Building Racial Justice in Mathematics Education:
A Seat at the Breakfast Table

Abstract: Everyone seems to be talking about racial equity and justice these days. Increasingly, scholars in mathematics education are recognizing the need to center the voices of those most affected—i.e., Black, Latine, Asian, and Indigenous children and families—in these discussions. Our current project explores participatory design research (PDR) as a tool for building school, university, student, and parent capacity for centering children of color and their families as researchers and designers of middle school mathematics learning, in a small but diverse Midwestern city. In this talk, we will discuss the challenges we are experiencing and what we are learning about PDR, racial justice, and ourselves, as we work to bring youth of color to the table with us to eat, learn, and act together.

Nicole Louie is an Assistant Professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her research is centrally concerned with issues of inclusion, exclusion, and belonging in schools. She is especially interested in how people’s experiences of these phenomena are shaped by systemic racism and intersecting systems of oppression. Her current project seeks to explore participatory design research as a tool for advancing racial justice in middle school mathematics, centering youth of color and their families as co-researchers and co-designers. Her previous (and still ongoing) work has focused on how teachers of mathematics both reproduce and challenge narrow, exclusionary views of mathematical intelligence, as they intersect with racial hierarchies.

Chundou (HMoob RPA: Tshaavntuj) of the Hmong clan Her (HMoob RPA: Hawj) is a second year PhD student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in the Department of Curriculum & Instruction. They are a Critical HMoob scholar who focuses on HMoob youth activism, arts, and learning in school settings and out of school as well. Before coming to graduate school, Chundou was a high school English teacher in the Madison, Wisconsin area where they also grew up. Chundou draws inspiration and hope from their ancestors, family, and communities to explore the ways in which HMoob youth are engaging in constant (auto)ethnographic inquiry through their art, creations, and imaginations.

Sponsored by Program in Mathematics Education