Developing and Promoting Student Agency in High School Math Classrooms

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Creating Balance Conference
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Agenda

- Icebreaker
- Define Agency
- Discuss Current Experiences
- Analyze Data
- Discuss Examples
- Reflect
Two Truths & a Lie

- Think of two facts about you and something that is not true.
- In groups of three, take turns sharing your two truths and a lie.
- The other two people must guess which facts are true and which one is false.
- Share the truth with your partners.
Agency

- What is agency?
- How is agency related to identity?
- What are the benefits of cultivating agency among students?
- What are the challenges involved in promoting opportunities for students to have the skills and confidence to act on one’s own behalf?
Our Definition of Agency

Agency:

Recognize.

Willfully act and make choices. Power to do what you choose within the structure.

Help students see own gifts. Own next steps.

Responsibility. Cultural.
Pros / Cons

- Give away Power
- Who has agency?
  - overserved
  - underserved
- Not scripted
- Negotiation
- Time
- Safety first
Agency

- **Agency**: Behavior of characteristics within a realm of a Figured World (Holland et al., 2001)

- **Human agency**: The confidence and skills to act on one’s own behalf (Solorziano & Solorzano, 1995)

- **Mathematical agency**: Students’ capacity to identify themselves as powerful mathematical thinkers who construct rigorous mathematical understandings, and who participate in mathematics in personally and socially meaningful ways (Turner, 2003).

- **Characteristics of agency**: control, composition, commitment, thematization, characterization, and reason, which are associated with choice, knowledge, and power (Kockelman, 2007).
What strategies do you use to cultivate agency?
Analyze Data

- What types of agency are enacted in these transcriptions?

- What level of effectiveness would you rate these examples?

- How could these discussions be expanded upon to promote more confidence and skills to act on one’s own behalf?
Discuss

- Describe your Integrated 1 example
- What characteristic and what level did you assign?
- Explain why/how you determined the category/level
- What are some ways to deepen the mathematical experience?

- Does anyone in the audience disagree or want to add some ideas/opinions to this example?
Strategies Used to Promote Agency

- Teacher/student positioning away from front.
- Student-generated definitions. Press to explain WHY.
- Addressed behavior. Taught students to listen (one mic one voice).
- Distributed participation.
- Either/or options.
- Multiple strategies. Choice in tools.
- Encourage regardless of accuracy. Validation. Recognized.
- Mistakes used to develop learning process. Confidence.
- Safe classroom culture.
- Use higher-order questions and precise vocabulary.
List more strategies here:

- Let’s keep the conversation going!