

Difficulties and Coping Strategies of Students in Learning Mathematics According to Their Proficiency Level

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aimed to know the difficulties and coping strategies of students in learning mathematics, specifically, as a whole and according to their proficiency level.

Method: It was conducted to 24 Grade 10 students of Gines National High School S.Y. 2015-2016. Participants were selected using convenience sampling from proficient, approaching proficiency and developing groups. The researcher-made questionnaire was the instrument used to gather data. An in-depth interview followed to confirm their responses and to get other information. Examination results were examined and the Devised Coping Strategy Inventory Tool was administered to validate difficulties and coping techniques of students. Obtained data were analysed using frequency and percentage for mathematics difficulties. Thematic Data Analysis, mean and standard deviation were used to analyse data for coping strategies.

Findings: Results of this study showed that regardless of proficiency level, students found arithmetic, information, language, and visual spatial difficult. Taking down notes, spending time for review, sitting near front, and listening attentively were primarily the coping styles of students in mathematics. Students of developing, approaching proficiency and proficient groups differed with the use of sitting-near-front, listening-attentively, practicing-solving and asking-the-teacher coping methods.

Significance: It concluded that students experiencing these difficulties in mathematics lack skills and cognitive abilities. Students face the same difficulties but at different intensity levels. On the other hand, students learned to cope with their difficulties individually. The students who listened more attentively, often seated near front of the class and frequently asked teacher questions were the proficient students. Appropriate actions were recommended.

Keywords: Coping Strategies, Difficulties, Mathematics, Proficiency Level, Students