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ED-609-81

September 27 2022

Mathematics, Culture, and Community: An Autobiography

**Part 1:** I really enjoyed math up until the 3rd grade, Where I would stare at my homework and cry because I didn't understand what to do and no one in my family knew how to help me. Looking back, I realize I didn't know how to do it because many of the instructions and word problems were in my second language: English. I was discouraged all through elementary school and middle school, where I earned my first 'C' grade in math. In high school I managed to get A grades, but it didn't mean I understood what I was doing. In college I became fairly neutral because I got good grades AND understood, but I still don't consider myself a math person today.

**Part 2:** In my math journey, meaningful experiences included getting opportunities to ask questions, as well as ask for clarification. Some turn-offs I encountered included being given homework that was not reviewed in class or explained. I was often turned-off by my lack of speed when it came to work completion and how long it took me to understand. My definition of math would be: The use of techniques to find a sum or a difference and make inferences. My past experiences have shaped my definition through the constant repetition it took to understand concepts, that is why it is more technical. This may affect my teaching of math by giving me an opportunity to put myself in my students shoes and being able to show them that there are various ways to come to an answer and that one way may work for you, but another way may work for your partner.