

Preface

When I first began traveling around the country working with teachers in Grades K–12, I thought that every one of my workshop participants came into our sessions with the same love of mathematics that I held.

That assumption was, as the politician might say, not entirely true.

Now, most teachers at the middle and high school levels were hired specifically to teach math, and I hasten to add that the majority of those teachers are comfortable with—no, better yet, even enjoy—teaching it.

However, that is not necessarily the case with the typical self-contained elementary or special education teacher who must wear a variety of hats and give instruction in a much wider range of subjects than just math. While some of those teachers like teaching math, others feel less competent or uncomfortable teaching it.

Truth be told, the single most important determinant for the success of math students at the secondary level is their preparation at the elementary level. But the task today is more daunting than ever, and changes in what is taught, how it should be taught, and especially how much more often it is assessed, impact how elementary teachers feel about teaching mathematics.

So, in response to requests from many outstanding elementary and middle school teachers who have “survived” my workshops, I am offering this collection of creative lessons and activities in order to stimulate the mind and encourage all involved to think differently about math.

Believe me, math is there for the taking. Take a little walk with me and my contributing friends. We think you’ll like what you see!