

Mathematical Reasoning and Common-sense in Word Problem-solving

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ABSTRACT The purpose of this paper is to explore the common tendency of learners to relegate reality from their solution processes when they engage in real world problem-solving. The study was conducted in township mathematics classrooms contexts with learners drawn from different socio-cultural backgrounds. The data collection strategies for the purpose of this study included a test and focus groups discussions. The results of this study demonstrate the importance of connecting formal classroom mathematics activities to learners' out-of-school real world knowledge and experiences during problem solving. Moreover, the study illustrates the ways in which the learners include and use cultural knowledge to arrive at and justify solutions to mathematical problems.