

**EXAMPLE: Shift 1: Mainstream → Margins**

**Ability to RECOGNIZE biases and inequities, including subtle biases and inequities**

Equity literate educators: notice even subtle bias in materials, classroom interactions, and school policies; know and teach about how notable people in their content disciplines used their knowledge to advocate for just or unjust actions or policies; and reject deficit views that locate the sources of outcome inequalities (like test score disparities) as existing within the cultures of, rather than as pressing upon, low-income families.

*A majority of the books read in the Freshman 'Literature and Composition Survey' course are written by white, male authors (i.e. Steinbeck, Wiesel, Shakespeare)*

**Ability to RESPOND to biases and inequities in the immediate term**

Equity literate educators: have 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 in classroom materials, classroom interactions, and school policies; and foster conversations with colleagues about equity concerns at their schools.

*Show students a copy of the course syllabus and ask them if they notice any patterns. Facilitate a conversation about the identities of the authors; noting which identities are represented and which are not. Ask students to write a short reflective essay about the value of having a diversity of experiences and narratives in authorship which explains how they might expand their own learning by identifying an author and a text that has a different race and gender than themselves.*

**Note:** This process described above meets the following English Content-Area Standards:

- Standard #3: Write clear and coherent arguments for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.
- Standard #8: Take part in a variety of rich, structured conversations—as a presenter, as part of a whole class, in small groups, and with a partner

**Ability to REDRESS biases and inequities in the long term**

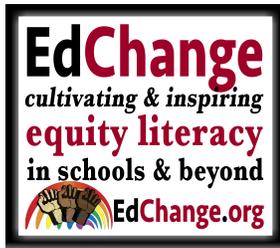
Equity literate educators: advocate against inequitable school practices, such as racially or economically biased tracking, and advocate for equitable school practices; never confuse celebrating diversity with equity, such as by responding to racial conflict with cultural celebrations; and teach, in relevant and age-appropriate ways, about issues like racism, sexism, poverty, and homophobia.

*As you select texts for the upcoming semester, ensure that at least 50% of the books are written by people of color. Use student suggestions and resources from other culturally responsive educators.*

**Ability to CREATE & SUSTAIN a bias-free and equitable learning environment**

Equity literate educators: express high expectations for all students through higher-order pedagogies and curricula; 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 cultivate a classroom environment in which students feel free to express themselves openly and honestly.

*Develop a committee of students and teachers who review the syllabus for each English/LA course to ensure that there are a wide variety of authors represented. Advocate that the department adopt a policy ensuring that 50% of all new texts purchased are written by authors of color.*



# Equity Literacy: An Introduction

by Paul C. Gorski for EdChange <<http://www.edchange.org>>  
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## Defining Equity Literacy

Equity Literacy refers to the knowledge and skills that enable us to recognize, respond to, and redress conditions that deny some students access to educational and other opportunities enjoyed by their peers. The Equity Literacy framework was constructed with an acknowledgement of both the strengths and limitations of existing frameworks for engaging the full diversity of youth in schools. Most particularly, it was constructed out of concerns with frameworks, such as "cultural competence," that focus on "culture" instead of "equity" and as a result mask the inequities that plague schools and other organizations. It is based on the reality that equitable educators must be proficient, not just with culture, but with the skills necessary to be a threat to the existence of inequity in their spheres of influence.

### Equity Literacy Abilities

### Examples of Associated Skills and Dispositions

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|---|--|
| <p>1. Ability to <b>Recognize</b> biases and inequities, including subtle biases and inequities</p> | <p>Equity literate educators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• notice even subtle bias in materials, classroom interactions, and school policies;</li><li>• know and teach about how notable people in their content disciplines used their knowledge to advocate for just or unjust actions or policies; and</li><li>• reject deficit views that locate the sources of outcome inequalities (like test score disparities) as existing within the cultures of, rather than as pressing upon, low-income families.</li></ul> |
| <p>2. Ability to <b>Respond</b> to biases and inequities in the immediate term</p>                  | <p>Equity literate educators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• have the facilitation skills and content knowledge necessary to intervene effectively when biases or inequities arise in a classroom or school;</li><li>• cultivate in students the ability to analyze bias in classroom materials, classroom interactions, and school policies; and</li><li>• foster conversations with colleagues about equity concerns at their schools.</li></ul>  |
| <p>3. Ability to <b>Redress</b> biases and inequities in the long term</p>                          | <p>Equity literate educators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• advocate against inequitable school practices, such as racially or economically biased tracking, and advocate for equitable school practices;</li><li>• never confuse <i>celebrating diversity</i> with <i>equity</i>, such as by responding to racial conflict with cultural celebrations; and</li><li>• teach, in relevant and age-appropriate ways, about issues like sexism, poverty, and homophobia.</li></ul>  |
| <p>4. Ability to <b>Create and Sustain</b> a bias-free and equitable learning environment</p>       | <p>Equity literate educators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• express high expectations for all students through higher-order pedagogies and curricula;</li><li>• 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</li><li>• cultivate a classroom environment in which students feel free to express themselves openly and honestly.</li></ul>  |

Excerpted from Paul C. Gorski's book, **Reaching and Teaching Students in Poverty: Strategies for Erasing the Opportunity Gap** (Teachers College Press, 2014).

## Shift 1: Mainstream → Margins

### Ability to **RECOGNIZE** biases and inequities, including subtle biases and inequities

What do you recognize in your classroom/school that might reinforce the idea that people with mainstream identities are more deserving of rights, respect, representation, or resources? What do you recognize about your school that might communicate a message to students/families with marginalized identities that they are less welcome than students with mainstream identities?



### Ability to **RESPOND** to biases and inequities in the immediate term

How can you respond to these inequitable patterns in ways that immediately mitigate harm? How can you empower students and families to do the same?



### Ability to **REDRESS** biases and inequities in the long term

How can you redress these inequities so that the patterns are disrupted and less likely to harm students? Who should be involved in this decision-making process?



### Ability to **CREATE & SUSTAIN** a bias-free and equitable learning environment

How can you create and sustain new approaches to teaching and learning that are more equitable, specifically by focusing on the experiences of students/families with marginalized identities? In what ways will this benefit all students?



## Shift 2: Colorblind → Color Conscious

### Ability to **RECOGNIZE** biases and inequities, including subtle biases and inequities

What do you recognize in your classroom/school that might ignore or erase the racial and cultural identities of your students? What barriers to equity are created and maintained by claiming to be 'colorblind'?



### Ability to **RESPOND** to biases and inequities in the immediate term

How can you respond to these inequitable patterns in ways that immediately mitigate harm? How can you empower students and families to do the same?



### Ability to **REDRESS** biases and inequities in the long term

How can you redress these inequities so that the patterns are disrupted and less likely to harm students? Who should be involved in this decision-making process?



### Ability to **CREATE & SUSTAIN** a bias-free and equitable learning environment

How can you create and sustain new approaches to teaching and learning that disrupt the narrative that colorblindness is possible and empowers students to develop a positive racial identity?



### Shift 3: Deficit → Systemic

#### Ability to **RECOGNIZE** biases and inequities, including subtle biases and inequities

What do you recognize about the content or process in your classroom/department/school/district that might place the blame on students/families with marginalized identities, rather than on the system that marginalizes them? What do you recognize about the ways you and/or your colleagues talk about students and families that might perpetuate this or allow it to happen?



#### Ability to **RESPOND** to biases and inequities in the immediate term

How can you respond to these inequitable patterns in ways that immediately mitigate harm? How can you empower students and families to do the same?



#### Ability to **REDRESS** biases and inequities in the long term

How can you redress these inequities by rejecting a deficit framing which often limits our ability to address the underlying, systemic issues? What would it take to shift the way we think about “the problem” so that we examine our own role in creating and maintaining it?



#### Ability to **CREATE & SUSTAIN** a bias-free and equitable learning environment

How can you create and sustain new approaches to teaching and learning that are more equitable, by addressing the complex systems of oppression that create educational disparities?



## Shift 4: Equality → Equity

### Ability to **RECOGNIZE** biases and inequities, including subtle biases and inequities

What do you recognize about your classroom/school that might distract from educational equity by focusing on equality? What barriers and obstacles might you be missing?



### Ability to **RESPOND** to biases and inequities in the immediate term

How can you respond to these inequitable patterns in ways that immediately mitigate harm? How can you empower students and families to do the same?



### Ability to **REDRESS** biases and inequities in the long term

How can you redress these inequities by placing a focus on equity literacy, antiracism and anti-oppression pedagogies and practices? What resources and training do you and your colleagues need in order to address systems of inequity that show up and are recreated in your school?



### Ability to **CREATE & SUSTAIN** a bias-free and equitable learning environment

How can you create and sustain new approaches to teaching and learning that are a threat to the existence of inequity? What would need to change so that you—in collaboration with student and families—could create more equitable learning communities for all students; specifically, for students of color?



## Shift 5: Racism in INTENT → Racism in IMPACT

### Ability to RECOGNIZE biases and inequities, including subtle biases and inequities

Where do you recognize outcome disparities between white students and students of color? What do you recognize about the policies, practices and procedures in your classroom/school that create disparities along the lines of race? How are 'good intentions' used to excuse/ignore these disparities?



### Ability to RESPOND to biases and inequities in the immediate term

How can you respond to these inequitable patterns in ways that immediately mitigate harm? How can you empower students and families to do the same?



### Ability to REDRESS biases and inequities in the long term

How can you redress these inequities by changing the system that creates racial disparities? What policies, procedures and practices need to be changed in your school/district to ensure equity for students with marginalized identities and what is your role in advocating for these changes?



### Ability to CREATE & SUSTAIN a bias-free and equitable learning environment

How can you create and sustain new policies, practices, and procedures that support institutional equity? In what ways can you ensure that your school maintains a commitment to antiracism and educational equity?

