

# DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND *INCLUSION*

## Equality vs. Equity

By Leah Claiborne



**I**n recent years, there has been a wave of effort to create more inclusive pedagogy in our field. These efforts often use terms associated with diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging. This important work has proven to be rewarding yet challenging for many pedagogues. This impact has been a challenge because educators often teach *what* they know, and they teach in a style of *how* they have learned. When teachers are asked to change their pedagogy, this often leads to uncertainty and perhaps even pushback for asking educators to consider looking outside the parameters of how they have been accustomed to teaching.

Equitable practices is one of the hardest areas to include in our teaching because some people believe that equity and equality are the same concepts, however, these are vitally different elements that ought to be distinguished in hopes of creating more diverse populations that will then feel included within our music studios and have a sense of belonging.

### Equity vs. Equality

Equity and equality are two words that can be uncomfortable for people to talk about because there first has to be an understanding that privilege exists in our society and consequently exists in our field. There are systems in place that have made it easier for some individuals to have access to opportunities and thrive while making it harder for marginalized communities to have access to these same opportunities. When discussing equality and equity, it is important to discuss the end goal or outcome. Equality allows for each member of society to be to on the same playing field. Equality in music education could potentially look like:

- Each student receives the same number of lessons each year.
- Each student receives the same amount of time in their lessons.
- Each students receives the same number of performance opportunities.
- Each student receives the same number of possible make up lessons.

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- Each student pays the same amount for lessons.
- Each student is required to have the same standard of instrument for their practice.
- Each student is required to have a parent at home helping with their practice.
- Each student is required to practice the same amount each day/week.
- Each student has the same amount of access to their practice instrument.

Each of these examples creates equality within the music teaching studio but does not account for circumstances that make it harder for some individuals to succeed in the same way as others.

Equity however acknowledges that certain members of our society have more challenges than others and therefore need more assistance. What can equity look like in our music studios?

### Change in Business Model:

- Students pay for their lessons based on their area code.
- Students can utilize an allotted time at the end of a semester for extra make up lessons if they need more assistance.

- Students can be mentored by older students/more advanced students in the studio if they need extra help.
- Scholarships (anonymously) are provided for some students.
- Allowing for your own home to be a practice studio during the week for certain students.
- Creating a virtual check in/mini lesson in the middle of the week to track progress for students who may not have as much parental support at home.
- Allowing part of the money paid for lessons to go toward the cost of a quality instrument.
- Providing group lessons to students who might not be able to afford your rate.
- Bartering.

Perhaps one of the greatest challenges with equitable practices in music teaching is deciphering what it means for each individual to create equitable practices in their studio. Equitable practices is one of the hardest areas to include in our teaching because it requires a great understanding of individual circumstances while being willing to put practices in place to allow for students, despite their challenges, to have the opportunity to succeed.

What are some ways that you have created successful equitable practices in your music studio?

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