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People's mathematics in working life: Why is it invisible?

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Summary: The labour market requirements play a central role in the answer from politicians and educational planners to the question “Why teach mathematics to adults?” Mathematics is interwoven with technology in the workplace – in technique, work organisation and people’s competences. Still “No” is the most common answer to the question “Do you use mathematics in your work?” This leads to one relevance paradox. – Mathematics as a visible tool disappears in many workplace routines. However, this kind of invisibility is not the only reason for the negative answer. People simply do not recognize the mathematics in their daily practice – as mathematics. They do not connect the everyday activity and their own competence with mathematics. Most of them only associate mathematics with the school subject. Hence the two main answers to the question “Why do adults study mathematics?” are proving to yourself that you can learn the mathematics that you did not learn in school and being able to help your children with their homework. This leads to a second relevance paradox.

Classification: B60 D38

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