

A TEACHER REFLECTS



In Lesson 5 students were intrigued immediately by the trail mix investigation. However, it was soon clear to me that this would be challenging for many of my students.

If I were to do this lesson again, I would make the trail mix project a class activity and have students bring in ingredients. I would have each group make a trail mix that they would like to eat, telling them only how many cups of mix they had to make. Groups could then use their own taste to determine how much of each ingredient to use. They would then informally think about ratios before they had to write them for the trail mix. When the mixes were made, a given amount of each would be given to each group and they would measure the ingredients and come up with the proportions. Although this would be more time consuming, my students really needed the experience of using ratios more. Also, middle school students are motivated by anything that involves food.

Some students continued to find the use of ounces confusing, since they still had little intuitive understanding of how much an ounce was. They had measured ounces in the previous phase, but hadn't yet internalized what they had learned. For one class lesson I brought in raisins, dried fruit, and chocolate chips, and let them estimate and then measure a given number of ounces. This was fun, and of course they ate everything at the end.