

Using Literature Circles to Enhance Reading

Instructors: Emily Peterson and Kerri Crawford

Dates: TBA

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Course Description: Literature Circles add an exciting dimension to a student's literacy experiences. These discussion groups encourage students to be positive members of a literate classroom community while capitalizing on how they personally respond to literature. This course will help the participant explore the various roles of the literature circle and select roles appropriate for their students – regardless of reading level or ability. Participants will conduct and record literature circles in their own classrooms.

Target Audience: Educators in Grades 2 – 5

Course Requirements:

- Microsoft Word
- Audio software: Any type of recording and editing software will do, We recommend Audacity because it is a free, portable download.
- Access to a microphone or an MP3 player that has a microphone

Goals, Outcomes and Objectives:

Goals:

- Develop meaningful literature circles to fit teacher's students
- Integrate literature circles into curriculum
- Create literature circles that are essentially run by the students and give them a forum to apply reading, writing, speaking and listening.
- Differentiate literature circles through book and group selection
- Integrate technology into literature circles

Outcomes:

- Understand the purpose of the literature circle
- Thoroughly explore the five common roles that each member of the circle shares
- Consider and develop roles not included in the original five covered
- Modify or develop age-appropriate roles for their own class
- Develop strategies for differentiation in literature circles
- Create a podcast of their students actively engaged in a literature circle
- Evaluate students in each of the literature circle roles
- Reflect on experiences and other participants' experiences to establish best practices when conducting literature circles

Objectives:

- Participants will be able to formulate their own definition of a literature circle and develop learning objectives for their students.
- Participants will be able to identify and/or develop non-traditional roles for the literature circle and identify the learning objectives for those roles.
- Participants will be able to create and post the final versions of each role they will use in their own classrooms and the accompanying learning objectives for those roles.
- Participants will be able to evaluate the success of their first literature circle experience.
- Participants will be able to create a podcast of their students actively engaged in a literature circle.
- Participants will be able to evaluate their students in each of the literature circle roles.
- Participants will be able to reflect on their experiences and other participants' experiences to establish best practices when conducting literature circles.

About Instructors:

Kerri J Crawford
Second Grade Teacher

Kerri began her teaching career in September 1975. She has been teaching second grade since that time. For the past eight years Kerri has been the regular education teacher in an Inclusion classroom. Literature Circles have been a part of her classroom for fifteen years. She has observed the success of literature circles in her balanced literacy program.

Kerri has been a member of the district's Technology Committee, is a trained mentor for new teachers and has served on the Professional Development Team for the past seven years. She was hired by the Board of Education to act as facilitator of the Professional Development Team for the 2006-07 and 2007-08 school years and expects to continue in that role. In January of 2008, Kerri began a Master's Degree in Education Computing through Stony Brook University.

Emily Peterson
Library Media Specialist

Emily began her career in education as a second grade teacher at the East Moriches School District. She taught in that capacity for two years. During this time she observed her mentor, Kerri Crawford, successfully implement literature circles in her classroom. Students excelled in their fluency and comprehension when literature circles were implemented into reading instruction. In 2004 Emily was hired as the school's Library Media Specialist. In September 2006 she joined the Sachem School District as a Library Media Specialist at Gatelot Avenue Elementary School.

In January of 2007, Emily began a Master's Degree in Educational Computing through Stony Brook University. With this degree Emily hopes to be an asset to the Sachem School District as they aspire to achieve their technology integration goals.

NYS Standards Addressed:

- ELA Standard 1: Language for Information and Understanding
- ELA Standard 2: Language for Literacy Response and Expression
- ELA Standard 3: Language for Critical Analysis and Evaluation
- ELA Standard 4: Language for Social Interaction
- MST Standard 2: Information Systems

Prerequisite Skills:

- Familiar with Microsoft Word
- Computer literate – email, internet research

Recommendation for In-service Credit:

- All assignments must be completed according to the guidelines on the rubric.
- Participants must participate in class discussions, complete required readings and postings, complete assignments and maintain an average of '3' on the rubric.
- Students who plagiarize will not be recommended for in-service credit.