



In Pursuit of Equity and Excellence in Education: Ten Principles of Equitable Educational Practice

Pedro A. Noguera, Ph.D.
Graduate School of Education
New York University

I. Equity vs. Excellence: Competing or Compatible Goals?

Principle #1 - Challenge the normalization of failure.

Race and class should not predict achievement.

- Equity Defined - Equality of opportunity with attention to equality in results for *all* students
 - judicious allocation of resources
- Teachers and administrators must challenge low expectations and complacency related to student outcomes
- Internal accountability is more important than external forms in promoting achievement for all

Failure is not an option: Moving beyond winners and losers

- **Principle #2 - Educational leaders must be the guardians of equity**
- Schools must be willing to confront the ways in which some students are denied learning opportunities
- Schools must reduce the tendency for inequality in student backgrounds to perpetuate inequity in academic outcomes
 - Privileged students are often treated better than disadvantaged students
 - Gifted vs. remedial education
 - Political pressure influences priorities and allocation of resources and assignment of teachers - unions and parental pressure
 - Homework is an equity issue - students with inadequate home support are at a disadvantage

NCLB Requires a Shift in the Paradigms: Focusing on all students

- **Principle #3 - Students who are behind must work harder, longer and under conditions that offer possibility of success**
- Focus on measuring and sorting must be replaced by focus on cultivating talent in all students
- Discipline practices must emphasize morality and character and connect students to learning
- Implement strategies based upon the recognition that not all students learn in the same ways or at the same pace
 - Schools must develop the capacity to meet student needs and implement effective intervention programs
 - After school, summer school mandatory tutoring, etc

Re-think Remediation

- **Principle #4 - We must teach the way students learn rather than expecting them to learn the way we teach**
- Schools must avoid concentrating low achievers together and must address teacher expectations and academic rigor
- Programs funded through Title I must be evaluated
- Move from remediation to acceleration through
 - Diagnostic assessment of learning needs
 - Personalization of interventions
 - Regular evaluation of interventions

Effective Teaching Strategies for Reducing Academic Disparities

- Active learning, interactive classroom
 - Moving away from the cemetery model
- Teaching within the zone of proximal development
- Constructivist, inquiry-based pedagogical strategies
- Simulations
- Socratic seminars
- Project based learning
- Experiential learning
- Student leadership in the classroom
- Public presentations of student work

Exceptions to Patterns: Immigrant Students

- **Principle #5 - The academic success of immigrant students is contingent upon how they and their families are treated**
- Tend to be over-represented among successful and at-risk students
- The amount of education they received prior to arriving in the US is significant
 - Whether or not they are literate in their native language often has tremendous bearing on their ability to learn English
- How parents are treated is significant - cultural competence among staff?
- Acculturation process may produce conflict for students
- ELL classes should not be used to deny learning opportunities
- Schools serving immigrant children need bilingual and bi-cultural staff and relationships with social service agencies that serve immigrant groups

II. Enacting an Equity Agenda: Demystify school success

- **Principle #6 - Students who are headed somewhere will behave differently than students who are headed nowhere**
- Teach study skills
- Start from the end: show and explain what excellent work looks like
- Provide academic and post high school counseling for students and parents
- Teach kids “code switching”
- Develop career academies with links to jobs for students that are not headed to college
- Discuss future plans early and expose students to options

Interventions that work

- **Principle #7 - Increase access and support in rigorous courses**
- Double period algebra
- AVID, Young Black Scholars
- Accelerated summer school
 - Upward Bound, MESA
- Transition classes, Puente
- Access to rigorous courses: International Baccalaureate, Project SEED

Additional Interventions

- **Principle #8 - Build strong relationships between teachers and students to improve behavior and achievement**
- Engage students through extracurricular activities
- Coordinate services - social services, healthcare for disadvantaged students
- Provide targeted mentoring for “at-risk” youth
- See *Effective Programs for Students at Risk* by Slavin, Karweit and Wasik (1989) Boston: Allyn and Bacon and “Promising Programs for Elementary and Middle Schools: Evidence of Effectiveness and Replicability” by Fashola and Slavin *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, 2(3), 251-307, 1997

Teaching and Learning at Your School

Principle #9 Improve instruction by reducing teacher isolation and make it possible for teachers to reflect on their practice and learn from each other

Teachers must be encouraged to take responsibility for student learning and focus on mastery and performance

- Teachers must constantly look for evidence of learning and reflect on their practice in order to increase their effectiveness
- Teachers must view the work produced by students as a reflection of their teaching
- Teachers must limit the amount of time students are engaged in passive learning and increase opportunities for active learning

We can't do it without them: Building partnerships with parents

- **Principle #10 - Build strong partnerships between parents and teachers/school**
- **Key Ingredients**
 - Recognition of shared interests
 - Respect and empathy
 - Clear guidance on what parents can do to support their children
 - Diverse staff with cultural competence in working with parents