

NI Maths Role Models

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I moved to Belfast from Co.Meath in 2009 and began working at Belfast Harbour in 2010 in Operations Engineering as a Maintenance Technician, where I fixed a variety of machinery around the Port including cranes, ramps for the ferries and pilot boats. I'm now in a Continuous Improvement role, where I explore ways, we can work better and faster in my department.

I always struggled with Maths in school and when I completed equivalent to GCSE's I had to drop to a lower level in Maths for my final years because of my results. I was told by a teacher that I wouldn't be able to study engineering because of this.

A career in science was what I was aiming for at that time, so I wasn't too concerned until later when I got the chance to do an Apprenticeship as an Aircraft Maintenance Engineer. Guess what one of my subjects in the first year of the programme was? Yes, you guessed it... Maths! I really had to work hard to catch up as Maths was involved in many aspects of the apprenticeship.

In my role as a Maintenance Technician at Belfast Harbour I used Maths every day, whether it was something basic such as using a measuring tape to mark out pieces of steel to make a part, or something a little trickier, like using measuring devices to measure - in tiny amounts - levels of wear in moving parts of cranes or boat engines. Cranes lift very heavy loads and I had to calculate what slings needed to be used based on weight being lifted.

In my new role as Continuous Improvement Lead, I measure how long it takes us to do something and how much it costs. I have to find a way to calculate how much we are improving and saving using graphs and charts. I also have to keep track of how much we are spending and investing in projects.

I was lucky I got a second chance to improve my Maths, and I'm so glad I did because I use it every day now and I love my job. My advice would be to persevere if you find it difficult, and practice using Maths in everyday situations - you will use it in ways you can't imagine in the future.