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Literacy Block

Observation Paper

During my observations I was able to see many different things that we have discussed in class. It made it more realistic to witness these things happening in a classroom setting. I was able to see the five types of reading, literature circles, running records, the writing process, phonics, and modeling. These are major things that we have discussed this passed semester. It is key to be successful at implementing these concepts for your students to be successful in the classroom.

The one thing that amazed me the most was the kindergarten classroom. I have always thought that kindergarteners would work on phonemic awareness and the beginning stages of reading. In this classroom, the students were working on their writing and some mechanics of writing. They each had their own writing folders that they could write in and keep their work. The teacher had a rug that in a corner of the classroom. At this rug, she had many different books and a large white board where she could model writing. The students would sit on this carpet with a writing partner. On the carpet, the teacher would introduce a new concept of writing to the students. She would model the concept on the white board and ask the students for input. While I was there, the were working on “show don’t tell” and dialogue. The students would constantly talk with their partner about the writing. This allowed them to bounce ideas off of each other and

discuss different things. After the introduction, the students would go back to their tables and write in their folders. They were allowed to write about anything they wanted and the teacher did not do much correcting. As we discussed in class, the teacher wanted them to write without worrying about corrections.

I also had the opportunity to see literature circles in the sixth grade classroom. These circles were run differently than other times I have seen them. There were only two groups. During reading time they read independently or with a partner. The teacher would conference with the whole group about their roles in the literature circle. One minilesson that she did was on scanning the reading. She discussed with the two groups that scanning was an important strategy for reading but they also needed to read the chapter in depth to be able to complete their roles correctly. She gave them examples of when scanning was able to be used and when it was not. I never witnessed any discussion among the groups about their book. The teacher led the discussion when she met with them. She asked the questions but the students never became the leaders. During literature circles there should also be discussion.

My favorite part of my observations was in the first grade classroom. During reading workshop, the students split up into their reading groups. These groups were based on the student's reading level. The reading groups split up and went with a different teacher. Every week, they would rotate so the groups would have a different teacher. In these groups, they had several different books they would read. The teacher would have them read the books aloud so she was able to listen to them. During their meeting, the teacher did a running record on one of the students while the others read. I was able to do a live running record on one of the students. They also worked on their

phonics. The teacher would introduce unfamiliar words that the students would encounter within their reading. They would practice on white boards writing these words and putting them into sentences. After that, the teacher gave each student magnetic letters. With these letters, they practice making words and chunking. The teacher would introduce a chunk and have the students make different words with that chunk.

In the fourth grade classroom, I was able to see the writing process in action. The students were studying different genres and were now writing a historical fiction story. They began with prewriting by discussing the characteristics of a historical fiction story. They write their ideas down on paper. After that they begin writing their draft. The teacher instructs them to skip lines so they will have room to write revisions later on. After they were done writing their draft, they read through their writing and have another person read their story and make marks for corrections. The students take the different revision ideas and edit their papers so they can type them up to publish them later.

I really enjoyed observing the first grade classroom. I liked how they split up the students into groups by reading level. One teacher is able to concentrate on a group of six students instead of a whole classroom. I have never seen a reading workshop ran this way. I believe this method is really effective. I want to use this in my classroom. I also liked how the teacher used magnetic letters to practice chunking. I could see the first graders using this strategy as they were reading by themselves. These observations provided some good insight. After discussing these things in class, it helped to see them done in a real setting. I can see myself using all of the strategies that these teachers used in their classroom.