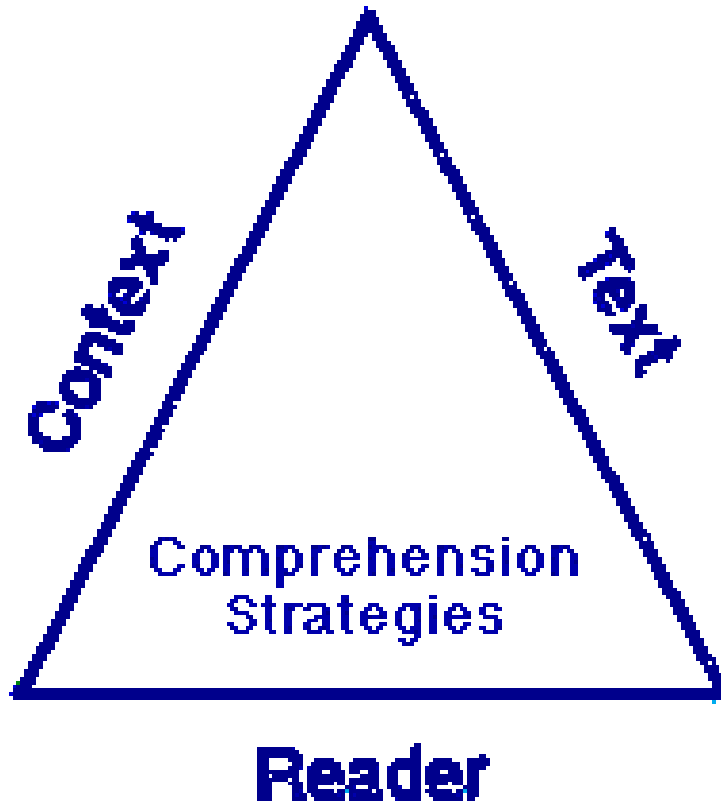


Another Tool for Your Toolbox: Literature Circles

**Presented by Suzanne
Porath**

**American School of
Brasilia, Brazil**

What do we know about reading?



Comprehension results from an interaction among the reader, the strategies the reader employs, the material being read, and the context in which reading takes place.

Reader constructs meaning

- Meaning is not in the words on the page. The reader **constructs meaning** by making inferences and interpretations.



Prior Knowledge



- Reading researchers believe that information is stored in long-term memory in organized "knowledge structures." The essence of learning is **linking new information to prior knowledge about the topic**, the text structure or genre, and strategies for learning.

Metacognition



- How well a reader constructs knowledge depends in part on metacognition, **the reader's ability to think about and control the learning process** (i.e., to plan, monitor comprehension, and revise the use of strategies and comprehension); and attributions or beliefs about the relationship among performance, effort, and responsibility.

Reading and writing are integrally related

- That is, reading and writing have many characteristics in common. Readers increase their comprehension by writing, and reading about the topic improves writing performance.



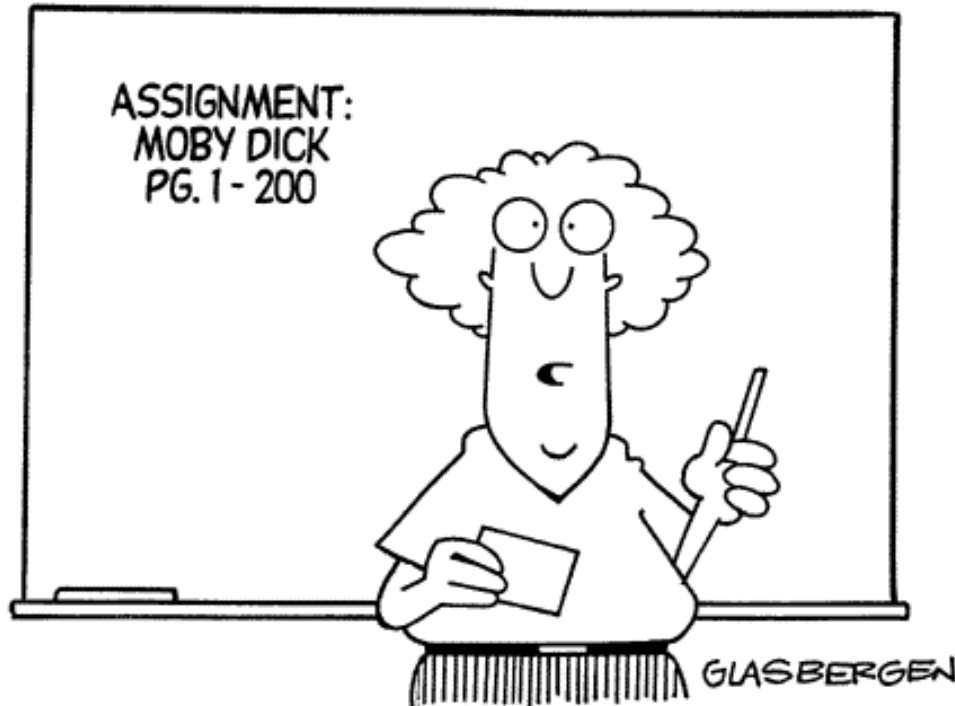
Collaborative Learning



- A powerful approach for teaching and learning. The goal of **collaborative learning** is to establish a community of learners in which students are able to generate questions and discuss ideas freely with the teacher and each other. Students often engage in teaching roles to help other students learn and to take responsibility for learning. This approach involves new roles for teachers.

Part 1 - What are Literature Circles?





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“I don’t like to give a lot of homework over the weekend, so just read every other word.”

To quote Harvey Daniels, a major proponent of literature circles, the authentic and mature literature circles will have most or all of the following key features:




Key features:

-  Students **choose** their own reading materials.
-  **Small temporary groups** are formed, based on book choice.
-  Different groups read **different books.**
-  Groups meet on a **regular, predictable schedule** to discuss their reading.



Key features continued:

-  Kids use written or drawn **notes** to guide both their reading and discussion.
-  Discussion topics **come from the students.**
-  Group meetings aim to be **open, natural conversations about books,** so personal connections, digressions, and open-ended questions are welcome.

Key features continued:







-  In newly formed groups, students may play a rotating assortment of **roles**.
-  The teacher serves as a **facilitator**, not a group member or instructor.
-  Evaluation is by **teacher observation and student self-evaluation**.

Key features continued.

-  A spirit of **playfulness and fun** pervades the room.
-  When books are finished, **readers share with their classmates**, and then **new groups form** about new reading choices.

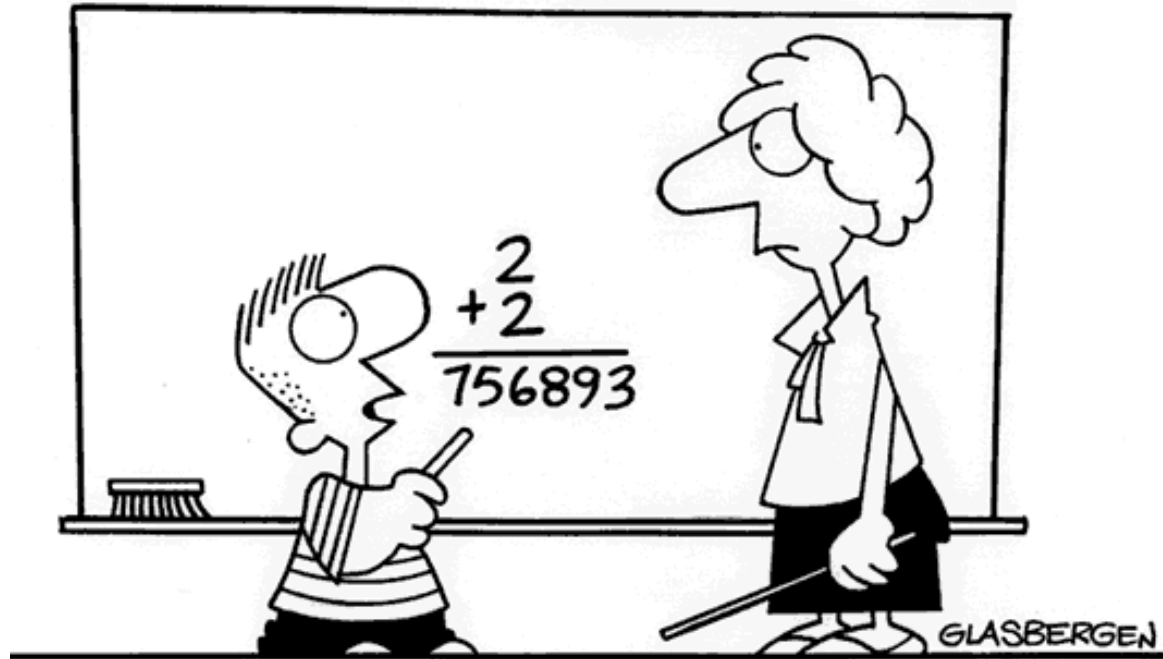


Why use Literature Circles?

-  Encourages in-depth reading and understanding of texts
-  Student centered learning
-  Promotes reflection and self-assessment
-  Provides guided social interaction
-  Presents multiple viewpoints
-  Creates different opportunities for responding to text

Part 2 - The Main Roles

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**“In an increasingly complex world,
sometimes old questions require new answers.”**

DISCUSSION DIRECTOR

Ask comprehension and higher level discussion questions; lead discussion



Teacher directed questions



What do you think about _____?



How is _____ different/like _____?



How did you feel about _____?



What do you think caused _____?







What might have happened if _____?

LITERARY LIMINARY



Pick passages to read aloud and discuss because the scene was:

-  Important, surprising, funny
-  Well written with vivid description
-  Changed the mood
-  Highlighted some techniques of writing - simile, flashback, etc.

VOCABULARY ENRICHER

Find important words or phrases that are:



Unknown



Important to understanding the plot



Unusual slang or use of a word



Defines and explains vocabulary

CONNECTOR



Find connections between the reading and the world.



Your life



Other readings



Movies, music, or TV



The real world

ILLUSTRATOR

Draw a picture of an important scene.



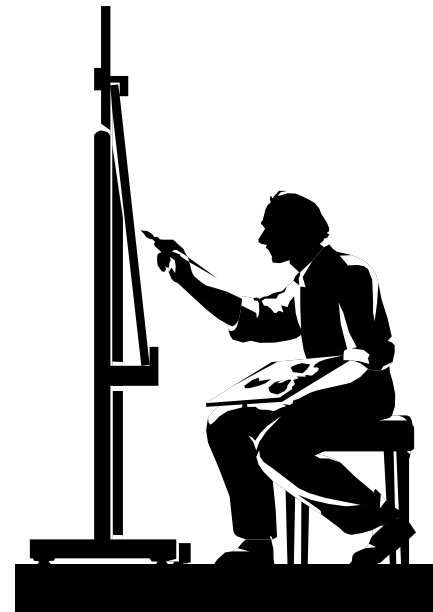
Sketch



Diagram or flow chart



Comic strip



SUMMARIZER

Give a brief summary of the reading.



Other Roles



- Fiction
- Nonfiction

Part 3 - Your Turn



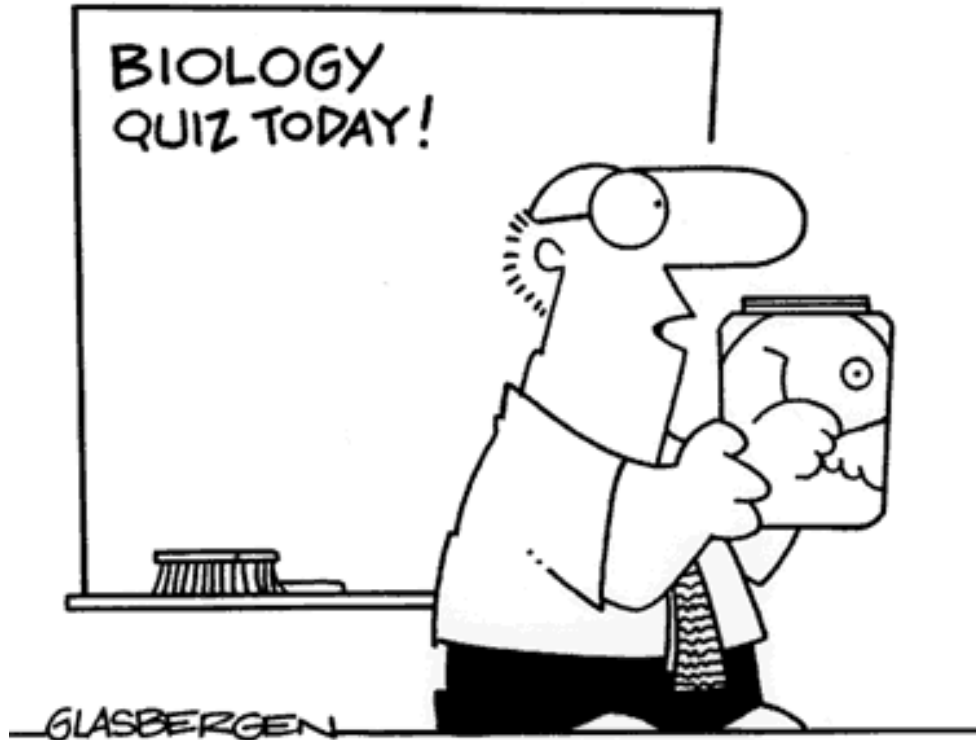
Next Instructions:



- ☺ Take a role sheet.
- ☺ Note the number on the top right.
That's your group.
- ☺ Read the short story and take notes on the role sheet.
- ☺ In about 15 minutes, meet in your groups to discuss the story.
- ☺ Remember to introduce yourself in your groups.

Part 4 - Evaluation

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**“Class, who can tell me what I have preserved in this jar?
No, it’s not a pig or a baby cow...it’s the last student
who got caught cheating on one of my tests!”**

Two Types

😊 Teacher

😊 Student



Teacher Assessment



- ◆ Informal conferences with students
- ◆ Observation of groups
 - ◆ 3 forms in packet
- ◆ Role sheets/response logs
- ◆ Projects

Student Evaluation



- ✦ Self-evaluation - many forms
- ✦ Group evaluation

Possible Grading System

Performance Assessment Scale

	Trait	Source of Data
40%	Productivity Quantity of reading Preparation for discussion Contributions to group	Daily role sheets Teacher observation
40%	Growth Variety of books, authors, genres Explanations and interpretations Use of input from peers/teacher Application of new skills and insights to next book Response expressed in projects	Daily role sheets Conferences Teacher observations Artifacts Projects
20%	Quality of Reading Difficulty of texts read Level of thinking shown Leadership in group sessions Sophistication of projects	Teacher observation Conferences Artifacts* Portfolios**

*Artifacts are student role sheets and student journals.

** A compilation of student work.

Adapted from Literature Circles: Voice and Choice in the Student-Centered Classroom. Stenhouse Publishers, York ME, 1994 Published in Canada by Pembroke Publishers, Markham, ON 1994.

Scheduling



- A two - four week course
- Every Monday/ Friday
- Once a week

Leaving the roles behind - Response Logs

Book Projects

Thank you for attending. I hope you try using literature circles in your classroom. If you have questions, please email me at suzanne@theporaths.com