



Views on Educational Equity

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There is increased desire to do something about the difference in educational success of people from different groups or of different genders. In the U.S. for example, people are disturbed by the attrition rates and low achievement among students of color and the under representation of certain groups in mathematical and scientific careers. There is a growing awareness that school practices and allocation of resources contribute to social injustice and to the increasing alienation of young people from society. Increasing numbers of parents, educators and community groups are concerned about the situation and are working to bring about change. Educators are doing research in this area, and there are many intervention programs. There have been attempts to address the issues in a variety of forums and conferences. But, even those who advocate for educational equity have different definitions, beliefs and values.

Some commonly held views on equity include the following:

- 1. Equity means Equal Treatment and Resources:** Proponents of this viewpoint claim that treating everyone the same and providing the same amount of resources to each student is fair and sufficient.
- 2. Equity means Equal Access:** Most everyone would agree that all children should have access to a good education. In practice, people's positions range from "If you are good in a subject you are allowed access to advanced courses" to "Everyone should be required to take a college preparatory curriculum" to "Schools must provide an innovative curriculum and social environment that enable all students to learn."
- 3. Equity means Equal Outcomes:** This viewpoint sees equal outcomes and eliminating the predictability of success and failure based on race, income or any other demographic as the ultimate measure of the effectiveness of our efforts.
- 4. Equity means Political Change:** Advocates of this view claim that equity in education requires political and economic reform. This view includes the argument that we have school systems that were designed based on decent-paying low-skill jobs that no longer exist, as well as that a system that tracks students based on race and income is unjust.
- 5. Equity means Change in Beliefs, Prejudices, Values and Biases, both Individual and Institutional:** From this point of view, peoples' beliefs, prejudices, values, and biases must be meaningfully addressed in order to eliminate individual and institutional practices and policies that hinder students' ability to learn.