
To Be or Not To Be: A Study of Prospective Teachers' Underlying Reasons to Pursue the Teaching Profession Across Two Geographic Areas

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Abstract

This presentation shares findings from diverse student populations at two large universities with secondary mathematics teacher preparation programs. Analysis of data from undergraduate students on the underlying reasons that influence their decisions to pursue completion of their programs and enter the teaching profession or leave the program before completion will be discussed. Findings from surveys and narratives completed by undergraduate students from diverse backgrounds at the two universities at opposing geographic sides of the U.S. will be shared to provide insights from current students and past students in the secondary mathematics teacher preparation programs from both universities. Common themes across the data will be discussed in relation to available literature. Themes can help inform and transform recruitment and advising efforts that are currently happening in programs across our universities and those of other MTE-Partnership institutions. Some themes are closely related to family and peer influences, commitment to education, seeing themselves as mathematics teachers, past mathematics education experiences that become well-remembered events for varying reasons, and altruistic or intrinsic motivations to make positive changes in the teaching profession.