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Culturally specific games in the mathematics classrooms: an exploration of their impact in the learning of mathematics.

J. South. Afr. Assoc. Res. Math. Sci. Educ. 2, No. 1, 52-50 (1998).

This paper describes part of a research project which looks at the relation between cultural games and the teaching and learning of mathematics. The main aim of the research is to look at various cultural games which are found in different settings. Some of these may be similar from one cultural setting to another, whereas others are different and unique to specific cultures. The research investigates the games with a view to their use in the mathematics classroom. This paper focuses specifically on two games, "Madice" and "String Gates", which are used in the primary and the junior secondary mathematics classrooms. The aim of the use of the two games was to find the extent to which these games could find use in the mathematics classroom, whether students could identify mathematical concepts that are found in these games, and also to find the students' views about the use of games in the classroom. In the game of "Madice" the students were given a pair of dice and a worksheet to go through. The teacher played a prominent role of explaining the steps in the game by asking them questions based on the game. Mathematical concepts that most pupils were able to identify were natural numbers, subtraction and remainder. In the game on "String Gates" each student was given a piece of string and asked to play any game that each student could remember. This was followed by a brief demonstration of some of the 'gates' by a few students who knew how to make them. Mathematical concepts that the students were able to identify at the end of the game were angles, triangles, and parallel lines. (Abstract).

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