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Ethnomathematics: Fusion or Fear.. Preliminary report.

Ever since the infamous speech in 1984 by Dr. D'Ambrosio that began the cohesive movement toward the teaching of non-Western uses of mathematics, critics have feared that the movement was equivalent to the "dumbing down" of mathematics. As recent as June 2005, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institute accused math educators of "no long believ(ing) in the beauty and power of the principles of mathematics" because they are "continually in search of a fix that will make it easy, relevant, fun and even politically relevant." We reveal some facts behind the fallacies of these opinions and explore ways of changing the perception of mathematicians and non-mathematicians alike. (Received September 28, 2005)