

EDITORIAL

Hygiene vital to prevent disease outbreaks

Hygiene is as important as clean drinking water for preventing diarrheal diseases. The attention to sanitation has become very critical in preventing disease outbreaks among millions of families and young children remain without proper sanitation. It is crucial in disaster response that natural disaster affected communities receive latrines and soap, as well as hygiene education to prevent illness and disease outbreaks. UNICEF is on the ground in over 150 countries and territories to help children survive and thrive, from early childhood through adolescence. In India, it works with the government, NGOs and other partners to support child health and nutrition, good water and sanitation, quality basic education for all boys and girls, and the protection of children from violence, exploitation, and AIDS. The poor sanitation and contaminated water resources facilities impact adversely on the health and well-being of children leaving them affected with diarrhoea and other water borne hazards. Delivering this basic human right the right to water and sanitation is good for people, businesses and our country. Sanitation for Millions works on improving the access to safely managed sanitation through the establishment of a concept for decentralized wastewater treatment systems, the improvement of operation and maintenance of sanitary facilities as well as the introduction of menstrual health & hygiene management and female-friendly toilets at public schools in country. The vision is to work alongside with government and sector partners to achieve the shared ambition of safely managed sanitation for all. This is an ongoing threat that will impact the population in the years to come if nothing is done. Safely managed sanitation systems are the need of the hour. The United Nations has designated November 19 as World Toilet Day, urging changes in both behaviour and policy on issues ranging from enhancing water management to ending open-air defecation. The basic purpose of observing this day is to raise awareness for accessing proper sanitation and advocate for safe toilets, and forging effective partnerships for the purpose. As sanitation is more than just access to a toilet but using one as well, it has become abundantly clear that good sanitation, once considered the domain of engineers, requires the involvement of social scientists, behaviour change experts, health professionals, and, vitally, individual people and communities. UNICEF focuses on equitable community-approaches to total sanitation aimed at full sanitation coverage in the whole community often starting at schools where children become agents of behaviour change at home. For a community to become 'open-defecation free', rich and poor households must all use toilets.

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Redesigning education for real-world skills



VIJAY GARG

By integrating practical lessons on earning, saving and managing money, education can better prepare students for real-world challenges. It is a truism to state that the world is becoming an increasingly complex proposition to deal with and the methods of coping with it need to be structured and understood. This alone will avoid increasing grief and bewilderment on the way matters are working in the world one is surrounded by. An illustration from the area of finance may illustrate the situation. It is an obvious matter to point out that everyone needs finance to survive and finance has to be gained if not earned from somewhere. This business of understanding finance or



earning requires the ability to understand what finance is and how it can be earned. Finance comes in many shapes and colours. A common factor in all finance is that it is putting a monetary value to one's effort and it is compensation for what one does to keep a system going. Finance sets the equation between effort and its compensation and finance in turn becomes a tool for both purchasing and obtaining the needs of life beyond purchase. To do so, one needs to understand currency, its equivalence and how currency is measured in effort. It is one of the enigmas of our prevailing school and college system that these matters are

rarely explained through a curriculum or, for that matter, in a formal situation. Much is learned about finance through observation and the domestic environment in which one has grown, that is converted into transactions in operational life and early enough in one's life one learns that one needs to have capabilities to earn money and therefore deal with finance. Each system has its methods of equivalence between efforts and compensation and the forces that determine it are very often referred to as market forces. This by itself is an art that life teaches sometimes simply and frequently through trial and error. Thus, it is that finance is not only tricky, but it leads to

learned in school about finance. This is a loss because, as enumerated above, what is taught in school about finance does not go very far in the practice of finance. What everyone needs to know is the correlation between one's worth in handling skills and information and how this is compensated in financial terms by the environment. This by itself is a tricky proposition and, as suggested earlier, needs fieldwork. Then there are final areas of finance that cannot be learned unless exposed to the practical world and that is not a matter that can be brought into the classroom. Also, in a normal education system, there are again gaps where this learning goes by default and people are left to pay for themselves through trial and error. This causes not only immense problems but complications of one variety or another. One can be shortchanged or one may not know that services cannot, in many cases, be provided without some type of compensation and that compensation very often has to be in terms of money. It will be a worthwhile approach to explain to people the relationship between money, finance and effort.

How do math skills improve quality of life?

VIJAY GARG

Math isn't just an important subject in school — it's essential for many of your daily tasks. You likely use it every day to perform real-life skills, like grocery shopping, cooking and tracking your finances. What makes math special is that it's a universal language — a powerful tool with the same meaning across the globe. Though languages divide our world, numbers unite us. Math allows us to work together towards new innovations and ideas. Why math is important for kids and adults. Plus, find out why learning even the most basic math can significantly improve your family's quality of life. Why is math so important in life? A person needs an understanding of math, measurements and fractions to cook and bake. Many people may also use math to count calories or nutrients as part of their diet or exercise routine. You also need math to calculate when you should leave your house to arrive on time, or how much paint you need to redo your bedroom walls.

And then the big one, money. Financial literacy is an incredibly important skill for adults to master. It can help you budget, save and even help you make big decisions like changing careers or buying a home. Mathematical knowledge may even be connected to many other not-so-obvious benefits. A strong foundation in math can translate into increased understanding and regulation of your emotions, improved memory and better problem-solving skills. The importance of math: 9 benefits of a great math education. Math offers more opportunities beyond grade school, middle school and high school. Its applications to real-life scenarios are vast. Though many students sit in math class wondering when they'll ever use these things they're learning, we know there are many times their math skills will be needed in adulthood. The importance of mathematics to your child's success can't be overstated. Basic math is a necessity, but even abstract math can help boost critical thinking skills — even if your child chooses not to pursue a STEM-style career. Math can

help them succeed professionally, emotionally and cognitively. Here's why. Math promotes healthy brain function. "Use it or lose it." We hear this said about many skills, and math is no exception. Solving math problems and improving our math skills gives our brain a good workout. And it improves our cognitive skills over time. Many studies have shown that routinely practicing math keeps our brain healthy and functioning well. Math improves problem-solving skills. At first, classic math problems, like Johnny bringing home 42 watermelons and returning 13 of them can just seem a silly exercise. But all those math word problems our children solve really do improve their problem solving skills. Word problems teach kids how to pull out the important information and then manipulate it to find a solution. Later on, complex life problems take the place of workbooks, but problem-solving still happens the same way. When students understand algorithms and problems more deeply, they can decode the facts and more easily solve the

issue. Real-life solutions are found with math and logic. Math supports logical reasoning and analytical thinking. A strong understanding of math concepts means more than just number sense. It helps us see the pathways to a solution. Equations and word problems need to be examined before determining the best method for solving them. And in many cases, there's more than one way to get to the right answer. It's no surprise that logical reasoning and analytical thinking improve alongside math skills. Logic skills are necessary at all levels of mathematical education. Math develops flexible thinking and creativity. Practicing math has been shown to improve investigative skills, resourcefulness and creativity. This means math problems often require us to bend our thinking and approach problems in more than one way. The first process we try might not work. We need flexibility and creativity to think of new pathways to the solution. And like anything else, this way of thinking is strengthened with practice.

Math opens up many different career paths. There are many careers that use a large number of math concepts. These include architects, accountants, and scientists. But many other professionals use math skills every day to complete their jobs. CEOs use math to analyze financials. Mailmen use it to calculate how long it will take them to walk their new route. Graphic designers use math to figure out the appropriate scale and proportions in their designs. No matter what career path your child chooses, math skills will be beneficial. Math skills might become even more important for today's kids! Math can certainly open up a lot of opportunities for many of us. But did you know that careers which heavily use math are going to be among the fastest-growing jobs by the time kids today start their careers? It's not just STEM jobs that will require math either. Other popular, high-growth careers like nursing and teaching now ask for minimum knowledge of college-level math.

How can AI enhance real-time feedback in modern classrooms?

VIJAY GARG

AI-driven assessments and feedback are transforming education by offering personalised learning paths, real-time insights, and holistic progress measures that go beyond traditional metrics. This revolution in digital learning enhances outcomes for learners and educators alike. The transformative shift towards digital learning in the Indian education sector has led to a significant allocation of Rs 1.12 lakh crore in the fiscal year 2023-24 budget-an impressive 8.26 percent increase compared to previous years. In this fast-paced world of education, the shift towards digital learning has brought about significant changes in how we assess and provide feedback to learners. The traditional model of assessment, often reliant on standardised tests and periodic exams, presents significant limitations in today's digital age. Such assessments often fail to capture the full spectrum of a learner's abilities, reducing them to a single numerical



score. To truly optimise learning outcomes, we must embrace innovative approaches that provide timely, actionable insights into learner performance. ROLE OF AI IN PERSONALISED LEARNING. A cornerstone of effective education is personalisation. Each learner is unique, with distinct strengths, weaknesses, and learning styles. Artificial Intelligence has the potential to create hyper-personalised learning pathways to cater to these differences. Learners

preparing for critical exams such as JEE and NEET would benefit from precise assessments of their progress. One example of this personalised approach is the use of Knowledge Graphs. These graphs map a learner's journey, identifying strengths and areas that need improvement. For instance, if a learner shows underperformance in a specific area of physics, the Knowledge Graph will highlight this gap, allowing educators to address prerequisite topics that may be causing the difficulty.

ENHANCING FEEDBACK WITH AI-POWERED ANALYTICS. Feedback is a critical component of the learning process, guiding learners on how to improve and helping educators refine their teaching strategies. Traditional feedback methods often involve delayed responses and general comments, which may not be effective for all learners. With its ability to process vast amounts of data, AI can provide real-time, specific insights into learner performance. Automated grading systems can free up educators to focus on higher-order thinking skills and provide more in-depth feedback. A HOLISTIC MEASURE OF PROGRESS. Traditional assessments often equate learning with memorisation and recall. However, true learning involves the ability to apply knowledge, solve problems, and think critically. For this, it is crucial to evaluate not just what a learner achieves in an exam

but also how they are progressing toward their goals. This can be achieved using an AI metric called the Learner Score. Unlike traditional metrics that focus solely on exam results, the Learner Score evaluates both input and output parameters. It encompasses factors such as time on task, engagement levels, and the quality of interactions with learning materials. For instance, a learner who is making significant strides toward achieving their self-defined goals, thereby affirming a solid foundation for future accomplishments, will have a higher Learner Score. This allows educators to recognise and reward effort, not just outcomes, and helps learners stay motivated and focused on their long-term goals. CATALYST FOR EXCELLENCE IN ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK. According to a report, the Indian EdTech sector is expected to reach \$10.4 billion by 2025, with AI-powered learning platforms driving a significant portion of this growth.