



Working Definitions for Equity

Anti-racism, Community Engagement, and Pedagogy
LC

A few working definitions:

[Oppression](#)

[Race](#)

[Racism](#)

[Implicit Bias](#)

[Microaggressions](#)

[Microaffirmations](#)

[White Supremacy](#)

[Diversity](#)

[Racial Equity](#)

[Cultural Competence](#)

[Cultural Humility](#)

[Inclusion](#)

[Intersectionality](#)

[Anti-racism](#)

[Liberatory Education](#)

[Restorative Practice](#)

[Systems-level Analysis](#)

[Deficit-based Framing](#)

[Strengths-based Framing](#)

[Community Engagement](#)

[Engaged Scholarship](#)

[Inclusive Teaching](#)

[Public Scholarship](#)

[Nonhierarchical
Leadership](#)

Oppression

The systemic devaluing, undermining, marginalizing, and dis-advantaging of certain social identities in contrast to the privileged norm; when some people are denied something of value, while others have ready access.

Race

A socially constructed way of grouping people based on skin color and other apparent physical differences (which has no genetic or scientific basis), in order to give power to some over others and to justify social and economic oppression.

- “Race is a concept which signifies and symbolizes social conflicts and interests by referring to different types of human bodies.”-Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States*

Last updated April 2020

Many of the definitions published here were adapted from the Interaction Institute for Social Change, the People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond, and Adeola Oredola ‘02 and were distributed by the Swearer Center for Public Service.



Working Definitions for Equity

Anti-racism, Community Engagement, and Pedagogy LC

Racism

A system of oppressive social structures based on the socially constructed concept of race exercised by the dominant racial group (whites) over non-dominant racial groups.

Racism is different from discrimination or racial prejudice; it is race discrimination plus power. Racism provides or denies access, safety, resources, and power based on race. Its complexity and structural nature has allowed racism to recreate itself generation after generation, such that systems that perpetuate racial inequity no longer need racist actors or to explicitly *promote* racial differences in opportunities, outcomes, and consequences to *maintain* those differences.

- “Racism, specifically, is the state-sanctioned or extralegal production and exploitation of group-differentiated vulnerability to premature death.” – Ruth Wilson Gilmore, *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California*

Racism is defined as operating at the following four levels (source: RaceForward):

<p>Macro-level</p>	<p>Institutional Racism - discriminatory treatment, unfair policies and practices, inequitable opportunities and impacts within organizations and institutions, based on race.</p>	<p>Structural Racism - a system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in various, often reinforcing, ways to perpetuate racial group inequity.</p>
<p>Micro-level</p>	<p>Internalized Racism - the set of private beliefs, prejudices, and ideas that individuals have about the superiority of whites and inferiority of people of color. Among people of color, it manifests as internalized racial inferiority. Among whites, it manifests as internalized racial superiority.</p>	<p>Interpersonal Racism - occurs between individuals when we bring our private beliefs into our interaction with others.</p>

Last updated April 2020

Many of the definitions published here were adapted from the Interaction Institute for Social Change, the People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond, and Adeola Oredola ‘02 and were distributed by the Swearer Center for Public Service.



Working Definitions for Equity

Anti-racism, Community Engagement, and Pedagogy LC

Implicit Bias

Also known as unconscious or hidden bias, implicit biases are negative associations that people unknowingly hold. They are expressed automatically, without conscious awareness. Many studies have indicated that implicit biases affect individuals' attitudes and actions, thus creating real-world implications, even though individuals may not even be aware that those biases exist within themselves. Notably, implicit biases have been shown to trump individuals' stated commitments to equality and fairness, thereby producing behavior that diverges from the explicit attitudes that many people profess.

Power

Access to social, political, cultural, financial systemic power. In the US, white people have held the majority of dominance and power. White people control political and institutional power, cultural and social norms and the vast majority of financial resources.

Privilege

Exists when one group has something of value that is denied to others simply because of the groups they belong to, rather than because of anything they've done or failed to do.

Microaggressions

The everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults--both intentional or unintentional--which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to a marginalized person or group.

Microaffirmations

Substitute messages about deficit and exclusion with messages of excellence, openness, and opportunity. Powell, Demetriou, & Fisher (2013) discuss tangible actions that can be applied to challenging and affirming experiences: active listening, demonstrated through eye contact, open body posture, summarizing statements, and asking questions to ensure understanding; recognizing and validating experiences, including expressing care about the effect of the event and demonstrating a willingness to think through a productive path forward; and affirming emotional reactions (see [Sheridan Center](#) website).

Last updated April 2020

Many of the definitions published here were adapted from the Interaction Institute for Social Change, the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, and Adeola Oredola '02 and were distributed by the Swearer Center for Public Service.



Working Definitions for Equity

Anti-racism, Community Engagement, and Pedagogy
LC

White Supremacy

An historically based, institutionally perpetuated system of exploitation and oppression of continents, nations and people of color by white people and nations of the European continent; for the purpose of maintaining and defending a system of wealth, power, and privilege.

Diversity

The inclusion of individuals representing a broad spectrum of races, ethnicities, religions, socioeconomic backgrounds, gender identities, sexual orientations, ages, languages, geographic/ community connections, physical & mental abilities, immigration status, etc.

Racial Equity

A condition in which the way someone is racialized does not determine their access, opportunities, treatment, or statistical outcomes in society. Achieving these results requires a proactive and ongoing commitment to anti-racist policies, practices, attitudes, and actions.

Cultural Competence

A set of behaviors, attitudes, and policies that make it possible for a system, organization or individual to work effectively in cross-cultural situations. All people and organizations are at different levels of awareness, knowledge and skills along the cultural competence continuum, which can evolve over time with practice and support.

Cultural Humility (vs. Cultural Competence)

A lifelong commitment to self-evaluation and self-critique: acknowledges that cultural competency will never be reached because it is a lifelong process. The desire and dedication to fix cultural power imbalance (interpersonal relationships & systemic levels). There is no way we can be experts in another person's culture. We should be humble when we approach other cultures, religions, races, gender identities, etc. In 2016, the National Association of Social Workers replaced their use of the term cultural competence with cultural humility.

Last updated April 2020

Many of the definitions published here were adapted from the Interaction Institute for Social Change, the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, and Adeola Oredola '02 and were distributed by the Swearer Center for Public Service.



Working Definitions for Equity

Anti-racism, Community Engagement, and Pedagogy LC

Inclusion

Authentically bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/policy making in a way that shares power. a value and practice of ensuring that people feel they belong and that their input is valued by the whole (group, organization, society, system, etc.), particularly regarding decisions that affect their lives.

Intersectionality

A sociological term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, which identifies how interlocking systems of power impact those who are most marginalized in society. Intersectionality considers that various forms of social identities such as class, race, gender, age, religion, and physical ability do not exist separately from each other, but are woven together in ways that significantly deepens the negative impact on individuals' lives, in society, and in social systems.

Anti-racism

“The active process of identifying and eliminating racism by changing systems, organizational structures, policies and practices and attitudes, so that power is redistributed and shared equitably.” (NAC International Perspectives: Women and Global Solidarity, as cited on Alberta Civil Liberties Research Centre’s [website](#)).

“Since the 1960s, racist power has commandeered the term ‘racial discrimination,’ transforming the act of discriminating on the basis of race into an inherently racist act. ... [But] the defining question is whether the discrimination is creating equity or inequity. If discrimination is creating equity, then it is antiracist.” - Ibram Kendi, *How to be an Antiracist*

Liberatory Education

Learning spaces that are centered around principles for social change and transformation, that ultimately support students to explore their own consciousness-raising and engage with the oppressive forces that impact their lives.

Restorative Practice

A range of methods and strategies which can be used both to prevent relationship-damaging incidents from happening and to resolve them if they do happen.

Last updated April 2020

Many of the definitions published here were adapted from the Interaction Institute for Social Change, the People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond, and Adeola Oredola ‘02 and were distributed by the Swearer Center for Public Service.



Working Definitions for Equity

Anti-racism, Community Engagement, and Pedagogy LC

Systems-level Analysis

Adds context, reveals root causes, contributing factors, and surfaces possible corresponding solutions. A systems analysis involves an examination of questions: What institutional policies and practices are involved? What are the historical underpinnings, cumulative inequities, mental models, and popular cultural norms reinforcing the disparity or social problem?

Deficit-Based Framing

It is often discussed in relation to the success gap between students of color and their white peers. The deficit thinking model “posits that the student who fails in school does so because of internal deficits or deficiencies” (such as intelligence, work ethic, competencies) ([Valencia, 1997, p. 2](#)). This thinking often places the blame of educational failures on communities of color rather than on the institutions that are inequitably serving them.

Strengths-Based Framing

An approach that focuses on what is working well to support the progress and advancement of individuals and communities. It acknowledges the social and cultural capital, resources, and assets, present in communities, especially communities of color. This is an alternative to an approach that stigmatizes families or individualizes explanations for educational shortcomings.

Community Engagement

Describes collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity. The purpose of community engagement is the partnership of college and university knowledge and resources with those of the public and private sectors to enrich scholarship, research and creative activity; enhance curriculum, teaching and learning; prepare educated, engaged citizens; strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility; address critical societal issues; and contribute to the public good.

(Source: [Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching](#))

**Supplants public service and volunteerism which carry uni-directional and transactional connotations.*

Last updated April 2020

Many of the definitions published here were adapted from the Interaction Institute for Social Change, the People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond, and Adeola Oredola ‘02 and were distributed by the Swearer Center for Public Service.



Working Definitions for Equity

Anti-racism, Community Engagement, and Pedagogy
LC

Engaged Scholarship

The co-creation of knowledge that shifts the position of students and community groups from knowledge consumers to knowledge producers and partners in problem-solving. Engaged scholarship is the generation of new knowledge through the combining of academic knowledge and community-based knowledge, eliminating a hierarchy of knowledge and a one-way flow of knowledge outward from the college or university. (Source: [Lynton Faculty Award in Engaged Scholarship](#))

Public scholarship and publicly engaged scholarship

Public scholarship typically refers moving beyond the walls of the academy to share knowledge generated in the academy with the public. Publicly engaged scholarship refers to moving beyond the walls of the academy to collaborate with community partners to generate knowledge. While publicly engaged scholarship may be considered public scholarship, public scholarship is not necessarily publicly engaged scholarship.

Nonhierarchical Leadership

An organic, decentralized organizational structure. Nonhierarchical leadership in teaching involves strategies for creating a symbiotic relationship amongst students and teachers.

Generosity

“True generosity consists precisely in fighting to destroy the causes which nourish false charity . . . true generosity lies in striving so that these hands—whether of individuals of entire peoples—need to be extended less and less in supplication, so that more and more they become human hands which work and, working, transform the world.” Freire
Pedagogy of the Oppressed