



EQUITY IN PRACTICE

Equity: From Awareness to Action

Equity in Practice

With an understanding of the key elements of equity, it is critical to consider the ways in which these elements can be put into practice in the day-to-day classroom environment. Ensuring that students have an equitable experience requires that teachers, administrators, and any adults with whom students interact at school must come together and talk about the foundations on which equity is based.¹⁵ Importantly, they should share the belief that all students can learn, hold high expectations for every student, and implement practices to ensure learning.¹⁶ Such shared beliefs and practices can promote positive relationships among educators and students. These relationships are critical to student success and allow for the development of innate abilities.¹⁷ In addition, positive relationships help motivate students to engage in academic content more meaningfully as they seek to make sense of their world and themselves.

Within this framework, there needs to be a push to promote a school culture that provides space for students to feel a sense of belonging while supporting teachers' work with students. Another critical component of providing equitable opportunities for all students is ensuring they have access to knowledgeable, caring adults in their schools.¹⁸ School culture significantly impacts student life and learning more than anything else a student encounters regularly.¹⁹ Thus, part of this culture must include consistently challenging biases that may exist throughout the entire school at all levels and supporting the growth of the adults in the building to support and maintain the desired school culture. Research indicates that teachers who feel confident and supported will implement equity initiatives with greater fidelity, which in turn improves student outcomes.²⁰

More is needed, however, to focus on lessons that meet the socio-psychological realities of students and families situated within the broader context of schools, districts, and the community. In addition, a focus on equity necessitates thoroughly involving and engaging teachers and administrators in the decision-making while ensuring they have the skills, abilities, resources, and proper mindset to situate effectively and prepare them to work toward achieving equity.

Conclusion

Many have defined equity similarly to equality, associated both with characteristics involving equal opportunities for all students.²¹ However, equity calls for individualized support for all to achieve equal levels of success.²² Research around equity focuses on the systematic structures of education²³: an equitable mindset,²⁴ criteria of equity,²⁵ and fundamental aspects of equity.²⁶ A systematic structure gives way to potential holistic change in the educational system within each individualized aspect.²⁷ This change, however, requires an equitable mindset that focuses on a person's beliefs.²⁸ Within this mindset, one can use equity as a criteria to evaluate educational opportunities through a lens of justice.²⁹

References

- ¹ Leithwood, 2021
- ² Ainscow, 2020; Fletcher et al., 2019; Leithwood, 2021; Marcos et al., 2021; Nadelson et al., 2019; Onyishi & Sefotho, 2021
- ³ Castillo, 2023
- ⁴ Shields & Hesbol, 2019; Nadelson et al., 2019
- ⁵ Teemant et al., 2021
- ⁶ Tyack & Cuban, 1995
- ⁷ Castillo, 2023
- ⁸ Fletcher et al., 2019
- ⁹ Ainscow, 2020
- ¹⁰ Cramer et al., 2018
- ¹¹ Onyishi & Sefotho, 2021
- ¹² Duncan & Punch, 2021
- ¹³ Torres et al., 2020
- ¹⁴ Nadelson et al., 2019
- ¹⁵ Leithwood, 2021; Ling & Nasri, 2019; Marcos et al., 2021
- ¹⁶ Marcos et al., 2021
- ¹⁷ Ling & Nasri, 2019
- ¹⁸ Cramer et al., 2018
- ¹⁹ Ling & Nasri, 2019
- ²⁰ Duncan & Punch, 2021; Jacobs et al., 2022
- ²¹ Luke et al., 2013; Majzub, 2013
- ²² Leithwood, 2021
- ²³ Teemant et al., 2021
- ²⁴ Nadelson et al., 2019
- ²⁵ Ling & Nasri, 2019
- ²⁶ Osta & Perrow, 2008
- ²⁷ Teemant et al., 2021
- ²⁸ Nadelson et al., 2019
- ²⁹ Ling & Nasri, 2019

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