

A TEACHER REFLECTS



Before beginning Lesson 13, I brought several different newspapers and magazines to class. The students looked through them to find examples of percents. They noticed many different ways in which the examples were worded, such as “40% off,” “a 30% discount,” “the quarterback completed 58% of his passes,” and “the population increased 2.4%.” They also noticed many examples of bar and circle graphs that used percents. One other example that was not as obvious was the connection between percents and some sports data—particularly baseball statistics which are commonly written as decimals. I asked students to pick one example and explain the information, using both the percent and its corresponding fraction or decimal.

After asking several students to explain their examples, I pointed out that converting between

percents and fractions can help clarify many situations. For example, they would more easily understand a test score reported as 92% rather than $\frac{322}{350}$. However, the fraction form contains more information because it gives the number of correct answers and the number of points on the test. Also, in baseball, a player’s batting “average” isn’t an average at all. A batting average of 0.275 indicates the player has hit safely 27.5% of the time.

After completing Lesson 13, I thought that a game was in order. I made decks of cards, each card showing a decimal, a fraction, or a percent. The students used the cards to play “War” where the highest card wins. They practiced changing decimals, fractions, and percents and also reviewed comparing rational numbers with this game.