

the rope. By slowing the rope down as it neared the ground, Jane could step over it without becoming twisted in it and falling down.

Jane and the students kept count of her successful steps, and Jane's turn terminated when she failed to step cleanly over the rope. Then, much to Jane's surprise, she was required to swing the rope for the other players. This also turned out to be an excellent form of physical therapy for Jane. The relationship among the students had been fostered in the classroom by the teacher's skill in revealing the thoughts and interests of the students. It has also been fostered by the teacher's trust in the student's ability and willingness to adjust to one another after the first stages of the relationship had been modelled and encouraged.

Friendship Circles

People have found friendship circles (Snow and Forest, 1987) to be an effective way of building relationships among children or young people. To form a friendship circle, students who are interested in being involved in the life of a fellow student are brought together on a team. With the guidance of an interested and sensitive adult, these students help make decisions and plans for and with the individual. They become involved with the student on a personal basis both inside and outside the school. They brainstorm ways of including the student in their own and other social circles. They identify barriers that prevent the student from participating in a particular setting or activity and then work together to break the barriers down.

This is not a "special friends project" or a "buddy system" for "unfortunate" students, or a chance for students to do a good deed for the day. The circle of friends is a network that allows for the genuine involvement of children in a friendship, caring, and support role with their peers. (Forest and Lusthaus, 1989)