

## What Does it Mean to Have Knowledge in Math?

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**“To know that we know what we know, and to know what we do not know, that is true knowledge.” — Nicolaus Copernicus**

**T**o begin math class with fourth and fifth graders, I presented this quote and asked the students to respond in writing with what they thought the quote meant.

### **Shannon Niewsluchowski, 5th Grade**

If you know what you do not know and know that you do not know it, then that shows that you have knowledge and shows that you are smarter than you think. If you know that you don't know something instead of lying to yourself and everyone else that you know something, it means that you are honest to yourself and others.

### **Korel Gudukoglu, 4th Grade**

Copernicus is saying that if we know what we don't know that is true knowledge. It is more important to know what you do know because you can learn things you do not know using what you do know.

### **Riley Balhan, 4th Grade**

We know our prior knowledge and we also know what we do not know, which means that if you don't know something, you should know what it is. You should persevere through it and try to learn what it is that you are trying to figure out. To know what you do know means that you have to know what you know to even begin to start learning something new. In math, it is better to know that you don't know something because that can bring you a lot farther because all you have to do is believe in yourself and persevere through hard work.

### **Jordyn Charles, 5th Grade**

The things that you do not know are most important because then you can expand and build on to what you do know. Otherwise, you would stay with no new knowledge and not build on anything.

### **Edgar Grimaldo, 5th Grade**

I think knowing what you don't know is more important because you can work up to what you don't know with what you do know. You can also see what you don't know to help you know what to do to learn it. If you see what you don't know, you can know what you need to know, to know what to do about what you don't know.

### **Jonathan Wagner, 4th Grade**

We have to know the things we know or we won't know the things we need to know.