ABSTRACT

This qualitative teacher action research study documents the experiences of honors-level students and their teacher as they engaged in think-alouds during their study of Early American literature. Twenty-nine ninth grade students participated in the study in an ethnically and socioeconomically diverse suburban high school containing approximately 1400 students. Methods of data collection included teacher observation, interviews, open-ended surveys, and student artifacts. Instructional activities took place before, during, and after reading texts and included teacher modeling of the think-aloud strategy, student thinking aloud in small groups and pairs, individual students recording their thoughts during independent reading, and small group discussion about the reading process. The purpose of think-aloud implementation was to facilitate participants’ development of an active approach to reading by shifting the cognitive demand of reading from teacher to student. Study findings suggested that think-alouds helped students to utilize a variety of reading strategies independently, enhancing their reading comprehension. Think-alouds also increased student engagement by transforming the learning environment into a more student-centered one rich in collaboration and meaningful conversation about literature.