

Strengths Assessment and Personal Goal Setting

In this assignment you will start off your portfolio with a strengths assessment and with setting some Personal Process Goals.

- Please have a draft to bring to class on Monday September 9th to discuss with peers.
- Please have your finished work typed in one document to bring to class on Thursday September 12th. In class you'll paste or upload this document to your portfolio. This document should include:
 - List of at least five strengths as a mathematician, with a sentence or two explaining each.
 - List of two to four Personal Process Goals, with a paragraph about each, explaining why you are choosing it and how you intend to track it.

1. Strengths as a Mathematician

- Describe some of your strengths as a mathematician, i.e. a person who engages with mathematics, including your engagement beyond school in things like puzzles, hobbies, jobs, etc.
- Try to make a list of at least five things that you genuinely feel good about, with a sentence or two of explanation for each. Resist the temptation to compare yourself to others.

2. Personal Process Goals

- Think about how you would like to grow as a mathematician this semester. Draft two to four goals to bring to class. See the list at the end of this document for ideas.
- Think about what evidence, such as a time log, journal, video of you speaking, etc., would convince you that you've met your goals.

- The most important aspects of setting Personal Process Goals are:
 1. They are goals that matter to you.
 2. They are growth goals where you can see your progress.
- Any stress involved in working towards these goals should be intrinsic to the difficulty of the goals and not about grades or external judgment. I will be looking for thoughtful reflection, otherwise you are measuring your progress, I am not.
- Phrase your goals so they're about attitudes or actions that you want to cultivate rather than that you want to avoid. If your first wording is something like, "To stop doing X," think about what your life as a mathematician would be like if you stopped doing X. What are you aspiring to?
- I encourage you to choose big, even lifetime goals, that no one can achieve in four months. Phrase big goals in terms of growth rather than endpoints, so you can see progress.
- You are welcome to also use evidence from other courses or other parts of your life to show your progress on your goals.

Notes:

- You will be able to modify your personal goals as the semester progresses.
- On Monday we'll share strengths and goals, which may give you ideas for changing your draft of the assignment.
- After your work is uploaded to your portfolio, I will make some comments on it.
- If there's anything you want me to see, but don't want to share with classmates on Monday, that's fine.
- This is a "writing to learn" assignment, not a "learning to write" assignment, so as long as your peers and I can understand what you're saying, I won't be too worried if there are some mistakes in grammar, punctuation, etc.

Some Ideas for Personal Process Goals:

- To approach new problems with confidence.
- To approach new problems with humility.
- To approach new problems with a good balance of confidence and humility.
- To better engage in productive struggle when problem solving.
- To actively work to understand new material, asking and answering my own questions.
- To persist in problem solving.
- To enjoy math more.
- To accept that frustration is part of the learning process and have a good balance between tolerating frustration and knowing when it's time to take a break or look for resources.
- To make connections between problems I solve.
- To attend to precision when solving problems. (Note: if you are tempted to make your goal, "To stop making silly mistakes," I encourage you to choose this one instead).
- To critique my own reasoning and find and correct mistakes.
- To regularly ask why things work or are true.
- To talk more in class.
- To listen more in class.
- To work to understand and appreciate classmates' mathematical thinking, as well as help them improve it.
- To share my mathematical thinking with classmates and help them understand and appreciate it and to let them help me improve it.
- To communicate my mathematical thinking more clearly when I speak.
- To communicate my mathematical thinking more clearly when I write.
- To make sense of mathematical writing that I read.