TIPS TO HANDLE MATH ANXIETY

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In the field of Mathematics, there are always issues that both students and teachers have to deal. Mathematics, being a core subject aims to produce students who are capable of doing accurate decisions and solutions in congruence with their problems in real life.

However, students’ behavior and anxiety is the main issue, why Math is considered as a difficult subject. Familiar lines such as,“Bakit tayo nag sosolve ng X and Y kailangan ba’to sa totoong buhay?” “Ang hirap ng Math nakakatuyo ng utak” are the everyday cries of students during their Math class.

According to Mohamed and Tarmizi (2010), in a Mathematical context, many students who are weak in Math appears to worry while attempting to use skills in solving Math problems.

They also added that most of the time, students with low level of Math anxiety tend to be more engaged and highly motivated to learn Math as compared to those who have high anxiety levels. Subsequently some researches also states that math anxiety has something to do with the cultural and belief that male students tend to do better in Mathematics than female students.

In line with this, the major goal of a Math teacher is to help ease students’ anxiety by slowly changing the way students behave during Math subject. For example, a teacher must utilize various techniques to help minimize students’ anxiety. In this case, effective teaching comes in many forms.
The following techniques are possible ways to help minimize students’ anxiety in Math. First, a teacher must create a positive learning environment that will develop the learners’ healthy attitude towards Math. The teachers should provide an environment that encourage the learners to participate more in the class discussion. Establishing a positive relationship with the teacher helps a student feel more comfortable and safe. Praising learners can condition them to respond positively to the given tasks.

Second, the teacher should focus on the teaching process. It is important to know the strengths and weaknesses of the students, their individual differences to apply the appropriate teaching strategies that will motivate the learners and develop their self-confidence in dealing with Mathematics.

Howard Gardner developed the theory of Multiple Intelligences, wherein, it shows that students have wide range of intelligences which deals with learning styles. It is a teacher’s duty to experiment which one style will be effective. For example, cooperative learning technique deviates from a normal lecture method setting in the class. This enables students to work with their peers in solving math problems. This will develop student’s ability to work in harmony with others.

Lastly, teachers should find ways to debunk the belief that male students do better in Math. Teachers must see to it that he/she will be able to demonstrate his/her own understanding on mathematics. Students must feel that the teacher is interested in making them (students) comfortable in dealing with figures and problem solving. Thus, it will help the students reduce their anxiety.

Parents could also play a big factor by giving follow ups and motivation to their children at home. In this way, the hope of easing the level of anxiety on Math can be lessen.

In other words, involvement of all parties- teachers, students and even parents should be taken into consideration on the levels of math anxiety a student is dealing with.
References: