

social studies and the young learner

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editor's notes



Dr. Sherry L. Field

The theme of this issue of *SOCIAL STUDIES AND THE YOUNG LEARNER* is “Social Studies in Action!” Children learn by doing. These articles describe elementary students learning content and acquiring skills in an environment that expands from the classroom outward to the school, family, and community.

In the first article, “Co-constructing Classroom Resources,” Janet Alleman and Jere Brophy observe classroom teacher Barbara Knighton guide students as they “create a visual display (a timeline, poster, graph, booklet, or the like) that employs the content they are learning.”

In the article, “Neighbors in Autumn: Service Learning with Elders,” Victoria L. Gadecki describes her work with a sixth grade team on an interdisciplinary service-learning project. Students visit the residents of a retirement home through fall, winter, and spring to bring them small gifts of the season and “spark conversations” that both generations appreciate.

Josephine Barry Davis helps children “to discover that they are not isolated entities with no roots, no connections, but historical and cultural beings with a rich and complex heritage” as depicted in her article, “Identifying with Ancestors: Tracking the History of America.”

In “Map Adventures: Geography for Kindergartners,” Robert Stevens and Marsha Hatfield state, “Geographic literacy can begin as soon as students begin school.” In the accompanying Pullout, “Map Adventures: Six Lesson Plans,” Marsha and Robert “provide teachers with instructional strategies that can help kindergartners understand basic spatial relations, represent physical features on paper, and use some of the basic vocabulary of geography.”

In the Children’s Literature section, Brooke Graham Doyle describes how “Reading (and Rereading) the book *Dear Juno* with Kindergartners” demonstrates “how some sources can be revisited and mined for more detail and deeper meaning.”

Under Classroom Resources, Timothy Lintner suggests “Using Multiple Intelligence Theory in K-2 Geography” and discusses practical exercises that young students can perform “to better understand the physical and social worlds around them.”

John Greer, Bonnie Greer, and Jeffrey M. Hawkins briefly catalog more than twenty-five ways that teachers can go about “Building a Sense of Family in the Classroom” to create a secure and healthy social environment.

Finally, in a pair of Perspectives, educators state their opinions on current educational policies. In “Modern Myths about Poverty and Education,” John P. Manning and William Gaudelli list four commonly believed “facts” that arise from misunderstandings or misperceptions. In “Multiple Perspectives on The Right to Education,” co-authors Mary Lee Webeck, Margit McGuire, Blythe Hinitz, Margaret Smith Crocco, and Cynthia A. Tyson provide five very different comments about high-stakes testing, authentic learning, and human and civil rights as we appreciate them today. 