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READING COMPREHENSION AS A DETERMINING FACTOR IN PERFORMANCE IN MATHEMATICS

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates reading comprehension as a decisive factor in students' performance in mathematics in the final years of elementary school. It starts from the understanding that learning mathematics goes beyond mastering calculations and procedures: it requires attentive reading, interpretation of statements, comprehension of problem situations, and attributing meaning to symbolic representations. The research, using a qualitative approach with quantitative data support, was conducted with 6th-grade classes through the application of diagnostic assessments of reading and mathematical problem-solving. The data analysis showed that students with greater reading proficiency performed better in interpreting problems, identifying relevant information, and choosing problem-solving strategies. Conversely, many of the difficulties attributed to mathematics were revealed to be related to failures in textual comprehension, and not just to a lack of numerical skills. The results reinforce the importance of pedagogical practices that integrate literacy into mathematics teaching, recognizing reading as a structuring competence of school learning.

Keywords: Reading skills. Literacy. Mathematics education. Problem solving. School learning.