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Honors Special Study

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HONORS SPECIAL STUDY

Presented to
Dr. Chapel
Honors Advisor

by

Emma Gail White
EDUC 481. - 1 hour credit
Fall, 1973

EDUCATION 481. - HONORS SPECIAL STUDY

The major objectives which motivated the Honors Program student to select a project concerning elementary school children are as follow:

1. To develop an increasing interest in education.
2. To gain practical experience working with school children.
3. To use the Honors Program project as a guide for planning future educational plans.

One hour weekly, often more, was spent in the first grade classroom of Cale School District, Cale, Arkansas. During this time, the regular teachers were observed, special assistance was given with the pupils, and an activity was presented. Activities were selected from the general areas of current events, art, music, and literature. Special bulletin boards were constructed for the childrens' art work. Some of the activities were planned with small groups and at other times with the class as a whole.

Weekly records of experiences were kept in a diary so evaluations could be made of activities during the progress of the semester. Photographs have been included showing the pupils in the classroom and some of the bulletin boards.

The major part of the actual participation with the class included a story hour each week. Reading a story to a group of six-year-olds was a pleasant experience because their responses were so genuine. Stories of humor, stories of an-

imals, realistic stories, and stories in poetic form were all equally accepted by the pupils. Most of the books had good illustrations to enhance and enrich the story and help to clarify vague concepts. The children would clap, laugh, and request that it be read again. As each book was selected for the weekly session, several goals for the children were kept in mind.

1. To provide rich and varied experiences.
2. To develop an interest in books and reading.
3. To stimulate oral expression.
4. To develop the ability to recall and retell stories.
5. To expand vocabularies and clarify concepts.

A brief description and summary of each selected book follows:

Animal Alphabet from A to Z, by Barbara Shook Hazen. Large, colorful illustrations are in this book which make learning the alphabet inviting to children.

Surprise for Perky Pup, by May Justus. Perky Pup is asleep under a tree when he is hit on the head by some unknown object. Although he prowls around, he is unable to locate what hit him. He worries that maybe he has an enemy. He howls until his dog friends ~~come~~ to him. Old Sal, the wisest dog, calm the disturbance by explaining that it was an apple that fell on Perky Pup's head.

Norman the Doorman, by Don Freeman. Norman is a mouse who lives in the basement of the Majestic Museum of Art in the helmet of a knight's armor. At night he takes his mouse friends on a tour of the basement. His biggest fear is the guard who usually stays on the first floor. Norman always springs the trap that the guard sets. Norman paints for a hobby, and his wire sculpture (made from mousetrap wire) wins a prize in an art contest sponsored by the museum, and soon his worries about the guard are over. The guard now wants to be friends. Colorful pictures accent this exciting book.

The Tiger in the Teapot, by Betty Yurdin. This story takes place in England. Mother is ready to fix the afternoon tea, but there is a big tiger in the teapot who will not budge. The Middle Boys, Middle Sisters, Jane, and Papa tried to force the tiger out of the teapot, but to no avail. They use threats, but the tiger says nothing and does not move. Then Little Sister Josie comes home and says that the tiger is welcome to stay in the teapot, but it must be cramping his lovely tail. She pats him on the head and invites him to tea. "Thank you", he said and jumped out. This fanciful tale with its humorous illustrations charmed the children.

Fuss Bunny, by Helen and Alf Evers. This book is charming and beautiful. Fuss Bunny had everything: good looks, a mother who loved him, a nice home, and plenty of friends. But suddenly he did not like bunny food such as lettuce and clover. He fussed and complained until nobody liked him except his mother. She managed to help him start eating again and everything got back to normal.

Be nice to Spiders, by Margaret Graham. "Please look after Helen. I've had her since she was a baby, but I can't keep her anymore. We have to move to an apartment that won't take pets. Thanks, Bobby." That is how Helen arrived at the zoo. She caught all the insects in the animal cages, and they were very content because they could now have some peace, quiet, and physical comfort. When it was time for the Mayor to inspect the zoo, the keeper cleaned away all the spider webs, and Helen lost her home. She hid in the Camel House and kept the flies away, but elsewhere in the zoo the animals were miserable because of the insects. When the zoo keeper discovered why the camels were so happy, Helen was hailed as a heroine and was welcomed to the zoo. This book is informative, entertaining, and has large, colorful illustrations.

In My Mother's House, by Ann Nolan Clark. This book is about the Tewa Indian children of Tesque Pueblo, near Santa Fe. In Tesque everything centers around the mother's fireplace. The house, the furnishings, and the children all belong to the mother. Even the crops in the field and the game on the mountain are hers when the men bring it home. The book places emphasis on the important role of the mother. It is written in short lines with breaks in the sentences. Several poetic verses are also included.

Square Bear and Cousin Bear, by Charlotte Steiner.

Square Bear and his wife built a log cabin in the country. They had an open fire, and they washed outside at the pump. Cousin Bear and his wife built a "prefab" house with a pretty bathtub and modern conveniences. They sang bear songs and went to The Red Barn to dance. Square Bear and his wife lived simply and used their spare time to prepare for winter. A blizzard came and the electricity went off. If it had not been for the foresight of Square Bear, the Cousin Bears would never have been rescued. The Square Bears then taught Cousin Bear how to saw and hammer. Mrs. Square Bear taught Cousin Bear's wife how to cook over an open fire. The Square Bears ordered a bathtub for themselves. So the two bear families learned from each other. The illustrations are colorful and charming.

Nobody's Cat, by Miska Miles. In this story the cat has no name. He begins as Nobody's cat and when the book ends he is still nobody's cat. Born in an old box in a narrow alley, the cat knew about the city, its trucks, dogs, people, when to run, and when to walk without fear. At night he heard the thuds of hurrying feet along the sidewalk, the whine of tires in the street, doors slamming in the alley, and other sounds. A cat fight is vividly described. The cat is carried to school by mistake in a car. He stays in the school yard for awhile, is caught in a storm, and finally returns to the home in the alley. The illustrations in the book are large and emotional charged pen and ink drawings. They are done in black and white and highlighted with orange.

The First Doll in the World, by Lee Pope. Twinkle was a little girl who lived in a den long ago. Twinkle grew tired of her play toys and became ill. She needed something but she did not know what. One day she drew a doll on the wall of the cave. Her mother was a wise woman and realized that her daughter needed a doll. She made one for her. This was the first doll in the world. The text of this book rhymes. The rhythm of the words and sounds is especially appealing to children.

Autumn Harvest, by Alvin Tresselt. The language used in this book is delightful. For example, "Katydid, katydidn't" were sounds heard from the insects in the autumn. The story is colorfully illustrated. Halloween and Thanksgiving are discussed.

Farm Animals, by Anna Ratzesherger. This informative and beautifully illustrated book describes sheep, goats, pigs, horses, a mule, cows, cats, dogs, a duck, and a chicken. It tells how they live, what they eat, how they help the farmer, and how they help us!

One Kitten Too Many, by Bianca Bradbury and Mani C. Nichols. A Siamese kitten named Tabitha lived in a house and had good manners. Whiskers, a "tiger kitten" lived outside and had bad manners. He was selfish and rude and raided the refrigerator. But Tabitha was able to teach him to say "please" and "thank you", and soon they became friends. The illustrations were very good.

Trick or Treat, by Louis Slobodkin. This book tells about the adventures of "Trick or Treating." There had been one house in the middle of the block that had been vacant for years, but that night all the lights were on and the children knocked nervously saying "Trick or Treat?" An old man answered and said "Trick?" He invited them in and began to perform magic tricks. He was Professor Purple, a famous magician. The children had a great time and the magician decided to stay at the vacant house.

Finders Keepers, by William Lipkind and Nicolas Mordninoff. Two dogs found a bone. They could not agree on whose bone it was, so they asked the farmer, a goat, and a cow to decide. Each said, "Whose bone?" "Who Cares?" Then a large dog came along and tricked them. They recovered their bone from his jaws and realized that the best thing they could do would be to share the bone.

Before reading the story to the class, the student read it enough times to be able to look frequently at the group during the presentation.

A special activity was planned for Halloween since it is an exciting day for children who prepare for it with keen anticipation. Each child was eager to tell about his individual plans for out-of-school activities. A jack-o'-lantern made from a pumpkin was brought to class by the teacher on October 31. A party was planned with refreshments and room decorations. Our special story for the day was Trick or Treat, previously described in the list of selected books.

Probably the most useful and informative bulletin

board was entitled "Willing Helpers." (A photograph is included on the photograph page). Each child's name was placed on a square by a special duty such as straightening the book shelf, dusting the erasers, or picking up paper around the desk. A large cat with rotating arms pointed to the child's duty. It was an enjoyable experience for the children to wait for the day to come when the cat's arms would rotate to their name and duty. This gave each child a specific assignment within the scope of his abilities and a sense of belonging and adequacy with the group.

A very successful group art activity was an "Autumn Leaf Tree." A large poster board tree was constructed that would stand upright on the science table. A construction paper leaf with each child's name written on it was placed on the tree. Each child was then given several paper leaves to decorate as he desired before placing on the tree. This activity helped the children to understand the relationship between the autumn season and the changing colors of leaves on the trees. They were able to participate both as individuals and as a group. For example, each child colored his own leaves as he desired and then placed them on the group tree. This activity also provided an opportunity for each child to be creative and increase his abilities with crayons and glue. The completed project served as an informative decoration for the classroom and as a reminder to the children of the fall season.

Simpler bulletin boards were constructed depending on the needs of the class. Other activities included playing records and singing as a group.

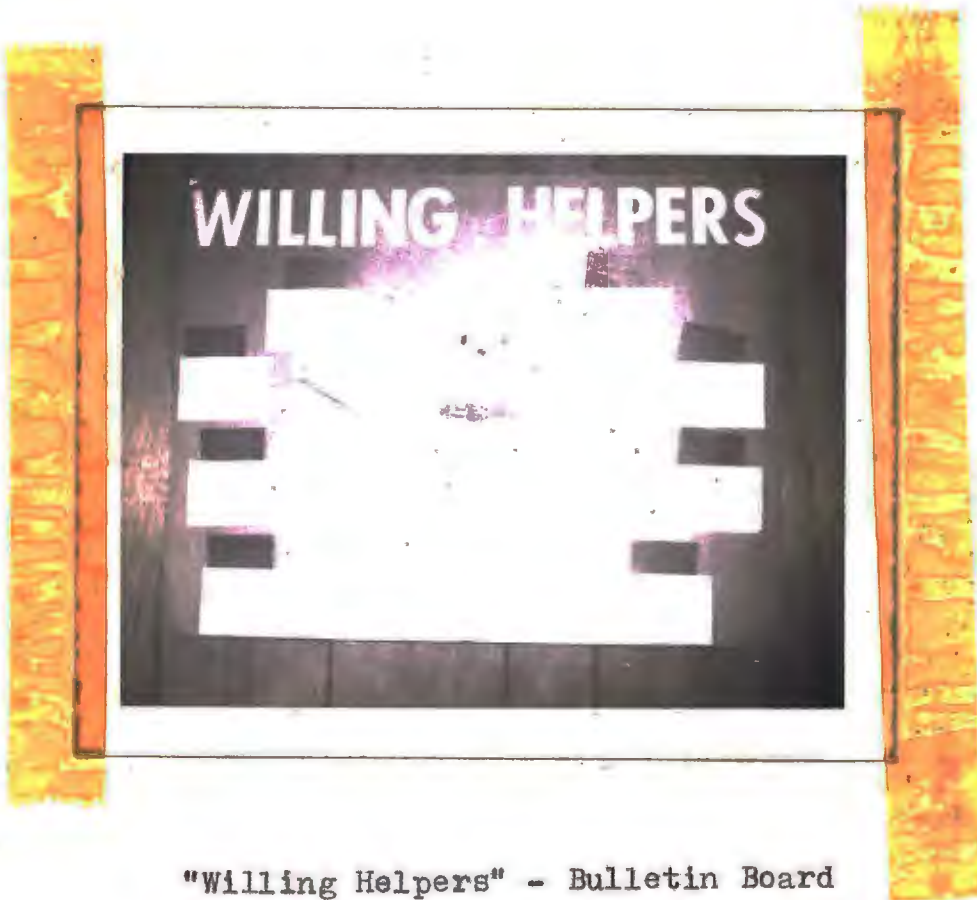
EVALUATION

The Honors Special Study was an enjoyable and informative project. The practical experience of participating with the children increased my interest in public school education and has been a valuable asset to my college training. I have had the opportunity to be really "close" to the children and gain an understanding of the factors that motivate them to learn. The positive responses from the children indicate that they also profited from the varied activities.

In summary, the project was enjoyable and successful for both the student and the pupils.



"Thanksgiving" - Bulletin Board



"Willing Helpers" - Bulletin Board



First Grade Class



Pupils holding examples of their art work.