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Integrating Children's Literature into the Elementary Mathematics Classroom

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Abstract

The integration of subjects is becoming increasingly more popular with educators, and yet rarely is the idea of linking mathematics and literacy considered. This essay delineates the benefits of integrating children's literature into the elementary mathematics classroom. The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (1989) asserts children need to be active constructors of mathematical knowledge, and children's literature presents both problems and methods of solving them in an authentic manner while portraying mathematics in a unique context. Through teachers utilizing children's literature, students build math-to-self connections, freely explore concepts, and gain positive attitudes towards the subject. A new set of mathematical discourse is readily available to students, creating a community of learners. A wide variety of methods to group students and arrange the classroom are also made possible through the integration of math and literature. With regards to choosing the actual literature to use in the curriculum, firm guidelines exist to ensure quality literature is chosen that invites readers while demonstrating accurate mathematics. Teachers should also consider the various forms of literacy on the Internet to maximize their instructional possibilities. The use of children's literature in mathematics has been found to deepen mathematical understanding and increase student achievement as material is integrated across the curriculum. An array of extension activities and assessment measures are also made possible through the connections between the two subjects. Finally, this essay demarcates the process a teacher should take when first considering the use of children's literature in the

elementary mathematics classroom.

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