Enjoyment and Creativity

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Enjoyment and creativity are two of the dispositions highlighted in this course.

Enjoyment speaks to the joy that one feels when engaging in some activity or experience. In mathematical spaces, this pertains to the awe and delight that students may experience with unearthing new knowledge or achieving a goal. A rewarding mathematical program intentionally creates space for student joy in learning designs and celebrates such joy when it occurs.

Creativity refers to the openness of mathematical spaces such that students may claim opportunities to build, make, and create ideas, processes, models, and representations of their own designs. Such opportunities for mathematical creativity lead directly to a sense of ownership and agency as students see themselves as unique builders and shapers of their own ideas.

Enjoyment and creativity can be fostered in classrooms that position students as mathematical thinkers and problem solvers. For example, students might be tasked with a problem requiring them to design packaging for an oddly shaped toy. This task can be presented in such a way that children have opportunities to explore different ways to solve problems involving area, volume, and geometry. As they discuss their reasoning, and compare and draw connections between their different solution pathways, they experience the joy of problem solving and agency in applying their own efficient strategies and approaches.

By intentionally designing mathematical experiences that nurture students' enjoyment and build their creativity, teachers help students see mathematics as a flexible and empowering subject where their ideas are valued.