

# The Math Myth: And Other STEM Delusions

By Andrew Hacker




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Andrew Hacker's 2012 *New York Times* op-ed questioning the requirement of advanced mathematics in our schools instantly became one of the paper's most widely circulated articles. Why, he wondered, do we inflict a full menu of mathematics—algebra, geometry, trigonometry, even calculus—on all young Americans, regardless of their interests or aptitudes?

*The Math Myth* expands Hacker's scrutiny of many widely held assumptions, like the notions that mathematics broadens our minds, that mastery of azimuths and asymptotes will be needed for most jobs, that the entire Common Core syllabus should be required of every student. He worries that a frenzied emphasis on STEM is diverting attention from other pursuits and subverting the spirit of the country.

In fact, Hacker honors mathematics as a calling (he has been a professor of mathematics) and extols its glories and its goals. Yet he shows how mandating it for everyone prevents other talents from being developed and acts as an irrational barrier to graduation and careers. He proposes alternatives, including teaching facility with figures, quantitative reasoning, and understanding statistics.

*The Math Myth* is sure to spark a heated and needed national conversation not just about mathematics but about the kind of people and society we want to be.

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### Editorial Review

Review

#### **Praise for *The Math Myth*:**

“In the meantime, it’s probably a good idea to give students multiple math pathways toward high school and college graduation—some less challenging than others. If we don’t, we’ll be punishing kids for the failures of an entire system.”

—*Slate*

“*The Math Myth* is a worthwhile read, even if you are among the educators who become apoplectic at the suggestion that students shouldn’t have to grapple with polynomial functions.”

—*National Book Review*

“Not one to decelerate, at 86 [Hacker] is doing nothing less than taking on the mathosphere.”

—*New York Times Education Life*

“Hacker’s accessible arguments offer plenty to think about and should serve as a clarion call to students, parents, and educators who decry the one-size-fits-all approach to schooling.”

—*Publishers Weekly* (starred review)

“A lively argument against the assumption that if the United States is to stay competitive in a global economy, our students require advanced training in mathematics.”

—*Kirkus Reviews*

“*The Math Myth* persuasively and satisfyingly debunks assertions about the practical value of requiring all students to master higher-level mathematics—and also points up the real harm caused by the Common Core standards and college-admission exams, which are constructed on those dubious claims. In a friendly and accessible style, Hacker, himself no slouch in terms of quantitative expertise, systematically demolishes every argument used to support the advanced-math-for-all position. His book is now my go-to resource on this topic.”

—Alfie Kohn, author of *Schooling Beyond Measure* and *The Homework Myth*

“*The Math Myth* is an important book. Hacker demolishes some totally unrealistic policies that will prevent many students from ever receiving a high school diploma and leading useful lives.”

—Diane Ravitch, author of *Reign of Error* and *The Death and Life of the Great American School System*

“*The Math Myth* vividly demonstrates that America’s uncritical celebration of school mathematics does a disservice to students, institutions of learning, and the wide array of urgent public needs. His book is important and timely—and a great read.”

—Howard Gardner, Professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and author of *The Unschooled Mind*

“I love every single word and idea. Andrew Hacker may make some enemies, but truth is truth!”

—Debora Meier, author of *In Schools We Trust* and *The Power of Their Ideas*

“Andrew Hacker exposes the inconvenient truth that the majority of college students will never need to use

quadratic equations in their majors and even fewer will ever need them on the job. Hacker shows convincingly that our current math curriculum has become too much of a good thing—an artificial barrier to the deeper learning at the heart of true vocations.”

—Anthony Carnevale, Director of the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce

**Praise for *Mismatch*:**

"Few people writing today for a general audience can make more sense of numbers."

—*The Wall Street Journal*

**Praise for *Money*:**

"A political scientist doing with statistics what Fred Astaire did with hats, canes, and chairs...He doesn't crunch numbers, he makes them live and breathe."

—*Newsweek*

**Praise for *Two Nations*:**

"His insights into the racial wounds that refuse to close are searing, and urgently need to be addressed."

—*Kirkus*

"Witty at times and searingly direct."

—*Publishers Weekly*

**Praise for *Higher Education?*:**

"Andrew Hacker and Claudia Dreifus have written a lucid, passionate and wide-ranging book on the state of American higher education."

—*The New York Times*

**About the Author**

Andrew Hacker is the author of ten books and teaches both political science and mathematics at Queens College. He lives in New York City.

**Users Review**

**From reader reviews:**

**William Smith:**

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seriously which one is acceptable to believe or which one the particular resource are convinced. If you find the unstable resource then you understand it as your main information we will see huge disadvantage for you. All those possibilities will not happen throughout you if you take The Math Myth: And Other STEM Delusions as your daily resource information.

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**Cassandra Harvey:**

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