

Introduction

1

This Open Educational Resource (OER) carries a significant responsibility by presenting statistics through an *equity lens*. The metaphor of a lens is used intentionally—as the glasses one wears can have a profound effect on what one sees. “Your eyes come into contact with the world—but what do they really see? Your perception is affected by the outer environment and by the ecology of your inner world.”^[1]

As such, the book encourages further inspection of the ways in which data is collected, interpreted, and analyzed on a variety of social justice issues, such as *health disparities, hunger, and food insecurity, homelessness, behavioral health (mental health and substance use), and incarceration of males of color*. The book endeavors to heighten awareness of how data can close disparities for marginalized or underserved communities. It also attempts to reveal how the misuse of data can reinforce inequities, for example, by stigmatizing people and labeling neighborhoods as high poverty, violent, and having poor educational opportunities. Whether an intended or unintended consequence, irresponsible data use can contribute to racist impressions of people and communities.

Whether you are a student taking this Introductory Statistics course, a seasoned statistician, or a policymaker working for a state or federal government, it is our *dharma* to use and manage data responsibly and ethically.^[2] Adopting an “equity talk or walk” means that you critically examine data through a lens that questions *how and why* inequalities exist for those who have been historically and continuously marginalized in society, and perhaps how to help envision and construct a more equitable future.

This OER book is intended to get you started (or continue) on your “equity-mindfulness” journey. As you go through this journey, I encourage you to think critically about diversity-related issues, power, and oppression and gain an understanding of people from racial/ethnic groups different from your own. Hopefully, you will reflect on your own position of power in society.

I had a Black Father and a Filipino Mother and grew up culturally Black in the low-income neighborhoods of North Philadelphia. I attended Catholic private schools (K-12) and was a National Merit Commended student in the 12th grade. My entire post-secondary education has been fully funded through merit scholarships and fellowships, stipends for living expenses/textbooks, and PhD Dissertation Awards from highly selective colleges/universities. Still, I have never forgotten my roots and where my life all started in a marginalized, under-resourced community rife with social, economic, and political disadvantages. This social location and positionality have given me both knowledge and courage to apply an equity lens to the discipline of Statistics, which is the intention of this OER.

The equity framework within mathematics education is quite narrow (Gutstein 2006). Applying an equity lens to statistics has been rewarding personally as a researcher yet disheartening as a person of color, given the stubborn and persistent disparities that continue to exist in certain sectors of our society. However, if the book has enlightened you about how knowledge of the concepts and practices of statistics can help to better understand social justice issues, then its purpose has been met. When viewed through an equity lens, statistics has such a humanitarian and compassionate side to it that hopefully opens your heart to a greater understanding of socially disadvantaged populations and communities.

Warm regards,

Dr. Yvonne E. Anthony, Author

1. Chidvilasananda, S (1996). *The Yoga of Discipline*. New York: A Siddha Yoga Publication. 05: [Introduction#return-footnote-4-1](#)

2. [Dharma is regarded in Hinduism as a cosmic or universal law underlying right behavior and social order] 05: [Introduction#return-footnote-4-2](#)