

Provider Motivation for Working with Novice College Mathematics Instructors

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A *Provider* is a person who offers opportunities for professional learning to novice college instructors (e.g., new faculty, graduate student teaching assistants and associates [GTAs]). Motivation theory has been studied in a variety of work contexts, including higher education (Daumiller et al., 2020). However, there is no existing research specific to the motivation of Providers of professional development much less about those who work in college mathematics contexts. Knowledge of Provider motivation would be valuable for at least two reasons: (1) knowing the motivations of people who become providers has implications for employers to attract and retain Providers and (2) understanding Provider motivation can inform the identification and development of new Providers (i.e., moving the field to purposeful development and away from the accidental Provider, who “fell into” it).

The research question is the following: What do Providers report as motivating them to choose to be a Provider of professional learning for novice college mathematics instructors? The framework for answering this question relies on motivation theories, change theory about people, power, structures, symbols in departments (Reinholz & Apkarian, 2018), and research on Provider professional orientations (Martinez et al., 2021). These interact to shape Provider work. In particular, structures include the interrelationships of people and roles like Course Coordinator, instructor, GTA, seminar leader.

Data were from surveys and interviews among people who had participated in a Provider workshop. Of the ten people who did the survey five agreed to interviews. For data analysis, I transcribed the interviews and did open coding for each interview, then cross-interview thematic coding, then case story development that used existing frameworks for motivation, professional orientation, and change theory to structure each story. I wrote case stories for each interviewee and contacted them for feedback. The poster will present a cross-case analysis of similarities and differences among interviewees, including charts documenting sources and enactments of motivations.

Implications for research include the need for investigation of the relationship between Provider motivation and Provider effectiveness in supporting professional learning by novice instructors. Participants’ reflections and stories also connect to the emerging need for research on what motivates Providers to do scholarly work related to being a Provider.

My goals in sharing the poster and having conversations with RUME attendees are for both feedback and thinking about future reporting. In particular, I wonder how attendees at the conference would talk about their own motivations for doing academic research, including RUME. Conversations about this would be useful for me to refine how I report on the motivation of Providers who do academic research about professional development of novice college instructors.

References

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