

Mathematics for students of digital arts and graphic design: a historical approach

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1. Introduction

Our experience as mathematics teachers at Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey (ITESM) in México City shows us that students of social sciences programs do not like mathematics. Many times students choose Digital Arts, Graphics Design, Laws, Psychology and other social sciences programs just because they think that they will not take courses, which involve mathematic topics. But the curricula of the Digital Art and Animation program at ITESM include three mathematics courses (Differential calculus, Integral calculus and Multivariable calculus). This is very upsetting for some students.

The main problem we face is how to stimulate our students to study mathematics, even if they chose an academic program not to study mathematics. What can we tell them if they do not like mathematics? Some students even told us: “I do not need mathematics; I am an artist” or something like: “I use animation software and I do not need to learn mathematics” Finally some others asked “Why learn mathematics if I use computers and computers do everything?” This was our challenge.