Because I am an elementary education major, for my Honors Thesis project I designed and constructed my own learning center to be used in the classroom. The idea was to make the center and the materials in it non-consumable (i.e., reusable) and durable. In this way, the center can be used over and over again and the subject of the center can be changed as many times as needed.

The learning center itself was constructed from a sheet of plywood cut in half and hinged together. It was then painted orange and yellow. A shelf was made of wood for the children to work on, and it was placed on adjustable brackets so it can be lowered according to the height of the child working there. Also on the learning center wall was placed a bulletin board. A filing cabinet was placed beside the center to keep supplies such as crayons, paints, paper, reference books, scissors, and the like. An orderly system was set up to keep things in the proper place.

In this learning center, as should be in most learning centers, is a record player and a tape player. There is also a stool for the child to sit on. Also constructed was a chart for keeping track of what the children have done in the center. This was covered with acetate so that it can be changed for each new center. A small box in the center contained task cards for the children to read in order to find out what they are supposed to do. There is a card for each task they are to perform.

For this particular learning center, I chose the topic of Communicating Our Moods and Emotions. All materials made for this subject can be changed to be used for any other subject. By using acetate and contact paper, the materials can be written on and then wiped off. They will also last for a great deal of time. An example of some of the materials made is: 1) An accordion-type display device which gives information, 2) A sun in which you turn it until a question is shown in the mouth. You answer the question and then lift up the sun's eyelid where the answer is lying to see if you got the answer right. Then you go on to answer the rest of the questions on the sun, 3) A match the colors board in which you match the question with the answer and then see if the colors match to see if you got the answer right. 4) A peek board which has little windows that open. The question is on the outside of the window and the answer is underneath.

There are many other activities in the center. Some are done alone, some with partners. There are several reusable worksheets, and for all activities used, there are answers somewhere to be found in the learning center.
COMMUNICATING OUR FEELINGS

Concepts to be understood:

Communication, emotions, moods, feelings, frustration, fascination, anger, sorrow, joy, love, hate, friendship, sympathy, wonder, thoughtfulness, curiosity, satisfied feelings, fear, loneliness, longing, despair, guilt

Generalizations:

People can communicate their feelings by facial expressions and actions. There are many different emotions.
By understanding our own feelings, we can often better understand the feelings of others.
All people have moods and emotions.
People can communicate other ways besides by talking and writing.
By recognizing emotional expressions on people, we can better understand how they feel.
By understanding how other people feel, we can better understand their views and, thus, hopefully get along better with them.

Objectives:

The children will be able to:
Explain how we can communicate with our faces and actions.
Name many different emotions and their meanings.
Recognize emotions on peoples' faces and state what they are.
Recognize emotions on their own faces and state what they are.
Write a poem about how they feel.
Draw or paint their feelings.
Write stories about their feelings.
Act out their emotions to other children.