

WHY ARE WE THE LAST IN MATH?

by:

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In an international assessment conducted some three years ago to Junior High School, Philippines ranked 2nd to the last out of 76 countries in the subject Math. What are the underlying reasons behind? Whose fault is it that they got this unspeakable rank? Should Math teachers feel responsible for the results? What are we making now to challenge both the teachers and the learners to step up their game? What indications does the result show to us?

Mathematics, being taught as early as grade 2, appears to still be a difficult and vague subject to learn until graduate studies. Seldom, that we would learnersacing Math as if they were born for numbers. Let us first take a look at the classroom set-up and determine where might probably the problem is rooted. Learners learn in a variety of spectrum. Some of them are fast learners. Some are labeled as the 'not-yet' learners. A very good teacher places himself in this kind of diversity by tapping the multiple-intelligences of the learners. During the tender years of the learners, they must see connections of Math to the real world. My theory is that they do not see patterns and connections of the lessons to the real world. That is why most of them take Math for granted.

It is a common knowledge that Math serves a wide range of topics, from algebraic expressions to Calculus and Statistics. The challenge lies in the ability of the teacher to simplify these complex topics. These topics require teachers to be in depth with their pedagogies and this can only be achieved when they have already acquired maximum competence in what they are teaching. Trust me when I say that our Gen Z learners will

not learn from someone who does not know what he/ she is teaching. They won't learn from teachers who skip topics because they do not learn how to teach it.

Another aspect that we should take a look on is the coverage of what is being taught. Are the topics written in the worktext well-articulated? In a school year, what are the essential lessons for the learners to learn? It would a great idea that all Math teachers sit together and identify the most essential topics to be learned by the learners in 10 months per grade level. In this way, there will be no overlapping of topics nor missing out of the basic and rudimentary lessons.

In the context of the results by the international assessment, the truth is, our Math teachers are not doing very well. Let us not be blind by the achievements and victories that school are achieving because of the contests joined and won. Let us be alarmed by what the numbers are saying and what the results are saying. Seminars and workshops about Math are nothing if these are not applied and innovated.

Let us always be reminded of the basics: "A good Math teacher adds passion and commitment in what he/ she is doing and deducts difficulties to be encountered by the learners. He/she is someone who multiplies positive outcomes in class and divides complex Math concepts and/ or theories into bite-size information so that learners can arrive at a rightful and reasonable solution.

References:

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