

Funding the Future

Of course we need a more numerate country, but let's ge...

Published: January 13, 2026, 6:38 pm

I shared this Twitter thread on that site this morning and will be discussing it on the Jeremy Vine Show on BBC Radio 2 at 12 noon today:

Richard Murphy @RichardJMurphy · 2h
Rishi Sunak's big idea in the face of the country going into meltdown is to require 16 to 18 year olds to continue their maths education when in compulsory state education. Some thoughts in a thread....
8:20 AM · Jan 4, 2023

Richard Murphy @RichardJMurphy · 2h
Replying to @RichardJMurphy
I agree with Sunak. We do have a problem with innumeracy in the UK, most especially when it comes to statistics. It seems that few journalists know, for example, that a big percentage change in a very small number still means that the resulting number is very small.
16.2K 12 28 346

Richard Murphy @RichardJMurphy · 2h
I do, in that case, support more maths education. But, I have a big caveat. The vast majority of people do not need to learn more trigonometry. And differentiation and integration are not that important in real life, I think.
10.9K 11 19 231

Richard Murphy @RichardJMurphy · 2h
Large parts of the current sixth form maths curriculum are inappropriate for most people in other words. So, whatever this new education is to be about, it must not be a compulsory maths A level as most are currently taught.
10.5K 1 13 197

Richard Murphy @RichardJMurphy · 2h
We do need more numeracy, without a doubt. Basic statistics is also really important. And that should include things like the normal distribution. But are standard deviations a part of that education? I don't know.
11.4K 3 11 176

Richard Murphy @RichardJMurphy · 2h
What should be taught is maths as it is used in the real world. And that means accounting and tax have to be a part of this curriculum. People need to be able to read accounts - and work out key ratios in them. And they need to understand tax calculations, from VAT onwards
12.1K 10 40 363

Richard Murphy @RichardJMurphy · 2h
People also need to be able to work out the implications of inflation and pay rises, and differences in them, as well as to work out what they mean for their spending.