From Disserting to Professing: “Does a research agenda come with this PhD?”

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Abstract: The purpose of this dialogue is to illuminate the crossroads that exist upon finishing doctoral studies in mathematics education and to offer an example of scholarship paths that may open (or close) in this phase of one’s academic career. Beginning with a brief review of my own research concerning domains of mathematics teachers’ knowledge for teaching special populations of students, I consider decisions that may, or may not, lead to fruitful extensions of this work. (A precise definition for “fruitful”, in this context, will be addressed.) At the heart of these considerations is the question of one’s relationship with one’s mathematics education dissertation post graduate school. (Does “till death do us part” hold in this marriage and, if not, then why, when, and how should one “re-marry”?) It is hoped that issues discussed will be of as much interest to mathematics education graduate students in attendance as to reflective scholars in every stage of the academic pipeline.

Dr. Aaron T. Wilson is an Assistant Professor in the department of mathematics at the University of Texas–Pan American in Edinburg, Texas. He is also Director of Outreach for the Experimental Algebra and Geometry Laboratory (EAGL) at this institution. Dr. Wilson currently enjoys teaching and doing mathematics with pre- and in-service teachers in the Rio Grande Valley. He also studies the equitable teaching of mathematics among linguistically diverse student populations as well as the impacts of mathematics outreach programs. Dr. Wilson is a 2013 graduate of the Mathematics Education Doctoral Program in the Department of Mathematics at Texas State University-San Marcos.