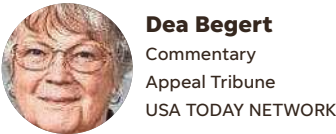


Helping students grow ‘Math Minds’



One of my hopes for the new year is that more students in Oregon will step up their game in math. The last round of test scores showed just over 40 percent of all students meeting state standards. We can do better, and I mean “we” because our students are not alone. We as teachers and parents need to do better to support our children when it comes to math.

After becoming an elementary school teacher myself, my students would tell me how much they hated math, that it was too hard, and that it was just for geeks. Here I am now, many years and countless students later, knowing firsthand that math is not too difficult for anyone! All students have the potential to be good at math when they are encouraged, are allowed to explore numbers, and understand that it’s alright to make mistakes.

Much like learning to ride a bike or to play guitar, math is a learned set of skills that students must be given the opportunity to practice and understand how to use. With perseverance, effort, encouragement, and patience, every student is capable of making their math mind grow. Mistakes are part of that learning process.

It’s up to parents and teachers to guide students on that journey to grow their math minds and nurture their perseverance. Here are a few tips — by the numbers:

1. Explore math on their own. Give your students a math project and allow them to be creative to complete

Your Turn

Have a topic, issue or viewpoint pertinent to Silverton or the east Willamette Valley you would like to share? The Silverton Appeal Tribune welcomes letters to the editor up to 250 words, or submissions to the Your Turn section, from 600 to 750 words, on topics of broader interest.

Contact Justin Much at 503-508-8157 or jmuch@salem.gannett.com.

the assignment. Some children may draw pictures, or experiment with other tools instead of written equations. This kind of independence and empowerment teaches children to take ownership of their learning. Parents may see one of those “lightbulb” moments when your child realizes how to solve a challenging equation. If they get stuck, try one of the steps below.

2. Problem solving is a process. Let children discover there are many different ways to solve problems. Allow them to take risks, try new things, experiment, take a guess, be wrong, find and correct their own mistakes. Perhaps there is no right or wrong answer, just concepts to try. Listen to your student and their ideas. Encourage them to ask questions, or explain the method they used to work out a problem.

3. Math is all around us. Students often understand the importance of math if you show them that math is everywhere in everyday life. Ask them to use practical applications such as measuring ingredients for recipes, calculating discounts at the grocery store, or determining mileage on vacation.

4. Play fun math games. Find math-oriented games including old-fashioned board games or puzzles from a local toy shop. You can create lots of math games by using a pair of dice or playing cards. How

about hop-scotch with some colorful chalk on the sidewalk for younger kids or a math brain teaser to develop logical reasoning and problem-solving skills for older children? Of course, there are a ton of apps and other digital learning tools available for making math more enjoyable.

5. Praise and positive energy. Commend the processes your students use and their efforts. When a challenging problem leads to discovery it boosts your child’s confidence in their math abilities. Provide positive comments about math and connect it to your children’s interests or hobbies. Praise your students for their efforts even if the answer is not yet correct. Let them know you believe in them.

I enjoy helping my second graders explore, ask questions, make mistakes, work for the answers and develop their imaginations in math. As a life-long learner and teacher I’m looking forward to trying new math methods and improving old ones; I hope someday more students will see math as a skill to practice and learn instead of a chore to fear and dread.

Dea Begert of Clackamas is a second-grade teacher at Oregon Connections Academy. She can be reached through the academy at www.OregonConnectionsAcademy.com, 800-382-6010.

Dam

Continued from Page 1A

weather or otherwise, then getting delayed and extended. That would push the threshold of that resilience.

"It's a very convenient, much used getaway for people," Loveberg said of the lake. "People go for a picnic for a day or stay for a week. People come and pitch a tent or stay in a motor home. We have people who live on their boats.

"Those people are going to be missed."

Construction options

Corps representatives, including project manager Jeff Ament, described a 300-foot tower and fish-collector barge the size of a football field. They presented an overview of the scope of the project and encouraged all on hand to submit input about the project’s effects, which will be used as part of an environmental impact statement.

Ament’s presentation outlined a handful of alternatives considered for the project, which is envisioned to take place in two phases of about 24 to 36 months each between 2021 and 2028. The most impactful phase — as far as water reservoir levels and river flows — would take place during the tower building phase.

The alternatives ranged from a dry build, which could potentially reduce Detroit Lake levels significantly for two years, to a wet build, which would not reduce the water but could create numerous complications, safety considerations and obstacles, a project akin to building a skyscraper base under water.

While the project, including the environmental impact statement, is in its incipient planning stages, a thin window for providing input has created another issue; the corps is accepting public input through Tuesday, Jan. 23.

The corps is charged with modifying water temperatures to be more hospitable to the fish as part of a 2008 legal agreement termed the Biological Agreement. Ament indicated that strides have been taken to that end, including developing adult fish collection facilities between 2009-16, and exploration of the current project builds from that.

Input is central to that planning.

"We do not have all the answers; that’s why we are here," Ament said.

"We’re working on that input, and we’ve been advocating that some of our customers pay close attention to the issue too," Loveberg said.

Proposed alternatives presented illustrated a variety of scenarios, all of which included no hydropower production during the project.

One saw the reservoir levels remaining at 1,310 feet for two full years — more than 100 feet lower than the recent 2015 dry spell — which posed the lowest safety risks.

On the other extreme was construction at normal reservoir elevations, which requires underwater blasting, expensive approaches and significant construction obstacles and safety risks.

The alternatives between the extremes varied, including one summer with the water level at 1,310 feet to construct the foundation on dry grounds while the remainder of construction would be tackled in underwater conditions.

Another proposed a summer construction season with 1,310-foot water levels, then gradually increasing

reservoir water levels with construction height, but always building in dry or above water conditions.

Building a watertight enclosure called a coffer dam around the construction was also suggested, but the canyon’s geometry may hamper the feasibility of that approach.

Public input can be submitted to: detroit.fish.pasage@usace.army.mil or by mail to Kelly Janes, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Attn: PM-E, PO Box 2946 Portland, OR 97208-2946.

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