

Learner-centeredness as an Aspect of South African National Curriculum

Statement

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Abstract: *When South African National Curriculum Statement (NCS) was introduced in schools, it impacted on teacher-learner interaction. Among others, the NCS document specified the need for a learner-centred approach to teaching and learning [Department of National Education (DoE), 2002, 2005:7, 2008:10]. This paper puts a spotlight on learner-centeredness as an NCS requirement. It focuses on a typical South African high school mathematics classroom learning practice. The idea is to establish the teacher's interpretation of learner-centeredness as an aspect that can impact on the success or failure of implementation of NCS curriculum. The investigation analyses the theoretical notion of learner-centeredness, the learner-centeredness as espoused by the NCS document, and establishes if the classroom learning practice in a typical South African mathematics class complies with the NCS expected practice. To achieve this, the paper investigates learner experience in a typical South African mathematics classroom. A questionnaire is used to establish the teacher's notion of learner-centeredness as depicted by the learner's classroom experience, and then to check, using the response to the questionnaire, if the notion is compatible with the NCS stated notion of learner-centeredness. The research question the paper asks is: "Is learner experience in the typical South African mathematics classroom practice in line with the NCS notion of learner-centeredness?" To answer the question, the author uses data from teacher workshops conducted in various provinces in South Africa as well as the questionnaire. The investigation has found that, in general, the classroom learning approach of high school mathematics does not comply with the NCS requirement of learner-centeredness.*

Keywords: learner-centeredness, socioconstructivist approach to learning mathematics, problem-solving in mathematics