**Final Teaching & Research Proposal**

*Revision Summary Sheet*

***Focus and Rationale Revision***

Within the Focus and Rationale I refined my research question from, “Which book study method peaks students interest toward reading more; Literature Circles or Traditional Teacher-led book studies?” to “What affect do Literature Circles have on students’ reading attitude and reading comprehension?”. I made the revision, first, to get rid of the grammatical errors (i.e.; using “peaks” versus “piques” and “students” versus “students’”). Second, I thought it would have been difficult to adequately measure “interest”, because interest and how it is recognized and expressed can vary student to student. So, I would have had a difficult time producing an assessment that would have been able to capture it accurately. And third, to avoid issues revolving around ethics, I would not have felt comfortable conducting my book study unit using a traditional teacher-led method with one group of students while conducting a Literature Circle method with another group. I can only imagine the back lash that might erupt when grades were reported. So, I decided the refined research question would be better, not only for all the afore mentioned reasons, but also because it finally targeted exactly what I was always interested in discovering.

In addition to the revision made with the research question, I also added more information to my Focus and Rationale. To more accurately respond to the initial three questions posed in the outline of the assignment, I included who else would be interested in my study (6th, 7th, and 8th grade English Language Arts teachers of the building that I teach at; Valleywood Middle School), and the reason for their interests (i.e.; the principal’s request that we all incorporate Literature Circles into our curriculum and create an environment conducive to produce the best results).

***Literature Review Revisions***

There were several revisions that I made to the Literature Review section of my Teaching and Research Project. First, within the subsection labeled “Perspectives”, I corrected a major typo. My original submission stated that Daniels supported Wilfong in that Literature Circles should be used with Expository text; emphasizing textbooks specifically. However, Daniels takes excruciating measures within his article, “Expository Text in Literature Circles”, to not only define the various types of Expository text that exist but also how Literature Circles do not work well as a method to study all of them (they especially were not meant to be used with every and all text books). In reference to textbooks directly, Daniels argues, “we need to use textbooks and reference books more appropriately (and sparingly), and instead infuse curriculum with authentic, real-world nonfiction –the kind of informational, expository, persuasive texts that adults really read” (Daniels, 2002).

Second, within the subsection labeled “Pedagogy” of the Literature Review, I had to rearrange some information that had originally mistakenly fallen into the subsection labeled “Assessment”. Since they were specifically referencing the actual numerical results of the studies, and would thus be used to help me to gain an understanding of which perspective worked better as a result of such data, I moved the data results of the Chase/Pheifer & Associates study and Wilfong’s study to the subsection “Pedagogy” of my Literature Review.

Third, once the necessary information was removed from where it did not belong, I was able to accurately preface that the method in which data were gathered, in relation to the Chase/Pheifer & Associates’ study would be one of the number one methods used in my study because of their ability to adequately measure reading comprehension (which I knew is a top concern and priority of the administrators and teachers of my building). Reading comprehension is a supposed benefit of Literature Circles and using this method of data collecting will suffice to replicate within my own research design. However, following very close behind reading comprehension is the second major claimed benefit of Literature Circles; enhanced student motivation. To make this more obvious, I added an additional transitional sentence leading up to the information about how data relative to student motivation was collected and how it would help to measure this Literature Circle benefit within my own study (i.e.; “Another claimed benefit of Literature Circles is their ability to enhance student motivation toward reading…”).

***Research Design Revisions***

Within Research Design, I first double checked that all generalized terms had reference areas that could be viewed for more detailed description (i.e.: that the specifics of teacher “observations” could be found in Appendix B). Next, I composed a few sentences describing not only what types of participants (6th, 7th, and 8th grade middle school students as outlined from the Focus and Rationale section of the proposal) would participate in the study, but what type of study the experiment would be (quasi-experimental) and why (in hopes to prevent unethical situations). I did not add any additional information about what is meant with terms like “traditional” versus “literature circles” here in Research Design in order to avoid over repeating what was already stated within Focus and Rationale. And, to finalize it all, I made several attempts to proofread for any lingering grammatical, spelling, and punctuation errors.

**Final Teaching & Research Proposal**

**Revised Focus and Rationale:**

The conclusion of the initial attempt conducting Literature Circles: It was a disaster! Students lost their books. Only one or two student(s), if any, in each individual small group actually read their assigned book. It was a headache trying to conference with groups on a regular basis all day while simultaneously keeping students on task and appropriate. And, the torture continued until the 3-4 week book study unit was completed. It is due to results like this that many teachers prefer a more traditional approach to book studies. A traditional teacher-lead book study offers a teacher more control of not only the material being read but how the material is read and more control of the behavior of the classroom as a whole throughout the book study unit. For, traditionally, one book is chosen to meet certain curriculum standards. The teacher’s role: distribute response reading questions, quizzes, and journal prompts; facilitate read-alouds (Since there is only one class set of the chosen book, the teacher resorts to silent, red robin, popcorn, or a dramatic reading to complete the book); and conclude the unit with a final project and test for a more in depth analysis of students’ understanding of the reading (students’ proficiency on the predetermined standards, and any additional standards that can be evaluated via the incorporation of the final project). Literature Circles, on the other hand, were created to offer a wider reading selection (i.e.: variety of genres), in order to ignite students’ intrinsic desire to read. The books offered would still meet curriculum standards, but would also consist of varying reading levels. Additionally, the teacher provides initial discussion questions and deadlines and sporadic conferences with each group, and monitors general progression of each group until the completion of Literature Circles in which a creative student-lead group project (and/or presentation) may be the conclusion rather than merely the age-old pencil and paper test. Thus, a decision needs to be reached whether it is more beneficial to facilitate Literature Circles or a Teacher-lead Book Study. Now, the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade English Language Arts teachers at Valleywood Middle School have routinely conducted their book study unit in the traditional teacher-led fashion. However, this past year the principal requested that the teachers investigate the more recently claimed benefits and concepts behind Harvey Daniels’ new book study approach called Literature Circles. Most specifically, however, is the inquiry as to what affect Literature Circles will have on our students’ reading attitude and reading comprehension.

**Revised Literature Review:**

***Perspective***

Lori Wilfong, in her article entitled “Textmasters: Bringing Literature Circles to Textbook Reading Across the Curriculum”, articulately defines Literature Circles as the following:

*“Traditional literature circles were described by Harvey Daniels in the early 1990s (Daniels, 1994). In this classroom practice, students divide into groups to read fiction books that the teacher has briefly introduced to the whole class. During sessions, students assume various “roles” that guide their reading (Burns, 1998; Daniels, 1994; Peterson & Belizzaire, 2006). Students meet on a regular basis to discuss agreed-upon sections of the book, rotating the roles among members of the group. The strategy ends with students presenting their book to their peers through creative presentations. Traditionally, the literature circle strategy was applied to fiction…” (Wilfong, 164).*

Since this initial summary of an approach originally created and coined in Harvey Daniels’ book, Literature Circles: Voice and Choice in Book Clubs & Reading Groups, many members of academia; whether teachers, researchers, professors, collegiate students, and more have taken a special interest in Harvey Daniels’ Literature Circle concept and have added their own twist in order to take a great idea to new innovative levels.

Wilfong, for one, conducted an action research project with her students that proved that Daniels’, “…strategy enables teachers to use literature circles with not just content area trade books but textbooks too” (Wilfong, 164). However, the way in which Wilfong outlines in her article that she chose to apply Literature Circles to textbooks is in direct contradiction as to what Harvey Daniels’ states in his article, “Expository Text in Literature Circles”, is appropriate. In this article, Daniels takes the time to define the various forms of expository text, and how to appropriately and effectively use only certain types of expository text in Literature Circles.

Besides Literature Circles finding themselves applicable to a growing variety of genres, Daniels in his article “The Next Big Thing with Literature Circles” presented how important written conversations amongst students will be used to exemplify students’ ability to “visualize, connect, infer, and [utilize] other reading-thinking skills that [will] manifest in [such] exchange[s]” (Daniels, 14). Additionally, Elizabeth Noll, in her article “Social Issues and Literature Circles with Adolescents”, was shocked to discover that her students went beyond the expected within their literature discussion groups and, “…moved out of the classroom and into the community to search for answers to their questions about social issues” (Noll, 88), and ultimately, “developed new perspectives on the social issues that were important to them” (Noll, 89). Further reaching beyond just community, school librarian Paulette Stewart desired to create, “virtual literature circles [as] an emerging example of networked social scholarship” in her article “Facebook and Virtual Literature Circle Partnership in Building a Community of Readers” (Stewart, 29). Along similar lines as Stewart, while it might not have been hosted on a popular social networking site such as Facebook and consisting of pre-selected avid readers, Melanie Helt also decided to “incorporate online correspondence [with college mentors] about literature [with the desire] to provide the motivation necessary for [below grade level readers]” (Helt, 28).

Yet, even as some librarians were exploring the magnificent realm of cyber space, other librarians struggled just to obtain more contemporary literature options with the hope, “to improve students’ attitudes about reading…[with] books to which they can relate in settings and themes –[and thus be] more likely to enjoy” (Carpinelli, 32). And, others still, seeking to obtain more multicultural options, “that portrays people accurately, but allows students to relate the life experiences of the culture to their own background, [and thus] strengthen children’s awareness and acceptance of others” (Wiesendanger, 110).

***Pedagogy***

There was one primary learning theorist continuously mentioned as the foundational educational approach behind the construction of Literature Circles. Chase/Pheifer & Associates in their article entitled “Summary of Literature Circles Research” state,

*“Learning is a social activity. Vygotsky (1978) theorized that social environments provide learners with an opportunity to observe higher levels of cognitive processing. From this perspective, discussions of literature may be viewed as social environments in which students can witness how group members work together collaboratively to construct meaning while also participating in the process” (Chase/Pheifer & Associates, 2*).

Chase/Pheifer & Associates go on further to state that,

“Collaborative learning is open-ended and student-centered. It fosters democracy, community, and shared responsibility in the classroom. The limited size of the groups compels each member to be an active participant and imbues each member with responsibility and investment” (Chase/Pheifer & Associates, 1). The research and theory on cooperative learning is cited as one of nine effective strategies in Classroom Instruction that Works: Research-based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement [Marzano, Pickering, & Pollack, 2001]”, and is defined as, “…‘best educational practice’ [Zemelman, Daniels, and Hyde, 1993]” (Chase/Pheifer & Associates, 1).

Chase/Pheifer & Associates study found that students participating in literature circles made greater gains than controls reading comprehension and equal gains in content knowledge after reading and discussing.

Wilfong’s research, analyzing Literature Circles with Expository text, found that,

*“…[after] the students had one month of traditional textbook reading, questioning, and review, followed by a chapter test. The baseline scores on the first chapter test were an average of 89%. The same 73 students took the chapter test for the second chapter, which was read and reviewed using the Textmasters strategy. The average test score was raised over three percentage points to 89.3%. Out of the 73 students, 14 students’ scores went down, 10 students’ scores remained the same, and 49 students’ scores increased. The improvement of all students is seen as statistically significant (Wilfong, 170).”*

However, in addition to Vygotsky’s constructivist approach, Stewart noted how, “Bandura’s social learning theory highlight[s] the facts that people learn from one another via observation, imitation, and modeling,” also played a significant role in the success of her virtual literature circles (Stewart, 32).

# *Assessment*

Harvey Daniels’ article, “How Can You Grade Literature Circles?”, generated a way to adequately assess students’ via literature circle portfolios. Literature circle portfolios consisted of, “multiple daily check-ins; copies of all reading notes; teacher observation logs; peer observation report; videotape of a group meeting; final assessment rubric form, scored by student and teacher”. The ‘teacher observation logs’ logged student, “preparedness, participation, memorable comment/quote, what kind of thinking [was] represented, strong/weak social skill”, while the student-generated rubric may look similar as students receive feedback on whether or not they, “came prepared, listened actively, asked follow-up questions, had original ideas, supported their ideas with the book, and kept all notes, records, and forms” (Daniels, 53).

Students’ enhanced level of reading comprehension is one of the number one benefits that Literature Circle claims to be able to produce. So, the ability to measure the difference in student comprehension in relationship to Literature Circles is important too. Chase/Pheifer & Associates’ study results were confirmed through standardized reading test, a social studies unit test, and audiotapes of group work (Chase/Pheifer & Associates, 3). Blum, Lipsett, and Yocom’s article entitled “Literature Circles: A Tool for Self-Determination in One Middle School Inclusive Classroom”, evaluated the effects of Literature Circles on students labeled “special needs”. The results of their study were validated by,

*“First, conducting multiple interviews with teacher, students, and educational specialists…Second, anecdotal records (e.g., classroom observations, discussion rubrics) were collected…Third, comparisons of scores applied to discussion rubrics were made, to determine students’ involvements in literature circles. Fourth, the analysis of task organizers completed by the students showed consistencies with anecdotal records and discussion rubrics” (Blum, Lipsett, and Yocom, 106).*

The rubric for teacher assessment of participation in literature circles consisted of the following categories: discussion contributions, used book quotes to support ideas, showed exceptional insight, interest/active listener, disagreed in an appropriate manner, reinforced others’ ideas, prepared for own task, and made connections (Blum, Lipsett, and Yocom, 104). Students also completed pre- and post-literature circle self-assessment surveys consisting of questions which, “focused on students’ perceive levels of comprehension, their abilities to remember what they read, and their abilities to explain what they read” (Blum, Lipsett, and Yocom, 102).

Another claimed benefit of Literature Circles is their ability to enhance student motivation toward reading. Helt’s desire to determine, “whether online correspondence about literature would provide the motivation necessary for students to put forth their best effort in reading and thus increase their test scores” was assessed using, the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test and also she, “gave surveys to all students to measure their attitudes toward reading before and after the online program” (Helt, 31). The article confessed that while the test scores do provide adequate validity to the second part of their initial inquiry, that they would need more than the student surveys to accurately measure the affects technology had on the test, and still question how to best measure “motivation”.

However, in order to evaluate her online program, Stewart asked group members to supply personal feedback on, “their individual participation, the group’s effectiveness, the merits (or difficulties) encountered in using Facebook for a virtual literature circle, and the products or tasks they completed” (Stewart, 31). Stewart also conducted a self-evaluation of the product and processes of her online program. She focused on three main areas, “Cognitive: What evidence does she have that students developed literacy skills she identified as objectives?, Affective: What evidence does she have that students’ social skills, attitudes, and emotions have changed or matured?, and Psychomotor: Did students’ report improve practical skills related to using Facebook?” (Stewart, 31-32).

***Conclusion***

The initial research question was constructed to compare and contrast the advantages and disadvantages between traditional teacher-led book studies and literature circles. However, it did not take long to realize that traditional-led book studies were definitely a thing of the past and the research-based benefits of literature circles were taking the lead. Even Clarke and Holwadel’s article, “Help! What is Wrong With These Literature Circles and How Can we Fix Them?” which seemed to reflect my own initial attempt with Literature Circles which, “did not go as planned and…deteriorated into tension-filled book groups marred by class inequities, bullying, name-calling, kicking, and threat” (Clarke and Holwadel, 21), incorporated strategies outlined by multiple editions of Harvey Daniels’ books on Literature Circles, in order to accomplish the many benefits that all teachers expect to see result. Results, that Chi-Hui Lin in her article entitled “Literature Circles. ERIC Digest” outlined to be as follows, “(1) stronger reader-text relationships, (2) improved classroom climates, (3) enhanced degrees of gender equity and understanding, and (4) a learning environment more conducive to the needs and abilities of English language learners” (Lin, 4).

In order to witness these advantageous results that article researchers discovered, it has become evident that additional research on the preparation, procedures, and processes of how to best facilitate Literature Circles for a diverse; culturally, economically, socially, etc., classroom is in order. Furthermore, to adequately service such a diverse population of students, additional research in how to implement various perspectives of the basic literature circle concept is necessary as well. Incorporating these two additional bodies of knowledge will hopefully produce successful literature circle book studies in any classroom.

**Revised Research Design:**

***Procedures***

This quasi-experimental study will be conducted with every student in order to avoid the unethical issue of any one student not being provided the academic equalities of another and every student will also be expected to obtain parent/guardian consent to participate in the study. Deciding who will participate and obtaining permission slips are done right away because, as a result of Literature Review, I now realize that Literature Circles do not begin when students choose their books and their groups. Rather they begin during daily instructional time with the reading, evaluating, comprehending, and assessment of various pieces of literature. Harvey Daniels’ article, “What’s the Next Big Thing with Literature Circles?” states the need for additional explicit reading strategy training. Before Literature Circles begin, teachers need to practice, “proficient reader strategies that are now staples of our everyday teaching: questioning, connecting, inferring, visualizing, determining importance, and the rest” (Daniels, 2006). These cognitive operations can be taught on a daily basis leading up to the implementation of Literature Circles using instructional models like think-alouds, in which the teacher can demonstrate how a smart reader thinks.

Daniels’ article also stresses the importance of creating a safe classroom environment for students to feel comfortable to share ideas with their peers. In our district, within the first week of school, all students and teacher alike are required to create a Social Contract in which they collaborate together to discuss proper classroom etiquette and compose an agreement detailing how to treat each other. (Refer to Appendix A to view forms used to create the Social Contract.) More importantly than our specific Social Contract, Daniels also stresses, “the realization that constant coaching and training by a very active teacher who uses mini-lessons and debriefings to help kids have skills like active listening, asking follow-up questions, disagreeing agreeably, dealing with ‘slackers’, and more” (Daniels, 2006) is also a vital necessity to fostering a quality environment for student group discussion.

Once students are underway continuously practicing their social and reading skills, preparation for Literature Circles can commence. Before book and group selections take place, I would have all students complete a Reading Attitude Survey Pre-Test. This survey will be administered as a pre-test and post-test evaluation and was created by, and used, in Min-Hsun Chiang’s “Improved Reading Attitudes and Enhanced English Reading Comprehension via Literature Circles” article. The survey appears in Appendix B. To measure reading comprehension, students are assigned to participate in a computerized standard reading test called the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) three times throughout the academic year for each 6th, 7th, and 8th grade year. The score they receive is called their Lexile score, and measures their level of reading comprehension proficiency. Once the students have completed the pre-test survey and at least one SRI, then at this point in the year (usually third marking period), students select their books, select their group members, and select a process to follow that will organize their readings and discussion groups. Book choices will be preselected based on varied reading levels, genres, and themes (however, students may choose other books with parent-teacher consent). As students begin the Literature Circles, reminders will be made about the Social Contract. The teacher will continue to conduct mini-lessons on group etiquette, good reading skills, how to complete group “role sheets”, and discuss and produce a student-created performance assessment rubric. Daniels’ article, “How Can You Grade Literature Circles?” stresses that students should do more than participate in peer-led discussion groups, but should also be a part of deciding what should be present on the final assessment evaluation. (Appendix C shows examples of a teacher observation form and rubric that a teacher would fill out as they observe each discussion group.) The teacher would also video tape each group, show the group their tapping, and have the students debrief about the pros and cons about what they witnessed as their discussion group progressed. Once students finish their books, they would take the Reader Attitude Survey Post-Test, take the SRI a second time, and fill out a self evaluation. It is from the qualitative data gathered from the various observations, video debriefing, pre and post-test surveys, and the final assessment rubric that reader motivation, attitude, and comprehension will be measured.

***Assessments***

Harvey Daniels’ in “How Can You Grade Literature Circles?” states that students should create Literature Circle Portfolios. In their portfolios, throughout the duration of Literature Circles, students should have collected, “multiple daily check-ins; copies of all reading notes; teacher observation logs; peer observation reports; videotape of a group meeting; final assessment rubric form, scored by student and teacher” (Daniels, 2003). In addition to the portfolio items, students will also complete the Reader Attitude Survey Pre-test and Post-test. (Please refer to Appendix B to view a copy of the Reader Attitude Survey Pre-test and Post-test and web link for additional information regarding the SRI test.) The Reader Attitude Survey Pre-test and Post-test asks students to respond to specific questions relative to their personal attitudes toward reading. This qualitative survey in addition to the SRI quantitative reading comprehension test, are all forms of data evaluating students’ self-evaluation and teacher evaluation of students’ enhanced ability to, “visualize, connect, infer, and perform other reading-as-thinker skills as they manifest in exchanges during group discussion” (Daniels, 2006).

***Design Rationale***

This particular research procedure takes into account that Literature Circles are not a single lesson plan taught one day and then forgotten. Literature Circles is a methodology. Literature Circles take preparation and nurturing. The procedure proposed above creates and nurtures the foundation necessary for Literature Circles to thrive and be as beneficial as they were initially designed to be by their founder; Harvey Daniels. The procedure also mentions how important it is that students have coaching and guided assistance in learning the necessary reading and social skills that Literature Circles demand in order to be successful. Many articles from the Literature Review pin pointed these two areas to be weaknesses and reasons as to why Literature Circles were not as effective in some classrooms as opposed to others. The information gathered and observed may not be quantitative state-mandated tests, but if we are trying to foster a natural and intrinsic desire for reading, via an ethical research inquiry, then assessment and evaluation need to reflect what Literature Circles are actually attempting to accomplish: improved reader attitude toward reading and improved reader comprehension.

**Annotated Bibliography**

1. Blum, H. T., Lipsett, L. R., & Yocom, D. J. (2002). Literature circles. Remedial and Special Education, 23(2), 99. doi:10.1177/074193250202300206   [Link](http://vq9xh3gm7u.search.serialssolutions.com/?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2004&ctx_enc=info%3Aofi%2Fenc%3AUTF-8&rfr_id=info:sid/summon.serialssolutions.com&rft_val_fmt=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:journal&rft.genre=article&rft.atitle=Literature+Circles&rft.jtitle=Remedial+and+Special+Education&rft.au=Blum%2C+H+Timothy&rft.au=Lipsett%2C+Laura+R&rft.au=Yocom%2C+Dorothy+Jean&rft.date=2002-03&rft.pub=Sage+Publications&rft.issn=0741-9325&rft.volume=23&rft.issue=2&rft.spage=99&rft.epage=108&rft_id=info:doi/10.1177%2F074193250202300206&rft.externalDBID=n%2Fa&rft.externalDocID=10.1177%2F074193250202300206)

*Special needs students within an underprivileged and inclusive classroom were evaluated before and after the implementation of literature circles in order to discover the effects, if any, on these students’ reading proficiency.*

1. Chase, P., & Pheifer, D. Chase/Pheifer & Associates, 1-5. Retrieved August 5, 2010, from <http://www.chasepheifer.com/pdf/LitCrcResearch.pdf>

*Vygotsky, as the underlying theorist, is explained to be the foundation behind the constructivist approach that literature circles were developed. Details behind how literature circles support stronger reader-text relationships, improved classroom climates, enhanced degrees of gender equity and understanding, and a learning environment more conducive to the needs and abilities of English Language Learners is further defined. And, the three components behind the effectiveness of Literature Circles is also presented; Cooperative learning, independent reading, and group discussion.*

1. Chia-Hui Lin. (2004). Literature circles. Teacher Librarian, 31(3), 23.   [Link](http://vq9xh3gm7u.search.serialssolutions.com/?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2004&ctx_enc=info%3Aofi%2Fenc%3AUTF-8&rfr_id=info:sid/summon.serialssolutions.com&rft_val_fmt=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:journal&rft.genre=article&rft.atitle=literature+circles&rft.jtitle=Teacher+Librarian&rft.au=Chia-Hui+Lin&rft.date=2004-02-01&rft.issn=1481-1782&rft.volume=31&rft.issue=3&rft.spage=23&rft.externalDBID=FELB&rft.externalDocID=547386231)

*The concept, the advantages, and the research supporting Literature Circles are briefly and clearly articulated.*

1. Christine Boardman Moen. (2005). Literature circles revisited: Learning from experience. Book Links, 14(5), 52.   [Link](http://vq9xh3gm7u.search.serialssolutions.com/?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2004&ctx_enc=info%3Aofi%2Fenc%3AUTF-8&rfr_id=info:sid/summon.serialssolutions.com&rft_val_fmt=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:journal&rft.genre=article&rft.atitle=Literature+Circles+Revisited%3A+Learning+from+Experience&rft.jtitle=Book+Links&rft.au=Christine+Boardman+Moen&rft.date=2005-05-01&rft.issn=1055-4742&rft.volume=14&rft.issue=5&rft.spage=52&rft.externalDBID=BKLS&rft.externalDocID=839765341)

*The article provides several additional enriching activities that educators can incorporate if they continuously find themselves encountering “fast finishers” within literature circles. The author models the quality questions that literature circles discussion groups are supposed to contain that can also curtail “fast finishing” and evoke deeper level thought conversations.*

1. Harvey Daniels. (2002). Expository text in literature circles. Voices from the Middle, 9(4), 7.   [Link](http://vq9xh3gm7u.search.serialssolutions.com/?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2004&ctx_enc=info%3Aofi%2Fenc%3AUTF-8&rfr_id=info:sid/summon.serialssolutions.com&rft_val_fmt=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:journal&rft.genre=article&rft.atitle=Expository+text+in+literature+circles&rft.jtitle=Voices+From+the+Middle&rft.au=Harvey+Daniels&rft.date=2002-05-01&rft.issn=1074-4762&rft.volume=9&rft.issue=4&rft.spage=7&rft.externalDBID=VOM&rft.externalDocID=116914206)

*Harvey Daniels explains the various types of expository text, which types are good candidates to be used within literature circles, which are not good candidates to be used within literature circles, and the resulting reasons as to why.*

1. Harvey Daniels. (2003). How can you grade literature circles? Voices from the Middle, 11(1), 52.   [Link](http://vq9xh3gm7u.search.serialssolutions.com/?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2004&ctx_enc=info%3Aofi%2Fenc%3AUTF-8&rfr_id=info:sid/summon.serialssolutions.com&rft_val_fmt=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:journal&rft.genre=article&rft.atitle=How+can+you+grade+literature+circles%3F&rft.jtitle=Voices+From+the+Middle&rft.au=Harvey+Daniels&rft.date=2003-09-01&rft.issn=1074-4762&rft.volume=11&rft.issue=1&rft.spage=52&rft.externalDBID=VOM&rft.externalDocID=420331051)

*Harvey Daniels supplies adequate curriculum, and standard, based ways to assess students and their work when they are conducting and participating in literature circles*

1. Harvey Daniels. (2006). What's the next big thing with literature circles? Voices from the Middle, 13(4), 10.   [Link](http://vq9xh3gm7u.search.serialssolutions.com/?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2004&ctx_enc=info%3Aofi%2Fenc%3AUTF-8&rfr_id=info:sid/summon.serialssolutions.com&rft_val_fmt=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:journal&rft.genre=article&rft.atitle=What%27s+the+Next+Big+Thing+with+Literature+Circles%3F&rft.jtitle=Voices+From+the+Middle&rft.au=Harvey+Daniels&rft.date=2006-05-01&rft.issn=1074-4762&rft.volume=13&rft.issue=4&rft.spage=10&rft.externalDBID=VOM&rft.externalDocID=1040452851)

*Harvey Daniels reviews the success that literature circles have experienced since their initial implementation into classrooms. And, now that more teachers have welcomed the concept into their classrooms, he reviews the improvements the new edition of his book contains: like mini-lessons, new concepts behind role-sheets, additional training, additional social skill instruction, extending into nonfiction, new models of assessment, and written discussion.*

1. Helt, M. (2003). Writing the book on online literature circles: Raising reading achievement through web-based mentoring. Learning & Leading with Technology, 30(7), 28,58.   [Link](http://vq9xh3gm7u.search.serialssolutions.com/?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2004&ctx_enc=info%3Aofi%2Fenc%3AUTF-8&rfr_id=info:sid/summon.serialssolutions.com&rft_val_fmt=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:journal&rft.genre=article&rft.atitle=Writing+the+Book+on+Online+Literature+Circles%3A+Raising+Reading+Achievement+through+Web-Based+Mentoring&rft.jtitle=Learning+%26+Leading+with+Technology&rft.au=Helt%2C+Melanie&rft.date=2003-04&rft.issn=1082-5754&rft.volume=30&rft.issue=7&rft.spage=28%2C58&rft.externalDBID=ERIC&rft.externalDocID=EJ668351)

*The author decides to conduct literature circles in her classroom while also incorporating technology. The students not only hold regular peer-led literature circles discussions, but they also dialogue online with pre-service teachers about their book in order to increase their reading proficiency levels.*

1. Katherine Wiesendanger, & Peggy Tarpley. (2010). DEVELOPING CULTURAL AWARENESS THROUGH IMPLEMENTING LITERATURE CIRCLES IN THE CLASSROOM. Race, Gender & Class, 17(1/2), 110.   [Link](http://vq9xh3gm7u.search.serialssolutions.com/?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2004&ctx_enc=info%3Aofi%2Fenc%3AUTF-8&rfr_id=info:sid/summon.serialssolutions.com&rft_val_fmt=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:journal&rft.genre=article&rft.atitle=DEVELOPING+CULTURAL+AWARENESS+THROUGH+IMPLEMENTING+LITERATURE+CIRCLES+IN+THE+CLASSROOM&rft.jtitle=Race%2C+Gender+%26+Class&rft.au=Katherine+Wiesendanger&rft.au=Peggy+Tarpley&rft.date=2010-01-01&rft.issn=1082-8354&rft.volume=17&rft.issue=1%2F2&rft.spage=110&rft.externalDBID=RGCL&rft.externalDocID=2039347031)

*Wiesendanger stresses the importance of having quality literature from a variety of cultural backgrounds for students to select from when conducting literature circles in order to promote self awareness, shared common values, respect compassion for others, sharing, responsibility, and more.*

1. Lane W Clarke, & Jennifer Holwadel. (2007). Help! What is wrong with these literature circles and how can we fix them? The Reading Teacher, 61(1), 20.   [Link](http://vq9xh3gm7u.search.serialssolutions.com/?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2004&ctx_enc=info%3Aofi%2Fenc%3AUTF-8&rfr_id=info:sid/summon.serialssolutions.com&rft_val_fmt=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:journal&rft.genre=article&rft.atitle=Help%21+What+Is+Wrong+With+These+Literature+Circles+and+How+Can+We+Fix+Them%3F&rft.jtitle=The+Reading+Teacher&rft.au=Lane+W+Clarke&rft.au=Jennifer+Holwadel&rft.date=2007-09-01&rft.issn=0034-0561&rft.volume=61&rft.issue=1&rft.spage=20&rft.externalDBID=GRTE&rft.externalDocID=1330789901)

*One inner-city and underprivileged school struggles to incorporate literature circles when dealing with several additional social, economical, behavioral, and more issues. However, with additional research and re-teaching a few basic and fundamental skills, the benefits of literature circles begin to manifest.*

1. Lori G Wilfong. (2009). Textmasters: Bringing literature circles to textbook reading across the curriculum. Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 53(2), 164.   [Link](http://vq9xh3gm7u.search.serialssolutions.com/?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2004&ctx_enc=info%3Aofi%2Fenc%3AUTF-8&rfr_id=info:sid/summon.serialssolutions.com&rft_val_fmt=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:journal&rft.genre=article&rft.atitle=Textmasters%3A+Bringing+Literature+Circles+to+Textbook+Reading+Across+the+Curriculum&rft.jtitle=Journal+of+Adolescent+%26+Adult+Literacy&rft.au=Lori+G+Wilfong&rft.date=2009-10-01&rft.issn=1081-3004&rft.volume=53&rft.issue=2&rft.spage=164&rft.externalDBID=IRED&rft.externalDocID=1879002431)

*This article presents a strategy that enables teachers of diverse content and curriculum to effectively use literature circles with textbooks too.*

1. Paulette Stewart. (2009). FACEBOOK AND VIRTUAL LITERATURE CIRCLE PARTNERSHIP IN BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF READERS. Knowledge Quest, 37(4), 28.   [Link](http://vq9xh3gm7u.search.serialssolutions.com/?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2004&ctx_enc=info%3Aofi%2Fenc%3AUTF-8&rfr_id=info:sid/summon.serialssolutions.com&rft_val_fmt=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:journal&rft.genre=article&rft.atitle=FACEBOOK+AND+VIRTUAL+LITERATURE+CIRCLE+PARTNERSHIP+IN+BUILDING+A+COMMUNITY+OF+READERS&rft.jtitle=Knowledge+Quest&rft.au=Paulette+Stewart&rft.date=2009-03-01&rft.issn=1094-9046&rft.volume=37&rft.issue=4&rft.spage=28&rft.externalDBID=SLMQ&rft.externalDocID=1709435551)

*A study is conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of literature circles hosted on the popular social networking site; Facebook.*

1. Social issues and literature circles with adolescents. (1994). Journal of Reading, 38(2), 88.   [Link](http://vq9xh3gm7u.search.serialssolutions.com/?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2004&ctx_enc=info%3Aofi%2Fenc%3AUTF-8&rfr_id=info:sid/summon.serialssolutions.com&rft_val_fmt=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:journal&rft.genre=article&rft.atitle=Social+issues+and+literature+circles+with+adolescents&rft.jtitle=Journal+of+Reading&rft.date=1994-10-01&rft.issn=0022-4103&rft.volume=38&rft.issue=2&rft.spage=88&rft.externalDBID=IRED&rft.externalDocID=5271313)

*Literature circles can do more than enhance students reading comprehension, but can also provide students the opportunities to find answers to their questions and to develop new perspectives on the social issues that are important to them.*

1. Tracy Smiles. (2008). Connecting literacy and learning through collaborative action research. Voices from the Middle, 15(4), 32.   [Link](http://vq9xh3gm7u.search.serialssolutions.com/?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2004&ctx_enc=info%3Aofi%2Fenc%3AUTF-8&rfr_id=info:sid/summon.serialssolutions.com&rft_val_fmt=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:journal&rft.genre=article&rft.atitle=Connecting+Literacy+and+Learning+through+Collaborative+Action+Research&rft.jtitle=Voices+From+the+Middle&rft.au=Tracy+Smiles&rft.date=2008-05-01&rft.issn=1074-4762&rft.volume=15&rft.issue=4&rft.spage=32&rft.externalDBID=VOM&rft.externalDocID=1498097381)

*Smiles conducted research to further investigate whether reader-centered experiences with literature lead to deeper interpretations of literature and foster positive attitudes and an appreciation towards reading and literature*

1. Tish Carpinelli. (2006). Literature circles: A collaborative success story. Library Media Connection, 25(3), 32.   [Link](http://vq9xh3gm7u.search.serialssolutions.com/?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2004&ctx_enc=info%3Aofi%2Fenc%3AUTF-8&rfr_id=info:sid/summon.serialssolutions.com&rft_val_fmt=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:journal&rft.genre=article&rft.atitle=Literature+Circles%3A+A+Collaborative+Success+Story&rft.jtitle=Library+Media+Connection&rft.au=Tish+Carpinelli&rft.date=2006-11-01&rft.issn=1542-4715&rft.volume=25&rft.issue=3&rft.spage=32&rft.externalDBID=LMCN&rft.externalDocID=1182221801)

*The article emphasized how contemporary settings and themes were a necessity to improve student attitudes toward reading.*

**Appendix A:**

**Social Contract**

*Definition: an agreement of behavior*

**Roles for the Group:**

* **Facilitator:** directs the discussion
  + *Make sure everyone is participating.*
  + *Make sure every answer is well-defined.*
* **Scribe:** Writes responses down for the group
* **Spokesperson:** Speaks for the group
* **Timekeeper/On-Task Person**: Keeps track of time and keeps group focused and on the task at hand
* **Affirmer:** Acknowledges and supports the group/individual answers

Directions: In your groups, discuss and answer each of the following questions.

1. How do you want to be treated by me (teacher)?
2. How do you want to be treated by each other?
3. How do you think I (teacher) want to be treated by you?
4. How do we want to treat each other when there is conflict?

**Appendix B:**

Visit the following website for a brief overview of the Scholastic Reading Inventory:

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/sri_reading_assessment/index.htm>

**Reader Attitude Survey Pre-Test and Post-Test**

1. Reading is my favorite pastime

2. Reading helps me relax from the external stress

3. Reading takes my mind off heavily-loaded school work

4. Reading is the last thing that I would choose to engage myself in for my spare time

5. I feel very rewarding when I finish reading the entire book

6. Reading helps me refresh my thoughts

7. I enjoy letting my mind travel as I read along

8. I feel satisfied while I am reading

9. I enjoy reading during my leisure time

10. Reading an interesting book is like hunting a treasure

11. Reading is an important means for me to acquire information

12. Reading is an important vehicle for me to remain connected with the world

13. Surfing on-line is far more interesting than reading books

14. I spend more time on Internet than reading books or other printed materials

15. Reading is sort of old-fashion

16. I frequently go to library to check out books to read

17. I seldom finish reading the entire book just for pleasure

18. I read only when I’m required to do so (e.g. homework assignment, exams, or only print version available)

19. When I read, I often keep reading for an extended period.

20. Reading literature is not my cup of tea.

21. I am easily distracted when I read.

22. Internet is apparently a better choice for me to gain knowledge

23. It is quite challenging for me to sit down and read for some time.

24. No matter how hard I tried, reading is still dragging and tedious to me.

25. I should probably find something interesting and start to read it.

26. Reading extensively will help me enhance my problem solving ability.

27. Reading frequently will improve my communication ability.

28. Reading will help me become a critical thinker

29.

30. The more I read the more creative I will be.

31. Reading will enhance my intelligence (IQ)

32. Reading will help me absorb information quickly.

33. Reading will broaden my world-view

34. Reading extensively will help me develop the sense of empathy

35. Reading will help me enhance my analytical ability

36. Reading will help me write better

37. Reading is not the most efficient way to be connected with the world when compared with on-line search

38. Reading frequently will improve my overall memorization.

39. Reading will help me improve my academic performance

40. Reading will probably help me enhance my emotional intelligence (EQ)

**Appendix C:**

**Teacher Observation**

Name of Student:

Prepared? Yes/No

Participated? Yes/No

One memorable comment or quote:

What kind of thinking does this represent?

One strong/weak social skill:

**Teacher/Student/Peer-to-Peer Performance Assessment Rubric:**

Come Prepared 25

Listen Actively 15

Ask Follow-up Questions 10

Have Original Ideas 15

Support Your Ideas with the Book 25

Keep all notes, records, and forms 10

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