

The Emergence of Mathematical Meaning: interaction in Classroom Cultures (Studies in Mathematical Thinking and Learning Series)

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This book grew out of a five-year collaboration between groups of American and German mathematics educators. The central issue addressed accounting for the messiness and complexity of mathematics learning and teaching as it occurs in classroom situations. The individual chapters are based on the view that psychological and sociological perspectives each tell half of a good story. To unify these concepts requires a combined approach that takes individual students' mathematical activity seriously while simultaneously seeing their activity as necessarily socially situated. Throughout their collaboration, the chapter authors shared a single set of video recordings and transcripts made in an American elementary classroom where instruction was generally compatible with recent reform recommendations. As a consequence, the book is much more than a compendium of loosely related papers.

The combined approach taken by the authors draws on interactionism and ethnomethodology. Thus, it constitutes an alternative to Vygotskian and Soviet activity theory approaches. The specific topics discussed in individual chapters include small group collaboration and learning, the teacher's practice and growth, and language, discourse, and argumentation in the mathematics classroom. This collaborative effort is valuable to educators and psychologists interested in situated cognition and the relation between sociocultural processes and individual psychological processes.



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