Community College Mathematics Instructors' Conceptions of Equity

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Active learning has been shown to improve student success in STEM courses (e.g., Freeman et al., 2014; Theobold et al., 2020). However, research also shows how such instruction can have inequitable impacts on the student experience and subsequent success (Reinholz et al., 2022). Thus the implementation of active teaching practices needs to be grounded in equity. A goal of this project is to implement a professional development (PD) program for community college introductory mathematics instructors. As part of that work, three rounds of interviews were conducted with instructor participants at a Hispanic-Serving two-year college (11 in fall; 8 in spring). Instructors were asked about their conceptions of equity as related to teaching during these interviews. In this poster, I will share some common themes from four instructors' conceptions of equity and how those conceptions evolved over the course of a year while engaging in PD centered on active, equitable, and inclusive teaching.

Results

Table 1. Four teachers' initial views of equity, final views of equity, and equity goals.

Instructor	Initial Views	Final Views	Goals
Paul	Equity is providing the right amount of support to each person.	Inquiry can be leveraged to improve equity within a class.	Wants to transfer lessons about gender equity into racial or ethnic equity.
Stella	Considering and attending to individual needs	New Perception of student needs	None
Sandra	Providing many forms of support to increase meaningful engagement and a sense of belonging	Considers race and ethnicity as factors is participation and sees a need to be flexible	To close the achievement gap within her class and increase the passing rate
Sun	Provide students with the means to succeed based on their individual needs	Give females a stronger voice and make effort to gain insight into students	Create class environment for students to fully engage and feel welcomed

Instructors discussed various teacher moves to support these views and goals that included purposefully creating mixed demographic groups, increasing wait time, allowing for multiple forms of participation, and increasing access to resources.

Conclusion

With a better understanding of how instructors think about equity, the project team is better positioned to meet the instructors where they are in terms of equity-focused PD. We can strengthen the connection between equity and teaching practices, for example, like making the connection for Stella that wait time can be a useful tool for attending to equity. Lastly, we can celebrate small steps toward equity. Equity does not have to mean big changes at the start. Rather, progress towards achieving classroom equity can be an ongoing process.

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