**Georgia Teachers of the Year Association**

**E-mail to MPedersen@paulding.k12.ga.us no later than May 14, 2018.**

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**“Promising Practices Classroom Activity”**

Title of Activity: \_\_Investigative Time\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Recommended to use with this number of students: \_whole class\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Content Area: \_Math\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Grade Level(s): \_any\_\_\_\_\_\_

Match to Georgia Standard(s): \_\_multiple standards\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Note:** Use the remainder of this page and up to one additional page for describing the activity.

When introducing a new concept, I occasionally begin a lesson with an “investigative time” to allow my students the opportunity to explore the process and try to gather understanding on their own. In these situations, I create groups of 3-4 and put on a little instrumental Sherlock Holmes-esque music in the background and provide the groups with an in-depth real-world situation or rigorous, multi-step problem in which the answer has already been provided. The groups are tasked with trying to brainstorm ideas on how the answer could have been reached with the information given. As I visit the groups, I put an emphasis on discussing their thoughts and testing out their ideas rather than worrying about being right or wrong. After a few minutes, each team designates two members to stand up and go join separate groups, ensuring that each table has representatives from three different groups. Once in their new groups, ideas are presented by all for a couple of minutes, and then the students return back to their original groups to share what they have heard. From this point, the problem is opened up to whole class discussion where I randomly select students to provide what their initial thoughts were and anything they may have discovered from their discussion with other groups.

When using this practice to introduce a concept, a concern of mine is that some students may initially give up when confronted with a tough question, especially given one that they haven’t been taught yet. To counteract this possibility and promote engagement, I make sure to emphasize that right or wrong answers are not desired. Instead, good ‘ole discussion amongst all is what we’re striving for considering that there are typically multiple ways to solve a problem. Also, making an effort to visit each group on multiple occasions throughout the process provides me an opportunity to boost their confidence in where their thoughts may be taking them. Having the students switch groups and retrieve ideas from others promotes engagement in the task as well. Ultimately, this activity provides an avenue for my students to become more independent while understanding that discovery and exploration can be common, effective practices used in math. If students can understand the value in putting forth quality effort in their work, whether you’re on the same path as another or not, instead of just relying on someone else to just tell them what to do, it will have a positive effect on their overall life.