

Exploring Practical Work as a Sustainable Strategy in Rural Mathematics Classrooms: A Case of Addition of Fractions

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ABSTRACT Addition of fraction is dealt with from grade 6 onwards in South African schools topics as prescribed by the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement. This paper reports on a study exploring practical work as a strategy to sustain rural mathematics classrooms. The conceptual perspective for the design and analysis of this study was based on a learning ecology framework consolidated by socio-culturalism and situated learning. This study was a qualitative case study (n = 42). The participants in this study were from a rural school of the Umhlali ward, which is in the Ilembe district in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The learners engaged in four activities in four lessons. They used either diagrams or fraction circles to complete the tasks in the four activities. The researcher analysed the written responses, observed their working in groups and carried out interviews. This case study found that practical work, in a rural setting, was a suitable strategy to sustain an effective mathematics learning ecology.