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Schliemann, Analúcia D.

Everyday mathematics and adult mathematics education.

van Groenestijn, Mieke (ed.) et al., Mathematics as part of lifelong learning. Proceedings of the 5th international conference of adults learning maths – research forum, ALM 5, Utrecht, The Netherlands, July 1–3, 1998. London: Goldsmiths College, University of London (ISBN 0-902986-46-5). 20-31 (1999).

It is not only in school that we learn mathematics. Research shows that people with restricted schooling come to master arithmetical operations, the properties of the decimal system, proportionality, measurement, geometry, and probability while participating in working activities. Activities such as buying and selling, carpentry, weaving, lottery, agriculture, tailoring, and many others seem to promote the development of mathematical understanding believed to be accessible only through formal school instruction. A lot of questions are arising from this fact. To approach this questions we have to consider the results of research on the characteristics, strengths, and limitations of everyday mathematics. This review of the studies focuses on four topics: (a) meaning and understanding; (b) generalization and transfer; (c) referents for mathematical concepts and procedures, and (d) the socio-interactive contexts of mathematical activity. Afterwards, the relevance of school instruction is discussed and the conclusions concerning the relevance of everyday mathematics to adults mathematics education are presented.

Classification: M18