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ENHANCING LEARNERS' MATHEMATICAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS DURING TEACHING PRACTICE: PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

Communication is central to the teaching and learning of mathematics in the classroom. This study aims to determine the extent to which learners possessed mathematical communication skills and the role that student teachers played to enhance these skills during teaching practice. Mathematical Communication Skills (MCS) refer to the students' capacity to (1) organize and connect their mathematical thinking through communication; (2) communicate their logical and clear mathematical thinking to their friends, teachers, and others; (3) analyze and assess other people's mathematical thinking and strategies; and (4) use mathematical language to express their ideas accurately. Learners' mathematical communication skills can be developed in various ways such as cooperative learning and group discussions. A 5 likert scale questionnaire was used to solicit qualitative data on the extent to which learners possessed mathematical communication skills and the role student teachers played to enhance these skills during teaching practice. Frequency distribution graphs were created using Question Pro to explore trends and patterns in the student teachers' responses. Participants were 60 mathematics student teachers in their fourth year who had finished their practicum. Results suggests that there is still room for improvement in learners' abilities to communicate mathematically. Mathematics educators who seek to encourage students' mathematical communication abilities through participating in innovative and creative learning activities should take this study into consideration. Cooperative learning, in which students are put into small groups where they can express their clear and logical ideas to the other students helps in enhancing the development of these mathematical communication skills.

Keywords: Communication; mathematical communication skills; teaching practice.