

Using Classroom-Based Scenarios to Build Mathematical Knowledge for Middle and Secondary Teaching

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The Prompts

From *Facilitator's Guidebook for Use of Mathematics Situations in Professional Learning*, NCSM & IAP, 2018, pp. 9, 31, 59, 115, 137.

Situation 1. Division Involving Zero

On the first day of class, pre-service middle school teachers were asked to evaluate $\frac{2}{0}$, $\frac{0}{0}$, and $\frac{0}{2}$ and to explain their answers. There was some disagreement among their answers for $\frac{0}{0}$ (potentially 0, 1, undefined, and impossible) and quite a bit of disagreement among their explanations:

- Because any number over 0 is undefined;
- Because you cannot divide by 0;
- Because 0 cannot be in the denominator;
- Because 0 divided by anything is 0; and
- Because a number divided by itself is 1.

Situation 2. The Product of Two Negative Numbers

A question commonly asked by students in middle school and secondary mathematics classes is "Why is it that when you multiply two negative numbers together, you get a positive number?"

Situation 21. Graphing Quadratic Functions

When preparing a lesson on graphing quadratic functions, a student teacher found that the textbook for the class claimed that $x = \frac{-b}{2a}$ was the equation for the line of symmetry of a parabola $y = ax^2 + bx + c$. The student teacher wondered how this equation was derived.

Situation 35. Calculation of Sine of 32 Degrees

After completing a discussion on special right triangles (30°–60°–90° and 45°–45°–90°), the teacher showed students how to calculate the sine of various angles using a calculator.

A student then asked, "How could I calculate the sin(32°) if I do not have a calculator?"

Prompts continue on the next page.

The Prompts, continued

Situation 38. Mean and Median

The following task was given to students at the end of the year in an AP Statistics class.

Consider the box plots and five-number summaries¹ for two distributions, each of which is comprised of a finite number of data values (see Figure 44.1 and Figure 44.2). Which of the distributions (Data Set 1 or Data Set 2) has the greater mean?

One student's approach to this problem was to construct what he thought were probability distributions for each data set and to compare the corresponding expected values to determine which data set had the greatest mean. The student formed four intervals using the five-number summaries and calculated the midpoint of each interval (i.e., he defined the intervals as the four quarters of the distributions, with each quarter containing 25% of the values for the distribution). Using the midpoint of each interval as the X-value of that interval, he then calculated the weighted mean for each probability distribution (see Figure 44.3). After completing his calculations, the student responded that the second data set had the larger mean.

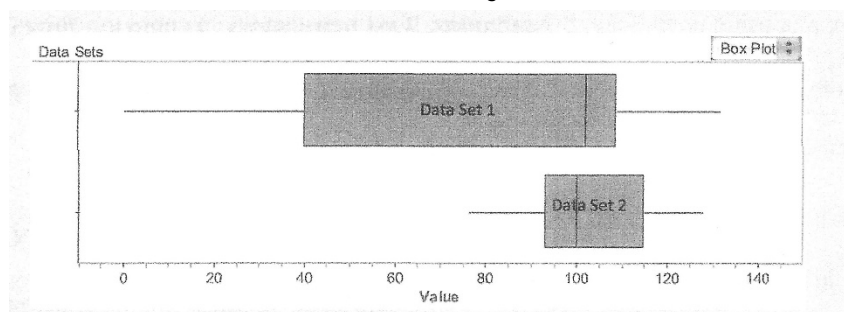


Figure 4.1. Box plots for Data Set 1 and Data Set 2.

Data Sets			Data Set 1: $E(X) = 79.25$				
	Group						
	one	two					
Value	0	76		0 – 40	40 – 102	102 – 109	109 – 132
	40	93	X	20	71	105.5	120.5
	102	100	$P(X)$	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25
	109	115	Data Set 2: $E(X) = 102.75$				
	132	128		76 – 93	93 – 100	100 – 115	115 – 128
$S1 = \min (\quad)$ $S2 = Q1 (\quad)$ $S3 = \text{median} (\quad)$ $S4 = Q3 (\quad)$ $S5 = \max (\quad)$			X	84.5	96.5	107.5	121.5
			$P(X)$	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25

Figure 44.2 Five-number summaries for Data Set 1 and Data Set 2

Figure 44.3. The student's calculations for the two data sets.

¹ Box plots are sometimes referred to as boxplots or box-and-whisker-plots. The box plot is a visual display of the five statistics values that comprise the five-number summary.

Framework for Mathematical Understanding for Secondary Teaching (MUST)

1. Mathematical Proficiency

- Conceptual understanding
- Procedural fluency
- Strategic competence
- Adaptive reasoning
- Productive disposition
- Historical and cultural knowledge

2. Mathematical Activity

- Mathematical noticing
 - Structure of mathematical systems
 - Symbolic form
 - Form of an argument
 - Connect within and outside of mathematics
- Mathematical reasoning
 - Justifying/proving
 - Reasoning when conjecturing and generalizing
 - Constraining and extending
- Mathematical creating
 - Representing
 - Defining
 - Modifying/transforming/manipulating
- Integrating strands of Mathematical Activity

3. Mathematical Context of Teaching

- Probe mathematical ideas
- Access and understand the mathematical thinking of learners
- Know and use the curriculum
- Assess the mathematical knowledge of learners
- Reflect on the mathematics of practice

Framework for Mathematical Understanding for Secondary Teaching, from Heid, M. K., & Wilson, P. S., with Blume, G. W. (Eds.) (2015). *Mathematical understanding for secondary teaching: A framework and classroom-based situations*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, p. 14.

CONTENTS of Situations Book

Preface.....	vii
1. Background for the Mathematical Understanding Framework 1 <i>Jeremy Kilpatrick</i>	
2. Mathematical Understanding for Secondary Teaching: A Framework9 <i>Jeremy Kilpatrick, Glendon Blume, M. Kathleen Heid, James Wilson, Patricia Wilson, and Rose Mary Zbiek</i>	
3. Development of Practice-Based Situations31 <i>Patricia Wilson and Rose Mary Zbiek</i>	
4. From Situations to Framework.41 <i>Patricia Wilson and M. Kathleen Heid</i>	
5. Creating New Situations as Inquiry57 <i>Rose Mary Zbiek and Glendon Blume</i>	
6. Summary of Uses of the Must Framework and Situations65 <i>James W. Wilson</i>	
7. Division Involving Zero: Situation 1 From the MACMTL– CPTM Situations Project95 <i>Bradford Findell, Evan McClintock, Glendon Blume, Ryan Fox, Rose Mary Zbiek, and Brian Gleason</i>	
8. Product of Two Negative Numbers: Situation 2 From the MACMTL– CPTM Situations Project103 <i>Ryan Fox, Sarah Donaldson, M. Kathleen Heid, Glendon Blume, and James Wilson</i>	
9. Cross Multiplication: Situation 3 From the MACMTL–CPTM Situations Project ...117 <i>Rose Mary Zbiek, M. Kathleen Heid, Brian Gleason, and Shawn Broderick</i>	
10. Summing the Natural Numbers: Situation 4 From the MACMTL–CPTM Situations Project121 <i>Shari Reed, AnnaMarie Conner, Ryan Fox, Shiv Karunakaran, M. Kathleen Heid, Evan McClintock, Heather Johnson, Kelly Edenfield, Jeremy Kilpatrick, and Eric Gold</i>	
11. Modular Arithmetic: Situation 5 From the MACMTL–CPTM Situations Project135 <i>Pawel Nazarewicz, Glendon Blume, Heather Johnson, Svetlana Konnova, and Jeanne Shimizu</i>	
12. Absolute Value Equations and Inequalities: Situation 6 From the MACMTL–CPTM Situations Project147 <i>Shari Reed, AnnaMarie Conner, Sarah Donaldson, Kanita DuCloux, Kelly Edenfield, and Erik Jacobson</i>	
13. Absolute Value In Complex Plane: Situation 7 From the MACMTL–CPTM Situations Project155 <i>Heather Johnson, Shiv Karunakaran, Evan McClintock, Pawel Nazarewicz, Erik Jacobson, and Kelly Edenfield</i>	
14. Properties of i and Other Complex Numbers: Situation 8 From the MACMTL–CPTM Situations Project163 <i>Erik Tillema, Evan McClintock, M. Kathleen Heid, and Heather Johnson</i>	
15. Square Root of i: Situation 9 From the MACMTL–CPTM Situations Project171 <i>Heather Johnson, Shiv Karunakaran, Ryan Fox, and Evan McClintock</i>	
16. Exponent Rules: Situation 10 From the MACMTL–CPTM Situations Project179 <i>Erik Tillema, Sarah Donaldson, Kelly Edenfield, James Wilson, Eileen Murray, and Glendon Blume</i>	
17. Powers: Situation 11 From the MACMTL–CPTM Situations Project185 <i>Tracy Boone, Jana Lunt, Christa Fratto, James Banyas, Eileen Murray, Bob Allen, Sarah Donaldson, M. Kathleen Heid, Shiv Karunakaran, and Brian Gleason</i>	

18.	Zero Exponents: Situation 12 From the MACMTL-CPTM Situations Project	191
	<i>Tracy Boone, Christa Fratto, Jana Lunt, Heather Johnson, M. Kathleen Heid, Maureen Grady, and Shiv Karunakaran</i>	
19.	Multiplying Monomials and Binomials: Situation 13 From the MACMTL-CPTM Situations Project.....	199
	<i>Jeanne Shimizu, Tracy Boone, Jana Lunt, Christa Fratto, Erik Tillema, Jeremy Kilpatrick, Sarah Donaldson, Ryan Fox, Heather Johnson, Maureen Grady, Svetlana Konnova, and M. Kathleen Heid</i>	
20.	Adding Square Roots: Situation 14 From the MACMTL-CPTM Situations Project	207
	<i>Amy Hackenberg, Eileen Murray, Heather Johnson, Glendon Blume, and M. Kathleen Heid</i>	
21.	Square Roots: Situation 15 From the MACMTL-CPTM Situations Project	211
	<i>Tracy Boone, Jana Lunt, Christa Fratto, James Banyas, Sarah Donaldson, James Wilson, Patricia S. Wilson, Heather Johnson, and Brian Gleason</i>	
22.	Inverse Trigonometric Functions: Situation 16 From the MACMTL-CPTM Situations Project.....	217
	<i>Rose Mary Zbiek, M. Kathleen Heid, Ryan Fox, Kelly Edenfield, Jeremy Kilpatrick, Evan McClintock, Heather Johnson, and Brian Gleason</i>	
23.	Zero-Product Property: Situation 17 From the MACMTL-CPTM Situations Project	223
	<i>Jeanne Shimizu, Heather Johnson, Ryan Fox, Laura Singletary, and Sarah Donaldson</i>	
24.	Simultaneous Equations: Situation 18 From the MACMTL-CPTM Situations Project	229
	<i>Dennis Hembree, Erik Tillema, Evan McClintock, Rose Mary Zbiek, Heather Johnson, Patricia S. Wilson, James Wilson, and Ryan Fox</i>	
25.	Graphing Inequalities Containing Absolute Values: Situation 19 From the MACMTL-CPTM Situations Project	239
	<i>Shari Reed, AnnaMarie Conner, M. Kathleen Heid, Heather Johnson, Maureen Grady, and Svetlana Konnova</i>	
26.	Solving Quadratic Equations: Situation 20 From the MACMTL-CPTM Situations Project	249
	<i>Jeanne Shimizu, Sarah Donaldson, Kelly Edenfield, and Erik Jacobson</i>	
27.	Graphing Quadratic Functions: Situation 21 From the MACMTL-CPTM Situations Project	257
	<i>Ginger Rhodes, Ryan Fox, Shiv Karunakaran, Rose Mary Zbiek, Brian Gleason, and Shawn Broderick</i>	
28.	Connecting Factoring With the Quadratic Formula: Situation 22 From the MACMTL-CPTM Situations Project	263
	<i>Erik Tillema, Heather Johnson, Sharon K. O'Kelley, Erik Jacobson, Glendon Blume, and M. Kathleen Heid</i>	
29.	Perfect-Square Trinomials: Situation 23 From the MACMTL-CPTM Situations Project	277
	<i>Bob Allen, Dennis Hembree, Sarah Donaldson, Brian Gleason, Shawn Broderick, M. Kathleen Heid, and Glendon Blume</i>	
30.	Temperature Conversion: Situation 24 From the MACMTL-CPTM Situations Project	283
	<i>Glendon Blume, Heather Johnson, Maureen Grady, Svetlana Konnova, and M. Kathleen Heid</i>	
31.	Translation of Functions: Situation 25 From the MACMTL-CPTM Situations Project	293
	<i>Bob Allen, Brian Gleason, and Shawn Broderick</i>	
32.	Parametric Drawings: Situation 26 From the MACMTL-CPTM Situations Project	299
	<i>Rose Mary Zbiek, Eileen Murray, Heather Johnson, Maureen Grady, Svetlana Konnova, and M. Kathleen Heid</i>	
33.	Locus of a Point on a Moving Segment: Situation 27 From the MACMTL-CPTM Situations Project.....	307
	<i>Rose Mary Zbiek, James Wilson, Heather Johnson, M. Kathleen Heid, Maureen Grady, and Svetlana Konnova</i>	

34.	Constructing a Tangent Line: Situation 28 From the MACMTL–CPTM Situations Project	317
	<i>Pawel Nazarewicz, Sharon K. O'Kelley, Erik Jacobson, Glendon Blume, and M. Kathleen Heid</i>	
35.	Faces of a Polyhedral Solid: Situation 29 From the MACMTL– CPTM Situations Project	323
	<i>Stephen Bismarck, Glendon Blume, Heather Johnson, Svetlana Konnova, and Jeanne Shimizu</i>	
36.	Area of Plane Figures: Situation 30 From the MACMTL–CPTM Situations Project	329
	<i>Erik Tillema, Tenille Cannon, Kim Johnson, and Rose Mary Zbiek</i>	
37.	Area of Sectors of a Circle: Situation 31 From the MACMTL– CPTM Situations Project	337
	<i>Dennis Hembree, Sharon K. O'Kelley, Shawn Broderick, and James Wilson</i>	
38.	Similarity: Situation 32 From the MACMTL–CPTM Situations Project.....	343
	<i>Evan McClintock, Susan Peters, Donna Kinol, Shari Reed, Heather Johnson, Erik Tillema, Rose Mary Zbiek, M. Kathleen Heid, Sarah Donaldson, Eileen Murray, and Glendon Blume</i>	
39.	Pythagorean Theorem: Situation 33 From the MACMTL– CPTM Situations Project	351
	<i>Patrick Sullivan, M. Kathleen Heid, Maureen Grady, and Shiv Karunakaran</i>	
40.	Circumscribing Polygons: Situation 34 From the MACMTL–CPTM Situations Project	365
	<i>Shari Reed, AnnaMarie Conner, Heather Johnson, M. Kathleen Heid, Bob Allen, Shiv Karunakaran, Sarah Donaldson, and Brian Gleason</i>	
41.	Calculation of Sine: Situation 35 From the MACMTL–CPTM Situations Project ...	377
	<i>Patricia S. Wilson, Heather Johnson, Jeanne Shimizu, Evan McClintock, Rose Mary Zbiek, M. Kathleen Heid, Maureen Grady, and Svetlana Konnova</i>	
42.	Graphing Sin(2x): Situation 36 From the MACMTL–CPTM Situations Project.....	385
	<i>Heather Johnson, Evan McClintock, Rose Mary Zbiek, Brian Gleason, Shawn Broderick, and James Wilson</i>	
43.	Trigonometric Identities: Situation 37 From the MACMTL–CPTM Situations Project	391
	<i>Bob Allen, Sharon K. O'Kelley, and Erik Jacobson</i>	
44.	Mean and Median: Situation 38 From the MACMTL–CPTM Situations Project.....	397
	<i>Susan Peters, Evan McClintock, Donna Kinol, Shiv Karunakaran, Rose Mary Zbiek, M. Kathleen Heid, Laura Singletary, and Sarah Donaldson</i>	
45.	Representing Standard Deviation: Situation 39 From the MACMTL–CPTM Situations Project.....	405
	<i>Rose Mary Zbiek, M. Kathleen Heid, Shiv Karunakaran, Ryan Fox, Eric Gold, Sarah Donaldson, and Laura Singletary</i>	
46.	Sample Variance and Population Variance: Situation 40 From the MACMTL–CPTM Situations Project.....	415
	<i>Ken Montgomery and Sarah Donaldson</i>	
47.	Least Squares Regression: Situation 41 From the MACMTL–CPTM Situations Project	421
	<i>Susan Peters, Evan McClintock, Donna Kinol, Maureen Grady, Heather Johnson, Svetlana Konnova, and M. Kathleen Heid</i>	
48.	The Product Rule for Differentiation: Situation 42 From the MACMTL–CPTM Situations Project.....	425
	<i>Heather Johnson, Shari Reed, Evan McClintock, Erik Jacobson, and Kelly Edenfield</i>	
49.	Proof by Mathematical Induction: Situation 43 From the MACMTL–CPTM Situations Project	433
	<i>Erik Tillema, Jeremy Kilpatrick, Heather Johnson, Maureen Grady, Svetlana Konnova, and M. Kathleen Heid</i>	
50.	Situating and Reflecting on Our Situations Work	443
	<i>M. Kathleen Heid</i>	
	Appendix: Conference Participants	453