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Panning for Gold: 15 Investigations to Enrich Middle School Mathematics

Daniel Brahier

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Students learn mathematics by solving problems. But to learn best, they need immersive problems that activate background knowledge while introducing new concepts - that challenge them to make connections between mathematical principles, mirror their real-world experiences, and show them the big ideas underpinning procedural understandings. These kinds of problems are riches for any classroom, and in *Panning for Gold* you'll discover a trove of extended investigations that support deep learning in math.

Panning for Gold containsfifteen classroom-tested, open-ended inquiries into real-life topics that build students' facility with algebra, geometry, data analysis and probability, number and operations, and measurement. Its extended, two- to three-day investigations are a high-quality supplement for any curriculum. Daniel Brahier describes each lesson thoroughly, including:

- the rationale for teaching it
- where in the curriculum it may fit
- connections to specific NCTM Standards
- step-by-step discussions of activities and questions for the classroom
- optional extensions.

Brahier, an experienced middle school math teacher, also provides classroom dialogues in each chapter that give the reader a sense of how activities are likely to play out in a classroom setting, as well as samples of student work and thinking patterns that show how deeply middle school students interact with the content of the investigation. In addition, he weaves key theoretical issues into the book, making *Panning for Gold* practical but also grounded in contemporary mathematical and pedagogical research.

Panning for Gold is so much more than an activities book. It's a way to explore new instructional ideas and to better understand the math content you teach. Across the mathematics curriculum, it offers a wealth of problems that help students discover and treasure the power of mathematical thinking.

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