

Reflection/Discussion Questions

David Fakunle's story



[Link to video](#)

Note: We encourage you to use these questions in whatever ways feel appropriate for your circumstances. They do not need to be discussed in order. Some questions may be more useful for a particular group of people than others. In any case, we hope you will use this guide as a tool for thinking about what “mathematics” is and about the experiences that young people have in school.

General questions

- 1) What parts of David's story stand out for you? Why do you think these experiences resonate with you?
- 2) Are there parts of the story to which you are not really able to relate? If so, why do you think this is the case?
- 3) What do you think David's story says about how we might define “mathematics”? What do you hear that causes you to think that?
- 4) Given what David shares, what do you think educators and others who make decisions for schools should be considering related to young people's experiences in school mathematics?
- 5) What aspects of David's story do you believe are similar to many other people's experiences? What causes you to think that?
- 6) What aspects of this story are very unique to David? What causes you to think that?
- 7) What other questions would you like to ask David?

Questions specific to David's story

- 1) [time stamp 1:45] David comments that mathematics is required in basically every educational space but that it often does not feel “relevant” or interesting for young people who must study it. What are your thoughts about this?
- 2) [time stamp 3:19] How does David relate mathematical understanding to economic well-being? How are his memories of school experiences with this similar to, or different than, your own?

3) [time stamp 8:00] What forms of mathematics does David discuss in this section of the video, as related to the [Standards for Mathematical Practice](#)? How do these relate to what we typically experience in school?

4) [time stamp 8:58] What are your reactions to David's discussion of "structure", both in public health and in other parts of our world? What are your thoughts about his comments that there is "flexibility" and "fluidity within structure" and that "the world is not black and white; it's gray... math can be that too"?

5) [time stamp 12:22] How do you relate to David's hopes for his own son in mathematics?

Questions for educators (and anyone who wishes to consider these ideas)

1) [time stamp 3:00] David discusses a relationship between young people's curiosity about why mathematics is relevant to their lives and their "caring" about learning it.

- Do you believe that this relationship exists?
- How can we help young people genuinely "care" about learning mathematics in school?

2) [time stamp 11:27] David comments that many young people will take mathematics courses only as long as "they have to" and that he felt mathematics had been taught in "such a robotic way that it certainly didn't satisfy [him]."

- What are your reactions to this as you think about the young people in your school?
- What can we do to strengthen young people's desire to enroll in more mathematics courses?

3) [time stamp 13:34] David urges us to consider the "relevance" of mathematics when we design school mathematics experiences. What are your experiences in doing so? What are the challenges and benefits of doing so?