

Understanding Rural Teachers' Perceived Intention of Using Play in ECCE Mathematics Classroom: Strength-Based Approach

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Abstract : The Lesotho downward trend in mathematics attainment at all levels is compounded by the absence of innovative approaches to teaching and learning in Early Childhood. However, studies have shown that play pedagogy can be used to mitigate the challenges of mathematics education. Despite the benefits of play pedagogy to rural learners, its full potential has not been realized in early childhood care and education classrooms to improve children's performance in mathematics because the adoption of play pedagogy depends on a strength-based approach. The study explores the potential of play pedagogy to improve mathematics education in early childhood care and education in Lesotho. Strength-based approach is known for its advocacy of recognizing and utilizing children's strengths, capacities and interests. However, this approach and its promising attributes is not well-known in Lesotho. In particular, little is known about the attributes of play pedagogy that are essential to improve mathematics education in ECCE programs in Lesotho. To identify such attributes and strengthen mathematics education, this systematic review examines evidence published on the strengths of play pedagogy that supports the teaching and learning of mathematics education in ECCE. The purpose of this review is, therefore, to identify and define the strengths of play pedagogy that supports mathematics education. Moreover, the study intends to understand the rural teachers' perceived intention of using play in ECCE math classrooms through a strength-based approach. Eight key strengths were found (cues for reflection, edutainment, mathematics language development, creativity and imagination, cognitive promotion, exploration, classification, and skills development). This study is the first to identify and define the strength-based attributes of play pedagogy to improve the teaching and learning of mathematics in ECCE centers in Lesotho. The findings reveal which opportunities teachers find important for improving the teaching of mathematics as early as in ECCE programs. We conclude by discussing the implications of the literature for stimulating dialogues towards formulating strength-based approaches to teaching mathematics, as well as reflecting on the broader contributions of play pedagogy as an asset to improve mathematics in Lesotho and beyond.

Keywords : early childhood education, mathematics education, lesotho, play pedagogy, strength-based approach.

Conference Title : ICCEEI 2023 : International Conference on Childhood Education and Educational Instructions

Conference Location : Vienna, Austria

Conference Dates : June 19-20, 2023