The podcast “Don’t Fear Math” explored concerns with math in academia and life and posed solutions to some of those concerns. Felicia Jones recognizes the problem that girls are greatly underrepresented in math. Jones notes that on average girls decide math isn’t for them at the age of 15. To me, this highlights a huge problem with the education system. Clearly some forces are making girls think that they aren’t good at math and discouraging them from pursuing math-related careers. The college of engineering at the University of Michigan notes in their fliers that they have a 28% women demographic. It is apparent that women aren’t choosing to go into tech or other math fields. There are many problems with this, but one of them is that women are going to continue to be underrepresented in industry with tech. This means that men will have a far larger grasp on the advancements of technology, which inherently will favor men.

Dan Finkle is a mathematician who has spoken about the problems in the education system within mathematics. I definitely agree with all of the points that he made. Students are motivated to get good grades and the way to do so is by getting the right answer. However, when this is the only motivating force I’ve found myself losing my love for math and becoming obsessed with the right answers. Yet, math is really about problem solving and finding patterns, both very important skills in education.

I came into this course having already taken Calculus III and receiving an A grade in high school because I had to retake the class because the University of Michigan didn’t take credit from that dual enrollment program. Having a passionate teacher who knew how to articulate difficult concepts was incredibly helpful in my overall understanding of calculus. I truly loved having you as a professor, your teaching and attitude towards math greatly top any of my other math experiences. Outside of learning, I enjoy teaching people in academics. Yet, I admittedly struggle with explaining concepts, so I definitely was taking mental notes of your teaching style throughout the course. Also, your use of oral exams was an amazing touch to this class. Being able to explain problems is so important in computer science and in other tech fields and I’m glad I could develop that skill this summer. Although I’m sure I could’ve gone through my future classes without having taken Calculus III again, I now feel that I have a very strong understanding of the topics that will help me understand future problems in greater detail. Actually, I’ve already come across gradients in learning about neural networks and I was able to understand that section! Thank you very much for everything you’ve taught me this semester and for making this course enjoyable!