

PROBLEM SOLVING THE CHALLENGE FACING SOUTH AFRICAN MATHEMATICS TEACHERS

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Mathematics Curriculum reform in South African classrooms has been on the minds of mathematics teachers since the introduction of Curriculum 2005, South Africa's version of Outcomes Based Education. The curriculum has introduced new perspectives and challenges on the teaching and learning of mathematics. Amongst others the shift to a problem centred or constructivist approach to the teaching and learning of mathematics is implied in the new curriculum documents.

Despite the rigorous training provided in the implementation of Curriculum 2005, affecting change to teacher's philosophies or beliefs about the teaching and learning of mathematics has been marginal.

Although a few teachers have engaged in problem solving as a context for teaching mathematical concepts, the vast number of teachers still rely religiously on routine textbook problems, for the introduction or consolidation of mathematical concepts. These teacher's classrooms are dominated by traditional teaching practices.

As a response to the need to promoting mathematical problem solving in schools, a project was initiated to providing training and support materials to teachers in selected schools. This report will present the results of this initiative. The research conducted makes an exhaustive analysis of the attitudes and responses of both learners and teachers involved the project.

The results of the project have had significant implications for future training initiatives for Curriculum 2005, and writing of learner support materials to be used in the mathematics classroom.

References

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