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Post-structuralism and ethical practical action: issues of identity and power.

J. Res. Math. Educ. 44, No. 1, 100-118 (2013).

Summary: In an era when familiar categories of identity are breaking down, an argument is made for using post-structuralist vocabulary to talk about ethical practical action in mathematics education. Using aspects of Foucault's post-structuralism, an explanation is offered of how mathematical identifications are tied to the social organization of power. An analysis of 2 everyday instances is provided to capture the oppressive conditions in which ordinary people involved in mathematics are engaged. Describing how systemic constraints become lived as individual dilemmas offers a way of understanding what we might do to effect change, and what we might do to produce tangible results.

Classification: C60 C20

Keywords: ethics; self-concept; power structure; language usage; social structure; equity; females; secondary school students; gender differences; student attitudes; mathematics tests; gifted students; professional identity; teaching methods; teacher supervision; social justice; cultural issues

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