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I would rather die: attitudes of 16-year-olds towards their future participation in mathematics.

Küchemann, D. (ed.), Proceedings of the British Society for Research into Learning Mathematics. Vol. 27 (1). Proceedings of the day conference, London, UK, March 3, 2007. London: British Society for Research into Learning Mathematics (BSRLM). 18-23 (2007).

Summary: Questionnaire responses were analysed from 1997 GCSE mathematics candidates in 17 schools about their expected future participation in AS/A level mathematics, their reasons for this and their attitude to mathematics. The data was gathered as part of a larger study but was analysed separately. The analysis supports findings from previous studies in demonstrating that lack of confidence and perceived difficulty are the major reasons for students not continuing with mathematics, and that dislike and perceived lack of relevance are also factors. The study shows a clear relation between these factors and predicted GCSE grade, and a lesser relationship with gender. When these were corrected for, school participation rates still varied, with enjoyment differentiating in schools with high and low participation rates.

Classification: C23 C24

Keywords: student attitudes; choices; gender differences; educational research