

Tessellations: A Resource Guide to Humanizing Disabilities in Mathematics Education

Tessellations represent the many possible endeavors in humanizing disabilities in mathematics education. These endeavors parallel teachers' intentional and creative design of their mathematics classrooms as spaces for inspiration and optimum learning. As with the mathematics classroom, this guide aims to inspire and spark continual learning through stimulating and meaningful activities and ideas. The guide is divided into two sections: The first includes a set of reflection questions to promote thinking more deeply about the key issues in the book; the second includes quick reminders and action-oriented activities to put big ideas from the book into motion.

Creating Powerful Patterns and Molds

- ▶ “To pretend not to notice a person’s particular embodiment in the world is to dismiss her ‘way of being’ as too tragic to acknowledge” (Valle and Connor 2011, p. 193).
- ▶ We authentically care about those mildly to profoundly affected by their disabilities.
- ▶ Disability = enhanced learning = intellectual rigor = powerful funds of knowledge and identity = inventive contributions.
- ▶ Disabled students are mathematics doers and thinkers.
- ▶ Disabled students get excited about mathematics just like other students, and perhaps more so.
- ▶ Emotions are at the heart of mathematics.
- ▶ Learning, understanding, and knowing mathematics take on new meanings when we collectively expand the meaning of mathematics.
- ▶ Disability labels such as “mathematics learning disability,” “intellectual disability,” and “emotional” or “behavioral disorders” are demeaning and reflect how poorly schools and society respond to differences.
- ▶ Leverage IEPs to fix attitudes and schools, not the student.
- ▶ Be bold, courageous, and take risks during IEP meetings.
- ▶ Build deep understanding of students with disabilities, their communities, and funds of knowledge and identity.
- ▶ All students belong to and are valued members of the community regardless of differences.
- ▶ Strive to pluralize mathematics.
- ▶ Humanized mathematics is about the student; their voice and ideas are foregrounded.

