Profiles of beginning teachers’ professional engagement and career development aspirations: A person-centred and mixed-methods study

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Teacher educators, policy makers, and employing authorities have for too long overlooked the values, beliefs and motivations of those entering teacher education programs and insufficiently explored how these shape beginning teachers’ aspirations for professional engagement and career development. We explore “types” of beginning teachers having shared profiles of aspirations for professional engagement and career development based on longitudinal data on 510 teachers who completed graduate-entry primary and secondary teacher education courses in three Australian universities. Questions on satisfaction with the choice of teaching as a career were included at entry and exit from the course, permitting exploration of how changes in satisfaction may relate to beginning teacher profiles. The analyses show distinct “types” of beginning teachers with different planned career trajectories. Qualitative analyses were then framed within clusters. For many, teaching as a career has been influenced by the changing nature of work and shifts in assumptions about the nature of career structures, employee loyalty, and the psycho-social meaning of work. Our findings invite re-examination of recruitment efforts, aspects of teacher education programs, and current models of career induction and mentoring.

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