

## Terms and Definitions

**Cultural capital:** The “economic value of a person’s behaviors, attitudes, knowledge, and cultural experiences” (Spring, 2012, p. 94). Certain ways of behaving, talking, and thinking are rewarded more in a society than others. Students possess cultural capital due to the social and material resources their families provide, including experiences, concepts, and languages that can be built on and expanded in school to help them learn even more (Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

**Culturally responsive:** Behaviors that facilitate the achievement of all students. In a culturally responsive classroom, teaching and learning occur in a supportive environment in which teachers identify, nurture, and use students’ personal and cultural strengths to promote their achievement (Equity Alliance, Arizona State University).

**Deficit theory:** The belief that children from disadvantaged populations are genetically or culturally inferior (Nieto & Bode, 2008). The deficit perspective of children whose economic or cultural backgrounds are different from the mainstream assumes that their differences “severely limit the probability of [social] advancement” (Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

**Disproportional treatment:** The percentage of a student group receiving a certain treatment is larger than the percentage of that group within the educational system or the treatment category. For example, when a particular student sub-group is represented in special education at a greater rate (e.g., 15% of all students enrolled in special education) than the sub-group is in the general population (8% of all students in the school), that group is said to be disproportionately overrepresented in special education (Dunbar & Barth, 2007).

**Diversity:** Differences among individuals or groups. Social diversity among people can include differences in socio-economic status, gender, race, ethnicity, language, culture, or ability/disability.

**Effective schools:** Schools that are successful in educating all students regardless of their similarity or diversity in terms of socio-economic status, gender, race, ethnicity, language, culture, or ability/disability.

**Equality of educational opportunity:** Everyone has an equal chance to receive an education. This means students of all backgrounds and abilities are given an equal chance to learn (Spring, 2012).

**Equitable education:** Education delivered through the provision of resources and opportunities that will enable all students to have a real possibility of equitable outcomes.

**Equitable outcomes:** Achievement results that are not a function of socio-economic status, gender, race, ethnicity, language, culture, or ability/disability.

**Human capital theory:** The idea that “investment in education will improve the quality of workers and, consequently, increase the wealth of the community” (Spring, 2012, p. 81).

**Mobility rate:** The degree to which students enter and leave schools during the school year. In Nebraska, any child who enters or leaves school between the last Friday in September and the last day of school is counted in the mobility rate. An individual child is counted only once. This number is divided by the K-12 enrollment taken the last Friday in September. The result can affect the funding a school receives from the state.

**Multicultural education:** Sections 79-719 to 79-723 of Nebraska Department of Education Rule 10 describe multicultural education as including, but not limited to, curriculum relative to the culture, history, and contributions of African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Native Americans, and Asian Americans. Special emphasis shall be placed on human relations and sensitivity toward all races.

**Prejudice and discrimination:** Prejudice is an unwarranted attitude about a group of people due to their identity or certain characteristics. Discrimination is behavior that follows from prejudice (Spring, 2012).