

Five Paradigm Shifts for Educational Equity

1. Advancing Equality --> Advancing Equity

- a) Do all students who walk into my school or classroom have an opportunity to achieve to their fullest capabilities regardless of race, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, socioeconomic status, home language, (dis)ability, and other identities?
- b) Do I understand that equity requires eliminating disparities in access and opportunity—what some people call fairness or justice—and that sometimes when we advocate equality (giving everybody the same thing) we fail to meet this requirement?
- c) When I advocate for equity do I take into account all types of “access”? Do I consider physical access as well as social, economic, and cultural access? For example, all students might have “access” to advanced math classes insofar as they are available to anybody who takes the prerequisites. But do I consider ways some students—women, for instance—are socialized not to pursue advanced math, which also is a matter of access and equity?

2. "Fixing" Marginalized Families --> Eradicating Marginalizing Practices

- a) Do I tend to find fault in students of color, students experiencing poverty, and other students and families while failing to examine ways policies and practices, as well as larger societal factors (inequities in access to living wage work, health care, and safe and affordable housing, for instance), drive outcome disparities?
- b) Do I tend to use strategies for addressing educational outcome disparities that focus on “fixing” marginalized families rather than addressing the conditions that marginalize families?

3. Color-blindness --> Self-Examination

a) Am I ignoring the existence or implications of difference as a way to avoid addressing the inequities related to them?

b) Is color-blindness possible? And, if so, is it desirable when it denies people what may be important dimensions of their identities?

4. Learning About "Other" Cultures --> Fighting for the Rights of All Students

a) Although learning about students' individual cultures is a valuable pursuit, do I stop there or do I commit to fighting for their rights, such as the right to schools in which policies and practices are constructed around their interests, needs, and experiences?

b) "Other" than what?

5. Celebrating Diversity --> Committing to Equity

a) Do I require marginalized students to celebrate diversity while the inequities they experience go unaddressed?

b) Might building equity initiatives around "celebrating diversity" perpetuate the very inequities we should be eliminating?

Source: <https://www.equityliteracy.org/educational-equity-resources>