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Mathematics and science education research, policy and practice in South Africa: what are the relationships?

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Summary: In this paper, a review of journal articles containing South African research in mathematics and science education in the 2000–2006 period is undertaken, and used to identify significant clusters of research interest on the one hand and areas of under-representation of research on the other. In mathematics education, significant clusters were found relating to: questions of relevance, language issues, mathematics teaching and learning, and mathematics teacher education. In science education, specific clusters of research focused on: tertiary science teaching and learning, school level science teaching and learning, and relevance issues focused on the nature of science and indigenous knowledge systems. Our classification of articles highlighted the paucity of research at the primary level, in rural contexts, and dealing with issues related to language use in multilingual classrooms. Our overview of articles also provided examples of research that linked the issues arising within specific clusters, and considered the consequences of these linked issues for teaching and learning. We conclude by noting examples of research findings within our review that have impacted on policy and practice, and point also to areas where further research appears necessary.

Classification: D20 A40 B10

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