

Queer Pedagogy

Disrupting Oppressive Conditions in the Geometry Classroom

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Welcome to Queer Pedagogy!

- Please edit your display name on Zoom:
“Participants” > Your name in the list > “More” > “Rename”
 - Your zoom display name should match your first and last names used in your correspondence with MfA
 - Add your **pronouns** at the end of your zoom name.

Beginning at 5:35, we are going to introduce ourselves by sharing the following information:

- How you would like to be addressed (name, pronouns, whatever applies)
- Educational Context
- A song that is giving you life: **drop a link to the song or its lyrics in the chat!**



Image Description: *Image of Queer Love is a Magical Thing art print by queer, muslim artist Yalla Roza. Print is a digital hand drawing of an apartment front with queer people of color, some in couples and some one their own, in the open windows and on the street. There are banners on the building and in the street that read “Queer love is a magical thing,” “you belong here,” “May you find healing in community, beloved” and “value platonic intimacy”*



Image Description: Image of a Black child smiling at the camera. They have their arms outstretched to the sides and hands in peace signs. The child is wearing a black short sleeve t-shirt w/ an adaption of the straight outta compton logo, which is rainbow colored and reads "straight outta the closet"

Image Source: [The Center on Colfax](#)

I come to mathematics carrying all of my humanity. My relationship with it passes through my experience. It affects my view of my world and I bring to it my own perceptions. I don't relate to Bertrand Russell's notion that mathematics is beyond humanity. Without us it is nothing.

Positioning Ourselves In this Work



Image Description: Wordle with the following words - First Gen College Grad, Second Gen American, Latinx, White, Middle Class, NJ Resident, Scholar Activist, Cisgender, Monolingual, mTBI survivor, Woman, Math Teacher, Learner, Math Coach, Millennial, Florida Born, Independent Scholar, Teacher Educator, Wife, Queer, Intersectional Feminist, Anti-Capitalist, Anti-Colonialism



Image Description: Wordle with the following words - South Asian, Immigrant, Cis Woman, Teacher, Queer, Feminist, Math, Anti-colonial, Multilingual, Labor Organizer, Tamil, Anti-Capitalist



Image Description: Image of a child wearing a shirt that says "love who you are." The child is striking a "superman" pose and is looking up.

Image Source: [Unsplash: Sharon McCutcheon](#)

This Is A Brave (Not Safe) Space

- *Controversy with civility*, where varying opinions are expected with a group commitment to understand the source of disagreement & work together toward a common solution.
- *Owning intentions & impact*, in which we acknowledge & discuss instances where dialogue has affected the emotional well-being of another person
- *Challenge by choice*, where we have an option to step in & out of challenging conversations
- *Respect*, where we show respect for one another's basic personhood
- *No attacks*, where members agree not to intentionally inflict harm.

Source: ["From Safe Spaces to Brave Spaces" by Brian Arao & Kristi Clemens](#)

Link: <https://tinyurl.com/QueerMfA>

Zoom logistics

Zoom fatigue is real, as is your privacy! If you want to turn your video off at any point in the session, please do so.



Image Description: An image of Indigenous people at Standing Rock. They are standing behind a rainbow colored banner that reads "Two-Spirit Camp: We feel & express differently because we were blessed with 2 spirits. We are 'male & female.' We are "gay, bi, & straight"...it's a gift...a sacred station. #StandingRockTwoSpirit"

Image Source [Huffpost](#)

What Do We Bring To This Work?

1. How have my parents, family, peers, romantic partners, & personal identity markers (race, ethnicity, dis/ability, body size, SES, religion, etc) influenced my beliefs about gender?
2. How have I benefited from adhering to gender expectations/roles? OR If I did not behave according to gender expectations/roles, what were the consequences?
3. If one of my children or a parent “came out” as lesbian, gay, bi, pansexual, asexual, transgender or non-binary, or any other LGBTQ+ identity how would I feel?
4. Do I use he/she, men/women as a catch-all to describe “everyone?” Why?
5. If someone thought I was queer, how would I feel?

6. What thoughts & feeling arise when I cannot easily determine the gender of a person or when a person challenges society’s binaries (e.g. appearance, speech, etc.)?
7. When someone calls me out regarding potentially harmful behaviors towards LGBTQ+ folx, do I feel compelled to quickly defend myself/intentions? Why? What do I hope to communicate?
8. Have I assigned traditional male/female names that match the biological sex of my baby/newborn? How about my pets? Why?
9. What feelings arise when I see LGBTQ+ folx displaying affectionate behaviors?
10. Can I identify 3 influential LGBTQ+ historical figures? 3 transgender historical figures?

Reflecting On What We Bring To This Work: Discussion Prompt Suggestions

- Was there anything you found surprising as you completed your reflection or any thoughts or emotions that came up for you?
- How do the beliefs we reflected on show up in our everyday lives both outside and inside of the classroom?



Image Description:
The image is of an art print titled "Queer Joy Art Print" by Laurence Philomene. It is a set of four photographs, all framed together (one in each corner) with headshots of a diverse group of queer folk looking joyful. Each of the four photos has a different solid color as a backdrop. The top left is blue, top right is pink, bottom right is green and bottom left is red.

Image/Data Source: [Laurence Philomene's Society6 Shop](#)



Image Description: *Image of artist Meg Emiko wearing a gray pullover sweatshirt w/ a rainbow shaped trans flag on the chest and the words "protect trans kids" over top of the trans flag colors.*

Image Source: Meg's Etsy Stor [MegEmikoArt](#)

Take a Break!

Take a bathroom break, stand up, dance around to the music, get water & a snack, but come back!

Return time: 6:35

How does queer identity show up in math?



2021 FCTM Live
A virtual mini-conference
REVITALIZING MATH TEACHING
Saturday, October 9, 2021
8:00 am - 12:00 pm EST

State presentations :
Test Development Center
Bureau of Standards and Instructional Support

K-12 teacher presentations:
Math Discussions, Access and Equity, 1st year of teaching, solving quadratics, Effective Feedback
,Math Toolbox, Building Relationships

Ignite Speakers:
Deborah Peart, Siddhi Desai,
Lashanda Garrison, Brandie Waid

register at: <https://fctm.memberclicks.net/fctm-live-2021-registration#/>

As you watch:

In the chat, type thoughts you're having about your practice that this video is bringing up **but don't hit share until we tell you to**

Heteronormativity & General Normativity

Heteronormativity is [the] societal assumption of certain norms: 1) that there are two distinct sexes; 2) that male and female functions and characteristics are distinctly different; and 3) that traits such as attraction and sexual behavior correspond to anatomy. Those who do not fit these norms—be it through same-sex attraction, a non-binary gender identity or nontraditional gender expression—are therefore seen as abnormal, and often marginalized or pressured to conform to norms as a result.

-[Learning for Justice, from Best Practices for Serving LGBTQ Students]

Normativity is the phenomenon in human societies of designating some actions or outcomes as good or desirable or permissible and others as bad or undesirable or impermissible.

-[Wikipedia: [Normativity](#)]

Queerness as Resistance

Queerness as resistance to normativity, which includes queer identity (resistance to heteronormativity) but also:

Different ways of knowing, doing, & being in the world & in mathematics

Resources for future reflection (math-specific): Alexander S. Moore, Brandie E. Waid, Cathery Yeh, Christopher Dubbs, Heather Mendick, James Sheldon, Kai Rands, Laurie Rubel, Luis Leyva, & Mario I Suarez [email us if you want access]



Image Description (from source): *Three Black and disabled folx (a non-binary person holding a cane, a non-binary person sitting in a power wheelchair, and a femme sitting in a chair) casually smile at the camera while a rainbow pride flag drapes on the wall behind them.*

Image Source: [Disabled and Here](#)

Creative Insubordination as Queer Pedagogy

In choosing to use Creative Insubordination, we are refusing the status quo when it is not in the best interest of our students. This means questioning some of the typical norms in mathematics teaching and learning. An important step in this work is first deconstructing what is going on around us, making the “normal” seem abnormal. For example, do we notice that the students in our calculus classes do not represent the demographics of our school? Only then can we imagine and plan for a different possible future where that representation is present.

Teaching mathematics involves negotiating one’s practice with colleagues, parents, administrators, students, and at times, community members. Choosing to refuse the status quo is an important option for maintaining our sense of morals, especially given the fact that we will never please all of the aforementioned constituents at the same time. Having political clarity on why we are doing the things we do is important..(p. 58).

-[Rochelle Gutiérrez: [Strategies for Creative Insubordination in Mathematics Teaching](#)]

In breakout rooms:

Given this idea of **normativity**, reflect on your own geometry classrooms.

- What would you identify as normative in the teaching of geometry?
- In what ways do these norms stifle students as they engage with geometric concepts?
- Any initial ideas on how you might queer your teaching to challenge these normative practices?
- We acknowledge that there are a lot of pressures on classroom teachers. How might we make use of creative insubordination to disrupt the normative practices in our geometry classrooms and pedagogy?

Breakout room 1: Notes

- Constructions - allowing flexibility... 2 column, paragraph, flow-chart
- Multiple entry points... different ways of solving problems... different ways of arriving at an answer ... flexibility.. Seeing more than one way as valid.
- Emphasize flexibility and multiple pathways. Different ways of thinking about a problem.
- Math trauma - addressing it.. Asking students about ideal and nightmare versions of math class
- Modeling different ways of approaching ... doing
- Asking students for feedback ... do you like this topic? Do you like how we are working through this topic... what else could help support you?
- Allowing for creativity.. Color-coding... processing the info on their own
- how do you balance the highly structured way of things being labeled “properly” ... using “precise definitions”... we want our students to be precise and accurate...without feeling their creativity is confined.

Breakout room 2: Notes

Given this idea of **normativity**, reflect on your own geometry classrooms.

- What would you identify as normative in the teaching of geometry?
- In what ways do these norms stifle students as they engage with geometric concepts?
 - Lots of structure at the start of Geometry- But can this amount of rigidity make us “lose” kids out of frustration
 - We are constantly categorizing things - it’s a Geo skill but what does that then show kids about real life?
 - In American classroom we might be saying ideas come from a specific origin, but students from other countries may have learned other things (Pythagoras/Gougu example)
 - Building a structured argument - mindset of rare to prove-constant questioning, use LSAT puzzles
- Any initial ideas on how you might queer your teaching to challenge these normative practices?
- We acknowledge that there are a lot of pressures on classroom teachers. How might we make use of creative insubordination to disrupt the normative practices in our geometry classrooms and pedagogy?

Debrief

What are we thinking/feeling in relation to what we discussed today?



Image Description: Image of a street art mural depicting a diverse group of queer people in the foreground. The mural contains images of a cityscape in the background and dispersed throughout are messages such as "here for queer joy," "Black lives matter" "pride. In the center of the mural is a person that looks like they are blossoming into a tree. The central image is accompanied by the phrase "we will blossom"

Image Source: [Homoculture](https://www.homoculture.com/)

Closing Items

- Share your [feedback](#)! We'll use it to design our session for next week.
- Reflect on the community norms we set for our brave space. Based on our session today, is there anything you'd like to add/change to those norms? Add your thoughts to [this document](#)!
 - We'll start our next session by adapting our norms to fit the needs of our community members.