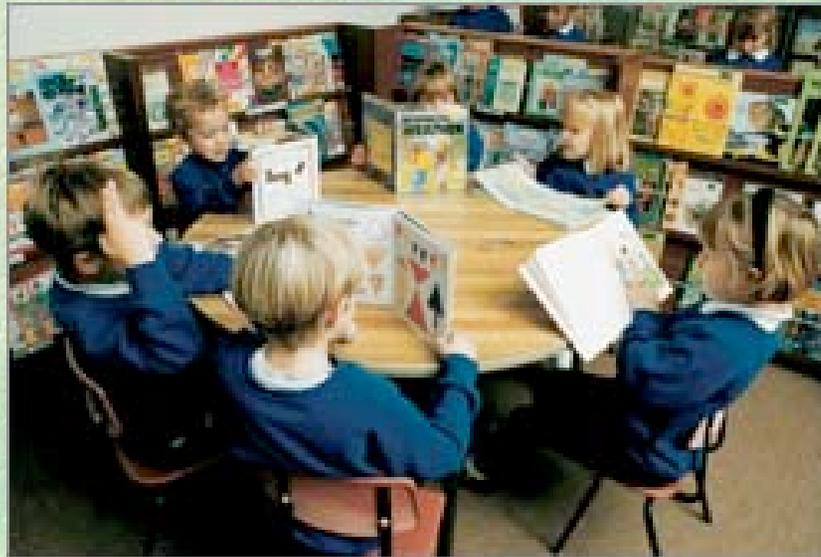


Literature Circles In the Elementary Grades



Bunny Frye / Barbara Day



Literature Circles

What are they?

Literature Circles are small groups of students who meet to discuss a piece of literature which they have chosen. Each member of the circle is assigned a role which helps guide the discussion.

Literature Circles allows students to become critical thinkers as they read, share thoughts, ask questions, and respond to reading selections. The

key to successful Literature Circles is
COLLABORATION.



Literature circles are...

Reader response-centered

Part of a balanced literacy program

Groups formed by book choice

Structured for student independence, responsibility, and ownership

Guided primarily by student insights and questions

Literature circles are not ...

Teacher and text-centered

The entire reading curriculum

Teacher-assigned groups formed solely by ability

Unstructured, uncontrolled "talk time" without accountability

Guided primarily by teacher-based or curriculum-based questions



Features of Literature Circles

- Groups of 3 to 6 students
- Group members of varied reading abilities
- Same book or selection
- Students assume roles within groups
- Teachers serve as facilitators
- Sharing / Presentations



Selecting Literature

A quality literature book should include:

Compelling content

Interesting characters

Illustrations (especially primary)



Organizing Literature Circles

- Organize by author, genre or theme
- Select books/ materials
- Give “book talks”
- Student choice
- Grouping
- Determine amount to be read
- Explain and assign roles
- Model!



Literature Circle Roles

Below is a sampling of possible roles from which the group members may choose:

- Discussion Director
- Word Finder
- Correspondent
- Connector
- Literary Luminary
- Summarizer
- Illustrator
- Checker
- Question Writer
- Group Reporter



Discussion Strategies

- Staying on topic
- Contributing appropriate information
- Encouraging all group members to participate
- Listening actively
- Looking at the speaker
- Respecting other opinions
- Asking for clarification
- Summarizing
- Speaking clearly and with adequate volume
- Referring to others' ideas
- Using members' names



Adaptations For Kindergarten and First Grade

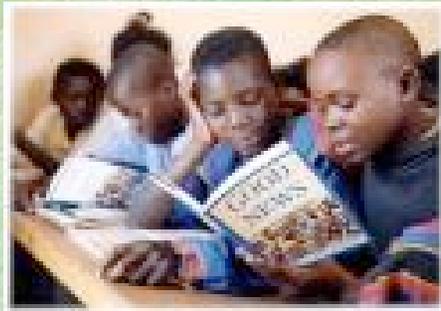
This lays the foundation for more traditional literature circles in the future.

- Choose a favorite page or character from students' independent reading book.
- Have students generate questions as a whole group for use for their group discussions. Display the questions.
- One cooperative group models discussion while the class observes and and reflects on the process.
- Emphasize social skills such as, how to be a good listener and speaker.



ESOL Implications for Literature Circles

- ESOL strategies are built-in.
- Social relationships are strengthened.
- Oral Language develops in a non-threatening, non-stressful, risk-free setting.



Book Pass Activity



Evaluations

- Teacher observation
- Student self-assessment
- Rubrics
- Extensions



Extensions

- Collages
- Story hats
- Story quilts
- Character bookmarks
- Mobiles
- Role-playing
- Written response
- Oral group summary
- Art projects
- Other ideas





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