

DEPARTMENT OF MATHEMATICS AND STATISTICS
MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLOQUIUM

First Year Calculus Students' Understanding of Function Composition

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Thursday, April 14 at 3:30 pm

Allen 14

Abstract. Over the past 20 years there have been many studies in mathematics education that have focused on students' knowledge of functions. The concept of composition, however, has not been incorporated in these studies despite it being an essential operation of functions. Previous educational research on the chain rule has indicated that function composition is an important concept for understanding the chain rule. Because of this, the chain rule provides a useful context for studying function composition. In this talk, I will discuss first year calculus students' routines of composition while working on chain rule tasks. The results identify several different ways that students treat composition across different types of functions. This provides valuable information to aid calculus instructors in supporting student understanding.

Mr. Horvath is a candidate for a position in our department. There will be a reception for him in Allen 467 at 3:00 pm.