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Math Anxiety

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Abstract

This paper examines the concept of mathematic anxiety, which has become so prevalent in students ranging from early elementary grades up to middle school and on into adulthood. Math anxiety can develop from many experiences and can easily proliferate over time.

Do you ever look at a math equation... maybe one including numbers, different signs, or even letters and think to yourself what am I looking at? This is mathematic anxiety. Mathematic anxiety is when you associate fear and worry with math. It sounds like a made up "disorder", but it is actually very common and there is evidence to prove it.

Back in 1950s Dreger and Aiken coined the term mathematic anxiety, but some people or only believe that Mary Fides Gough was the one who is invented it. Math anxiety is a real. There are many layers to mathematic anxiety. Math anxiety has negative effects immediately for people, but also overtime on the human brain.

Many people have anxiety due to math because of a whole multitude of reasons. Ashcraft and Kirk (2001) discovered that " people with high maths anxiety demonstrated smaller working memory spans than people with less maths anxiety, especially in tasks that required calculation. In particular, they were much slower and made many more errors than others in tasks where they had to do mental addition at the same time as keeping numbers in memory." These notable scholars are essentially saying having math anxiety is an issue not just because of worry and fear of numerical equations, but also because it can decrease someone's ability to store important data in their mind, therefore their memory is on the decline. Also, researchers suggest that mathematics anxiety has to do with the negative connotation people associate with math... like test taking, word problems, and the complexity of equations. According to Psychology Research and Behavior Management section of the National Library of Psychology, "Attitudes to mathematics also involve conceptualization of what mathematics is, and it is possible that this is relevant to mathematics anxiety. Many people seem to regard mathematics only as school-taught arithmetic and may not consider other cultural practices involving numbers as mathematics," this can relate to people fearing math due to them not using or envisioning math to be someone exciting that

surrounds us. Associating a negative connotation with math anxiety is one of the main reasons why students dread walking into math class.

So how can someone prove that mathematical anxiety is not just something people say to get out of math or fearing if they are going to do their family finances correctly. Well, math anxiety can relate to people who despise math, but it also is a real issue for the neurodiverse population. People actually have math disabilities, I included. Although there is an assumption that some people believe that people cannot have math anxiety and it just something that they don't enjoy doing or are lazy. People try and prove that the only portion of our population that is justified to have math anxiety is those who have special needs. This is not factual information because all people can have math anxiety, but math anxiety cannot be because of someone's view of math...that is not a sufficient enough answer or reason.

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