



# Culture and Cognitive Development: Studies in Mathematical Understanding

*Geoffrey B. Saxe*

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Researchers examining children's mathematics acquisition are now questioning the belief that children learn mathematics principally through formalized, in-school mathematics education. There is increasing evidence that children gain mathematical understanding through their participation in out-of-school cultural practices and that their mathematics only occasionally resembles what they learn in the classroom.

*Culture and Cognitive Development* presents the latest research by Dr. Geoffrey Saxe on this issue. In examinations of the mathematical understandings of child candy sellers in an urban center in northeastern Brazil, Dr. Saxe finds sharp contrasts between mathematics as practiced in school and in real-world settings. In this unique research project he presents a penetrating conceptual treatment of the interplay between culture and cognitive development, filling a void in current research literature.

Subjects examined include:

the interplay between sociocultural and cognitive developmental processes

the differences between math knowledge learned in and out of the classroom

the ways math learning in the classroom is modified by children's out-of-school mathematics and, correspondingly, how practical out-of-school mathematics use is modified by formal education

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