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## An instructional development project in grade two : the theme of friendship

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## **An instructional development project in grade two : the theme of friendship**

### **Abstract**

The theme of friendship was extended through quality literature experiences and related expressive activities to second grade children at the beginning of the school year. The primary goals were to involve children in the language processes and to develop a community of friendly learners. Teacher-directed and student-initiated activities were provided. The student-initiated activities were presented as options through literature-based learning centers. The goals of the centers included ways to make friends and to be a friend, an understanding that friends can be of all ages, involvement in pals, ways to cope with difficulties encountered in friendships and to recognize each others' individuality, and an appreciation of animals as friends.

An Instructional Development Project in Grade Two

The Theme of Friendship

A Graduate Project

Submitted to the

Department of Curriculum and Instruction

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Education

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

by

Trudy L. Lainson

December, 1999

This Graduate Project by: **Trudy L. Lainson**

Entitled: **An Instructional Development Project in Grade Two**

**The Theme of Friendship**

has been approved as meeting the research article requirement for the  
Degree of Master of Arts in Education.

3/3/2000  
Date Approved

**Jeanne McLain Harms**  

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## Abstract

The theme of friendship was extended through quality literature experiences and related expressive activities to second grade children at the beginning of the school year. The primary goals were to involve children in the language processes and to develop a community of friendly learners. Teacher-directed and student-initiated activities were provided. The student-initiated activities were presented as options through literature-based learning centers. The goals of the centers included ways to make friends and to be a friend, an understanding that friends can be of all ages, involvement in pals, ways to cope with difficulties encountered in friendships and to recognize each others' individuality, and an appreciation of animals as friends.

Extending children's experiences through literature-based themes in the reading program nurtures their thinking-language abilities. Literature provides models of whole units of language and related expressive activity, thus extending children's reading abilities through the comprehension-composition connection. Also, these experiences develop positive reading attitudes and encourage life-long reading interests (Strickland, 1995).

A literature-based curriculum exposes children to quality reading experiences representative of the different genres. Quality literature is characterized by carefully developed literary elements, such as round characters, well-designed plots, interesting settings, and vivid strong language (Lukens, 1994).

Language is learned easily when it is relevant to children and is closely related to both the personal and the social aspects of their lives. Literature-based learning experiences enable children to create meaning within the functions of language expanding their knowledge of the world (Goodman, 1986).

A print-rich learning environment that is secure and predictable supports the learning process. Then, many options for learning through literature experiences and related expressive activities can be offered to nurture children's thinking-language abilities. From engagement in these options, children can also develop personal-social abilities such as independence, confidence, and risk-taking. Then, children can begin to take charge of their

own learning (Harms & Lettow, 1998).

In a literature-based program, the teacher develops and maintains a learning environment that supports the learning of each child. Because the responses of students and their interactions with peers, teachers, and family members facilitate thinking-language growth, the teacher needs to focus on these opportunities rather than on a teacher-instructional situation.

Provisions for flexible grouping--heterogeneous and homogeneous and individual, pair, small group, and whole class--are offered when appropriate for students' learning. Small flexible groups for individual projects and large groups for planning, reflecting and sharing promote a sense of community in the classroom. Demonstrations by the teacher, collaboration with peers, and sharing with an audience are an important part of the learning process (Cambourne, 1988).

Because language is a process, assessment of growth needs to be described, thus qualitative techniques need to be applied. Assessment may include student journals, teacher logs, checklists, student-teacher conferences, and portfolios. The goal is to connect instruction with assessment. This approach helps children set goals, engage in language processes, reflect on their progress, and establish new instructional goals based on learning needs (Strickland, 1995).

## Implementation of an Instructional Development Project: Friendship Theme

Starting the school year off with a friendship theme allowed a class of second grade children to get to know each other right away. The activities in this theme encouraged classroom interactions, strengthened name recognition, and built new friendships. While focused on friendship, children expanded their knowledge of one another. This project gave many opportunities for experiences in caring, sharing, and getting along with others. The students thrived in a cooperative, creative learning environment that emphasized thinking, speaking, reading, writing, and listening.

This literature-based theme, friendship, was introduced at the beginning of the year through teacher-directed activities, including read alouds, semantic webbing, whole group discussions of literary elements, and projects. Student-directed activities provided through centers offered many options for learning independently. These learning centers, both sustaining and those specific to the theme, were literature-based experiences accompanied by related expressive activities, involving oral and written language and the graphic and performing arts. These experiences gave children opportunities to create meaning and to share their ideas with others.

### Teacher-Directed Activities

The friendship theme was introduced with the literature experience, Rosie and Michael, by Judith Viorst. The class discussed how common



interests, goals, and experiences often begin friendships and how a child may initiate friendship through acts of generosity, as seen in the book. The discussion focused on the characters in the book and their personality traits. The students generated a list of important qualities that make up the ingredients of a good friendship. In pairs, the students improvised scenes that dramatized the conversations of friends. A follow-up activity involved writing a "Recipe for Making a Friend." The children shared their recipes with the class. Then, they were bound together to make a class book. The students were then introduced to the sustaining centers and the centers specific to the theme.

The students were engaged in these teacher-directed expressive activities throughout the friendship unit:

1. Students interviewed a classmate. One student role-played the reporter and gathered information about the other. Then, the two partners exchanged roles.
2. Students created a People magazine by writing articles using the interview information. A photograph of each student was included and a class picture was used for the cover.
3. Each day someone was selected to give a presentation about their "Mystery Friend." The presenter gave a description without saying the friend's name. Then, the class guessed the identity of the

mystery friend.

4. Students made posters advertising their friends. The posters resembled a campaign poster or a movie poster.
5. Students constructed a triarama with three interesting facts about a friend.
6. Library pockets were used to make a message center. Each child's name was written on a library pocket that was stapled to a bulletin board with the title "Very Friendly Messages."
7. Children played a friendly game of "Ko-No," a game for two people, played by children in China and India.
8. Students wrote "Friendship Personality" poems using a simplified cinquain form.

Line 1: first name of the person

Line 2: two words to describe the person

Line 3: three words that name things the person likes to do

Line 4: four more words to describe the person

Line 5: last name of the person

9. A class diary activity was started. Each day children were invited to add a page to the diary. Their writing focused on acts of friendship that happened that day.
10. The class was divided into three groups; each group read its

part in a "Friendship Rap." Students performed the rap for another class, the school principal, and the support staff.

11. Body shape outlines were made of each student. The students colored themselves within their outline. The class members wrote positive remarks about the students on the outlines.

This activity was preceded by a discussion of what compliments are and how to give them. Several students were chosen each day to receive compliments from their peers.

12. Photographs were taken of each student with triplicate copies developed. The photographs were used for the following activities:

- a. The pictures were laminated, mounted, and taped together end to end in a long strip. The strip was folded accordion style. A cover titled "My Friends" was placed on the front. Each child's name was written on an index card. Students matched the pictures to the names of their new classmates. The book was on display in the class library.
- b. The pictures were used to play a game of "Friendly Concentration." The picture cards were shuffled and placed face down. The students had to remember the names of the children in each photograph as they looked for a match by turning over two pictures at a time.

## Student-Directed Activities

### Sustaining Centers

The sustaining centers were maintained throughout the school year with the format remaining the same as the themes and units changed. These centers offered a predictable and secure learning environment as well as a print-rich environment. They provided language experiences with the different literature genres to support the theme and extended opportunities for children to be involved naturally with the language processes. These centers were placed around the classroom on tables and bookcases with suggestions and directions for related expressive activities. Each area offered the children a place to work on theme content and interact with one another. The teacher presented an overview of each center's contents before the children began independent activity.

#### A. Reading/Listening Center

This center offered literature works representing the different genres to support the strands of the theme. Teacher-prepared cassette tapes accompanied the books. Some of the works had flannelboard and magnet-board pieces to prompt retelling experiences. Puppets and masks were also included for reenacting stories. Student-authored stories as well as student-prepared tapes were available for listening and reading. Examples of literature that enriched the reading/listening center specific to the theme

of friendship can be found in Appendix A.

#### B. Poetry Center

Poetry related to the friendship theme was provided at this center.

Posters and pictures portraying images of friendship were included. Some poetry was accompanied by cassette tapes for listening and choral reading.

This center also offered descriptions of different poetry forms. Poems selected for this center were from the following authors: Beatrice Schenk de Regniers, Eloise Greenfield, Nancy Grimes, Lee Bennett Hopkins, Myra Cohn Livingston, and Sally Mavor. The specific works of these authors can be found in Appendix B.

#### C. Author/Illustrator Center

This center facilitated a comprehension-composition connection by enabling children to see the relationship between the works of authors/illustrators and their background of experiences. Marc Brown, James Marshall, and Arnold Lobel were featured at this center. Students were able to read biographical sketches of the authors, see photographs of them, and read samples of their works. The works of the authors are listed in Appendix C.

#### D. Interesting Objects Center

The children were encouraged to gather special objects of their own for this center. They brought gifts from friends and relatives that had special

meaning for them. They shared their treasures through small group discussion. The items were also used as story starters for written expression and props for dramatizations.

#### E. Bookmaking Center

This center included directions and materials for the construction of different types of student-made books that encouraged the children's publication of their writing and illustrating.

#### Centers Specific to the Theme

Centers with suggestions for literature experiences and accompanying expressive activities were provided. These literature-based centers gave students different experiences in reading, writing, speaking, and listening as well as those in graphic and performing arts.

A. New Friendships Center Goal: To explore different ways to make new friends and to reinforce the qualities of being a good friend

- Literature Experience:

Listen to or read some of these books on making new friends.

Aliki. (1982). We are best friends. New York: Greenwillow.

Brown, M. (1982). Arthur's Halloween. Boston: Little Brown.

Carle, E. (1987). A house for a hermit crab. New York: Philomel.

Cohen, M. (1967). Will I have a friend? New York: Macmillan.

Henkes, K. (1988). Chester's way. New York: Greenwillow.

Henkes, K. (1989). Jessica. New York: Mulberry.

Raschka, C. (1993). Yo! Yes? New York: Orchard.

Tsutsui, Y. (1986). Anna's secret friend. Illus. Akiko Hayashi. New York: Viking Kestrel.

#### Expressive Activity:

1. Role-play with a partner different things you can say or do to make a new friend.
2. Tell or write a story about an experience you had making a new friend.
3. Make a list of characteristics you look for in a friend.
4. Illustrate a bookmark with your favorite character from one of the books you have read. Share it with a friend. (Include the title of the book and the author's name).
5. Ask a classmate to help you read the dialogue from a book as reader's theatre.
6. Think of a time when a new friend came to your house. What did you do together? Write about the visit.
7. Paint a picture of a new friend you have made this year.
8. Draw the name of a "secret friend" from the box. Try to do friendly, thoughtful acts for this new friend throughout the next few days. Keep your identity a secret!

- Literature Experience:

Read this wordless story about a mouse searching for a new friend.

Carle, E. (1971). Do you want to be my friend? New York: Crowell.

Expressive Activity:

Look carefully at the illustrations in the book. Write a story to go along with the pictures.

- Literature Experience:

Read this story about a problem on the first day of school.

Henkes, K. (1991). Chrysanthemum. New York: Greenwillow.

Expressive Activity:

1. Think back to the first day of school. Was it scary? What kind of feelings did you have? Make a feelings web showing all the emotions you felt.
2. Has anyone ever made fun of your name? How did it make you feel? Write about it.
3. Are you named after anyone? Ask your parents how they decided to name you. What does your name mean? Look it up in a baby name book. Do you think the meaning fits your personality?

Student Responses: This center provided opportunities for students to become familiar with one another at the beginning of the school year. They enjoyed the role-playing, and it served as an excellent way to “break the ice” and initiate new friendships. One day when a new student entered our classroom, one of the children commented to her that she was lucky to be in our room because we were the friendliest class in the school!



## B. Friendly Relationships Center

Goal: To reinforce the meaning of friendship.

- Literature Experience:

Read this book about three friends and their storytelling.

Marshall, J. (1989). Three up a tree. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Expressive Activity:

Lolly, Sam, and Spider each told a story involving three characters: a chicken, a fox, and a monster. Write your own story including these characters.

- Literature Experience:

Read this tale of a friendship between a boy and a tree.

Silverstein, S. (1964). The giving tree. New York: Harper & Row.

Expressive Activity:

1. If you were the boy, what gift would you give the tree? Why?
2. Reenact the story through pantomime as a friend reads it aloud.

- Literature Experience:

Read this story about two girls who feel comfortable sharing their wildest fantasies.

Kellogg, S. (1986). Best friends. New York: Dial.

Expressive Activity:

1. Recall a make-believe experience you have shared with a friend. Write about it and illustrate it. Then share it with a classmate.
2. Design an "I Care" button to wear during the friendship theme.

- Literature Experience:

Read this story about a boy's first sleepover.

Waber, B. (1972). Ira sleeps over. New York: Houghton Mifflin.

Expressive Activity:

1. Think about the first time you spent the night away from home. How did you feel? Were you scared? Write about your experience.
2. Make a peek-over book about your favorite stuffed animal. Write a description of your animal. Include its name and where you got it.
3. Make a book of things to do when staying overnight at a friend's house.
4. Write a scary ghost story to tell your friends.

- Literature Experience:

Read these books about friends caring and sharing.

Blegvad, L. (1985). Anna banana and me. Illus. Erik Blegvad. New York: Atheneum.

Brown, M. (1989). Arthur's birthday. Boston: Little, Brown.

Brown, M. (1983). Arthur's Thanksgiving. Boston: Little Brown.

Lobel, A. (1970). The frog and toad treasury. New York: Harper Collins.

McLerran, A. (1991). Roxaboxen. Illus. Barbara Cooney. New York: Lothrop.

Nikola-Lisa, W. (1994). Bein' with you this way. Illus. Michael Bryant. New York: Scholastic.

**Expressive Activity:**

1. Choose a friend with whom you would like to spend a day. Tell about the experience.
2. Write an acrostic poem using your name or the name of a friend.
3. Write a sequel to one of the books.
4. Recall one of your interesting experiences with a friend. What do you remember seeing, touching, smelling, and tasting? Compose a story about your experience.
5. Use the pellen material to construct the main characters of one of the stories. Color your figures with the crayons and spray them with the hairspray to protect them. Retell the story on the flannelboard to the others at the center.
6. Make a game you and your friends can play together.
7. Write stories and create illustrations of items you would give to a special friend.
8. If you are reading an Arthur book, make a display of dolls and stuffed animals that represent characters in the book.

Student Responses: Designing the "I Care" buttons was a favorite activity at this center. Many children made buttons as gifts for friends and family members. Many of the stories written at this center were related to the favorite stuffed animals of the children. Several of them brought their animals from home to set on their desks during our writing workshop.

### C. Elderly Friends Center

Goal: Reinforce the concept that friends come in all ages.

- Literature Experience:

Read this book about a young boy's search for the meaning of memory.

Fox, M. (1985). Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge. Illus. Julie Vivas.

New York: Kane/Miller.

Expressive Activity:

1. Choose an item from the memories basket. Write about the item, recording any memories it brings to mind.
2. What memories would you collect for a friend? Draw and label them. Meet with a partner. Describe the memory each object stands for. Then exchange papers. Choose one of your partner's objects and share a memory it makes you think of.
3. Look through magazines to find examples of special memories. Cut them out and create a "Special Memories" collage.
4. In the story, a word or phrase has more than one meaning. Compose a story that has words or phrases with more than one meaning. You might want to compile a book with your classmates.

- Literature Experience:

Read this book about people who miss their elderly neighbor when he moves away.

Blos, J. (1989). Old Henry. Illus. Irene Trivas. New York: Morrow.

**Expressive Activity:**

Think of a bad habit you have that might be annoying to your neighbors.

Write a resolution about changing your annoying habit.

- **Literature Experience:**

Read this story about a boy who becomes friends with a painter.

Rylant, C. (1988). All I see. Illus. Peter Catalanotto. New York: Orchard.

**Expressive Activity:**

Listen to a recording of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony and paint a picture for a friend as you enjoy the music.

- **Literature Experience:**

Sometimes it's hard to get to know someone. Read a book about feeling comfortable with a new friend.

Rylant, C. (1983). Miss Maggie. Illus. Thomas Di Garcia. New York: Dutton.

**Expressive Activity:**

1. After reading the story, sit with a friend and write down some reasons why someone might hesitate to get to know someone else. Talk about whether the reasons are true or false.
2. Nat's decorated cans brought a lot of pleasure to Miss Maggie. Bring a can from home and use the wallpaper books or materials at the Art Center to decorate it. Give it to an elderly friend.

- Literature Experience:

Read this book about Annie and the lessons she learned from her grandmother.

Miles, M. (1971). Annie and the old one. Illus. Peter Parnall.

Boston: Little Brown.

Expressive Activity:

1. The Old One taught Annie a lesson about life. Write a paragraph about the lessons you have learned from an older person or persons. Illustrate your paragraph.
2. What do you think happened after the end of the book? Write a sequel to the story.
3. Grandmother gave examples of how many things change as time passes. Draw and label how other things in nature change as time passes.

- Literature Experience:

This story portrays the special relationship between a girl and her grandmother.

Flournoy, V. (1985). The patchwork quilt. Illus. Jerry Pinkney. New York: Dial.

Expressive Activity:

1. Draw a picture of your family. Show each family member dressed in an article of clothing that is special to them.
2. Imagine that you are one of Grandma's grandchildren who lives far

away. Use construction paper to design a card for her.

3. Create your own patchwork quilt "memory" square.

- Literature Experience:

Read these books about friendship and the elderly.

Aliki. (1979). The two of them. New York: Mulberry.

de Paola, T. (1980). Now one foot, now the other. New York:

Putnam.

de Paola, T. (1974). Watch out for chicken feet in your soup.

Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

MacLachlan, P. (1980). Through grandpa's eyes. Illus. Deborah Ray.

New York: Harper & Row.

McCully, E. A. (1993). Mirette on the high wire. New York: Putnam.

Polacco, P. (1992). Mrs. Katz and Tush. New York: Bantam.

Rylant, C. (1992). An angel for Solomon Singer. Illus. Peter

Catalanotto. New York: Orchard.

Expressive Activity:

1. Make a hand puppet to retell one of the stories. Share your retelling with a friend.
2. Collect photographs of your grandparents and share them with a friend.
3. Make a memory box for an elderly friend. In the box place special memories or symbols of significant times you have spent together.
4. Interview an elderly friend to gather stories about their childhood.

Student Responses: Many grandparents mentioned our friendship theme when they visited the classroom on the night of Open House. One little boy introduced his grandparent as the “best grandpa in the world.” Grandpa was beaming from ear to ear! The activities raised an awareness of the importance of the relationships of family members and the sharing of family traditions.

#### D. Pen Pal Center

Goal: To write invitations and friendly letters.

- Literature Experience:

Read this story about a character who is longing to receive a letter through the mail.

Lobel, A. (1970). Frog and toad are friends. New York: Harper & Row.

Expressive Activity:

Read the story “The Letter.” Pretend you are Frog and write a letter that you think Toad would enjoy reading. Write things in your letter that you think Toad would like to read about.

- Literature Experience:

Read this book about a budding friendship between a girl and a boy.

Keats, E. (1968). A letter to Amy. New York: Harper & Row.

Expressive Activity:

1. The author uses collage in his illustrations. Create a collage on the theme of friendship.
2. Keats also creates many moods in this book. Work in groups to create



dances and pantomimes based on the story.

3. Create an invitation to a birthday party or other special event.

- **Literature Experience:**

Read this book about a character who is homesick while at camp.

Brown, M. (1982). Arthur goes to camp. Boston: Little Brown.

**Expressive Activity:**

Create a postcard that Arthur might have written to his family.

Draw a picture of Camp Meadowlark on the front of the postcard and compose a message from Arthur on the back.

- **Literature Experience:**

Read these books about characters who can keep in touch by writing to one another.

Ahlberg, J. (1986). The jolly postman. Illus. Janet and Allan Ahlberg.

Boston: Little Brown.

Johnston, T. (1994). Amber on the mountain. Illus. Robert Duncan.

New York: Dial.

Komaiko, L. (1987). Annie Bananie. Illus. Laura Cornell. New York:

Harper & Row.

**Expressive Activity:**

1. Make an autograph book and have your friends and classmates sign it.

Ask for their addresses so you can write to them during summer vacation.

2. Use stamps and ink to design your own pen pal stationery.

3. Make a chain letter. Write messages on wide strips of paper. Staple the strips into connected loops to form a chain. Flatten it and put it in an envelope. Send it to a friend.
4. Draw a name from the Pen Pal Jar. Write a letter to that person.
5. Write a friendly letter to a relative who lives far away. Include a picture that you have drawn for them.
6. Choose a character from one of the books that you would like to write to. Write a letter to that character telling them why you think that they would make a good friend.
7. If you have especially enjoyed a book, you might want to write a letter to the author/illustrator.

**Student Responses:** The children enjoyed writing letters to friends and relatives and receiving responses. Learning how to write a friendly letter is an authentic activity that they found very rewarding.

#### E. Changes in Friends Center

**Goal:** To reinforce the idea that relationships among friends take cooperation, tolerance, caring, sharing, acceptance, and the realization that everyone is different and unique.

- **Literature Experience:**

Read this book about children who learn about the value of sharing.

Hutchins, P. (1986). The doorbell rang. New York: Greenwillow.

**Expressive Activity:**

1. Write a story about what you think might have happened if Grandma

had not shown up with more cookies.

2. Write a recipe for your favorite kind of cookies. Share it with a friend.

- Literature Experience:

Read this book about how children quickly change their minds about hating and easily forgive and forget.

Zolotow, C. (1969). The hating book. New York: Harper & Row.

Expressive Activity:

1. Hate looks are ugly and mean. Love looks are happy and friendly.

Draw and color two faces. Make one a hate face and one a love face.

Tell some ways you can show a love face.

2. Create a love/hate book. Draw and write about some things you dislike and things you like a lot.

- Literature Experience:

Read this story about hard work, honesty, and friendship.

Brown, M. (1981). The true Francine. Boston: Little Brown.

Expressive Activity:

1. How would you gently confront a friend who has made a mistake similar to one of Muffy's? Write about your feelings.

2. Select the character of Muffy or Francine. Write a letter of advice to the character with suggestions for handling the problem. Share your letter with a partner and discuss the advice that was given.

3. Retell the story with a partner, each sharing one of the characters' points of view.

- Literature Experience:

Read this book about a toad that tries hard to cheer up a sick friend.

Lobel, A. (1970). Frog and toad are friends. New York: Harper & Row.

Expressive Activity:

Frog was sick in bed. Toad tried to tell him a story to make him feel better. Make believe you have a sick friend, too. Your sick friend wants to hear a story that will make him feel better. Write a story that would make your friend feel better. Draw a picture to go with your story. Read your story to a friend.

- Literature Experience:

Read this book about a boy who was teased because he got new glasses.

Brown, M. (1979). Arthur's eyes. Boston: Little, Brown.

Expressive Activity:

1. Have you ever been teased about something? How did you feel and how did it turn out? Did you resolve the problem on your own, or did someone help you? Discuss it with a partner, then make a list of suggestions that kids can use if someone teases them.
2. Use the pattern and create a pair of designer glasses.

- Literature Experience:

Read these books about problems that sometimes occur in friendships.

Baylor, B. (1963). Amigo. Illus. Garth Williams. New York: Macmillan.

Bonsall, C. (1964). It's mine! a greedy book. New York: Harper & Row.

- Hoban, R. (1970). A bargain for Frances. Illus. Lillian Hoban. New York: Harper & Row.
- Hoffman, M. (1991). Amazing Grace. Illus. Caroline Binch. New York: Dial.
- Marshall, J. (1984). The cut-ups. New York: Puffin.
- Mills, L. (1991). The rag coat. Boston: Little, Brown.
- Sharmat, M. (1978). I'm not Oscar's friend anymore. New York: Pantheon.
- Udry, J. (1961). Let's be enemies. New York: Harper & Row.
- Zolotow, C. (1975). The unfriendly book. Illus. William Pene Du Bois. New York: Harper & Row.

#### Expressive Activity:

1. Tell about a quarrel you had with a friend and how you resolved your unfriendly feelings.
2. Tell how you can express unhappy feelings without saying "I hate you" and "You are dumb."
3. Use puppets to dramatize conflicts and resolutions that friends might be involved in. Situations might include selfishness, name-calling, physical conflict, isolation, and gossiping.
4. Write a story about how you and your friends have helped each other in times of need. Illustrate your story.

Student Responses: Students loved the puppets and dramatizing. One little girl commented that it was easier to express her true feelings with puppets.

This activity initiated discussions on resolving conflicts and getting along with others. The class had many discussions about problems at home with siblings and how to reach a solution that was fair to everyone involved.

#### F. Animal Friends Center

Goal: To explore the friendly relationships between people and animals and to reinforce the concept that there are many different kinds of friends.

- Literature Experience:

Read these books about animal friends that love to go on adventures.

Heine, H. (1982). Friends. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Heine, H. (1994). Friends go adventuring. New York: Simon & Schuster.

#### Expressive Activity:

1. Make a friendship pie. Fold a brown paper circle in half and decorate it with markers to resemble a pie. Use the stamp pad and have your friends "autograph" the inside of the pie by making a red thumbprint.
2. Make a web showing all the ways that the three friends had fun together.
3. List the ways that the three friends took turns, cooperated, and helped each other.

- Literature Experience:

Read this book about sharing, cooperating, and giving.

de Regniers, B. (1964). May I bring a friend? Illus. Beni Montresor.  
New York: Atheneum.

**Expressive Activity:**

The main character in the story is never named. The book is written in first-person, using I. Write a first-person story about something you did with a friend. Since the story has a rhyme scheme, you may want to make your story a short poem.

- **Literature Experience:**

Read one of the following books about animals who are best friends.

Lobel, A. (1972). Frog and toad together. New York: Harper & Row.

Marshall, J. (1972). George and Martha. New York: Houghton Mifflin.

Steig, W. (1971). Amos & Boris. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

**Expressive Activity:**

1. Develop your oral reading abilities by reading aloud with a friend. Each of you can choose a character and read the dialogue out loud.
2. Choose one of the stories to record and include sound effects.
3. Choose a character from a book and pantomime a scene for others.
4. Make a venn diagram to compare/contrast the two characters in one of the books.

- **Literature Experience:**

Read this book about a new pet.

Brown, M. (1993). Arthur's new puppy. Boston: Little, Brown.

**Expressive Activity:**

1. Choose a pet to research and write an informational report about it.

2. Bring a picture of your pet to school. Write a story to accompany it.

Share them both with a partner.

3. Using materials at the art center, make a paper-bag puppet of your favorite animal.

• **Literature Experience:**

Read this story about a girl who saves her cat from danger.

Ness, E. (1966). Sam, Bangs & moonshine. New York: Holt.

**Expressive Activity:**

1. Sam has a habit of making up stories that are not true. Her father describes these stories as “moonshine.” Write and illustrate a story using exaggeration or “moonshine.”

2. Extend the story. Write about why Sam gave Thomas the gerbil and what their friendship will be like in the future.

3. If you had a pet and had to go on a month-long vacation, what instructions would you leave your friend who was going to care for your pet? Write a list of instructions for your friend to follow.

• **Literature Experience:**

Read this story about a real mouse who wishes he were someone else.

Lionni, L. (1969). Alexander and the wind-up mouse. New York: Pantheon.

**Expressive Activity:**

1. What if Alexander had stayed with his original idea and had the lizard turn him into a wind-up mouse? How would the new story end?



2. Write about an adventure the mice have now that Willy is a real mouse.

3. Write a story about wishes.

• **Literature Experience:**

Read these books about animal friends.

Bourgeois, P. & Clark, B. (1997). Franklin's new friend. New York: Scholastic.

Freeman, D. (1968). Corduroy. New York: Viking.

Rylant, C. (1997). Poppleton and friends. New York: Scholastic.

Sadler, M. (1990). Elizabeth and Larry. New York: Simon & Schuster.

**Expressive Activity:**

1. Make a jigsaw puzzle of a drawing of what you like about the book.

The puzzle can be made from poster board. The pieces should be sketched out with pencil, laminated, and then cut out and placed in a box or an envelope.

2. Make a diorama of a book setting and its characters.

3. Create a poster of a book.

4. Make an advertisement for a book you recommend.

**Student Responses:** This center started a chain reaction of events involving pets. The students began taking turns bringing their pets in for "Show and Tell." Each student introduced their pet, gave a brief history of the pet, and led a follow-up discussion with the class involving a question and answer period. Another favorite activity was making the dioramas. Some

of the children made them at home. This was a great way to involve the whole family in our friendship theme! The children loved sharing their creations and were so proud of their accomplishments!

### Culminating Activities

During the Friendship Theme, the students were engaged in literature experiences and expressive activities that developed their thinking-language abilities. Social experiences, such as sharing, caring, and cooperating, were offered. The class celebrated the end of the unit with a Friendship Fair. The culminating activities were set up in stations through which the students rotated. These Friendship Fair activities were included:

1. Station One: Heart to Heart

To review the concept that “friends have feelings,” the students created friendship hearts. Students were given a large heart on which they colored a mosaic design. They added a statement with permanent marker to show that friends have feelings. The hearts were displayed around the room after the fair.

2. Station Two: Friendship Necklaces

To review the concept that “friends have fun together,” the students created a friendship necklace. Each station had a large bowl of fruit-flavored, o-shaped cereal, string, and masking tape to tape the end of the string to form a needle. The children visited as they threaded their necklace with cereal. The finished necklaces were

tied around the students' necks.

3. Station Three: Friendship Read-a-thon

To review the concept that "friends share," a cozy reading corner was created with beanbag chairs and soft lighting. Students paired up and read to each other. A variety of books were offered from which the students could select.

4. Station Four: Friendship Quilt

To review the concept that "all friends are unique," a large white sheet was divided into squares according to the number of students in the class. Each student was given their own square. Using permanent marking pens, each student drew their face and name on their square. A parent volunteer sewed the squares together into a quilt, and it was displayed in the hallway.

5. Station Five: Friendship Snacks

To review the concept that "friends cooperate," students made and shared a snack of "Friendship Gorp." The students combined 1 cup peanuts, 1 cup chocolate chips, 1 cup raisins, and 1 cup of corn cereal squares in a paper bag and shook lightly to mix. Then they enjoyed this delicious, nutritious treat together!

### Conclusions

Children's reading and writing abilities are nurtured through involvement with quality literature experiences and related expressive activities. As they have opportunities to explore and discover the value of reading, writing,

speaking, and listening, they begin to understand that the function of language is to create meaning. A thematic unit based on quality literature has been an exciting and effective way to teach this goal. The opportunities for student learning have been extended in my classroom. The print-rich environment, literature experiences, and related expressive activities have enhanced my teaching, enriched my students, and generated much enthusiasm for learning! I look forward to teaching this unit in the future and sharing the extended literature-based theme with my colleagues.

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## Appendix A

## Reading/Listening Center

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- Tsutsui, Y. (1983). Anna's special present. New York: Harper & Row.
- Viorst, J. (1974). Rosie and Michael. New York: Atheneum.

## Appendix B

## Poetry Center

- de Regniers, B.S. (1986). A week in the life of best friends: And other poems of friendship. Illus. Nancy Doyle. New York: Athenum.
- Greenfield, E. (1978). Honey I love. Illus. Leo & Diane Dillon. New York: Crowell.
- Grimes, N. (1994). Meet Damitra Brown. Illus. Floyd Cooper. New York: Lothrop.
- Hopkins, L. B. (1986). Best friends: poems. New York: Harper & Row.
- Livingston, M.C. (1994). Flights of fancy. New York: McElderry.
- Livingston, M.C. (1987). I like you and you like me. New York: McElderry.
- Mavor, S. (1997). You and me: poems of friendship. New York: Orchard.

## Appendix C

## Author/Illustrator Center

Marc Brown

Brown, M. (1983). Arthur's April fool. Boston: Little, Brown.

Brown, M. (1993). Arthur's family vacation. Boston: Joy Street.

Brown, M. (1982). Arthur's Halloween. Boston: Little, Brown.

Brown, M. (1985). Arthur's tooth. Boston: Atlantic Monthly.

Arnold Lobel

Lobel, A. (1979). Days with frog and toad. New York: Harper & Row.

Lobel, A. (1976). Frog and toad all year. New York: Harper & Row.

Lobel, A. (1972). Frog and toad together. New York: Harper & Row.

James Marshall

Marshall, J. (1984). George and Martha back in town. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Marshall, J. (1973). George and Martha encore. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

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