

## Thinking Outside the Box

“Life is Math,” he said with conviction. I was heading home from a long work flight when the man next to me engaged in conversation. It was obvious within minutes he held a complex engineering mind and yes, later confessed he was dyslexic. For the next hour he bellowed how the United States isn’t producing enough engineers and creative minds to tackle “the real work”. He drove home his point by questioning our society’s aversion to math learning and reflecting how, “Finance is math, driving is math, cooking is math, basically all of life is math.”

Some of our children with exceptional needs do all forms of math with brilliant ease, while others struggle with the most basic math facts, yet solve higher level problems with acumen and imagination. And for many typical students and those with Dyscalculia ([www.understood.org](http://www.understood.org)) math is a challenge from onset to outcome. So how do we engage all levels of learners in what my new friend from Southwest Airlines refers to as “life’s essential”?

It’s important to compliment the neurodiversity of our students with an out of the box approach to learning math. Here are a few YouTube, Add-Ins, Apps and Web resources keep your student engaged and thriving in math.

Let’s start with the legendary Chris Woodin - a man who has all children in awe and parents thinking “Why didn’t I think of that?” Head over to YouTube and search “Chris Woodin Math”. You’ll soon see why his innovative approach produces all-time record views.

It took a Austrian engineer to create a simple and fun 3D approach to math - [GeoGebra](#). “*Dynamic mathematics software for all levels of education that brings together geometry, algebra, spreadsheets, graphing, statistics and calculus in one easy-to-use package.*” You can also use this program as a quick add-in to OneNote in Microsoft 365 (free online to all students and teachers).

On that note! (See what I did there?) OneNote offers great tools for learning math. Simply google “Learn Math in One Note” and you’ll have lessons and ideas for months. *Bonus: OneNote is a fabulous organizational tool for tween/teens with ADHD and Executive Function deficits. Keep photos of white board teacher notes organized next to homework and study guides.*

Keep math fun. It can’t get any simpler than to head over to <https://www.mathsisfun.com/>

There are also several APPs that come in handy for the young and old, mobile and tablet user including these favorites:

- **PhotoMath** - The world's smartest camera calculator and math assistant.
- **Calculator Pro** -Makes it easier to use an iPad calculator.
- **Schoolkit Math** - Times Tables made easy: select numbers in row and column and answer will be shown in yellow. Use the Math Challenge feature for practicing simple addition etc.

- **Math Facts or Quizlet** - Good app (and web based) for extra practice.
- **Mod Math** - Terrific for older children.

We're all familiar with Prodigy and Khan Academy, but what else is out there to guide my child (and let's face it - us!) through 2018 math problems? Some other web based tools include:

**Web Math** Generates answers to specific math questions and problems.

**MathWay** Enter a problem, see steps, explanations and examples.

**Yup** - 24/7 online tutoring for math and science. Say what?! Yup.

**TSBVI** - Math for the blind and visually impaired.

**Math Mammoth** - If you're looking for an extra challenge or need to fill in the gaps.

We'd love to know how these resources impacted your child or teen's learning experience. Find something you didn't see featured here, but want to share? Send feedback to PUSD Parent Liaison - Gina Zanolini - [gzanolini@powayusd.com](mailto:gzanolini@powayusd.com)

About the author: Melissa Lazaro is an adjunct professor at PLNU, Sales Director for Lexplore, EdTech fan and mother of a son with dyslexia. She is passionate about fueling a child's love for learning.