Let's Think About BIMDAS

Topic: Number

A structured problem solving lesson getting students to think about the order of operations.

Year Group: 3rd Year Level: Ordinary

Presenting the Problem

You have three 4s, you may use any mathematical operations to come up with as many different answers as possible.



Note: Students are not to use "44" or "444"



Reflecting on the Learning

The lesson went very well, that it was pitched to the correct level and that the students benefited from it and appeared to enjoy it. We were particularly pleased to observe active participation by all students during the task. We believe this was a result of the teacher's clear description of the task and use of an example on the board prior to letting the students begin. It is noteworthy that this was one of the first times that the students experienced structured problem solving and yet they had no issues with it. Students were self-motivated to carry on and get as many answers as possible. This is in stark contrast to some of our own experiences when first introducing structured problem solving to some of our older classes. We believe this highlights the importance of introducing structured problem solving as early as possible in first year. By introducing it early and using it as often as possible, one will give structured problem solving the best opportunity of becoming part of classroom culture in post primary teaching.



Developed by Kieran Carey, Michelle Cumiskey and Elaine Devlin, with thanks to Liam Doheny MDT and the students from De La Salle College, Dundalk, Co. Louth.

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