

Reading a mathematical text

Thesis for the Degree of

MSc

by

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Submitted to the Scientific Council of the

Weizmann Institute of Science

Rehovot, Israel

Year 2008

Summary

The practice of reading mathematical texts is scarce both in research in mathematical education and in school practice. Although there are characterizations of mathematical texts in the literature, as well as few studies on the integration of reading in mathematics studies, there are almost no studies on the reading process itself. This study examines the processes that students undergo while reading a mathematical text and thereafter .

A mathematical text was chosen combining topics known to 12th grade students at the highest level and it was given to four pairs of them. These pairs of students were observed during their reading, followed by a semi-structured interview. The observations and the interviews were analyzed qualitatively. The following main findings stood out: 1) the nature of the processes the readers underwent were on the cognitive level, the "meta" level, and the cultural and the emotional levels; 2) the centrality of the connections the readers made during the reading and 3) the existence of different reading styles shaped by readers' dispositions and beliefs. These findings highlight the educational potential of integrating the reading of mathematical texts in the curriculum.