Book Buddies

Teacher: Tim O'Keefe, The Center for Inquiry, Columbia, South Carolina

Grade Level: Third

Topic: *Chicken Sunday* by Patricia Polacco

Materials Needed:

- A copy of *Chicken Sunday* for each Book Buddy pair

- A copy of the Student Activity Sheet "Book Buddy Response Invitations" for each Book Buddy pair

Background Information:

The Book Buddies experience is one aspect of Mr. O'Keefe's literature program which also includes regular read-alouds and literature circles. Third and fifth graders have met as Book Buddies throughout the year to read and respond to literature together. During these interactions, they have used reading and writing as tools for learning. They have also been learning to take hold of literature conversations for themselves. The teachers' goal is to create classroom communities where students can orchestrate quality conversations about literature independently, and they find that Book Buddies benefit equally from the interaction in spite of differences in age. This particular Book Buddy engagement grew out of focus studies on African American history, tolerance, and race relations.

Lesson Objectives:

Students will:

- read and enjoy literature.

- pose and answer questions with their Book Buddies.

- share and discuss questions in small groups.

- make predictions and intertextual ties (personal connections, text-to-text connections, and text-to-world connections).

- uncover literary elements such as character, point of view, and mood.

- identify lessons learned and knowledge gained from the text and the discussions.

- share their responses during small- and whole-group discussions.

Expected Products From Lesson:

- Two different written responses to the reading that are completed as partners (one each day) from a number of choices (see "Book Buddy Response Invitations")

- Sketch to Stretch responses to the story

Instructional Strategies Implemented:

- Paired reading and discussion
- Small-group discussions
- Whole-class discussions
- Writing and reading as tools for learning
- Generating authentic questions about literature
- Experiencing multiple responses to literature

Collaborative Structure of Class:

An inquiry classroom needs to be arranged to facilitate conversations. In Mr. O'Keefe's class, students sit at desks clustered in groups of four or five. During their opening activities, read-alouds and other whole-class activities, they gather on the floor in the front of the classroom. During Book Buddy meetings, students meet where they can find a quiet space. Some remain in the classroom, but many take advantage of South Carolina's mild climate and settle outside on benches, steps, or under trees. To accommodate discussion at the end of the experience when the two classes meet together, Mr. O'Keefe pushes the student desks against the walls so all can gather on the floor.

Lesson Procedures/Activities:

- Both classes gather together for procedural instructions and housekeeping reminders.
- Book Buddies take books and a copy of "Book Buddy Response Invitations" and find a quiet place to work.
- Taking turns, Book Buddies read assigned section of book together.
- Book Buddies select a response invitation and complete it collaboratively.
- After reading and responding to the literature as partners, they join another pair to form a small group. Using their diverse response strategies as springboards for conversation, they continue to discuss their reading. Working together, each group writes a question to bring to the whole-class discussion.

Follow-Up or Culminating Activities:

- Students create Sketch to Stretch responses.
- Both classes meet together as a whole group to share insights, reflections, and questions.

Assessment:

Students may be assessed on a daily basis through:

- teacher observation,

- anecdotal records, and

- checklists.

The following activity might receive holistic or scaled evaluation (see the Teacher Tool Assessment and Evaluation: Some Useful Principles for a detailed explanation of holistic and scaled evaluation).

- The Sketch to Stretch activity