Emalee Klinefelter April 10, 2012 RIFF/INSIDER 3 YaLit

After voting on a book to use in our literature circle engagement, the middle school students chose the book *The Face on the Milk Carton*. In our following meeting we went over the different literature circle roles. We read the first three pages to see what the story was going to be like, and we also practiced the various literature circle roles after reading those pages to get an understanding of what each role entailed. We also set up a reading schedule and chose roles for our next meeting.

In our last meeting I asked my students to read the first four chapters of the book. To my surprise most of the students read beyond those pages and one even finished the book! For our literature circle discussion, I asked those who read ahead to just focus their questions and input towards the first four chapters, since we didn’t want to spoil the story for the rest of the readers. In the meeting before, I handed out sheets for the different roles for each student to fill out in preparation for our meeting, unfortunately, I learned the hard way that they either didn’t fill them out, lost them, or left them at home. I initially thought that would break the chances of having a good, in-depth conversation of the book, but it didn’t. When we first gathered together to discuss the book, the students in a way looked to me for direction. I initially started the circle off by asking questions, about five minutes into our discussion I realized that the students didn’t need me to be the “sage on the stage” but rather act as the “guide on the side”. The students all took turns and gave their thoughts, opinions, and relations to the text… it was awesome to watch! I was thrilled to witness how the students were excited to discuss what they had read. It really went better than expected.

One thoughtful consideration I have for our next meeting would be to change the roles that I initially started off with (handing out worksheets to fill out) and instead apply the roles that we used in our own YA Lit class, this way the students are not taking home work but rather doing the “work” in the literature circle while chatting and collaborating with their peers and I. I’m looking forward to our next meeting and cannot wait to see what my literature circle students will be bringing to the table this time!