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From failure to functionality: a study of the experience of vocational students with functional mathematics in further education.

Smith, C. (ed.), Proceedings of the British Society for Research into Learning Mathematics (BSRLM). Vol. 32, No. 3. Proceedings of the day conference, University of Cambridge, UK, June 17, 2012. London: British Society for Research into Learning Mathematics (BSRLM). 55-60 (2012).

Summary: Many students who undertake vocational courses in Further Education colleges in England enter post-compulsory education as mathematical ‘failures’ at GCSE level but their experience in college has the potential to change not just their attainment, but also their future attitude and ‘functionality’ with mathematics in employment and society. This paper outlines the early stages of a mixed methods study to identify the main influences on the student experience and their effects on the aspirational trajectory from ‘failure’ to ‘functionality’.

Classification: C70 C20

Keywords: transition from school to further education; vocational education; low attainment; student attitudes; self-concept; confidence; educational research; comparative studies; interviews; functional mathematics; organisational structures; curriculum; prior experience; vocational staff; teacher beliefs

<http://www.bsrlm.org.uk/IPs/ip32-3/BSRLM-IP-32-3-10.pdf>