

A COLLABORATIVE SELF-STUDY TO FOREFRONT ISSUES OF IDENTITY AND EQUITY IN MATHEMATICS METHODS COURSES

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This self-study is a collaboration of Mathematics Teacher Educators (MTEs) with the goal of raising issues of identity and equity within their elementary mathematics methods courses. A common problem of practice surfaced among the MTEs of how to support prospective teachers (PTs) in their development of seeing students' mathematical strengths. The research question was: How can MTEs collaboratively work towards addressing issues of identity and equity across varied institutional contexts?

Self-study involves the systematic studying of the self as a teacher within a context, aimed at improvement (LaBoskey, 2007) and is still emerging as a means for MTEs to study their own practice (Suazo-Flores et al., 2018). We sought to explore pedagogical practices in our methods courses to support PTs in seeing the mathematical strengths of PK-6 students. We selected an article by Skinner, Louie and Baldinger (2019) as a common course reading and developed a protocol that included pre/post PT reflective prompts around the article's strategies for seeing students' mathematical strengths. In order to examine our pedagogical practices we gathered and analyzed the following: (a) positionality statements, (b) lesson plans, including the selection of discussion facilitation questions, (c) post-implementation reflections from the MTEs and PTs, and (d) recordings and notes from our monthly meetings. Reflecting on these data offered insight into pedagogical changes for future course iterations.

Engaging in iterative cycles of practice, reflection, and change allowed us to continually learn from each other and modify our instruction. Based on insights from our colleagues and our own self-reflections, issues of practice to be taken up in future iterations were identified. These included the need to (a) directly address power and privilege with our PTs, (b) model and discuss trusting elementary students with challenging mathematics tasks, and (c) interrogate systemic issues in mathematics teacher preparation, such as purposeful field placements, and PT and elementary student assessment tools. Holistically, the self-study process helped us to develop collective terminology and refine our understanding and use of equity-based practices encompassing various mathematics education organizations' definitions and position statements. Through self-study we supportively and collaboratively pushed each other to reflect on our own teaching with and through equity-based pedagogies, recognizing that our enactment is vital for PTs who teach mathematics for equity and access (Chao et al., 2014).

References

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