Literature Circles Teacher Information

1. Purpose

Literature Circles is a strategy that aims to engage students in critical thinking and reflection as they read, discuss and respond to a text. They are one of the tools that teachers may use to improve reading comprehension and encourage students to take responsibility for their reading and thinking about text.

The purpose of literature circles is to make learning visible and audible, comprehend texts through the use of appropriate strategies, build collaboration, confidence and independence amongst students. They encourage students to reflect on their own learning and enables this to be visible to teachers.

2. Prior Learning

Prior to students engaging in Literature Circles, they should have developed the following capabilities:

- Listening skills;
- Co-operative group work;
- Comprehension strategies (please refer to Action Research Project Framework: North East Cluster);
- Independent reading skills.

3. Role of the Teacher

The role of the teacher when developing student capacities to undertake Literature Circles and implementing the strategy within their classroom is to:

- To role model for students how to undertake each role;
- To intervene in the Literature Circle process when necessary:
  - To both extend/challenge students thinking as well as supporting those in need;
- To provide students with ongoing feedback about their participation in the Circle process;
- To work with students on text selection.

4. Circle Roles: As enacted in Primary and Secondary Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Role Descriptor:</th>
<th>Comprehension Strategies:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Director</td>
<td>Develop a set of questions for the group to discuss about this part of the book;</td>
<td>Inferring</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Direct the discussion;</td>
<td>Questioning</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Lead and create big idea(s);</td>
<td>Predicting</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ensure all Circle members self-reflect at the end of a discussion.</td>
<td>Synthesising</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connector</td>
<td>Make notes of any connections they make from the passage they have just read;</td>
<td>Making Connections</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Literature Circle Assessment Opportunities

Through the utilisation of Numeracy Circles, there are opportunities to assess individual, group and whole class understandings in mathematics, as well as individual’s abilities to work in groups and follow process.

Teachers are able to assess an individual’s understanding and ability in group process through:

1. The Literature Circle Rubric;
2. Artefacts constructed by the individual during the Literature Circle (e.g. Literature Circle Student Booklet);

Teachers are able to assess the diversity of understandings present in the group, through:

1. The Literature Circle Group recording sheet.

6. Key Understandings underpinning Literature Circle Implementation

Key to the success of Literature Circle implementation are the following:

- The Teacher must ensure that the students have been taught each of the roles explicitly.
• When students are first exposed to Literature Circles the **Teacher should take on the role of the Discussion Director** (or potentially or another role, depending upon the capabilities of the student cohort) for the entirety of the first text, enabling them to model the role, and the process of the Circle.

• Utilise the **Gradual Release Model** as the Literature Circles are being rolled out, to enable students to become less reliant on teacher input.

• Whilst the **Discussion Director** leads the group, it is not essential that they start the conversation or if the roles are shared.
  - Each person can be given the opportunity to share their role
  - The **Discussion Director** shares their big idea questions at the end of the discussion.
  - The role can vary depending on the experience of the group and can be developed further.

• Inexperienced Literature Circles benefit from a more dominant self-driven learner facilitating the discussion (Discussion Director) in early meetings.

• For each role, the student also needs to share and engage in overall discussion and engaged in reflection at the end.