

Reflections on Teaching Developmental Mathematics: Motivation Through Enlightenment

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Abstract

The Motivating Beauty of Mathematics. Most college instructors agree that there is a need to motivate students to learn mathematics. But there is a profound disagreement on how exactly to do this. Can we actually motivate our students to learn basic algebra? Is the instructor to emphasize the usefulness of mathematics in the "real world"? Are we to motivate students by

exhibiting our own motivation and passion for the subject? Are we to convey the beauty of mathematics at such an early stage? Needless to say, these questions pose considerable complexity, and to some extent, the answers are yes, yes, yes, and yes. However, as faculty, we need to find a theme, indeed a style in our teaching of developmental mathematics. Although engaging students in the developmental classroom requires all of these considerations, we contend that the coherence, logical structure, beauty, and breadth of mathematics should be kept at the center of our motivational efforts.