INQUISITIVE MANNER OF TEACHING MATHEMATICS: DEVELOPS INTEREST, FOCUS AND CONTINUITY IN CHILD'S LEARNING BEHAVIOR

by:
Karen B. Sulangi
Teacher II, Nagbalayong Elementary School

Learning Mathematics is a tough task for students nowadays. Learners often think that this subject is difficult and they cannot perform with it without even trying how it is done. With all the factors affecting learner's ability to learn the subject, teachers lose hope on how to build-up student's interest with the subject matter. It also adds the burden in teaching the subject since the students are no longer interested and just complying with the requirements of the curriculum.

Mathematics is a complex and abstract concept that is hardly defined in low-level context. However, basic elementary concepts such as the four fundamental operations is one of those few concepts that can actually enlighten the thoughts of each learner to learn the subject. It is the main reason shapes, numbers and comparison are taught in Kindergarten. It can easily be represented. This way learners can think of real concepts that can represent either a special thing for them or even use their own body to demonstrate such competencies. In this case, representation of 4Fs can easily be done in an integrated and spiraling manner. Theoretically, the hierarchy of numbers and mathematical concepts can be viewed as a single particle needed to co-exist another term and concept. Likewise, mathematical concepts are readily available in our surrounding, only if a good and equipped Math teacher is capable of making his students actualize visualization to computation.
One of the strategies that would sustain student’s interest with regards to mathematics is a Socratic-guided way of questioning. Every person who has been into teaching has encountered Socrates several times. He is known to the systematic way of asking question – a scientific one. In which, simultaneously differs instruction. One has said, “Aside from his [teachers’] voice, another powerful tool he can use as an instructional material is his manner of asking questions.” Sometimes, great teachers forget to ask question and just fed-up learners with every concept they need to learn, again, base from the curriculum. They tend not to consider asking questions that will provoke students to think critically; that will ignite them into something they never figured-out before yet they wanted to discover again and again. This time, guided questioning comes in the way.

There is already a guiding principle in Socratic way of questioning, however, guided questioning should be observed. Guided questioning is keeping the teachers attention to the students reaction or response with his given question. Allowing himself to observe if the students accepted the question and is ready to give his response or the student does not care at all. Most students would look like that they are attentive to the teacher’s one-hour litany, yet, after the evaluation majority of the class were not able to comprehend the teacher’s transfer of learning. In guided questioning, one should carefully and thoroughly observe his learners in the diversity of questions his throwing-up. This is to clearly see if the learner is willing and ready to take new information and concept – taking Law of Readiness into action. Guided questioning starts with low-level questions going through Socratic Method. Concepts that should be asked at the start of class to tease the brain and prepare it for much more comprehensive questions without losing their interest with the concept that is being introduced.

The use of manipulative materials elicit guided questioning. This is through self-questioning such as, “how should I do this”, “why is this should be paired to this number, “how can I affix this semi-circle with the right triangle”, eventually, teachers can intervene from this questions by asking another question – not by answering the learners questions. This allows their mind to think and stay focused on the activity they are doing which in learning Mathematics is most essential, consistency and continuity.
Reference:

Christine A. Padesky Ph.D.

Center for Cognitive Therapy, Huntington Beach, California