Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to examine how implementing literature circles could engage students in collaborative learning through reading. Some elements examined were comprehension, engagement, and student cooperation. The participants were seventh graders in an advanced literacy class. The class met every day in the morning for approximately 45 minutes. During that time students were taught reading strategies through modeling as a guided approach to learning. This approach incorporated whole group instruction initially then melded into small group activities and eventually segueing into independent reading groups responsible for creating their own strategies and skills necessary for comprehension. During this independent time, the teacher conducted observations and interviews to check for comprehension, collaboration and on-task responsibilities. The teacher also collected student work to check for understanding of reading. Students worked well together in a variety of grouping arrangements and higher-level comprehension skills were evident in their work. Findings included high levels of student engagement and higher-level comprehension skills.