

LEARNING DIFFICULTIES OF NINTH GRADERS ON SIMPLE EQUATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR OVERCOMING: A CASE STUDY IN POINT PEDRO EDUCATION DIVISION

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Mathematics is one of the important and compulsory subjects in the education system in Sri Lanka. Grade nine (9) is the top grade of the junior secondary level. Third term examination of ninth graders is conducted at provincial level. Algebra is one of the important areas in Mathematics. In algebra, simple equation is the fundamental of the types of equations.

This project report titled, "Learning difficulties of ninth graders on simple equations and suggestions for overcoming" is based on a study which examined and evaluated students' learning difficulties on simple equations. Based on the study, some recommendations have been suggested to the teachers. The objectives of the present study are to: identify the relevant background knowledge, concepts and sub-concepts required for the understanding of simple equations, assess students' understanding of the above identified concepts, assess students' problems in understanding simple equations, assess students' family background in understanding simple equations, investigate if there is any correlation between teachers' content knowledge and students' understanding of simple equations, assess the methods of teaching and learning Mathematics preferred by teachers and students respectively, recommend some suggestions to teachers for effective teaching and learning process.

In this study, two hundred (200) grade nine (9) students and sixteen (16) grade nine (9) Mathematics teachers from eleven (11) schools in Point Pedro education division of Vadamardchy education zone in Jaffna district, participated. To identify the learning difficulties of ninth graders on simple equations, students' diagnostic test, students' questionnaire and teachers' questionnaire were used. The responses of the students and teachers were subjected to quantitative and qualitative analysis.

This project was identified by the researcher that most students need to have a better understanding of concepts of simple equations with of the help of the teachers and family background. The teachers should be provided with opportunities to update their knowledge through seminars and workshops to archive the goals of Mathematics.