

1116-A5-1986

Morgan H. Sargent* (mhsargent@gmail.com), , Canada. *IFF You Already Understand: The roots of elitism and exclusion in mathematical education and what we can do about it.*

Formal mathematical education goes back as far as ancient Egypt. In ancient societies, it was often the priesthood that controlled and developed mathematics and therefore mathematical education. The same tools of control that were employed in the administration of religion were often used in the administration of mathematics. Math was used as a tool of religious control, and only by attaining certain levels of priesthood could one gain access to certain points of knowledge or education. Although we are no longer directly engaged in promoting mathematics as a tool only for the religious elite, it is still broadly perceived as something only a select few can participate in. Our methods of assessment only re-enforce this perception: hierarchical pre-requisites for courses; silent isolation for testing; rewards and punishment based on attention to details; and strict recreations of existing knowledge are just some of the tools that we use. As a result, we have a public that accepts as given ideas of “math-phobia” and “math anxiety.” In order to change the public perception of mathematics, we must change mathematical education including, or perhaps especially, how we assess students’ capacity and understanding of mathematics. (Received September 21, 2015)