

Behavior and Equity Recommendations for Educators

Equity in the classroom involves giving everyone the specific tools they need to be successful.
 “Equity is a mindset, not just a set of practices.”

Potential Pitfall	Recommendation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define behavior in subjective, non-observable terms, using vague terms (e.g., defiant, disruptive), that leave room for inequitable interpretations. This can create inequitable discipline practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage students in the process of defining behavior expectations. Define behavior in measurable and observable terms. Create both student and educator standards for behavior.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow implicit biases to govern engagement with students. Lower expectations for students due to their implicit biases. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the backgrounds, identities, and experiences of each student within their classroom using a trauma-informed lens. Choose to embrace the unique backgrounds, identities, and experiences that students bring to the classroom.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply the same instructional practices that have been used for years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use engaging instruction to reduce the opportunity gap, accounting for different learning styles. Adjust pedagogy to current best practices. Provide each student access to meaningful learning experiences, addressing academic or environmental barriers that students have. Engage students in activities, readings, and discussions that bridge critical conversations.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask questions with specific answers in mind instead of looking for diverse perspectives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek multiple perspectives when asking students to respond to questions. Use responses like, “That’s one idea. Does anyone else have another?” to encourage the sharing of diverse perspectives. Create a classroom climate where each student feels they have a voice and the ability to share in classroom discussions. Help students understand that they each have a unique contribution to make. Create an environment where listening and processing the perspectives and lived experiences of others is encouraged.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • De-value student resistance to systems and practices that student’s experience as uninviting, hostile, or dehumanizing, not considering the root cause of student resistance. • Interpret student resistance as “defiance” or “misconduct” and evidence of poor self-management skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deconstruct expectations, cultural norms of schooling, and ways of communicating. • Expand what it means to be successful to include the experiences, cultural ways of knowing, and aspirations of students of color, students living in poverty, as well as other students from marginalized communities and their families. • Develop expectations through a trauma-informed lens.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow bias-based bullying to occur due to the fear of addressing these issues. • Call out a student who makes an insensitive comment making them feel bad about what they said. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address moments of bias, oppression, and other identity-based assumptions and ideas that occur in the classroom. • Call attention to an insensitive comment that has been made, explaining why it demotes inclusivity. Discuss how the commenter’s past experiences may have engendered these biases. • Create an environment where teaching moments are provided when insensitive or exclusive comments are made in class.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the purpose of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) for students of color, students living in poverty, as well as other students from marginalized communities from a deficit mindset with a focus on developing skills that they do not possess as a result of something missing from them or their families. • Fail to consider that students may be feeling a range of unpleasant emotions (e.g., anxiety, frustration, and boredom) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with students from the lens that all learning is social and emotional for every student. • Locate the problem to be solved within the system not with individual students, recognizing our collective response to the conditions of learning we create for students of color, students living in poverty, as well as other students from marginalized communities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over emphasize self-management and self-regulation and under-emphasize the meaningful development of student agency to lead change and contribute to new, more humanizing and equitable structures of teaching and learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use SEL approaches to draw out and build on student assets to facilitate learning. • Listen and value student experiences and personal narratives. • Build empathy through story-telling and sharing.

References

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