

Contents

LIST OF FIGURES	ix
LIST OF TABLES	xi
PREFACE	xiii
1 THE PROBLEM	1
PROLOGUE	1
DESCRIPTION OF THE PROBLEM	2
EXPLANATIONS OF AVOIDANCE	9
Lack of Ability	9
Negative Attitudes Toward Mathematics	12
Lack of Usefulness of Mathematics for Future Life	15
A Discouraging Social Milieu	17
SUMMARY	19
2 THE RESEARCH PROJECT	21
THE STUDENTS	24
THE INSTRUMENTS	28
The Questionnaire	29
Essays	35
Interviews	35
Standardized Ability Tests	36
SUMMARY	37
3 STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD MATHEMATICS	38
THE CLUSTER OF PLEASURE/DISPLEASURE WITH MATHEMATICS	42
THE PERCEIVED USEFULNESS OF MATHEMATICS	54
INFLUENCES FROM THE SOCIAL MILIEU	62
SUMMARY	68

4 PREDICTING PARTICIPATION	71
COURSE PLANS	72
THE PREDICTORS	75
Background Variables	75
Ability	76
Attitudes	78
DEALING WITH LONGITUDINAL DATA	81
RESULTS FROM PREDICTING COURSE PLANS	83
Middle School Students	85
High School Students	92
SUMMARY	95
5 SUGGESTIONS FOR CHANGES	97
CHANGING THE MATHEMATICS CLASSROOM	101
DESIGNING SPECIAL PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS ON CAREERS IN MATHEMATICS	107
DESIGNING PROGRAMS FOR PARENTS, TEACHERS, AND GUIDANCE COUNSELORS	108
INTRODUCING NEW MATHEMATICS COURSES	108
REQUIRING FOUR YEARS OF HIGH SCHOOL MATHEMATICS	111
CONCLUSION	112
BIBLIOGRAPHY	115
APPENDIX A TENTH-GRADE QUESTIONNAIRE	131
APPENDIX B ADDITIONAL TABLES	147
INDEX	159