

MATH WITH A CONSCIENCE?

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Description: Does applicable math always side with the rich and the powerful? Or can it help us create a better, a more just world? We show how an intentional focus on the social and ethical dimensions of math starting from such questions can enrich the classroom experience at all levels of the curriculum. Examples and tools for the classroom will be provided.

Motivation: Motivating math students is a serious issue these days. We often lose students who want to change the world and make a positive difference to more humanistic disciplines or the medical sciences. By initiating a discussion of ethics and social justice in the classroom, we can encourage more of our students to engage meaningfully with mathematics and to feel more connected to the material they are studying. Participants will gain ideas to mull over and tools to take home and adapt to their classrooms.

What can we do? What should we do?

A broader concept of social justice to encompass human well-being:

Human well-being: A context- and situation-dependent state, comprising basic material for a good life, freedom and choice, health and bodily well-being, good social relations, security, peace of mind, and spiritual experience.

–International Council of Scientific Unions (2010)

as quoted by Ubiratan D'Ambrosio

Outline of the talk:

- (1) Prelude
 - (2) Is Math Value-free?
 - (3) Math with a conscience? Examples from research that engages with social justice and human well-being issues
 - (4) Sample tasks for the classroom
 - (5) Questions for ourselves as mathematics educators and ambassadors of mathematics in the world
 - (6) Reading suggestions and online resources
 - (7) Discussion
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The talk slides are available if you are interested. Please just email me at:
`gizem.karaali@pomona.edu`

Also if you were at the session and you asked a question or responded to one, please do get in touch with me. I am looking into creating a centralized resource site for the ideas and themes that were discussed in the session and think that your questions, comments and suggestions would add much value to the project.

THANK YOU ☺

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