“There exists a passion for comprehension. Without this passion, there would neither be Mathematics nor Natural Science.”

-Albert Einstein-

Reading was a primary leisure activity during the time when there were no televisions or computers. People would spend hours reading books and travel to places far-away in their minds. Sad to say as it is, as time goes by, people have lost such skill and passion in reading and with it, a tremendous negative effect has been seen in the children of today’s generation.

Children and teenagers who love reading are said to have comparatively higher IQs. They often excel in schooling and undeniably are more creative. Reading significantly helps in developing vocabulary and word power. It can improve the students’ ability to comprehend concepts and ideas. Aside from this, reading can develop positive values and it increases the ability to concentrate.

Reading is said to be a universal requirement. Everyone encounters daily situations that require reading abilities such as reading of signs, information, notices, prescriptions, addresses and even numbers. In school, reading as a subject should be given emphasis for success in reading would lead to success in the content fields in Science, Mathematics and in all undertakings with the various innovations, discoveries and higher technology. In short, it is the springboard in learning other areas in school.
Mathematics, being one of the major subjects in elementary is considered as a difficult subject to most students. It is more than numbers, computations and calculations. It involves classifying and analyzing. Because of this, teachers teaching Mathematics should aim to develop students in becoming competent problem solvers since problem solving is an integral part of all Mathematics learning.

Problem solving is one of the basic major skills in Mathematics education which is considered to be the highest level of thinking and development where most pupils find lasting difficulties. When the pupils are exposed to problem solving, it encourages them to use more than individual skills and concepts. They shift emphasis from getting the correct answer to an understanding how answers are derived and why the questions were asked in the first place. Pupils cannot learn problem solving by merely memorizing and observing. It is a complex process wherein analysis and comprehension are very important.

Pulao (2005) mentioned on his study that if students are poor in reading comprehension, they could not understand very well the meaning of statements and terms such as products, subtracted from, quotient, added to, etc. which were related to mathematical operations. Reading skills must have been very essential in the learning of Mathematics especially problem solving.

According to Montaque as mentioned by Lingad (2003), good problem solvers use a variety of processes and strategies as they read and represent the problem before they make a plan to solve it. First, they read a problem with understanding. As they read, they use comprehension strategies to translate the linguistics and numerical information into mathematical notations. Second, they paraphrase the problem by putting it into their own words, visualizing or drawing a picture or diagram. They hypothesize by thinking about logical solutions, types of operation and number of steps needed to solve the problems. Estimate or predict the answer, compute, finally then check to make sure they used the correct procedures and that their answer is correct.
To enhance our student math proficiency, reach their full potential, and become competitive with their peers, we must acknowledge the importance of teaching them reading comprehension skills in math and all the math teachers must instruct reading comprehension in math class. By continually applying appropriate reading strategies to mathematics, students will be able to bridge the gap between reading and mathematics, and ultimately, unite them for a better understanding of both (Brummer & Macceca, 2008).

Hodrosky (2009) on his action research entitled “The Importance of Teaching Reading Comprehension in Mathematics” focused on studies of the importance of reading comprehension in mathematics and what is the best way to teach reading comprehension strategies in math class. The research reviewed showed that mathematics is not nonverbal and only involves numbers and symbols. As math is an academic language, reading math is different from reading other subject areas. The study also pointed out that strong mathematics and science-related competencies improve the likelihood of employment, result in higher wages once employed, and improve on-the-job productivity. He also added all students want to be successful, but they need to be given tools. They need to receive timely corrective feedback directly or indirectly on their thinking processes. They also need opportunities to reflect on and to revise their work products and thinking.

Educators, even in mathematics, need to be aware of proven strategies. Too often, teachers find themselves teaching their subjects with no recognition that attention to comprehension would enhance learning. Students need to know how to come to know.
References:


