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2019

### How Leaders Create the Conditions for Equity

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# How Leaders Create the Conditions for Equity

"In an equity-based model, policymakers intentionally adjust a variety of resources to better serve the highest-need students. The allocation of resources at the school and district level must go further to address inequality. That requires bold and intentional conversations about school structures, student supports, data use, professional learning and instructional improvement that help meet individual student needs. Those conversations encourage schools to view each student - and each staff member - as an individual with needs, skills and a background that is unique to him or her" (Larson & Barton, 2013, p.4).



# About This Module

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Equity is a complex topic that encompasses many facets of leadership, education reform, and socio-economic issues. This module offers district and school leaders an introduction to equity and the conditions that create equitable school environments. The module provides educational leaders with strategies based on equity frameworks and research-based high-leverage equitable practices to implement in order to begin equity work at their sites and help teachers meet the needs of all of their diverse students. See the additional resources section at the end of this module for links to tools for assessing equity, creating action plans, and seeking support for improving the conditions that reduce opportunity and achievement gaps and establish equitable learning environments for diverse students and staff.

**What if all students, and the adults who support them, received the individualized supports and scaffolds necessary to feel a sense of belonging at school, to achieve at high levels, and to take control of their own outcomes? That's equity. As you explore this module, you will gain strategies for making that happen at your site.**

[Click next to go to the purpose, goals, and objectives of the module.](#)

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Brittani Burns

# Purpose, Goals, and Objectives

## Purpose:

- \* To make leaders aware of the importance of promoting equity in educational settings;
- \* To assist leaders in using equity to improve school environments and positively impact all teachers and students.



### Goals:

- participants will be able to define equity and its importance in educational settings;
- participants will be able to explain the difference between equity and equality;
- participants will be able to understand conditions for and barriers to equity;
- participants will be able to explain the growth framework for equity
- participants will increase their understanding of how to create equitable environments within their buildings through implementing 10 High-leverage practices for equity;
- participants will be inspired to adjust their methods of equity implementation based on research on equity

### Objectives:

- to understand and identify the differences between Equality and Equity;
- to identify strategies for embracing, developing, articulating, and modeling the equity vision;
- to list ways in which educational leaders can create conditions for equity in their schools;
- to identify three critical elements of equity

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# ALIGNMENT TO STANDARDS

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This professional learning module aligns to the Teacher Leader Model Standards (ETS, 2008).

"These standards are designed to encourage professional discussion about what constitutes the full range of competencies that teacher leaders possess and how this form of leadership can be distinguished from, but work in tandem with, formal administrative leadership roles to promote good teaching and support student learning" (ETS, 2008, p.3)

## Equity-Focused Collaboration

### Domain I: Fostering a Collaborative Culture to Support Educator Development and Student Learning

The teacher leader understands the principles of adult learning and knows how to develop a collaborative culture of collective responsibility at the school.



## Domain II: Accessing and Using Research to Improve Practice and Student Learning

The teacher leader understands how research creates new knowledge, improves policies and practices, and improves teaching and learning.

## Equity-Focused Professional Learning

### Domain III: Promoting Professional Learning for Continuous Improvement

The teacher leader understands the evolving nature of teaching and learning, established and emerging technologies, and the school community.

## Equity-Focused Teaching and Learning

### Domain IV: Facilitating Improvements in Instruction and Student Learning

The teacher leader works collaboratively with colleagues to ensure the instructional practices are aligned to a shared vision, mission and goals.

## Equity-Focused Assessment and Data Practices

### Domain V: Promoting the Use of Assessments and Data for School and District Improvement

The teacher leader is knowledgeable about current research on classroom- and school-based data and the design and selection of appropriate formative and summative assessment methods.

## Equity-Focused Family Engagement Practices

### Domain VI: Improving Outreach and Collaboration with Families and Community

The teacher leader understands that families, cultures and communities have a significant impact on educational processes and student learning.

## Equity-Focused Policies

### Domain VII: Advocating for Student Learning and the Profession

The teacher leader understands how educational policy is made at the local, state, and national level as well as the role of school leaders, boards of education, legislators, and other stakeholders in formulating those policies.

**(ESSA) provisions. "ESSA includes provisions that will help to ensure success for students and schools" (U.S. Department of Education, 2015, para. 2). A few are represented below:**

**ESSA advances equity by upholding critical protections for America's disadvantaged and high-need students;**

**requires - for the first time - that all students in America be taught to high academic standards that will prepare them to succeed in college and careers;**

**ensures that vital information is provided to educators, families, students and communities through annual statewide assessments that measure students' progress towards those high standards;**

**helps to support and grow local innovations - including evidence-based and place-based interventions developed by local leaders and educators;**

**sustains and expands this administration's historic investments in increasing access to high- quality pre-school; and**

**maintains an expectation that there will be accountability and action to effect change in our lowest - performing schools, where groups of students are not making progress, and where graduation rates are low over extended periods of time.**

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**Click next to go to the challenge questions found in the module .**

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# Challenge

" Equity is a difficult ideal to maintain and many strategies to maintain it have fallen far short in the implementation. To maintain equity, if it is ever achieved, school systems need to have an approach for analyzing findings about recommended shifts in learning approaches and objectives. These approaches should be designed to help teachers and administrators understand not what they have to avoid, but also what it is that they can do to achieve optimal equity moving forward" (Lynch, 2016).

Why Equity Matters in Education



be a [Google document](#) or [paper and pencil](#).

Consider the following scenario in terms of developing an equity mindset among faculty and staff. [Click on the link below](#) to access the article.



## Challenge Questions:

1. Is it important to acknowledge the difference between equality and equity? Why or why not?
2. What are the conditions that support equity? What are the barriers to equity?
3. What leadership practices create the conditions for equity?

[Think about these challenge questions as you proceed through this Professional Learning Module. You will return to these questions at the end of the module to reflect on your learning. Continue to record any thoughts related to the challenge questions as you progress through the module.](#)

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# Initial Thoughts

" An equitable school is both the right of your students and the responsibility of you and your colleagues. The benefits of realizing equity within your school or system are numerous and powerful. But as educational professionals, equitizing your school is up to you and your institution" (Linton, 2011, p.125).

Reflect on the following questions and use your note-taking tool to record your responses.

- 1) Did you receive an equal or an equitable education?
- 2) In what ways did receiving either an equal or an equitable education serve as a barrier or support for your success in school, work, and in life in general? Why?
- 3) How does your experience compare to that of the students you serve?

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[Click next to go the Perspectives and Resources section of the module.](#)

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# Perspectives and Resources

**After completing the Perspectives and Resources section and the accompanying activities, the participants will be able to provide an evidence-based response to the following Challenge Questions:**

1. Is it important to acknowledge the difference between equality and equity? Why or why not?
2. What are the conditions that support equity? What are the barriers to equity?
3. What leadership practices create the conditions for equity?

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[Click next to go to the Definition of Equity section, reflecting on the difference between equity and equality](#)

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# Defining Equity

**“The route to achieving equity will not be accomplished through treating everyone equally. It will be achieved by treating everyone justly according to their circumstances.”**

**-Paula Dressel, Race Matters Institute**

## Why Should We Care about Equity?

Equity plays an important role in our lives and experiences, especially in education. In an ideal world, everyone would have the same advantages. Students would enter school ready to learn and personal and social barriers wouldn't exist or interfere with student learning. Unfortunately, we don't live in an ideal world where everyone has the same advantages and abilities. Some students have personal and social circumstances that interfere with their learning and other students have personal and social circumstances that make it easier for them to excel. As a result, understanding what equity is and how to create conditions for equity in your school is important.

**We share care about equity because the nations demographics have changed.**

- 85.7% of public school students were white in 1960
- “Today, the majority of public school students are students of color” ([The National Education Statistics](#), 2017)
- “More than half of public school students also qualify for subsidized meals because of low family income” (Education Week, 2017; [Conditions of Education](#), 2019)
- “In 2014, 20 percent of school-aged children were in families living in poverty, and children of color are more than twice as likely as their white counterparts to be poor” (Education Week, 2017)
- Black and Latino students reading scores are significantly lower than their white peers (Education Week, 2017)
- By the age of 24, students from families with high incomes are eight times more likely to have a bachelor degree ([Pell Institute Indicators](#), 2019)



“Equity is referred to as fairness,” (Glossary of Education Reform, 2014), justice, and freedom from bias. In education “equity is the process in how we ensure every child has access to a high quality education” (Cannon, N.D/ Equity Meets Education). This means ensuring that the resources, opportunities, and supports for success are based on the *student's* needs. When educational equity occurs, barriers such as personal and social circumstances do not interfere with students' academic achievement. These circumstances are understood and addressed to ensure the success of the student.

## Equality versus Equity

Equality and equity are often used interchangeably even though they are two different concepts. This often occurs because many people believe that equity means everyone receives the same thing. This is a common error and supports the need to distinguish between the two concepts to improve equity at the school level.

Equity, as we learned earlier, is providing each student with the resources and opportunities they need to be successful. Although equality and equity are closely related, important in social justice, and deal with resources, equality is providing the same or equal resources for all. Equality is often associated with treating people the same and providing them with the same opportunities and resources.

### Reflect and Review:

Think about the differences between equality and equity. How would you as an administrator explain the key differences to a colleague or teacher who used the terms interchangeably? Record your response in your notes.

### Is it Equality or Equity?

Take a few minutes to read the following real-world examples. Identify the examples as equality or equity and provide a rationale for your decision.

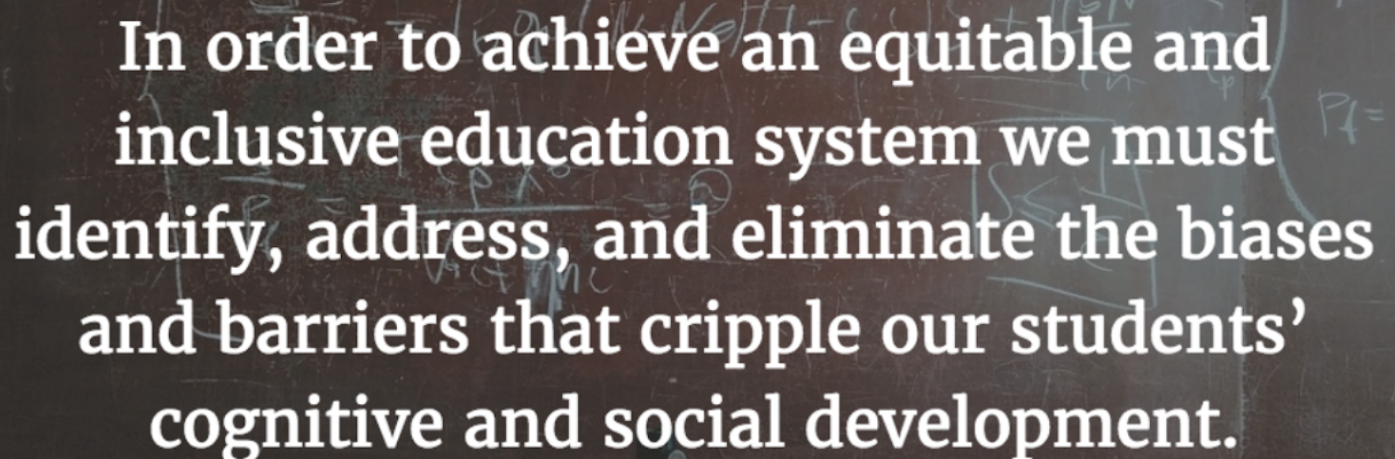
1. Computer labs in lower income neighborhoods have more computers and printers, as well as longer hours of operation, as some students don't have access to computers or internet at home.
2. A public school holds a parent meeting and the school leaders hire translators to attend the meeting or offer an additional meeting held in another language.
3. All public schools in a community have computer labs with the same number of computers and hours of operation during school hours.

(Milken Institute of Public Health, 2019)

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# Barriers and Supports to Equity

"When teachers and principals are asked to describe what equity in education means to them, their comments center on themes around the access to resources and opportunities that each individual student needs to be successful" (Scholastic, 2019, para. 1).



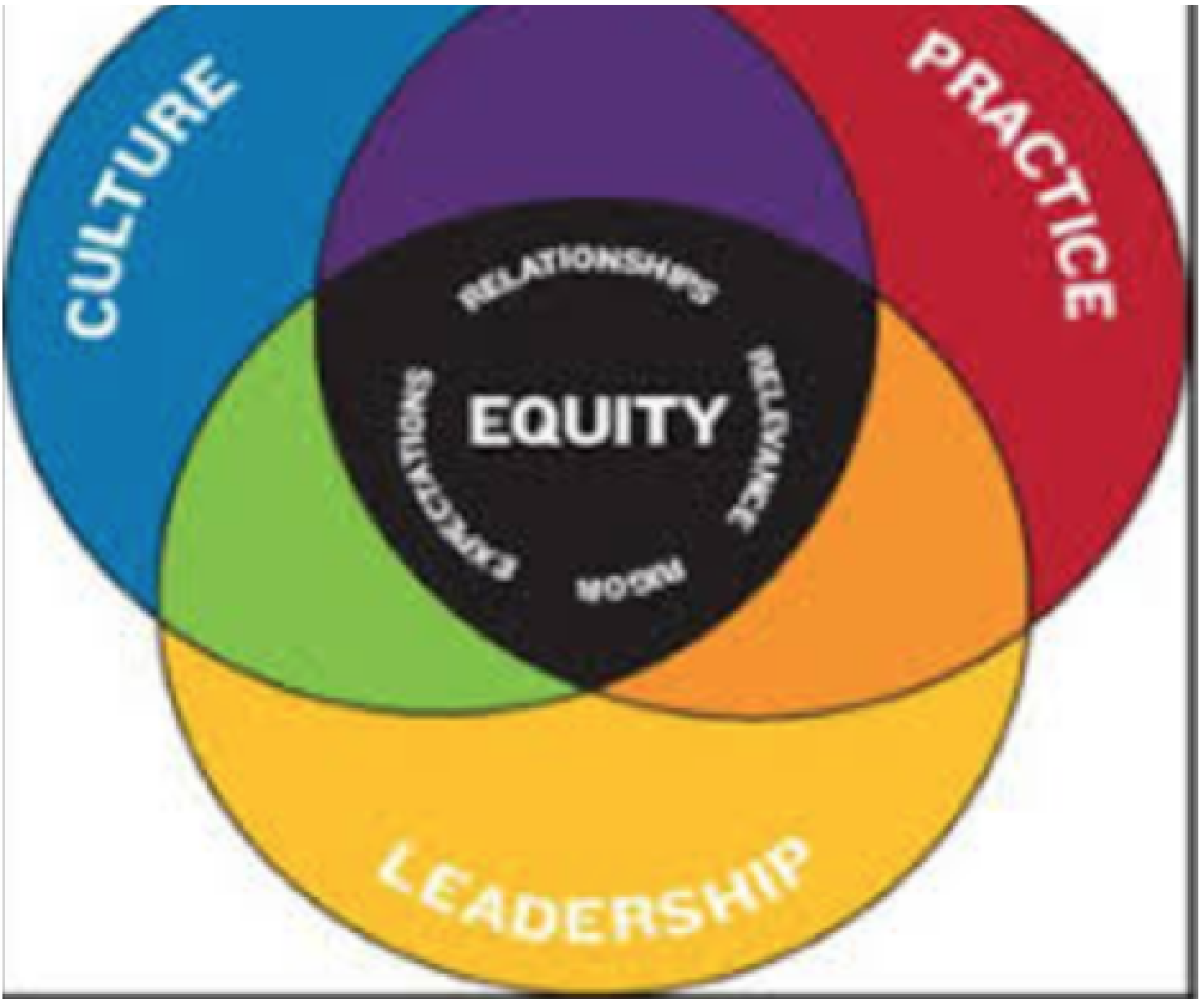
In order to achieve an equitable and inclusive education system we must identify, address, and eliminate the biases and barriers that cripple our students' cognitive and social development.

Think about your site. List some of the biases and barriers students may face that affect their academic performance.



Reflect on the video to the left about barriers to inclusive education. Think about the ways that some restrictions would be possible to overcome.

**What are the ways to overcome equity barriers?**



**students, equitable culture sets the stage for engagement and learning while working in trifecta with focused instructional leadership and effective teaching practice. Combined together, equitable leadership, culture, and practice can create a powerful school environment focused on high achievement for all students" (Linton & Davis, 2013, p. 1).**

**The framework shows that change must occur in the culture of the school, in instructional practices, and in leadership so that all emphasize authentic and respectful relationships that embrace diversity; relevancy in the form of curricula that connect to students lives, interests, and needs; high performance expectations for faculty, staff, and students; and rigorous learning for faculty and students.**

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (2008) lists three components for more equitable school environments, such as educational system design, practices, and resources. It echoes with Linton's systematic leadership and practice components.

**"A fair and inclusive system that makes the advantages of education available to all is one of the most powerful levers to make society more equitable. Three key policy areas can affect equity in education: the design of education systems, practices in and out of school, and how resources are allocated. The OECD has developed ten practical steps that governments can take in these three areas to enhance equity in education" (Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development [OECD], 2008).**

The OECD has recommended ten steps which would reduce school failure and dropout rates, make society fairer and avoid the large social costs of marginalized adults with few basic skills.

Limit early tracking and streaming and postpone academic selection.

Manage school choice so as to contain the risks to equity.

In upper secondary education, provide attractive alternatives, remove dead ends and prevent dropout.

Offer second chances to gain from education.

## Practices

Identify and provide systematic help to those who fall behind at school and reduce year repetition.

Strengthen the links between school and home to help disadvantaged parents help their children to learn.

Respond to diversity and provide for the successful inclusion of migrants and minorities within mainstream education.

## Resources

Provide strong education for all, giving priority to early childhood provision and basic schooling.

Direct resources to the students with the greatest needs.

Set concrete targets for more equity, particularly related to low school attainment and dropouts.

1. How can leaders and policymakers create an equitable academic culture?
2. How can leaders and policymakers improve the design of education systems?
3. How can leaders improve practices in and out of the classroom?
4. How can leaders improve resourcing for equity in education?

Record your responses to questions on your note-taking sheet.

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# A Growth Framework for Equity

["Equity requires change" \(Linton, 2011, p. 88\).](#)

## Galloway & Ishimaru's (2015) Equity Growth Framework:

Galloway & Ishimaru (2015) identified 10 high-leverage leadership practices that support the conditions for equity in schools. On the next page, you will learn about the 10 high-leverage leadership practices for equity.

They also developed an equity growth framework that can be used to implement the high-leverage practices. The three themes that make up the growth framework are:

- Perspectives on opportunity and achievement gaps (disparities),
- Locus of control (Leadership), and
- Data and inquiry practices

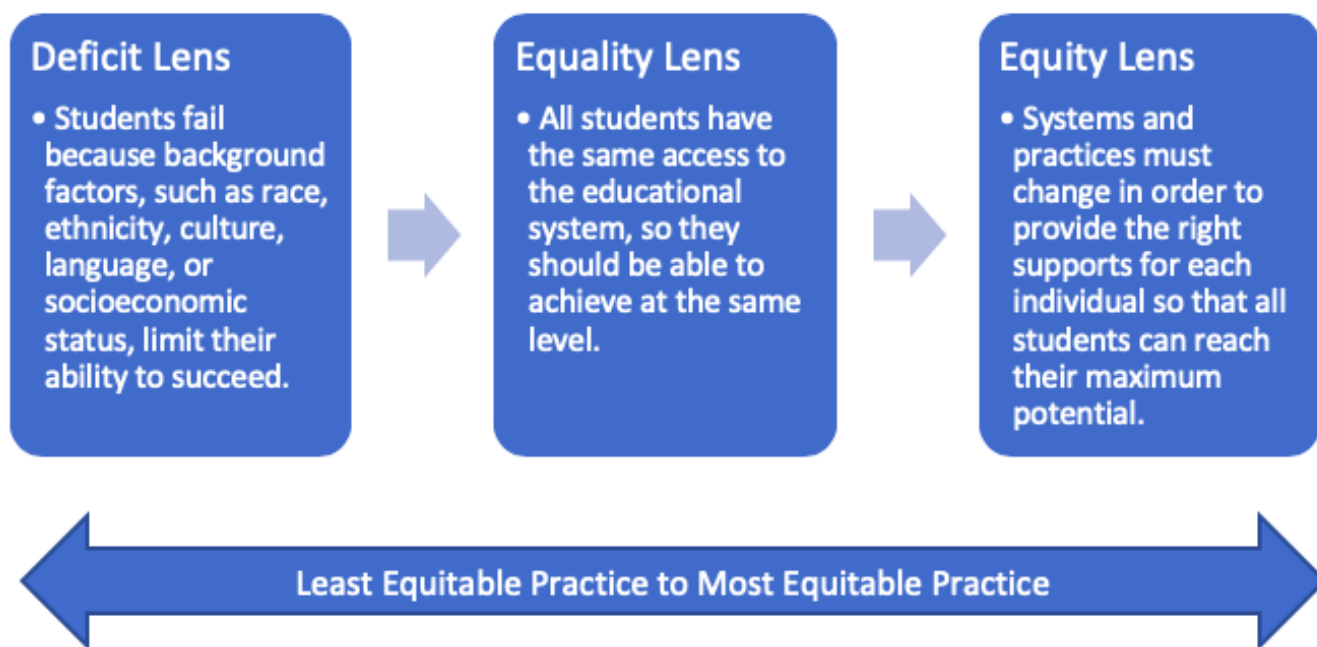
The themes can be placed along a continuum from least to most equitable. The Equity Growth Framework can be used to assess your site's current conditions for equity and guide you in changing the equity conditions at your site.

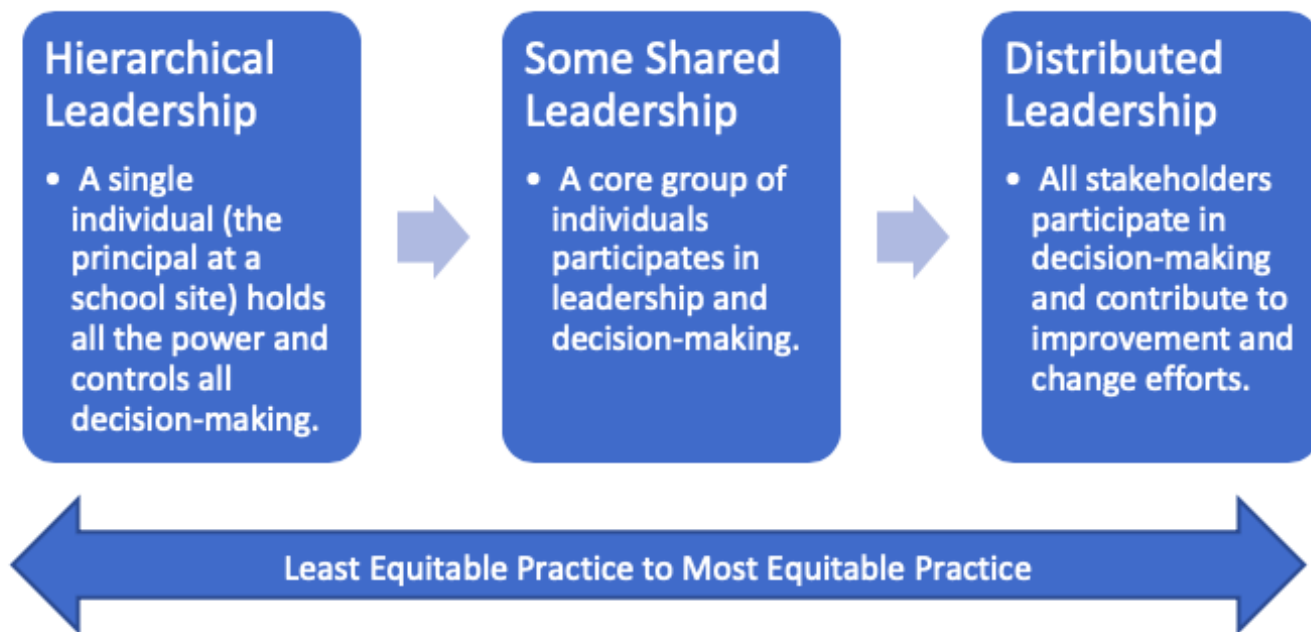
As you review the three components of the equity growth framework that follow, assess and record where your site falls along the continuum for each theme:

- Perspectives on achievement and opportunity gaps
- Locus of control
- Inquiry and data practices

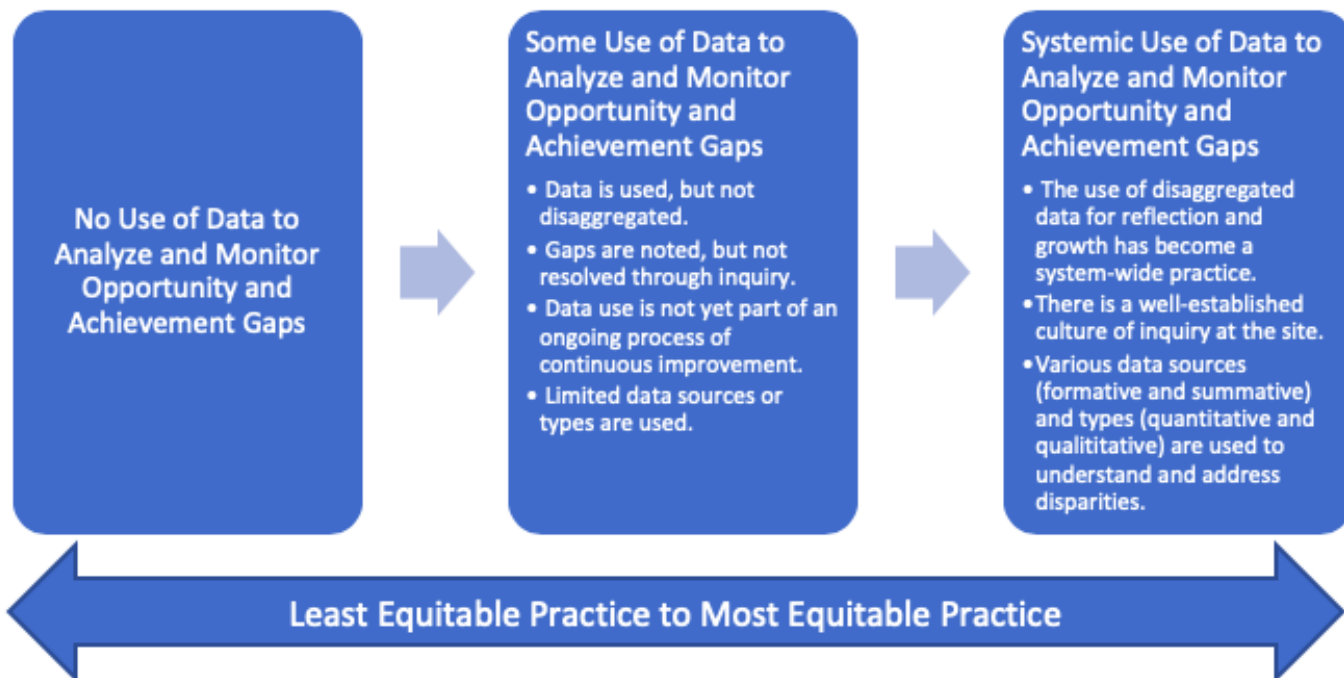
At the end of the module, you will use your notes from this equity growth framework assessment to plan your initial steps for creating or improving the conditions for equity at your site.

## Perspectives on Achievement and Opportunity Gaps





## Inquiry and Data Practices



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Click next to go to the 10 High-Leverage Practices for Equity section of the module



# Cultural Relevance and Equity

" What is a school culture of equity? A school culture of equity is one where educators create a classroom, school, and system where excellence is achieved for every student, no matter who that student is or where that student comes from. In a school culture of equity, diversity becomes the norm for all, not the exception for a few" (Linton & Davis, 2013, p. 1).

Culturally Responsive Teaching - Listen to the Silence



your note taking sheet.

Linton, 2011: "The purpose of engaging in this process of centering one's self in equity is simple: if you do not understand deeply your own realities, it is very hard to help others - such as your students - successfully negotiate their own realities" (p.6).

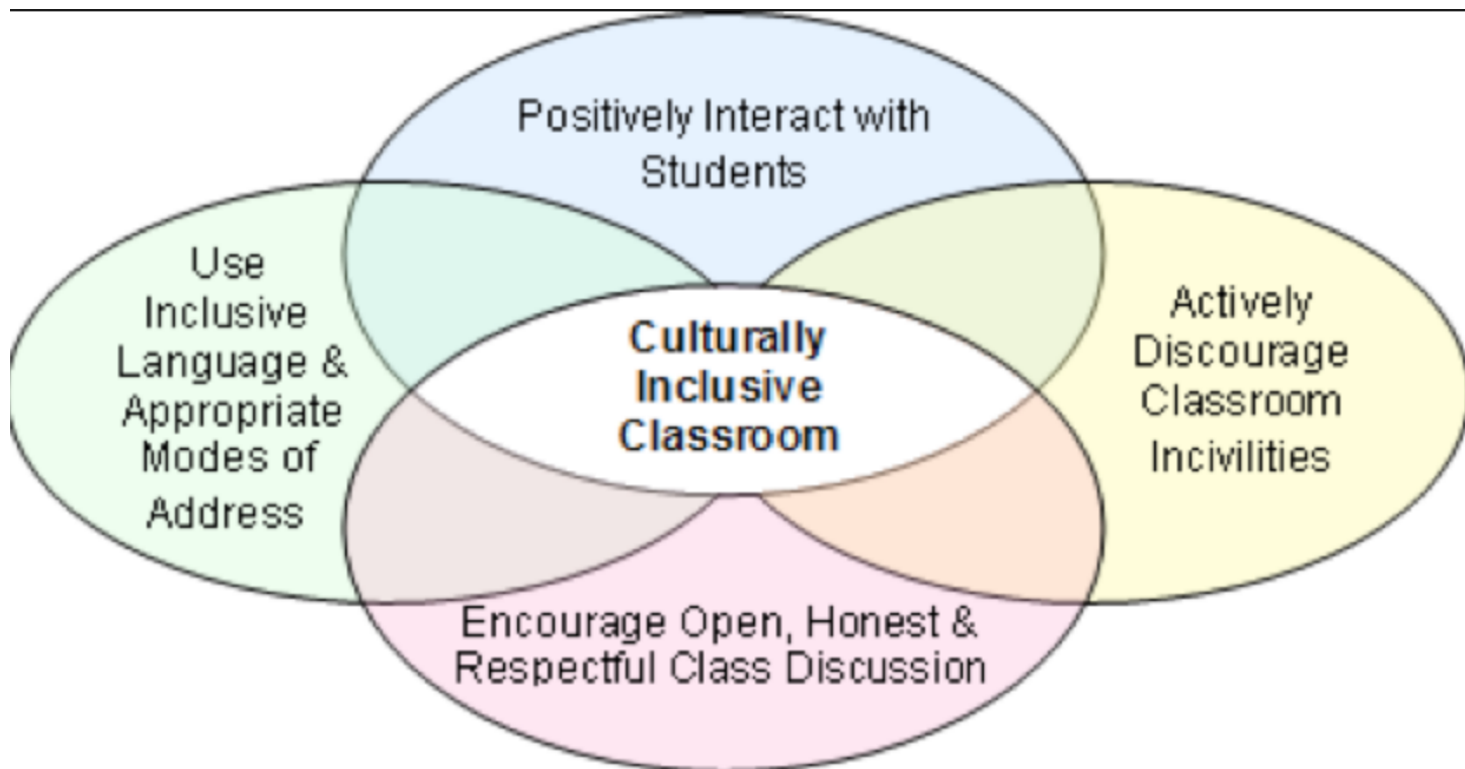
Reflect on the quote and try to answer the following question by completing the Activity below. What are the most important dimensions of your own identity?

Activity: Identifying the most important dimensions of your own identity.

Using the Circle Handout Activity, engage in a process of identifying of what you consider to be the most important for your self-identity. Reflect on the following:

- a) How do the dimensions of your identity that you chose as important differ from the dimensions other people use to make judgements about you?
- b) Where do stereotypes come from? How do those stereotypes relate to equity and inclusive education?

Capture your thoughts on your note-taking sheet.



## leaders need to promote culturally inclusive classrooms and equitable school cultures that exhibit relevancy by providing:

- an effective and safe learning culture that delivers instruction which inherently connects with students' prior knowledge and background, while also explicitly showing how the learning matters personally to the student;
- culturally competent educators who inherently design and deliver daily instruction that matters to the student, connects with who they are, and reflects where they come from locally and culturally

(Linton & Davis, 2013, p. 59)

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# 10 High-Leverage Practices for Equity



"Equity-centered capacity-building is a complex process coupling both structural and technical processes with those that are more social, cultural, and political" (Rimmer, 2016, February, Building the capacity, para. 2).



## equity-focused leadership strategies revealed recurring themes that appear throughout the research literature on equity and leadership:

- A shared understanding of a vision and mission that prioritize equity beliefs: high achievement, access, and opportunities for all students, regardless of background, paired with a culture that understands openly discusses the impact of biases;
- Continuous and data-based monitoring of student progress and achievement to identify underperforming groups. Studying various sources of disaggregated data to monitor achievement and opportunity gaps is a core equity practice. It is paired with the use of inquiry and research-based practices to improve teaching and learning and the allocation of resources where they can best serve the students with the greatest need.
- A culture of collaboration and shared responsibility where educators work together to solve instructional problems and provide each student with appropriate supports and strategies based on their individual needs; and
- Community involvement that embraces diversity, avoids deficit thinking, and seeks ways to establish authentic relationships among culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse families and students.

## How are these themes embedded in the 10 High-Leverage Leadership Practices for Equity?

While equity work is about improving outcomes for students, achieving the goal requires more than just instructional leadership. Mission, vision, and culture; instructional improvement; need-based resource allocation; and equity-focused scheduling, placement, hiring, retention, and capacity-building (systems and processes) work in concert to create the conditions for equity (Rimmer, 2016, February).

Leading for equity requires creating a school- and system-wide culture of equity. This represents a shift in the organizational culture for some organizations: "Embedded within each of the high-leverage practices is a paradigm shift in the kind of leadership that must take place for aspiring and practicing leaders to enact the practices in ways that lead to equity" (Galloway & Ishimaru, 2015, p. 385).

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## Core Practices

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The first three practices are considered foundational. They must be in place in order for effective implementation of the remaining practices to occur. (Galloway & Ishimaru, 2015)

Reflect on and examine your own biases, privileges, identities, and values.

## Developing organizational leadership for equity

Build capacity in others to reflect on and examine their own biases, identities, privileges, and values both individually and in professional learning communities.

### Developing an equity vision and establishing a school-wide commitment to it

The vision recognizes and addresses institutional biases and inequities. It establishes high expectations for teaching practice and student outcomes and for collective responsibility for student success. Importantly, It also provides for *sustaining the change that equity requires*.

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## Additional High-Leverage Leadership Practices

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Use these practices to build on the foundation established with the three core practices above. (Galloway & Ishimaru, 2015)

### Supervising for Equitable Teaching and Learning

Rimmer (2016, February) suggested that the most powerful leadership action to support equity and instructional improvement is increasing the time leaders spend focusing on instructional improvement.

"Effective leaders...use data to make *strategic* decisions about the allocation of...resources" (Rimmer, 2016, February, What is the Work, para. 10)

Redistribute resources, such as time, money, skills, and instructional coaching, so that more resources and high-quality resources go to the students impacted by the opportunity and achievement gaps.

## Strategic Hiring and Placement of Personnel

Increase teacher diversity, recruit those with equity skills, and place highly effective and experienced teachers based on student need.

## Fostering an Equitable School Culture

This may require a shift in the school and/or district culture for some sites.

According to Rimmer (2016, February), "Unfortunately, some teachers can come to accept mediocre student performance or even failure as normal, inevitable and outside their control" (What is the work, para. 2). Leading for equity means counteracting this mindset by establishing a mission, vision, and culture of high expectations for all students and teachers, using a research-based framework and evidence-based practices for improving teaching and learning, and providing time and collaboration for improving teaching and learning through inquiry, the effective use of data, and need-based allocation of resources.

## Collaborating with Families and Communities

Cultural relevance and asset-based thinking are the keys to equitable family-community partnerships.

## Modeling the Pursuit of Equity and Social Justice

Leaders consistently model the equity vision in their actions and behaviors. This is also a way of supporting others through the change process.

In equity work, we focus on what we can change (organizational structures, beliefs, and practices) and advocate for those things currently outside our control (legislation and policies).

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# Wrap-Up

**This Professional Learning Module (PLM) has provided school leaders with understandings and strategies to create conditions for equity in their building.**

**These are the key concepts for creating the conditions for equity that were presented in this module:**

- recognizing the difference between an equity and equality;
- barriers to equity and the ways for leaders to overcome the obstacles to equity;
- cultural relevance and how it affects academic equity;
- the equity growth framework;
- 10 High-Leverage Practices for equity



**Reflect on the video and your new learning from the module.**

**How would you, as a school leader, facilitate the conditions for equity? Record your answers on your note-taking sheet.**

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# Assessment

**REFLECT**

cultural groups” (Lindsey, Nuri Robins, & Terrell, 2003, p. 42; as cited in Linton, 2011, p. 95)

Answer the following questions using your note-taking sheet.

- 1) What are the dominant groups at your site?
- 2) In what ways does the site culture's dominant pattern embrace or marginalize them?

PLAN





- 1) How has your thinking shifted as a result of reviewing the materials of this module?
- 2) What do you consider as the essential aspects of building organizational equity?
- 3) What elements of the Growth Framework for Equity or the 10 High-Leverage Equity Practices would you start with to foster more equitable conditions at your site?



**to answer the module questions.**

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[Click next to go to the additional resources for the module.](#)

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# Additional Resources

Links to additional resources:

Click on the images or urls below to access the articles and websites.

**Leaders who desire to embark on the journey of doing equity work at their sites would benefit from the guidance of an equity framework.**



## A Fair Start: Ensuring all Students Are Ready to Learn

### Education

NATIONAL CONFERENCE of STATE LEGISLATURES | JAN 2018



# The Principle...

## [The importance and principle of equity in early education](#)

A report issued by the SPREE working group provides an in-depth assessment of early education and offers approaches and strategies to improve the early learning experience for children, as well as outlines the SPREE Framework consisting of five key principles. Here we delve into Principle #1, Equity.

## THE SPREE FRAMEWORK

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The State Policy and Research for Early Education (SPREE) working group was commissioned by the National Conference of State Legislatures to study current state of early education in the U.S. and create guidelines to improve early learning for U.S. students. The result of the group's collaboration was a framework for improving educational outcomes in the U.S. intended to guide legislators' decisions' about education policy and funding. The SPREE group found equity to be such a critical component of education reform that it placed equity at the center of its framework for improvement as the foundational principle of education improvement efforts (Waterford.org, 2018, February 17).

[Click the image to the left to view the SPREE Framework.](#)

The SPREE framework is largely policy-focused and deals with some issues that may be beyond the control of leadership. However, other frameworks incorporate more dimensions of equity that leaders can influence.



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[Click the image to download a free copy of the 4D Framework.](#)



## 1 ne 4D framework

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The Center for Educational Leadership at the University of Washington's 4D Instructional Leadership Framework illustrates the interconnections between instructional leadership and the other elements of equity-focused leadership (Rimmer, 2016, February).

In describing how the framework was developed, Rimmer (2016, February) explored the following equity-centered essential questions:

- If doing equity work means being committed to improving student achievement by improving instructional practices and narrowing opportunity and achievement gaps, what leadership actions and behaviors contribute to that work?
  - What capacities must leaders develop in themselves and others in order to do effective and continuous equity work at their sites?
- 

## Linton (2011) and the Equity 101 Framework

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Linton's (2011) framework is available in his book, *Equity 101*. The framework shows that change must occur in the culture of the school, in instructional practices, and in leadership so that all emphasize authentic and respectful relationships that embrace diversity; relevancy in the form of curricula that connect to students lives, interests, and needs; high performance expectations for faculty, staff, and students; and rigorous learning for faculty and students.

Linton is also the Chief Education Officer of Curious School, an organization that supports leaders in their equity work. Equity work and equity talks can be challenging and uncomfortable. The Curious School blog has articles that can be used to frame that dialogue as you implement the following high-leverage leadership practices for equity: engaging in self-reflection and growth and leading others in engaging in self-reflection and growth.

<http://curiousschool.org/>

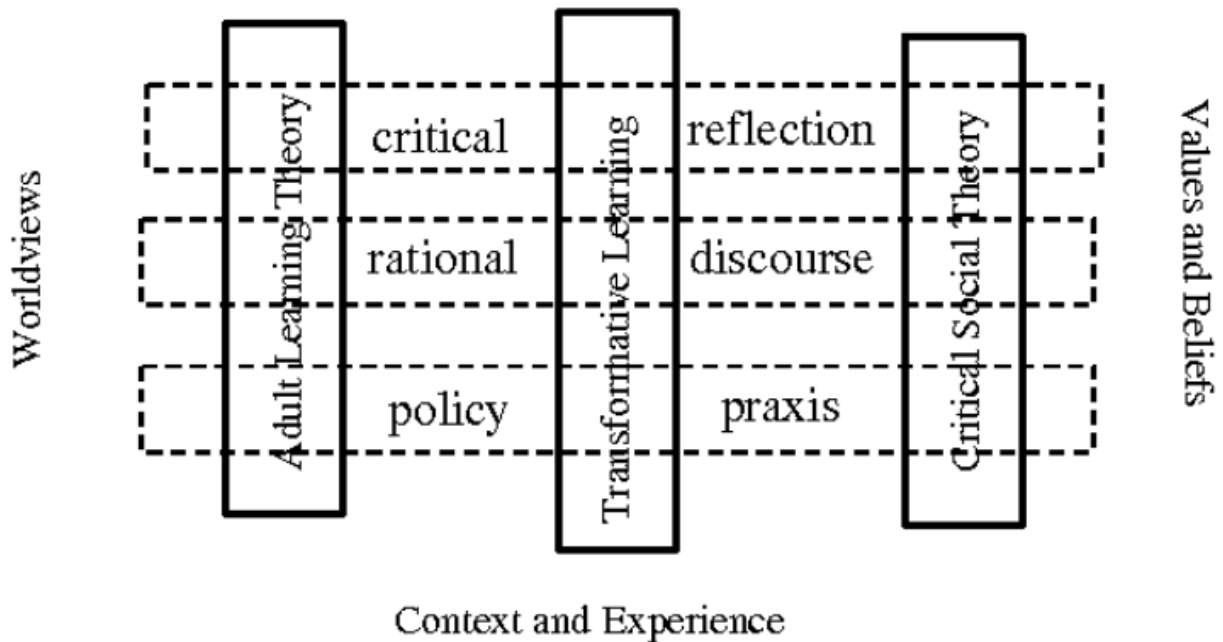


**transforms lives.**

Systemic Equity Review Framework: A Practical Approach to Achieving High Educational Outcomes for All Students

A Pedagogy of Transformative Leaders  
The Principle Weaves of Principal Preparation

Ontological/Epistemological Assumptions



Leadership for Social Justice and Equity: Weaving a Transformative Framework and Pedagogy

# THE LEAD TOOL and the High-Leverage Practices

Created by the Oregon Leadership Network (OLN), the LEAD Tool helps school leadership teams implement the 10 High-Leverage Leadership Practices for Equity. Customized supports are also available through OLN.

[leadtool.educationnorthwest.org/](http://leadtool.educationnorthwest.org/)

## More Resources to Explore:



### 6 Steps to Equitable Data Analysis

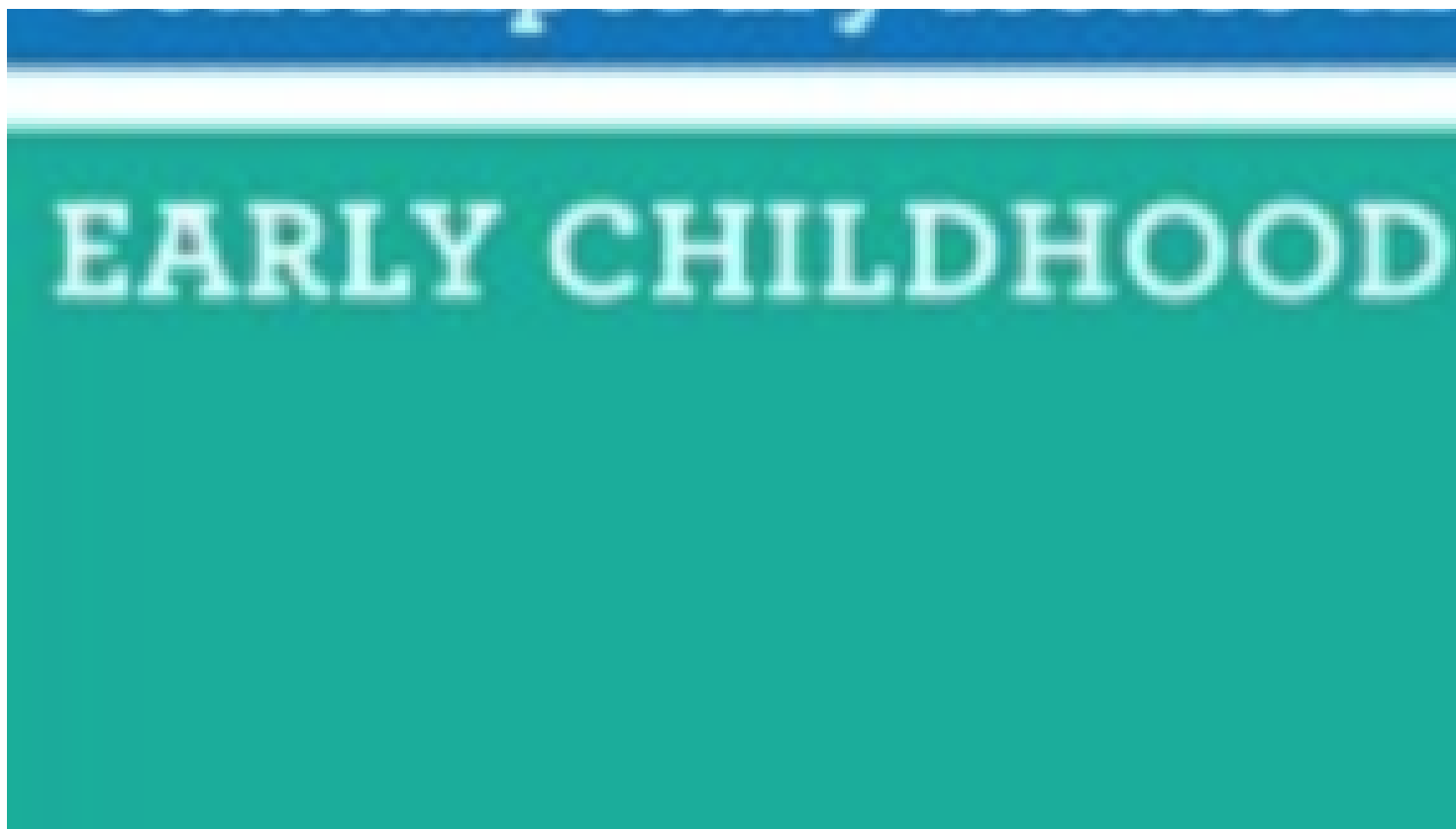
When analyzing data, educators should include students' identities and culture for a fuller picture of how they are doing.

## Data and Inquiry Practices

Leaders who want to improve the conditions for equity at their sites will focus on how data and inquiry are used to drive continuous improvement and address knowledge and opportunity gaps.







## Understanding Inclusive Early Childhood Education: a capability approach

<https://www.tninkingmaps.com/equity-education-matters/>

### **A NEW Angle: Creating Equity in Education**

<https://www.collaborativeclassroom.org/blog/new-angle-creating-equity-education/>

### **The Equity Knowledge Network**

<http://www.rsekn.ca/knowledge-hub/education-resources>

### **Educational Equity Portal**

<http://euschoolequity.org/bibliography.html>

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