

What are Student Teachers' Perceptions in the Use of Home Languages in the Teaching and Learning of Mathematics?

Judah P. Makonye

*Marang Centre for Science and Mathematics Education, University of Witwatersrand,
Number, 27 St Andrews Road, Parktown, 2050, Johannesburg, South Africa
Telephone: +27117173206, Fax: +27862076533, E-mail: Judah.makonye@wits.ac.za*

KEYWORDS Students' Attitude. Mathematics Instruction. Mother Tongue

ABSTRACT The paper explores student teachers' perceptions on the use of learners' home languages in mathematics teaching and learning. Interview data from sixty student teachers from a university in South Africa was collected. Students' perceptions varied enormously. The supportive respondents argued that the use of home language not only supported mathematics epistemic access, but also promoted cultural identity and lifted home languages to a position of prominence and prestige. Those who were against argued that the use of home languages proffered disadvantaged learners with inferior education. In this group, other respondents were of the view that the education system was logistically not ready for it. Yet still, some argued that use of home languages in education promoted tribalism and worked against national cohesion. Recommendations include calling for the deployment of resources to promote the teaching and learning of mathematics in home languages.