

Equity Literacy for Educators: Definition and Abilities

Equity literacy is a framework for cultivating the knowledge and skills that enable us to be **a threat to the existence of inequity** in our spheres of influence. More than cultural competence or diversity awareness, equity literacy prepares us to see even subtle ways in which access and opportunity are distributed unfairly across race, class, gender identity, sexual orientation, (dis)ability, language, and other factors. By *recognizing* and deeply understanding these conditions, we are prepared to *respond* to inequity in transformational ways in the immediate term. We also strengthen our ability to foster longer-term change by *redressing* the bigger institutional and societal conditions that produce the everyday manifestations of inequity.

We built the equity literacy framework after careful consideration of the strengths and limitations of existing frameworks for attending to diversity in schools and other organizations and systems. We were particularly concerned with popular approaches like “cultural competence” and their vague focus on “culture.” These approaches mask the inequities that cause educational disparities. Equitable educators should be proficient not only with cultural knowledge, but also with the knowledge and skills to ensure and advocate for equity.

Abilities	Examples of Associated Knowledge and Skills
1. Ability to Recognize even the subtlest biases and inequities	Equity literate educators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> notice subtle bias in learning materials and classroom interactions; show curiosity about ways school policy and practice might disadvantage some students in unintentional (or intentional) ways; and reject deficit views that outcome inequalities (like test score disparities) are the result of the cultures or mindsets of students of color, students experiencing poverty, or other marginalized-identity students.
2. Ability to Respond to biases and inequities in the immediate term	Equity literate educators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop the facilitation skills and content knowledge necessary to intervene effectively when biases or inequities arise in a classroom or school; cultivate in students the ability to analyze bias and inequity in classroom materials, classroom interactions, and school policies; and foster conversations with colleagues about equity concerns in their schools.
3. Ability to Redress biases and inequities in the long term	Equity literate educators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> advocate against inequitable school practices like racially or economically biased tracking and advocate for equitable practices; never confuse <i>celebrating diversity</i> with <i>equity</i>, such as by responding to racial conflict with cultural celebrations; and teach about sexism, poverty, racism, ableism, transphobia, and heterosexism.
4. Ability to Create and Sustain bias-free and equitable classrooms, schools, and institutional cultures	Equity literate educators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> express high expectations for through higher-order pedagogies; consider how they assign homework and communicate with families, understanding that students have different levels of access to resources like computers and the Internet; and prioritize consideration of the needs, challenges, and barriers experienced by students who are from marginalized groups in each discussion and each decision about classroom, school, or district policy and practice.