



Positive Norms to Encourage in Math Class

By Jo Boaler

1. Everyone Can Learn Math to the Highest Levels.

Encourage students to believe in themselves. There is no such thing as a “math” person. Everyone can reach the highest levels they want to, with hard work.

2. Mistakes are valuable

Mistakes grow your brain! It is good to struggle and make mistakes.

3. Questions are Really Important

Always ask questions, always answer questions. Ask yourself: why does that make sense?

4. Math is about Creativity and Making Sense.

Math is a very creative subject that is, at its core, about visualizing patterns and creating solution paths that others can see, discuss and critique.

5. Math is about Connections and Communicating

Math is a connected subject, and a form of communication. Represent math in different forms eg words, a picture, a graph, an equation, and link them. Color code!

6. Depth is much more important than speed.

Top mathematicians, such as Laurent Schwartz, think slowly and deeply.

7. Math Class is about Learning not Performing

Math is a growth subject, it takes time to learn and it is all about effort.

