

Mrs. Poulsen's Flipped – Introduction Letter

Dear Parents,

We have an exciting year of math coming up in my classroom. Things will be a little different in your student's math class than you may be used to. We will be implementing a teaching model known as the 'flipped classroom'.

What is a 'flipped classroom'?

In short, a flipped classroom switches the traditional order of teaching with the purpose of creating a more in depth and supportive environment in the classroom where the teacher is present and able to help students. It allows for students to receive a more individualized math education where my actual face-to-face time with them is being used effectively. This results in the student understanding the content at a deeper level than previously attained. It challenges students to learn how to take charge of their learning, become resourceful learners, and manage their time. The flipped classroom also provides time for "Higher-Order Thinking", discussions, and questioning during class time helping students to think deeply about the subject and become reflective learners.

The purpose of this letter is to address some questions about the flipped classroom and how this will look in my classroom. If you have further questions, please feel free to contact me at rpoulsen@lpcsd.org.

What will "homework" look like?

For homework, students will be required to watch short video lectures created by me, where I will teach the lesson and give examples in much the same manner as a student would receive it in class in a traditional setting. Because students are watching the videos, they can pause, rewind, or re-watch any portion of the video at any time. If they learn at a quicker pace they can watch in fast-forward mode if desired. This allows the student to learn at his/her own pace and become self-directed; learning to know when they need to go over certain concepts not fully understood the first time the lecture is watched.

Videos will cover one concept and be approximately 5 to 10 minutes in length. Students should plan on spending about twice the amount of time on homework as the length of the video as they will be required to take notes and will be pausing to spend a few minutes thinking and reflecting on what they have learned.

The videos can be accessed on the class Math XL website. Because the videos are online they can be accessed on any internet capable device, even cell phones. Videos can also be uploaded to iTunes from a flash drive and synced with a student's iPod to watch offline. Other options are available on request.

If you have concerns about your students access to the videos please let me know and I will make accommodations. Please remember that our school has 3 physical and 2 mobile computer labs. Students can access the computer lab in the library any time during the day – breakfast, study hall, lunch, after school. Also, there are evening library hours.

While watching videos, students are taking notes of the concepts and doing examples in their notebooks. Upon completion of watching the video students are required to do a few sample problems on Math XL. These problems are not unlocked until the related video has been watched.

Occasionally homework may look like 'regular' homework where students will be working on practice problems and/or worksheets (this will generally occur the few nights before a test). However, students will have access to the online videos to re-watch in order to help review concepts.

NEW THIS YEAR: NO HOMEWORK WEEKENDS/HOLIDAYS!

We are going to work really hard during the week. I want my students to relax and be kids on weekends. The only exception would be for students who have fallen behind during the week. They should then use the weekend to catch up.

What will class time look like?

Class will begin with students logging into the TI nSpire Navigator system and completing the First Five Five (FFF) on their nSpire. The FFF is a five minute formative assessment of recent and review material. FFFs are worth 5 points every day. Points accumulate throughout the marking period until students reach 100 points or the marking period ends. The total points accumulated at the end of each marking period count as a test grade. Students who are late to class for any reason cannot take the FFF that day.

While students work on the FFF, I will be taking attendance and "collecting" their homework via the Math XL website. This will allow me to assess how well students understood the video lesson the night before. Students will be grouped according to these daily results so that they may complete an appropriate task in class. We may go over a few problems as a class but most often students will work in their small groups and get individual assistance from me or in smaller groups as needed.

After the FFF, students will work in small groups on practice problems or activities ("labs") to help practice and develop a full understanding of the concepts. Students are encouraged to work with each other and help each other and will be reminded that a good indication of a concept being understood is the ability to explain the concept to someone else. I will be walking around the room from group to group helping to explain concepts and clarify misconceptions. Students will be active learners.

Class will end with a "Ticket out the Door". The Ticket out the Door consists of a quick informal assessment so that I can determine student understanding of the current topic and adjust instruction accordingly the next day.

In the flipped classroom, students will take weekly quizzes to assess their learning. There will continue to be opportunities for whole-class instruction ("lecture") and review if the majority of students need to review a concept. However, most of the teaching is focused on smaller groups of students who need help on certain concepts, leading to fully differentiated instruction and support.

What is asked of you as a parent?

The flipped classroom will enable you to be more involved with your student's math education. Parents tend to agree they do not remember much math from when they were in high school and do not feel adequate in helping their student when doing math homework. With the flipped classroom there are several easy ways to support your student:

1. Provide a quiet place to watch the videos (headphones strongly encouraged to limit distractions)
2. If internet access is not available, provide your student with time to stay after school and watch in my room, LMC, or computer lab.
3. Ask your student questions about what they watched and have them summarize out loud to you.
4. Encourage them to take their time watching the video (pause, rewind, re-watch portions if topics in video are being covered too quickly)
5. Watch with your student so you can learn along with them and help with regular practice problems before the test.

What is required of the student?

In reality, the flipped classroom does not change the responsibilities of the student in that he/she is expected to do 'math homework' each night. The difference is the **type** of homework the student will be completing. Instead of doing practice problems which could be done without really thinking about the math involved, getting stuck on a problem, do them incorrectly, or not try at all as a result of thinking that math is too hard, students simply watch the videos, take good notes, think about what they heard, write a summary, and answer a few related questions. The expectation is the student comes to class prepared each day with the background knowledge on each concept and are ready to really learn in a deeper, faster, and better way. Students are not expected to have complete mastery when they arrive in class, though that may be the case with some concepts. Students will be responsible for their own learning in that:

1. Students must plan time to watch the videos when they are fully awake, and make connections
2. Students should plan to watch before 10 pm if at all possible
3. Students need to take the initiative to re-watch videos as needed
4. If absent, students are still required to watch the videos and come prepared to class.
5. Students must take initiative to keep in contact with me either online or in person if there are issues with watching the videos. This may include needing to come see me before school, during lunch, or afterschool in order to watch the videos before class begins as often as needed.

What if your student does not understand the concepts while watching the videos?

Individualized or small group support is available for students before, during, and after the school day in a variety of ways.

1. Students can arrange to meet me before school (usually around 7:15 or earlier with appointment)
2. Students can arrange to meet with me during my planning and lunch periods (periods 6 & 8)
3. Students can arrange to meet with me during my study hall period (period 2)
4. When students ask a question online via edmodo, I can respond individually or post a video explaining in a different way. Additionally, classmates can respond to edmodo questions.
5. Look at online resources beyond my videos for help with the concept (Khan academy for example)

Students are held accountable for completing homework on a nightly basis. As with regular homework assignments failure to do so will adversely affect the student's grade.

Students failing to complete homework by class time (video watched, notes taken, math XL problems answered) **will be required to phone parent to report to you they have come to class unprepared.** Student will then have access to a device and headphones in order to complete the assignment before joining the rest of the class activities.

Unprepared students will miss the class discussion and will therefore be required to schedule a time to meet with me to have an individual discussion on the concept in order to receive credit. Students repeatedly unprepared for class are subject to further consequences.

All assignments not completed by the day of the test will receive a 0.

Assignments that correspond to the lesson (practice problems/worksheets, labs) should be fully completed by the assigned due date. Students will be given ample time in class to complete these assignments working with me or other students. However, being off task during class or absent may require the student to complete these assignments on their own time to ensure assignments are fully completed before entering class the next day.

Finally, please send me an email (rpoulsen@lpcsd.org) to indicate that you received and have read this letter. Also, please indicate in that email if you'd like to be part of a regular email group (approximately bi-weekly) and include all email addresses you'd like to receive these "newsletters".

Thank you for reading this! I am looking forward to a great year. ☺



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“Education is not the learning of facts, but the training of the mind to think.”

~ Albert Einstein