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World Language: Spotlight on Equity Resources

The Spotlight on Equity provides a list of considerations for the purpose of providing an equity literate and socially conscious lens to the teaching and learning of world language as well as to recognize the historic economic exclusion and marginalization of minority groups and communities. When grade-level appropriate, educators may use these topics to critically engage students in socially relevant world language conversations and opportunities. The enumerated considerations are not a complete list, but rather a starting point on which to begin historically and socially relevant conversations.

Feedback on the draft versions of the Spotlights on Equity was solicited from the field between October 11th and November 22nd of 2021. A link to a Cognito form with focus questions created by content specialists at the Vermont Agency of Education was sent out through their networks. Additionally, feedback was requested from members of the Vermont Curriculum Leaders Association (VTCLA), the Equity Literacy and Equitable Education Systems grant awardees, the Vermont Foreign Language Association, the Vermont Principals Association, and the chairperson of the Act 1 Advisory Working Group. Thirty-two educators submitted feedback that was used to improve and refine the draft documents.

There are also authentic connections to equity, media, and digital literacy which should be incorporated into the teaching and learning of a culturally sustaining world language curriculum to aid in the development of bi- and multi-literate students. Definitions and supplemental resources to support the teaching and learning of these considerations are provided below.

Definitions

Equity Literacy: Equity literacy is the ability to recognize, respond, and redress even the subtlest biases, inequities, and oppressive ideologies, and to actively cultivate and sustain equitable, anti-oppressive ideologies and institutional cultures.

Digital Literacy: Digital literacy is part of media literacy (see below) and both are included in the idea of “information literacy”, which is the ability to effectively find, identify, evaluate, and use information. Digital literacy specifically applies to media from the internet, smartphones, video games, and other nontraditional sources and includes both digital skills and ethical obligations.

Media Literacy: [Media literacy](#) is the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and create messages in a variety of forms, from print to video, to the internet. Media literacy can be tied to digital literacy, and also falls under



the umbrella of “information literacy” (see above). It builds on an understanding of the role of media in society as well as the essential skills of inquiry and self-expression necessary for citizens of a democracy.

Spotlight on Equity Resources

Communication

Resources	Annotations and Why it Matters
<p>Civil Discourse in the Classroom</p>	<p>Learning for Justice (formerly Teaching Tolerance) developed this publication to introduce educators to basic tools for teaching civil discourse. “It is not subject-specific; ... the tools of argumentation and discussion lend themselves to any subject in any classroom. Although it is primarily designed for young adolescents, the curriculum can be adapted for students of any age. Using these lessons, students will be able to turn their unsubstantiated opinions into reasoned arguments. They also will learn how to effectively challenge an opposing argument... with a step-by-step process for refutation. These tools lay the groundwork for productive, reasoned, and lively discussions on a variety of topics”.</p>
<p>Fostering Civil Discourse: A Guide for Classroom Conversations</p>	<p>Facing History and Ourselves developed this guide to prepare our students to “respond thoughtfully and respectfully together to ... events by taking steps to cultivate a reflective classroom community throughout the school year. A reflective classroom community is in many ways a microcosm of democracy—a place where explicit rules and implicit norms protect everyone’s right to speak; where different perspectives can be heard and valued; here members take responsibility for themselves, each other, and the group as a whole; and where each member has a stake and a voice in collective decisions.”</p>
<p>Our Values, Beliefs and Identity are Embedded Within Language</p>	<p>From the United Nations comes this short article with a video stating how “every two weeks, one of the world’s languages disappears, along with the human history and cultural heritage that accompanies it...calling for greater efforts to preserve and promote mother languages and indigenous languages, to bolster inclusion, diversity and ultimately, sustainable development.”</p>

Resources	Annotations and Why it Matters
How Language Classes are Moving Past the Gender Binary	This New York Times article discusses how societies that speak gendered languages have been more open to nonconforming identities, but challenges are presented to second language learners where traditional grammar does not reflect societal changes, and there is often the issue of the “male default.”
Implicit Bias Module Series	This module series from the Kirwin Institute at Ohio State University provides insight into how our minds operate to help us understand the origins of implicit bias and learn strategies to address individual implicit biases.
Implicit Bias	Racial Equity Tools has collated an extensive list of implicit bias-related tools categorized by Research and Analysis, Organizations, Resources, and Tools and Practices. Provided are links to articles such as Implicit Bias in the Courtroom and videos including Immaculate Perception .
Washington Models for the Evaluation of Bias Content in Instructional Materials	This framework was developed for Washington educators in 2009 to allow instructional content to be evaluated for bias using five dimensions: gender/sex, multicultural, persons with disabilities, socio-economic, and family. While the lens of this framework is bias evaluation, it also emphasizes the importance of both respect and appreciation of differences and similarities.
Conversational Leadership	This online book, with video options, speaks to how conversational can be transformative and how this leadership style can be a positive approach to working together in a complex world.

Culture

Resources	Annotations and Why it Matters
The Danger of a Single Story	Ted Talk: “Novelist Chimamanda Adichie tells the story of how she found her authentic cultural voice and warns that if we hear only a single story about another person or country, we risk a critical misunderstanding.”

Resources	Annotations and Why it Matters
Why Do We Prefer Things that We are Familiar With?	<p>This Decision Lab article explains how the <i>mere exposure effect</i> describes our tendency to develop preferences for things simply because we are familiar with them and avoid things that are new or unknown.</p>
Justice and Colonialism	<p>This paper examines the relationship between justice and colonialism. It defines colonialism, including political domination, land taking, cultural imposition and economic exploitation; examines the kind of injustice that colonialism involved; and discusses the possibility of corrective justice.</p>
Resources that Address Issues of Race, Diversity and Social Justice	<p>ACTFL Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee has compiled a broad and varied selection of resources, including external resources such as an interview with Toni Morrison; webinars and papers, including The Journey of Social Justice; Anti-Asian racism and LGBTQ+ resources; and the ACTFL Statement on Diversity and Inclusion in World Language Teaching and Learning.</p>
New Ways of Seeing: Seeing With “Others Eyes”	<p>New Ways of Seeing: Seeing With “Others Eyes” and New Ways of Seeing: Language Appreciation are excerpts from a new publication by the Senior Advisor for China Learning Initiatives that make “an eloquent case for language learning as a means to enhance and deepen students’ capacity for processing information and analyzing the shape of the world.”</p>
Social Justice in the Language Classroom: A Call to Action	<p>This paper makes the case that the “goals of [world] language education in the United States have always been informed by the social, historical, and political contexts in which the instruction takes place,” and states that social justice education should play a role in all world language classrooms.</p>
Untangling Disinformation	<p>This NPR podcast series examines how widespread the problem of disinformation is, and efforts to overcome it.</p>
The Globally Competent Learning Continuum	<p>“The Globally Competent Learning Continuum (GCLC) identifies the dispositions, knowledge, and skills that educators need to teach students from diverse backgrounds and prepare all students to thrive in a global society. The GCLC is a tool for self-reflection, used by educators wishing to reflect on their own level of global competence and to learn the characteristics included in higher levels to advance along the continuum.”</p>