

The Definition of a Mathematician

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Goals

- Everyone should have a chance to discover the beauty of mathematics, and everyone should have the chance to put it to good use.
- There are issues of equity, access, justice, identity, inclusion that pervade our mathematics community, and society at large.
- Our goal is to give you tools to better understand these issues and be able to explain them to others, and hopefully to tackle these issues.

Disclaimers

- We do not pretend to have all the answers to all the questions.
- We will use active learning, you are expected to participate as much as possible.
- “Three before me”

Definition of “mathematician”

**List the first few things that come to mind
when you hear the word “mathematician.”**

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Get in your breakout group, introduce yourselves, and find a few ways in which the words you listed in the previous activity influence our mathematical community.

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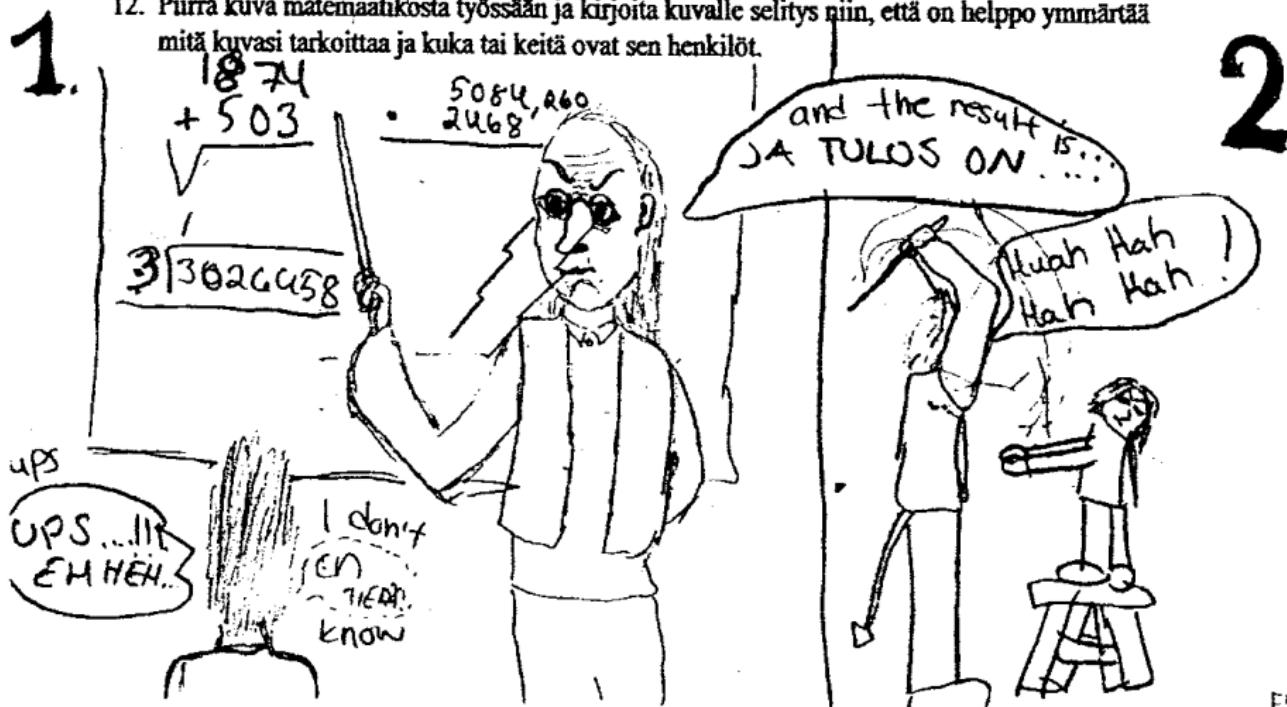
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And who are we losing more specifically?

This even affects how children think of mathematicians



Susan Picker, John Berry: *Investigating pupils' images of mathematicians.*

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What would you like to first come to mind when you hear the word “mathematician”?

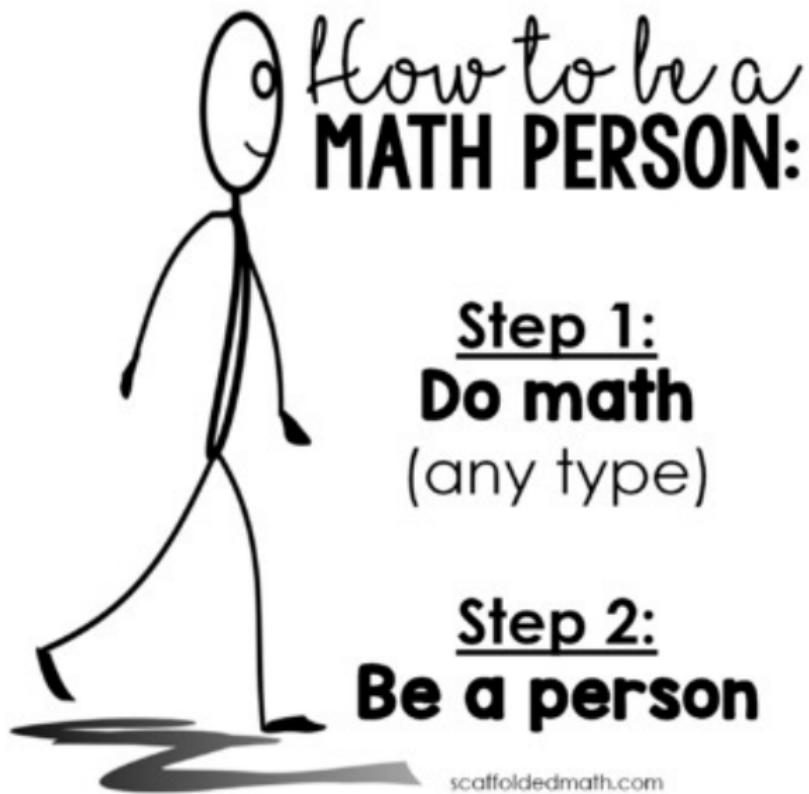
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What would you like to first come to mind when you hear the word “mathematician”?

From the Cambridge Dictionary: “someone who studies, teaches, or is an expert in mathematics.”



How to be a **MATH PERSON:**

Step 1:
Do math
(any type)

Step 2:
Be a person

More on definitions

We have two contending definitions of a mathematician:

- The “official” definition: the definition anyone would give if asked (from question / index card #3: someone who does math).
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**What causes this difference between our
“official” definition of a mathematician, and our
“operational” definition of a mathematician?**

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Where does this all come from?

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For the next webinars, we will focus on the *interpersonal* aspect of oppression in mathematics. That's when someone poses a direct act towards someone else, and that act is oppressive (whether the person intended or not for the action to be oppressive).

Take-aways

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- We are humans doing math, not just mathematical brains doing math without thinking about anything else.
- Our biases, assumptions, stereotypes have an impact on us and our community, and on those who are not part of our community: in terms of people not feeling welcome, not joining us, leaving us, not being as successful as they could be, etc.

Thank you!

Join MAA Connect and look for “Conversations for the Mathematics Community ” for more webinars, resources, readings, etc!

**And thanks to the MAA for supporting this work, especially:
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