ELIMINATING MATH ANXIETY AMONG STUDENTS FOR BETTER CLASS PERFORMANCE

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Many students claim to hate the subject Mathematics, or if not hate, consider it as one of the most difficult subjects that they ever encounter. The difficulties that they are going through with this subject make it hard for them to cope with the lessons and often lead students to be uninterested with the subject. Also, if their problems with Math will not be resolved, it can lead them to get lower grades than other students and can affect their performance in class. Their negative way of thinking towards Math can hinder them to be given the chance to understand the lessons.

According to Dream box learning (2013) Elementary Math focuses on things like logic and problem solving, which become an issue for some students and can even hinder their performance on tests. The nervousness, anxiety and the tension that they feel tend to take over which prevent the student from completing the problem to the best of his or her ability. With the mind-set that they will not be able to understand the lessons in Math no matter how they listen or study, the tendency is that they will not make an effort anymore to comprehend Mathematical problems.

Due to these existing dilemmas being dealt by the students, it is necessary to know the causes of Math anxieties. Other students fail to focus in solving Mathematical problems because of the fear of public embarrassment most especially when the teacher is giving board works wherein other students can see the actual solving of the problem. Also, the pressure around them can hinder them to excel in this subject because other students might feel inferior if they can see their other classmates doing well in solving problems and equations. There is a possibility that they will be discouraged because of this.
In able to overcome students' difficulties in Math, Ewart Newton (2015) suggested some ways to help them. Newton suggested to strengthen students' basic numerical skills. When students don't have the basic skills at hand, their working memories are taxed and this can be both distracting and discouraging. Using step-by-step approach is also another technique and Newton said that it is a good idea to chunk material into smaller steps so that students are able to understand and master one step before moving to the next. It can be overwhelming for the students to receive and process a lot of information at once and there will be no enough time for them to absorb all the things the teacher had said.

In addition, Laura Candler (2011) asserted that teacher may refer to word problems as "puzzlers," "brain teasers," or "stumpers," and present them as fun challenges rather than dreaded math problems. This technique will be enjoyable for the students and at the same time, less exhausting for the students. Also, fun challenges can eliminate anxiety among students because the approach is less serious and with this technique, they will not be afraid to commit mistakes because the delivery of the lesson creates an enjoyable learning process for the students.

If the teacher notices that some students struggle in Mathematics or some lessons in the subject, immediate action should be taken before things get worse. If the problems, difficulties and anxieties they have when it comes to solving mathematical problems left unresolved, they will struggle when they are already in higher grade or in high school because their foundation in this subject is weak. It will be more frustrating for the students if they will encounter more challenging Math problems but they are unable to solve those equations.

Aside from delivering the lessons and teaching in front of the class, the teacher also has to make sure that the students can cope with the lessons and activities. It is also the responsibility of the teacher to aid and guide the students who struggle in the subject
because students may lose interest, may fail or be discouraged in studying if they will not be given the appropriate attention for their struggles. As much as possible, the teacher must assure that all his or her students were able to understand the lesson because they must always remember that there should be no child left behind.

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