
A Baker's Dozen: Reasons for Individualized Math Classes

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- 1) Math classes are not filled according to ability.
- 2) Many of our students have not done any math in years.
- 3) A student who is able to do advanced math does not want to do subtraction of whole numbers.
- 4) A student who understands a concept does not want to wait until others in class “get it.”
- 5) Students who do not have a comfort level with math feel “bad” that they don’t get it when most others do.
- 6) Some students prefer to have lots of examples and then have time to practice with many of the same sort of problems until they get comfortable with them.
- 7) Students want to progress as quickly as possible. They say that they want to get the answers correct, not play games.
- 8) Many students from countries other than the U.S. have great computation skills, but the vocabulary and reading gets in the way on word or “wordy” problems. Working one-on-one with these students helps them to pull out what is necessary, resolving the confusion of words and math quickly.
- 9) Some students cannot even make monetary exchanges, and others have an inappropriate attitude regarding these students.
- 10) Students who can’t keep up with the class get frustrated and drop out.
- 11) Students who can’t keep up with the class sit at the back and never catch up.
- 12) Students need to know they aren’t alone with the problem. By sitting alongside them, the teacher helps them feel less tense, more at ease. Students can confide some of the gaps in their knowledge. For example, by working one-to-one, Joan found out that a student couldn’t tell time or understand concepts like “two weeks from tomorrow” or “the third Monday of the month.” Students feel less comfortable admitting their gaps in a large group setting.
- 13) The students’ progress and comfort in class is a priority.