

Abstract Submitted
for the 4CF09 Meeting of
The American Physical Society

Using a Non-Equivalent Groups Quasi Experimental Design to Reduce Internal Validity Threats to Claims Made by Math and Science K-12 Teacher Recruitment Programs LAURA MOIN, University of Colorado at Boulder — The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act national policy established in 2009 calls for “meaningful data” that demonstrate educational improvements, including the recruitment of high-quality teachers. The scant data available and the low credibility of many K-12 math/science teacher recruitment program evaluations remain the major barriers for the identification of effective recruitment strategies. Our study presents a methodology to better evaluate the impact of recruitment programs on increasing participants’ interest in teaching careers. The research capitalizes on the use of several control groups and presents a non-equivalent groups quasi-experimental evaluation design that produces program effect claims with higher internal validity than claims generated by current program evaluations. With this method that compares responses to a teaching career interest question from undergraduates all along a continuum from just attending an information session to participating (or not) in the recruitment program, we were able to compare the effect of the program in increasing participants’ interest in teaching careers versus the evolution of the same interest but in the absence of the program. We were also able to make suggestions for program improvement and further research. While our findings may not apply to other K-12 math/science teacher recruitment programs, we believe that our evaluation methodology does and will contribute to conduct stronger program evaluations. In so doing, our evaluation procedure may inform recruitment program designers and policy makers.

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Date submitted: 29 Sep 2009

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