

Four Simple Truths about Learning Mathematics

1. You are in charge of your learning.

Your teachers and others around you may put a lot of effort into helping you learn, but since you are the one learning, you make the biggest difference. If you often think things like "I'll never understand math," "I'm sure I'll fail this math test," or even "I shouldn't have to learn this," it's hard to believe anything else. But you CAN succeed at math! Instead, try a positive mindset. Think "If I work hard, I can learn this," "There are lots of places for me to get help," and "This class is helping me reach my goal." Choose to do math at your best study time of the day, get help when you need it, keep your study materials organized, take good notes, and attend class daily.

2. How you study makes a difference.

If you've learned a musical instrument, language or sport, you already know how important it is to practice. Math takes practice, too! Plan to spend at least two hours per day. Do your homework during this time, but also take time to do more problems than are assigned, read the text, and review previous concepts. As questions arise, take note of them and ask your instructor.

Here is a study suggestion: practice doing some problems without looking at your book or notes. After all, you probably won't have your book or your notes with you during the test. If you don't get them right away, give yourself time to see what parts you can figure out. Then check in the book to see how you did, note what you missed and try again with some more problems. When you feel good about those problems, try mixing them with problems from the previous week.

3. You will have to pass the test.

Do you do well at homework, but not on the test? There are things you can do during your study routine that will help prepare you for a test situation.

- Give yourself mini-tests daily: choose some problems, close your book, and set a timer.
- Design a longer practice test the week before an exam. Include problems from every concept.
- Use a clever test-taking strategy.
 1. Start by writing a couple of formulas down at the top of the test (especially ones you tend to forget).
 2. Scan the test and identify which problems look easy and which have the most points. Do these first.
 3. Don't spend too much time on any one problem.
 4. If you have time, check over your work.

4. You can get help.

- Talk to your instructor in office hours or make an appointment. He or she can help with math content and also give you more tips on how to study/learn math.
- Study at the Math Learning Center (room 2202) which offers study groups and tutoring.
- Set up an appointment with a counselor at the Advising & Counseling Center (room 5229 or call 546-4559) for help with test anxiety, stress management, general counseling and more.
- Take the class Math 081, Math Success Strategies. It is a 2-credit class especially for students in Math 070, 080, and 099. Learn how to succeed in math!
- Get free individual tutoring. More info at www.shoreline.edu/tutoring or call 546-4776.
- Visit the Writing and Learning Studio (room 1501) for help with time management, note-taking and other study techniques.