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Can grade 3 students learn about variation?

Phillips, Brian, ICOTS 6. Proceedings of the Sixth international conference on teaching statistics, Cape Town, Sout Africa, July 7–12, 2002. (ISBN 0-85590-782-7). 6 p. (2002).

This paper reports on outcomes observed in an investigation that involved teaching chance and data with an emphasis on understanding the part that variation plays in processes associated with chance measurement and data collection/analysis. Classes of students in grades 3, 5, 7, and 9 took part in the study but this report will focus on children in grade 3. They were taught a unit of 10 lessons over eight weeks and given pre and post tests in association with the teaching of the unit. Of interest was not only their learning about basic probability and data handling but also their developing understanding of the influence that variation has on outcomes in relation to the observation of pattern. The question of the age at which children can start appreciating the influence of variation creates special interest in this group of students.

Classification: K12