



Unsettling Understandings of Maths Anxiety

A critical synthesis to inform policy and practice

The British Academy has commissioned a research team to provide an up-to-date systematic review of research into the issue of maths anxiety, analyse its implications for policy and practice, and identify potential interventions and gaps in our knowledge. This Special Research Project is part of the British Academy's initiative to deepen awareness and demonstrate the importance of quantitative skills.

Situating the review

Despite the large amount of literature related to mathematics anxiety and the underlying concerns around numeracy and confidence with numbers, there has been to date a limited understanding of the evidence beyond the different research communities that dealt with the topic and its implications. Previous research also suggests that the focus on anxiety needs to be tempered by other closely related variables and constructs (such as dispositions, efficacy, and identity). To identify the implications for policy and practice, the phenomenon needs to be understood from the outset as both a psychological and a sociological, cultural phenomenon.

Report and Outcomes

The final report is envisaged to cover particular sub-sections on pre-school, compulsory stages (primary and secondary) and post-compulsory education and life; parental anxiety, and teachers' anxiety and their influences. The research team intend to make available the project outputs through open access (where possible) and in accessible formats such as searchable databases for both the literature and datasets. The project team places great emphasis on reaching as many beneficiaries as possible, from the outset, and in conducting a systematic review that is from the beginning conditioned by the focus on policy and practice; towards this end the team intend to work closely with various stakeholders to ensure that policy agendas are reflected in terms of a 'what can work and why?' for pedagogy and practice.

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