

**Striving To Be Kind To Others**  
Themed Literature Unit  
1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade  
Edriana Cho  
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**Thematic Framework**

In this unit, students will use high quality literature to explore the central questions what does it mean to be a kind person and what does it take to show kindness to others?

**Rationale**

Striving to be kind to others is a fundamental theme that is important to grasp even at an early age. Since this is a theme that has probably come up often in their schooling, they will be familiar and aware of this topic in a general sense. There is already a foundation set in the students regarding kindness.

Students will learn through actively engaging in meaningful and powerful literature to help them understand how it is we can show kindness to others. The unit will have an important effect on them because students will be able to build on their schema by connecting new ideas to what they already know about being kind. In addition, we will participate in a service learning project which will provide hands on experience and more meaning to the unit. This will directly enhance and cement their conceptual understanding of showing kindness. The unit will have a direct connection to their daily lives since they interact with their peers, family members and friends on a daily basis. The books and activities we will be doing throughout the unit will allow students to be immersed in their learning because they will be able to find connections between the text and their real life. This in turn will help them to be independent readers and writers because they will have a personal connection with the material we are using and studying in class. In addition, books will be sent home to further emphasize the learning that is going on so that there is a correlation between home and school. Students will learn the importance and value kindness and therefore enhance the quality in their community in which they live.

Morally and ethically, as the teacher, I will have to remember that not all students and the students' families value kindness to the same degree. Although it is an important virtue to have as a person, it may not always be evident at the child's home and they may not see it being modeled by adults they interact with. I will have to be especially sensitive and aware of that because of several situations I know of that are going on at home between parents and divorces, etc. Therefore, as the teacher, I will explicitly be conscious of showing kindness to my students and staff members to model for my class so there is consistency and they are able to experience it at school.

My rationale for teaching a themed literature unit on showing kindness to others directly applies to the EALRs and GLEs of writing, reading and

communication. A lot of the activities throughout the unit will be creating connections between writing, reading and their personal lives. In order for this to occur, comprehension of the text must be evident. Students will participate in reading, writing and communication activities to make these connections. Some important learning targets we will focus on throughout the unit are demonstrating reading comprehension, interpreting, analyzing and synthesizing literary and informational text, and interpreting info by listening and observing. In addition, students will write their own fiction or non-fiction story with a clear beginning, middle and end. These learning targets also apply to the second grade GLEs in writing, reading and communication.

### **Learners**

The classroom I am student teaching in consists of 22 students, 12 girls and 10 boys. The classroom is a multiage classroom with 10 first graders and 12 second graders. Many of the students were placed into this classroom with careful judgment from their previous teachers considering their academic and social abilities. Others were simply put into this classroom because there was not enough room in the other first and second grade classrooms. Due to this reason, there is a wide range of academic ability ranging from kindergarten to the third grade level. There are three students who are English Language Learners who get pulled out daily for extra help. Four other students get pulled out for reading and/or speech support. All of this occurs in the morning.

One student of ours is on an IEP and has been diagnosed with ADHD. His IEP entails that he gets pulled out in the morning for reading support and then during math time, a paraeducator will come to assist in the classroom. The student's mom and the cooperating teacher have set up a system where he will aim for three daily goals- staying in seat, completing work, and respecting self space. The teacher will rate on a scale of 1-4 three times a day and also reflect with the student everyday during last recess. It helps the student to work towards a goal and for the teacher and him to be on the same page.

Around 60% of the students are of Caucasian descent and other ethnicities that are represented in the class are Chinese, Vietnamese, Hispanic, African American, Filipino, and Indian. Due to student and family confidentiality, the teachers do not know which of their students are on free or reduced lunch. However, we do know that 20% of students qualify for it.

Piaget's developmental stages put the first graders in the preoperational stage and the second graders in the concrete operational stage. The last half of the preoperational stage is based on intuitive thinking. Children are able to think more logically than before, even if it is at times a little faulty. The use of symbols and language become highly accessible and helpful at this stage of development. During the concrete operational stage, children are able to think more systematically and quantitatively. Students increase in their ability to think logically.

The classroom climate is very positive and my cooperating teacher has instilled in the students a sense of responsibility and respect for each other. Classroom management is excellent which leaves room for more instruction and

learning versus disciplining and correcting students. We aim to be positive and use a lot of positive reinforcement to help students know that we appreciate their effort throughout the day, which fosters a supportive classroom. This will be very helpful during this unit since there will be a lot going on in conjunction with the social studies unit and service learning.

During Kindergarten and even in first grade, students learned about themselves, families and neighborhoods. This unit will build off what they already know about those topics and make important tangible applications on how they can enhance the quality of their community. It is creating another layer to what they have learned and will learn in social studies and communities. In addition, the school has virtues of the month and they are taught succinctly throughout the curriculum in each classroom. Students will already be familiar with February's virtue, Caring and Kindness, which is a perfect connection to the themed literature unit.