California Dreaming: A Tale of Algebra Readiness at Two Levels

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2:00 pm in Derr 238
September 9, 2011

Abstract: In the last few decades algebra has become increasingly accessible and meanwhile more high-stake in secondary schools in the US. Despite all the progresses and promises, algebra readiness continues to pose major challenges to mathematics education in both the middle grades and also the first year of college. Achievement gaps still persist among student groups. This talk presents some most up-to-date data on student performance in algebra at these two levels in the state of California, and unfolds the readiness issue from mathematical, curricular, cognitive, political, and socio-cultural perspectives. A few recommendations are proposed for promoting student readiness in algebra at the two levels.

Xuhui Li received his Master’s degree in mathematics from East China Normal University and his Ph.D. in mathematics education from the University of Texas at Austin. Since 1992 he has been engaged in mathematics teacher preparation and professional development activities as well as in related research projects in Shanghai, Texas, Michigan, and California. Currently he teaches mathematics and mathematics education courses at California State University, Long Beach. His research focuses on measuring secondary school teachers’ mathematical knowledge for teaching, and revealing the connections between teachers’ mathematical knowledge and their implementations of mathematics curriculum materials in classrooms.