

GIVING THE FLOOR TO... TOD SHOCKEY IN A TRIBUTE TO UBIRATAN D'AMBROSIO

TEM A PALAVRA... TOD SHOCKEY NUM TRIBUTO A UBIRATAN D'AMBROSIO

TIENE LA PALABRA... TOD SHOCKEY EN HOMENAJE A UBIRATAN D'AMBROSIO

1. BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

I have worked in higher education for over twenty years as a mathematics educator. For the past 15 years I have served as an editor for the Journal of Mathematics and Culture.

2. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE MEETING

It is an odd emotion writing this reflection on the very personal role that Professor D'Ambrosio played through his kind mentoring in my development as an academic. While certainly an aspiration to be as well engaged in scholarship across a plethora of disciplines as was Dr. D'Ambrosio, his message was clear: there is much to be learned.

In his seminal paper of 1985, he included "codes and jargons" in his definition of ethnomathematics, and this has stood out as a critical element in my development of an understanding of any groups' ethnomathematics. In early work the codes and jargons of thoracic cardiovascular surgeons proved a great challenge that, once understood, revealed an unknown world.

In his 1998 monograph, "Ethnomathematics: The Art of Explaining and Knowing", the importance of understanding that "every culture has its ways of doing mathematics (of "mathematizing")" (p. 8) has stood as a constant reminder of the attention needed as an academic conducting ethnomathematics work.

Considering codes and jargons alongside the concept of mathematizing, the concepts of etic and emic (Pike, 1967) have played a pivotal role in my attempts to avoid putting colonizing lens on work from groups of which I hold non membership. A reminder of a colonizing view of mathematics was appropriately captured by D'Ambrosio (1998):

What we call mathematics is a very distinct cultural form that has as its origins a way of dealing with quantities, measurements, shapes, and operations. Its characteristics come from a way of thinking, reasoning, and from a logic that is situated in a system of thought that we identify as western thought. Naturally, culturally different groups have different ways to proceed in their logical schema. (p. 8)

Putting arrogance aside and embracing that other “logical schema” exist, has hopefully informed my work to be respectful. As a teachers’ educator, a clear message from Ubi stands out. With respect to mathematizing, he reminds us “that there is no way to ignore this and not respect these particularities when the child enters school. In that moment, the entire past of the child should be respected” (p. 8).

The outcome of this respect is dignifying her culture, supporting her confidence, “a respect that extends to her family” (p. 8). Of course, the highlighted references were purposeful. When the community of ethnomathematics embraces respect, many find themselves considering pedagogical implications. With respect to pedagogy, Ubi put forth a pedagogy of love that I will continue to embrace through my career.

3. TO KNOW MORE...

D'Ambrosio, U. (1985). Ethnomathematics and its place in the history and pedagogy of mathematics. *For the Learning of Mathematics--An International Journal of Mathematics Education*, 5(1), 44-48.

D'Ambrosio, U. (1998). *Ethnomathematics: The art of technique of explaining & knowing* (P. B. Scott, Ed. & Trans.). International Study Group on Ethnomathematics.

Pike, K. L. (1967). *Language in Relation to a Unified Theory of the Structure of Human Behavior*. The Hague, Paris: Mouton.