MATH ANXIETY: ITS CAUSES AND PREVENTION

by:
Allan B. Roxas
Teacher I, Magsaysay National High School

Mathematics is one of the difficult subjects among all the learning areas in education. Therefore students are at risk of developing different problems as they study the subject, one of these problems is Math anxiety. It is the strains, uneasiness or the feeling of fear which serves as a barrier to prevent an individual to perform better in Mathematics as defined by Ashcraft (2002). It is often perceived that students with math anxiety are those students who have no knowledge about numbers but actually, they have the ability but they cannot perform well in the said subject because of the intrusive agents of their anxiety. Math anxiety affects the physical, emotional and social aspects of the students, which interrupt the students to learn and work successfully in math problems. According to some studies and researches, students with anxiety exhibit low level of achievement compared to those students without anxiety. However, it is also evident in their studies that relieving the anxiety that the students are experiencing, they show improvement in their performance in Mathematics.

There are various causes of Math anxiety, these are (1) the students’ negative conception about Math because of teachers’ attitude about math, (2) time limit on Math tests, (3) bad experiences on Math, and (4) students who are afraid to be turned-down by their teachers because of their wrong answers.

In order to alleviate the causes of math anxiety, there are some procedures that teachers may employ to encourage the students to like Mathematics.

1. Teachers must say positive words about math and must be passionate about the subject they are teaching. If the teacher really hates Math subject, he may tell the origin of his
negative notion about it and tell the students the things he is doing to change it; that may help students to realize and work as well with their difficulties.

2. Teachers must give emphasis on the application of Mathematics to their lives not on the grades that they will get from a Math class. Explain the importance of operations that are using in Mathematics and if possible, do not give timed tests.

3. Teachers must know his students, they may conduct open forum about their experiences in Math then give advice that will help them to strive more in Mathematics.

4. Teachers must value all the answers of the students, there are subtle ways to tell that the student’s answer is wrong. Do not say harsh words that may hurt the feelings of the students instead ask other students to help their classmate in solving the Math equations or problems.

5. Teachers must present good reasons why students must learn the basic and higher Math.

6. Teachers must not set the mind of the students by saying that Math is a very difficult subject.

Teachers really play an important role on how the students will perceive the lessons. They are one of the most influential people in a student’s life. Teachers must be aware of the signs why their students are rejecting the subjecting, they might experiencing Math anxiety and this article may help them to lessen it.

References:

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https://www.oxfordlearning.com/what-is-math-anxiety/