

COUNTING ACTIVITIES FOR THE CLASSROOM OR THE HOME: GRADES K-1

PATSY K. LOWRY, DALE CAMPBELL, C. J. DAANE, AND JULIE HERRON

In the document prepared by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, Principles and Standards for School Mathematics [NCTM, 2000], the concepts and skills related to number and operations are a major emphasis of mathematics instruction in prekindergarten through grade 2. The child who holds up two fingers in response to the question How many is two? grows to become the second grader who solves sophisticated problems using multidigit computation strategies (p. 79).

According to ALEX (Alabama Learning Exchange), the main standard that involves numbers is demonstrate concepts of number sense by using one-to-one correspondence; comparing sets of objects up to 10 using vocabulary terms, including more than, less than, most, or least; and recognizing that the quantity remains the same when the spatial arrangement changes.

ACTIVITIES

Activity 1.

Materials:

- flower foam shapes
- marker
- clothes pins or colored paper clips
- set of number cards

Introduction: Recently, flower foam shapes were found at one of the stores where everything is \$1.00. There were 20 shapes in the package. This activity could easily be part of a center. Write a numeral on the shapes.

- (1) Select one of the flowers shapes.
- (2) Clip the corresponding amount of clothes pins onto the petal.
- (3) Find the numeral in their set of number cards.
- (4) Place the number card under the petal.
- (5) Check the answer key to make sure you are right.

Conclusion: To change this activity, you can use brightly colored large paper clips. The students would place the number of paper clips on the petal that corresponded to the numeral written on the petal. Then, place the number card under the petal.

A variation of this would be to use construction paper petals with the numbers on them. Give students beans and have them glue the correct amount of beans in the center of the flower. This would provide a connection to a science lesson on parts of a flower.

Activity 2.

Materials:

- small disposable plastic bowls
- marker
- counters

Introduction: This activity requires small disposable plastic bowls and counters: plastic round discs, snap cubes, small play animals, or wooden cubes. Write a numeral on the inside slanted portion of the bowl.

- (1) Give each student some type of counters and a small bowl.
- (2) Place the appropriate number of counters in the bowl to match the numeral written on the bowl.
- (3) Check the answer key to make sure you are right.
- (4) Swap your bowl with a neighbor.
- (5) Check the answer key again.

Conclusion: This activity can continue until all students have had the opportunity to try to represent each numeral.

Activity 3.

Materials:

- deck of sets on note cards
- deck of numerals written on cards

Introduction: This is a matching activity. Place some small inexpensive stickers on 3 by 5 colored note cards, pieces of tag board, or pieces of card stock. Have a deck of these note cards for each student. For example, if you are working on identifying amounts to 10; have a deck with each amount on a different card from 1 to 10. Students should also have a deck of number cards that go from 1 through 10.

- (1) Shuffle each deck of cards separately.
- (2) Draw a card from both decks.
- (3) See if there is a match. If not, select one card to keep and continue drawing until you find a match from the other deck.
- (4) Match the appropriate card with stickers to the card with the numeral from the other deck.
- (5) Place the number card under the card with the stickers on it.
- (6) Stack these two cards on the side of the table.
- (7) Continue until all cards have a matching card.
- (8) Check the answer key to make sure you are right.

Activity 4.*Materials:*

- Set of dominoes
- Paper/pencil

Introduction: This is a game activity for 2 to 4 players and could be used in a center. A set of dominoes is needed.

- (1) Turn the dominoes face down.
- (2) Each player draws one domino.
- (3) Each player counts all the dots on his/her domino.
- (4) The player with the largest number of dots earns a point. No one else can earn a point this turn.
- (5) Continue drawing dominoes until there are not enough dominoes left for each player to get one.
- (6) Tally the number of points to determine who wins. The person with the most points will be the winner.

Conclusion: Students should keep up with their points by using tallying marks or taking a toothpick for each point earned, then counting the toothpicks. When players have used all the dominoes or there are not enough dominoes left for each player to get one the game is over.

Each player must be able to state how many points he/she has earned. He/she must justify why one person is the winner and others are not.

CONCLUSION

These activities are also good for older English-language learners in grades 2-3. Specifically, they would be good for students that have limited English skills. It would be a way for the students to interact with a partner or in a small group which would be less stressful than having to speak in front of the entire class [Reys et al, 2009, p. 56].

REFERENCES

- [NCTM, 2000] National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (2000). *Principals and standards for school mathematics*. Reston, VA: Author.
- [Reys et al, 2009] Reys, R. E.; Lindquist, M. M.; Lambdin, D. V.; & Smith, N. L. (2009). *Helping children learn mathematics*, 9th edition. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

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