STRENGTHENING MATHEMATICS EDUCATION IN THE PHILIPPINES

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In a diverse population like the Philippines, it is natural that students have diverse learning styles. A classroom is a microcosm of the society. Inside the schools, it is evident that every learner has strengths and weakness. One weakness of the Philippine education is the declining intelligence levels of students in mathematics and its branches. In news and reports, numerous studies and institutions have concretized the image of a country that struggles to comprehend equations and problem solving.

One of the probable causes of this enigma, a study reported, is the country's socio-economic status. Disparities between high socio-economic statuses and low have been more prevalent and have been researched (Lubienski, 2007). It is further discovered that willingness of students in low socio-economic statuses is not as high as their higher-socio economic statuses peers. Evidently, it also revealed that as far as being engaged and interested, the higher socio-economic statuses students enjoyed discussions on certain conflicting mathematics topics while lower socio-economic statuses often complained that they would get confused about which mathematics ideas were right and which were wrong.

Secondly, researchers have noticed a trend of parents of high school learners were being so busy that they cannot be involved in their children's education as exhibited through the parents' poor attendance at parent-teacher conferences and open houses (Hoover, 2001). The study found that parental involvement correlated with student success and performance in school through reinforcement and modeling. Teachers reported that learners do not attempt to complete their assignments or give up easily on homework activities. It was found that learners are most attentive on homework assignments what their parents are working with them or overseeing them while doing their homework. More importantly, the environment created by the parents was found to be connected with a student's own self-regulation of completion of their homework.

Third, the attitude of students and parents on mathematics education also matter in determining the quality of education in our country. A report revealed that a huge number of students and parents believed that studying higher level mathematics is not essential for life in the real world (Scherer, 2007). It was found that some learners only study higher level mathematics courses as graduation requirements. Some researchers (Arthur et. al., 2008) found that groups of parents realized that mathematics is important in education, but not essential in the need for opportunities or personal growth.

To address these causes, teachers can consider the use of multiple intelligences and grouping students. Grouping students in the mathematics settings is very effective and substantial according to many studies (Guth, 2005). Cooperative learning has many benefits for students' learning and teachers. Group work increases the opportunities for communication and made problem solving a richer learning experience for students. The teams that worked together felt less frustrated and were more confident. On the other hand, the utilization of multiple intelligences has been described as a framework for allowing teachers to explore their teaching styles. Multiple intelligence is one of the most important new ideas on the educational horizon because it can be a partners in the process of increasing the quality of education in schools.

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