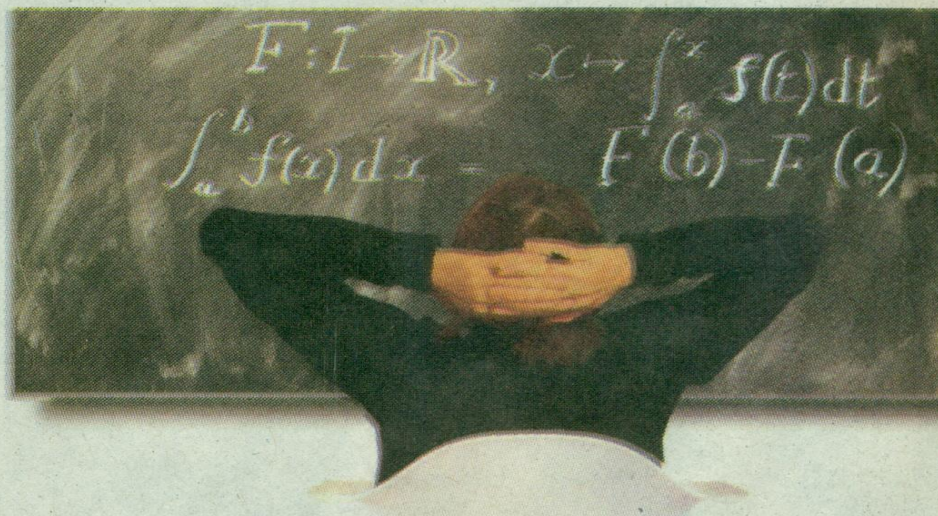


Everyday math

Math gives one a logical approach to problem-solving, and is a life skill



SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Effective learning: Making math visual.

■ DIVYA GOKULNATH

Mathematics is a universal language. Its omnipresence makes it an integral part of our life. Every single mathematical formula and equation has a reason as well as application that makes life more structured and less chaotic.

From calculating the amount of money you need to buy lunch, measuring the distance to work, to assessing the amount of weekly groceries – mathematics is part of our everyday decisions.

Interestingly, the animal kingdom also weaves in mathematical applications in their lives. The hexagonal combs of bees, spider webs, snail shells (the shell increases in size like a geometric progression) are some of the great examples of how mathematics blends abstractionism with reality.

Fear-driven

Unfortunately, learning mathematics for most students is still driven by the fear of exams, rather than the love for the subject. What feels complicated in maths to students can be made easier and enjoyable if our curriculum includes activities and games. Explaining mathematical theories with visual representations would definitely make learning exciting as most humans are primarily visual learners.

Use of technology can aid in making learning simple, fun, contextual, interactive, and personalised. Technology in education enables a combination of teachers, videos, and interactives to deliver personalised learning, feedback and assessments. Big data analytics can ensure that every child learns at their pace and style.

Maths is more real than you think: Always learn math by relating it to real life examples. Break

maths concepts into fun and relatable situations. Grocery shopping, for example, requires a broad range of math knowledge from multiplication to estimation and percentages. Each time you calculate the price per unit, weigh produce, figure percentage discounts, and estimate the final price, you are using math in your shopping experience

Travelling becomes more exciting: From estimating the amount of fuel needed, distance to be travelled to paying the highway tolls, everything can be analysed and calculated with the help of mathematical applications. In fact, long before Google Maps and GPS, travellers used to use paper maps, atlases, road signs, and so on, to reach a destination which included the use of basic math.

Visualising is the key: Understanding complex maths concepts becomes easier when you visualise it and give it an entity that you can relate to. A circle can be a pizza or a cake, which you can then cut into pieces to understand fractions!

Learning mathematics this way will help students understand not just the “What” of maths concepts, but the “Why” and “How” as well. In short, mathematics nurtures a plethora of *personality-boosting* qualities like creativity, critical thinking, reasoning, and problem-solving abilities.

Overall, math is not just a subject; it is a way of thinking. It gives you a logical approach towards problem-solving, which is an important life skill. Hence, students should approach maths as not a mere subject, but as a life skill that will help them in decision-making.

The writer is Director and Teacher at BYJU'S - The Learning App.