From the classroom to assessment and back again

Ryota Matsuura
Sarah Sword
Miriam Gates
Al Cuoco
Glenn Stevens

NCSM Annual Conference
April 13, 2016

Today's agenda

1. Background on our work
2. Paper and pencil assessment
   - Review the items in small groups
   - Whole group discussion
3. Validity and reliability of the assessment
4. Further discussion and questions

What is ASTAHM?

Assessing Secondary Teachers' Algebraic Habits of Mind

ASTAHM is an NSF DRK-12 collaborative project funded in 2012 aimed at developing instruments to assess secondary teachers' mathematical habits of mind (MHoM).

What do we mean by MHoM?

We define mathematical habits of mind (MHoM) to be:

> *the specialized ways of approaching mathematical problems and thinking about mathematical concepts that resemble the ways employed by mathematicians.*

Knowing mathematics as a mathematician

From our experience, we believe that knowing mathematics as a mathematician...

- enriches and enhances the other ways of knowing mathematics,
- can bring efficiency and coherence to teachers' mathematical thinking and to their work with students,
- and thus is an important aspect of mathematical knowledge for teaching at the secondary level.

Focus on Mathematics—brief history

Focus on Mathematics (FoM) is a partnership originally funded by the NSF (2003–2013). The goals of FoM are to:

- Provide teachers with coherent, content-focused PD, and sustained immersion in mathematics,
- Develop mathematically expert teachers who share their knowledge with teachers and students,
- Build a mathematical learning community in which teachers and mathematicians work together, and
- Improve student achievement.

The FoM Partnership has created

- School based study groups
- Seminars, colloquia, and summer institutes
- New graduate degrees
- Online problem solving courses for teachers
- Avenues for teacher leadership
- Student mathematics fairs (10,000+ students)
- Case studies of participating teachers
- **Research study to measure MHoM**

Impact on teachers

FoM teachers have reported[1]:

- Deeper knowledge of mathematics
- Changes in beliefs about the nature of mathematics and how students learn mathematics
- Renewed passion for mathematics
- Changes in instructional practice, for example
  - use of precise language
  - connecting mathematical ideas
  - mining student ideas and approaches

[1] Baldassari, C., Lee, S., & Torres, R. T. (2009). *The case of a high school mathematics teacher.* (http://focusonmath.org/FOM/PERG)

Initial motivation for research

- Through our FoM work, we've seen that MHoM is indeed a collection of habits teachers can acquire, rather than some static you-have-it-or-you-don't way of thinking.
- Teachers report that developing these mathematical habits has a tremendous effect on their teaching.
- We recognize the need for scientific-based evidence to establish that teachers' MHoM are not static and that these habits have a positive impact on their teaching practice.
- Instruments to measure these habits have not existed.

Research question

What are the mathematical habits of mind that secondary teachers use, how do they use them, and how can we measure them?

Instruments for conducting research

To investigate our research question, we've been developing:

- Detailed definition of MHoM, based on literature, our experiences as mathematicians, and classroom observations.
- A paper and pencil (P&P) assessment that measures how teachers use MHoM when doing math for themselves.
- An observation protocol measuring the nature and degree of teachers' use of MHoM in their classroom work.

Important: We've seen the need for both instruments, and also the value of developing all three components together.

What we aren't creating

- Our instruments are being designed for research and development purposes, *not* for teacher evaluation.
- They are meant to help researchers, school leaders, professional developers, and others in better understanding and meeting the mathematical needs of secondary teachers.

Focus on MHoM

Our current focus is on three categories of MHoM:

- Seeking mathematical structure
  - Experimenting
  - Using language, notation, and pictures to acquire clarity and understanding
- Using mathematical structure
- Using mathematical language clearly (i.e., "Describing")

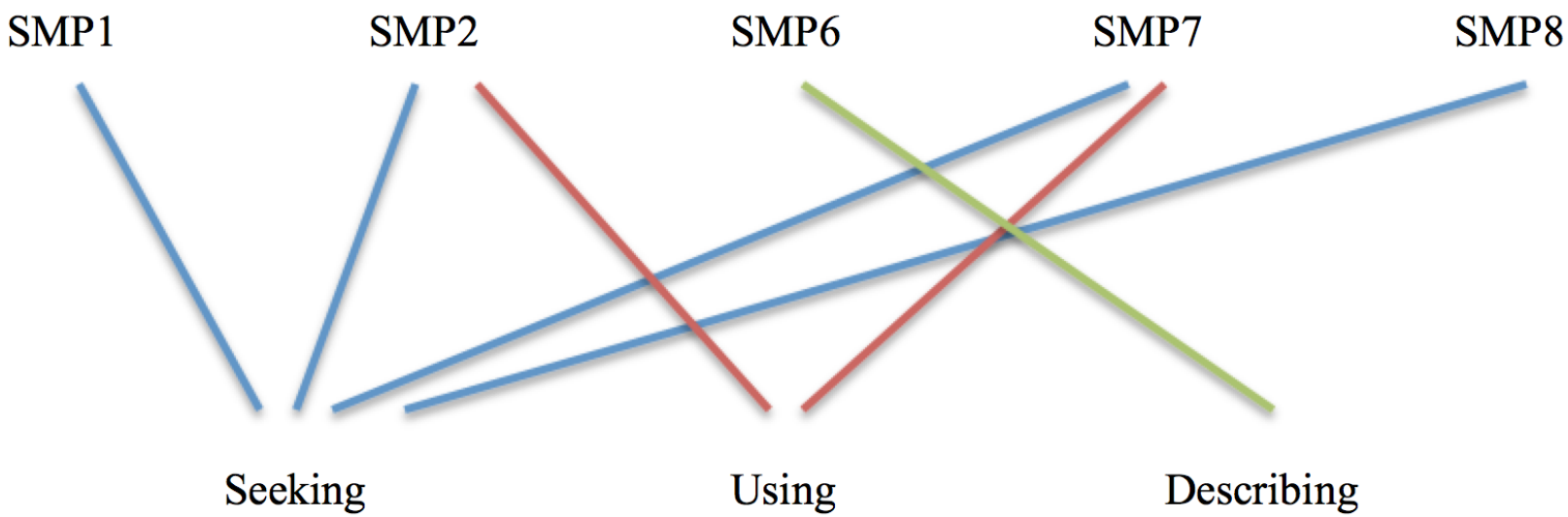
Remark: Focusing on three habits has allowed us to create instruments that are not too burdensome to use.

Connection to CCSSM

Our three mathematical habits are closely related to the following Common Core Standards for Mathematical Practice:

- **MP1.** Make sense of problems & persevere in solving them
- **MP2.** Reason abstractly & quantitatively
- **MP6.** Attend to precision
- **MP7.** Look for & make use of structure
- **MP8.** Look for & express regularity in repeated reasoning

Connection to CCSSM



We've parsed the SMPs for measurement purposes. E.g., the two processes of *seeking* and *using* structure in SMP7 look different when people do them, so we study them separately.

P&P assessment: Overview

- We are developing a P&P assessment that measures how teachers use MHoM when doing math for themselves.
- The assessment has been field-tested with over 500 teachers. Field-tests are ongoing.
- Initial validity and reliability testing yielded promising results. More testing is being planned.
- Again, this is a tool for research, *not* for teacher evaluation.

P&P assessment: Key features

- Assessment measures how secondary teachers use mathematical habits of mind when doing mathematics.
- Items are accessible: most secondary teachers can solve them, or at least begin to solve them.
- Coding focuses on the *approach* to each item, not on obtaining "the correct solution."
- Assessment items are drawn from multiple sources, including our classroom observation work.

Maximum Value

Find the maximum value of the function $f(x) = 11 - (3x - 4)^2$.

Habit measured: Using mathematical structure

- Though most teachers obtained the same (correct) answer, there were vast variations in their approaches.
- These various approaches came in "clumps," as assessment experts and research literature had told us to expect.
- Using these responses, we developed a rubric that allows us to code how each teacher solved the problem.

Sample code: SQUR

$f(x) = 11 - (3x-4)^2$. Anything squared is ≥ 0.

Therefore, 11 − (stuff squared) must be ≤ 11. So 11 is the max.

Sample code: SYMM

$f(x) = 11 - (3x-4)^2$

$= -9x^2 + 24x - 5$

x-coord. of vertex:

$\frac{-b}{2a} = \frac{-24}{2(-9)} = \frac{-24}{-18} = \frac{4}{3}$

$f(\frac{4}{3}) = 11 - (3(\frac{4}{3}) - 4)^2$

$= 11 - (4-4)^2$

$= \boxed{11}$

max value is 11.

Dig into the items/rubrics

Consider these questions as you review the items/rubrics:

- Where do you see MHoM being used in these approaches?
- Do the ways in which you think about this item match the habit that we claim it measures?
- How would you want students to approach this problem?
- What connections do you see to the SMPs?

Validity and reliability results

The current version of the assessment was administered to 274 secondary teachers. Validity and reliability tests have yielded excellent results, as summarized in the table shown.

Statistic	**Value**	**Interpretation**
Cronbach's Alpha	0.87	Excellent
Chi-square	29.475 ($p = 0.595$)	Good. Indicates that the model fits the data well.
Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)	0.01	Excellent
Confirmatory fit index (CFI)	1.00	Excellent
GFI (Goodness of fit index)	0.98	Excellent
Tucker-Lewis index	1.01	Excellent

Measuring teacher change[2]

Paired Samples Statistics for Teacher MHoM subscales, Time 1 and Time2 (N = 20)

		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1*	Full Assessment, Time 1	4.9	2.4	0.6
	Full Assessment, Time 2	5.4	2.6	0.7
Pair 2	Using Structure, Time 1	4.7	2.8	0.7
	Using Structure, Time 2	5.4	2.9	0.8
Pair 3	Language, Time 1	5.9	2.5	0.6
	Language, Time 2	5.8	2.5	0.6
Pair 4*	Seeking Structure, Time 1	4.3	2.6	0.7
	Seeking Structure, Time 2	5.3	3.3	0.9

[2] Gates, M., Cordner, T., Kerins, B., Cuoco, A., Badertscher, E., & Burrill, G. (in press). Creating a hybrid immersive mathematics experience. *Mathematics Teacher*.

Further discussion questions

- How can we ensure that we are indeed measuring MHoM and not simply capturing teachers' prior knowledge?
- What constitutes evidence of a "way of thinking" or "intent of an approach"?
- What aspects of MKT are we capturing with the P&P assessment? What aspects are we missing?
- How can data from the P&P assessment inform professional development for teachers?

Learn more or participate

Want to use the assessment, or participate in the research? Learn more about our project at:

mhomresearch.edc.org

If you have further feedback and/or questions, email us at:

matsuura@stolaf.edu (Ryota Matsuura)