STORYLINES EXPERIENCED BY INDIGENOUS AND NEWLY MIGRATED MATHEMATICS STUDENTS

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Students are positioned by teachers, classmates, media, community, organizations, policy, legislation, language, and families, through current and historical practices. As researchers and former classroom teachers, we are particularly attentive to the positioning of mathematics students who identify (or are identified) with groups that have often been marginalized, namely students who are Indigenous or are newly arrived migrants. Most research using theories of positioning focuses on the positioning (e.g., Sengupta-Irving, 2021). However, positioning theory sees a triad at work in human interaction, including the three elements of positioning, storyline, and speech/communication act (e.g., Harré, 2012). The people involved in an interaction are associated with positions in a story, which guides their choices about how to interact. This study explores the influence of storylines in the context of learning mathematics. The storylines available (known) to students and their teachers make certain positions possible and exclude other positions from possibility. Storylines are important because they provide repertoires for action for mathematics students and teachers. In our presentation, we will describe how we have been working with students to (a) identify the key storylines that underpin their experiences associated with their mathematics learning, and (b) document their accounts of interactions that they see guided by these storylines. Some storylines that have come up so far include "We have to try hard to learn math", "Teachers respond to students differently based on the students' reputations", "Math is important", "The math we do in school is not interesting", "Math teachers don't understand Indigenous people", and "Math should be done in silence". In our oral report we will share student experiences that connect with these storylines. Our next research step brings these storylines and the associated experiences to the students' mathematics teachers, where we will collaboratively build pedagogies that both respond to students' strengths and are informed by their experiences. (This research is supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, grant entitled "Migration and Indigenous contexts of Mathematics Education (MIME): Changing storylines with strength-based pedagogies", Principal Investigator: David Wagner.)

References

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