

Count Me In!



Linda Bennett, Editor

“Count Me In!” is the theme of this issue of *Social Studies and the Young Learner*.

The introduction, “It’s About Us: 2010 Census in Schools,” is by Renée Jefferson-Copeland, chief of the Census in Schools Branch of the U.S. Census Bureau. The “It’s About Us” program provides educators with resources to teach the nation’s students about the importance of civic responsibility through the use of national standards-based lessons involving math, geography, reading, and social studies.

Following this introduction, readers can peruse the “Ten Questions on the 2010 U.S. Census Form.”

In their article “Building Basic Statistical Literacy with U.S. Census Data,” Caroline C. Sheffield, Karen S. Karp, and E. Todd Brown guide students in creating choropleth maps, bar graphs, circle graphs, and in calculating percentages with a circle of 100 beads! By manipulating Census data into different displays, students begin to see some of the strengths and weaknesses of each form.

In “An Annotated List of Census Resources for Educators,” Census consultant Pat Watson describes nine websites at which teachers will find “linked information with interactive opportunities, downloadable data, and both national and local statistics that can personalize lessons and provide current, usable data for classroom activities.”

Third grade teacher Janice Jefferson provides a classroom perspective on Census resources in her short piece, “Interdisciplinary Activities Using *Census in Schools*”

In “Making Sense of the Census with Young Learners,” Nancy P. Gallavan and Kathryn M. Obenchain invite

students, while working in small groups, to count and then graph the populations of five fictitious small towns. The next day, students graph U.S. population data (total men, women, boys, and girls) from the 2000 Census. The PULLOUT that follows their article, which comprises the handouts for these activities as well as a brief assessment, is titled, “From Small Towns to a Big Nation: A First Look at Census Data.”

The final three articles in the journal are on topics other than the U.S. Census.

In “Learning through Process Drama in the First Grade,” Mary Kathleen Barnes Edric C. Johnson, and Lois Neff describe an ambitious unit of study in which children explore several economic concepts as well as government, laws, and leadership through imagination and roleplay.

In “Origin Stories: Geography, Culture, and Belief,” S. Kay Gandy and Kathleen Matthew state, “There is a great variety of origin stories that provide explanations for earthly happenings. The cultural and religious themes evident in these stories can significantly enrich the social studies curriculum, giving elementary students an understanding of how culture and the environment influence the behavior of diverse peoples.”

Finally, Ee Moi Kho and Walter Parker discuss “Kids Learning Outdoors: Fieldwork in Singapore.” Under the name “fieldwork,” first- through sixth-grade students in Singapore regularly venture out of the school on excursions into the community. They conduct surveys and interviews, do simple experiments, observe and gather relevant information, sketch the site, and (back in the classroom) shape their experiences into presentations and publications. 🌐