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Looking for equity in policy recommendations for instructional quality.

Atweh, Bill (ed.) et al., Mapping equity and quality in mathematics education. Dordrecht: Springer (ISBN 978-90-481-9802-3/hbk; 978-90-481-9803-0/ebook). 177-190 (2011).

Summary: This chapter uses an equity lens to examine recently published national policy reports that address the improvement of mathematics instruction in the United States. We frame equity along two dimensions: the kinds of mathematical knowledge to which students have access and the opportunities for students to participate in classroom environments that support significant mathematics learning. A central finding of the analysis is that, across the policy documents, mathematics is narrowly construed and primary emphasis is placed on procedural knowledge and the accumulation of facts. Moreover, the recommendations reflect a general tendency to privilege teacher content knowledge over other forms of knowledge that would enable teachers to teach all students effectively. We concur that deep subject matter knowledge is essential in order for teachers to teach mathematics well; however, we contend that it is not sufficient for an equity agenda, as mathematics knowledge alone does not enable teachers to facilitate students' learning.

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