

Re: Math is not a memoriter course.

Re: Math is not a memoriter course.

Source: <http://sci.tech--archive.net/Archive/sci.math/2007-08/msg04208.html>

- *From:* "Stephen J. Herschkorn" <sjherschko@xxxxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Fri, 24 Aug 2007 20:31:57 -0400
-

Herman Rubin wrote:

In article <1187966095.414568.184130@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>, <aatu.koskensilta@xxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

Someone wrote:

Do they really believe that it could possibly do more harm to the student than would be done over a lifetime by not knowing the single digit multiplication facts?

Why do they have to know the single digit multiplication facts? I often do base 16 computations, and I have made no attempt to memorize its multiplication table.

In fact, one the touted methods of teaching, Chisenbop, only assumes that multiplication by 1, 2, 5, and 10 are memorized, and uses the distributive law for the rest. Since multiplying by 5 is essentially dividing by 2, not too much has to be learned. But the only thing gained by learning tables is speed; why do we not have children memorize the tables to 100 or 1000?

My experience is that students who cannot multiply without the aid of a calculator have all the more trouble with later subjects such as algebra and statistics. How can one learn to factor polynomials if one cannot multiply? Very slowly, I guess.

Re: Math is not a memoriter course.

Re: Math is not a memoriter course.

Only slightly off topic, it still annoys me if, when I ask a student what half of 0.05 is (e.g., in the process of determining a rejection region for hypothesis testing), s/he to pull out a calculator to give me an answer

I have no idea where you get the idea that children aren't taught the multiplication table. I also find I have not been horribly harmed by not knowing the multiplication table.

See the above. Napier's "bones" were devices for people who could add but not multiply. But computers and calculators are even faster.

There are real problems with mathematics education today — some quite widespread, some specific to certain countries —, and it would be more sensible to concentrate on those, instead of ranting on imaginary ills.

Students do not understand any of the concepts involved with the integers, and cannot formulate problems. This is FAR more important than knowing how to solve standard problems; anything which is learned about solving problems below the graduate level can NOW be done by machine.

This is not a matter of either/or. Students need to learn some basic machinery by heart. And they should understand concepts as well. Usually, a lack of the former really hinders the latter.

—
Stephen J. Herschkorn sjherschko@xxxxxxxxxxxxx
Math Tutor on the Internet and in Central New Jersey and Manhattan

Re: Math is not a memoriter course.