

An Exploration of the Transition to Graduate School in Mathematics

Preliminary Research Report

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In recent years, researchers have given much attention to the new mathematics graduate student as a mathematics instructor. In contrast, this study explores the academic side of the transition to graduate school in mathematics—the struggles students face, the expectations they must meet, and the strategies they use to deal with this new chapter in their academic experience. This talk will look at preliminary results and analysis from a qualitative study designed to explore these aspects of the transition to graduate school in mathematics from a post-positivist perspective. In order to explore the transition as fully as possible, interview data from a varied sample of graduate students and faculty members at one university are being incorporated to gain multiple perspectives on the transition experience. Potential implications for graduate recruitment, retention, and program protocols in mathematics will be discussed.

Keywords: graduate students, academic transition, semi-structured interview, case study