

Joshua M. Rosenberg
Contributions to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Teaching at the high school and post-secondary level began my interest in teaching students from diverse backgrounds. Before beginning my Ph.D. program at Michigan State University, I taught high school science in a public school in North Carolina. Having attended what I thought were (but, as I learned as a teacher, were not) diverse public schools from Kindergarten through my undergraduate institution, I was impacted and changed by coming into close contact with the conditions in which my students lived and learned. Teaching was a trial by fire in the opportunities of teaching diverse learners. My students were bright, hard-working, and responsible, but they seemed to live in a less-forgiving world than I did. I began talking with my friends and family about race, social class, and how many students differed not by their capabilities but rather their context. These conversations were—and are—hard.

To me, graduate school was an opportunity to begin to understand the sources of the inequities I observed in my classroom. It was also an opportunity to deepen my responsibility not only to talk about issues of race, social class, sexual orientation, and immigration status, but also to consider them in my current work, as a teacher and mentor, but also as a researcher. I have deliberately worked to make equity and diversity a focus in my teaching. For example, while educational technology has become a prominent topic and interest for teachers, the educational technology field has not adequately addressed issues of equity, access, and power that join the transformative power of digital tools for teaching and learning.

In a course I co-taught during summer 2017, I partnered with an administrator from a local school who presented on equity concerning educational technology. Some of my students—because they thought this was a critically important perspective or because these ideas were new—reported that this was a highlight for them. My earlier research brought my “teacher lens” to the question of how context was addressed in educational technology, demonstrating that while part of some theoretical accounts, most research did not focus on—or account for—contextual factors that shape how students use technology in their learning (Rosenberg & Koehler, 2015). In my dissertation study, more than 90% of youth come from racial and ethnic groups who are historically under-represented in STEM areas of study and occupations. This study provides the opportunity to discover how youth’s participation in out-of-school programs (particularly in STEM) can leverage their interests in STEM to support their efforts to pursue STEM classes or, later, majors in STEM domains. In my capacity as a peer and mentor, I welcome scholars to contribute to my (open-source) work by including a code of conduct that pledges to respect and create a harassment-free experience for all contributors.

While committed to intentionally bringing students’ diversity into my teaching and mentoring and research, a key way I plan to address equity in my work is to construct opportunities for learners to work with data as a way to develop awareness about how data can be used as a source of power or authority. Most importantly, I aim to create opportunities for learners themselves to think of and with data to advocate causes that are personally meaningful to them as learners. The questions that students often find personally meaningful may not only be so to them, but also to others in the classroom and also to a more just and inclusive society.