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Abstract

Linear equations, connecting arithmetic to the symbolism of formal mathematics, represent a key topic of mathematics. However, the understanding primary teacher education students bring to their studies has been rarely examined. In this study, students were invited to explain in writing how an unannotated solution to $x + 5 = 4x - 1$ had been conceptualised by the hidden solver. Data, coded against an iteratively derived framework, showed that most students were familiar with linear equations, able to articulate an objective for equation solving and offer solution strategies, typically based on either doing the same to both sides, swapping the side swapping the sign or both.

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Paul Andrews is a Professor of Mathematics Education at Stockholm University. His research interests are typically focused on comparative analyses of mathematics didactics and participant, both teacher and student, beliefs. Currently he is the director of a Swedish Research Council-funded project on the development of foundational number sense in year one children in England and Sweden. His methodological and theoretical standpoints are varied and determined by the research questions he is pursuing at the time.