



Reflections of TIME

Staff:

Editors-in-Chief: Quratul Ain, and Wendy Soohoo

Secretary: Saeed Chaudhry

Photographer: Vidya Sriprasad

Graphics: Louise Kato

Editors: Rebecca M. Steiner
Ana I. Bernal

Advisor: Naomi Weinman

Email us at: RofT2K@yahoo.com

Volume: 2 Issue 1; Oct, 24 2003

a publication of the TIME 2000 program

The 'Math A' Controversy

by Wendy Soohoo

Math is in the news! However, it's not for a good reason. This year's June Math A exam resulted in many students being unable to achieve a passing grade, and then because of arguments over whether or not the exam was fair, the exam was rescored (refer to fig. 1). The Math Regents Review Panel was formed because of the high failure rate, and it conducted a study that compared and contrasted the June 2002 and June 2003 Math A Regents exam. Its task was to rescore the exam in the fairest way possible and to determine why the failure rate was so high.

Grade	June 2003 (%) students passing	Rescore (%) students passing
9	61	80
10	32	64
11	28	60
12	28	55

Fig. 1

Unlike the 2002 exam, this year's Math A exam did not include questions involving trigonometry, systems of equations, or inequalities. Since these topics are considered an important part of the curriculum, teachers tend to spend a great deal of class time on them. The fact that they were not on the exam was a source of frustration for both the teachers and the students.

Results from the Panel suggested that Parts I and II of both exams had similar difficulty levels. However, Parts III and IV of the June 2003 exam were more difficult. Students found the words and the inclusion of unfamiliar concepts confusing. For example, Question 34 required the use of the Pythagorean Theorem (refer to fig. 2), but the problem featured a three dimensional figure and it was difficult to determine where the hypotenuse was. In this problem the non-typical diagram may have frustrated the students.

The Panel gave individual schools the option of whether or not to pass the 11th and 12th graders who were in jeopardy of not graduating. However, the Panel had difficulty in deciding how to grade the 9th and 10th graders. They finally decided to hold this year's students to the same standards as the ones to which the

June 2002 students were held, and rescore all of their exams. Since this year's exam was apparently harder than last year's exam, it is incomprehensible how the Panel made similar grading standards. This may also create a problem in the schools since some students who may have passed at these standards will not be prepared for the next level of mathematics.

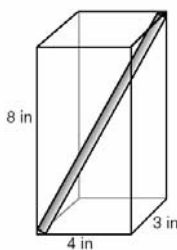


Fig. 2

The problems surrounding the latest Math A exam arouse questions about its role in promoting students. By creating the Math A and B curriculum, the state was hoping to raise the standards of students' competency. However, since this year's exam was such a controversy, it caused the NYS Education Department to realize that it is of utmost importance that they publish a clear Math A curriculum and properly train teachers. However, the New York State Educational Commissioner, Richard P. Mills, announced on October 8, 2003 that "some children are going to need more time to get to a full achievement." So the passing score will be 55 for an extra two years and Math A will be changed from a three-semester course to a two-semester course. Hopefully, these changes will improve the quality of learning.

Voice From the Field

By Eric Glatz

This is Eric Glatz, a TIME 2000 graduate. I am now starting my second year as a full-time mathematics educator. I am having a lot of fun with my job; working in the city leaves a lot of freedom in your style of teaching. I work in Richmond Hill High School in Queens, and the new city program mandates a double period of mathematics for all incoming freshman. This leaves the teacher with a lot of class time, offering expanded possibilities on the types of lessons you can lead.

I enjoy my position a lot because I am always trying to incorporate things that interest me.

(Continued on next page)

Events



TIME 2000 celebrates the graduation of TIME-3, May '03.



TIME 2000 was featured at the Q-Gala, June '03.

Congratulations to MT4 for receiving the award for Outstanding Educational Programming from the Queens College Student Association, June '03

Congratulations to TIME 2000 graduates John Chae, Eric Glatz, Rocio Saborido, and Irina Zavurov! They will participate in a presentation at the 2004 Annual Meeting of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics with Dr. Artzt and Dr. Curcio. It is not often that beginning teachers give presentations at such prestigious meetings. The title of their session is "Creating PowerPoint Lessons That Engage Secondary School Mathematics Students." The conference will be held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on April 21-24, 2004. They will also speak at LIMACON in March 2004 at the State University in Old Westbury. The entire TIME 2000 family is extremely proud of them!

As a result of her summer internship at Scholastic, TIME 2000 graduate, Tara Wachter, teacher at Herricks Middle School, has had two articles published. One article appears in the October issue of *DynaMath* entitled "Creepy Coordinates," and the other one entitled, "Jurnee's Journey!" appears in the 13 October 2003 issue of *Scholastic Math*. They both contain excellent, very imaginative activities for students that are connected to real life. Congratulations, Tara!

Special thanks to Jim Simons for sponsoring the second annual TIME 2000 Conference Celebrating Mathematics Teaching, on October 24, 20003.

(Continued from previous page)

I use Power Point a lot and enjoy producing information as accurately as possible. One of my passions is film, and film history, and I try to bring this into the classroom as much as possible. For example, my current favorite is demonstrating the inaccurate account of Pythagorean Theorem the Scarecrow gave in "The Wizard of Oz."

My only advice to new and future teachers is to have fun with the career you are following. Remember, if it's boring for you then it's definitely boring for your students. Bring creativity and passion to your classrooms!

Reflections of TIME Presents: Dr. Sultan

by Vidya Sriprasad



If you are in TIME 2000, you begin your years at Queens College with Doctor Sultan and he will be around until you graduate. It takes just one class to know what kind of teaching styles and test methods he uses. Dr. Sultan is one of the few professors that use the latest teaching methodology, where students participate in the lessons and learn from their mistakes with the help of the instructor. However, Dr. Sultan has not always taught this way.

Dr. Sultan used to teach by expository instruction, which is teaching by standing in front of the class, lecturing and giving exams. He would not have any connections with the students, other than him talking and his students listening. While developing the TIME 2000 program with Dr. Alice Artzt, he realized that in order to make it successful, he would have to first modify his ways of teaching. This would mean having an interactive classroom. As TIME 2000 students, we are fortunate enough to have him as our teacher and as an ideal role model. By being in his classroom, we are active participants and we are able to observe his teaching habits.

We know Dr. Sultan in Queens College as a professor and the Math advisor for Math majors and Education minors, but what does he do outside of school? Well, he participates in three choruses; the one at Queens College, the Oratorio Society in Queens, and a voluntary chorus. A TIME 2000 student went to a concert for a music class project and saw him there. She told me, "I was shocked to see him there, but he made a cool bass (singer)." Dr. Sultan is also involved in teaching at a high School for disabled children, wrote a textbook for Linear Programming, and published an article with Dr. Artzt in the Spring '03 edition of Mathematics Education Research Newsletter.

In my opinion, I think Dr. Sultan is a phenomenal professor who really cares about the students that he

teaches. He always has time for them and he makes sure that his students understand the information that he teaches. This is why he's an inspiration to his students.

Summer at Cyberchase

by Rebecca Steiner

Hello everyone! I hope you are all enjoying the fall semester here in TIME 2000. I also hope you had a wonderful summer; I certainly did, and I'd like to share some of my summer experiences with you.

I had an absolutely wonderful internship at Channel Thirteen (WNET) working on the PBS Kids program *Cyberchase*, an educational series designed to promote mathematical concepts in a fun and adventurous way. One of the highlights of the summer was "Writers' Week," when the writers and the mathematics consultants come from all over the country to sit in a conference room together to brainstorm ideas for upcoming shows. The two math consultants, Michael Templeton from Oregon and Carey Bolster from Maryland, designed some wonderful activities to stimulate the writers' minds and to get their creative flow going. I got to participate in these activities, and it was truly a thrilling experience. I sat in a room with some of the most brilliantly creative people on the planet! (I dream of getting to work with people like that when I start teaching.)

I also got to learn a lot about the production process of an animated show like this. A few weeks into my internship, one of *Cyberchase's* producers gave an informational "Production Overview" session for the interns in which she did a short demonstration of how an episode goes from just an idea in someone's head to the actual animated show that is broadcasted on television. This was absolutely fascinating. It's great to be able to see the big picture while you're working on seemingly isolated pieces of the project.

The last week of my internship was the most fun. I got to sit in on a live recording of Christopher Lloyd (who does the voice of the cartoon character "Hacker") over the phone in the office of one of the executive producers. I also got to attend a filming of the live action segment of the show, called "Cyberchase for Real," in Central Park. I met Matthew Wilson ("Harry") and Bianca DeGroat ("Bianca") and I was even on TV for about three seconds on Monday, September 1, at about 4pm.

One of the most exciting aspects of *Cyberchase* is that it's not just a television show like I originally thought. The *Cyberchase* team provides outreach materials to classrooms, after-school programs, and the general public. There's a kids' magazine, a teacher's guide (two editions), an interactive website with lots of math games, many different workshops for children to do alone or in groups, and even a monthly *Weekly Reader* column for fourth graders. It's just unbelievable how much work is

required to make a program like this run!

Cyberchase airs on PBS on weekdays at 5pm and Sundays at 10am. Check out their website at [pbskids.org/cyberchase!](http://pbskids.org/cyberchase)

Interested in seeing first-hand how mathematics appears in the real-world? Are you curious about summer job opportunities relating to mathematics education? There are summer internships available for math majors in a variety of fields such as advertising, curriculum development, data analysis, educational media, finance, instructional technology, market research, and publishing. So, get your resume ready to apply for a summer 2004 internship! For additional information, please email Tara at qcmathinterns@aol.com.

Whadaya Think?

Can you find an error in the following? We begin with $a = b$.

We multiply both sides by a to get:
 $a^2 = ab$.

We subtract b^2 from both sides to get:
 $a^2 - b^2 = ab - b^2$.

Factoring, we get:
 $(a - b)(a + b) = b(a - b)$,

and finally dividing by $(a - b)$, we get:
 $a + b = b$.

Now, if we set $a = b = 1$, then by substitution we have $2 = 1$!
(If interested, please email us for the answer)

Math Help Websites
www.mathforum.org/dr.math

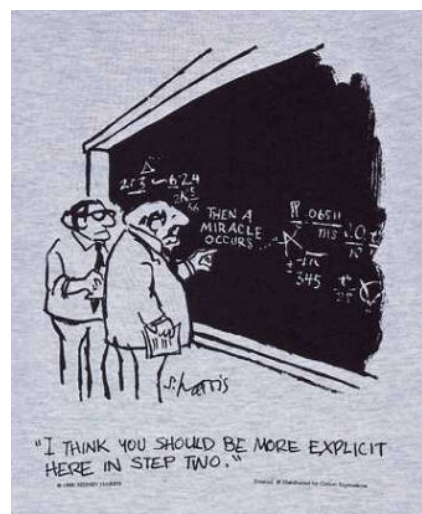
www.mathpower.com

www.mathgoodies.com

(Scale: 5 *s = Best)

Fun Corner

By Sidney Harris



Visit our website at www.qc.edu/time2000.