

Math Goes to Work

“When am I ever going to need this?” asks many a student of mathematics. Duhita Mahatmya can tell you—every day! She uses data and statistics daily to understand how people learn and how systems can improve their learning. She’s a research scientist for the College of Education at the University of Iowa.

When she was younger, Duhita always enjoyed STEM subjects and was drawn to teaching. As her education and career advanced, she became increasingly interested in linking data and statistics to human behavior.

Although math was not necessarily her passion in school, the more she worked with numbers in her job, the more she saw the power of math to explain things.

“In school, we often focus on the scientific method and collecting data in a very controlled setting such as a lab,” said Duhita. “What I find exciting in my role is that I take the data and mathematical findings to determine how we make it work in a less controlled environment, our day-to-day lives.”

Duhita helps professors and graduate students to design research and make sense of data through analysis and statistics.

“I encourage students to keep a curiosity about numbers and how it applies to real-world applications,” said Duhita. “When you are reading an article and see percentages or polls, recognizing the math behind it helps you to understand the full story.”

Duhita Mahatmya

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Duhita Mahatmya
Research Scientist at the University of Iowa



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