

**From Becoming the Math Teacher You
Wish You'd Had, pp. 318-320**

Jen: What do you think I'm going to say about how you did today?

Ethan: I think we did well because we were persevering on a hard problem.

Jen: Good word.

Eduardo: This is so hard, but I like it. I like getting confused!

Several students: Me, too!

Monique: I think we did very good because we were communicating with our partners and saying what we thought.

Jen: There was a lot of communication, and it wasn't about stuff we're not supposed to be talking about, right? In fact, sometimes it got kind of loud in here, but I didn't mind because I would say, like 98 percent of it was math talk, wouldn't you say?

Class: Yeah.

Joseph: You're going to say Joseph did awesome.

(Laughter.)

Jen: That's totally what I was going to say. Why am I going to say that?

Joseph: Because I didn't get frustrated when I didn't know the answer.

Jen: It's normal to get frustrated, but it's what you do when you get frustrated, right? You don't just give up!

Noemi: We were working really well with our partners because we were doing a really good job with each other when we disagreed. We didn't get up and leave. We stayed and talked it through.

Jen: You would sit there and defend yourself and say this is *why* I believe what I believe.

Jake: We've been working on this for like twenty minutes and we've gotten like five different answers, and we disagreed about all of them but we're still going.

Manuel: We've gotten like twelve different answers, and we still don't know which is right!

Class: Us, too!

Eric: We had like 9,576 and 9,814 and we got tons of different answers and my answer of 1,582, well I sort of think it's wrong but I sort of think it's right.

Maribel: Can we *please* keep working?

Jen: One last comment first.

Leon: I tried to hop in with them and try and defend my answer even though it was 37,530 and they said I was wrong, but I tried to defend my answer.

Max: He did defend his answer.

Manuel: You did a good job defending your answer.

Jen: I saw that you guys were getting a little frustrated over here, and I think what happened was—if you are still trying to solve something and you're not sure about what you think yet and someone says, "Here's what I think!" you might not be *ready* to hear yet because you're still trying to think about what *you* think. I get like that. If someone tries to talk to me about something I haven't thought about yet, I get like, "No! Don't talk to me!" (Jen covered her ears as a gesture. Lots of kids nodded at this.)

Jen is teaching students that empathy, communication, reading social cues, disagreement, building shared norms, and collaboration are part of doing mathematics. They are not add-ons or lessons that we only do during morning meeting or as part of an antibullying curriculum. They are not for September only, and they are not indulgences. Socialization into the collaborative culture of mathematics is, in fact, part of learning mathematics. It's what mathematicians do and is as important content as fractions.