

THE ROLE OF FIGURATIVE CONTEXT IN REALISTIC TASKS

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The real context a realistic task is embedded in is called *figurative* context (Clarke & Helme 1996).

Previous studies covered the role of figurative context in certain aspects: familiarity (Papastravidis et al. 1999), gender (Kaiser-Messmer 1993), involvement (Stillman 1998), individuality (Clarke & Helme 1996).

There is no comprehensive theory covering the role of figurative context. Especially questions concerning the subjective reception of figurative contexts have not been answered and not been investigated empirically yet.

Quantitative approaches to these questions would not lead to a sufficient understanding of the students' individual processes. On the contrary, these questions require a qualitative approach.

The aspect of the subjective reception of figurative context was, among others, investigated in a qualitative-orientated case-study. Students were asked to solve different realistic tasks. Their solution-process was recorded on video. Afterwards the students watched the recordings and expressed their thoughts concerning the figurative context they had had during the solution-process (method of stimulated recall). In following interviews the students were asked additional questions.

First analyses allow, among others, the following conjectures:

- ◆ Figurative contexts given in the tasks can internally be represented in very different ways.
- ◆ Depending on the individual and the situation the role of figurative context can vary considerably
- ◆ In different phases of the solution-process the figurative context can have various functions

References

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