

Perspectives on Equity

1. No one is born prejudiced. All forms of bias, from extreme bigotry to unaware cultural biases, are acquired--actually imposed on the young person.
2. All humans are very much alike. We are one species.
3. In many societies many of the assumptions, values and practices of people and institutions from the dominate culture serve to the disadvantage of students from the non-dominant culture.
4. Individual prejudice and institutionalized biases are dysfunctional for individuals and to the society as a whole.
5. Systemic mistreatment (such as racism, sexism, and classism) is more than the sum of individual prejudices. Thoughtful action with regard to curriculum, pedagogy, and school policies and organization, is necessary to overcome the effects on people and institutions of a long history of prejudice and discrimination.
6. Individuals and groups internalize the systematic mistreatment. They often act harmfully toward themselves and each other. This process must also be identified and eliminated.
7. Educators are an important force in helping many people overcome the effects of societal bias and discrimination, but schools also serve to perpetuate the inequalities and prejudices in society.
8. Race, class and gender bias are serious issues facing U.S. society and education that are usually not discussed. Talking about them is necessary, not to lay blame, but to figure out better ways of educating our children.
9. The lack of acceptance and support of a variety of forms of leadership is an impediment to the development of teacher leadership among people of color, women and the working class.
10. To make progress on this very complex problem it will be necessary to improve alliances between educators from different ethnic and racial groups, between males and females, and between people of different class backgrounds.
11. Discussing and gaining new understandings about the existence and effects of bias and discrimination will usually be accompanied by strong emotions.
12. Changed attitudes and actions will be facilitated if we are listened to attentively and allowed to release our emotions as we attempt to make sense of our experiences and the experiences of others.