

Re: Tackling John Baez Head-On

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- *From:* "OsherD" <mdoctorow@xxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* 12 Apr 2005 08:21:09 -0700
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>>From Osher Doctorow

Let's look at algebra as a language, at a very intuitive level.

Suppose that you tried to discover something by using vocabulary (words) in English. You have over 100,000 words to choose from (over 150,000 a few decades ago). You're not likely to get anywhere, right? Not unless you had some rules for selecting among words?

Of course, you might learn some relationships among/between words, but again you'd need some criteria for finding important relationships.

You'd need logic, geometry, probability-statistics, analysis, arithmetic/number theory, observation of the real world, science and its methods (with or without modifications and updates), even psychology and the social sciences wouldn't hurt and would probably help.

When your knowledge has advanced enough, you might look for algebra as a way of categorizing what you've learned, and then you'd look for rules between/among the algebra categories and at the few - very few - algebraic rules that you have. If you developed really advanced algebraic rules, you'd probably be using the other fields as guides.

Osher Doctorow

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 - ◇ *From:* OsherD
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