



Literacy and Literature Circles in the 21st Century



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Session Outcomes

Participants will explore the evolution of literature circles over time, consider strategies for supporting today's readers and learners using literature circles, and begin designing units that integrate the use of literature circles in their own classrooms.

Today We Will Consider.....

- The Evolution of Literature Circles
- Preparation and Management
- Supporting Readers and Inquiry-Based Learning
- Question Stems and Sentence Frames
- Implications for Unit Design
- Striving for Continuous Improvement

**What do you already know about literature circles?
Please be as specific as possible in your response.**

Use the resources provided on the wiki page below to engage in your own inquiry work relevant to Literature Circles.

<http://betterreaders.wikispaces.com/Literature+Circles>

What have you learned about *traditional* forms of literature circles?

Where do you see opportunities to incorporate 21st century skills?

Which resources are worth sharing with others?

Eleven Key Ingredients for Literature Circles (and a Handful of 21st Century Applications)

1. Students choose their own reading materials
 - Social Bookmarking tools such as Diigo can enable greater choice while sharpening search skills
 - Good Reads and Shelfari enable students to collect and share the books they are reading
 - Readers can learn how to use RSS to subscribe to worthwhile sites and blogs
 - Readers can also use e-readers to access text
2. Small, temporary groups are formed
 - Teachers can enable meetings to take place virtually using tools like wikis, blogs, Ning, Adobe Connect, Elluminate, Skype, and others
3. Different groups read different books.
 - And different groups could share their thinking about these books virtually using a variety of tools. This would enable them to connect to a global audience of readers.
4. Groups meet on a regular, predictable schedule to discuss reading.
 - Meetings could be scheduled using Google Calendar.
 - Groups could also agree upon times and virtual locations for meetings.
5. Kids use written or drawn notes to guide their reading and discussion.
 - Pencil and paper are fine, but consider encouraging a variety of approaches and the use of different visualization tools.
 - Teaching learners how to use social networking tools to create and learn from a back channel could be powerful as well.
 - Modeling and practicing the art of collaborative note-taking is important. Google Docs enables this well.

6. Discussion topics come from students.
 - Post sentence starters in locations throughout the room that are easy to access.
 - Train students in QAR or other questioning strategies that will empower them to direct meaningful conversations.
 - Encourage learners to research the texts read, explore comments and reviews made by others beyond the classroom, and consider how varied perspectives might inform their own and prompt deeper discussion.
7. Group meetings aim to be open, natural conversations about books so personal connections, digressions, and open-ended questions are encouraged.
 - Podcasting group meetings will provide you an archive of models to share with students. Reviewing these tapings can enable reflection and self-assessment as well.
8. The teacher serves as a facilitator, not a group member or instructor.
 - Facilitators provide tools, frameworks, feedback, and modeling.
9. Evaluation is by teacher observation and student self-evaluation.
 - Designing quality rubrics, checklists, and self-evaluation tools is key.
10. A spirit of playfulness and fun pervades the room.
 - It can also pervade final products and assessments. Design in ways that create joy.
11. When reading is finished, readers share their conclusions with others and new groups form.
 - Using the web to create and share content with real audiences is the final step of the process.

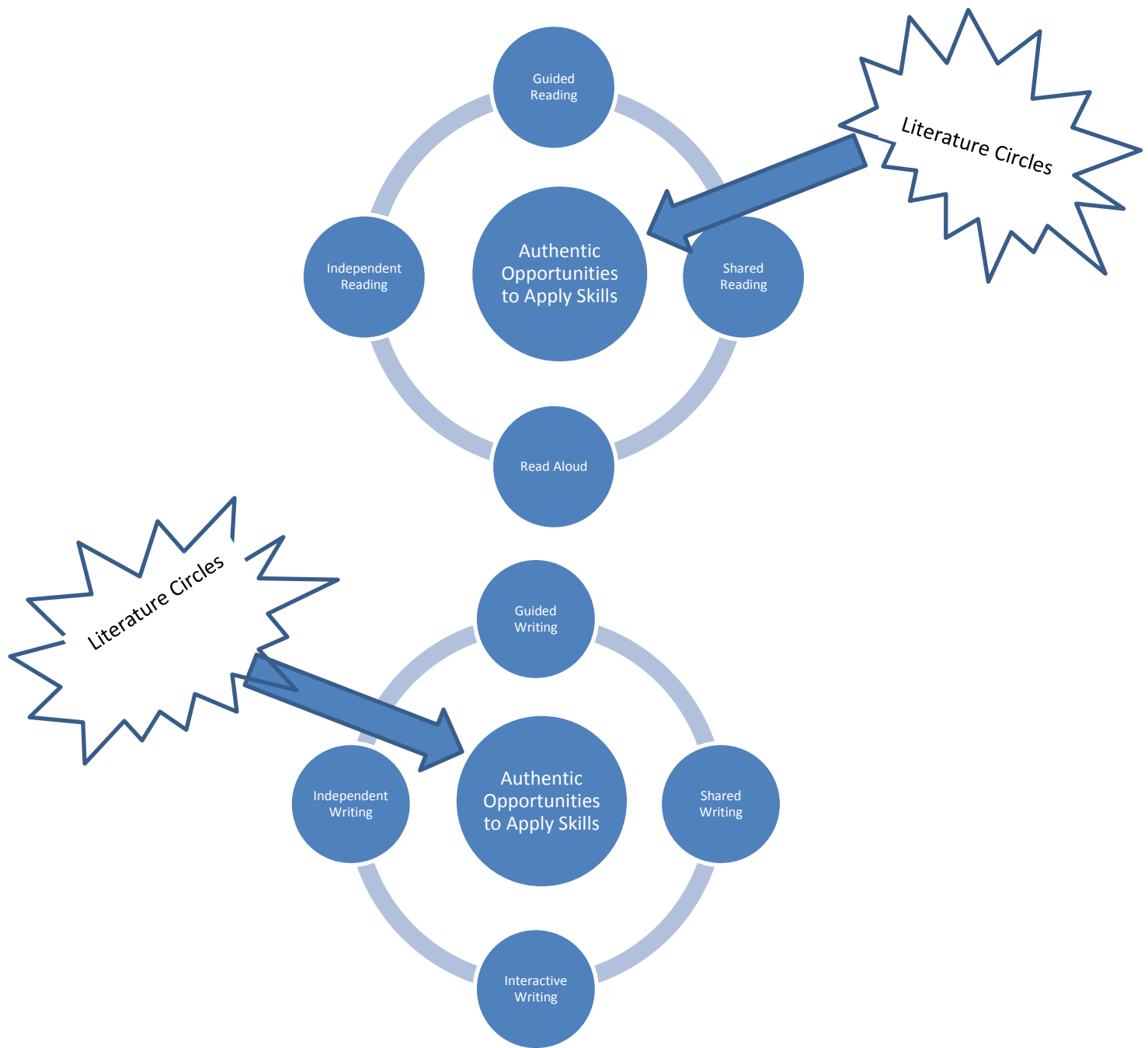
Adapted from *Literature Circles: Voice and Choice in Book Clubs and Reading Groups*
by Harvey Daniels

Sentence Starters That Frame How Readers Discuss, Interpret, and Write About Text

Applying Comprehension Strategies	Taking a Position
<p>Predicting: I predict that _____ If x happens then _____ Because x did y, I expect _____ I'm wondering if x _____</p> <p>Connecting: X reminds me of _____ X is similar to y because _____ X is important to y because _____</p> <p>Inferring: X is _____ so this means _____ Earlier, we learned _____, so this suggests _____ X causes Y as a result of _____, which demonstrates _____</p> <p>Summarizing: The main idea is _____ The author's point of view is _____ The author's purpose is to _____ We read this because _____</p> <p>Evaluating: The point made is valid/invalid because _____ The strengths of this piece are _____ The text/author does not do a good job of _____ What's most important about this is _____</p> <p>Analyzing the Text: The author uses _____ for the purpose of _____ The author assumes _____ and I agree/disagree _____ These particular features of the text clarify/convolute meaning _____</p> <p>Clarifying: This is what the author is really saying _____ Given that _____ happened, the author is trying to _____ X is not _____ but is instead _____</p> <p>Synthesizing: These factors suggest _____ Initially, we/I thought _____, but after learning _____, I now think _____ It's not a question of x but rather of y because _____</p>	<p>Agreeing: Most will agree that _____ because _____ I agree with the suggestion that _____ and this evidence supports that as well.</p> <p>Disagreeing: I would challenge x's point about y because _____ I would argue that _____ because _____ X claims y, but we've learned that _____ so _____ While x suggests y, this evidence disproves that _____</p> <p>Agreeing and Disagreeing: I agree that _____ I challenge y because _____ I share x's belief that _____ but question _____ because _____ I agree with _____ but question how that belief helps us resolve _____</p> <p>Arguing to Enlighten: X is happening, but it is not y but z that is causing it to happen. While x is true, I would argue y, because of z. Previously, we understood x to be the most important factor, but y has changed, having this effect _____. I'm noticing this relationship _____ which changes previous notions about _____.</p> <p>Provoking Action: We've learned x, so we must do _____ In order to do y, we must learn more about x. We used to think x, but now we realize y. Let's plan how we will use this information to do z.</p>

Adapted from the work of Burke, Land, Olson, Graff, and Birkenstein

Where Do Lit Circles Fit Within a Comprehensive Literacy Program?



Considerations for Comprehensive Literacy Unit Design

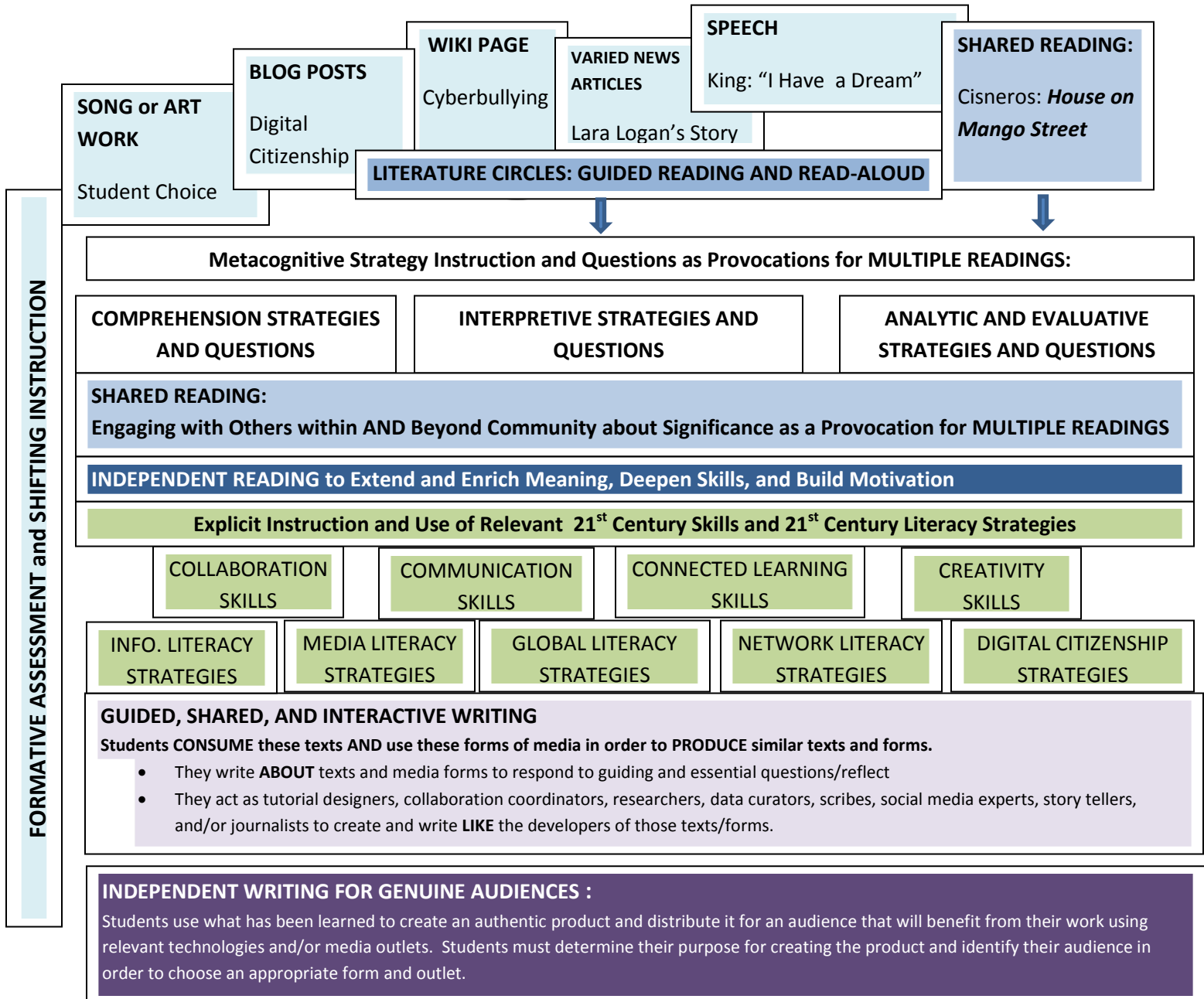
Reading/Writing Opportunities Identified Within Model Provided	Traditional Practice	21 st Century Practice
Guided Reading		
Shared Reading		
Read Aloud		
Independent Reading		
Guided Writing		
Shared Writing		
Interactive Writing		
Independent Writing		

Sample 8 Week Unit Framework for a Secondary Level English Class

ORGANIZING CENTER: THEME--OVERCOMING ADVERSITY

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS THAT STUDENTS MUST ENGAGE IN INQUIRY AROUND= CONTENT+21ST CENTURY SKILLS

1. How do we overcome adversity ourselves, and how do we help others overcome it?
2. How do weak literacy skills contribute to adversity?
3. How can critical thinking, research, reading and writing skills help us overcome adversity?
4. What do good citizens do? What do good digital citizens do? How does positive citizenship allow us to overcome adversity? How does poor citizenship contribute to adversity?



Drafting a Literacy Unit that Integrates Literature Circles

Unit Framework

RATIONALE:

What is the Organizing Center of this Unit?

Measurable Targets/Outcomes (Attend to Comprehension and Support Literacy While Exploring Content):

Essential Questions That Students Must Engage in Inquiry Around:

Alignment of Reading/Writing Assessment Moments and Resources

MOMENT	SKILLS TO ASSESS (ALIGN TO CCLS)	RESOURCES
GUIDED READING		
SHARED READING		
READ ALOUD		
INDEPENDENT READING		
GUIDED READING		
SHARED READING		
READ ALOUD		
INDEPENDENT READING		

Which 21st Century Literacy Skills and Strategies Will Learners Use?

What Will They Create and Produce for Authentic Audiences? How May These be Used as Summative Assessments?

What Will Each Circle Read? How Can You Attend to Their Unique Needs?

What Roles Will Learners Perform? Which 21st Century Skills Will be Assessed?

ROLE	DESCRIPTION	ASSESSMENT TYPE: Formative or Summative

What Will Learners Produce? What 21st Century Skills Will be Assessed?

PRODUCT:	SKILLS ASSESSED:	ASSESSMENT TYPE: Formative or Summative

How Will Learners Practice Comprehension, Interpretation, Analysis and Evaluation?

Brainstorming Important Mini-Lessons

PROCEDURAL	LITERARY

LITERATURE CIRCLE LEADERS IN THE 21ST CENTURY: Beyond the Packet: Rotating Varied Roles

Assigning each learner a specific role to perform has been a defining feature of traditional literature circles. Now, our capacity to connect challenges us to consider the potential of these positions.

ROLE	RESPONSIBILITIES	POTENTIAL TOOLS
Text Connector	Identifying and sharing text-to-text, text-to-self, and text-to-world connections.	
Questioner	Constructing a variety of questions to facilitate discussion with	
Literary Luminary	Returning to memorable and important parts of the text to facilitate rereading and deeper consideration	
Illustrator	Creating nonlinguistic representations of critical components of the text	
Summarizer	Summarizing the text read	
Researcher	Investigating literary criticism, critical components of the text, the author, the style, or the time period to enrich meaning	
Word Wizard	Investigating the meaning of challenging words, and using a variety of rich, sophisticated terms to describe what has been read	
Travel Tracer or Scene Setter	Documenting the setting as it evolves or shifts over time	
Scribe	Documents findings from conversations, research, and collaboration in order to share with others	
Collaboration Creator	Facilitating collaborative learning opportunities between those in the lit circle and others beyond it, using various tech tools	
Tutorial Designer	Designing tutorials and sharing models/examples of lit circles in action, so that others might learn from them	
Critical Friend	Facilitating self and peer evaluation, providing feedback, and helping individuals and groups set goals to improve	

References:

The unit framework and roles for literature circle leaders in the 21st century were influenced by these thinkers and their varied works:

Harvey Daniels, 2002

Ellin Oliver Keene and Cris Tovani, 2008

Anthony Petrosky, University of Pittsburgh, 2007

Dr. Giselle O. Martin-Kniep and Joanne Picone-Zocchia, 2010

Silvia Tolisano, 2011

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