

The Audience: Grade eight mathematic students

The Goal: To finish off our unit on fractions with a fun activity that actually incorporates using fractions in everyday life. To compile a recipe book for each class of favourite recipes.

The Rationale: After having written a formal test on adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing fractions, I thought that this would be a fun way to explore how fractions are used and introduce our next unit on ratios and proportions. I also wanted to continue to build community by allowing my students to share food stories, recipes and if possible a sample of the actual food.

Description of the Activity

- 1) Talk to your family about a special or favourite recipe that you can tell a story about. The story can revolve around a time when you and family or friends gathered together to eat that recipe, a tradition or history about that recipe, or an interesting moment when that recipe was being made.
- 2) Copy the recipe and bring it to class. Do not bring your family's only copy of your favourite recipe!!!
- 3) Determine the yield for the recipe that you chose.
- 4) Calculate the ratio of the yield of your recipe to our class.
- 5) Identify the multiple by which you must increase or decrease your recipe.
- 6) Multiply each ingredient of your recipe to yield enough for our class.
- 7) Prepare your story to share with the class.
- 8) Discuss with your family the possibility of making the recipe for our class to sample.
- 9) If possible make the recipe to share with the class when you tell your story.

The Feast

I had the chance to do this activity with two of my classes. Having learned from the name story activity, this time I had my students prepare their stories in advance on paper. Some read the stories but most recalled them without the paper in front of them. Just over half of the students in each class actually brought their food to share, and everybody had to submit a recipe for the cookbook and tell a food related story while we sampled the treats. It was a very nice bonding experience. Some students shared recipes that have been handed down through the family for generations. What impressed me about this is that many helped their parents or grandparents make the recipe for the

first time for this activity. Students gained a real appreciation of how their families made these treats that they have just taken for granted in the past.

In one class with many EAL students there was a real diversity in recipes submitted. Many were traditional dishes from their countries. I was a little worried when one student passed out a dessert that was quite different. Not all students liked it, but they were willing to try it and we talked about showing respect and how important it is to be willing to try new things. Students reflected that while many of the foods were different, the stories were similar. One student really impressed me as he had made perogies. They were excellent and the whole class gave him a round of applause as he had made them on his own. This is a student who has not experienced a lot of positive attention in class, as he often does not do his work. To see his beaming face was quite special. Another student that has been too anxious to attend classes for over a month joined us and stayed for the whole period to hear the stories and sample the food. This was incredible and a testament to the fact that sharing does indeed help build community.