ABSTRACT

This qualitative study displayed fifth grade students exploring various forms of the arts (visual, theatrical, musical, and kinesthetic) in an English classroom over a twelve-week span of time. With minimal guidance, the teacher encouraged students to explore the arts through mini-projects and small activities in order to deepen their experiences and understanding of two Civil Rights-centered texts, *The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963* by Christopher Paul Curtis, and *Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice* by Phillip Hoose. In the beginning of the study, students completed a mini-project, using one form of art to depict the most important scene from the first whole-class text. After the first week, the students used a different art form each week to explore a different aspect of the text being studied in that week. At the conclusion of the study, students were required to create a project using their two favorite forms of art to show a thematic message, which came from one or both whole-class texts. Throughout the study, the teacher gathered several sources of data including surveys, student work, and observations. The data collected in the study suggests that student understanding and analysis deepens when supported by various forms of art.