

June 24, 2020 #EquityChat

Dr. DeRionne Pollard (@DrPollard\_MC),  
President/CEO of Montgomery College (@montgomerycoll)

[@SDMesaPrez](#) Welcome to #EquityChat with @lamkeithcurry & @SDMesaPrez Our guest tonight is Dr ReRuonne Pollard @DrPollard\_MC President/CEO of @montgomerycoll <http://montgomerycollege.edu/about-mc/offic...> #radicalinclusion Welcome Dr Pollard!

[@DrPollard\\_MC](#) Honored to be asked—love this work you two are doing! @SDMesaPrez @lamkeithcurry Let's get going!

[@SDMesaPrez](#) Q1. What is your definition of equity? How is equity-minded practice embedded in your work.

@DrPollard\_MC #EquityChat @lamkeithcurry @SDMesaPrez

[@DrPollard\\_MC](#) Equity, at it's most basic level, is about ensuring fairness in treatment, access, and outcomes. For me, though, it's about working to remove barriers that impede; it's about lifting voices and experiences that have been marginalized. #EquityChat

[@poppyfitch](#) Lifting voices and clearing barriers, [hundred points]!

[@SDMesaPrez](#) Tell us about some areas where you feel we've seen equity gains in the last 5 years

@DrPollard\_MC @lamkeithcurry #EquityChat

[@DrPollard\\_MC](#) I struggle with this, because I do think we have made some gains—if we look at access to higher education by some groups, but higher education we have not made enough SYSTEMIC changes to solicit the transformative energy of which we are capable.

[@poppyfitch](#) Mulling on how and why we've not been able to see systemic changes... will mustering more creativity and collaboration than we have seen in the past do it? What do you view is the thing?

[@ahandsintheair](#) I love the idea of "lifting voices and experiences" as that creates space to see, hear, connect with and validate our students. When we see them, we can truly serve and support them. #EquityChat

[@DrPollard\\_MC](#) But more: had @montgomerycoll faculty interviewee say this to me and it has stuck: equity and inclusion (because you need both) is about providing her students with the explicit permission to be themselves in her classroom—and all that means. #equitytalks

[@ahandsintheair](#) "...providing students with the explicit permission to be themselves.....—and all that means." -- THAT IS GOLDEN! #EquityChat

[@MisterElAre](#) A1: In my analysis and work, I look at equity as a goal we are working towards—a goal that will be met when we fully understand and recognize the ways that systems have marginalized many for the privilege of others. Equity seeks to undo this. #equitychat

[@ahandsintheair](#) [raising hands] We canNOT do this work without situating it in the historical systems and structures that got us here. #EquityChat

[@bekyherring](#) #equitychat A1. Equity is putting systems in place to make sure all of our students, regardless of race, socioeconomic status, sexuality, gender, or religion, has equal chance for success. BUT I prefer the language of liberation/justice over equity. Our systems need dismantling!

[@DrPollard\\_MC](#) LOVE THIS!!! Equity demands that dismantling because we have constructed whole systems that have been INTENTIONALLY designed to produce inequitable results.

[@bekyherring](#) I often have to reflect on my position as an educator within the context of liberation and justice because if I am not actively working to dismantle this unjust system within the context of my school, I serve as another cog in the wheel of injustices happening to my students.

[@lamkeithcurry](#) We cannot serve as another “cog in the wheel of injustices”. #EquityChat [@DrPollard\\_MC](#)  
[@SDMesaPrez](#) [@lamkeithcurry](#)

[@ahandsintheair](#) [speaking head] [raising hands]

[@DrPollard\\_MC](#) Equity means that we resist temptations to focus on mere presence but about experience and access to power.

[@lamkeithcurry](#) Q2. [@DrPollard\\_MC](#). How has [@montgomerycoll](#) adjusted due to COVID-19? and post COVID-19 how can [@montgomerycoll](#) better serve your students and community? #EquityChat [@lamkeithcurry](#) [@SDMesaPrez](#)

[@lamkeithcurry](#) Q2. Follow-up [@DrPollard\\_MC](#). What were some of your identified strengths and weaknesses?

[@DrPollard\\_MC](#) AND THE ROSE!!! Quite spectacularly. And we recognized that we have too many manual/paper processes, and we need to accelerate automation for students and employees.

[@ahandsintheair](#) Establishing online/automated processes has been EVERYTHING. We'll definitely hold onto and expand those offerings. We have also seen more diversity with some of our Zoom activities and workshops. Not restricting people by time and place has allowed some to engage differently.

[@DrPollard\\_MC](#) So, [@montgomerycoll](#) has deep competency in the delivery of remote learning primarily through online courses—but we hadn't built the bench per say. There were several excellent faculty doing the work, but now we had to mobilize ALL of our faculty quickly—and forforeseeable future.

[@lamkeithcurry](#) [@DrPollard\\_MC](#) today I was in a panel for the [@chronicle](#) and we were talking about post COVID. Your thoughts are right on target where we are headed.

[@lamkeithcurry](#) [@DanielleBMcLean](#) any thoughts. Welcome to #EquityChat, the weekly twitter chat hosted by [@lamkeithcurry](#) [@SDMesaPrez](#)

[@DanielleBMcLean](#) I'm sorry I used this! Catching up on convo now! This is great!

[@DanielleBMcLean](#) Missed\*

[@lamkeithcurry](#) [@ahandsintheair](#) [@SerEducada](#) [@daisygonzales](#) thoughts?

[@DrPollard\\_MC](#) Replying to [@lamkeithcurry](#) [@montgomerycoll](#) and [@SDMesaPrez](#) I'm really proud of our CV19 work [@montgomerycoll](#). First, we've privilege student and employee health and safety. We identified a set of guiding principles and assumptions to guide the work—and we admitted both our strengths and weaknesses.

[@DrPollard\\_MC](#) Second, we recognized that vulnerable students needed more NOW—and we redirected nearly \$650K to student emergency aid. Next, we developed a plan and executed it: [www.montgomerycollege/ResilientMC](http://www.montgomerycollege/ResilientMC)

[@DrPollard\\_MC](#) Finally, we're preparing for the future and realizing that higher ed will be fundamentally and forever changed as a resolution of CV19—and we can either wait and be victims or chose to be the defines of our future. I reject the premise that we have no power.

[@DrPollard\\_MC](#) Our students and community have empowered us to quickly and responsively adapt—they don't have the luxury of waiting for us to get it together.

QT [@SDMesaPrez](#) “WE” absolutely have power...collectively...all of my colleagues are 24/7 ride or die [@CalCommColleges](#) [@Comm\\_College](#) #warriors #EquityChat let's harness this passion and get our students and communities the resources to transform

[https://twitter.com/DrPollard\\_MC/status/1275947069216350210?s=20](https://twitter.com/DrPollard_MC/status/1275947069216350210?s=20)

[@SDMesaPrez](#) Q3. From your prespective, what would dismantling structural racism and inequity lool like in community colleges? #EquityChat [@DrPollard\\_MC](#) [@lamkeithcurry](#) [@SDMesaPrez](#)

[@DrPollard\\_MC](#) I also think we have to be courageous enough to look at our structures & ensure they are designed for the students we have now and want to have—not systems designed for employees & the students we wish we had. So, what about evening programming and support for students? Weekends?

[@SDMesaPrez](#) And I imagine expectations for flexibility in services will be higher as a result of Remote access now...[@DrPollard\\_MC](#) [@lamkeithcurry](#) #EquityChat

[@DrPollard\\_MC](#) Wow. I posed this question last week, and boy did I get some responses! For me, dismantling racism means addressing the following: funding of community colleges (equitably!!!)—why constantly treated as if our work is less valuable and therefore cheaper?

[@DrPollard\\_MC](#) Next, had my CAO say that the first equity decision a college makes is in our assessment/testing practices and philosophy. If we know what placement testing does and does not do, why do we continue to embrace it as a litmus test for ability and success?

[@DrPollard\\_MC](#) I also believe we have to take on hiring. Yup. Why are ignoring the toxic practices used by some in higher ed that works to perpetuate the culture and profile of a department or program? Are we prepared to address the cultures in which we place newly hired employees?

[@DrPollard\\_MC](#) Also, what about Board policies? Dismantling racism must be and is a full-college endeavor: policy, procedure, practice, and promise.

[@butiwilltry](#) I'm so bummed I had to miss the Equity chat! Hopefully it's ok to chime in anyway because I love this question. 1) Refunding K-12, 2) equal distribution of public ed funding instead of it being contingent upon property taxes, and 3) FREE! [clapping hands] [clapping hands]

[@PatriciaNUSP](#) CSUs have lower division writing courses that are housed in Africana Studies, Native American Studies. Are the only articulated transferable writing courses from community colleges coming out of English departments and not Black/Women's/Chicano/a Studies?

[@DrPollard\\_MC](#) So there's this [@SDMesaPrez](#) and [@lamkeithcurry](#): higher education was a movement before it was a series of building and people to be managed. In large parts, this nation has constantly looked to higher education to be a national unifier and also a disruptor.

[@DrPollard\\_MC](#) My question is are we still disrupting in a way to produce the outcomes we need? #EquityChat

[@QChlotilde](#) can you expand further on what you mean?

QT [@SDMesaPrez](#) As usual I'm going to have to sit with this [@DrPollard\\_MC](#) -so true...#EquityChat [@lamkeithcurry](#) [https://twitter.com/DrPollard\\_MC/status/1275951573487759366?s=20](https://twitter.com/DrPollard_MC/status/1275951573487759366?s=20)

[@lamkeithcurry](#) Q4. [@DrPollard\\_MC](#). How can college leaders support each other with COVID-19, racism, and inequities on our campuses? EquityChat [@lamkeithcurry](#) [@SDMesaPrez](#) [@montgomerycoll](#)

[@DrPollard\\_MC](#) We have to support innovation, caretaking, responsiveness, collective learning, and risk-taking. Don't get caught in the trap of competition and isolationism because some of us may not be around or deeply wounded by the time all of this is over.

[@lamkeithcurry](#) [fire] [fire] [fire] no follow up [microphone] drop #EquityChat

[@lamkeithcurry](#) [@DrPollard\\_MC](#). I feel many educators think this is a competition and they don't realize we need to learn from each other. I appreciate my personal and professional relationships with my colleagues. I got so many ideas and supportive comments over the years.

[@Preeminent\\_MW](#) So true!! Someone shared yesterday that higher education tends to be collegial, yet not collaborative. We should all seize this moment to reimagine the future of education together!

[@DrPollard\\_MC](#) We first have to admit we have two viruses attacking us right now: racism/white supremacy and CV19—and the first is a parasite that is magnifying the impacts of the second. We don't get to ignore that CV19 is more significantly impacting black, brown, and poor communities!

[@DrPollard\\_MC](#) THESE ARE OUR COMMUNITIES!!! THESE ARE OUR STUDENTS! We gotta make sure we do no harm and look for ways to strategies to be radical in how we respond—radical in the latin where we get to the root of things.

[@DrPollard\\_MC](#) And we have to embrace our role of matching those who need opportunities with opportunities that exist. Be the translators that community colleges were designed to be over 100 years ago.

[@SDMesaPrez](#) Q5. What are you reading? And what books would you recommended we consider reading?

[@DrPollard\\_MC](#) #EquityChat @lamkeithcurry

[@DrPollard\\_MC](#) So, y'all know I'm an English teacher at heart and by training, and I have been going back to my roots and reclaiming Black literature and letting it feed my soul. I'm going deep on Zora Neale Hurston, Toni Morrison, and James Baldwin right now.



[@ahandsintheair](#) #somuchgoodness on that shelf of yours! [books]

[@PamEddinger](#) Dust Track on a Road sits side by side on my shelf w TEAWG. ZNH is close to my heart. I read her at @BarnardCollege, where she was the first Black graduate.

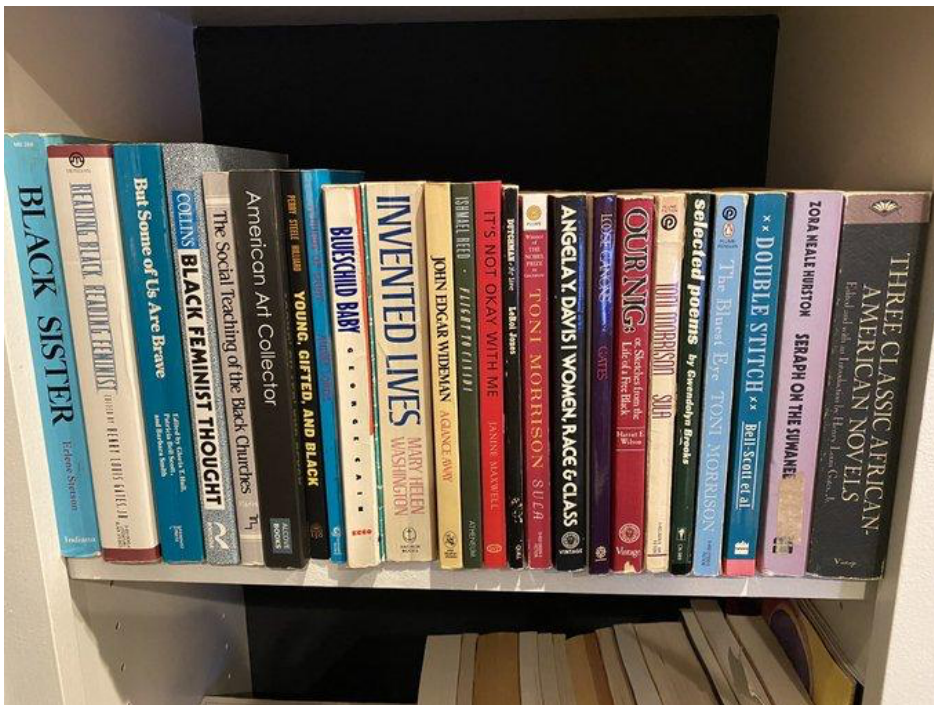
[@PMontaleb](#) My favorite #EquityChat question

[@ahandsintheair](#) That does not surprise me at all! [books] [smiling face with heart-eyes]

[@DrPollard\\_MC](#) These ancestors engage, heal my spirit, and inspire!



**EQUITY**  
AVENGERS

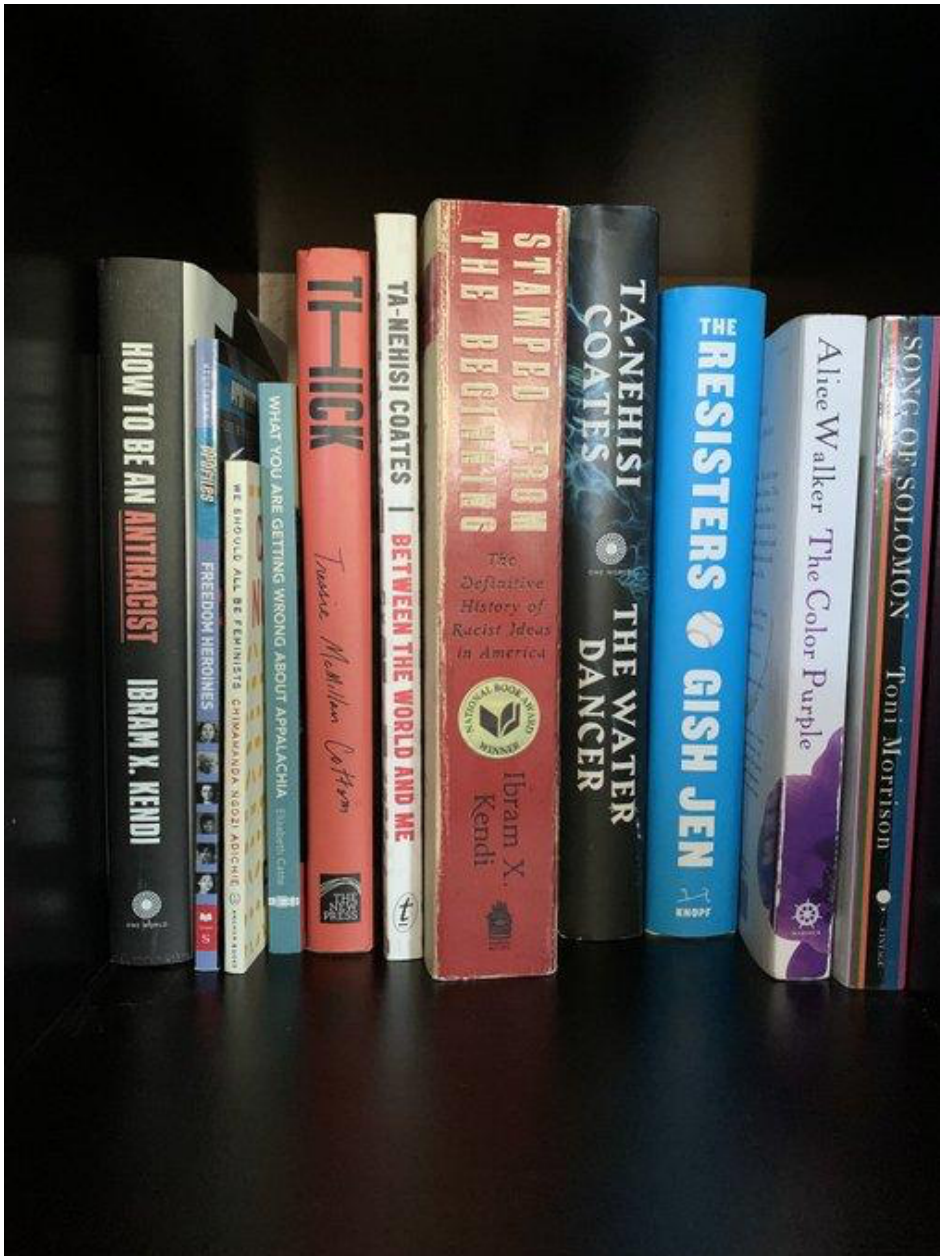


[@DrPollard\\_MC](#) You all have had some really great references on earlier #EquityChats, so I'll offer these up as some would food.

[@ocsmithlaw](#)



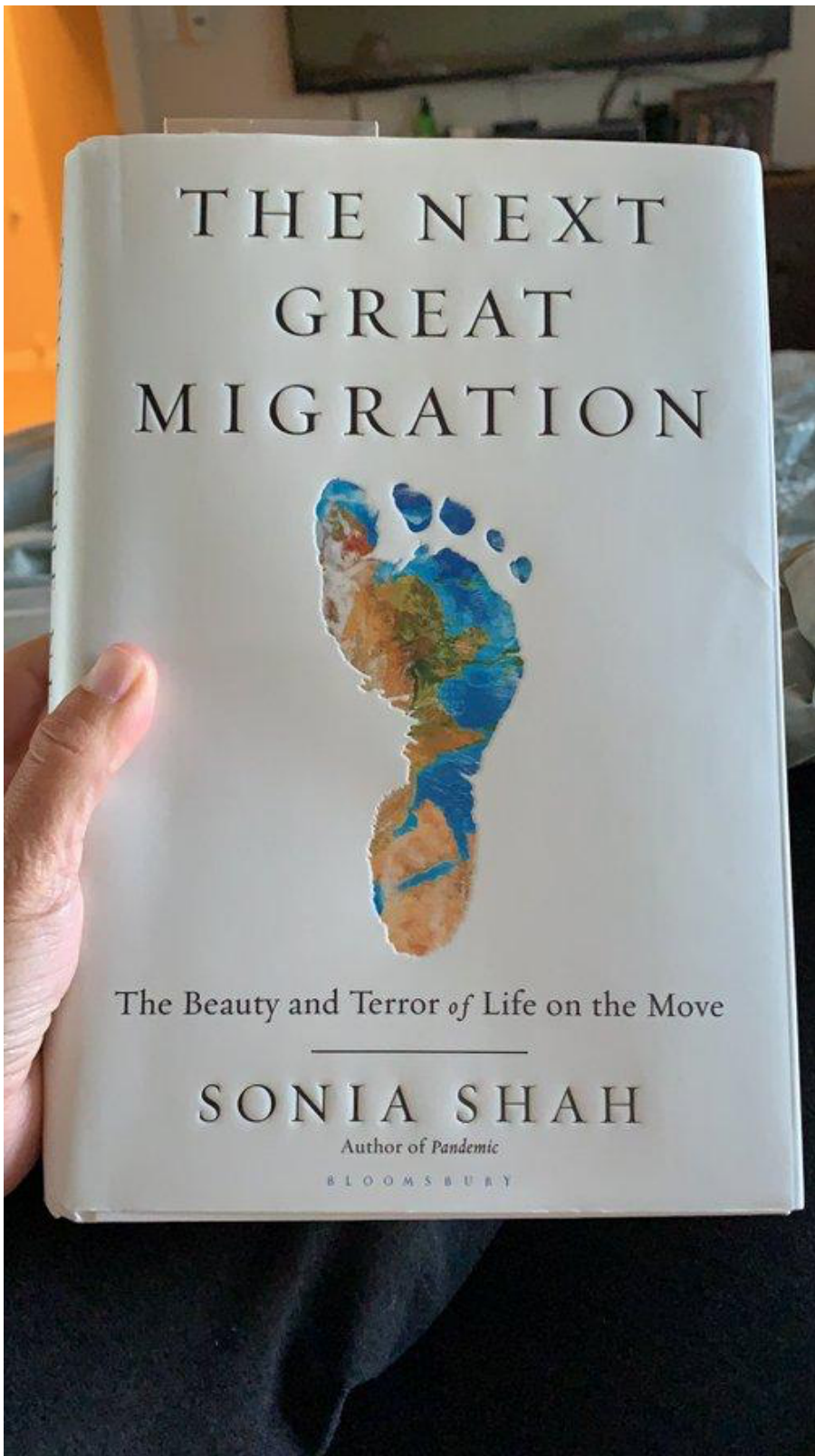
**EQUITY**  
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[@ocsmithlaw](#) And because it's summer after all: [@AlyssaColeLit](#) [@authorMsBev](#) and [@courtneymilan](#) [@SmartBitches](#) [@DrBruckman](#) Fantastic read.



**EQUITY**  
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[@DrPollard\\_MC](#) The Truman Commission called for community colleges in a moment not unlike this one [@SDMesaPrez](#) and [@lamkeithcurry](#). National unless and fragmentation, ethnic division, economic bifurcation, war and conflict, struggling national identity, shifting demographics.

[@DrPollard\\_MC](#) Sound familiar? WE WERE BUILT FOR THIS MOMENT!!!! #EquityChat

[@ahandsintheair](#) That is some #equityavenger talk right there. I feel and share that statement often. It motivates me. It speaks to my agency, my passion, my purpose and my ability to impact meaningful change...right now. #capeworthytimes [woman superhero] #EquityChat

[@BridgetHerrin](#) I start all of my presentations with this quote from the Truman commission, it grounds me in our purpose. "If the ladder of educational opportunity rises high at the doors of some youth and scarcely rises at the doors of others,

[@BridgetHerrin](#) while at the same time formal education is made a prerequisite to occupational and social advance, then education may become the means, not of eliminating race and class distinctions, but of deepening and solidifying them."

[@BridgetHerrin](#) Com. colleges, esp. in CA, have a deep and long-rooted value system espousing access and equity. We cannot keep on the same path and ignore the depth of the inequities we are supporting.

[@DrPollard\\_MC](#) I have a trustee who really influenced me to revisit the report, and what a treasure it is. I have begun to reclaim it as seminal, crucial, and a compass for this moment. I'm going to borrow your practice of citing it in my upcoming presentations. Thank you for sharing!!

[@NicoleLynnLewis](#) Yessssss!

QT [@SDMesaPrez](#) Amen....interest convergence not unlike Pres Johnson's actions in the 60s trying to find a way to "occupy" the masses who were protesting-but we would do it for all the right reasons #EquityChat  
[https://twitter.com/DrPollard\\_MC/status/1275954342206504960?s=20](https://twitter.com/DrPollard_MC/status/1275954342206504960?s=20)

[@lamkeithcurry](#) [@DrPollard\\_MC](#) thank you for joining [@SDMesaPrez](#) [@lamkeithcurry](#) on our weekly #EquityChat. [@DrPollard\\_MC](#) was on [fire] [fire]. Please continue to engage in the conversations. Next week is freestyle Wednesday with #EquityChat at 5:00 p.m., PST.

-- one off tweets using #EquityChat and responding to Q1 --

[@jaqFrOot](#) A1. Equity as a teacher means individualized methods of learning for my students so they can have access to what they need to get to the destination of the lesson or the material they're learning. Everyone's journey may look different #equitychat

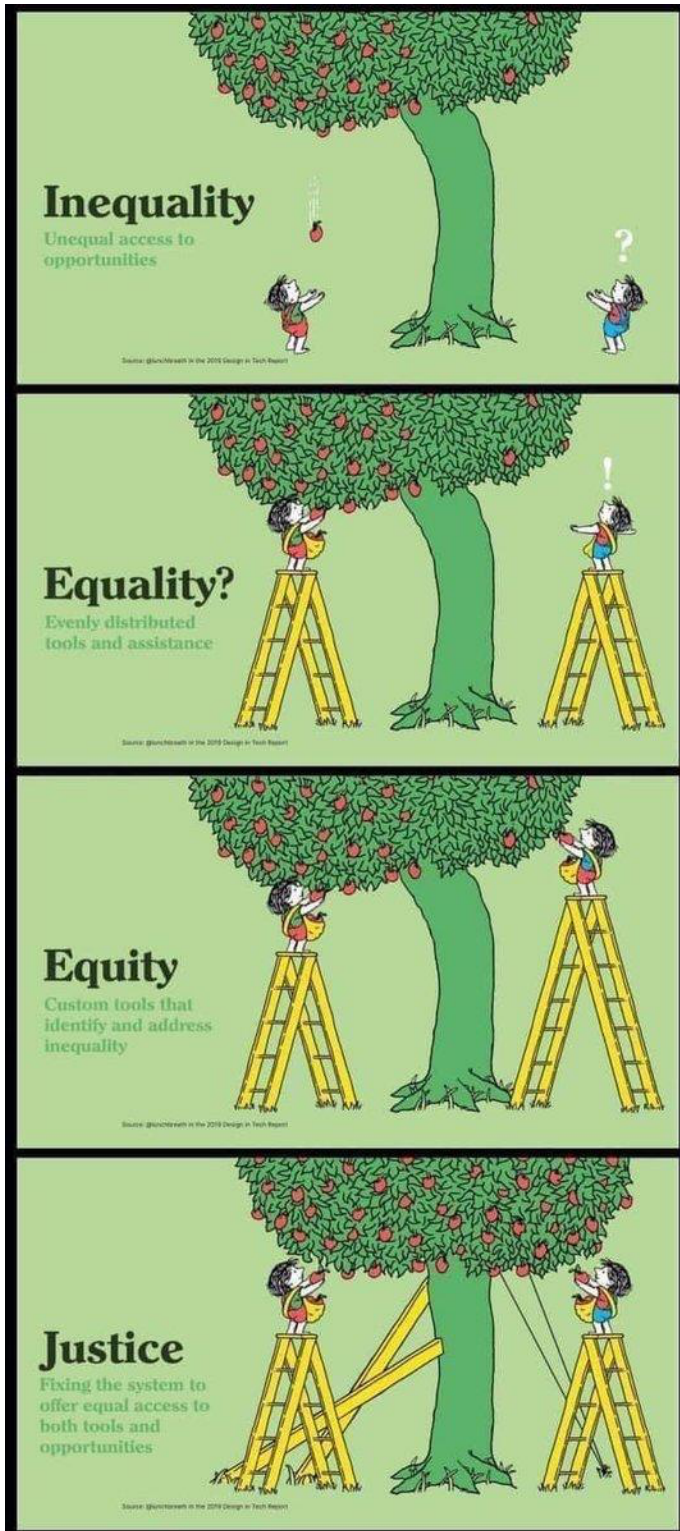
[@ahandsintheair](#) Oh, how I would have loved to have teacher like you growing up.

[@jaqFrOot](#) [loudly crying face] [loudly crying face] [loudly crying face] thank you!

[@JemellehCoes](#) Equity is ensuring that everyone gets what they need in order to be successful! It's an important concept. However, I'm most interested in justice, actively dismantling systems of oppression toward liberation. #EquityChat

[@Coach\\_K\\_SEB](#) This helped me!





[@KMcauslin](#) A1 Equity and equity minded means fairness with consideration to individual needs and circumstances  
[#equitychat](#)



# EQUITY AVENGERS

[@osems92](#) A1: Equity is treating everyone equal AND giving everyone access to equal opportunities. In a world that is extremely inequitable, equity-minded practices is about breaking down barriers that are preventing all my students from succeeding. [#equitychat](#)

[@hollyschaos](#) A1: equity is the idea that whatever barriers may be in a persons way are accounted for, taken into consideration, and worked with instead of ignored, everyone has an equal chance [#EquityChat](#)

[@LTKteaches](#) A1: Equity is making sure everyone has the something they need. It also means, "making sure that you don't need to suit up or armor yourself because of issues of racism, classism, sexism...etc. You can't fully grown and contribute in armor." [#EquityChat](#)