Make Math Relevant

Explore the Ideas Below!

- Create teams of students to measure the perimeter of the classroom. Because exact results may not be found, discuss variation in measurement. Adjust the following questions to meet your students' needs:
    - "If there are 25 people using the room, what process do you use to find out how much space is available for each one?" Calculate the space per person. Try measuring the space per person in your kitchen at home.

- Tape out an area in the reading corner that would accommodate 30 students sitting closely together. Use the formula for area (L x W) to calculate how much carpet is needed. If carpet remnants are $1.95 per yard, how much will carpeting the area cost? Discuss whether or not having a carpeted area in the classroom will make a difference in learning.

- Ask students to measure a room in their home for brand new laminate floors and then calculate the cost using the $1.95 figure. Students can also find sales prices of flooring and have them discuss using a coupon or waiting for a big sale.

- Measure the classroom doorway. How many students can walk side by side through it at the same time? How many lines of "x" students will it take to empty the classroom? What process is used to determine the answer? Why is an orderly exit especially important during an emergency? Measure a doorway in your house. How many family members can exit at the same time in an emergency?

- To discuss talking "% of" and "% off," distribute colorful grocery ads, and have students work in pairs to create their own math challenges around their favorite foods or healthy snacks.
    - Example: How many 16-ounce bags of carrots would be needed for the whole class to have a snack if each serving was four ounces? What would that cost, according to the grocery ad?

- Use online ads for retail clothing stores like Kohl's, Macy's, or Target and invite your students to create a collage of an outfit they'd like to have with the purchase price next to each item. If they saved "x" amount per week, how long would it take to purchase the outfit?
- The homeless shelter is asking students to donate one days' worth of snack money to those who are in need. If every student shared a quarter, how much

would the class contribute? If the class raised $20, what amount would each student donate?

- When teaching equivalent fractions, give students a real recipe and a set of measuring cups and spoons. Tell your students,"You hate to wash dishes, so use the fewest utensils possible to measure out the ingredients." ("That's really what you do when you're cooking," she notes.) Students discover they can use the 1/4—cup measure six times to measure out 1 1/2 cups, for example.

- Use the stock market pages of the newspaper. Students can observe that a stock has moved from 61 7/8 to 61 3/4, for example. Because they are "just learning" which fraction is greater, the newspaper's indication that the stock is "down one-eighth" helps them understand. (para. 2)

- To convey the relative size of fractions, use of a set of wrenches. 'The 5/16" wrench is too small,' she tells her students, and the ½ wrench is too big. Which one should I try?'"

REFERENCE:

http://www.ascd.org/publications/curriculumupdate/summer1996/Bringing-Mathematics-to-Life.spx