

FACILITATING MATHEMATICS TEACHER EDUCATORS' CONVERSATIONS ON INEQUITIES IN MATHEMATICS CLASSROOMS

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Mathematics teacher educators (MTEs) have a responsibility to prepare and support mathematics teachers to build safe cultural spaces for students to learn mathematics. This requires making teachers aware of “national, state, district, and school contexts for educating students and be[ing] ready to engage in conversations to address inequitable learning experiences” (Association of Mathematics Teacher Educators, 2017, p. 23). One method of providing this preparation is to engage teachers in conversations and experiences that enable them to recognize and address inequitable learning experiences.

We used the casebook *Cases for Mathematics Teacher Educators: Facilitating Conversations about Inequities in Mathematics Classrooms* (White et al., 2016) in our three respective contexts to foster math educators’ ability to identify and address inequities and to develop MTEs’ ability to engage in conversations as inequities arise or are recognized. Guided by a situative framework (Putnam & Borko, 2000) and an inquiry stance (Cochran-Smith, 2003), we sought to answer the question: *How do mathematics teachers across the teacher development continuum respond to equity-related cases and engage in conversations about inequities in mathematics education?*

This cross-site research study was situated within teacher education and professional development settings. Participants included PreK-12 mathematics teacher leaders; graduate students preparing to become university-based MTEs; and preservice mathematics teachers. After the participants read the cases, we used common prompts to explore how they grappled with, embraced, and/or resisted equity-based dilemmas. The participants’ written responses, recordings of the discussions, and facilitator notes were collected and analyzed (Saldaña, 2016). Preliminary data analysis revealed that all groups were eager to engage in conversations around the cases, which enhanced their ability to notice and analyze inequitable situations.

A case titled “Who Counts as a Mathematician?” led to rich conversations across all three groups. Several participants challenged traditional assumptions regarding who can be considered doers of mathematics, allowing us to address inequitable learning contexts that may result from stereotyping and tracking. The teacher leaders often had experiences similar to those of the case authors and were ready to disrupt inequities. However, some graduate students and preservice teachers found it difficult to unpack the complexities and nuances of the dilemmas. This finding suggests the developmental nature of educators’ ability to see themselves in the cases, feel empowered to disrupt inequities, and be ready to facilitate conversations with other educators.

As MTEs, we must continue to grow and develop our ability to facilitate conversations about inequities in mathematics classrooms. This study allowed us to learn collaboratively across settings and adjust our practice. Our findings highlight the need to explore how educators develop an understanding of various scenarios in order to create equitable mathematics classrooms.

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