Abstract

This qualitative study examined the use of literature circles as meaningful tool in the reading classroom. This study took place in a suburban elementary school with approximately six hundred students. There were twenty-nine fifth grade students participating in this study. I used several methods to gather my data including teacher observations and reflections, surveys, a variety of interviewing methods, and student work. To analyze my data I created theme statements from my codes and bins, and reviewed my student feedback. The students started the school year learning the components of a good reader. We created a comfortable environment where we discussed our strengths and weaknesses as readers and how to collaborate with one another. We then read the same novel as a group modeling the different roles involved with a literature circle. After mastering the concepts of the roles, we began our first literature circle. The finding’s suggests that taking the time to establish a comfortable reading environment leads to a successful literature circle. Students learn to communicate with each other. They are more organized and take on additional roles and responsibilities This, however, will only occur if a teacher leads by example before beginning the circles and once the circles are in motion the teacher must relinquish control and allow the students to become the teachers.