

Building a Common Language

“Equity literacy” (Gorski, 2016) includes a vocabulary for social justice. The next few pages list several terms that are frequently used in conversations about equity, defined by a variety of different resources. Please consider this as a starting point in your professional and personal development, as you continue to explore the meaning of these different terms and look for new ideas to add to your vernacular.

1. Action	The fact or process of doing something, typically to achieve an aim. Dictionary.com
2. Attitude	The tendency to respond in a particular manner. Attitude encompasses implicit bias, observation bias, attribution errors and other cognitive errors.
3. Attribution Error	The tendency people have to overemphasize personal characteristics and ignore situational factors in judging others’ behavior. University of Texas at Austin video. (2017). <i>Ethics Defined: Fundamental Attribution Error</i> . https://ethicsunwrapped.utexas.edu/glossary/fundamental-attribution-error .
4. Colorblind	The racial ideology that posits the best way to end discrimination is by treating individuals as equally as possible, without regard to race, culture, or ethnicity. It focuses on commonalities between people, such as their shared humanity. Wise, T. J. (2010). <i>Colorblind: the rise of post-racial politics and the retreat from racial equity</i> . San Francisco, CA: City Lights Books.
5. Context	The circumstances that form the setting for an event, statement, or idea, and in terms of which it can be fully understood and assessed. Dictionary.com
6. Culture	Culture has been defined in a number of ways, but most simply, as the learned and shared behavior of a community of interacting human beings. Useem & Useem (1963) <i>Human Organizations</i> , 22 (3). p. 169. Culture is broader than just race and ethnicity. Love, Stiles, Mundry, & DiRanna, (2008). <i>The Data Coach’s Guide to improving learning outcomes for all students- unleashing the power of collaborative inquiry</i> . Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
7. Cultural Humility	A lifelong process of self-reflection, self-critique and commitment to understanding and respecting different points of view, and engaging with others humbly, authentically and from a place of learning. Gallardo, M. E. (2013). <i>Developing cultural humility: embracing race, privilege and power</i> . Los Angeles: SAGE Publications.
8. Cultural Racism	Those aspects of society that overtly and covertly attribute value and normality to white people and whiteness, and devalue, stereotype, and label People of Color as "other," different, less than, or render them invisible. Maurianne Adams, Lee Anne Bell, and Pat Griffin, editors (2007). <i>Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook</i> . New York: Routledge.
9. Cultural Responsiveness	Incorporating a group’s shared behaviors, beliefs, customs, values, and experiences to enhance the environment and change systems to enhance equity. Klingner et al., 2005.
10. Ethnicity	A social construct that divides people into smaller social groups based on characteristics such as shared sense of group membership, language, political and economic interests, history and ancestral geographical base. Maurianne Adams, Lee Anne Bell, and Pat Griffin, editors (2007). <i>Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook</i> . New York: Routledge.
11. Explicit Bias	Consciously held beliefs and values that certain characteristics, behaviors, attitudes, etc. are superior to others. McIntosh, Girvan, Horner, & Smolkowski, (2014). "Education not Incarceration: A Conceptual Model for Reducing Racial and Ethnic Disproportionality in School Discipline," <i>Journal of Applied Research on Children: Informing Policy for Children at Risk</i> , 5(2).

12. Implicit Bias

Frequently based on stereotypes, implicit bias describes the automatic associations all humans make about groups and group members, and how these associations impact behavior in certain situations. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Center for Policing Equity Webinar (September 2016). *Identity Traps: Implicit Bias and Self-Threats*.

13. Institutionalized Racism

Institutionalized racism occurs within and between institutions. Institutionalized racism is discriminatory treatment, unfair policies and inequitable opportunities and impacts, based on race, produced and perpetuated by institutions (schools, mass media, etc.). Lawrence & Keleher (2004). *Chronic Disparity: Strong and Pervasive Evidence of Racial Inequalities*. Structural Racism. Race and Public Policy Conference.

The ways in which institutional policies and practices create different outcomes for different racial groups. Maggie Potapchuk, Sally Leiderman, Donna Bivens and Barbara Major. (*Flipping the Script: White Privilege and Community Building*)

14. Learning

The acquisition of knowledge or skills through experience, study, or by being taught. Dictionary.com

15. LGBTQ+

An acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer/Questioning (vague or unsure), and others. It refers to a population of people united by having gender identities or sexual orientations that differ from the heterosexual and cisgender majority. "Cis" is a Latin prefix meaning "on the same side". (University of Central Florida – Social Justice and Advocacy)

16. Lived Experiences

The representation and understanding of a research participants' experiences, choices, options, and how these factors influence one's perception of knowledge. (Given, 2008).

17. Meritocracy

Government or the holding of power by people selected on the basis of their ability. Dictionary.com

Meritocracy reflects the common belief that if you work hard, you will succeed. This belief system places all responsibility for one's position in life on the individual, ignoring the role of systemic racism, ableism, implicit bias, policies, economic structures, etc.

18. Micro-aggression

Brief comments, questions, or even compliments that suggests something demeaning. Wilson (2017). *Implicit Bias: How Our Unconscious Minds Lead Us Astray*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Minority Health Resources Preconception Peer Educator Program webinar.

The slow accumulation of microaggressions during a childhood and over a lifetime is in part what defines a marginalized experience, making explanation and communication with someone who does not share this identity particularly difficult. www.microaggression.com/about

19. Observation Bias

The tendency to see what we expect to see, or what we want to see. When a researcher studies a certain group, they usually come to an experiment with prior knowledge and subjective feelings about the group being studied. (Dictionary.com)

20. Prejudice

A pre-judgment or unjustifiable, and usually negative, attitude of one type of individual or groups toward another group and its members. (W.K. Kellogg Foundation: Racial Equity Resource Guide)

21. Privilege

A special advantage, immunity, permission, right, or benefit granted to or enjoyed by an individual because of their class, caste, gender, or racial/ethnic group. McIntosh, P. (1988). *White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences Through Work in Women Studies*.

22. Race

A category of humankind that shares certain distinctive physical traits. (Merriam-Webster)

Race is associated with biology whereas ethnicity is associated with culture. (<http://www.livescience.com/33903-difference-race-ethnicity.html>)

23. Racism

A belief or doctrine that inherent differences among the various human racial groups determine cultural or individual achievement, usually involving the idea that one's own race is superior and has the right to dominate others or that a particular racial group is inferior to the others. Dictionary.com

24. Reflection

Serious thought or consideration. Dictionary.com

25. Stereotype

Characteristics ascribed to groups of people involving gender, race, national origin and other factors. Hall, L. E. (2005) *Dictionary of multicultural psychology: issues, terms, and concepts*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications.

26. Structural Racism

Also, "Systemic 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. It identifies dimensions of our history and culture that have allowed privileges associated with "whiteness" and disadvantages associated with "color" to endure and adapt over time. Structural racism is not something that a few people or institutions choose to practice. Instead it has been a feature of the social, economic and political systems in which we all exist. The Aspen Institute: Roundtable on Community Change. (<https://assets.aspeninstitute.org/content/uploads/files/content/docs/rcc/RCC-Structural-Racism-Glossary.pdf>)

27. Systemic Racism

Also, "Structural Racism"

In many ways "systemic racism" and "structural racism" are synonymous. If there is a difference between the terms, it can be said to exist in the fact that a structural racism analysis pays more attention to the historical, cultural and social psychological aspects of our currently racialized society. The Aspen Institute: Roundtable on Community Change. (<https://assets.aspeninstitute.org/content/uploads/files/content/docs/rcc/RCC-Structural-Racism-Glossary.pdf>)

28. Superficial Reflection vs. Critical Reflection

Reflection at a superficial level makes reference to an existing knowledge base, including differing theories but does not make any comment or critique of them, while critical reflection shows that an experience has created a change in the person – his/her views of self, relationships, community of practice, society and so on. (Latrobe University – Reflective practice in health.)

29. White Fragility

A state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves. These moves include the outward display of emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt, and behaviors such as argumentation, silence, and leaving the stress-inducing situation. These behaviors, in turn, function to reinstate white racial equilibrium. (DiAngelo, 2011).