

Algebra II students, Katie Taft, Dana Schamp, Kevin Klasmeier, and Billy Demas question their teacher on the importance of a theory.

"When Are We Going to Use This . . . ?

We have all seen the poor soul sitting in the corner poring over his math and pulling out his hair in desperation. Finally, he screams in exasperation, "When are we going to use this in the real world?" He wonders at the usefulness of this strange arrangement of numbers and rules that we are told are a necessity for life.

We started questioning the sanity of our teachers early when they attempted to show the logic in long division and the fun in order of operations. Later, as they introduced us to algebra and geometry, we were convinced that they were stark raving mad. Then there were those strange and persistent people who, in high school, continued on into trigonometry and even, OH, NO, CALCULUS! They knew or felt something that drove them to work with identities and imaginary numbers.

This leads me to the three reasons why math is so important.

1. Math is important so that

we can be confused by science. As one reclusive teacher said, "Math is the queen and slave of science." This is quite correct, actually. Without math, any grasp of the physical sciences is impossible.

2. Math is important so that we can become productive members of society. That same teacher said, "Math is a prerequisite for any career in math or science e.g. engineering, architecture, chemistry, etc." Even fields that aren't technical require adequate math skills. It's called being well rounded.

3. Math is important to help us in every part of our lives — personal and professional. It basically teaches problem solving skills. We (supposedly) learn to think more logically.

So the basic answer to, "When are we going to use this in the real world?" is you won't — not directly anyway. But the skills you gain from the effort will serve you long into the real world.

By Alison Ogle



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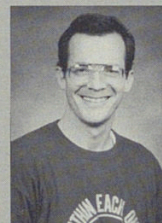
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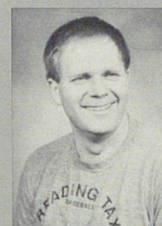
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