

Creating an Online Course

a reflection by Stephanie Green

Developer Notebook Entry 1

Grade Level: 6th grade

Subject: Mathematics

Particular Curricular Unit you are thinking of developing:

I would like develop a unit for fractions, since many 6th graders have trouble with this unit and it is one of the major building blocks when they continue in their mathematical education.

What do you want your course to look like?

I would like my course to be well organized and very easy to navigate considering the age of my students. Students should be able to find relevant course materials quickly and easily and be able to understand course components and expectations. My online course should also be aesthetically pleasing to my students so that learning can take place in a relaxed way. I would also like my course to contain functional links that are consistent and assure accessibility throughout time constraints.

What your ideas/thoughts/dreams for class interaction for both teacher and students?

Students should be able to access and respond to course content in a timely manner. Through online surveys, discussion boards, skype and email, students should receive feedback, ask questions and get to know each other both formally and informally. As an instructor, I plan to interact with my students using these tools and set convenient times for virtual “chatting” to identify and help students who are struggling or need extra motivation.

How do you think you will assess students?

Students will be assessed through online quizzes and a unit test, as well as through submission of regular activities and practice. Using the online tool, [That Quiz](#), I can create quizzes that students can take and receive immediate feedback on. Using the Online textbook series from [Prentice Hall](#), students can practice quizzes and tests and also receive immediate feedback as they complete each section. This companion website also delivers virtual tutorials for students to access throughout the unit. Using another online source, [IXL](#), students can practice relevant math problems and I receive data on how much each student is practicing, where their strengths and weaknesses lie, and how well they are mastering the concept. Another practice site I plan to use is [Internet 4 Classrooms](#), which offers guided tutorials with examples and built in practice as well as some computer-based learning games to add some motivation and fun to learning fractions.

What are some of the social, ethical, legal, and human issues surrounding the participation in your online course?

One of the biggest concerns when teaching (or taking) an online course is to verify that the student who signed up for the course is actually taking the tests, performing the activities, and participating in the discussions as themselves and not their parent, brother, aunt, etc. Another key issue is

the copyright and fair use agreements set in place so that students don't just plagiarize other's work and call it their own. With the ease of "copying and pasting", it is difficult to ascertain where students received their work and whether or not they have used the information following copyright laws. Another concern is maliciously damaging, destroying, deleting or stealing other students' work that has been submitted on-line, or using that work to "bully" or make fun of another student. We all know how easy it is to comment on work submitted on the Internet. We need to make sure that students who submit comments are making positive, constructive comments so cyber-bullying does not occur.

Developer Notebook Entry 2

What surprised you?

I was most surprised by the number of free CMS systems available for teacher use. I was previously unaware of all of these systems, especially those that are free to the user and the relative ease to get started in integrating them into courses.

What didn't surprise you?

I was least surprised that Moodle would be the top choice for my course. It is the one CMS that I am most familiar with, just by word of mouth and hearing other teachers who have used it.

Which CMS are you going to use for this course? Why?

I am choosing to use Moodle for my course because my school will be implementing this CMS in our curriculum next year. Creating my unit using the Moodle system will allow me to be ahead of the game so to speak, and I will be able to utilize it with my students next year.

Why is this CMS a good match for your course and curriculum?

I believe this is a good match because Moodle had all of the features that were highly important to me, such as file sharing, group work and discussion forums as well as an online gradebook that gives students the opportunity to know their grade whenever they go to their Moodle course. I also believe the automated testing bank with the assistance of the MathML editor will make it easy for me to create/ give assessments using the automated testing feature for my fractions unit.

What additional tools/functionality might you need beyond the features available in the CMS you have chosen?

My school already used SchoolMaster PASS which allows students to view grades at anytime. It would be great if the two gradebooks could be linked, instead of having to import in both places. I would also like to incorporate my wiki but I am unsure if this capability is available. As I am creating the course, I am sure I will run into features or functions that I would like to add.

What support do you need to be successful with this endeavor?

I am a little apprehensive at this point as I am not quite comfortable in creating an online unit. To get myself better acquainted with the system, I need to learn the ins and outs of Moodle, as it is a system I have never used before. I need to hopefully connect to my schools' server (if it's already up) and have the ability to create and use my course through my school. I hope to use the online

tutorials to assist in my understanding of how to create and use my online course.

Developer's Notebook Entry 3

The **learning goals** for my unit are:

- Efficiently compare and order fractions; determine their approximate locations on a number line.
- Use area models to represent multiplication of fractions.
- Create and solve contextual problems that lead naturally to the addition, subtraction, multiplication and division of fractions.
- Solve problems involving the addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of mixed numbers.
- Understand ratio as a fraction used to compare two quantities by division.

The **learning outcomes** for my unit are:

- Students will perform computations with fractions.
- Students will create a set of flash cards with rules/steps for working with fractions.
- Students will design a demonstration using video to model adding and subtracting fractions
- Students will create a recipe that models how to multiply and divide fractions

The **Potential methods of assessment** are:

- Weekly quizzes
- 2 real world projects (mid unit and end of the unit)
- Unit pre and post exam
- Weekly discussion board posts ([see Rubric Here](#))
- Weekly blog posts ([see Rubric Here](#))

Ms. Green's Communication Policy

A critical component of a Web-based class is communication. Students are responsible for securing access to the Internet, checking email regularly, and using communication technology to meet the expectations of this course.

How your instructor will reach you:

Ms. Green will use the [Moodle home page](#) as the primary means of communicating with students on a day-to-day basis. Remember you must log in using the Moodle key on the top right corner of ATA's web site. Information posted on this page will include general announcements, instructions for attending the Webcasts, tips, answers to frequently asked questions, and links to additional resources you might find interesting. You should check the course home page every day.

You will also receive periodic emails from your instructor providing reminders, instructions, and general feedback on assignments.

Discussion forums

Because a discussion board enables others to see your input, Ms. Green asks you to follow these

guidelines:

- Please focus your ideas and thoughts on the weekly discussion board using our moodle account.
- Please protect your privacy and the privacy of others by not sharing personally identifiable information on this discussion board.
- All communication should relate to academics. Please be respectful of your fellow students. Any discussion post deemed inappropriate will be immediately taken down and disciplinary action will follow.

Blogs

You will be required to set up a blog for open class discussions. You will share ideas and strategies you found successful for solving fractions. This will be a group project and you will be required to post comments on each of your group member's blogs. Remember the things you post here can be seen by everyone in the class. Be mindful of this and follow the same guidelines as the discussion forums.

Email

Please remember to **sign your name on every email you send to Ms. Green!** I have a lot of students, and it takes time to determine who you are when all I get is dancinggirl.kid07@atafordpas.org over and over again.

If at any time you feel you need to contact me please feel free to email me at sgreen@atafordpas.org or you can reach me during regular school hours at 313-625-4700.

Developer Notebook 4

Link to my rubric: [Recipe Project Rubric](#)

Developer Notebook 4: Reflection

In creating my rubric, I chose to evaluate the final project that my unit will cover. The rubric criteria were the expectations I have for what I anticipate the student's final project to contain and look like. It was difficult to make the decision on which rubric to turn in as I will have students using several online applications as well. Within my course, I will use rubrics to also assess discussion board responses, blogs responses and the first project my kids will be required to do. There was a wealth of sample rubrics to use for these applications and I will choose the ones I feel best represent what my students needs are. The only concern I have when creating this document using Google spreadsheets is that there is no way to identify what portions of the rubric and their example value. When creating rubrics I like to give my students an evaluative tool so they can self-assess their progress on their assignments. Below is an example of what I mean:

| | CRITERIA | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| The student will take 3 recipes that have | None of the recipes have three fractions. | One of the recipes has three fractions. | Two of the recipes have three fractions each. | Each recipe has at least three fractions in it. |

| | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| AT LEAST 3 fractions each and triple and halve them. | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|

This rubric will aid in my students growth by allowing them to not only self-evaluate their project, but it also serves a checklist to make sure they have followed and completed the requirements to the best of their abilities. This involvement empowers the students and as a result, their learning becomes more focused and self-directed. Using this type of rubric also indicates the standards for the assignment in my online course. It provides a way for me to communicate my expectations, along with written directions, so students can see concise benchmarks that they must reach in order to be successful in the course.

In order to help my students accomplish the goals of my course, I have identified some key factors that are important when teaching and learning in an online environment.

1. “Academic integrity and netiquette (Internet etiquette) expectations regarding lesson activities, discussions, e-mail communications and plagiarism are clearly stated.”

This is an important aspect of communicating online and will be clearly stated in my syllabus as well as separately in my communication policy and discussion rubrics. Students will be able to view these expectations as they complete the weekly activities.

2. “The course provides opportunities for students to engage in higher-order thinking, critical-reasoning activities and thinking in increasingly complex ways.”

Because this is a math course students will use multiple strategies for learning and practicing fractional mathematical skills. This includes note-taking through PowerPoint, practicing through sites that give immediate feedback and develop understanding, quizzes and tests that assess how well a student is advancing, and real world projects that allow the student to inquire about what they are learning and apply it to given situations, thus using the higher level thinking skills they need to be successful in years to come.

3. “The course is easy to navigate.”

It is important for students to be able to access the materials they need in the course quickly and easily, so they are utilizing their time appropriately on the course material and not on trying to get the links to work or even find the links that are relevant to the lesson they are working on. Using Moodle for my course lends itself to easy navigation with links that are uploaded right to the server and are linked to the page. The setup is easy to follow and can be tracked in a logical way.

