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## Building Cultural Empathy Through Facilitated Literature Exposure in Pre-adolescent and Adolescent Readers

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# Building Cultural Empathy through facilitated literature exposure in pre-adolescent and adolescent readers.

Jackson Wall

UF 200 – Civic and Ethical Foundations – Dr. Margaret Sass



## Introduction:

### Learning goals

The objective of this project is to supply rhetoric on cultural empathy in a context children can understand. In this case, in the form of a children's book. The book *Our Friend Andrew* was written about deaf child making friends and being accepted by his classmates through tolerance/acceptance.

## Topic:

The book is about a child named Andrew who is deaf. During breaks in class, the other children in the class are allowed to listen to music and dance.

Andrew cannot hear the music, so he does not dance. The other children learn to be friends with Andrew through translation from their teacher.

Andrew exhibits positivity and happiness throughout the plot. Further applying a positive image to his character and disability.

## Objective:

The topic was chosen to highlight a less common cultural identifier amongst young populations. While most children are aware of racial and gender based differences and are taught about discrimination and how to avoid them through context, I felt that the rhetoric was lacking. There is not a deaf child in every class. Tolerance is learned through experience, it's not taught. However, exposure to different populations introduces a new level of sensitivity towards a hypothetical individual that may, otherwise, not exist.

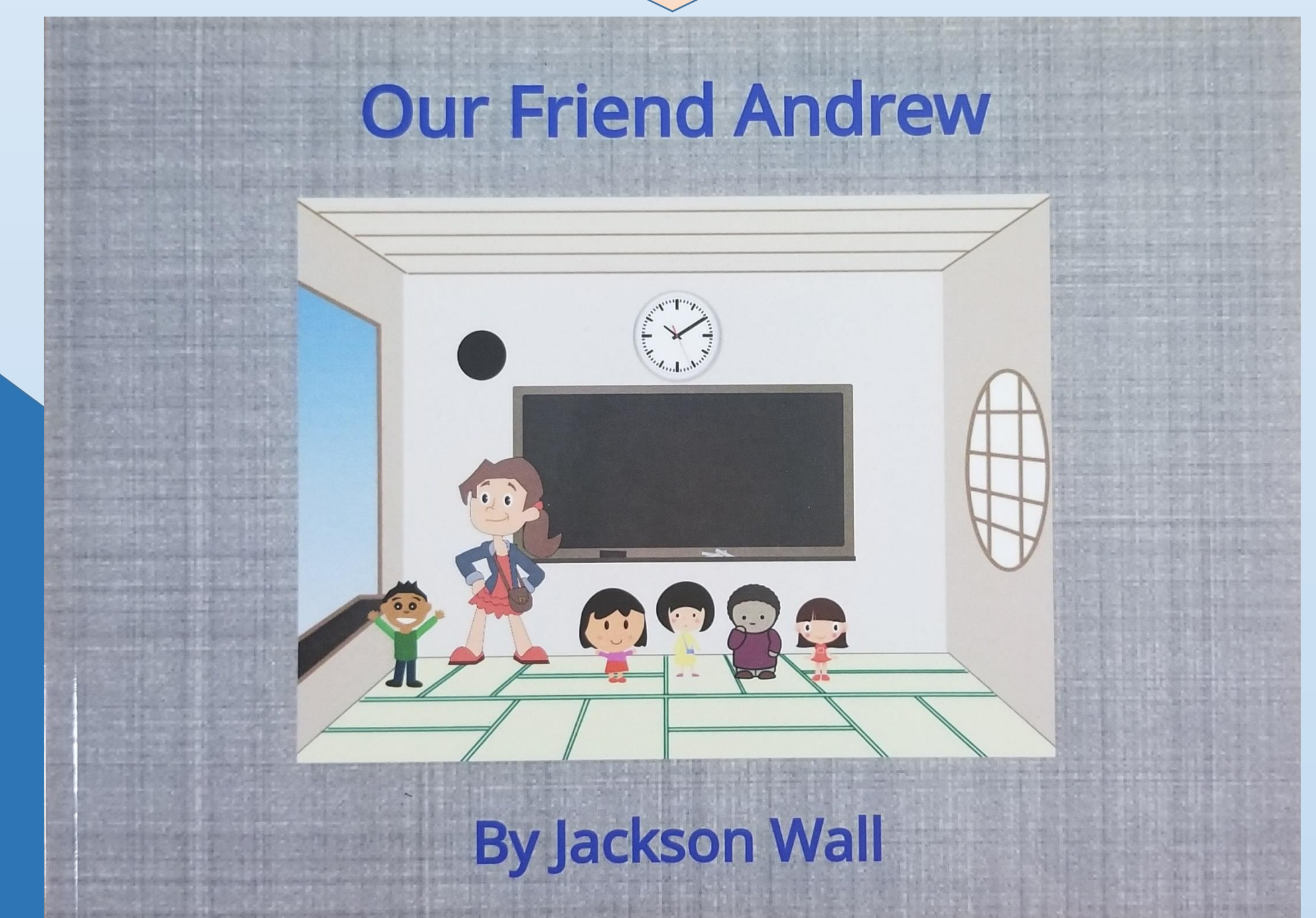


## Response:

This experience was much more enjoyable than I had anticipated. The group I read to actually had a positive response to my story. Furthermore, there was a larger magnitude of response based off my presence than the actual book. I was a fresh face and they enjoyed talking with me. The very young children wanted to see the pictures in the book and just wanted to make contact with me. Some of the older individuals asked me what college was like. So, I discussed future plans with them and what they wanted to do for a living. They seemed to enjoy that more than the actual book.

## Reflection:

The book served more of an ice breaker than anything. The actual bulk of my time spent on the bus was not reading at all. I spent time talking with the driver and his assistant while all of the kids settled down and found their seats. He told me a lot of them come from rough and low-income backgrounds, so the bus serves as a mobile library and intervention tactic. They seemed to really enjoy my attention on them and wanted to tell me stories of their own after I finished reading so I would stay longer. It made me very happy to see all of them so excited to hear about my education and to hear that they were excited about going to college. All in all it was a very eye opening and positive experience for me and I hope the group I read to enjoyed their experience as much as I enjoyed mine.



## Community Partner:

**Name:** Garden City Book Mobile

**Project Purpose /Need:**

To help facilitate a healthy environment for at risk youth. Also, to help expose children to a variety of books and build up reading skills for further educational development.



## Reference:

[Garden City Book Mobile Logo]. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://notaquietlibrary.org/bells-for-books/>

[Garden City Mobile Library]. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://notaquietlibrary.org/bells-for-books/>