

A TEACHER REFLECTS



The hardest part of this phase was the final project, Lesson 12. My students had worked very hard throughout the unit and were tired. Although some students were excited about the museum idea, others felt that they had already created a display when they had illustrated their stories in Phases One and Two. We brainstormed what to do as a class and came up with the idea of having a pot-luck dinner party for guests from each of the lands that Gulliver visited. I let the students choose the lands they wanted to describe and then put them in groups accordingly. There was a pretty even distribution of students with the groups running between 3 to 5 students. One land, Quarterville, had eight students who wanted to describe it, so I made Quarterville the hosts and put them in charge of table decorations.

As a class, we came up with a list of things that would be needed to make the party successful. We also thought about how we could display the items for other people. The students decided that we needed to have a plate, knife, fork, spoon and something to drink. We also had each group bring something to eat. The students had a week to complete the project. I gave the groups one day of class time to organize their projects and divide up the work and another day at the end of the week to put everything together and write their presentations. The rest of the week, I had the students do some paper and pencil activities with scale, area, and volume. When they were finished

with that day's assignment, I let them work on their project in class.

To display our place settings, we put all the desks together to form one long table and made a place card with the name of the land and scale factor for each place setting. Some groups had made life-size invitations to the party, and we sent these to the other classrooms in our school. On the day of the party we spent the first fifteen minutes of class setting up and then opened our doors. As our "guests" stood around the rim of the table, each group presented their place setting and placed their pot-luck dish on the table. I had each group tell how they figured out the size of their objects and describe the size of the person from their land that would be sitting at the table. One group brought a doll to show the size, while another created a life-size drawing of just a hand to show the size comparison.

The next day, I had my students complete Step 3, Observing a Display, and Step 4, Reviewing a Display, from Lesson 12 as written. I then had students write an individual review and self evaluation. The students felt the activity was fun and fair and, because they had designed the project themselves, they were highly motivated. When I do this again, I think I will have all three of my math classes participate in one dinner party, and see if we can set up in the multipurpose room or library. We could then do our presentations and evaluations all in one day.