



Chipotle Challenge

Bryan Meyer, Mathematics, High Tech High North County

"So there are 60-some thousand flavor combinations at Chiptole..." This simple message written on the side of a drinking cup from Chipotle started our whole investigation. Could there really be this many? Could there be more? We were determined to find out if they were right. Students studied smaller problems and created rules about combinatorics that they could use to piece together this huge problem. In the end, we came up with an answer of our own and exhibited our work as a Chipotle-esque assembly line where we explained our ideas to visitors (and, of course, served burritos).

Teacher Reflection

From my perspective, this project was a success mostly because students were doing and creating math together. The solution to the problem was exciting for all of us, but how we came to that solution was far more powerful. Students were collaborating, looking for patterns, being systematic, persisting through difficult tasks, and creating mathematical rules. This type of thinking is, at least in my opinion, what makes mathematics powerful and important.

Student Reflections

This was not only a fun project involving food, but it opened my eyes to so many similar problems we are faced with on a daily basis. We first started out by learning how to create combinations from small groups and find different patterns we see in these combinations. After working with smaller problems, we used the patterns to figure out equations that could be used to make the problems a little simpler. Our final project was looking at the Chipotle menu and trying to find how many different combinations could be made. There were so many! Everyday, I see a similar problem and it reminds me about how much I truly learned just by doing this project.

—Julian Guzman

The Chipotle Challenge was a great experience. I learned so much about how to think like a mathematician. Learning how to view results and draw conclusions. This project showed me how math can be applied to real life. I will always remember this project because of the memorable connections we made our fellow students. Also, who can have a problem with a project completely centered around burritos? Seriously guys!

—Desirae Lizcano