Integrating Literature Circles Into a Co-taught Inclusive Classroom

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New York State Council for Exceptional Children
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Presentation “Ground Rules”

• This presentation is probably too long for the time allowed.
• We are not distributing a paper handout.
• The presentation is available at:
http://www.newpaltz.edu/prepforsuccess/activities.html
• There are many links that you can click on later to get more ideas/videos/worksheets that we don’t have time to show you.
What are Literature Circles?

- Small, heterogeneous, peer-led discussion groups
- Students choose the text they want to read
- Group members read and discuss the same texts
- Aim to improve students’ comprehension skills and ability to interpret and think critically about text
- Also known as Book Clubs
- Grade K- Adult

(Daniels, 2002)
Connections to the Common Core

Students who are college and career ready in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language:

- demonstrate independence
- build strong content knowledge
- respond to the varying demands of audience, task, purpose, and discipline
- comprehend as well as critique
- value evidence
- use technology and digital media strategically and capably
- come to understand other perspectives and cultures

(NYSED, 2011, p. 6)
Evidence-based Literacy Strategies for Students with Disabilities (SWD)

Students with disabilities Need explicit instruction in:

• Word Study
  – Phonemic Awareness
  – Phonics Instruction
• Fluency
• Vocabulary Instruction
• Comprehension
• Motivation

(Boardman, Roberts, Vaughn, Wexler, Murray, & Kosanovich, 2008; Faggella-Luby, & Deshler, 2008; Kim, Linan-Thompson, & Misquitta, 2012; Roberts, Torgesen, Boardman, Scammacca, 2008)

So, are literature circles an evidence-based instructional approach for students with disabilities?

Click on the picture. According to the What Works Clearinghouse, we don’t have enough evidence to say!
More specifically, effective instructional approaches for struggling readers:

- Include explicit instruction in evidenced-based strategies such as vocabulary instruction, finding the main idea, questioning, elaboration, summarization
- Use peer and teacher feedback
- Elicit ongoing interaction
- Encourage task completion
- Control for task difficulty
- Use small group instruction
- Help students to “think aloud” about text
- Provide repeated opportunities for practice and feedback

(Jitendra, Burgess, & Gajria, 2011; Kim, Linan-Thompson, & Misquitta, 2012; Roberts, Torgesen, Boardman, & Scammacca, 2008; Sencibaugh, 2007; Swanson & Hoskyn, 2001; Vaughn, Gersten, & Chard, 2000).
Things to Think About as We Proceed:

• In what ways do Literature Circles provide balanced literacy instruction for students with disabilities that is evidence-based?

• Could employing Literature Circles in a co-taught classroom be evidence-based?

• What other interventions do we need to include to provide a balanced literacy approach for students with disabilities?
Questions to Consider for Implementing Literature Circles in an Inclusive Classroom

1. When and how shall we **introduce** literature circles?
2. How should we **manage** the literature circles process?
3. How can we **guide students** when they start reading and discussing their texts?
4. How can we **support all learners** to develop appropriate skills in literacy using a variety of co-teaching arrangements?
5. How will we regularly **evaluate** student progress?
Introducing Literature Circles

• Review Student Assessment Information
• Select Appropriate Texts
• Present Text Choices
• Determine Group Composition

Click picture for more ideas on Middle School Literature Circles from Laura Candler
Review Student Assessment Information

- Standardized test scores
- Student records
- IEPs
- Curriculum-based assessments
- Informal reading inventories
- Cloze or maze tests
- Observational checklists
Select Appropriate Texts

- Choose trade books that approximate the range of reading levels present in the class.
- Start with relatively short texts such as short stories, chapter books, poetry, biographies, or nonfiction articles.
- After first time, consider appropriate text length.
- Texts usually have a theme, topic, or author in common that:
  - will engage the students’ interests
  - are appropriate for students’ developmental levels
Examples of text sets at various reading levels for social studies instruction
World War II
Native Americans

- Louise Erdrich: The Birchbark House
- Donald Hall: Dogsong
- Jean Craighead George: Julie of the Wolves
- Jan Hudson: Sweetgrass
Civil War/Underground Railroad
Medieval Times
Immigration to America
The Great Depression
Dealing with Loss
It takes all kinds to make a family

- Children raised by a family member
- Single-parent families
- Children in foster care
The power of one
Present Text Choices

- Student choice is central to the philosophy of literature circles.
- Introduce the class to each text in an appealing manner (e.g., book talk, provide cliffhanger).
- Display in the classroom.
- Provide guidance in choosing appropriate independent reading level, but balance with student interest.
- If students choose text above their independent reading level, consider:
  - Bookshare
  - CAST UDL Book Builder
  - Text-to-speech readers
  - Highlighting
  - Online dictionaries
  - Reading pens to pronounce unfamiliar words
  - A conversation about a lower level book next time.
Determine Group Composition

- Number of texts selected will influence group size
- Initial groups should range from two to six students.
- Heterogeneous groups that reflect student characteristics, literacy abilities, and classroom context
- Students make a prioritized list of text preferences
- If they don’t get their first choice this time, next time
Managing the Literature Circles Process

- Establish a Schedule
- Use different co-teaching arrangements
- Vary Teacher Involvement

Click picture for more ideas on Middle School Literature Circles
Establish a Schedule

• Create an instructional cycle that determines time dedicated on a daily and weekly basis
• Determine amount of time needed each day
• Divide up the daily schedule
  – Large group
  – Literature Circles
  – Evaluation and check-in
• Decide which co-teacher should work with each group initially
• Provide adequate time for reading and response (i.e., oral and written).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time allotted</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Day 1</th>
<th>Day 2</th>
<th>Day 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15 min</td>
<td>Large group</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 min</td>
<td>Literature circles</td>
<td>Circle 1*</td>
<td>Circle 3</td>
<td>Circle 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ms. Coulter</td>
<td>Ms. Briggs</td>
<td>Ms. Briggs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Circle 2*</td>
<td>Circle 4*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ms. Briggs</td>
<td>Ms. Coulter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Independent work or focus group lessons</td>
<td>Circles 3, 4*, 5, 6</td>
<td>Circles 1*, 2*, 5, 6</td>
<td>Circles 1*, 2*, 3, 4*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 min</td>
<td>Evaluation and check-in</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* These circles include two students with disabilities
Use Different Co-teaching Arrangements

(a) One Teaching/One Helping
(b) Parallel Teaching
(c) Station Teaching
(d) Alternative Teaching
(e) Team Teaching
Vary Teacher Involvement

- Base degree of support on group strengths and challenges
- Provide more intensive instruction when only a few students need assistance on specific skills
- Use focus groups for mini-lessons on a particular strategy
- Employ explicit instruction
  - Discuss the skill
  - Model the skill
  - Provides guided practice with corrective feedback
  - Provide independent practice in the group
- Fade support over time to meet the goal of literature circles: student-led discussion
- Let circles proceed on their own while a teacher meets with a small group or individual to provide a focus lesson

(Daniels & Steineke, 2004; Paxton-Buursma & Walker, 2008)
Guiding the Literature Circles Process

• When you first start with literature circles, it is good to practice each role together as a class with the same text
• Then assign a role to each group member
  – Director
  – Connector
  – Questioner
  – Vocabulary enricher (Word wizard)
  – Literary luminary (Passage picker)
  – Summarizer
  – Researcher
  – Illustrator
  – Travel tracer
• Start with role sheets or cards
• SWD roles could reflect IEP goals and strengths
• Students can choose roles if appropriate
• Switch roles as appropriate

Click on the role card to find out more about roles from Literacy Solutions
Role Sheet for Vocabulary Enricher/Word Wizard

Name ____________________________ Circle ____________________________
Meeting Date ____________________ Reading Assignment __________________
Book ______________________________________________________________

Vocabulary Enricher/Word Wizard: The words a writer chooses are an important ingredient of the author’s craft. Your job is to be on the lookout for a few words that have special meaning in today’s reading selection.

Jot down puzzling or unfamiliar words while you are reading. Later, look up the definitions in either a dictionary or some other source.

You may also run across words that stand out somehow in the reading – words that are repeated a lot, used in an unusual way, or are crucial to the meaning of the text. Mark these special words, too, and be ready to share your ideas on their usage to the group.

Note: When discussing vocabulary, you should always refer back to the text in order to examine the word in context.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Pg. # &amp; Paragraph</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Reason/Plan for Discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summarizer Role Sheet

Name _____________________________ Circle _____________________________
Meeting Date _______________________ Reading Assignment __________________
Book _________________________________________________________________

Summarizer: Prepare a brief summary of the day's reading. Use the questions below to help you decide what to include. In some cases, you might ask yourself what details, characters, or events are so important that they would be included on an exam. If it helps you to organize the information, consider making a numbered list or a timeline.

Sample Questions
• What are the most important events in the section you read?
• What makes them so important?
• What effect do these events have on the plot or the other characters?
• What changes---in plot, character, or tone---did you notice when you read?
• What questions might appear on an exam about this section you read?
• What might be a good essay topic for this section of the story?

___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________

Click here for more role sheets.
Role Sheet for Connector

Connector

Name ____________________________________  Circle ____________________________________
Meeting Date ____________________________  Reading Assignment ______________________
Book  _______________________________________________________________________________

Connector: Your job is to find connections between the book and you, and between
the book and the wider world. Consider the list below when you make your connections.

– Your own past experiences
– Happenings at school or in the community
– Stories in the news
– Similar events at other times and places
– Other people or problems that you are reminded of
– Between this book and other writings on the same topic or by the same author

• Some connections I made between this reading and my own experiences, the wider
world, and other texts or authors:

Click for more role sheets
The Passage Picker

Not all readers have the same background experience, so model and teach good questioning and piggybacking skills to find out why students say what they do.

Check for understanding

Allow for different perspectives

Click on the picture to read about Literature Circles at the New York Public Library
Click on bookmarks to read more about roles
Revised Roles

• In lieu of traditional roles, these roles may be substituted to further develop students’ comprehension of the text and apply critical thinking skills more aligned with the Common Core
  – Sensory Image Maker
  – Inference Maker
  – Questioner
  – Connector
  – Importance Determiner/Synthesizer

Ferguson & Kern (2012)
Supporting All Learners

- Some students will need more support than role sheets provide.
- For example:
  - Prereading information (e.g., vocabulary words, historical context, graphic organizers)
  - A role sheet for vocabulary enricher/word wizard could be modified to include fewer words and a graphic organizer that helps students think through the strategies that more expert readers use automatically
  - Teaching a vocabulary or summarizing strategy using explicit instruction
  - Preselect passages for the student to read aloud that are at the student’s own reading level when working in groups
  - Assign roles appropriate for the difficulty of the text (e.g., for a more challenging passage, assign the student the role of illuminator)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Book:</strong> Redwall by Brian Jacques</th>
<th><strong>Sentence from text</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vocabulary Word:</strong> haversack</td>
<td>The young mouse repacked his canteen into his haversack.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Page</strong> 186 <strong>Paragraph</strong> 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Context and word clues</strong></th>
<th><strong>Your guess for word meaning</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This thing is big enough to block Warbeck from pecking at Matthias. He put his canteen of water in it. Haversack has the word “sack” in it.</td>
<td>A bag to carry stuff in.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Brief definition from dictionary</strong></th>
<th><strong>Visual</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A bag worn over the shoulder used for carrying supplies.</td>
<td>![Haversack Image]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Personal sentence</strong></th>
<th><strong>Synonym or Antonym</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I carry my books to school everyday in a haversack.</td>
<td>Backpack</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Word map examples

Word Map

1. (Vocabulary Word)
2. (the matching dictionary definition)
3. (synonym)
4. (antonym or "nonexample")
5. (other forms of the word)
6. (sentence or phrase from the text)
7. (my association, example, or sketch)
8. (my very own sentence)

VOCABULARY WORD MAP

Definition in Your Own Words

Synonyms

Use It Meaningfully in a Sentence

Draw a Picture of It
LINCS

- List the parts
- Identify the reminding word
- Note a LINCing story
- Create a LINCing picture
- Self-test
  - Say the new word
  - Say the reminding word
  - Think of the LINCing story
  - Think of the LINCing picture
  - Say the meaning of the new word
  - Check to see if you’re correct

## LINCs Example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Reminding Word</th>
<th>Example or Story</th>
<th>Picture</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>palisades (this example is from Ellis)</td>
<td>pal</td>
<td>My pal, Joe, dove from the cliff into the ocean.</td>
<td><img src="palisades.png" alt="Picture" /></td>
<td>A line of steep cliffs along a river or ocean.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ascend</td>
<td>send (send the paper airplane upward)</td>
<td>The airplane ascended into the clouds.</td>
<td><img src="ascend.png" alt="Picture" /></td>
<td>to move, climb, or go upward</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

http://reading-toolkit.wikispaces.com/vocabulary
TRAP IDEAS: A Strategy for Summarizing Informational Text

• TRAP
  – Think before you read
  – Read a paragraph
  – Ask “What is the paragraph mostly about? What is the most important information?”

• IDEAS
  – Identify important details to support the main idea
  – Delete trivial details
  – Eliminate redundant details
  – Add a term for a list of words or concepts
  – Summarize

(Mason, Reid, & Hagaman, 2012)
Story Mapping for Narrative Text

Idol (1987)
Interactive Story Mapping

- Interactive story mapping is available from readwritethink.org
  http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/student-interactives/story-30008.html
Varying Co-teaching Arrangements

Formats for teacher involvement range from most to least intensive and include teacher as:

- Leader
- Group member
- Outside observer of one group
- Roaming observer of multiple groups

Level of teacher involvement is diminished over time based on each group’s:

- previous experience
- literacy skills
- interpersonal skills
- quality of response
Co-Teaching Arrangements for Literature Circles
Whittaker (2012)

Table 3. Literature Circles Planning Guide for Cycle 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Coteaching arrangement and instruction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Day 1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Alternate teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large group</td>
<td>Ms. Briggs</td>
<td>Introduce piggybacking and sentence prompts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ms. Coulter</td>
<td>Meet with Rene to model and practice questioning strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Station teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature circles</td>
<td>Ms. Briggs</td>
<td>Lead Circle 2\textsuperscript{a}; assess piggybacking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ms. Coulter</td>
<td>Lead Circle 1\textsuperscript{b}; assess piggybacking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent work</td>
<td></td>
<td>Circles 3, 4\textsuperscript{a}, 5, 6; read books and complete role sheets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Parallel teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation and check-in</td>
<td>Ms. Briggs</td>
<td>Give Circle 2\textsuperscript{a} feedback on piggybacking; students set goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ms. Coulter</td>
<td>Give Circle 1\textsuperscript{b} feedback on piggybacking; students set goals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(a\). These circles include two students with disabilities.
Evaluating Student Progress

Teacher can use any of the following to monitor student progress in group discussion skills

- Checklist of skills
- Audio or video tape
- Use sticky notes while observing students’ comments and later place in student folders
- Students can self-reflect on rating scales or in journals
### Literature Circles Discussion Strategies Rubric
(Whittaker,2012)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discussion Strategies</th>
<th>Students in Literature Circle</th>
<th>Examples/Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Choose one or more skills:</td>
<td>S1  S2  S3  S4  S5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiates a discussion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elaborates on or extends another student’s comment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asks for clarification</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supports a point with textual evidence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listens courteously and effectively</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourages others to speak</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizes other’s contributions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shares discussion time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses appropriate body language</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagrees respectfully</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mediates a conflict</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rating – 1=Not Proficient; 2=Partially Proficient; 3=Proficient; 4=Advanced
Evaluating Student Progress

Teachers can use any of the following to monitor student progress in comprehension

- Response logs
- Role sheet responses
- On-line posts
- Bookmarks
- Comments on sticky notes
- Drawings with captions
- Face-to-face conferences
- Culminating experience (e.g., project, presentation)
- Portfolio of a combination of above responses
Virtual Literature Circles

To create virtual literature circles teachers can:

• use blogs and related online resources (e.g., Moodle, ThinkQuest, Blogger)
• structure a virtual discussions by approving and posting the students’ discussion prompts
• require one comment with a word limit and then adjusting requirements
• combine online with face-to-face circles
• “listen in” without having their presence change the dynamic

Most students are very enthusiastic about virtual discussions, participate more often, feel more comfortable admitting their confusions about text, and formulate their responses more thoughtfully (Collins, 2010; Day & Kroon, 2010; Kitsis, 2010)

Click here for video
What Do You Think?

• In what ways do Literature Circles provide balanced literacy instruction for students with disabilities that is evidence-based?

• Could employing Literature Circles in a co-taught classroom be evidence based?

• What other interventions do we need to include to provide a balanced literacy approach for students with disabilities?
References


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