can help students thrive, and every student, regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression should be provided the opportunity to learn - free from discrimination, fear, or harassment.

EQUITY PILLARS



GENERAL EQUITY PRACTICES
How can our educational community consider global equitable practices in our specific context?



DATA PRACTICES
How might our educational community use our most specific data in order to drive equity efforts within our community?



ACADEMIC EQUITY
How might what we teach, practice, and enforce shape educational equity? How are we providing academic access and opportunity?



SELF-AWARENESS
What is the role of educators, staff, - or more broadly YOU - in shaping the educational community towards gender equity?



FAMILY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
What is the role of the educational community beyond the school in driving educational equity efforts?



DISCIPLINARY EQUITY
Does our system of discipline reflect equity among all student subgroups?



SCHOOL



CLASSROOM



INDIVIDUAL



EQUITY SPHERES

In what way can the school district or an individual school become more equitable across their systems?

What can teachers do, in matters of curriculum, discipline, pedagogy, and classroom culture in order to become better proponents of equity?

What can an individual, be it a teacher, administrator, student services professional, caregiver, or student, do to promote equity in their educational community?



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www.education.pa.gov/EquityHub

Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging in Pennsylvania:

↳ Perceptions and Clarity ↲

Educational communities are seeking clarity around the purpose, intention, and need for equity, inclusion, and belonging in educational spaces. This information is provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Education to help address perceptions and offer clarity on equitable practices in education.

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Equity

Equity in education is defined as every student having access to the resources and rigor they need at the right moment in their education across race, gender, ethnicity, language, disability, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, family background and/or family income. (adapted from www.ccsso.org)

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Inclusion

Inclusion is defined as engagement within a community where the equal worth and inherent dignity of each person is honored. An inclusive community promotes and sustains a sense of belonging. (adapted from Cobb & Krownapple, 2019)

③

Belonging

Belonging is defined as experiencing appreciation, validation, acceptance, and fair treatment within an environment. (adapted from Cobb & Krownapple, 2019)



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Perception	Clarity
Equity, inclusion, and belonging is only for urban educational spaces with diverse populations.	Equity, inclusion, and belonging helps create access, opportunity, and a healthy learning environment for ALL learners, regardless of demographic (urban, rural, suburban). Educational communities include people of varying lived experiences who have diverse needs and a variety of strengths.
Equity, inclusion, and belonging is another way of promoting Critical Race Theory.	Critical Race Theory is not part of or taught in any state required curriculum. Equity, inclusion, and belonging in education helps create spaces for ALL learners and staff to be their authentic selves. Discussions about cultures and identities in education are important to ensure equitable access for ALL learners.
Equity, inclusion, and belonging is only about funding.	Equitable funding is an important consideration to ensure fair access and opportunity for students across Pennsylvania. Funding is one part of the process to create healthy learning environments - but it cannot shift systems in isolation.
Equity, inclusion, and belonging suggests that I am not a good person or that my education system is bad.	It is important to understand who we are as we interact with others. Self-Awareness, one of the PDE equity pillars of practice , invites people to explore and reflect upon their own thoughts, ideas, and beliefs. Self-awareness supports how to engage in healthy relationships with people of diverse backgrounds—but it is not intended to encourage guilt, shame, or hopelessness. Discussing equity, inclusion, and belonging may be uncomfortable, however, it is important to ensure we can engage with individuals, families, and communities who are different from us.
Equity, inclusion, and belonging does not allow for diverse viewpoints.	Diverse viewpoints are an important part of our democracy and help our nation thrive. Equity, inclusion, and belonging help create the conditions for civil dialogues to occur. Equity in voice, inclusion of different perspectives, and honoring the lived experiences of others is a vital part of preparing youth for global citizenship, as well as a global workforce and marketplace.

Questions?

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