

RETURNING TO DISRUPTING DEFICIT NARRATIVES: FUNDS OF KNOWLEDGE BEYOND CURRICULUM

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We examine the potential for instructor-led student interview in disrupting narratives about minoritized university students and their families. This approach was inspired by a critical component of the original Funds of Knowledge for Teaching project (FoK), the home visit, which involved ethnographic interviews with students and their family to learn about their lives. Study group reflections with project teachers and researchers led to the teachers' examination of biases and disruption of deficit stories about students and their families (Tenery, 2005).

Two frameworks guided the design and the analysis of the study. The *anti-deficit framework* for students from minoritized groups (Adiredja, 2019) prioritizes unpacking students' existing understandings and resources for learning, and explicitly constructing counter-stories about students and their mathematics. The study also interprets the results of the study from a *socio-ecological perspective* (Louie & Zhan, 2022). Story construction is attributed to the individual, the learning community they are in, and the broader societal context.

The data comes from a larger project focusing on engaging university instructors in community learning project focusing on race, gender, and mathematics (NSF DUE 2021313 IUSE). The project began in the summer and the interview occurred in the following Spring. Six participants interviewed a student of their choice, and four attended a follow-up debrief meeting.

Results showed that participants gained novel insights into their students' lives. The focal case, Zaynah shows that the interview can also change an instructor's deficit story about a student and their mathematics into an anti-deficit story. Zaynah's post-interview description of her student, Maria, went from someone who had "weak algebra skills" and was "just kind of there," to a student who had a well-researched and articulated academic and life goals, and a "passion" that Zaynah "knew nothing about." Zaynah accepted that math "wasn't [Maria's] thing," and that "she can and will do the math" to achieve those goals.

The anti-deficit framework and the socio-ecological perspective rejected a simple narrative of a deficit-oriented instructor who changed after the interview experience. Zaynah is not a deficit-oriented instructor. Her description of her other students in the workshop—all women of color—were positive, with no mention of deficits. Instead, it is a more complex story of the interplay of narratives about mathematics and students of color, and the impact of the interview with a student and the role of the community in shifting deficit stories. It is showing promise of applying FoK project's core principles in undergraduate mathematics beyond curriculum design.

References

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