



Conquer Mathematics anxiety

Many learners develop a negative attitude towards mathematics. This fear of mathematics is often referred to as mathematics anxiety. Prof Kobus Maree, a lecturer in the Faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria and a specialist in the psychological aspects of mathematics, has advice on overcoming mathematics anxiety.

Role of the maths teacher

A learner who is afraid of a teacher will probably be too afraid to ask questions if he/she does not understand the work. Some learners are so scared of an angry, impatient or unapproachable teacher that they practically freeze when they see a sum.

A teacher who allows his/her class to ask the 'dumbest' questions (and who never makes his/her students feel stupid), employs a powerful strategy against mathematics anxiety. It is of the greatest importance that you should have so much self-confidence and such a good self-image in mathematics that you have the courage to ask questions about aspects of mathematics that bother you, at any time, in any place, of anybody.

Maths teachers are not always aware of the fact that mathematics can evoke such profound emotions in you. Despite the fact that students sometimes experience their teachers as severe, aggressive or unfriendly, it appears from research that this subjective

perception is unfounded in the vast majority of cases. You need to see to it that you do your part to the best of your ability at all times.

The link between maths anxiety and achievement in mathematics

Remember that a measure of anxiety is desirable when you are writing any test or examination. This not only increases your preparedness, but also leads to higher achievement. Research has confirmed that a healthy degree of anxiety, especially when this anxiety is linked to the ability to stay focused, indicates that students take their work seriously and is a good predictor of success.

Wat maak ek as my kop toeslaan in my wiskunde-eksamen?

Hoe hanteer 'n mens dit as jy soveel angstigheid of vrees ondervind dat jy skielik niks kan onthou nie? Hier is 'n paar riglyne om wiskundevrees te hanteer.

- Leer 'n paar ontspanningstegnieke aan. 'n Ontspanne en aangename atmosfeer is belangrik in wiskunde. Kry die hulp van iemand soos jou beroepsvoorigter of sportafripter hiervoor.
- Spreek jou dokter as jy regtig nie van jou angstigheid ontslae kan raak nie. Onthou altyd om enige medikasie betyds te toets ten einde enige moontlike nuwe-effekte te vermy.
- Herevalueer jou eksamen- of toetsituasie. Dit beteken dat jy in die eerste plek jou benadering tot die situasie van negatief na positief moet verander. Onthou altyd dat studie sonder evaluering geen nut het nie; dat jy regtig die kans kry om jou

kennis van en insig in wiskunde te evalueer; dat jy kan bepaal waar jou swakhede en probleme is; dat swak resultate nie beteken "jy is 'n mislukking en sal nooit kan slaag nie". Die teenoorgestelde is waar!

- Plak iets groens op jou penhouer en kyk dikwels daarna. Groen sal jou help ontspan.
- Stel realistiese doelwitte vir jouself. Doen die moeite en probeer uitvind, indien nodig deur 'n sielkundige, watter doelwitte en aspirasies is realisties in jou geval en hou dan daarby.
- Ontwikkel goeie studiemetodes.

Alles van die allerbeste – en geniet jou opwindende reis deur die wêreld van wiskunde!

Relaxation techniques

- Adopt a comfortable position. Lie on your back, or sit comfortably. If your clothes are tight-fitting, loosen them. Breathe deeply and hold your breath for five seconds. Now breathe out and experience the feeling of calm that starts to take hold of you. Then breathe normally and concentrate on the pleasantly heavy feeling that takes hold of your body.
- Now contract every muscle in your body – contract every part of your body. Feel the tension throughout your entire body. Then allow all the muscles to relax completely and experience the feeling of calm that comes over you.
- Note the difference in the tension you experience when your eyes are open and the relaxed feeling you experience when your eyes are closed. Now relax all your muscles once again. Keep your eyes open and feel the tension leave you as soon as you close your eyes. Keep your eyes closed. Breathe in deeply and hold your breath. Keep your body relaxed, but be aware of the fact that you are still tense because you are holding your breath. Then let your breath out and experience the deep, relaxed feeling that takes hold of you.
- Breathe normally and experience the warm feeling of relaxation that flows through your body. If you completely surrender to the feeling of relaxation, if you experience it in every part of your body, you should feel calm, heavy and secure. Remember: complete relaxation leaves you with a feeling of peace and security.

Eksamenwenke

- Gaan toilet toe voor jy eksamen skryf.
- Moenie probeer om al die werk die dag voor die eksamen in jou kop te kry nie.
- Moenie die werk vinnig deurkyk voor jy die eksamenlokaal ingaan nie.
- Dra gemaklike klere.
- As jy onseker is oor een of meer vrae, ontspan. Jou vriende sal waarskynlik ook met dieselfde vrae sukkel. Dis nie nodig om na jou vriende te kyk nie – hulle gesigsuitdrukkings kan jou dalk verwar of ontstel.
- Rus tussen antwoorde en doen strekoefeninge met jou skouers, nek, enkels, arms en rug. Haal 'n paar keer diep asem. Maak reëlmatige bewegings met jou hande (maak net seker jy pla nie van die ander studente nie!).

Dis nie nodig om paniekerig te raak as jou kop skielik toeslaan nie – as jy skielik voel jy weet niks nie. Dis moontlik dat jy besig is om 'n 'blinde kol' met betrekking tot die oplossing te ontwikkel en dat jy net 'n rukkie lank iets anders moet doen voordat jy by die oplossing uitkom. Sit jou pen neer, kyk na iets wat groen is, dink aan 'n baie aangename ding in jou verlede; dink aan die redes hoekom jy wiskunde neem, hoekom jy graag goed wil vaar, vir wie jy graag goed wil vaar. Besoek in jou verbeelding 'n denkbeeldige veilige plek (besluit nou op so 'n plek waar jy veilig, gelukkig en ontspanne sal wees). Na 'n paar aangename ontspanne oomblikke behoort jou insig terug te keer, en jou 'toeslaankop' sal vanself regkom.

References

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