MTI 516 – Best Practice Reading Strategy: Literature Circles in the K-12 Classroom

Credits: 3 hours from Calumet College of St. Joseph
Calumet College of St. Joseph is an independent co-educational, liberal arts institution, fully accredited by the Higher Learning Commission, a member of the North Central Association. CCSJ is accredited to offer master's, baccalaureate and associate's degrees, certificates, and diplomas by the Higher Learning Commission, a member of North Central Association (NCA) 30 N. LaSalle St., Chicago, IL 60602-2504, (800) 621-7440. CCSJ is also Accredited By The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP).

Grades: K-12

Please include the following information in bold on the cover page when you turn your work in:
Last Name___________________  First Name___________________
Home Address______________________________________________
Email Address____________________________________  Grade/Subject Taught________
School District Name_________________________________________  City________________  State_____
Name of Class_________________________________________  Date Turned In____________

Credit Limits:
All students taking graduate courses through Midwest Teachers Institute are limited to the following maximum number of classes:
Fall Semester 9 credit hours
Spring Semester 9 credit hours
Summer Semester 12 credit hours
Total maximum for year 30 credit hours

Requirements for Taking Courses through Midwest Teachers Institute
All MTI courses are designed for educators who have a minimum of a bachelor’s degree. Prior to beginning the course, check with your district office to ensure that credit will be accepted for salary increase and professional development.

Course Description
Best Practice Reading Strategies: Literature Circles is designed to assist teachers in developing, facilitating, and assessing Literature Circles in K-12 classrooms. The application of Literature Circles can
span a wide spectrum of content areas, and can be easily hybridized to fit each individual teacher’s needs or desires. The goal is to help teachers foster student-led book clubs in their own classrooms that are based on student interest and choice. These peer-led book discussion groups can also help motivate students to read, learn, and collaborate with one another.

**Compliance with National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS)**

NBPTS standards represent the highest level of professional achievement in the continuum of teacher professional development. There are five core principles (standards), which cover five aspects of professional educational practice: (1) commitment to students and their learning, (2) knowledge of subject matter and instructional strategies, (3) management and monitoring of student learning, (4) systematic reflection about the teaching profession to learn and grow from experience, and (5) collaborative participation in the educational learning community. This course is in compliance with all of the 5 NBPTS Core Propositions.

**Course Objectives**

Following the completion of this course, the Educator will be able to:

1. Identify the essential components of genuine, peer-led discussion groups.
2. Engage mini-lessons that encourage productivity and literary understanding.
4. Design and adapt assessments and grading procedures of Literature Circles.
5. Understand and implement student-led book clubs throughout multiple grade levels.

**Required Reading**


**Formatting Requirements**

1. All assignments must be completed and returned in the same order as they appear in the course packet.
2. All work must be completed. Any work left incomplete will be returned and will not receive a grade.
3. All completed coursework must be turned in via internet attachments. Please name your attachment with your course number and your full name (ex. 100JohnSmith) and submit it as a Microsoft Word document. Please submit all work to grades@midwestteachersinstitute.org

4. **Due Dates:** (These are the latest you can turn in your coursework and receive credit. Extensions are available upon request)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Range</th>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Credit Hours</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 13th - December 15th</td>
<td>Fall Semester</td>
<td>9 credit hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1st - May 5th</td>
<td>Spring Semester</td>
<td>9 credit hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 7th-August 12th</td>
<td>Summer Semester</td>
<td>12 credit hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Total maximum for a calendar school year = 30 credit hours

**Grading**

The total grade will be determined by adding the points from the following 5 categories:

- Text questions: 90 points
Quiz questions            20 points  
Applications/projects     90 points  
Evaluation                100 points  
Total                     300 points  

The grading scale for the final grade is:
100-90% A  300-270 total points
89-80%  B  269-239 total points
(Anything resulting in fewer than 239 points will not receive credit.)

Text question rubric:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Superior (3 pts)</th>
<th>Sufficient (2 pts)</th>
<th>Minimal (1 pt)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supporting Evidence in Practice ____/3</td>
<td>Response shows strong evidence of ideas and insights from this course and how they are applied to the classroom.</td>
<td>Response shows evidence of ideas and insights from this course and how they are applied to the classroom.</td>
<td>Response shows some evidence of ideas and insights from this course and how they are applied to the classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accuracy ____/3</td>
<td>All supporting facts and statistics are accurately represented.</td>
<td>Almost all supporting facts and statistics are accurately represented.</td>
<td>Some of the supporting facts and statistics are accurately represented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar and Spelling ____/3</td>
<td>Response includes 0-1 mistakes in grammar or spelling.</td>
<td>Response includes a few grammar and spelling mistakes.</td>
<td>Response includes several grammar and spelling mistakes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Application rubric:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Superior (15-13 pts)</th>
<th>Sufficient (12-10 pts)</th>
<th>Minimal (9-7 pts)</th>
<th>Below Standard (6-4 pts)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding of web tool ____/40</td>
<td>Response shows strong understanding of the web tool and is utilized to maximize student learning</td>
<td>Response shows adequate understanding of the web tool and will benefit student learning</td>
<td>Response shows some understanding of web tool but may not benefit student learning</td>
<td>Response shows little understanding of web tool and may not benefit student learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task Completion ____/40</td>
<td>All tasks are completed and are thoughtful and meaningful.</td>
<td>All tasks are completed but with minimal quality</td>
<td>Almost all tasks are completed.</td>
<td>A few tasks were not completed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar and Spelling ____/20</td>
<td>Response includes 0-1 mistakes in grammar or spelling.</td>
<td>Response includes a few grammar and spelling mistakes.</td>
<td>Response includes several grammar and spelling mistakes.</td>
<td>Response includes numerous grammar and spelling mistakes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Evaluation rubric:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Superior (20-17 pts)</th>
<th>Sufficient (16-13 pts)</th>
<th>Minimal (12-9 pts)</th>
<th>Below Standard (8 pts)</th>
</tr>
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TEXT QUESTIONS

As you read the text, complete the following questions. Some of the responses may be answered in 1-2 sentences. However, most questions require 1-2 paragraphs (9 points each).

Chapter 1 - Daniels (2002) describes Literature Circles as discussion groups that are small, and most importantly, peer-led. “Members of these groups have chosen to read the same story, poem, article, or book. While reading each group-assigned portion of the text (either in or outside of class), members make notes to help them contribute to the upcoming discussion, and everyone comes to the group with ideas to share” (p. 2). Has there ever been a time where you’ve facilitated this type of learning in your classroom? If so, describe the scenario.

Chapter 1 - A major feature of past Literature Circles was “role sheets” and their coinciding “role assignments.” These simple tools and role assignments gave book club members temporary jobs and some brief direction. Daniels and other educators feel the role sheets may now be outdated. Do you agree with his assertion? Why or why not?

Chapter 2 - Literature Circles have been around for some time. However, Daniels postulates that his “official” eleven-point definition applies to authentic, mature Literature Circles. Have you already incorporated any of these key ingredients in your classroom? If so, which ingredients and how have you

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<th>Response shows little evidence of ideas and insights from this course and there is little evidence they are applied to the classroom.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accuracy</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar and Spelling</td>
<td>Response includes 0-1 mistakes in grammar or spelling.</td>
<td>Response includes a few grammar and spelling mistakes.</td>
<td>Response includes several grammar and spelling mistakes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logical Sequencing</td>
<td>Response is written in a clear, concise, and well organized manner. Thoughts are presented in a coherent and logical manner.</td>
<td>Response is mostly clear, concise, and well organized. Thoughts are presented in a coherent and logical manner.</td>
<td>Response is somewhat unclear and/or disorganized. Some thoughts are presented in a coherent and logical manner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>Response demonstrates an in-depth reflection on, and personalization of, the theories, concepts, and/or strategies presented in this course.</td>
<td>Response demonstrates some reflection on, and personalization of, the theories, concepts, and/or strategies presented in this course.</td>
<td>Response demonstrates a minimal reflection on, and personalization of, the theories, concepts, and/or strategies presented in this course.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
incorporated them? If not, provide some insight as to how you can begin incorporating them into your classroom.

Chapter 5 – Daniels asserts that a really good classroom idea is not tied to a certain grade level. That being said, which of the four versions of Literature Circle trainings do you think would best suit your classroom and your students’ needs? Explain.

Chapter 6 – Considering student choice is a major part of contemporary Literature Circles, do you think you would allow your students to choose their Literature Circle books? Why or why not?

Chapter 6 – Some teachers express concern that Literature Circles may not always fit into their district’s curriculum. If Literature Circle cycles are scheduled correctly, they can be integrated into any curriculum, during any unit, using almost any reading material. How would you fit Literature Circles into your classroom routine and into your district’s curriculum? Draft a schedule and explain how Literature Circles would be a part of your classroom.

Chapter 8 – Daniels lists some of the main differences for the primary-grade application of Literature Circles. List and describe the major differences you feel would be essential for operating Literature Circles in the primary grades.

Chapters 9 and 10 – In chapters 9 and 10, Daniels describes how Literature Circles can be hybridized for the intermediate grades and for middle and high school. Choose either the intermediate-grade application (Ch. 9) or the middle and high school application (Ch. 10) and describe what you feel are the most important aspects of that specific application.

Chapter 12 – Daniels suggests that assessment is probably one of the most unnatural aspects of Literature Circles. Literature Circles are intended to be very similar to adult books clubs, which people engage because they love to read, not for a grade. However, as teachers, we know assessment is important, especially when determining what students have learned and when considering what to do if they have not learned. After analyzing Daniels’ “Principles of Constructive Assessment” and his suggestions for assessments to coincide with Literature Circles, which type of assessment do you think you would utilize? Why?

Chapter 13 – With the shift to Common Core, there seems to be more emphasis on nonfiction reading. Daniels states that the Literature Circle approach is not just for fiction reading in language arts classes. He further says that Literature Circles can definitely be adapted for instruction in science or social studies classes. However, using traditional textbooks would not be the best approach. How can different content area teachers adapt Literature Circles into their classrooms and their instruction?
QUIZ

Use the information gathered from the readings to answer the following multiple choice and true or false questions (2 points each).

1. Chapter 1 – All of the following are problems or difficulties associated with Literature Circles EXCEPT:
   a. Garnering student interest and engagement
   b. Assessment
   c. Terminology Drift
   d. The Joy and Jeopardy of Role Sheets

2. Chapter 2 – True or false: Literature Circle groups are formed around several people’s desire to read the same book or article – not by reading level, ability grouping, teacher assignment, or curriculum mandate.

3. Chapter 2 - Which of the following is NOT an aspect of Fountas and Pinnell’s primary grades “balanced” reading program:
   a. Reading aloud
   b. Independent reading (kids on their own)
   c. Small group instruction using a basal reader
   d. Shared writing (teacher scribe)

4. Chapter 3 - Collaborative learning draws heavily on a well-developed field of study called group dynamics. In regards to group dynamics, or any school classroom for that matter, there are certain predictable and controllable elements in the development of highly productive groups. Which of the following elements is NOT an element in Schmuck and Schmuck’s (2000) development of mature, interdependent, productive groups:
   a. Clear expectations and mutually developed norms
   b. Open channels of communication and conflict resolution mechanisms
   c. Diverse friendship patterns
   d. Assignment of roles such as “the mediator”

5. Chapter 5 – True or false: Whatever the grade level, good literature circle training has the same key steps.

6. Chapter 5 – According to Daniels, all of the following are training variations and suggestions for Literature Circle implementation EXCEPT:
   a. Have older kids teach younger ones
   b. Regardless of age, younger kids can help teach older kids too
   c. Have kids visit a classroom in which lit circles are working well
   d. Use fishbowl demonstrations for training and problem solving. Ask one lit circle to hold its discussion in the middle of the room while everyone else observes
   e. None of the above

7. Chapter 6 – In literary mini-lessons, we draw students’ attention to elements of authors’ craft, usually focusing on broad elements that reach across the different books that kids are reading. Daniels suggests all of the following as LITERARY mini-lessons EXCEPT:
   a. How do authors hook us on the first page
   b. What does “believable” dialogue sound like
   c. What makes a good book title
   d. How to create a self-assessment rubric
8. Chapter 7 – True or false: Regarding “role sheets,” the goal of these support tools is to make these tools obsolete.
9. Chapter 7 – When teachers select sets of books for Literature Circles, they must consider:
   a. Topics
   b. Authors
   c. Interests
   d. Reading levels
   e. All of the above
10. Chapter 12 – For assessment to be sound and authentic, teachers must consider:
   a. Assessment should reflect and encourage good instruction
   b. Most school assessment activities should be formative
   c. Traditional norm-referenced, competitive measures that rank students against one another provide little helpful formative assessment and tend to undermine progressive instruction
   d. The best assessment activities are actually integral parts of instruction
   e. All of the above

APPLICATIONS

Choose 2 of the 3 applications to answer (45 points each, 90 points total).

Application #1
Mini-lesson and conclusion project (p. 86)
Daniels posits that the typical time distribution for Literature Circles might consist of the following:
   5 minutes – mini-lesson
   20-30 minutes – group meetings (and/or reading time)
   5-10 minutes – conclusion/sharing/debriefing
Develop a mini-lesson you would present before setting your students free to meet as a group or before providing them reading time. The mini-lesson could be procedural or literary. Some examples of mini-lessons include “How to select books that are right for you,” “Things that can be included in a Response Log,” and “The main ingredients of a mystery.” In addition, develop a conclusion/sharing out/debriefing to wrap up the lesson.

Application #2
Assessment (p. 185)
In Chapter 12, Daniels provides a list of “Principles of Constructive Assessment,” and then a list of multiple assessment types you can utilize in Literature Circles. Develop a new type of assessment for Literature Circles that encompasses all of Daniels’ “Principles of Constructive Assessment.” What would the assessment be called? What would it assess? What would it look like? Why would it be beneficial for students? How do you know if the assessment is encompassing all of Daniels’ “Principles of Constructive Assessment?”

Application #3
Nonfiction Literature Circles (p. 200)
For a good portion of the class, the focus has been mainly on fiction. However, as Daniels states, Literature Circles can be used with nonfiction as well. Develop a lesson using nonfiction material. What
type of nonfiction reading material would you use? What would the instructional outcome of the lesson be (what do you want students to come away with)? Would you use a special instructional approach to help students accomplish the objectives (i.e. Jigsawing, read alouds, etc.)? What would the mini-lesson look like? What would the conclusion/sharing/debriefing look like?

**EVALUATION/REFLECTION** (100 points)

Choose one of the two assignments for your final assessment.

Find an article from a scholarly journal (Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy, International Reading Association, etc.) that pertains to Literature Circles/Literacy Circles/Student-Led Book Clubs. You must cite the article you use for this assignment in a “References” page at the end of the project. Once you have finished reading the article, complete one of the following activities (100 points):

1.) Develop a Power Point or Prezi presentation you would utilize during a professional development session to inform your peers about Literature Circles. In the presentation, explain why Literature Circles are effective, some ways to initiate Literature Circles in the classroom, how to develop a schedule for Literature Circles so they can fit in with the district’s curriculum mandates, and ways to assess Literature Circles. Use evidence from the article and the book to support your presentation.

2.) Create a plan and presentation for sharing Literature Circles with parents of the students in your classroom. Provide parents with information regarding Literature Circles, why they are effective, the role of students in Literature Circles, how their child will be assessed, how they could help at home, and inviting them to come and see Literature Circles working in your classroom. Use the article and the book to help support your usage of Literature Circles in the classroom.

**END OF COURSE SURVEY**

Now that you are finished with your class, please take the time to help us improve. In order to make sure that we are providing the best possible service, please go to: [http://www.midwestteachersinstitute.org/course_survey_12.html](http://www.midwestteachersinstitute.org/course_survey_12.html). Take the course survey, which is required for you to receive your grade. We at MTI appreciate and value your feedback.