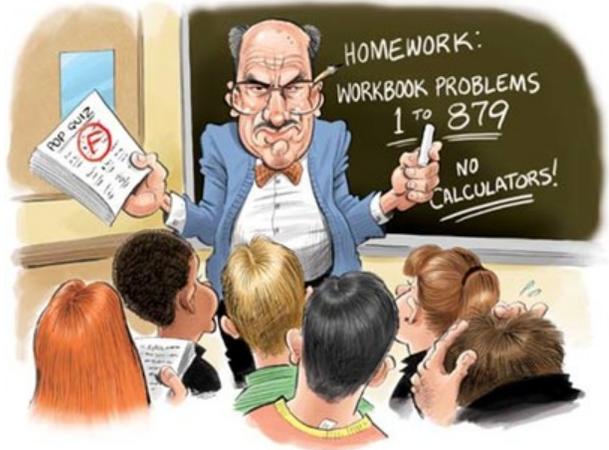


# How To Not Suck at Teaching Math

[fuelgreatminds.com/how-to-not-suck-at-teaching-math](http://fuelgreatminds.com/how-to-not-suck-at-teaching-math)

June 14, 2015

Math teachers are a special group of people. They quantify, analyze, and look for patterns in everything that they do. The only other group of teachers that really understand math teachers are science teachers because these teachers get excited about things that nobody else understands.



In my 15 years of teaching I have had to the pleasure of working with, supporting and coaching many many math teachers and the one thing that I noticed about math teachers is that they can be down right BORING! They focus on algorithms and computation of numbers instead of celebrating the beauty of math in everyday life. In my most humble opinion some math teachers just suck at teaching math.

If you have ever heard the brutal comments that students make about teachers you have probably heard that either the teacher is mean or boring. Boring math teachers can improve their classroom instruction by including student engagement strategies, literacy strategies, and real-world connections.

## **Student Engagement Strategies-**

Some teachers see student engagement as them having to be a circus act. This happens to be the furthest from the truth. Teaching a math lesson that has high student engagement means that the lesson sustained the students' attention, induced curiosity, allowed peer-to-peer interaction, and is personally meaningful and relevant to the students.

## **Literacy Strategies-**

It is a known fact among math teachers that teach in Title 1 schools that many of the students that they teach are struggling readers. Most math teachers do not feel that it is their job to teach literacy in mathematics. Honestly it is everyone's responsibility to support literacy when the student population are struggling with reading. Math literacy strategies are not mirror images of the Language Arts strategies because math is not a text based subject. Comprehension strategies such as Reciprocal Teaching can be modified to support literacy in the math classroom. After all READING IS THINKING no matter where the reading takes place.

## Real-Word Connections-

Most students disconnect from a lesson when they don't see the value in learning what you are teaching. There are so many real-life connections that can be made when teaching mathematics. This is especially true in secondary mathematics. I can remember teaching an 8th grade math summer school class and the students didn't understand the concept of slope. The next day I brought in pictures of ramps on the interstate and we talked about what would happen if the ramps didn't rise gradually? This small but relevant piece of information cemented their definition of slope.

There is an art to teaching mathematics to students because most students already have a negative view of math. It is my love of mathematics that I try to share with my students every time I stand in front of them. I know that we tend to think that students should want to learn because getting a good education is important, but this generation of students have access to stimulating activities are competing with your math lesson. My co-worker always used to ask, "Are you a lecturer or a teacher?" or do you even know the difference? I'm going leave you with this question which one are you?

Teenager Post # 100

Dear teacher,

When 90% of us fail, it isn't  
cause we didnt try, its because  
you're a terrible teacher.

Sincerely,  
your students.

//teenagerposts.tumblr.com