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**Context matters: how should we conceptualize equity in mathematics education?**

Herbel-Eisenmann, Beth (ed.) et al., Equity in discourse for mathematics education. Theories, practices, and policies. Based on a conference, Rochester, NY, USA, May 2008. Dordrecht: Springer (ISBN 978-94-007-2812-7/hbk; 978-94-007-2813-4/ebook). Mathematics Education Library 55, 17-33 (2012).

Summary: Focusing on contexts of learning reminds us that no category of teachers or students is homogeneous. It also helps clarify equity – a necessary clarification, given the lack of consensus on what it is. Equity means fairness, not sameness. As such, this chapter elaborates on equity by highlighting four dimensions in mathematics education. ‘Access’ to tangible resources dominated equity discussions in the 1980s and continues in ‘opportunity to learn’ research. ‘Achievement’ refers to participation in quality mathematics classes and success in them. It is paramount in standardized tests and ‘achievement gap’ discourses. ‘Identity’ refers to supporting students in becoming better persons in their own eyes, which requires attention to their roots and a balance between attention to self and others. The ‘power’ dimension takes up issues of social transformation at many levels. Access and achievement are positioned as the dominant axis of equity. Identity and power form the critical axis.

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