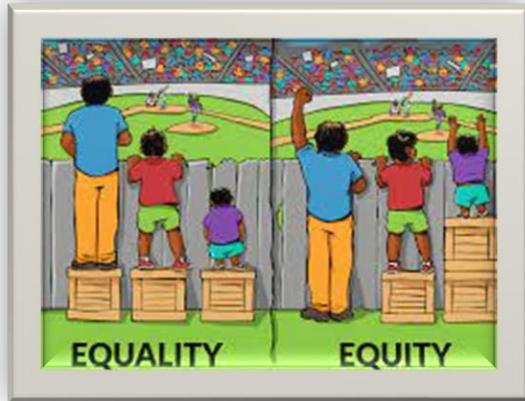


Jesse Graham Galas
Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Statement

For longer than I care to admit, I was under the impression that “equality” and “equity” were the same thing. It took a very simple graphic for me to really understand the difference.



interactioninstitute.org
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I see in these images the core of what it means to me as an educator when I say that I will meet a student where they are, actively listen to their needs, and address those needs to the best of my ability. This is not simply the now common practice of inviting students to share their pronouns or making a land acknowledgement at the beginning of class, but understanding that every student has specific access needs, and it is my job to create an environment that offers the building blocks for everyone to see over the fence.

My active teaching style is to welcome everyone in the room, regardless of their experience level or learned practices, create a brave space of consent to discover where they are in their personal journey as artist or amateur and share with them the tools and skills that I have learned through years of study and experience both in the classroom and in the field. Active listening, tolerance, examining one’s own implicit bias – these are all skills necessary to truthful storytelling in the theatre, and especially essential when establishing an equitable practice, both in the classroom and onstage. This also manifests in culturally conscious casting, where it is no longer the accepted practice to be color or gender-blind, but rather mindful and intentional in casting choices, celebrating what a diverse voice might bring to the role.

When thinking of Social Justice practices in the classroom, this has recently manifested in a discussion with both students and faculty around such new topics as Black Acting Methods, Anti-Racist Theatre, Regionalisms in Dialect, Consent Practices, Brave Space vs. Safe Space, Fair Working practices during Tech, and most recently, Equity vs. Academic Rigor. I believe all of these topics to be worth deep, honest, and evaluative discussion, followed by a plan forward that actually addresses these issues instead of just paying them lip service.

As a white woman, I am well aware that I have operated from a place of privilege for many years; perhaps not as privileged as some, but certainly more than others. Through my recent training with Nicole Brewer and Anti-Racist Theatre and Kim Shively, Emily Rollie, and Michael Jablonski of Theatrical Intimacy Education, I have begun to implement more practices of consent and equity in my classroom and rehearsals and have tweaked former practices to address harm reduction and prevention for the future. I know that this journey to mindfulness and intentionality is a marathon, not a sprint, and that “Better is better”. As a lifelong learner, I now know better, and will continue to learn and apply methods to do better.