

# MAT 2384: Numerical Methods Lecture Notes

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# Chapter 1

## Iterative Methods to Solve The Equation $f(x) = 0$

Given a continuous function  $f$ , the goal of this chapter is to estimate the solution of the equation  $f(x) = 0$  in a certain interval  $I$  numerically.

**Theorem 1.0.1** (Intermediate Value Theorem). *Let  $f : [a, b] \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$  be a continuous function. Let  $y \in \mathbb{R}$  be any value between  $f(a)$  and  $f(b)$ . Then there exists  $z \in [a, b]$  such that  $f(z) = y$ .*

Bolzano's Theorem is a special case of the Intermediate Value Theorem, which states

**Theorem 1.0.2** (Bolzano's Theorem). *If a continuous function defined on an interval  $I$  is sometimes positive and sometimes negative, then it must be 0 at some point. So there exists  $x_0 \in I$  such that  $f(x_0) = 0$ .*

*Proof.* Without loss of generality, assume  $f(a) \leq f(b)$ . Let  $y \in [f(a), f(b)]$ . Set

$$S := \{x \in [a, b] : f(x) \leq y_0\}$$

$S$  is a subset of  $[a, b]$  so it is bounded,  $a \in S$  since  $f(a) \leq y_0$ . Therefore  $S \neq \emptyset$ . Thus by completeness, there exists  $x_0 := \sup S \in [a, b]$ . We want  $f(x_0) = y_0$ . Consider the cases where  $f(x_0) = y_0$ ,  $f(x_0) < y_0$ , and  $f(x_0) > y_0$ .

- **Case 1:**  $f(x_0) = y_0$  This case is trivial since this is the result we want.
- **Case 2:**  $f(x_0) < y_0$  Set  $\epsilon := y_0 - f(x_0)$ . Since  $f$  is continuous at  $x_0$ ,  $\exists \delta > 0$  such that

$$|x - x_0| < \delta \implies |f(x) - f(x_0)| < \epsilon$$

Since  $f(x_0) < y_0 \leq f(b)$ , we can find  $x > x_0$  such that  $x \in [a, b]$  and  $|x - x_0| < \delta$ . Then  $f(x) < f(x_0) + \epsilon = y_0$ . So  $x \in S$  by the definition of  $S$ , but  $x > x_0$  which contradicts the fact that  $x_0 = \sup S$ .

- **Case 3:**  $f(x_0) > y_0$  Set  $\epsilon := f(x_0) - y_0$ . Since  $f$  is continuous at  $x_0$ ,  $\exists \delta > 0$  such that if  $x \in [a, b]$  and  $|x - x_0| < \delta$ , then  $|f(x) - f(x_0)| < \epsilon$ . So  $f(x) > f(x_0) - \epsilon = y_0$  and  $x_0 > a$ . We can assume that  $x - \delta > a$  since  $\delta$  can be arbitrarily small, and we claim  $x_0 - \delta$  is an upper bound for  $S$ . To prove this, if  $x > x_0 - \delta$ , then either  $|x - x_0| < \delta$ , in which case  $f(x) > f(x_0) - \epsilon = y_0$ , or  $x > x_0$  then  $x \neq S$  since  $x_0$  is an upper bound for  $S$ . Therefore, if  $x > x_0 - \delta$ , then  $x \neq S$ , thus proving the claim. This contradicts that  $x_0$  is the supremum of  $S$ .

□

**Example.** Prove that the equation

$$2x^3 + 2x - 4 = 0$$

has a unique root in  $[0, 1]$ .

*Proof.* Set  $f(x) := 3x^2 + 2x - 4$ , this function is continuous since it is a polynomial. We have  $f(0) = -4 < 0$  and  $f(1) = 1 > 0$ , so by the intermediate value theorem, there exists  $c \in [0, 1]$  such that  $f(c) = 0$ . It follows that  $c$  is unique since the polynomial is injective by virtue of  $x^3$  and  $x$  being injective. □

## 1.1 Fixed-Point Iteration

**Definition 1.1.1.** We say that the value  $x = r$  is a fixed point for a function  $g(x)$  if  $g(r) = r$ .

**Example.**  $g(x) = \frac{5-x^2}{4}$ .  $r = 1$  is a fixed-point for  $g$  since  $g(1) = 1$ .

Graphically, fixed-point of  $g(x)$  correspond to the intersection of the graph of  $g(x)$  and the line  $y = x$ . Given an equation  $f(x) = 0$ , we can write it under the form

$$g(x) = x$$

by isolating one  $x$  in the equation.

**Example.**  $3x^3 + 2x - 5 = 0$ . We can write this as

$$x = \frac{5 - 3x^3}{2}$$

Set  $g(x) := \frac{5-3x^3}{2}$ . Then  $g(x) = x$ . Finding a root for  $f(x) = 0$  is equivalent to finding a fixed-point for  $g(x)$ .

### 1.1.1 Steps to Solving Using Fixed-Point Iteration

Start with a first estimation  $x_0$  (will be given) of the root, and form the following sequence (known as the *iteration sequence*)

$$x_0, x_1 = g(x_0), x_2 = g(x_1), \dots, x_n = g(x_{n-1})$$

If this sequence converges to a value  $a$ , then we can prove that  $a$  is a fixed-point for  $g$ , hence a root for  $f(x) = 0$ .

**Theorem 1.1.1.** Assume that the function  $g$  has a fixed-point  $s$  on an interval  $I$ , if

(i)  $g(x)$  is continuous on  $I$

(ii)  $g'(x)$  is continuous on  $I$

(iii)  $|g'(x)| < 1$  for all  $x \in I$

Then the iteration sequence converges.

The steps for solving are as follows

1. Start with  $f(x) = 0$
2. Rewrite  $f(x) = 0$  under the form  $x = g(x)$
3. Verify that the sequence  $x_0, x_1 = g(x_0), x_2 = g(x_1), \dots, x_n = g(x_{n-1})$  converges using the above theorem (or otherwise)
4. Compute terms of the above sequence and stop when you reach the required accuracy

**Example.** Consider the equation

$$x^3 + 12x - 3 = 0$$

1. Prove that the equation has a unique root in  $[-1.9, 1.9]$
2. Use the Fixed-Point iteration method to estimate the value of the root to 6 decimal points starting with  $x_0 = 1.8$

**Solution:** Using the steps, we have

1. Set  $f(x) := x^3 + 12x - 3$ . Since  $f(x)$  is a polynomial, it is continuous, so by the intermediate value theorem, we have there exists  $c \in [-1.9, 1.9]$  such that  $f(c) = 0$ .  $f(x)$  is injective since  $x^3$  and  $x$  are injective, so  $c$  is unique.
2. Set  $g(x) := \frac{3-x^3}{12}$ .

3. Checking the conditions of the theorem,  $g(x)$  is continuous since it is a polynomial,  $g'(x) = -\frac{x^2}{4}$  is continuous since it is a polynomial. Then

$$|g'(x)| = \frac{x^2}{4} \leq \frac{1.9^2}{4} = 0.902 < 1$$

Therefore, the sequence converges.

4. We have to calculate the terms of the iteration sequence,

$$\begin{aligned}x_0 &= 1.8 \\x_1 &= g(x_0) = \frac{3 - 1.8^2}{12} = -0.236000 \\x_2 &= g(x_1) = \frac{3 - (0.236)^2}{12} = 0.251095 \\x_3 &= g(x_2) = \frac{3 - (0.251095)^2}{12} = 0.24861 \\x_4 &= g(x_3) = \frac{3 - (0.24861)^2}{12} = 0.248718 \\x_5 &= g(x_4) = \frac{3 - (0.248718)^2}{12} = 0.248718\end{aligned}$$

We stop when 2 consecutive terms agree on the first 6 decimal points. So the root is 0.248718 correct to 6 decimal points.

## 1.2 Newton's Method

Newton's method is a technique for solving equations of the form  $f(x) = 0$  by successive approximation. The idea is to pick an initial guess  $x_0$  such that  $f(x_0)$  is reasonably close to 0. We then find the equation of the line tangent to  $y = f(x)$  at  $x = x_0$ , and determine where this tangent line intersects the  $x$  axis at the new point  $x_1$ . So,

$$x_1 = x_0 - \frac{f(x_0)}{f'(x_0)}$$

We then find the equation of the line tangent to  $y = f(x)$  at  $x = x_1$ , and repeat this process, so we have

$$x_{n+1} = x_n - \frac{f(x_n)}{f'(x_n)}$$

**Example.** Using Newton's method, estimate the value of the root of the equation

$$x^3 + 12x - 3 = 0$$

on  $[0, 2]$ . Start by showing that the equation has a unique root on  $[0, 2]$ , then approximate (to 6 decimal places) with the starting point  $x_0 = 1.8$ .

**Solution.** We have  $f(x) = x^3 + 12x - 3$ , and

$$f(0) = -3 \text{ and } f(2) = 29$$

Therefore by the intermediate value theorem, there exists  $c \in [0, 2]$  such that  $f(c) = 0$ .  $f(x)$  is injective since  $f'(x) = 2x^2 + 12$  is strictly increasing on  $[0, 2]$ , so  $c$  is unique. Now using Newton's method,

$$x_0 = 1.8$$

$$x_1 = x_0 - \frac{f(x_0)}{f'(x_0)} = 0.675138$$

$$x_2 = x_1 - \frac{f(x_1)}{f'(x_1)} = 0.270469$$

$$x_3 = x_2 - \frac{f(x_2)}{f'(x_2)} = 0.248748$$

$$x_4 = x_3 - \frac{f(x_3)}{f'(x_3)} = 0.248718$$

$$x_5 = x_4 - \frac{f(x_4)}{f'(x_4)} = 0.248718$$

Therefore, the our root is 0.248718 correct to 6 decimal places.

**Example.** Consider the equation

$$x^3 - 2x - 5 = 0$$

- (i) Prove that the equation has a unique root in  $[2, 3]$
- (ii) Starting with  $x_0 = 3$ , estimate the root of the equation to 6 decimal places using Newton's method.

**Solution.**

- (i) We have  $f(2) = -1$  and  $f(3) = 16$ , therefore by the intermediate value theorem there exists  $c \in [2, 3]$  such that  $f(c) = 0$ .  $f'(x) = 3x^2 - 2$  is injective since if  $f(x_1) = f(x_2)$ , then we have

$$f(x_1) = f(x_2)$$

$$\implies x_1^3 - 2x_1 - 5 = x_2^3 - 2x_2 - 5$$

$$\implies x_1^3 - 2x_1 = x_2^3 - 2x_2$$

Then  $x^3$  and  $x$  are injective functions, so we must have that  $x_1 = x_2$  and therefore the root is unique. Alternatively, we can look at the derivative on its interval,

$$\begin{aligned}2 &\leq x \leq 3 \\4 &\leq x^2 \leq 9 \\12 &\leq 3x^2 \leq 27 \\10 &\leq 3x^2 - 2 \leq 25\end{aligned}$$

Therefore the derivative is positive so the function is strictly increasing, and thus injective.

(ii) Starting with  $x_0 = 3$ , using Newton's method we get

$$x_1 = x_0 - \frac{f(x_0)}{f'(x_0)} = 3 - \frac{3^3 - 2(3) - 5}{3(3)^2 - 2} = 2.600000$$

$$x_2 = 2.6 - \frac{f(2.6)}{f'(2.6)} = 2.127197$$

$$x_3 = x_2 - \frac{f(2.127197)}{f'(2.127197)} = 2.0945136$$

$$x_4 = x_3 - \frac{f(2.094552)}{f'(2.094552)} = 2.094552$$

$$x_5 = x_4 - \frac{f(x_4)}{f'(x_4)} = 2.094551$$

$$x_6 = x_5 - \frac{f(x_5)}{f'(x_5)} = 2.094551$$

Therefore, we have  $x \approx 2.094551$  correct to 6 decimal places.

**Example.** Use Newton's Method with  $x_0 = 2$  to estimate the value of  $\sqrt[3]{7.9}$  correct to 6 decimal places.

**Solution.** We can set  $x := \sqrt[3]{7.9}$ , so we have  $x^3 - 7.9 = 0$ . Then this can be solved the same as the previous examples.

## 1.3 The Secant Method

The tangent line to the curve of  $y = f(x)$  with the point of tangency  $(x_0, f(x_0))$  was used in Newton's approach. The graph of the tangent line about  $x = \alpha$  is essentially the same as the graph of  $y = f(x)$  when  $x_0 \approx \alpha$ . The root of the tangent line was used to approximate  $\alpha$ . Consider employing an approximating



line based on interpolation. Given 2 root estimations  $x_0$  and  $x_1$ , then we have a linear function

$$q(x) = a_0 + a_1x$$

with  $q(x_0) = f(x_0)$ , and  $q(x_1) = f(x_1)$ . This line is also known as the secant line, with the formula

$$q(x) = \frac{(x_1 - x)f(x_0) + (x - x_0)f(x_1)}{x_1 - x_0}$$

The linear equation  $q(x) = 0$  with the root denoted by  $x_2$  is given by

$$x_2 = x_1 - f(x_1) \cdot \frac{x_1 - x_0}{f(x_1) - f(x_0)}$$

This equation can now be employed for every term in the sequence,

$$x_{n+1} = x_n - f(x_n) \cdot \frac{x_n - x_{n-1}}{f(x_n) - f(x_{n-1})}$$

**Example.** Use the secant method with  $x_0 = 2$  and  $x_1 = 1.9$  to estimate the root of the equation to 6 decimal places

$$2 \sin x - x = 0$$

**Solution.** We have  $f(x) = 2 \sin x - x$ , we can start calculating the terms of the sequence

$$x_2 = x_1 - f(x_1) \frac{x_1 - x_0}{f(x_1) - f(x_0)} = 1.9 - (2 \sin(1.9) - 1.9) \frac{1.9 - 2}{(2 \sin(1.9) - 1.9) - (2 \sin(2) - 2)} = 1.895747$$

$$x_3 = x_2 - f(x_2) \frac{x_2 - x_1}{f(x_2) - f(x_1)} = 1.895747$$

Therefore the root is  $x \approx 1.895747$  correct to 6 decimal places.

## Chapter 2

# Interpolation

Given a set of  $n + 1$  data points  $(x_0, f_0), \dots, (x_n, f_n)$  where

$$f_i = f(x_i)$$

for some unknown function  $f$ , the goal is to find a *polynomial* function of degree  $n$ , say  $p_n(x)$ , where its graph goes through all the datapoints. We then can use the approximation  $f(x) \approx p_n(x)$ .

**Theorem 2.0.1.** *Given a collection of  $n + 1$  data points  $(x_0, f_0), \dots, (x_n, f_n)$  in the cartesian plane such that*

$$x_0 < x_1 < x_2 < \dots < x_n$$

*Then there exists a unique polynomial of degree  $\leq n$  such that*

$$p_n(x_i) = f_i \quad \forall i \in \{0, 1, \dots, n\}$$

If we use the approximation  $f(x) \approx p_n(x)$ , then the absolute error  $(|f(x) - p_n(x)|)$  is given by the following theorem.

**Theorem 2.0.2** (Error Formula). *The error formula with the above notation is*

$$|f(x) - p_n(x)| = |(x - x_0)(x - x_1) \cdots (x - x_n)| \frac{f^{(n+1)}(t)}{(n+1)!}$$