Guaranteed Success—How can you pass this math class?

We all know that math is a difficult subject. So difficult at times, that we would rather ignore it and avoid it (Math Anxiety). However, you know you cannot do this with mathematics. Your advancement towards a degree or certification depends on you success in your math course. So here is a study guide to help you succeed in math. I will guarantee that if you do study in the manner that is described, you will succeed in your math course and you can use this studying practice for all your classes! It works!

**The Game Plan**

The recommended hours of study for each credit hour you take is 2-3 hours per credit per week. Since this math class is a 5-credit hour class, this means you should be spending 10-15 hours a week studying math. And since we are busy, this study time needs to be efficient and helpful. Here is a great way to organize your 2-3 hours of study time. It should be done in three shifts and it does not have to be done all at once.

**Shift 1:** (15—30 min.) This shift should be done as soon as you can after your math class. During this shift, you should review (maybe even rewrite) your notes from class. Quite often, I hear students tell me that they understand the material as we go over it in class, but blank out when they try their homework. This study phase forces you to go back through class and see if you really understood the material. I suggest that you do this phase with a classmate(s). You can discuss together any possible mistakes or discuss any class items in more detail. Another benefit to this phase is that you can correct any possible mistakes by catching them early and discussing them with your instructor.

**Shift 2:** (15—30 min.) In this shift, you should redo each example done in class and maybe a few from the textbook that the lecture covered for the day. You redo each example until you can go from the beginning to the end with complete understanding. For each example, you should understand what the problem is trying to address, (i.e. what type of problem is it?), you should understand how to start the problem, understand each step, and understand your answer. Make sure you are understanding all phases of the problem, not simply memorizing the problem. Again, I suggest that you do this phase with a classmate(s). Treat it as a Think-Pair-Share activity.

**Shift 3:** (1—1.5 hrs.) In this shift, you are now doing the assigned homework for the textbook section that was covered in class. At this time, since you spent time preparing for the HW, you should be able to do most of the HW problems more efficiently. Furthermore, when you do get stuck, you are going to have a better idea which examples you can reference to obtain help. And lastly, do not spend more than 10 minutes doing one problem. If this happens, make a note of it, write some questions down that you have, and then move on. You can then bring your questions to your group in class or your instructor during office hours.

If you follow this plan, studying for quizzes and tests will no longer be a cram session, but a review session. Your questions will be specific and productive, and hence, you will be in control of the situation (fighting Math Anxiety) as you put yourself on a path to succeed in your math class!

**Other Study Items**

**Time-Management:** This is a life-skill that needs to be done as a student. Make note of where you are spending your time, and adjust your schedule accordingly. If you are committed to too much, you are putting yourself in an unrealistic situation. At some point, something is going to give. Chances are you are going to fail a course.

**Helpful Help:** There is no doubt that you are going to seek out the help of a tutor, a friend, or your instructor. This is good and you should be getting help. But there is a fine-line between getting help and constantly having another person(s) do the problem for you. If you are repeatedly asking for help as you do your assigned HW, this simply means that you do not understand the material and you may need revisit phases 1 or 2 in the “Game Plan”.