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Exploring grade 2 mathematics classrooms as sites of inclusive practice

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2019

https://hdl.handle.net/10539/29337

Mubviri, Pamela Lilian, (2019). Exploring grade 2 mathematics classrooms as sites of inclusive practice, University of the Witwatersrand, https://hdl.handle.net/10539/29337

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Abstract

Literature shows that South African mathematics education is in crisis. This study sought to look at inclusion practices during the teaching of mathematics. The main objective of this study therefore was to investigate the role of inclusion in a grade 2 mathematics classroom in a former Model C school located in the North of Johannesburg while teaching a mathematical concept known as 'bridging through ten'. Inclusion was introduced into the classroom by conducting an eight-day bridging through ten intervention program which made use of the five tools of mathematical resilience. The tools of mathematical resilience used include; 'the growth zone model', 'the ladder of accessibility', 'the explore-options-actions framework', 'the grid of communications' and 'the relaxation response'. To execute this investigation, this study utilized a mixed methods approach and made use of case studies of three learners that represented three different clusters of the research results. The two instruments of data collection used were a mathematical resilience questionnaire and a bridging through ten test both used as pre and post-tests to compare the results before and after the intervention. This allowed me to establish the feelings and attitudes of learners towards mathematics before and after an inclusive environment. The results obtained indicated that there was a positive shift of beliefs and attitudes towards mathematics from the pre to post-questionnaire for most learners and also displayed a better understanding of the concept of bridging through ten from the pre to post-mathematics tests.