

Transformational Conversations Leading with a Lens of Equity



November 30, 2021
John Staley
Bill Barnes



Session Outcomes

Leaders will....

- Examine a new series of NCSM leadership resources designed to engage educators in conversations about race, equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- Examine the role of bias in mathematics education and its impact on student learning.

Norms

- Stay engaged.
- Experience discomfort.
- Speak your truth.
- Expect and accept non-closure.
- Share the airtime. (step up/step back)

Adapted from Glenn E. Singleton & Curtis Linton, Courageous Conversations about Race: A Field Guide for Achieving Equity in Schools. 2006. pp.58-65. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

NCSM's Mission and Vision



NCSM Mission Statement

NCSM is a mathematics education leadership organization that equips and empowers a diverse education community to engage in leadership that supports, sustains, and inspires high quality mathematics teaching and learning every day for each and every learner.

NCSM Vision Statement

NCSM is the premiere mathematics education leadership organization. Our bold leadership in the mathematics education community develops vision, ensures support, and guarantees that all students engage in equitable, high-quality mathematical experiences that lead to powerful, flexible uses of mathematical understanding to affect their lives and to improve the world.

NCSM's Transformation Conversations Series

- Transformational conversations can prove to be challenging. Cultural norms, implicit bias, unproductive beliefs, and/or discomfort can distract or derail the conversation.
- This series is designed to serve as a starting point for leaders who endeavor to strengthen institutional culture by engaging stakeholders in transformational conversations.
- Each conversation of the series is written to provide leaders with some background knowledge, tools, and resources as they prepare to engage with a specific sensitive topic.

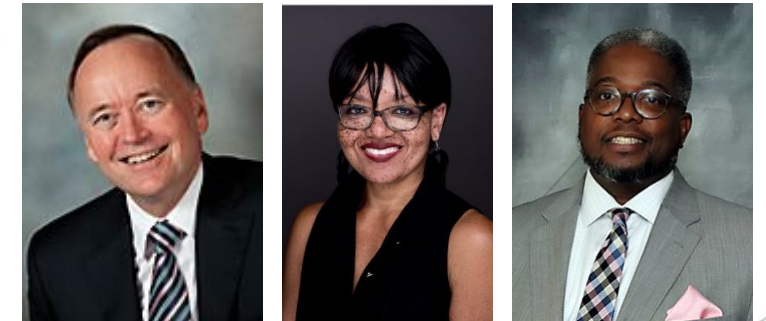
Transformational Conversations

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NCSM is committed to developing useful leadership resources that are designed to move equity and social justice work forward. NCSM intends to produce additional conversations as well as build out supplemental resources designed with a leader's successful implementation in mind.

Papers and Resources Highlighting Critical Conversations

- **Believing All Students Can Learn**
- **Bias and the Mathematics Classroom**



<https://www.mathedleadership.org/transformational-conversations>

WHY?

Essential Question

What role does a teacher's bias play in shaping students' mathematics identity and agency?

Mathematics Identity and Agency

“Mathematics identity is defined as how these learners see themselves mathematically and how they are seen by others (teachers, parents, and peers) as doers of mathematics. It also refers to a perception of self as a participant in mathematics.

Agency is one’s identity in action and the presentation of one’s identity through participating in mathematics in personally and socially meaningful ways. Teachers support students’ identities and sense of agency in values that they communicate through their words and actions.”

Robert Berry (2018)

Unpacking Bias

Categorization

Stereotypes

Association

Bias

Prejudices

Preferences

Aversions

Unpacking Bias

Categorization -

grouping like things together

Association -

linking people to
characteristics of social groups



Bias

Stereotypes -

*beliefs we have
about social groups*

Prejudices -

attitudes we have
about social groups

*Preferences
- our likes*

*Aversions -
our dislikes*

What We See, Think, and Do...

What role does bias play in shaping students' mathematics identity and agency?

1. *Bias conditions how we look at the world and the people within it.*
2. *We have a **bias** when, rather than being neutral, we have a preference for (or aversion to) a person or group of people. Thus, we use the term “**implicit bias**” to describe when we have attitudes towards people or associate stereotypes with them without our conscious knowledge. (Colorado, Department of Education)*
3. *Bias, even when we are not conscious of it, has consequences that we need to understand and mitigate. The stereotypic associations we carry in our heads can affect what we perceive, how we think, and the actions we take. (p. 48)*
4. *The plague and power of bias are too consequential to let them go unacknowledged and unchecked. They can affect us in surprising ways. (p. 30)*

[Eberhardt, Jennifer L.](#) (2019). **Biased: Uncovering the Hidden Prejudice That Shapes What We See, Think, and Do**

Essential Questions

How can we uncover our own biases? What implicit biases must we address?

From Association to ...

Write down the first thing that comes to mind for each statement.

1. A student who does not raise their hand to respond to questions.
2. A student who completes homework on a regular basis.
3. A student who does not quickly respond to number fact type of questions.
4. A student who does not seek/accept help when they appear to be struggling in class.
5. A student who has been performing poorly on assignments and assessments and then passes a major assessment.
6. A student who has been performing well on assignments and assessments and then fails a major assessment.
7. A student who is an outstanding athlete on several school teams.
8. A student that never completes homework.

From Association to ...

- Were there any noticeable patterns that emerged as you discussed your responses?
- How does *bias* influence our collective responses to the reflection questions?
- How might you use this activity with those that look to you for leadership? What would be your intended outcome?

Draw a picture of your ideal student

What is their gender?

What is their race?

How do they behave?

How does their family show up?

What are their beliefs about their math identity and math agency?

Commitment

How will I hold myself accountable to make a difference?

...equity in mathematics *education* will not be *achieved until* it is no longer possible “to predict mathematics achievement and participation based solely on student characteristics such as race, class, ethnicity, sex, beliefs, and proficiency in the dominant language.

(Gutiérrez 2002b, p. 153)

WHO'S NEXT?



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