Five Shifts of Consciousness for Multicultural Educators
(and the questions we should be asking ourselves)

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1. **Advocating *equality* → Advocating *equity***
   a. Does every student who walks into my school or classroom have an opportunity to achieve to her or his fullest capability regardless of race, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, socioeconomic status, home language, (dis)ability, and other social and cultural identifiers?
   b. Do I understand that *equity* requires eliminating disparities in access to opportunities and resources—what some might call *fairness* or *justice*—and sometimes when we offer equality (giving everybody the same thing) we fail to meet this requirement?
   c. When I advocate for equity in educational access do I take into account all types of "access"? Do I consider physical access as well as social, economic, and cultural access? For example, although all students in a particular high school might have "access" to upper-level mathematics classes in the sense that such classes are offered to anybody who has taken the prerequisites, do I consider in my equity advocacy the many ways in which some groups of students—women, for instance—are socialized not to pursue mathematics (or any other STEM field) as a course of study and that this, too, is about access?

2. **Finding fault in disenfranchised families → Eradicating disenfranchising practices**
   a. Do I tend to find fault in students of color, low-income students, and other students and families from disenfranchised identity groups while failing to examine ways in which policies, practices, and pedagogies, as well as larger societal factors (inequities in access to living wage work, health care, and safe and affordable housing, for instance) influence educational outcome disparities?
   b. Do I tend to institute strategies for addressing these disparities which are aimed at "fixing" disenfranchised families rather than those conditions which disenfranchise families?

3. **Color-blindness → Self-examination**
   a. Am I ignoring the existence of difference as a way to avoid addressing the difficult issues related to them?
   b. Is color-blindness possible? And, if so, is it desirable when it denies people what may be important dimensions of their identities?

4. **Learning about "other" cultures → Fighting for the rights of disenfranchised families**
   a. Although learning about my students' individual cultures is, indeed ,a valuable pursuit, do I stop there or do I commit to and fight for their rights, such as the right not to be placed unjustly into low academic tracks (or to be tracked at all)?
   b. "Other" than what?

5. **Celebrating diversity → Committing to sustaining an equitable learning environment**
   a. Am I asking students who already are alienated by many aspects of education to celebrate a difference for which they may experience bias? If so, to whose benefit?
   b. Might celebrating diversity *in place of* working toward a more equitable vision of multiculturalism perpetuate the very inequities multicultural education is supposed to redress?