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Learning Journals for Community and Communication

In recent years, the Mathematical Association of America has recommended that "mathematics faculty should deliver an unambiguous message concerning the importance of mathematical reasoning and communication skills and adopt instructional methods and curriculum content that develop these skills." In this session, we present the idea of online learning journals as a low-stakes, small-scale assessment for learning that offers students an opportunity to distill and communicate their mathematical learning, with their peers as the target audience of their writing. In these journals, students are prompted to give an objective discussion of the mathematical content, a description of how the concepts are useful, as well as the aspects they have found challenging. We argue that these journals not only support the development of communication skills in mathematics, but also serve as a space for students to gain different points of view through the insights of their peers, especially in a remote learning environment. These benefits are supported through student feedback and perceptions of the use of learning journals in their courses.