Kelli Thompson

“I tend to go to the calculator first... if the answer doesn’t look right, then I would do it on paper. But if you punched in the right numbers in the calculator, you know it’s right.”

Kelli, a sociable 9th grade student, has been using a scientific calculator since the 6th grade. She is comfortable using it, and she wouldn’t do math homework without it. She doesn’t want to risk arithmetic errors and it’s easier to punch in numbers than to do them in her head. She uses a calculator for basic arithmetic operations, squaring and square rooting numbers, exponents, changing fractions to decimals and vice versa. She uses the scientific calculator for Science class as well. Kelli says, “My calculator would be more cool if it’s not so grey and plain”.

Kelli thinks Math is “OK”, and she is not particularly excited about it. She tries to finish her homework as soon as possible every night, so that she can chat with her friends online. Outside of school, she enjoys snowboarding, volleyball, and cheerleading. She also likes to go to house parties with friends to dance.

Sometimes she has problems with translating word problems into algebraic equations, because the wordings of the questions are confusing, almost like a problem in reading comprehension. Whenever she encounters problems in her homework, she would immediately ask the teacher in class, or her elder sister at home who just got out of college. She finds problems with “standard” procedures, such as factoring or manipulation of polynomials easy. She uses the calculator to check her answers as well, because she is prone to careless mistakes when solving long, complicated algebraic equations. Kelli is looking forward to use graphing calculators when the materials get more complicated in her Math class.

Kelli usually works alone for her Math homework, but she is occasionally assigned by the teacher to do problem sets in class with a partner or in small groups. Whenever she does Math in groups, she has a tendency to work on the problems faster, so she doesn’t lag behind. She likes to work with students whose level in math understanding is almost the same as her. She feels she can have her homework done faster this way, because she can check her answers with her partner for each question.

Goals

1. Demonstrate that she understands the concepts quickly
2. Good balance between school and her social life
3. Maintain good grades