

Negative Attitude of Students Towards Mathematics Class

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Abstract: *This action research seeks to answer the question: Why do students show a negative attitude toward Mathematics class? The researcher was able to address this concern to her class in Mathematics 7. The researcher found out that most of the students are having a hard time in their class which involves the fundamental operation on fractions and signed numbers, because this, the researcher tried to find other ways to help the students, most especially those who had a hard time in solving word problems. The 75% of the student in the last section of the Grade 7 got a score of higher than 5 which show low understanding in the lesson.*

Keywords — *Negative Attitude; Mathematics Class; Mathematics Anxiety; Number Anxiety*

1. INTRODUCTION

A solid Mathematics foundation is vital for a student to succeed, without solid math skills, students will probably have a lot of trouble in school and their daily activities. Mathematics is a fundamental part of human thought and logic, and integral to attempts at understanding the world and ourselves. Mathematics provides an effective way of building mental discipline and encourages logical reasoning and mental rigor. In addition, mathematical knowledge plays a crucial role in understanding the contents of other school subjects such as science, social studies, and even music and art (mathunion.org, 2010). Students with weak basic math skills find the subject increasingly confusing, difficult, and end up with an uninterested mood towards mathematics subject, which might be attributed to the so-called math anxiety and number anxiety. Richardson and Suinn (1972) in Ruff and Boes (2010) defined math anxiety as stress-causing negative physical reactions that interfere with the manipulation of numbers and problem-solving in both academic settings and everyday life. On the other hand, Dreger and Aiken (1957) described “number anxiety” as negative emotional responses to mathematics.

The researcher found this behavior in her Mathematics class in the last section of Grade 7. These situations become more alarming when 75% of the class got a score lower than 5 which is half of the total item of the quiz. A problem was identified, and this is the negative attitude of students toward mathematics class (sleepy, bored, and uninterested in the lesson). Possible causes were identified and enumerated as follows: lack of interest, weak foundation about the topic, lack of ideas, limited time, peer influence, teacher’s lack of a mechanism in giving incentives, inappropriate visual aids, lack of resources, poor study habit, and lack of follow up at home.

The researcher formulated this study for the early detection of the reasons and solutions to the problem that arises.

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The study sought to improve students’ performance in Mathematics 7 by performing the following tasks:

1. Develop the interest of the student in the lesson through:
 - 1.1. Appropriate activities;
 - 1.2. Constant follow-ups; and
 - 1.3. Parent help and involvement.
2. Motivate the students to perform in the class activities.
3. Develop cooperation among members of the group in group activities.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study employed an action research design of Nunan as cited in the study of Cabigao (2012) which is consisted of seven stages to achieve the target improvement of students’ performance for one month. The target subject is the students of the last section of Grade 7 at Cong. Teodulo C. Natividad High School. In achieving the objectives of the study, the activities undertaken were: (a) Review of the previous lesson for retention; (b) Group Activities; and (c) Parent conference. The expected outputs were: (a) Activity participation of the student in the Mathematics class; (b) Decrease of the falling rate in the class; and (c) Students understand the lesson.

4. STRATEGIES EMPLOYED

Cooperative Learning

Cooperative Learning is more elaborate than group work activity. Cooperative Learning can be incorporated into our classroom management system. If we train our students to work effectively in groups, the results can be a very productive and fun learning environment. Hsiung (2013) noted that empirical evidence suggests that students studying cooperatively exhibit significantly better academic achievement. However, since most prior studies do not carefully monitor the time on task, it is unclear whether the observed learning benefits are due to the intrinsic superiority of cooperative learning or merely a reflection of the increased amount of time students spend studying. Another study with experimental design showed that compared to traditional instruction, cooperative learning enabled a better understanding of the concepts of chemical kinetics and

improved students' motivation to study chemistry for both schools (Boz & Kirik, 2012).

At first, they choose to work with their friends and found it not very productive, maybe because they used this to their advantage to share things and talk about things inside the class. After few activities, students welcome the idea of group work. I assigned four to five partners to a group (chosen ahead of time). The partners are chosen mainly by ability so that each group will have one top-level, two middle levels, and one to two struggling students in each group. This type of grouping aimed to develop cooperation, sharing of ideas, and learning among members of the group.

The first group work is usually a simple and easy one. This gives students time to adjust with their group and as time goes, I gave them more difficult and complicated activities. At first, it takes time as they go with their group. I also found it noisy, but we do this after time will come that they can move the furniture faster than expected, if needed, go to their proper station, and perform the activity with enjoyment and never find the subject boring and sleepy. Cooperative learning should not be used haphazardly. However, when used with a plan, it can give many educational benefits.

Supplementary Activity 1: *The Caterpillar Dance*

When teaching students to multiply decimals, I often find that they forget to account for decimal place value. To help them to remember to make the decimal point, I use the decimal dance or caterpillar dance. I simply exaggerated the motion of counting decimal places. I make a large arc under each digit until I have counted for the correct decimal place and produce a big caterpillar. This caterpillar helps them to remember how to multiply decimals.

Using these strategies, they remember the concept and rules in multiplying the decimals and using funny characters and design their attention was coped and changed the sleepy mood into a more active and attentive one.

Supplementary Activity 2: *The Fractions and Colored Tiles*

When introducing the concept of multiplying decimals, this is almost the same as multiplying fractions. I used 8-piece colored tile to represent one whole tile. And create a situation that can be work on by the group. At first, they try to create other objects using the tile, then guide them to the lesson. When I ask the student "what fractions of the original tile did the second student get?" the student learns that a part of a tile given to him is the smaller part of the tile.

In these activities, the student learned their lesson because they learned thru what they see visually and what they hear from the discussion.

Supplementary Activity 3: *Parent Involvement*

Parents had a great influence on their children since learning takes place not only in the school but also at home. In a study conducted by Cabigao (2014), he concluded that: (1) teachers' frequent home visitations encourage parents to maximize their effort in monitoring their children in accomplishing home works; (2) students need constant encouragement and/or assistance from parents and/or elders in completion of their school requirements; (3) home visitation is an important method of encouraging the parents to cooperate closely with teachers in monitoring their children's studies; and (4) parents' active involvement in monitoring the progress of the studies of their children is very essential.

Thus, this study likewise affirmed that constant reminder gives our students the retention of things they must remember. These also true to the parent. Follow up and involving them in school activities to let them be part of the school mission to our students. Thru their help, students continue to learn even at home.

5. RESULTS

Students develop positive attitudes towards mathematics when they perceive mathematics as useful and interesting. Similarly, students develop negative attitudes towards mathematics when they do not do well or view mathematics as uninteresting.

After different interventions and teaching strategies were executed to the class the target result was obtained the falling rate decreases to 60% which is better in the class of the lower section. Students became more participative in the classroom discussion and activities.

6. CONCLUSION

The study shows that the foundation of the students and learning strategies has a great effect on the learning behavior of the learners. Using different strategies and interventions when combined with the eagerness of the teacher, the students will give good feedback on the subject. The student is the master of their environment the better their learning environment is the better learning they can get from it.

Teachers, as facilitators of learning, must likewise be considered as important factors in improving students' performance. Giving teachers a conducive workplace will raise their commitment in school through a continuous training program. As mentioned in the study of Cabigao (2016), developing a school-initiated program is necessary to enhance teachers' commitment to school leading to higher instructional competence, which will result in improved learners' performance in the classroom.

7. REFERENCES

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APPENDIX: DOCUMENTATION



