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Extending the literature base of a theme of friendship in a first grade classroom

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Extending the literature base of a theme of friendship in a first grade classroom

Abstract

The process of instructional development was engaged in to extend the literature base of a theme in a reading program for grade one. The theme of friendship, a part of the established curriculum, was chosen for the project. Works from the different genres of literature were found to offer many perspectives and related expressive activities. Along with teacher-directed instruction, learning centers, sustaining and specific to the theme, were developed to provide children with opportunities to take charge of their learning. This extended theme will offer a print rich environment in which children can be energized to engage in the language processes. As a result, their personal-social and thinking-language abilities can be enhanced. Also, the overall goal of nurturing lifetime involvement in reading can be furthered.

Extending the Literature Base of a
Theme of Friendship in a First Grade Classroom

A Graduate Project
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Master of Arts in Education
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by
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Abstract

The process of instructional development was engaged in to extend the literature base of a theme in a reading program for grade one. The theme of friendship, a part of the established curriculum, was chosen for the project. Works from the different genres of literature were found to offer many perspectives and related expressive activities. Along with teacher-directed instruction, learning centers, sustaining and specific to the theme, were developed to provide children with opportunities to take charge of their learning.

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Literature-based reading instruction is currently being implemented in many classrooms. This instructional development, in many instances, involves extending the existing curriculum through quality works representative of the different genre. Experiences with different genres focused on a theme in a reading program can provide a print rich environment. Such an environment can offer children authentic reading experiences with options for their responses (Goodman, 1986).

A literature-based reading program emphasizes readers extending their thinking-language abilities through involvement in the language processes. Several components can assist in achieving this overarching goal.

Elements of Literature-Based Programs

Quality literature works are essential in any language arts program because they model the richness of language, spark the imagination, introduce descriptive language and a sense of story, and intrinsically encourage reading and writing (Heald-Taylor, 1987). As a result, children can be energized to learn and can extend their understanding of concepts and events (Harms & Lettow, 1992).

Learning centers can provide children many opportunities to own their reading experiences. Through learning center activities, children can experience success. Such a learning

environment offers experiences that facilitate students' interests and range of language abilities. Many literature works representing different aspects of a theme and reading levels need to be offered in the centers. Cassette tapes of literature, commercially- or teacher-prepared, need to be offered for children who are limited in learning through reading, as well as for all children to have rich listening experiences. Many options for related expressive activity can extend listening/reading experiences and provide ways for children to create their own constructs and then to interact with others (Zarrillo, 1989; Harms & Lettow, 1992).

Such a classroom environment can nurture a collaborative community in which the teacher supports the students in their learning, and both parties can learn from each other (Routman, 1991). Children can view themselves as members of a community of readers and writers who work together with each other and their teacher to meet goals (Goodman, 1986).

To facilitate this environment, teachers need to become literacy educators, not just reading teachers (Spiegel, 1992). Frank Smith (1988) refers to this role for teachers as a member of the club. Teachers need to interact with their students by sharing their reading experiences and extending their students' constructs created in the reading process.

Routman (1991) says that the teacher's role in a literature-based program is to serve as a facilitator of students' learning in a print rich environment. The teacher models reading, promotes students' interests in reading, and encourages their interaction with the class community. Also, the teacher presents mini lessons on reading tasks when needed and collaborates with students in reflecting on their progress in learning to read and in setting further learning goals.

The ultimate goal of a literature-based reading program is to nurture reading as a lifelong activity for learning and pleasure. The development of lifelong reading depends on children having numerous opportunities to participate in authentic reading situations within the classroom community (Hiebert & Colt, 1989). If children are to become readers, they must have time to read in school and a chance to share literature works with their peers and the teacher (Huck, Hepler, & Hickman, 1993).

Literature-Based Theme: Friendship

The process of extending a theme through literature experiences, representing many genres and related expressive activities, for grade one will be described. The theme of friendship was chosen. In the Houghton Mifflin reading series, the adopted basal program for the school, many stories deal with childhood, both human and personified animals.

Besides teacher-directed activities, learning centers, both sustaining and specific to the unit, can offer options for students in theme study and lead to more flexible grouping-- individual, pairs, and small groups. Children of diverse backgrounds and abilities can work together. The emphasis is on finding and creating ideas. Together children can find answers to questions by pooling their ideas and discussing possible answers. Such options can appeal to individual children's interests, thus energizing them to become involved in learning experiences.

Sustaining Centers

Sustaining centers are maintained throughout the school year, offering a secure, predictable place to learn. Their contents support the theme being studied. These sustaining centers are frequently found in literature-based instructional programs: listening/reading center, poetry center, author center, and bookmaking center.

Listening/reading center. This center will contain many literature works representative of the different genres to support the theme of friendship. Both picture books, some with predictable texts, and chapter books will be included (see bibliography). Many of the books in this center will be accompanied by cassette tapes made by the students and the teacher, along with commercially-prepared tapes. These tapes will offer children models of language. For the linguistically

delayed, the tapes will provide a means for learning and contributing to the class.

Another section in the listening/reading center will provide student-authored works. These works will be selected by the student authors and will have been collaboratively edited with an adult.

Poetry center. This center will have a collection of poetry on charts that encourages children to enact with bodily actions the rhythms of the poems. Poems on friendship will be collected into booklets and also displayed on posters in the center. These are some of the sources:

Bryan, Ashley. (1992). *Sing to the Sun*. New York:

HarperCollins.

de Regniers, Beatrice Schenk. (1983). *The Way I Feel . . .*

Sometimes. Ill. Susan Meddaugh. New York: Clarion.

de Regniers, Beatrice Schenk. (1986). *A Week in the Life*

of Best Friends. Ill. Nancy Doyle. New York:

Atheneum.

Greenfield, Eloise. (1978). *Honey, I Love*. Ill. Diane &

Leo Dillon. New York: Crowell.

Greenfield, Eloise. (1991). *Nathan Talking*. Ill. Jan

Spiviey. New York: Dial.

Grimes, Nikki. (1994). *Meet Danitra Brown*. Ill. Floyd

Cooper. New York: Lothrop.

Kuskin, Karla. (1980). Dogs and Dragons, Trees and Dreams.

New York: Harper & Row.

Lee, Dennis. (1975). Alligator Pie. Ill. Frank Newfeld.

New York: Harper & Row.

Livingston, Myra Cohn. (1994). I Never Told. New York:

McElderry.

Livingston, Myra Cohn. (1989). Remembering. New York:

McElderry.

Lobel, Arnold. (1983). The Book of Pigeonicks. New York:

Harper & Row.

McCord, David. (1967). Every Time I Climb a Tree. Ill. Marc

Simont. Boston: Little Brown.

McCord, David. (1975). A Star in the Pail. Ill. Marc

Simont. Boston: Little Brown.

Author center. This center will focus on Patricia Polacco, an author/illustrator who writes stories about friendships. These friendship stories include a grandmother-granddaughter in Thunder Cake, (1990. New York: Philomel), and friends in Rechenka's Eggs, (1988. New York: Philomel), Appelmondo's Dream, (1991. New York: Philomel), Chicken Sunday, (1992. New York: Philomel), and Mrs. Katz and Tush, (1992. New York: Bantam). A biographical sketch of Patricia Polacco will be displayed in the center along with her works. Cassette tapes of Patricia Polacco's stories will be packeted with the picture books.

Literature Experience

Listen to/read some of Patricia Polacco's books:

Appelmondo's Dream, Chicken Sunday, Mrs. Katz and Tush, and Rechenka's Eggs.

Expressive Activity

1. After reading Appelmondo's Dream, use butcher paper and poster paint to create pictures of dreams.
2. After reading Rechenka's Eggs, decorate an egg with a pattern by using paint or markers.
3. After reading Chicken Sunday, use butcher paper and draw a picture of a time that your family got together to eat a meal with other relatives.

Puppet/mask-making center. This center will present examples for making puppets and masks that can be used in retelling stories. This center contains supplies such as paper, pencils, crayons, tongue depressors, markers, paper plates, construction paper, scraps of material, wallpaper books, stencils, patterns, scissors, buttons, glue, and tape.

Bookmaking center. In this center, the children will be able to design covers for their stories. Supplies in the center will be paper, contact paper, wallpaper, material, and wrapping paper. There will be different sizes of cardboard cut for

casings. Self-sticking labels will be available for the titles on the casings.

Centers Specific to the Theme of Friendship

Center: Changes in Friendships

Literature Experience

Listen to/read:

Udry, Janice May. (1961). Let's Be Enemies.

Ill. Maurice Sendak. New York: Harper & Row.

Zolotow, Charlotte. (1969). My Friend John.

Ill. Ben Shector. New York: Harper & Row.

Zolotow, Charlotte. (1969). The Hating Book.

Ill. Ben Shector. New York: Harper & Row.

Expressive Activity

1. Tell about a quarrel you had with a friend or relative. How did you work out your problem with the other person?
2. Tell how you express your unhappy feelings without hurting your friend.

Center: How Friends Get Along

Literature Experience

Listen to/read:

Lobel, Arnold. (1971). Frog and Toad Together.

New York: Harper & Row.

Lobel, Arnold. (1979). Days With Frog and Toad.

New York: Harper & Row.

Marshall, James. (1984). George and Martha Back in Town. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Minarik, Else Holmelund. (1960). Little Bear's Friend. Ill. Maurice Sendak. New York:

Harper & Row.

Expressive Activity

1. Create puppets or masks for the characters of one of the stories. You and your classmates can use the puppets or masks to retell the story.
2. After reading Days With Frog and Toad, design a kite from the paper supplies in the classroom.
3. Write or discuss a time when you flew a kite with a friend.
4. After reading Little Bear's Friend, create a bookmark for your favorite character in the story. You may want to share your bookmark with a friend.

Center: Favorite Stuffed Animal

Literature Experience

Listen to/read:

Freeman, Don. (1968). Corduroy. New York:

Scholastic.

Freeman, Don. (1978). A Pocket For Corduroy.

New York: Scholastic.

Expressive Activity

1. Use the flannel board pieces and retell what happened in the story, A Pocket For Corduroy.
2. After reading Corduroy, use the construction paper, wallpaper, and buttons to create a new outfit for Corduroy. Write a letter to Corduroy about his new outfit and why he deserves it.
3. After reading Corduroy, make a moveable bear.

Center: What Makes Friends Special and Unique

Literature Experience

Listen to/read:

Canon, Janell. (1993). Stellaluna. New York: Harcourt Brace.

Glen, Maggie. (1990). Ruby. New York: Putnam.

Glen, Maggie. (1992). Ruby to the Rescue. New York: Putnam.

Henkes, Kevin. (1991). Chrysanthemum. New York: Trumpet.

Nikola-Lisa, W. (1994). Bein' With You This Way. Ill. Michael Bryant. New York: Lee & Low.

Pfister, Marcus. (1992). The Rainbow Fish. New York: North-South.

Expressive Activity

1. On a sheet of paper, draw all the things that you like to do that make you a special person.
2. Create a bookmark for your favorite story.
3. After reading The Rainbow Fish, design your own colorful fish.
4. After reading Ruby, use the flannel board pieces to retell the story. When retelling the story, tell why Ruby is a special bear.
5. After reading Chrysanthemum, make a list of all the names that you think are beautiful.
6. After reading Bein' With You This Way, use a large piece of butcher paper and draw a picture of your best friend.
7. Write a commercial for your favorite book. Your goal will be to get other students to read or listen to the story.
8. After reading Stellaluna, draw a picture about your favorite part in the story.

Conclusions

Extending the literature-based reading program in a first grade classroom with the theme of friendship can generate excitement and an appreciation for reading. Children can have opportunities to listen to or read books from many different genres reflecting on a theme that is developmentally appropriate and of much interest to them. With the use of sustaining centers and centers specific to the theme of friendship, each child will have the opportunity to be successful in their learning as they select activities that relate to their interests and language abilities. Then, children can have positive experiences with language and enjoy spending time reading books and responding to them with expressive activities.

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- Spiegel, D. (1992). Blending whole language and systematic direct instruction. The Reading Teacher, 46, 38-44.
- Zarrillo, J. (1989). Teacher's interpretations of literature-based reading. The Reading Teacher, 43, 22-28.

Children's Books in Listening/Reading Center

Picture Books

- Barner, B. (1991). The good friend's club. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

- Bozzo, M. (1991). Toby in the country, Toby in the city.
Ill. Frank Modell. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Cannon, J. (1993). Stellulana. New York: Scholastic.
- Ellis, J. (1993). This and that bread. Ill. Ann Iosa.
Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Galdone, J. (1991). Where's Gerd going? Ill. Dorothy
Donohue. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Henkes, K. (1991). Chrysanthemum. New York: Trumpet.
- Hoban, R. (1969). Best friends for Frances. Ill. Lillian
Hoban. New York: Scholastic.
- Kafka, S. (1991). I need a friend. Ill. Samantha Smith.
Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Marshall, J. (1984). George and Martha. Boston: Houghton
Mifflin.
- McClenathan, L. (1991). I can do it day. Ill. Chris
Demarest. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Mueller, V. (1991). A playhouse for monster. Ill. Lynn
Munsinger. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Pape, D. (1991). Who will read to me? Ill. Tony Ross.
Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Sternberg, K. (1991). My new glasses. Ill. Toni Gaffe.
Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Sun, C. (1991). Two together. Ill. Robin Kramer. Boston:
Houghton Mifflin.

Taylor, J. (1991). Sophie & Jack. Ill. Susan Ganter.
Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Tsutsui, Y. (1991). Anna's secret friend. Ill. Akiko
Hayashi. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Full Length Books

Cleary, B. (1991). Ramona Quimby, age 8. Ill. Alan
Tiegreen. New York: Morrow.

Cleary, B. (1968). Ramona the pest. Ill. Louis Darling. New
York: Morrow.

Danziger, P. (1994). Amber Brown is not a crayon. Ill. Tony
Ross. New York: Putnam.

Giff, P. (1990). Emily Arrow promises to do better this
year. Ill. Blanche Sims. New York: Dell.

Giff, P. (1986). Pickle puss. Ill. Blanche Sims. New York:
Dell.

Giff, P. (1985). Dinosaur's paw. Ill. Blanche Sims. New
York: Dell.

Giff, P. (1985). Lazy lions, lazy lambs. Ill. Blanche Sims.
New York: Dell.

Giff, P. (1985). Say cheese. Ill Blanche Sims. New York:
Dell.

Giff, P. (1985). Fish face. Ill. Blanche Sims. New York:
Dell.

Giff, P. (1985). The beast in Ms. Rooney's room. Ill.

Blanche Sims. New York: Dell.

Giff, P. (1994). Candy corn contest. Ill. Blanche Sims. New York: Dell.

Giff, P. (1984). December secrets. Ill. Blanche Sims. New York: Dell.

Hurwitz, J. (1988). Teacher's pet. Ill. Sheila Hamanaka. New York: Morrow.

Hurwitz, J. (1979). Aldo applesauce. Ill. John Wallner. New York: Morrow.

White, E. (1952). Charlotte's web. Ill. Garth Williams. New York: Harper & Row.