

Unit One

Number Sense

Topic A: Emotions and Learning

Emotions, or what we feel about something, play a big part in how we learn. If we are calm, we learn well. If we are afraid or stressed, we do not learn as well.

Math anxiety or the fear of math is learned. If it is learned, it can be unlearned. Most math anxiety comes from bad memories we have of learning math.

Everyone can learn math. There are some people who are better at math than others, but even these people had to **learn** to be good at math.

People who are good at math have learned some skills to help them learn math. One useful skill is test taking.

Preparing for a Test

Getting ready for a test starts on the first day of class. Everything you do in class and at home is part of that getting ready.

Always do as many exercises as you need to help you understand. Once you understand, do ten more questions, then you will know for sure that you really understand.

Always correct your exercises. It is good to know that you are understanding and getting the questions right. It is also good to know if you are not understanding and need some help.

Always do the self-tests. The self-tests can show things that you are not sure of.

Always do the review. Review is part of this book. It is a chance to go over all the things you have learned in a unit before moving on. It prepares you for what will be on the test.

Always do a practice test. A practice test gives you a chance to see how many questions and what kind of questions are on the test.

Taking the Test

Always look over the test. Take a look at the whole test before starting. This takes very little time. Use a highlighter to highlight the questions that you know you can do easily. As you work, put a star beside any questions that you would like to go over again when you finish the test.

Relax. Before starting the test, imagine yourself somewhere where you are calm and confident. Go there in your mind. Focus on how good you feel and how in control you are. If you become anxious during the test, in your mind go to the calming place. Focus on how calm you feel. Then go back to your test.

Always check your test. Before you hand in your test, check it over. Be sure that you answered the question being asked. Look for any starred questions that you had trouble with and go over them again.

How to Deal with Math Anxiety

Anyone can feel anxiety that will slow down learning. The key to learning is to be the “boss” of your anxiety.

One way to be the “boss” is to relax. Try this breathing exercise.

Start by breathing in slowly to the count of four. It may help to close your eyes and count. Now hold your breath for four counts and then let your breath out slowly to the count of four. The counting is silent and should follow this pattern: “breathe in, two, three four; hold, two, three, four; breathe out, two, three, four; wait, two, three four.” With practice, the number of counts can be increased. This is an easy and good way to relax.

Now try this exercise quietly and repeat it five times slowly.

Each time you feel anxious about learning, use the breathing exercise to help calm yourself. Ask yourself if what you tried worked. Do you feel calmer?

Remember learning to deal with your math anxiety may take some time. It took you a long time to learn “math anxiety”, so it will take some time to overcome it.