

mathematics steps in. Every day, every time, when I need mathematics, it shows up big for me. What's not to love about that?

I could go on and on. However, I need to talk about something more important here: How can we set the stage for PK–12 students to develop a similar healthy relationship with mathematics? Tackling this challenge will put us in a better position to offer all students an opportunity to engage in and be successful in mathematics. So, how do we do this? Here are a few ideas for you to think about.

First, we must continue to challenge notions related to mathematics being something only “smart” people can do. When a student gets a whiff of the idea that mathematics is just for smart people—the moment that student accepts the thought of “I can't do mathematics; so I guess I'm not smart” or “I'm not smart, so I guess I can't do mathematics”—then we have lost the battle with that student.

There was a time when I did not think I could do mathematics. There was a time when I did not think that I was smart. So, from personal experience, I can say that it is a bad combination, and unless some helpful interventions disrupt this pattern of thinking, we are allowing students to miss out on their potential in mathematics.

Second, what ever happened to mathematics being fun? Now, I know that school cannot be all “fun and games,” but let me challenge you on this. Think of something fun you participated in recently. Think of how you felt and the details of the environment you were in: how it looked, how it smelled, the sounds you heard. Now think of something completely mundane you did, that you found boring, unappealing, uninteresting. Can you recall the level of detail in this scenario? Most likely not, but even if you can, are you happy about those details? Nope! Bottom line, if we know that we will stick with something that is enjoyable, why do we think this is not applicable to students in mathematics?

Students need the opportunity to enjoy mathematics. This can happen in so many unique ways. We can create scenarios for students to apply mathematics in ways that are meaningful to them. We can provide opportunities

for students to engage in healthy and mutually enjoyable competition in mathematics. We can select problems and tasks that are interesting and intriguing. We can help students study mathematics from different angles such as the history of mathematical ideas. Let's commit to making mathematics something students want to do, want to study, want to engage in, want to apply.

This is my final example, but it is not an exhaustive list of things we can do to help students develop a love for mathematics. Show your love for mathematics! I know this sounds simple, but it really works. When we are prepared to show our authentic awe and enthusiasm about mathematics and our genuine perplexity about challenges in mathematics, these actions become appropriate models for students to follow. Excitement is infectious! We can do this by learning *with* students rather than being the keeper of the answer key. A great general is leading the battle, not standing on a hill watching it!

We can model this leadership by giving students an opportunity to select or pose problems that they relate to and then honoring those problems with the same attention we give to problems we select. We can also provide space for students to voice their challenges as well as their successes in mathematics, and we can commiserate with how we have been stumped by mathematics as well.

Today, mathematical challenges are the norm, but it is up to us as educators to demonstrate our own mathematical challenges, concurrently upholding our love for it. As a member of the editorial board for this awesome journal, I am proud of everything we do in this journal. Serving NCTM in this capacity is a great privilege. However, for this moment, I am going to give a great big shout-out to *MTLT's* For the ♥ of Mathematics Department. I find this department irresistible!

The ideas, images, suggestions, challenges, and so forth that our readers contribute to spread their love of mathematics to others is something that I really appreciate. At times I might turn to this department first because I know what I find here will put a smile on my face and give me energy and encouragement as I read the rest of the journal.

I love mathematics. I want you to love mathematics. I want our students to love mathematics. —

Thomasenia Lott Adams, tl@coe.ufl.edu, is a mathematics educator and Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Development in the College of Education at the University of Florida (UF) in Gainesville. She is also the Mathematics Officer in the UF Lastinger Center for Learning. Her interests focus on empowering teachers to make sense of mathematics for teaching.

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