

Evaluation and comparison of mathematical achievement

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Abstract

My presentation will connect strongly to the theme of the conference and I will talk about achievement from different perspectives. The first section concerns explicit and implicit meanings of the term “achievement”. Even though the term is widely used it is not entirely evident what it represents. In fact, different conceptualisations can be identified. In order to evaluate achievement, and in order to design valid ways of describing achievement, it is important to understand and define what achievement stands for. The second section will be a presentation and discussion of images of achievement in mathematics in Sweden. These images come from different sources and are not always consistent. It is important to critically view and compare the achievement measures used, in order to interpret these images and draw conclusions about the effects of how mathematics is taught and learned in Sweden. The third section is more tentative and attempts a quest for alternative interpretations of achievement. It is sometimes claimed that students who don't seem to learn the mathematics that is assessed, actually learn something else. The question is: What is this “something else”, and can it be visualised and evaluated?