

Using Data to Discover and Remedy Inequities and Achievement Gaps

The first step towards addressing inequities and gaps is understanding the data to identify areas that need improving as well as using that data to design strategic interventions.

Learning analytics harnesses data to identify areas needing improvements and can be especially powerful in helping underserved and underrepresented populations. Learning analytics is crucial in designing strategic interventions, which lead to **educational gains and changes in educational policy**.

Equity ensures that learning experiences are accessible and inclusive and that all students have what they need in order to succeed in both school and in life. This approach supports individualization for students' needs with a ripple effect for systemic changes that address equity for all students.

Historically, the field of learning analytics has shifted from strictly data-driven approaches to a more holistic way of improving student learning outcomes through data-informed learning experience design. Learning analytics can be used to identify and prioritize those students who might not meet identified student outcomes and those who need additional support. They also provide support in moving students toward mastery. Learning analytics help with clearly visualizing the variability of students and their needs in classrooms, schools, and communities.

Equitable learning experiences afford students with different learning outcomes aligned to personalized goals and expectations. Preparing all students to thrive as adults requires districts and schools to cultivate the unique strengths and interests of each individual, empowering them to aim toward the college and/or career path they choose.



“Equity means- acknowledging students’ differences and giving them what they need to be successful. It also means staying focused on outcomes, both academic and developmental.”

— [Dr. Pedro Noguera](#)

Equitable learning experiences level the field to provide students with opportunities without stereotypes, barriers, judgment, blindspots, assumptions, or unconscious implicit bias. It's important to acknowledge and identify historical inequities in the classroom and interrupt inequitable practices. Educators must explore how their identities and experiences impact the choices they make, as well as their understanding of the varied identity markers of their students.

Learning analytics allows educators to analyze their students' current realities and use the data to make informed decisions that enhance and improve student learning outcomes, providing opportunities for authentic choice of how and what students will learn within the guidelines of state standards. Learning analytics is a viable solution for changing the trajectory of students who have been marginalized based on demographics and lived experiences. It is a way to move from teaching students how to improve scores on high-stakes assessments toward improving their overall skills in learning and living productive lives.

Methods to Begin Closing the Achievement Gap

1**Set Benchmarks and track progress.**

Use a consistent and simple tool to measure student progress.

2**Build in time for student self-reflection.**

Build a culture of self-reflection in classrooms.

3

Keep an open mind and avoid assumptions. Gather information on what your students know about a topic.

4**Develop relationships with parents.**

Update parents on students' successes.

5

Integrate texts and topics that are culturally relevant. Find books with characters similar to your students.

6

Personalize learning. Model different learning strategies in your classroom.