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Sequencing Rationale

Our fractions unit is a unit that requires significant modifications to the way my grade level has organized it in the past. Previously this unit was only four weeks and this year the decision has been made to make this a five week unit. An extra week has been added to review previous concepts from fifth grade essential to success on this unit. In order for students to be able to simplify fractions and to find common denominators there should be extensive review of concepts like primes, composites, prime factorization, least common multiple (LCM), and greatest common factor (GCF). The ideal outcome would for this extra week of review to assist in eliminating some of the tragedies associated with fractions that result from students entering the unit deficient in significant pre-requisite skills.

After, our introductory week of review our unit will kick off with a week to understand the basics about fractions before getting too far into calculations. A week is dedicated to understanding key concepts like equivalent, improper, comparing, and ordering fractions. These ideas will be integrated several times in the adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing lessons that will follow on the subsequent weeks. Too many errors typically occur with these simple concepts that if left un-fixed infuse their way into the entire rest of the unit causing students to misunderstand new material due to previous lesson confusions.

Next, a two week period will be devoted to adding and subtracting fractions. There is simply to these ideas to not take it slow by allowing two full weeks. By providing two weeks it will allow for an opportunity to put students in our media center for a couple of days to model the concepts associated with adding and subtracting fractions while working in small groups. This activity will allow for a tremendous amount of authentic assessment conducted by all of the math teachers in my grade level instead of having only one teacher grade all of his/her students on a single objective. The other benefit to the two week time table is that there will be time for several assessment strategies infused into our daily teaching. By taking our time through these ideas we can make any necessary modifications to our teaching to improve student understanding with topics that can be rather challenging for a sixth grader.

Finally, a week will be dedicated to multiplying and dividing fractions. Since there are only a trio of lessons in this week there should be a full day provided for review of all of the major concepts prior to the culminating assessment. Since this unit is going to be conducted over a twenty-five school day period there should be ample opportunities for re-teaching, enrichment, and review of major concepts throughout the unit. Also, with the multiple opportunities to document student understanding through a multitude of assessment strategies there should be a diminished value placed on the test because students will have had several chances to already demonstrate their understanding of concepts so that the test itself should be less of a challenge than what they have already been subjected to.