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Creating Real-World Readers: Literacy Circles in Third Grade

DeJanee Gregory
dng14a@acu.edu

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Creating Real-World Readers: Literacy Circles in Third Grade

DeJanee Gregory

Abilene Christian University

CREATING REAL-WORLD READERS

Abstract

This study addresses the topic of literature circles in an elementary classroom and their implications on students' attitudes toward reading and their self-perceptions as readers. The author was a preservice teacher placed in a yearlong clinical teaching internship in a third-grade English Language Arts departmentalized classroom. The goal of the study was to implement literature circles in hopes to better understand students' attitudes and self-perceptions as readers. For this study, the author collected data in the form of student interviews, survey data, a personal reflective journal, observations, and students' reflections. Utilizing the constant comparative method, the author analyzed data for major themes which resulted in the following: autonomy, student engagement, and readers reading. The author found that her students were doing real reading that resulted in an increase in student independence and autonomy, increased student engagement, and dramatic improvements in students' self-perceptions.

CREATING REAL-WORLD READERS

Creating Real-World Readers: Literacy Circles in Third Grade

“Reading individually is a skill; reading within a community is an art.”

-(Petrich, 2015).

“I got this book from Barnes and Nobles when my nana was visiting, but I can’t find an AR test on it.” “I don’t like reading at school, but I love reading at home.” “Why do we have to read boring things at school?” These are some of the many things I have heard my students say this year. I’m sure these are sentiments many educators have heard students say. Reading is a skill, enjoyed pastime, and even a complex brain function that many strive to understand.

As I spent more time observing and learning from my third-grade students, I realized that we, adults and educators, have been thinking about reading all wrong. Reading is an experience. In my experience, students learn best when they can read a book they enjoy, in a community in which they feel safe, doing reading that is not “for school.” Literature circles are the “school” way to elicit the experiential reading students crave.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to implement literature circles in a third-grade classroom. This study sought to understand how reader self-perceptions and attitudes toward reading may support or hinder literature circles and discussions. Specifically, the study aimed to address the following research questions: What happens when literature circles are introduced in a third-grade classroom for the first time?

- Sub Question: How do my students’ self-perceptions and attitudes towards reading change?
- Sub Question: What are my students’ perceptions of literature circles?
- Sub Question: Is there a difference in attitudes based on gender?

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During the time of this research, I was completing a yearlong clinical teaching placement in a third-grade departmentalized setting. My cooperating teacher and I were responsible for teaching English Language Arts to two classes of about 43 students total. Stark Elementary (all names have been replaced with pseudonyms) is an elementary school in a small West Texas town of about 107,000 people. Stark Elementary school serves about 570 students in grades k-5. Stark Elementary has a diverse student population that is 10.3% African American, 45.6% Hispanic, and 39.5% White. Much of the school population and surrounding community are considered economically disadvantaged. For example, 83.7% of the school population is economically disadvantaged compared to the district average of 70.8% and the state's average of 59.0%. Stark Elementary is a Title I school and features many academic pull-out and intervention programs. Of the student population, 1.4% are English language learners, and 14.3% are considered under special education. Stark Elementary is a Leader in Me school that is striving to become a lighthouse school. This means, they are applying the Leader in Me principles (Covey, 2008) well and can serve as an exemplar example for other schools. The community surrounding Stark Elementary is an older residential area. Many live nearby, and their parents work close to the school.

Throughout my time at Stark Elementary, I witnessed how pressure to excel and participate in programs such as Accelerated Reader can affect the learning community and literacy habits of students. Many of my students were hyper-focused on tracking their Accelerated Reader points and seemed disinterested in reading simply for enjoyment, to learn more information, or to improve their craft. Many of them defined themselves by the types of books they could independently read, and the number of Accelerated Reader points they had. I became interested in how my cooperating teacher and I could prepare students to be lifelong

CREATING REAL-WORLD READERS

readers. I was also interested in how we could better understand ways to improve students' attitudes toward reading as well as their self-perceptions. This study provided the perfect opportunity to implement a literacy approach that would engage my students in real-world reading and encourage deeper connections with the text.

Literature Review

Reading is a critical skill for learning. Despite the demand for literacy skills in life, reading in school is mainly done using leveled books and textbooks. However, Rosenblatt's Transactional Theory suggests that reading is transactional and is done best when the reader can connect with the story (Rosenblatt & Booth, 1995). Therefore, students today must be prepared to do more than textbook reading, and our classrooms need to better reflect the reading that happens in the real world. Literature circles are a powerful instructional strategy to use to tackle this issue in the classroom by focusing on student-centered learning by providing students opportunity to read literature and have meaningful conversations about their reading in groups with their peers (Young & Mohr, 2018). Traditional literature circles utilize a teacher-led approach to reading and responding to assigned literature. Students typically have assigned roles that encourage group work and individual accountability. According to Farris, Nelson, and L'Allier (2007) "learning to engage in meaningful discussions, make compromising stances, and work cooperatively are all essential elemental skills students should develop as part of the literature circle experience" (p.39).

However, some researchers have looked into making literature circles more student-led to increase engagement and interests (DeWitt, Pratt-Fartro, & Pinkie, 2014). Some studies encourage the teacher to act as a facilitator instead of a manager. For example, a study by Miller (2015) found that students were engaged and required less teacher attention. The aim of the study

CREATING REAL-WORLD READERS

was to use literature circles to empower students to be invested in their learning. Furthermore, a study by Petrich (2015) revealed accountability as a major theme among his students. He found that students were motivated to read without teacher encouragement and the “desire was not the result of teacher mandates, but a sense of urgency and passion from students” (p. 11). Literature circles provide students with the opportunity to be autonomous learners using peer-led discussions and the freedom to explore their ideas.

Along with increased engagement, literature circles provide a great tool for teachers to use to differentiate in the classroom. Literature circles provide opportunities for more intimate conversations and interactions, thus allowing for groups such as special needs students, English language learners, and struggling readers to flourish and grow as learners (Blum, Lipsett, & Yocom, 2002; Farris et al., 2007; Goatley, Brock, & Raphael, 1995; Potenza-Radis, 2010). They also give an opportunity for teachers to use mixed ability grouping and integrate informational text (Barone & Barone, 2016; Blum et al., 2002). A study by Blum et al. (2002) found that literature circles allow students to be in groups with peers based on shared book interests rather than ability grouping. According to Poole (2008), “lower -ability groups receive an inferior form of instruction characterized by more skills-based and decoding activities as well as less emphasis on meaning and critical thinking” (p. 229). However, literature circles encourage heterogeneous grouping based on literary interests and desires. Farris et al. (2007) argued that literature circles are a perfect way to incorporate the cultures of students and encourage connections with the literature.

There are also many positive effects of literature circles including improved comprehension (Rosenblatt & Booth, 1995; Young, 2014). Rosenblatt’s Transactional Theory states that when students are interacting with books, they are creating deeper connections with

CREATING REAL-WORLD READERS

the text (Rosenblatt & Booth, 1995). The transaction is further exemplified by the students interacting with the book, the book interacting with the students, and the students further interacting with the text through their peer and their peers' ideas. Along with improved comprehension, research suggests that students are motivated by choice, collaboration with peers, and authentic reading (Kozulin, Gindis, Ageyev, & Miller, 2003; Miller, 2015; Petrich, 2015; Potenza-Radis, 2010). For example, Brozo and Flynt (2008) argued that students who are motivated to read, engage, and connect with texts will have a greater chance in becoming lifelong readers. Brozo and Flynt (2008) also stated that, "increased attention to social motivation in the classroom can lead to more intrinsically motivated readers and to increased achievement in reading" (p. 173-174).

Research supports that literature circles are a great way to incorporate and encourage a community of learners in your classroom. Vygotsky's Social Learning Theory (Kozulin et al., 2003) supports the idea that students learn best through social interaction. A study by Farris, Nelson and L'Allier (2007) concluded that literature circles engage students in meaningful discussions while also allowing them to make bold statements about their thoughts and work cooperatively with one another. One study by Young and Mohr (2018) looked at how personality affected participation and discussion in the literature circles. Young and Mohr (2018) found that personality had little effect on the students' participation, in fact, many of the students were likely more comfortable sharing in groups than they had been class-wide.

While there have been studies done on literature circles, none of the previous research has looked at how literature circles influence students' self-perceptions and attitudes toward reading and ultimately literature circles. This study will extend the research base by providing an insight into students' self-perceptions and attitudes about reading. Furthermore, many of the

CREATING REAL-WORLD READERS

studies done have looked at grades 4 through 6. My study will contribute to the existing body of knowledge because I specifically studied student self-perceptions and attitudes about reading when introduced to literature circles.

Methods

The following describes a qualitative action research study conducted in a third-grade classroom. I studied the attitudes and self-perceptions of my students as readers while implementing literature circles. I was a researcher, but also a teacher in this classroom, and my students were comfortable with me as both because this study took place during my year-long student teaching placement. Through this experience, I collected and analyzed many different forms of data to find emerging themes that portrayed the experience of implementing literature circles, and the attitudes and self-perceptions of my third-grade students.

Participant Selection

The participants of this study included a single classroom of third-grade students and one classroom teacher. The class was comprised of 11 girls and 10 boys. My class was a diverse group of learners and people. I sent home a parent information letter and consent form, and the students were asked to sign an assent form. Of the 21 students in the class, the 15 students who received parent permission and assented to the study participated. Seven of the students were Caucasian, two were Hispanic, two were African American, and four were of multiple ethnicities. The classroom teacher was an African American female. Further, purposive sampling was used to select students from the class to participate in a series of short interviews. Six students were selected based on results from the surveys. The interviewees were intentionally selected. Patton (1990) describes this as purposive sampling or selecting students who will offer different perspectives in the study.

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Data Collection

Data collection was done over a four-week period beginning in February. All students who received consent and assent participated in the study. For my research, I triangulated my data by using a variety of data collection methods (Hendricks, 2017). All student participants were given two pre- and post-surveys. The first survey given was the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (McKenna & Kear, 1990). This survey consisted of 20 questions relating to students' attitudes about reading. The students were asked to respond to each question using a Likert scale. The second survey was the Reader Self-Perception Scale (Henk & Melnick, 1995). This survey consisted of 33 questions relating to students' self-perceptions regarding reading. Students were once again asked to respond to each question using a Likert scale that was modified to exclude the "undecided" option.

I choose a sample of students to interview based on their responses to both surveys. I used purposive sampling (Patton, 1990) to select six students: two students who had negative feelings about reading, two who had neutral feelings about reading or are indifferent, and two who had positive feelings about reading. The sample represented the demographic makeup of my class. The interviews were conducted in one-on-one sessions. The one-on-one interviews lasted approximately ten to fifteen minutes with each of the six students. The interviews were semi-structured, with pre-planned but open-ended questions (Hendricks, 2017). Additional questions may have been asked based on the responses of the participants. The interviews were also audio recorded. The audio was then used to transcribe the interviews for data analysis.

Furthermore, I kept a journal about how I felt about implementing literature circles, my observations of students' attitudes, and their overall participation. I journaled two to three times a week at least half a page after school for four weeks. I also carried around a notebook to take

CREATING REAL-WORLD READERS

field notes (Hubbard & Power, 2003). I also took field notes during the literature circles. I made quick notes in my small notebook or on sticky notes about my students' verbal responses to the text and their peers, and about my observations of my students' overall participation.

The students' written reflections produced during the research period were utilized as a data source as well. Students were asked to write reflections once or twice a week about the literature, the literature circle, or their attitude towards the process. Writing samples were collected and analyzed at the end of the four-week research period.

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using the constant comparative method, with initial coding followed by creating hierarchies of categories or initial coding and following with supporting codes (Hubbard & Power, 2003). Most of my collected data was qualitative; therefore, I used inductive coding. I used the process Tracy (2013) described as "level 1 coding" (p.193). Level 1 coding involved creating about 15-20 primary codes that emerged from the first 20% of my data and then using those codes to create categories of data. I then used my 15-20 level 1 codes to code the remaining 80% of my data. Then, some of the level 1 codes became parent codes as I created groups of codes and formed a hierarchy of parent and child codes. To keep track of my codes, I created a codebook (see Appendix A), which explained each code and gave an example from my data. Level 2 codes are the codes that were the most frequent and representative of the data. Level 2 codes were created by sorting, organizing, and combining similar level 1 codes. In addition, I wrote a memo for each level 2 code that chronicled how I chose the code and what data represented the code. To analyze my journaling, I "cook[ed]" my notes by fleshing them out and expanding upon my ideas and clarifying things in my journal (Hubbard & Power, 2003, p. 92). Furthermore, I indexed during the coding process to "point out themes and categories" to

CREATING REAL-WORLD READERS

strengthen my reflection on observations, notes, and student work (Hubbard & Power, 2003, p. 99). The themes that emerged from the coding of the data determined what additional data was collected, if any. The quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. I analyzed the quantitative data using descriptive statistics by comparing the average scores for the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey and the Reader Self-Perception Scale to determine whether students' scores changed over the course of four weeks. My data collection methods allowed me to further analyze my data during the process and identify major themes in my research data. The themes I found are below.

Findings

Many things happened in my third-grade classroom when I introduced literature circles for the first time. It was a learning experience for all involved, but I think my students benefited the most, which is all I can hope for. In the following pages, I will describe and outline some of my major findings as presented through short stories. My findings included increased autonomy in the classroom, deep levels of student engagement, and how despite their self-perceptions, my students were reading.

Autonomy

Imagine this, you are a first-year teacher who has just gained control of the classroom and have been trying all of the strategies and lessons you dreamed about such as literature circles. Then, you have to give up that new-found control to your students. In the end, the students love it, and you grow to love it as well. That is how my implementation of literature circles went in my classroom. I went into the research period thinking my students would be completely ready to take control of their learning and be autonomous learners. They did eventually; however, it did not start out that way.

CREATING REAL-WORLD READERS

My students craved autonomy but had to be guided when given the freedom and independence they desired. For example, when interviewing my students, one of the questions I asked them was whether they would want the teacher to read-aloud a book of their choosing or participate in a literature circle. My students unanimously answered they would rather participate in a literature circle. One student, Belle, stated that she would rather be in a literature circle because, “it is more fun, and we get to be with our friends instead of like just sitting and listening.” She continued stating that, “if someone [were] reading aloud to me. I’d have to sit there and be quiet, and I wouldn’t get to be with my friends.” Caleb answered this same question and said that he’d choose to be a literature circle because when the teachers read, “we don’t really get to talk about it much. Well we talk about the subject we’re learning on, but we don’t talk by ourselves.” My students’ answers showed how they desired independence from their teachers.

However, their desire for independence did not prove that they were equipped to be autonomous. When we first began, I gave all of my students the same speech about how this was *their* group and not mine. I told them that they would be able to discuss things they found in their books, their wonderings, their predictions, their likes, dislikes and any connections with the book. I told them they could talk about anything they wanted about their book with their group. My first meeting with a literature group went something like this, they stared at me, and I stared at them. During that first meeting, I heard things from my students such as “what do we talk about” and “I’m not sure what to say Ms. Gregory”. Then, I repeated the speech I gave in the beginning and after staring at each other for a few minutes, I gave my students a question to help them begin discussing. I made sure they knew they were talking to each other and not answering the question to me. They were to talk to their peers and ignore me. Despite those instructions to

CREATING REAL-WORLD READERS

discuss their answers with their peers, my students simply answered the question to me. It took practice and patience for my students and me to get to a point where they were taking charge of their own learning.

My meeting with that same group went like this, they stared at each other, and I stared at them. This was improvement. I decided that while my students craved autonomy, I had to prepare them first. After those two initial meetings, I took all participants and did a mini-lesson on what literature circles looked, sounded, and felt like. My students contributed ideas, and we created a paper of questions and sentence stems to help guide their discussions if they need it. This helped my students tremendously and soon enough I did not have to say a word. My students were so engulfed in their conversation, they barely noticed I was present. My students were making choices about various things, holding each other accountable, managing conflict, self-evaluating, and using reading strategies. Their autonomy was not limited to literature circle meetings; my students soon began to take charge of their learning in other ways as well.

Under the code autonomy, I had a level 1 code, student-led conflict management. When students work closely together and are independent of the teacher, it is likely that there will be problems. In my students' case, they were arguing about who was going to talk, when they were going to talk, how much they should read before meeting again, and even what to talk about first. I journaled about ways I could move groups around to reduce arguments and ways I could help them. Ultimately, I decided that moving the students would not help them because our class was argumentative, and a move would not solve the problem. I would intervene in the beginning just to get them back on track, but in the end, I decided that they needed to figure it out. My students learned how to manage their conflicts without me, and they benefited from this. For example, one group who named themselves "The Little Legends" decided very early on to make group

CREATING REAL-WORLD READERS

norms. Norms were a regular practice in our classroom, and I think that familiarity was useful for my students in this situation. They asked me to write down their norms, and they brainstormed and came up with them as a group. They all agreed on each one and decided that they needed the norms to be productive. Aside from being their scribe, they came up with this solution to their conflicts on their own. The norms they created are shown below in Figure 1. After observing many groups come up with their own unique ways to manage and solve conflict, I found that a balance between teacher intervention and student-led conflict management can strengthen your students' autonomy and independence in the classroom.

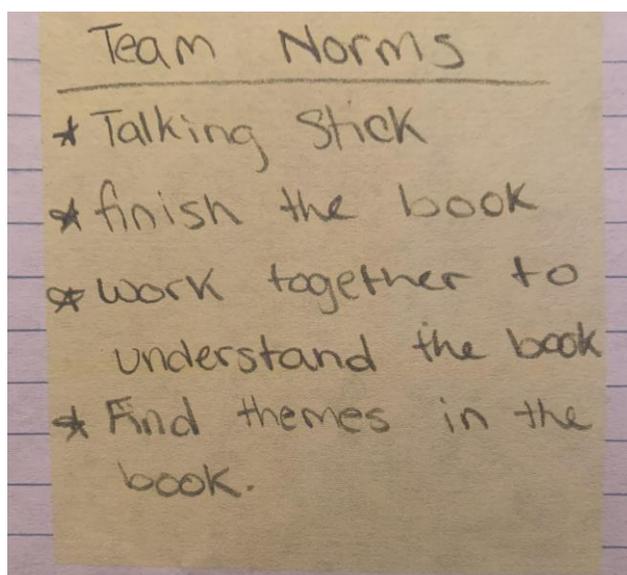


Figure 1. Little Legends group norms.

Student Engagement

Along with increased autonomy among my students, I also found that my students showed an increase in engagement. My students were engaged deeply in the text and the activities surrounding literature circles. My observations of the groups during literature circle meetings, revealed that students were deeply engaged in the text and thinking deeply about what they were reading. Students were having conversations about their wonderings and making

CREATING REAL-WORLD READERS

personal connections. For example, during an observation I heard a student, Justin, tell the group “I wonder why they chose this character to be interesting.” This thinking was deep and showed how my students were thinking about their readings. I had never heard my students talk about books in this capacity. Literature circles gave my students the opportunity to talk about books in meaningful conversations with their peers. Followed by that wondering by Justin, the other group member discussed the characters and never directly tried to give an answer to Justin.

Instead, they all shared wonderings and then Nicole stated, “I don’t think these questions can be answered, but they are good questions”. I saw my students’ mindset shift from answering questions to focusing deeply on the text. For example, students started off asking simple questions such as who the main character was the setting, etc. By the end of the research period, I heard groups having discussions about the book that required deeper thinking and inferencing. For example, Nicole asked the group “what if Desmond was actually a ghost the entire time?”, then a peer, Bryan answered her and said, “well, that would change the whole storyline.” He further responded to the group asking, “how would we know he was a ghost?”

Initially, the students were not entirely invested in the book for the sake of the book. My data shows that at start of the research period, students were actually socially motivated. They were engaged in their groups because they were engaged socially. In an interview with Mason, I asked him what his favorite part of literature circles or his book were, and he responded, “I don’t know, I just really like the book and being with my friends”. When I further questioned him about the process of picking the book and his reasoning for wanting that book, he responded that his friends liked it so he also likes it. Along with interview answers, I also noticed that in many of my students’ journal responses at the start of the research period they included their friends or

CREATING REAL-WORLD READERS

their group and their opinions about the books, one student's response can be seen in Figure 2 below.

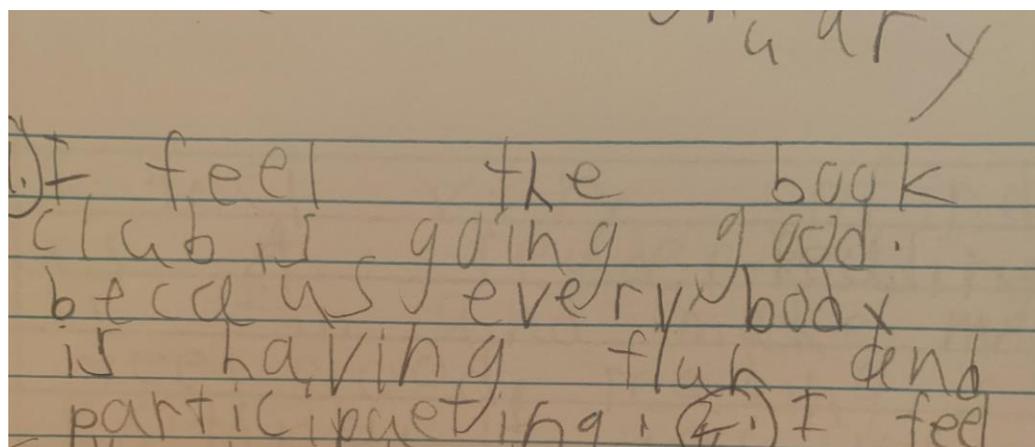


Figure 2. Caleb's journal response about literature circles.

Furthermore, a participant, Brianna was asked about her feelings about book clubs and she stated, "they are really fun and make people come together and community and see each other and be in book clubs together. Also read more books together." Brianna loves to read, but she was engaged because she was socially motivated. My data showed that my students were excited about reading and deeply engaged in the text but were also motivated by the opportunity to be socially engaged.

Reading

Before beginning my research, I thought that many of my students had negative or poor self-perceptions as readers. Many of them read on a daily basis but had the idea they were not "good" readers. After interviewing my students and reading their survey responses, I found that my students actually had positive self-perceptions, but those perceptions were based on things such as Accelerated Reading points, the amount of time they spend reading, or automaticity of words while reading.

CREATING REAL-WORLD READERS

Based on my students' survey and interview responses, I found that my students had a generally positive attitude about reading. The Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (data showed that my students' attitude towards recreational and academic reading remained the same, as seen in Figure 3. For recreational reading, my students overall average was in the 45th percentile based on the pre- and post-survey results. For academic reading, my students overall average was in the 63rd percentile on both pre- and post-survey data.

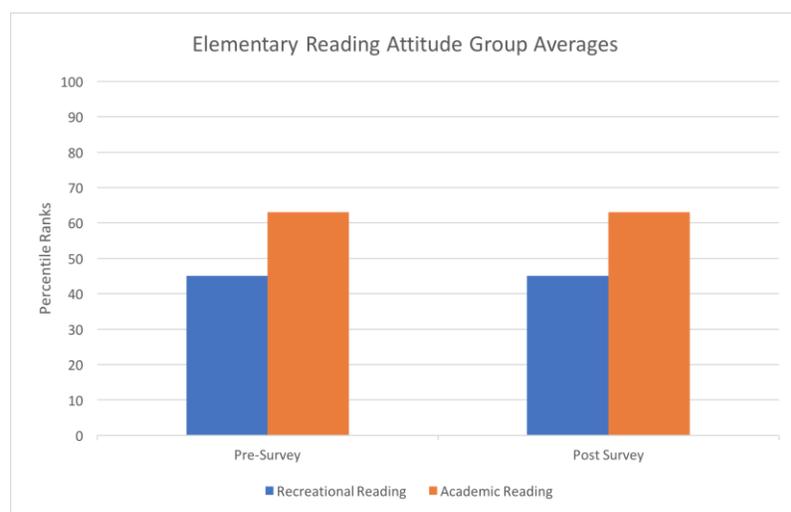


Figure 3. Reading attitude average percentiles.

The group of students represented here all loved reading, and the averages for both recreational and academic reading remained the same. This could be because I hosted the book clubs during their normal free independent reading time. I initially expected the recreational reading average to increase. I interpreted this data to mean that my students enjoyed book clubs and associated the experience with academic reading and recreational reading.

Furthermore, the data also showed a difference among boy and girls attitudes about reading. Based on the pre-survey results, the girls averaged in the 45th percentile for recreational reading and in the 69th percentile for academic reading. The boys on the other hand averaged in the 38th percentile for recreational reading and the 52nd percentile for academic reading. The

CREATING REAL-WORLD READERS

pre-survey data showed that the girls had a better attitude about recreational reading than the boys by a 7 percentile difference. They also had a better overall attitude about academic reading. The post-survey data showed that the girls still had a better attitude about academic reading, but the boys' percentile did increase. The post-survey data is displayed below in Figure 4.

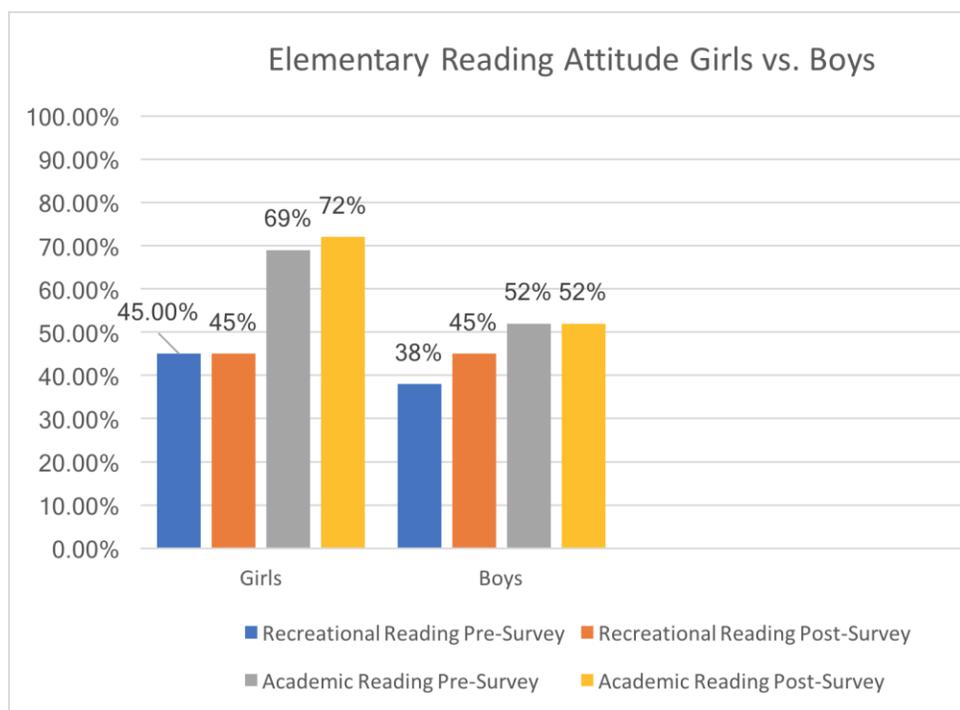


Figure 4. Elementary Reading Attitude Survey data comparing girls and boys.

Overall, the students' attitudes about reading seemed to remain the same though some gains were made in the areas of girls academic reading attitude and boys recreational reading attitude. This may suggest that boys viewed the literature circles as recreational while the girls viewed them as another form of academic reading.

Self-Perceptions

In addition to students' attitudes about reading, I also surveyed the students about their self-perceptions as readers. All year, I noticed that some of my students had negative self-images about anything from reading to writing. The Reader Self-Perception Scale and students'

CREATING REAL-WORLD READERS

interview responses gave me an insight into how they feel about themselves as readers. Based on interview responses, I found that many students associated being a good reader with the frequency of books they read. In an interview with James, I asked if he was a good reader and why; he responded that he was a good reader because, “[he] reads a lot and became a million-word reader.”

In addition to the interviews, the survey results showed that my students had generally positive self-perceptions. The pre-survey data is shown below in Figure 5.

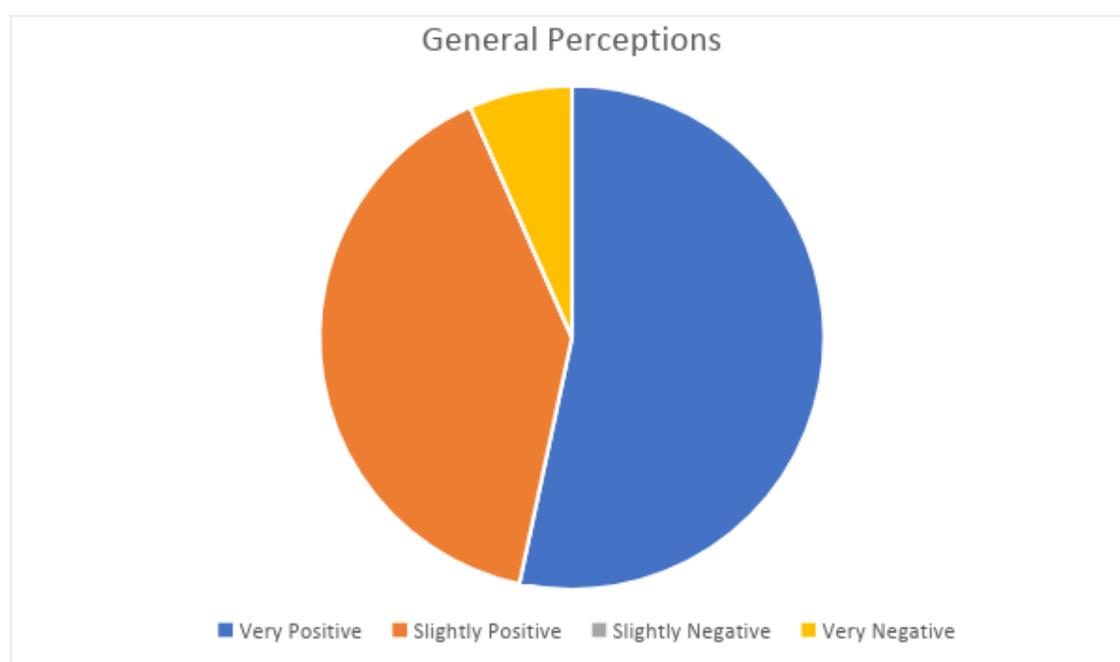


Figure 5. Graph of students' general self-perceptions.

Figure 5 shows that 53% of my students had a very positive general self-perception. In addition, 40% had a slightly positive self-perception and 7% had a very negative self-perception. Based on the post-survey data, students' self-perceptions changed dramatically. As seen in Figure 6, 67% of the students had a very positive general perception, 20% had a slightly positive perception, 7% had a slightly negative self-perception, and 7% had a very negative self-perception.

CREATING REAL-WORLD READERS

The Reader Self-Perception Survey also specifically identified areas of self-perception such as progress, observational comparison, social feedback, and physiological states. The results from the pre- and post-surveys are attached (see Appendix B). The data shows that not only did my students become more engaged when I implemented literature circles, they also grew more autonomous and their self-perceptions greatly improved.

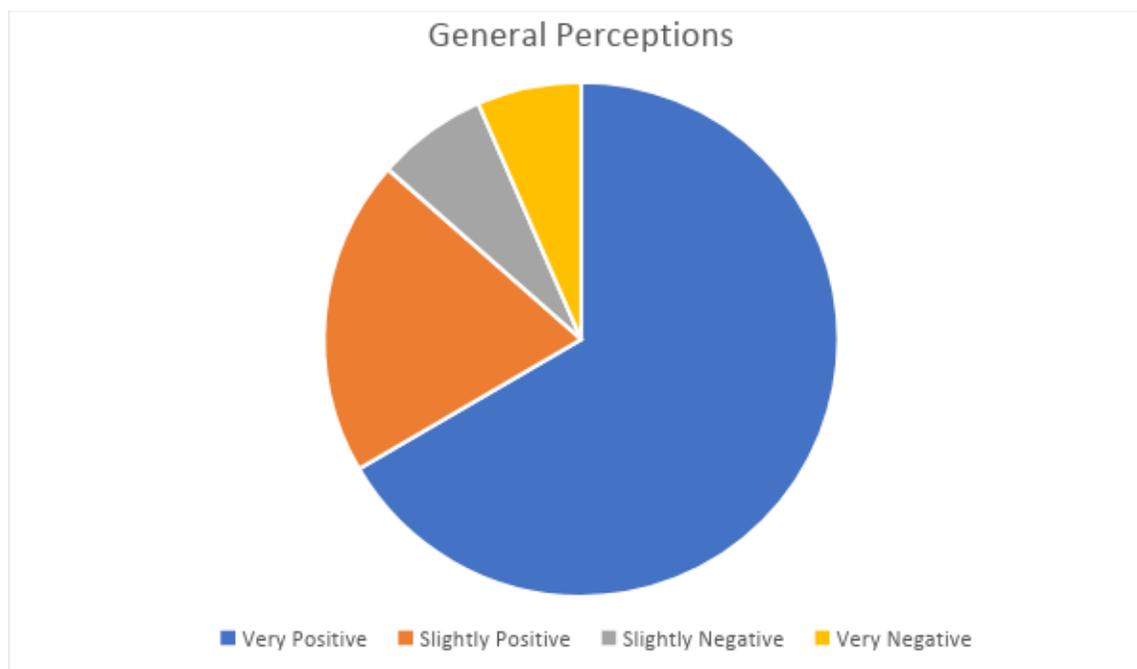


Figure 6. Post-survey data of students' general self-perceptions.

Implications for Teachers

As I discussed in my literature review, there has not been much research done on literature circles in third-grade classrooms. After conducting my study, I am more informed and enlightened to the process of implementing literature circles in a third-grade classroom. While implementing literature circles in my third-grade classroom, I learned a few key lessons. I found that literature circles ultimately increased student autonomy and engagement and that despite my students' self-perceptions, they were doing real-world reading. Here I outline some implications

CREATING REAL-WORLD READERS

for other educators who wish to try out literature circles in their classroom including my advice for implementation and future research opportunities and questions I was left with.

Advice

Here I chronicle lessons I learned while implementing literature circles in hopes that readers can learn from my mistakes or ignorance while trying them in your own classroom. My first lesson was to use a common language among my students and me. Some students called our groups book clubs, and some called them literature circles. While the research uses these terms interchangeably, I think it is important to use one term with your students. It is important for them to have one word to associate this process with. While the semantics may not have affected my students, language is important because students process words differently. For example, when I called our groups literature circles, my students associated it with a negative connotation. They felt it was more “serious” and “school reading” as they said. However, when my students and I called our groups book clubs, my students associated that with a more positive connotation and were engaged more. It would be okay to use either term as long as teachers choose one and stick to it.

Another piece of advice would be to allow students complete freedom when choosing their books and book clubs. Make it an event! I give this advice because I assigned my students to a group and then let each group pick from about 5-6 books that were on what I felt was their level. However, if I could do it again, I would set up as many books as I could around the room and allow my students to come in and view all the books and choose solely based on what they were interested in. This would be beneficial for several reasons. One reason is because students would inherently be more engaged because they would feel in control. Another reason is because one’s groups would be more likely to work well together because they chose to be in that group.

CREATING REAL-WORLD READERS

Thirdly, it would allow students to read texts that they may not have otherwise gotten a chance to read, allowing them to be challenged.

Future Research Opportunities

Along with advice, I'd like to share some future research opportunities or questions that I was left with after the research period. One question I still have is how students' perceptions of literature circles would have been different if I had assigned group roles as some of the research behind literature circles suggested. How do roles affect how students perform in and feel about literature circles? I also thought about incorporating different subject matter into their literature circles such as art activities or science experiments. How would the integration of different subjects into literature circles affect student engagement? How would it have been to have the groups create a final product to present to the class? Would our groups have been successful with no teacher intervention or guidance? How long would it have taken them to have deep and meaningful conversations after an initial introduction to literature circles? These are questions I still have given the short duration of my research, which provided only a snapshot into implementing literature circles.

Conclusion

As I was researching the process of implementing literature circles in my third-grade classroom, I was very aware of the challenges my students' traditional reading background would bring to the research. I discovered that the high levels of student engagement and the increase in students' self-perceptions from doing real-world reading were worth the front-loading required by the teacher. I would encourage teachers and educators to implement literature circles or book clubs into their own classrooms. While this model may seem difficult or may not be for everyone, I have seen the benefits and know it can be a refreshing experience for students and

CREATING REAL-WORLD READERS

educators alike to participate in meaningful conversations about literature that you and your friends have invested in.

CREATING REAL-WORLD READERS

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CREATING REAL-WORLD READERS

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CREATING REAL-WORLD READERS

Appendix A

Codebook

Level	Code	Definition	Example
2	Autonomy	Students desire to be autonomous and independent	“I like being able to talk with just my friends and not the teacher.” -Mason
1	Student choice	Students enjoy having choice and are utilizing the opportunity to have choices	“I’d rather be in a book club because we get to choose our book” - Belle
1	Student excitement about reading	Students are eager and excited to begin reading, read, or continue reading,	“Let’s finish the whole book!” -James
1	Committed to their group	Students are committed to being with their group regardless of the book they are reading.	“my group is the best group, I’d continue to be with them even though we argue.” -Nicole
1	Student-led conflict management	Students are managing conflict that arises and are navigating conversations and issues without my assistance.	Students created group norms and I wrote them down on a sticky note for them.
1	Social learning	Students are learning from each other in a social setting.	Another student explained how the sticky notes helped him understand the book.
1	Accountability	Students are holding each other accountable; Students are not being accountable to their group.	James and Caleb decided to meet without a group member because he didn’t read.

CREATING REAL-WORLD READERS

1	Students self-evaluating	Students are evaluating themselves on how they read and their group work.	Well, I actually got confused. I noticed I didn't get it because nothing else made sense." -
1	Collaboration	Students are working together to solve problems and learn	"Let's all decide what pages to read next" – Mason
1	Strategic planning	Students are planning as a group how to best tackle their reading and groupwork.	
1	Students encouraging each other	Students are using kind and encouraging words.	
1	Text engagement & deep thinking	Students are engaged in the text and making connections and thinking deeply about what they are reading.	"No, I think it means something else. If you keep reading, it explains it kind of." –Justin
1	Socially motivated	Students are motivated to do better & desire to participate because of their peers.	"I'd choose to read with my friends because I might like the book towards the middle." – Brianna
1	Invested in the book	Students are fully invested in the book and are engaged with the text.	"I'd choose my book over and over again because I can't stop reading it." –Brianna
1	Book skills	Students are using book skills to navigate the text.	

CREATING REAL-WORLD READERS

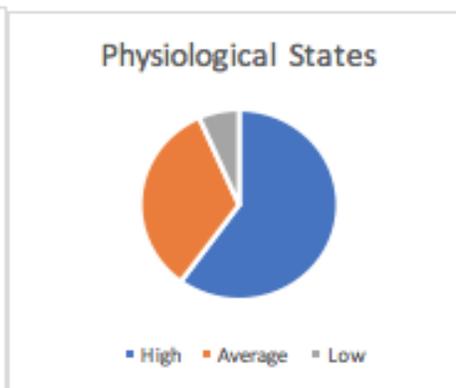
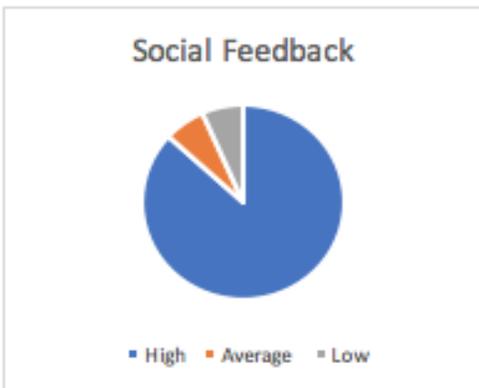
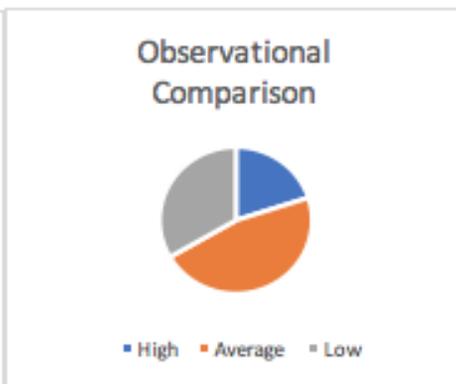
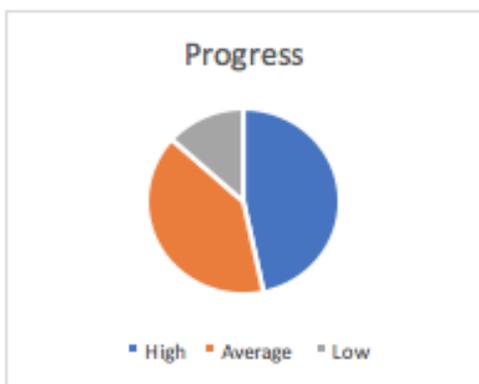
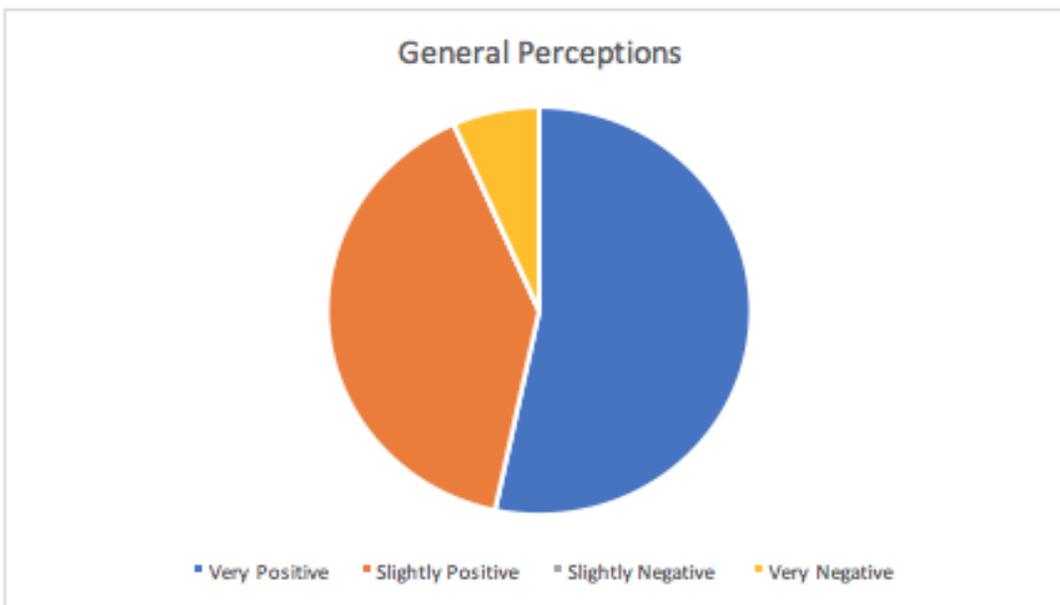
1	Words wrong = bad reader	Students associate a high number of words they get wrong while reading to being a bad reader.	
1	AR points, Frequency & size of book = good reader	Students associate high amounts of AR points or the amount of time they read, or how big the book they are reading to being a good reader.	
1	Teacher planning	This code tells about ways I, as the teacher could have planned or things my students would have liked to do in book clubs.	
1	Teacher role	The role the teacher has in the book clubs can sometimes be the facilitator, encourager, or inhibitor	
1	Progress = good reading	Students associate progress and improvements from second grade to mean they are good readers.	
1	Reading strategies	Students are using reading strategies while they read to think deeper about the text.	
2	Student Engagement	Students are visibly engaged in the text or with their peers.	

CREATING REAL-WORLD READERS

2	Reading	Students are doing real reading, using the strategies they know. This code also addresses my students' self-perceptions as readers, whether they are a good reader or a bad reader.	
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Appendix B

The Reader Self-Perception Scale Pre-Survey Data



The Reader Self-Perception Scale Post-Survey Data

