

# WORKING DEFINITIONS

**Accessibility** The opportunity [for a person with a disability] to acquire the same information and materials, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same services as a person without a disability in an equally effective and equally integrated manner, with substantially equivalent ease of use.<sup>i</sup> This includes the intentional design or redesign of technology, policies, products, services, and facilities that increase one's ability to use, access, and obtain the respective item. Accessibility empowers individuals by helping them understand their rights and advocate for themselves so they can live with independence and dignity. Accessible curriculum recognizes and reduces barriers to student success and designs syllabi, activities, and assignments that acknowledge and support students of all ability statuses<sup>ii</sup>

**Antiracism** is a powerful collection of antiracist policies that lead to racial equity and are substantiated by antiracist ideas. Practicing antiracism requires constantly identifying, challenging, and upending existing racist policies to replace them with antiracist policies that foster equity between racial groups.<sup>iii</sup>

**Culturally Responsive Teaching/Pedagogy (CRT or CRP)** is a complex and evolving pedagogical theory that centers the process of using familiar cultural information and processes to scaffold learning. It emphasizes communal orientation and focuses on relationships, cognitive scaffolding, and critical social awareness.<sup>iv</sup>

**Decolonization** is about “cultural, psychological, and economic freedom” for Indigenous people with the goal of achieving Indigenous sovereignty — the right and ability of Indigenous people to practice self-determination over their land, cultures, and political and economic systems. Colonialism is a historical and ongoing global project where settlers continue to occupy land, dictate social, political, and economic systems, and exploit Indigenous people and their resources.<sup>v</sup> Education has long been idealized as a transformative system that can address social inequalities and promote democracy. Yet, in practice, education is also a site of social reproduction which upholds one “canon” of knowledge to the exclusion of others. Decolonizing education therefore requires interrogating historical legacies and dominant forms of knowledge, as well as how they contribute to favoring certain groups, countries or cultures over others. Decolonizing is not about deleting knowledge or histories that have been developed in the West or colonial nations; rather it is to situate the histories and knowledges that do not originate from the West in the context of imperialism, colonialism and power and to consider why these have been marginalized and decentered.<sup>vi</sup>

**DEIA** is an adopted acronym for the concepts of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. There may be an additional letter presented for accessibility (DEIAA) depending on usage. (Source: [Glendale Community College C&I](#))

**Diversity** is the myriad of ways in which people differ, including the psychological, physical, cognitive, and social differences that occur among all individuals, such as race, ethnicity, nationality,

socioeconomic status, religion, economic class, education, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, mental and physical ability, and learning styles. Diversity is all inclusive and supportive of the proposition that everyone and every group should be valued. It is about understanding these differences and moving beyond simple tolerance to embracing and celebrating the rich dimensions of our differences.<sup>vii</sup>

**Epistemology**—as traditionally construed—is the study of knowledge.<sup>viii</sup> This study includes four main questions:

- The **What-Is-It** Question: What is knowledge?
- The **Justification** Question: What makes a belief reasonable or rational or justified?
- The **Source** Question: What are the ultimate sources of knowledge (or justification)?
- The **Scope** Question: What, if anything, do (or can) we know?

In the context of education and specifically, discipline-specific curricula, faculty are asked to critically reflect on the history of their discipline with respect to the way knowledge is defined and accepted, and who does and does not have a voice in the discipline.<sup>ix</sup>

#### Epistemology: An Explanation in Verse

*Epistemology! "What can I know?"  
And why does it matter and how does it go?  
This stuff is important for one cannot travel  
The road of the wise if one can't unravel  
The true from the false, the sense from the babble  
The solid and firm from the dribble and drabble. (xxi)*

— Jacob M. Held  
"Unsettled Meddling: An Introduction in Verse"  
In *Dr. Seuss and Philosophy: Oh, the Thinks You Can Think!*

**Equity** refers to fair and just practices and policies that ensure all campus community members can thrive. Equity is different than equality in that it implies treating everyone as if their experiences are the same. Being equitable means acknowledging and addressing structural inequalities—historic and current—that advantage some and disadvantage others and providing access to resources for success.<sup>x</sup> It is actively and intentionally challenging dominant narratives through empathy for the common good.<sup>xi</sup>

**Inclusion** is an outcome to ensure that students of diverse backgrounds are treated fairly and respectfully. Inclusion outcomes are met when you, your institution, and your program are truly inviting to all and where diverse individuals can participate fully in the decision-making and development opportunities within an organization or group in a way that shares power.<sup>xii, xiii</sup>

Additional terms that appear in the document but did not have a definition in the first draft:

**Bias** is a prejudice in favor of or against one thing, person, or group compared with another usually in a way that's considered to be unfair. Biases may be held by an individual, group, or institution and can have negative or positive consequences.<sup>xiv</sup>

**Culture** is the values, beliefs, traditions, behavioral norms, linguistic expression, knowledge, memories, and collective identities that are shared by a group of people and give meaning to their social environments. Culture is learned and inherited behavior that distinguishes members of one group from another group. Culture is not static and can change over time.<sup>xv</sup>

**Institutional Racism** refers specifically to the ways in which institutional policies and practices create different outcomes for different racial groups. The institutional policies may never mention any racial group, but their effect is to create advantages for whites and oppression and disadvantage for people from groups classified as people of color.<sup>xvi</sup>

**Structural Racism** is the normalization and legitimization of an array of dynamics – historical, cultural, institutional and interpersonal – that routinely advantage Whites while producing cumulative and chronic adverse outcomes for people of color. Structural racism encompasses the entire system of White domination, diffused and infused in all aspects of society including its history, culture, politics, economics and entire social fabric.<sup>xvii</sup> Structural racism is more difficult to locate in a particular institution because it involves the reinforcing effects of multiple institutions and cultural norms, past and present, continually reproducing old and producing new forms of racism. Structural racism is the most profound and pervasive form of racism – all other forms of racism emerge from structural racism.<sup>xviii</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> University of Pittsburgh, Office for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. (n.d.) Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Glossary. <https://www.diversity.pitt.edu/education/diversity-equity-and-inclusion-glossary>.

<sup>ii</sup> [Glendale Community College DSPS](#)

<sup>iii</sup> Kendi, I.X. (2019). How to be an antiracist. One World.

<sup>iv</sup> Hammond, Z. 2014. Culturally Responsive Pedagogy and the Brain.

<sup>v</sup> <https://globalsolidaritylocalaction.sites.haverford.edu/what-is-decolonization-why-is-it-important/>

<sup>vi</sup> <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/campus/decolonising-curriculum-how-do-i-get-started>

<sup>vii</sup> Department of Epidemiology. (2017). Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee. University of Washington School of Public Health. <https://epi.washington.edu/sites/default/files/DEI%20Glossary%20Word.pdf>

<sup>viii</sup> From Brian C. Barnett in *Introduction to Philosophy: Epistemology*, edited by Brian C. Barnett and Christina Hendricks. The original is freely available under the terms of the CC BY 4.0 license at <https://press.rebus.community/intro-to-phil-epistemology/>.

<sup>ix</sup> Ladson-Billings, Gloria. (2000). *Racialized discourses and ethnic epistemologies*. In *The Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition.

<sup>x</sup> <https://diversity.uiowa.edu/resources/dei-definitions>

<sup>xi</sup> Byrd, A. (2023) Personal communication

<sup>xii</sup> <https://dei.extension.org/>

<sup>xiii</sup> Gilson, C. B., Gushanas, C. M.L, i, Y., & Foster, K.(2020). Defining inclusion: Faculty and student attitudes regarding postsecondary education for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. *Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities*, 58(1), 65-81. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.losrios.edu/10.1352/1934-9556-58.1.65>

<sup>xiv</sup> <https://ideas-in-action.lbl.gov/diversity/implicit-bias>

<sup>xv</sup> Abu-Lughod, L. (1991). Writing against culture. In R. G. Fox (Ed.) *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present* (pp. 137-162). Santa Fe: School of American Research Press.; Culture(n. .d.) American Sociological Association. <https://www.asanet.org/topics/culture>

<sup>xvi</sup> Department of Epidemiology. (2017). Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee. University of Washington School of Public Health. <https://epi.washington.edu/sites/default/files/DEI%20Glossary%20Word.pdf>

<sup>xvii</sup> <https://www.apha.org/>-

[/media/files/pdf/webinars/2020/advancing\\_racial\\_equity\\_discussion\\_guide\\_part\\_i.ashx?la=en&hash=826C2700FFDD1B00E117B9F98C1105E38A32A4F6](/media/files/pdf/webinars/2020/advancing_racial_equity_discussion_guide_part_i.ashx?la=en&hash=826C2700FFDD1B00E117B9F98C1105E38A32A4F6)

<sup>xviii</sup> Department of Epidemiology. (2017). Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee. University of Washington School of Public Health. <https://epi.washington.edu/sites/default/files/DEI%20Glossary%20Word.pdf>