

Literature Circles Voice and Choice Across the Curriculum



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Learning Forward
April 2012

Second Edition

Literature Circles

*Voice and Choice in
Book Clubs &
Reading Groups*



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Why I Value Literature Circles

1. Literature Circles value student-generated
 - ◆ a. What do students think?
 - ◆ b. What is meaningful, puzzling, controversial, or striking and why?
 - ◆ c. What connections are there to your own life or experience?
 - ◆ d. What feeling/visual expression does it inspire?
 - ◆ e. What big issues and questions are raised?

2. Literature Circles foster authentic critical thinking.
 - ◆ a. Authentic thoughts, not passivity and a just-look-up-the-answers approach.

Why I Value Literature Circles

- ♦ 3. Literature Circles allow me (the teacher) to facilitate learning through your (the student) thoughts, experiences, connections, questions.
 - ♦ a. Students are not bulldozed with material that they are not allowed to experience.

- ♦ 4. Literature Circles allow us to practice listening to one another to develop our own thinking.

Eleven Key Ingredients of Literature Circles

1. Students choose their own reading materials.
2. Small temporary groups are formed, based on book choice.
3. Different groups read different books.
4. Groups meet on a regular, predictable schedule to discuss their reading.
5. Kids use written or drawn notes to guide both their reading and discussion.
6. Discussion topics come from the students.



Eleven Key Ingredients of Literature Circles

7. Group meetings aim to be open, natural conversations about books, so personal connections digressions, and open-ended questions are welcome.
8. The teacher serves as a facilitator, not a group member or instructor.
9. Evaluation is by teacher observation and student self-evaluation.
10. A spirit of playfulness and fun pervades the room.
11. When books are finished, readers share with their classmates, and then new groups form around new reading choices.



Train Your Students Well

1. Give students a two-page article to read.
2. Let them know you are training them to do literature circles and why the circles are valuable.
3. Pass out the master sheets for one role and go over it with the class.

Training cont'd

4. As a class, have students use the role to have a class discussion.
5. If necessary, guide the discussion with your own modeling of the role.
6. On the next day, use a piece of text (possibly the same piece) and read it with a new role.

Training cont'd

7. Continue for two more days until each role has been practiced.
 8. On the following day, choose a new short text and divide students into groups of four, each one with a different role. Put students into those groups to have a discussion after they have read.
- ◆ *As facilitator, encourage everyone's participation, keep everyone on topic, and stay aware of time limits.
 - ◆ **Questioner should have one, two, or three big issues or questions that the article raises. These should be used if the conversation does not start or flow naturally.

Training cont'd

- ◆ ***Illustrators should not get caught up in “great” art!
- ◆ ****Remind them to be active listeners!



Professional Development

- ◆ School improvement goal
 - ◆ Literature Circles, Vocab and QAR
- ◆ Building background
 - ◆ Summer Institute
- ◆ Finding common ground
 - ◆ Ways to use text in place
 - ◆ Ways to pull in new text
- ◆ Planning for the implementation

August 2011

- ◆ Day One:
 - ◆ Spent most of the day reading the text
 - ◆ Made choices about what was important
- ◆ Day Two:
 - ◆ Began deciding what the process would look like in each teacher's classroom
 - ◆ Began the search for text
 - ◆ Planned a two week lesson for implementation

Questions? Comments?

