

Neither our efforts to emphasize the utility of secondary mathematics nor its privileged status as a crucial achievement for students wanting to pursue post-secondary studies has made mathematics appealing to students. Is the compulsory gotta-pass-it nature of math the cause of its lack of appeal? Or does utility somehow reduce its appeal? What other motivations for learning mathematics are there that might make mathematics appealing?

Before we address these strategic questions or the underlying nature-of-mathematics question (Is mathematics appealing?), we will look at specific examples of teaching practice that address the appeal of mathematics:

1. Dressing it up—‘Clothing’ mathematics:

- in games and social processes (math is fun);
- in practical activity (math is useful)
- in historical and cultural perspective (math is human)
- in technology (math is current).

2. Stripping it down – Restoring mathematics to its essence (?):

- intellectual inquiry (math is a challenge);
- the ‘cold austere beauty’ of Russel’s logical systems (math is elegant).

As participants engage with positive examples of each approach, they will help to construct a mission statement: how (whether?) students (some? more? all?) can experience mathematics in school as a positive and rewarding endeavour.