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About the Author



Dr. Shannon D. Holder is the mother of two who has dedicated nearly thirty years to the field of education, serving in a variety of roles including teacher, assistant principal, principal, director, manager, specialist in family engagement, and senior manager of equity and student conduct. Her leadership experience includes founding principal roles at both a secondary alternative school and an elementary public charter school. Currently, she is the CEO of Onyx Equity Consulting and Changing the Trajectory, LLC, where she collaborates with schools to cultivate their

ideal cultural environments. In addition to her consulting work, Dr. Holder is the author of two children's books, is currently employed in the public-school system, and serves as an adjunct professor at George Mason University.

Dr. Holder holds a bachelor's degree from Virginia State University, a Master's in Education Leadership from George Mason University, and a Doctorate in Educational Policy and Organizational Leadership with a concentration in Diversity and Equity from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. She has facilitated workshops at numerous local, national, and international conferences, addressing critical topics such as equitable family engagement, equity in education, discipline disparities, and colorism in schools. Her work is driven by a deep passion for social justice and educational equity.

Introduction

Welcome to the *Encyclopedia of Educational Equity* (EEE), a comprehensive resource designed to provide clarity and understanding of key terms, concepts, and practices in the pursuit of educational equity. Although deeply embedded in education reform, revolution, and progressive discourse, in more recent years, educational equity has emerged as a central focus in discussions surrounding education policy, practice, and transformation. This encyclopedia aims to demystify the often politicized and misinterpreted language surrounding educational equity and serve as a valuable tool for Pre-K–12 educators, college students and professors, policymakers, researchers, and advocates striving to create more equitable educational systems and opportunities for all learners. The EEE is not exhaustive and not intended to replace equity textbooks or other resources of educational equity tools. We highly recommend reading the recommended reads and resources suggested at the end of this book as they provide deeper guidance in educational equity, diversity, and inclusion work in schools, school divisions, academia, and policy.

Why an Encyclopedia of Educational Equity?

The need for a shared understanding of terms related to educational equity has never been greater. As societies grapple with persistent disparities in educational outcomes based on race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, language, gender, ability, and other factors, it is essential that stakeholders possess a common vocabulary to engage in meaningful dialogue, policy development, and action.

These disparities are deeply rooted in historical and systemic inequities that continue to affect educational opportunities and achievements for marginalized and minoritized groups. Without a shared understanding of the terms and concepts that describe these issues, efforts to address them can be fragmented and ineffective. A common vocabulary allows educators, policymakers, researchers, and community members to communicate more effectively, share insights, and collaborate on solutions.

This *Encyclopedia of Educational Equity* (EEE) seeks to bridge gaps in understanding and promote informed discourse by providing clear definitions, explanations, and examples of key terms and concepts related to educational equity. By doing so, it aims to unpack complex issues and make

them accessible to a broader audience. When stakeholders have a precise and common understanding of terms such as “systemic racism,” “implicit bias,” “culturally responsive pedagogy,” and “achievement gap,” they are better equipped to identify problems and devise strategies to overcome them.

This resource serves as a foundation for professional development and continuous learning. Educators can use it to enhance their instructional practices and create more inclusive classrooms. Policymakers can refer to it when crafting legislation and policies that aim to promote equity in education. Researchers can build on its definitions and frameworks to advance the field of educational equity. Community advocates can leverage it to raise awareness and mobilize support for equitable educational practices.

In essence, the EEE not only facilitates a shared understanding but also empowers stakeholders to take informed and concerted action toward educational equity. By providing a common language, it helps to unify efforts across different sectors and disciplines, fostering a collaborative approach to addressing disparities in education. The ultimate goal is to create an educational system where all students have the opportunity to succeed, regardless of their background, and to build a more just and inclusive society.

Through this encyclopedia, we acknowledge the complexity of educational equity and the importance of precision in language. It is a tool for learning, reflection, and action—a resource that supports our collective journey toward a fair and equitable educational landscape.

Who Can Benefit?

This encyclopedia is intended for use by a diverse audience of stakeholders committed to advancing educational equity. Educators at all levels—from early childhood through higher education—will find valuable insights to inform their practice and pedagogy. Policymakers and administrators can use this resource to inform policy decisions and initiatives aimed at promoting equity within educational systems. Researchers and scholars will find definitions and references to support their work in studying and addressing educational disparities. Additionally, students, parents, community members, and advocates will find this encyclopedia to be a valuable tool for understanding and advocating for equitable educational opportunities. Depending on your positionality, this resource can serve as a foundation or prelearning guide, assist in expanding your learning, supplement other equity-focused resources, or, at its simplest form, be a lexicon of educational equity terminology.

For those new to the field of educational equity, this resource can provide foundational knowledge, helping to establish a strong understanding of key concepts and principles. It can serve as a prelearning guide, offering an introduction to the terminology and ideas that are essential for deeper exploration and comprehension of equity issues in education, in addition to be used by anyone needing quick access to definitions or explanations of specific concepts.

For individuals who already have some background in educational equity, this resource can help expand their learning by introducing more advanced concepts, diverse perspectives, and the latest research. It can deepen their

understanding and enable them to engage more critically and thoughtfully with equity-related challenges and opportunities

Additionally, this resource can supplement other equity-focused materials, providing additional context, examples, and explanations that enrich the learning experience. It can be used alongside other resources to create a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of educational equity.

A Note About Language and Terminology

Language is ever-evolving, and what is considered the best and most equitable term today may change tomorrow in response to new research, social considerations, or new evaluations of inherited language conventions. In EEE, I want to call specific attention to the terms “Black,” “Latinx,” “Asian,” “Indigenous,” and “white.” Following the lead of many scholars and publishers, including Rachele Kanigel in *The Diversity Style Guide* and Sarah Glover of the National Association of Black Journalists, I capitalize Black when referring to skin color because it is used as a substitute for many ethnic identities, and it names both a culture and group of people with a shared history that exists around the world. As Alexandria Neason of the Columbia Journalism Review put it, “If we are going to capitalize *Asian* and *South Asian* and *Indigenous*, for example, groups that include myriad ethnic identities united by shared race and geography, and to some degree, culture, then we also have to capitalize *Black*” (Laws, 2020). The tendency, however, for white supremacist groups to capitalize “white” has led many scholars and organizations, including the Associated Press, to leave this term lowercase. I have chosen this convention for the same reason, and because, as many have pointed out, the history and cultures of white people are not shared in the same way as they are for Black people, especially in the United States.

Though debate about these terms is extant, the forms I have selected are widely known and understood within education and professional development, and my intent is to be both equitable and easily understood. Where significant disagreement about the use of a term is notable, I have included relevant details about the debate.

In most cases, I have chosen to preserve terms as quoted from authors and/or speakers even where they differ from my own preferences. These quotations are cited accordingly.

Conclusion

As we embark on this journey through the *Encyclopedia of Educational Equity*, let us remain mindful of the transformative power of language and the role it plays in shaping our understanding and actions. Language is not just a tool for communication; it is a powerful agent of change that can influence thoughts, perceptions, and behaviors. The words and terms we use can either reinforce existing biases and inequities or challenge and dismantle them.

By engaging with the terms and concepts presented in this encyclopedia, we commit ourselves to a deeper understanding of educational equity. Each term has been carefully defined and contextualized to provide clarity and insight into the complex and multifaceted nature of equity in education.

This engagement is not a passive act but an active pursuit of knowledge that empowers us to recognize and address the systemic barriers that hinder equitable access to education for all students.

Moreover, by incorporating this terminology into our daily conversations, educational practices, and policy-making processes, we contribute to creating a common language that fosters inclusivity and equity. This shared vocabulary helps bridge gaps in understanding and facilitates meaningful dialogue among educators, families, students, policymakers, and community members.

As we delve into this encyclopedia, we are not merely learning definitions; we are expanding our capacity to think critically about issues of equity and justice. We are equipping ourselves with the knowledge and tools needed to advocate for systemic change. This commitment to learning and using equitable language is a step toward realizing a more just and inclusive society, where all individuals have the opportunity to succeed and thrive regardless of their backgrounds or circumstances.

What Is a Micro-Check?

Micro-level thinking refers to analyzing and understanding phenomena, issues, or situations at a small scale, focusing on individual components or specific interactions within your brain. This approach zooms in on the detailed aspects of a topic, often examining the minute elements that contribute to larger patterns of your thinking.

Micro-Checks are intended to help you think about your thinking. At your deepest core, your beliefs are at a micro level and should be explored, unpacked, and interrogated. Use these moments in the book to delve deeply into the root cause of your beliefs. Ask yourself the following questions:

- ▶ Why do I think the way I do?
- ▶ Where do these beliefs come from?
- ▶ Who or what caused me to think this way?
- ▶ If needed, figure out how to counter these thoughts and beliefs.



This is when true change begins. These are your Micro-Checks

Motivation and Inspirations

As my children and I were isolated in our home during the unprecedented pandemic of 2020, the world outside seemed to come to a halt. At that time, I was immersed in my doctoral work at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, delving deeply into research on diversity and equity and their profound impacts on our schools while often pivoting to support my children learning virtually for the first time. Amidst this academic journey and daunting time period, I witnessed the tragic and senseless death of George Floyd on May 25, 2020, unfold on our television screen.

The juxtaposition of reading about systemic inequities and seeing such a blatant act of injustice unfold before my eyes was a moment of profound awakening. It felt as if the world had stopped, not just because of the pandemic, but because we were collectively confronted with a painful truth that could no longer be ignored. The brutality of George Floyd's death was not just an isolated incident; it was a glaring reminder of the deep-seated racial inequities that continue to plague our society. His death, and the subsequent global protests, highlighted the urgent need for systemic change in all facets of life, including education. *This Encyclopedia of Educational Equity* is born from the collective grief, outrage, and resolve to create a more just and inclusive world.

My motivation for compiling this encyclopedia stems from years of witnessing the profound disparities in educational opportunities and outcomes for marginalized and minoritized communities. As an educator and advocate for equity, I have seen how the lack of understanding and awareness around these issues perpetuates inequality. The George Floyd incident ignited a global movement and reckoning, reaffirming my commitment to dismantling the barriers that prevent all students from reaching their full potential.

The purpose of this encyclopedia is to provide a comprehensive resource that defines the critical terms and concepts related to educational equity. It aims to equip educators, policymakers, students, and advocates with the language and knowledge needed to address and combat inequities in education. By fostering a deeper understanding of these concepts, we can work toward creating learning environments where every student feels valued, supported, and empowered.

This work is not just an academic endeavor; it is a call to action. It is inspired by the countless voices demanding justice and the courageous individuals who have fought and continue to fight for equality. The creation of this encyclopedia is a step toward amplifying those voices and ensuring that the principles of equity are embedded in our educational systems.

I am deeply grateful to the community of scholars, activists, and educators who have contributed to this work.