

TOOL

The Equity Rubric



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The Equity Rubric

Purpose

This tool supports you in reflecting on and developing equitable teaching and coaching practices. It identifies indicators of equity across multiple domains and is intended to push your thinking and deepen conversations about equity.

When to Use

Use this tool when reflecting on your own practice, preparing for or debriefing a coaching conversation, or working with a client or team to identify areas of strength and growth related to equity. Use this tool in community, with a Professional Learning Community (PLC), another coach, mentor, or trusted administrator.

How to Use It

Engage with this tool in bite-sized chunks by focusing on one domain at a time. Review the indicators of equity and inequity, identify evidence from practice, and reflect on where strengths and opportunities for growth exist. This rubric is a tool for reflection and ongoing development—not evaluation. Pay attention to the emotions that surface as you engage with it, and explore what you can learn from them. Over time, revisit the rubric to deepen your understanding and track growth.

Key Definitions

- **Equity:** Educational equity means that (a) each child receives whatever they need to develop to their full academic and social potential, and (b) each child is successful in school.
- **Success:** Success must be defined by the local school community so that it reflects the voices of students, families, educators, and the broader community, and is grounded in the local context and conditions for access and opportunity.

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- This tool names indicators of equitable inputs. Many of these indicators address teacher behavior.
- The true indicator of equity is revealed in the impact that a teacher and school have on students, and what students gain from being in that classroom and school, which includes skills, abilities, knowledge, thoughts, feelings, a sense of belonging, and a sense of potential.

Overview of the Equity Rubric

Rubric Domain	Content
<i>I. Teacher Beliefs</i>	The teacher is aware of their biases and privileges.
<i>II. Relationships and Culture</i>	The teacher's ability to form positive relationships with students and to create a classroom that is safe, affirmative, and student-centered.
<i>III. Class Environment</i>	The teacher utilizes identity-affirming strategies to create a healthy community of learners.
<i>IV. Rigor and Expectations</i>	The teacher creates intellectually challenging work for students, holds them to high expectations, and communicates confidence in their ability to be successful.
<i>V. Access and Participation</i>	The teacher uses a wide range of strategies to ensure that every child has access to the content and that every child can learn.
<i>VI. Student Performance</i>	Every student is successful.
<i>VII. Curriculum and Instruction</i>	Curriculum and instructional practices are relevant, diverse, inclusive, affirming of many identities, and student-centered.
<i>VIII. Family and Community Partnership</i>	Parents and caregivers are seen as valued partners and participate in their children's education in a variety of ways.
<i>IX. School Culture</i>	School staff intentionally build trusting, mutually respectful, and caring relationships with each other, and with students and their families
<i>X. Institutional and Organizational</i>	The school's core policies and practices indicate a prioritization of equity.

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I. Teacher Beliefs	Strong evidence of equity	Some evidence of equity	No evidence of equity	Evidence of Inequity	Evidence: Observed Examples
<i>Indicator of Equity</i>					
1. The teacher understands how their own identity markers (including race, class, and gender) impact how they teach.					
2. The teacher is aware of their implicit bias and how it influences their teaching and is committed to not acting from it.					
3. The teacher is aware of the privileges granted by their identity markers (including their race, ethnicity, religion, culture, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, language, physical, and neurotypical abilities).					
4. The teacher is aware of their own internalized oppression (if they belong to a historically marginalized group) and is committed to not acting from it.					
5. The teacher is aware of the unique ways that they can contribute to their students.					
<i>Indicator of Inequity</i>					
6. The teacher uses the phrase “these kids” coupled with a negative or deficit reference.					
7. The teacher talks disparagingly about students grouped by their ethnicity, religion, language, race, gender, sexual orientation, or abilities (or a combination of identity markers).					

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II. Relationships and Culture	Strong evidence of equity	Some evidence of equity	No evidence of equity	Evidence of Inequity	Evidence: Observed Examples
<i>Indicator of Equity</i>					
1. Teacher communicates care, warmth, and personal regard for all students.					
2. The teacher knows each child's preferred name and pronoun, and correctly pronounces their names; the teacher ensures that students know each other's names and pronouns and that they correctly pronounce names.					
3. Praise and words of affirmation are extended to all students for their contributions, ideas, effort, kindness, perseverance, and so on. A ratio of five positive interactions for every one negative interaction is evident.					
4. The teacher consistently makes many efforts to get to know all students, and to surface and highlight each student's strengths, skills, and unique contributions.					
5. The teacher communicates warmth and care, and also holds children to high expectations.					
6. The teacher works to reduce students' stress from microaggressions.					
7. The teacher creates an environment that is intellectually and socially safe for learning.					
8. The teacher creates space for student agency, autonomy, and voice.					
9. Students are oriented toward themselves and each other, not just to the teacher.					

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II. Relationships and Culture	Strong evidence of equity	Some evidence of equity	No evidence of equity	Evidence of Inequity	Evidence: Observed Examples
<i>Indicator of Equity</i>					
10. Every child is encouraged to take leadership and helper roles in the classroom. These roles are distributed based on a child's skills, ability, and interest, and there is room for them to explore new roles to uncover new interests.					
11. Seating arrangements in the classroom ensure that all students are a part of the community.					
<i>Indicator of Inequity</i>					
12. Some groups of students grouped along gender, race, and linguistic ability clearly have more or less status in the class (e.g., boys are praised for being smart, girls are praised for being helpful, black boys are always in trouble).					
13. The teacher's interactions with students, when examined along lines of gender and race/ethnicity, are disproportionate when categorized as positive or negative.					
14. Students are isolated, either temporarily or on a long-term basis, and often those students fall along lines of marginalized groups (e.g., they are black or brown males).					

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III. Classroom Environment	Strong evidence of equity	Some evidence of equity	No evidence of equity	Evidence of Inequity	Evidence: Observed Examples
<i>Indicator of Equity</i>					
1. The teacher uses multiple strategies to gain every child's attention and to ensure that every student understands directions.					
2. When students do not follow behavioral expectations, the teacher has a set of routines to use, of which students are aware, which are consistently used.					
3. The teacher makes expectations clear, uses physical proximity with students, and uses a warm and direct tone of voice.					
4. Principles of restorative justice are used to redirect challenging behavior, manage conflict, and repair harm when rules are broken.					
5. The emphasis in classroom management and student behavior is on how to be a positive member of a community (not on compliance and regulations).					
<i>Indicator of Inequity</i>					
6. Students of color are disproportionately disciplined for nonspecific, subjective offenses such as “defiance” or “disrespect.”					
7. Students of color, especially African American and Latino males, spend disproportional time in the office or in time-out.					
8. Children's bodies are heavily regulated: there is a great emphasis on walking silently, sitting straight, and so on.					

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IV. Rigor and Expectations	Strong evidence of equity	Some evidence of equity	No evidence of equity	Evidence of Inequity	Evidence: Observed Examples
<i>Indicator of Equity</i>					
1. All students have the opportunity to develop their higher-order thinking skills.					
2. Students from marginalized communities and from low-income communities, and English Language Learners are offered many opportunities to develop cognitive skills and habits of mind that prepare them for advanced academic tasks.					
3. Teachers communicate confidence that all students are capable of engaging in intellectually challenging work.					
4. The teacher consistently communicates high expectations and offers the support and guidance to ensure all students meet expectations.					
5. The teacher supports students to take ownership of their learning.					
6. The teacher guides students to be metacognitive about their learning and to learn how to learn.					
<i>Indicator of Inequity</i>					
7. Teachers rely heavily on lecture, rote memorization, and “the basics.”					

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V. Access and Participation	Strong evidence of equity	Some evidence of equity	No evidence of equity	Evidence of Inequity	Evidence: Observed Examples
<i>Indicator of Equity</i>					
1. There is evidence that every child is engaged with their learning, and is participating, at all times.					
2. Children from marginalized communities—including English Language Learners, girls, and gender non-conforming children—participate in whole-class discussions and in small-group discussions comparable to their male, cis-gendered, and native English-speaking counterparts.					
3. In whole-class discussions, the teacher calls on students equitably, using strategies to vary participation.					
4. The teacher consistently uses wait time.					
5. The teacher makes time and space to honor student questions.					
6. When a student makes a mistake, the teacher responds in a clear and affirming way.					
7. In general, the teacher talks less than students talk.					
8. The teacher considers the needs of their students' families when making decisions about requesting they buy and bring their own supplies to school for projects, holiday gift exchanges, or any other occasion.					
9. If the curriculum is not inclusive of neuro-divergent thinkers, the teacher modifies instruction to meet their needs.					

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V. Access and Participation	Strong evidence of equity	Some evidence of equity	No evidence of equity	Evidence of Inequity	Evidence: Observed Examples
<i>Indicator of Equity</i>					
10. The teacher employs trauma-informed practices when necessary and/or brings in people who can.					
<i>Indicator of Inequity</i>					
11. The teacher shames students publicly and/or privately.					

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VI. Student Performance	Strong evidence of equity	Some evidence of equity	No evidence of equity	Evidence of Inequity	Evidence: Observed Examples
<i>Indicator of Equity</i>					
1. Different ways of knowing and expressing knowledge are valued and rewarded. Success is defined and measured in many ways.					
2. Every student is successful in class.					
3. Students are recognized for being positive contributors of a community.					
<i>Indicator of Inequity</i>					
4. Testing data is prioritized and emphasized; success in tests is messaged as the ultimate goal and is valued above all else.					
5. Performance data is publicly displayed and shared (even when student names have been removed) for the purpose of shaming or “creating urgency.”					
6. There are notable discrepancies that run along lines of race/ethnicity and gender in performance data (e.g., English Language Learners perform poorly on writing assessments).					

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VII. Curriculum and Instruction	Strong evidence of equity	Some evidence of equity	No evidence of equity	Evidence of Inequity	Evidence: Observed Examples
<i>Indicator of Equity</i>					
1. The teacher is a facilitator of learning, guiding students toward discovery, providing content expertise at times, and creating structures that facilitate student-directed learning.					
2. Students' knowledge, experience, wisdom, and background are valued and seen as resources for learning.					
3. Students' knowledge, experience, wisdom, and background are accessed, centralized, and incorporated authentically into learning.					
4. Teachers use students' real-life experiences to help students connect with and make meaning of in-school learning.					
5. Teachers offer students authentic opportunities to process content in a variety of ways.					
6. Students can process new content using methods from oral traditions.					
7. The curriculum—or at the very least, instruction—emphasizes higher order thinking skills, an inquiry approach, and student ownership over learning.					
8. The experiences and stories of historically marginalized groups are integrated into and centralized in the curriculum. They are not relegated to a unit or month.					

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VII. Curriculum and Instruction	Strong evidence of equity	Some evidence of equity	No evidence of equity	Evidence of Inequity	Evidence: Observed Examples
<i>Indicator of Equity</i>					
9. The experiences of historically underserved groups are not reduced and limited to their experiences of suffering. People of color do not appear in literature simply to talk about their experiences of oppression.					
10. Whenever possible, the teacher includes literature by authors whose racial and cultural background reflects that of their students.					
11. The voices and experiences of people who have been historically marginalized are prioritized—even if members of those groups are not among the student population.					
12. The teacher connects new content to culturally relevant examples and metaphors from students' communities and everyday lives.					
13. The teacher encourages multiple perspectives (from multiple ways to solve a math problem, to multiple interpretations of a poem, to multiple perspectives on current and historical events).					
<i>Indicator of Inequity</i>					
14. Students are seen as vessels to fill with information.					

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VIII. Family and Community Partnership	Strong evidence of equity	Some evidence of equity	No evidence of equity	Evidence of Inequity	Evidence: Observed Examples
<i>Indicator of Equity</i>					
1. Parents and families are viewed as partners in the education of students.					
2. Parents' and families' knowledge and wisdom of their children and community are tapped into.					
3. There is dialogue with parents about the issues that are important to them, and these issues are included in classroom curriculum and activities.					
4. Parents and caregivers are warmly invited into the classroom, their input is welcomed, and they are listened to.					
5. The teacher makes every possible effort to communicate with parents and caregivers across linguistic differences, seeking out interpreters and making efforts to cross language barriers with nonverbal communication.					
6. The teacher uses a variety of structures to communicate with parents and caregivers and to get their input, perspective, and feedback.					
7. There are no patterns of disparity between which groups of parents and caregivers the teacher contacts with concerns (e.g., parents of African American males are not contacted more often than other groups). There are also no differences in the quality of those contacts.					

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IX. School Culture	Strong evidence of equity	Some evidence of equity	No evidence of equity	Evidence of Inequity	Evidence: Observed Examples
<i>Indicator of Equity</i>					
1. Every staff member contributes to building a culture that emphasizes trust, connection, and support.					
2. Every staff member communicates warmth, care, and high expectations.					
3. Teachers and administrators speak about children and families with respect, curiosity, and compassion. No one is shamed, ever.					
4. Teachers and administrators acknowledge each other's as well as students' and families' unique cultural perspectives and assets.					
5. Teachers and administrators listen with curiosity to each other, to families, and to students.					
6. Teachers, coaches, and administrators seek to understand family and student experiences and perspectives.					
7. The school has a shared positive culture that is inclusive and intentionally cultivated. Every adult, child, and family member who are part of the school have regular opportunities to reflect on shared values and to offer the school feedback.					
8. The school's approach to culture-building is inclusive of multiple viewpoints.					
9. The school's approach to discipline builds understanding, empathy, and self-awareness.					

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IX. School Culture	Strong evidence of equity	Some evidence of equity	No evidence of equity	Evidence of Inequity	Evidence: Observed Examples
<i>Indicator of Equity</i>					
10. When consequences are issued, they emphasize repairing harm, rebuilding relationships, and strengthening community.					
11. Teachers, coaches, and administrators employ multiple channels to seek out parent perspectives and input and do so consistently and regularly.					
12. Teachers, coaches, and administrators recognize the contributions of all children and have ways to publicly acknowledge those contributions.					
13. Teachers, coaches, and administrators intentionally build trusting, mutually respectful, and caring relationships with students and families.					

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X. Institutional and Organizational	Strong evidence of equity	Some evidence of equity	No evidence of equity	Evidence of Inequity	Evidence: Observed Examples
<i>Indicator of Equity</i>					
1. Teachers and leaders reflect the racial and ethnic/cultural composition of their students.					
2. The school's mission and vision explicitly include a commitment to equity.					
3. Strategic plans, goals, and initiatives reflect a prioritized commitment to equity. Equity is not approached as an add-on initiative, but is integrated into every facet of teaching, learning, and leading.					
4. Financial resources are allocated for the school's equity plans, goals, and initiatives. A school's budget reflects the prioritization of this commitment.					
5. Teachers, coaches, and administrators disaggregate data according to race, ethnicity, home language, gender, and ability in order to see evidence of disproportionality and to determine where to allocate energy and resources.					
6. Performance data, graduation data, number of students in Advanced Placement (AP) classes, and so on do not reflect the status quo; that data indicates an interruption of inequitable patterns.					
7. The school ensures that students are aware of prerequisite courses for college and that these courses are available to all students.					
8. The school does not have homogenous grouping (tracking) or the school is actively de-tracking.					

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X. Institutional and Organizational	Strong evidence of equity	Some evidence of equity	No evidence of equity	Evidence of Inequity	Evidence: Observed Examples
<i>Indicator of Equity</i>					
9. Small groups, tutors, mentors, instructional assistants, and counselors support students individually and in small groups.					
10. The school has a comprehensive and inclusive hiring process conducive to hiring teachers who are highly trained and experienced, who have deep pedagogical content knowledge, who are knowledgeable about systemic oppression, who have reflected on their own unconscious bias and their identity in relation to power and privilege, and who have shown commitment to equitable practices.					
11. The school invests in high-quality, ongoing professional development (PD), including coaching, so teachers have the deep pedagogical content knowledge and cultural competence to support student learning, especially if children are not successful or below grade-level.					
12. The school prioritizes professional learning (including coaching) for every member of staff, and on every item on this rubric.					

The Equity Rubric

Reflect

- Which domains and indicators on this rubric are my strengths?

- How did I develop those skills and dispositions?

- Which domains and indicators do I want to prioritize developing?

- Which observable student behaviors would be evidence of my growth in those domains and indicators?

- What's the first step I could take to make growth in my prioritized areas for development?

WHAT'S NEXT

Keep Learning with Bright Morning



Download [The Coaching for Equity Toolkit](#).

Make every conversation an equity conversation.

- Navigate challenging conversations with confidence
- Examine beliefs without triggering defensiveness
- Transform classroom observations with an equity lens
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