Mathematics teachers’ re-sourcing and use of social media: can the ‘prosumer’ concept convey what’s going on?

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Abstract: Mathematics teachers use social media to re-source and collaborate. This is an arena where the every-day practice of subject didactics is made. Analysing this activity is to understand teachers as both producers and consumers of subject didactical contributions and of peer-learning. In this poster the potential in using the concept ‘prosumer’ as a theoretical construct for studying mathematics teachers’ activities in social media is outlined.

Keywords: Mathematics teachers, prosumer, social media, theoretical discussion.

Poster summary

The interrelated roles of social media as both a platform and a phenomenon of interactivity, invite teachers to produce and consume knowledge of teaching and learning mathematics (e.g., Liljekvist, 2016; van Bommel & Liljekvist, 2015, 2016). The availability and user-friendliness of the social media platform alter the behaviour of the mathematics teacher, and ‘stories’ of the good mathematics teaching are made (e.g. kinds of curricular material, or kinds of questions raised, see e.g., Liljekvist (2016)). Analysing the affordances of this new environment is necessary to understand how the subject didactical discourse on learning and teaching is simultaneously constructed and consumed in mathematics teachers’ digitalized every-day practice. It is a matter of probing the characteristics of the interaction, that is, the ways in which the activity on the Internet supports knowledge development and re-sourcing in mathematics teaching (cf. Liljekvist, 2016; Ruthven, 2016).

The primary aim of this poster is to initiate a discussion in the TWG17 that elaborates on theoretical constructs that may be fruitful in the research of mathematics teachers’ digitally extended every-day practice and collaboration. This arena for teacher learning and collaboration is under-researched (see, e.g., Robutti, Cusi, Clark-Wilson, Jaworski, Chapman, Esteley, Gnoos, Isoda, and Joubert (2016)).

The prosumer concept, that is, people as producers and consumers of products and services (cf. Beighton, 2016; Ritzer, Dean, & Jurgenson, 2012; Zajc, 2015) shows some possibilities to theoretically model mathematics teachers’ re-sourcing on social media as it centres on the phenomenon per se (i.e., producing and consuming knowledge). Thus it is closely tied to the raison d’être of social media (Zajc, 2015) and mathematics teachers’ activities there (van Bommel & Liljekvist, 2015, 2016). However, the concept needs to be operationalized in an educational setting and in a mathematical discourse in order to have sufficient explanatory power for our purposes. Here are some examples; In business and sociology, the driving forces for investigating ‘prosuming’ is to understand consumers’ behaviour (e.g., Ritzer et al. 2012; Zajc, 2015), but in educational research mathematics teachers’ performance, for instance, as a learner and as a colleague is of interest (e.g., Liljekvist, 2016; Ruthven, 2016; van Bommel & Liljekvist, 2015, 2016). Further, Beighton (2016) discusses in his article how the prosumeristical behaviour can also work as a tool for control, where
creativity and knowledge development, and professional learning may not be supported. This aspect of mathematics teachers’ online activities is relevant, as it, for instance, may explain some of the quality problems in the curricular material shared (e.g., Liljekvist, 2016).

The poster offers a brief overview of the present situation described above, and clarifies how the prosumer concept may be operationalised in the analysis of data from social media. The core research question centres on how we can theoretically describe mathematics teachers’ simultaneous processes of producing and consuming subject didactical knowledge on social media.

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References


