

Dear Dr. EA,

I need your help! I am having trouble determining the best major and career path for me. I am currently an elementary education and math/computer science double major. But I am constantly wondering if that is the best option for me. My college offers a wide variety of majors and programs, yet I have committed myself to being an education major, and therefore a future teacher. While I find that I enjoy the field of teaching, I am concerned about a few things. I am wondering whether I will get sick of teaching the same thing year after year and if I will be a successful teacher at all. I also sometimes have thoughts about my financial future also. Will teaching provide me with enough income to support a family someday? I have often considered switching to the pre-law program or simply changing the math major. How do I know what's right for me? Help!

Respectfully yours,  
"Indecisive"

Dear Indecisive,

Don't worry! You are not alone. Many emerging adults have lingering questions as they grow into adult roles. With so many uncertainties, you are bound to have some concerns about your future. However, only you can determine the right path. I can try to help you find out what this is.

First, it is important for you to note that emerging adulthood is a period of exploration. You have probably taken a variety of classes and have obviously considered switching your major. This is common. Many college students come into school without a major and even change it once or twice. So there is no problem with having to switch your major. Moreover, a person's major is not necessarily indicative of the profession that they will pursue after college. You may decide to attend graduate school for a different area of studies such as law, as you mentioned above. So you have not completely closed yourself off to other professions. You can even try teaching for a few years and then pursue a different career if you decide that it's not for you.

In terms of your specific concerns, you stated that you might get sick of teaching. Remember that although you will be teaching similar material, the classroom dynamics from year to year can differ greatly depending on the students in your classroom. Furthermore, the methods with which you teach these children will surely change as you develop as a teacher. But, you raise an important point—are you the type of person that likes a lot of change? Are you the type of person who will want to invest in one career, or take different paths? Which sounds more appealing to you?

Financial issues are a part of everyday life. Although teaching may not be the highest paying job, providing for yourself and your family, for a stable future, are important concerns. To what extent do you feel that your choice of major and career plans now will impact your long-term career plans and ability to make money? If and when you decide to get married, do you anticipate that the financial responsibilities will be shared equally between you and your spouse? Do you believe that money should be a determining factor in choosing a career path? These are important questions to ask yourself to determine if you are headed in the right direction for yourself.

It is important for you to know that you are not alone in your concerns. Take into consideration the fact that majors are not binding in terms of your profession. Yet also know that teaching can be a very rewarding and exciting career path to choose and your college experiences will help prepare you for this role.

Good luck!  
Dr. EA

Work submitted by Boston College student, A. Wattine; edited by Professor Tanner for web site