HELPING STUDENTS TO OVERCOME MATH ANXIETY

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“I wish mathematics was never invented”. A lot of students say. Mostly students with Math Anxiety. Mathematics is stressful, as a matter of fact. But the humanity can never go as far as how we are today if it wasn’t for Math. Math Anxiety is a real thing. It can begin as early as a child encounter numbers to letters and signs in equations. And fearing math can result in long-term, serious consequences. Prior studies have shown that elementary school children who excel at math are more likely to succeed in high school, as well as later in life.

It is also perceived to be a phobia called “Math Phobia”. And like any other phobia, it can be overcome by facing and solving math equations. Be a positive person! Start by making them have a pleasant outlook in Math. Educators should always approach people with Math Anxiety positively. Math anxious people often think that they are underdogs just because they aren’t good in Math. Being good in Math only means you are good in Math. It does not and should not mean any superiority nor entitlement of new privilege. A child may have poor Mathematical ability but who knows that maybe he can cook very well or recite a spiel like a Hollywood actor? Everyone has different sets talent and made to fit in such different fields.

Make the child practice solving equations more often. But of course with reservation. As long as the child is still interested to learn and it is within his consent, the teacher can help him. Practicing with something a person isn’t good at is the best approach in learning it. This may take some time since it is something that the he finds
difficult. But it can become easy by discussing topics hands-on and breaking it down into smaller steps.

Encourage peer learning. Pair-work and group-work to solve Math problems can be effective ways of reinforcing concepts learnt. The children may find it comfortable psychologically since they won’t be working alone and feel pressured.

Know the reason behind their anxiety. Did they had weak math foundations during the early years. Do the children lack the privilege to study? Do the children lack emotional support?

Assess the teaching style. Sometimes, the fault may be on educator as well. Were the discussions too fast? Were the examples given matches with level of difficulty of the ones in the exams? Do the teacher appear intimidating?

Last is never make the students look at math as something they should be afraid of. As an educator, we should always be positive, graceful, and enthusiastic. Never let anyone suffer and struggle with things where we can provide solution.

References:

10 Tips to Overcome the Fear of Maths


Your fear of math is real. It might even be a phobia.