Abstract

Mathematics anxiety is a highly relevant issue in mathematics education. Research into pre-service teachers’ mathematics anxiety has indicated a number of worthwhile strategies to help minimize its effect on the nervous learner. Of particular interest is the Thinking Classroom model. However, while the research is comprehensive on pre-service teachers it is sparse when concerning middle school aged children. I have implemented a number of these strategies into a middle-school program designed for anxious youth. The current study is an exploration into how the Thinking Classroom model helps students lower their anxiety surrounding mathematics. During the study, students were asked to create a written reflection piece called a Math Autobiography, given a MARS-R several times and then interviewed. While not all students exhibited a decrease in anxiety, most students reported at the end of the study that they felt their abilities had increased in mathematics and felt more positive about the subject.

Keywords: mathematics anxiety; MARS-R; Math Autobiography; Thinking Classroom; middle school