

Ryan Adams

Professor Schilling

Literacy Circles

10 May 2010

Literacy Reflection

My ten hours of observation during Literacy Block enabled me to go into several different classrooms where reading and writing lessons were taking place. My ten hours of observation were split evenly between lower elementary (k-3) and upper elementary (4-6) where I gathered a lot of valuable information. During these observations, I saw many different strategies implemented that were discussed in class and in the textbook. Seeing the strategies being implemented gave me a better understanding of how to effectively implement writing and reading lessons in my future classroom.

Comment [MSOffice1]: Awesome! 😊

My observations began in a sixth grade classroom where literacy circles were being implemented. Seeing literacy circles being used allowed me to fully understand the roles that students take on while reading books. The different roles that students took on were Discussion Leader, Word Wizard, and several other jobs. Literacy circles allowed the students to select books that they were interested in and have the freedom to discuss the book amongst their group with very little teacher involvement. By seeing literacy circles used in a classroom, I now fully understand the work needed to implement them correctly and how I can use them in my classroom someday. Along with literacy circles, I observed other writing and literacy strategies being used in other classroom.

Comment [MSOffice2]: Each of these is important to the overall organization of literacy instruction, isn't it?

A text-rich environment could be found in almost all the classroom that I entered during my ten hours of observation. The lower elementary classrooms had more objects labeled than the

upper elementary classrooms. Classrooms were labeled with things such as the different genres of stories, how to select a book to read, and posters stating the writing process. In the classrooms with posters about writing and reading, I saw several students refer to them when they were questioning themselves about their writing. One student used a poster to decide the genre of the book he was reading and one student used a grammar chart to determine if he needed to use a comma. With students using these posters, it indicates to me that I need to provide my future students with informational posters about reading and writing. Additionally, I also saw several teachers use the writing process within their classrooms.

While observing several writing lessons, I noticed many teachers using the writing process with their students. Students in one of my observations wrote stories and hung their published work up to share with others. The teacher in this classroom required her students to follow the whole writing process to write a short story, which required students to work on the same story for several days. When first learning how important it was to take students through the whole writing process, it scared me because I tried to figure out how I would have the time to do that for every writing assignment. Throughout this observation with Literacy Block, I now know how to properly plan writing assignments that use the whole writing process. While observing student writing, I noticed a lot of students that wanted to share their created work. Allowing students to share their work is very important so they do not feel like they are just writing for the teacher to read. Sharing writing allows students to feel good about their accomplishments.

Assessment is important to measure students' progress both in reading and writing. The teachers I observed used both formal and informal assessments. Some assessments I saw being used by several teachers were running records and benchmarks. Several teachers I talked to did a

Comment [MSOffice3]: How cool to see this in action.

running record on their students one or two times a week depending on how many students they had in their reading group. Teachers **used running records** to determine their student's fluency, where they self corrected, and errors that the student made while reading. One teacher used a running record to determine if a child had a problem announcing words that looked the same but had one or two different letters such as "run and ran". Running records will help me as a future educator to determine students' fluency levels and help me drive further instruction. Another assessment I observed in a lower elementary classroom was a checklist that is used to check off students that could identify the author and title along with reading the book from left to right. I will use these various assessments to determine whether my students are meeting standards.

Along with assessments being administered, I saw several teachers prepping students for the ISTEP. Many teachers gave students writing prompts and multiple choice comprehension questions to answer similar ones to those found on the ISTEP. One teacher stated that they do these ISTEP activities so students are not shocked when they receive the test. Learning how to prepare students for high stakes testing was important for me so I do not let my students go into a big test without strategies to use while taking the test. One strategy I observed was having the **students read the questions first** and then read the passage so they were able to pick out the most important information in the passage. I plan on looking up other strategies I can teach my students to help them be successful on standardized tests.

During my ten hours of observation, I saw and learned several different strategies and classroom designs that could I use in my future classroom. I saw several different posters throughout these ten hours that I want to purchase for my classroom to help my future students develop into the best readers and writers. Learning how teachers structure and plan writing assignments provides me with a structure to use to ensure my students use every step of the

Comment [MSOffice4]: Great. As you create your own classroom, you will certainly learn ways and develop your own methods for helping your students take these high stakes exams.

Adams 4

writing process on their assignments. Each one of my observations was different, but I gathered valuable information from each teacher.

Comment [MSOffice5]: Overall, good reflection, Ryan. I would like to see you draw more explicit relationships between what we talked about in class and what you observed.

18/20