



Differentiation Strategies for High-End Learners:  
A Response to Instruction

# LITERATURE CIRCLES

# Literature Circles: Pre-assessment

## What are Literature Circles?

Literature Circles are small groups of students who discuss a common work. Most of the time, students read the same book, but different books, authors, or books that share similar themes can also be used.



# Literature Circles

## Pre-Assessment

- When are literature circles appropriate?

C. During regular instruction, Language Arts, English, Social Studies, or any time a work of literature is part of study.



# Literature Circles

## Pre-assessment

Which students should participate in literature circles?

A. All students should participate as long as the literature circles are at an appropriate challenge level and the students have the appropriate reading readiness.



# Literature Circles Pre-assessment


Literature circles should be used only as extra assignments after all of the skills lessons have been mastered.

- A. TRUE
- B. FALSE
- C. DON'T KNOW






# Literature Circles

- Why are literature circles beneficial?
    - Require interaction with real literature
    - Elevate student engagement
    - Provide appropriate challenge through added depth and complexity
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# Literature Circles

- Promote student choice
  - Encourage student ownership of their learning.
  - Compel students to think about their thinking (metacognition)
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# Literature Circles

- Meet the special needs of gifted students

- Depth
- Complexity
- Acceleration
- Opportunities to express creativity






# Fascinating Fact

Up to three-fourths of high-end learners are visual-spatial and learn best when material is presented holistically.





# Literature Circles

- Therefore:
    - Reading skills instruction for these students may be most effective when embedded in the literature rather than taught in isolation.
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# Another fascinating fact:

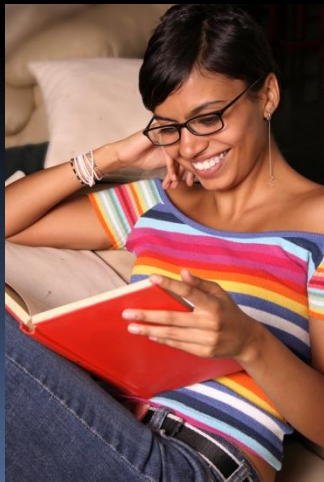
- Gifted readers may enter a Language Arts/Literature class already knowing 50% or more of the skills you will teach, or they can learn them in 1-3 repetitions.





*"Gifted readers don't need to learn to read. They read to learn."*

*P. F. Wood*





- How do I begin?
  - Model the technique for students
    - Invite parents or other teachers to engage in interactive book discussion
    - Students circle around adults and take notes
    - Together, students and teacher debrief, making observations of the interactions

# Literature Circles

## BEFORE



- *Teacher*
  - *Makes book talk to "hook" students on a book of their choosing. Choose Books at challenge level (skill or reasoning)*
  - *Make up rules for discussion (include students)*
  - *Post rules for group discussion*
  - *Prepare 2-3 main questions for discussion and possible follow-up & probing questions*
  - *Teach skills mini-lesson if desired*
  - *Assign pages or chapters to be read*

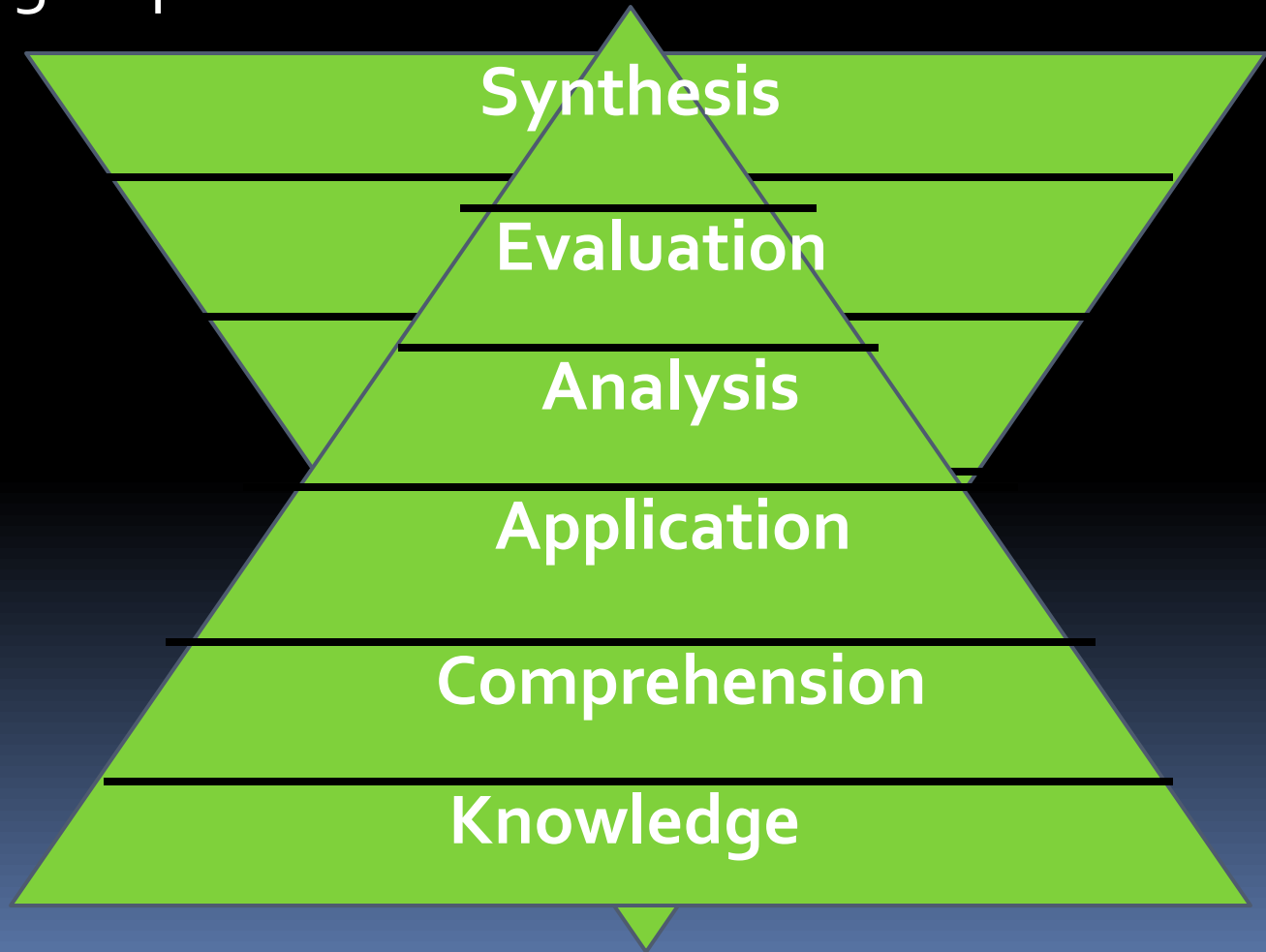
# Literature Circles

- Constructing Thoughtful Questions
  - Make questions open-ended
  - Encourage Shared Inquiry
  - Use higher levels of Bloom's
  - Include textual references



# Literature Circles

Thought questions should come from:





# Literature Circles

- BEFORE

- Students

- Choose book
- Choose reading partner (Optional)
- Gather materials
  - Book
  - Reading Reflection Journals
  - Sticky Notes



# Literature Circles



## DURING READING

- Students
  - Apply mini-lesson skill while reading, if applicable
  - Record thoughts and jot questions in reading reflection journals as they read.
  - Mark important passages with sticky notes
  
- *"To read without reflecting is like eating without digesting."* Edmund Burke



# Literature Circles

- AFTER READING
- Students
  - Complete pre-discussion assignments in preparation for discussion.
  - Vocabulary work
  - Respond to skill work (If applicable)
  - Re-read, if necessary
  - Come to circle prepared to discuss


# Literature Circles

- DURING DISCUSSION
- Teacher
  - Gathers participants in circle
  - Reviews discussion rules with students
  - Posts first discussion question
  - FACILITATES discussion by asking probing or follow-up questions

**Does not participate actively in discussion**




# Literature Circles

- DURING DISCUSSION
  - Students
    - Discuss one question until all are satisfied
    - Listen actively to one another
    - Respond to one another – NOT THE TEACHER
    - Pose follow-up or clarifying questions to the speaker
    - Make text to text, text to self, text to world connections
    - Provide evidence for their responses
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# Literature Circles

- AFTER CIRCLE DISCUSSION
    - Teacher led debrief
    - Writing connection Assignment
    - Creative response
      - Book “advertisement”
      - Book Talk
      - Character study
      - Act out important scene
      - Change ending of story
      - Comic Strip or illustration about most crucial scene
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# Literature Circles

- How do I grade students?
  - Rubrics (<http://www.rubistar.com>)
    - Self reflective
    - Students rate each other
    - Anecdotal teacher notes during discussions
    - Student-teacher conferences, if time
    - Individual response to reading after discussion through writing, creative production, or authentic product.

# Literature Circles

## Non-negotiables

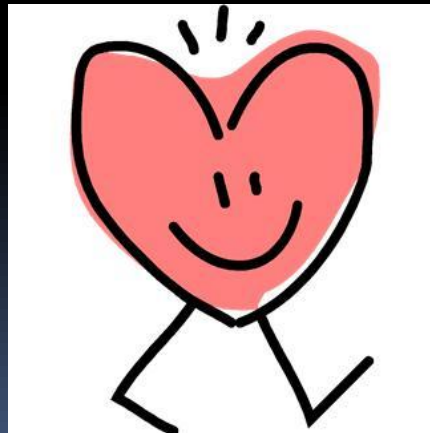
- ✓ Teacher acts as facilitator-NOT participant
- ✓ Students are active listeners, and treat each other with respect at all times.
- ✓ Group participants interact with one another- NOT the teacher



# Literature Circles

*We shouldn't teach great books; we should teach a love of reading.*

B. F. Skinner



What are YOUR ideas for how to include literature circles in your classroom?




# Literature Circles

- Upload your lesson plan to the Moodle Class website.
- Elementary : <http://atim.cc/course/view.php?id=377>
- Secondary : <http://atim.cc/course/view.php?id=378>
- Teach the lesson
- Follow-Up:
  - Webinar to discuss the effectiveness of the lesson and how to continue improvement  
**Date: March 7, 2011**
  - WIKI to write a minimum of four paragraphs reflecting on the effectiveness of the lesson and how to continue improvement. In addition, post feedback to two other teacher postings.



# Bibliography

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