

**Using Non-Print Multi-Media Texts with Literature Circles**

by

Denise Sievert

A Thesis Proposal

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Science in Education

Department of Language, Learning and Leadership

At the State University of New York at Fredonia

Fredonia, New York

May 2013

State University of New York at Fredonia  
Department of Language, Learning & Leadership

CERTIFICATION OF PROJECT WORK

We, the undersigned, certify that this project entitled USING NON-PRINT MULTI-MEDIA TEXTS WITH LITERATURE CIRCLES by Denise Sievert, Candidate for the Degree of Master of Science in Education, Literacy, Birth to Grade 6, is acceptable in form and content and demonstrates a satisfactory knowledge of the field covered by this project.


Master's Project Advisor  
Anna M. Thibodeau, Ph.D.  
Department of Language, Learning & Leadership

6-18-2013

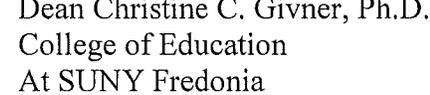
Date


Discipline Chairperson  
Anna M. Thibodeau, Ph.D.  
Department of Language, Learning & Leadership

6-18-2013

Date

Dean Christine C. Givner, Ph.D.  
College of Education  
At SUNY Fredonia

6/24/2013

Date

**USING NON-PRINT MULTI-MEDIA TEXTS  
WITH LITERATURE CIRCLES**

**ABSTRACT**

Common core standards require students to be taught with evidence based practices. This thesis and design of a professional development workshop will include the evidence based research that describes how the instructional practice of Literature Circles combined with non-print texts can be used to help students improve their comprehension skills. The thesis will also describe how Literature Circles can prepare learners for literacy tasks of the 21st century.

## Table of Contents

Abstract	1
Chapter 1 Introduction	4
Statement of Problem	
Background	
Terminology	
Rationale	
Chapter 2 Literature Review	10
Introduction to Review	
Literature Circles in General Education	
Common Core Standards	
Literature Circles with Learning Disabilities	
Literature Circles with English Language Learners	
Popular Culture	
Technology with Literacy	
Literature Circles with Technology	
Chapter 3 Methodology	28
Design of Professional Development Project	
Literacy Coaching Workshop Goals and Objectives	
Proposed Audience and Location	
Proposed Workshop Format and Activities	
Proposed Resources for Workshop	
Proposed Evaluation of Workshop	
Chapter 4: Application	35
Key Findings	

Workshop Goals and Objectives	
Proposed Audience and Location	
Proposed Format of the Workshop & Activities	
Proposed Evaluation of Workshop	
Professional Standards	
Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion	47
Overview of Study and Findings	
Significance of the Findings	
Limitations of the Findings	
The Answer to the Research Question	
Recommendations for Future Research	
References	51
Appendix A: Proposed workshop Agenda	54
Appendix B: Satisfaction Survey	55

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This thesis addresses a problem that is faced by teachers when incorporating multi-media texts into traditional, small group Literature Circles. It also explores the background and descriptions of various roles that are used within Literature Circles, terminology that is used throughout the thesis, and the rationale for the selected topic. Chapter 2 of this thesis includes a review of relevant studies that have already been completed and published in the professional literature of the discipline. These studies are grouped into subgroups and explained. Chapter 3 will analyze the findings from the literature review and apply them to a Professional Development Workshop for Elementary Teachers, specifically those teaching grades three- six. Chapter 4 is the application of the methodology. This will include the key findings, the goals and objectives, proposed audience, a detailed format of the workshop, resources that will be needed, the proposed evaluation plan, and conclude with an explanation of how the workshop relates to International Reading Association, the New York State Common Core Standards and the International Society for Technology in Education Standards. Finally, Chapter 5 concludes with the overview of the major findings from the project, and their significance to Literature education. This chapter will also discuss the limitations of the findings. The research question is answered in this chapter along with recommendations for further research.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The problem begins with the multiple types of text that teachers utilize to teach literacy. Traditionally teachers are using a paper print text such as a paperback novel. They then use that

text as a tool to teach students how to comprehend the main ideas of the text. Comprehension is a crucial part of literacy. If students do not comprehend what they are reading, then lack of comprehension becomes a crucial problem affecting all areas of their learning. If students cannot read the printed text or understand what the text is saying, how can students comprehend the intended message? The traditional paper text can be employed to teach comprehension skills; however, this thesis asserts that a non-print multi-media text can also be selected by the teacher to accomplish the same goal of teaching comprehension skills. These non-paper texts are texts that incorporate technology. If students were taught the same desired comprehension skills, will using a non-print multi-media text instead of paper have an impact on their comprehension?

This thesis explores the approach to teaching reading through the use of Literature Circles with different types of non-print multi-media texts. The research findings suggest that there is a difference between the comprehension of a literary paper text and a multi-media literary text in Literature Circles. The first topic in this thesis is what Literature Circles are and how they are utilized in the traditional classroom. Next, the discussion is of what multi-media texts are and how they can be implemented in the classroom. Finally, the thesis focuses on combining components of a literature circle with non- print texts and comparing the comprehension results with those obtained from a literature circle with the use of print based text to determine if or how the strategy can be integrated with non-print multi-media texts.

## **Background**

The topic of Literature Circles combined with multi-media texts is important to the field of literacy because in the traditional classroom, the incorporation of new technologies is

redefining reading, writing, and communication. Over the past twenty years, the use of Literature Circles as an approach to teaching reading of a print text has helped to develop students' critical thinking and overall comprehension (Blum, Lipsett, & Yocom, 2002). Using the Literature Circles help develop students to critically analyze a text. Incorporating non-print multi-media texts into the Literature Circles might allow the students to critique the authors' messages and create a message of their own. Ultimately, this will allow the students to use more technology.

Literature Circles can be a problem because they are not the traditional teacher-led reading instruction (Day & Ainley, 2008). However, structured and scripted reading programs such as Reading First have little room for the reading instructional strategy of Literature Circles. Effective Literature Circles need time for students to read the text as a group and time for the students to discuss the various roles. Therefore, including this approach into the curriculum is difficult when schools have a set reading program such as Reading First, because these programs are structured day to day with activities that are to teach the story and the focus skill of the week. The focus skills are the strategies of reading that are being utilized for the particular story.

If schools are using the programs that focus only on one skill for reading, they likely have little time or interest in using a literature circle that requires a large block of time. The Literature Circles allow students to use multiple strategies for comprehension, and therefore are more challenging to assess than an activity that uses just one strategy for comprehension.

## **Terminology**

The terminology used throughout the thesis to determine the effect of Literature Circles using non-print multi-media texts compared to using print based paper text includes “Literature Circles,” “non print texts,” “multi-media texts” and “comprehension”. The following paragraphs present detailed definitions which have been adapted from other sources.

**Literature Circles** are small peer-led discussions groups that discuss literary texts (Blum, Lipsett, & Yocom, 2002). Group members can consist of students in the class. Group members select the same text for everyone to read, and the students’ insights and exploration drive the discussions. Literature Circles are closely related to such terms as *book clubs*, *discussion groups*, and *reading groups*. These terms are used interchangeably throughout the thesis. The discussion group’s intent is to have the students take personal ownership of their reading. Discussions allow for them to construct meaning in an active and careful way (Daniels, 2002). Literature Circles can incorporate various roles for students to select, or the literature circle can be designed to be question based. The different roles within the literature circle vary for primary grade levels and middle grade levels. The roles for older readers consist of the *connector*, *questioner*, *literary luminary*, *illustrator*, *summarizer*, *researcher*, *word wizard*, and *scene setter* (Daniels, 2002). The *connector*’s job requires the students to make self to text, text to text references. The *questioner* is responsible to write down questions for the group to discuss in the circle. The *illustrator* is assigned the responsibility of drawing anything about the story that the group liked or thought was meaningful. The *word wizard* is asked to look through the text and determine what words are meaningful and/or tricky. The *literary luminaries*’ role requires them to go through the text and locate a few special sections or quotations to discuss within the group. The *summarizer*’s job is to prepare a brief summary of the assigned reading to share with the group. The *researcher*’s role is to gather background information on any topic

that relates to the book. Such topics could be the geography or the climate for the book's setting. The *scene setter's* task is to discuss the setting or settings if the text has characters that change their locations (Daniels, 2002).

**Non-print texts** and **multi-media texts** have similar characteristics. Non-print texts are texts that do not contain written print. Types of non-print texts include videos, films, picture books, books on tape, and CD-ROMs (Goodwyn, 1998). Whereas the non-print texts do not contain written print, multi-media texts contain some print; however, they are not traditional paper printed text like a paperback novel. Types of multi-media texts include comic strips, posters, web-sties, a song, and online books (Walsh, 2009). Non-print texts and multi-media texts are similar to traditional print texts because they both can be utilized to develop students' comprehension skills. Many of these non-print multi-media texts are a part of students' everyday lives, part of the students' pop culture (Hong Xu, 2002).

**Comprehension** is the main purpose for reading (Gunning 2008). It determines whether the text is understood. Students need comprehension to understand words, interpret sentences and words, understand full texts, and to use the information that is gained. In order to comprehend, students need to be able to decode, read fluently, and know the vocabulary (Gambrell, Mandel Morrow, & Pressley, 2007; Gunning, 2008; Vacca & Vacca, 2008). The author of the thesis has determined that comprehension is an ability to understand the meaning or importance of a text.

## **Rationale**

In my education as I was growing up, I was taught reading through teacher-selected books and direct instruction consisting of a question and answer approach. It was an effective way for me to comprehend the story; however, I only interacted with the text to the extent of finding the answers that my teacher wanted. I never constructed my own meaning from the stories nor actively engaged in any reader response. As I look back, I hardly remember what I read or what the text was about. I did not have a long term recall for the content. As I worked on my university degree to become a teacher, my children's literature professor introduced the method of teaching using Literature Circles. This was a great way to learn and interact with the text by having students take on aspects of what they think are the important parts of the book and construct meanings for themselves and others in the circle. This method proved very helpful and enjoyable for me. When looking at the research on Literature Circles, I noticed the structure of the Literature Circles and questioned if the same design could be applied to reading books in media other than the traditional printed style.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

### Introduction to the Review

To answer the research question of how to most effectively use Literature Circles with multi-media non-print texts, the first logical step is to review the current best practice literature. Relevant data bases for this topic include Academic Search Premier, empirical articles, method textbooks, and books that pertained to Literature Circles. The keywords that were used to search are *Literature Circles, book clubs, discussion groups, non-print texts, Common Core State Standards and multi-media text*. The many articles found from these key words are grouped to form the categories for this literature review: Literature Circles in general education, Literature Circles with students with special needs, and Literature Circles with English language learners. Using multi-media text and technology adds the dimension of assistive technology, so the category was added to the sub-sections below.

### Literature Circles in General Education

In Wilfong (2009), the author examines the incorporation of the use of **Literature Circles combined with the use of textbooks** in a Middle School classroom. Some districts can only purchase one set of textbooks for each content area, therefore sometimes the only time students are allowed to read the content area textbook is in class, because students cannot take textbooks home with them. This was the case for this particular study, in which a fifth grade teacher, Mrs. Stelkan, (pseudonym) took her traditional approach to teaching the content: Having

students read the text, answer questions, then take a chapter test as a baseline. She tried incorporating Literature Circles into her classes by selecting some of the roles that are used in traditional Literature Circles and modifying the Literature Circle formed to meet the students' identified needs (Discussion Director, Summarizer, Vocabulary Enricher, and Webmaster). The particular roles were selected to help students utilize the literacy skills of forming questions with higher level thinking, summarizing information, learning new vocabulary, and be able to organize the information they learned onto a graphic organizers. The roles were all selected to be used with nonfiction texts. The students were then able to use the skills from these various jobs and present them in a whole group setting.

The **importance of talk** during Literature Circles is reiterated in Short, Kaufman, Kaser, Kahn, & Crawford (1999). However, the authors in this article don't just observe the students talk but the teachers' role in talk in the Literature Circles. Just as students have declared "roles" in Literature Circles, teachers have undeclared roles as well. The teachers have to be "facilitators, participants, mediators, and active listeners" (Short, 1999, 378). As a *facilitator*, the teacher needs to be able to encourage student discussion, clarify or provide additional information for student understanding, restate student comments for to create a deeper understanding for those who may not heard or understood, provide order in the group setting, and to challenge the students comments. As *participants*, it is expressed in the article that teachers need to share their own connections to the books, relate the book to their personal experiences, make broad comments on the themes of the text, ask questions about the issues, and express personal opinions and what you learned from reading. *Mediation* by teachers in Literature Circles allows for the students to be able to share their personal values and life experiences with classmates and it gives many students a safe place where they can work

through personal issues. The last role of the teacher is to *actively listen*. In order for students to move away from a teacher leading the discussions in a literature circle to a student led, active listening is very important. Teachers need to acknowledge each child's statement and then use the student comments when attempting to resort order when students talk over one another.

The **use of talk** was shown in Clark (2007). He looked at how power was exemplified based on gender during a literature circle discussion group in a fifth grade classroom. Clark conducted research that focused particularly on one group of students that consisted of two girls and three boys that were discussing the children's novel, *Shiloh* by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor. The goal of the study was to observe particular themes that occur within the mixed gender Literature Circles. Themes that emerged were: exclusion of girls from the discussion, marginalization of one specific girl, and male dominance within the group. Results found that the girls were excluded in the discussion by turns taken. Boys spoke 81 times and the girls spoke only 29. During the marginalizing, Clark, noted that when one specific girl spoke, she was “either cut off” from speaking or “ignored by the boys” (p. 116). The boys showed dominance within the group by not only controlling the discussion, and shutting out the girls, but also by directing the discussion off topic, sparring with words, and calling each other names. The researcher determined that if used appropriately, Literature Circles are “an important classroom practice and that **by participating in effective group discussions both boys and girls can acquire the new basic communication skills required by today’s workforce**” (p.121).

King (2001) looks at how the use of talk in Literature Circles allows for students to develop a **meaningful interaction with texts**. The author states that when students are participating in "small group unstructured expressive talk, they are able to articulate affective responses" (p. 32) that normally would be dormant. By allowing the open discussion of the text,

Literature Circles allow students are able to make a deeper connection to the text and therefore allow for a deeper understanding. King looked at a fifth grade class at the University of Brighton. Like Short (1999), King says, that the role of the teacher is to teach the students how to respond and eventually transfer the control of the discussion to the students.

In Wies Long & Gove (2004), a study was conducted to determine what would **motivate urban students** to "freely choose to read and write and reflect" (p 350) on what they are reading both in and out of school. The teachers used engagement strategies along with Literature Circles to increase students' critical responses. The authors used **three engagement strategies: first, encourage respond and to question, second to investigate and find out, and finally, pose and solve the problems.** These strategies along with the use of Literature Circles had 16 fourth grade students of all different reading levels actively reading, questioning, and responding to texts.

A similar case study by Cox & Lacey-Parrish(2010) mention how when used effectively, Literature Circles can produce **multiple benefits** from reading such as shared responsibility and leadership, open communication, diverse friendship patterns, and conflict resolution mechanisms. It can also assist in enhancing students love for reading. Prior to implementing the Literature Circles the authors noted that Literature Circles are not originally assessed and translated into letter grades. Once explained to students that test are not the only way to assess students work, a rubric was created for self-assessment that would ultimately be translated in to a letter grade. Then, the authors shifted the decision of text selection to the students. Next students were given their roles, which allowed students to eventually develop more in-depth questions and more personal responses to the reading. The Literature Circles used allowed

students who normally are offered few informal discussions of texts in school a chance to openly discuss the contents of texts.

Literature Circles also can be used to motivate students to want to read and show them how reading a book can (and should) be for the purpose of enjoyment. In DeVault (2009) it is discussed how the instructional strategy of Literature Circles were used in a fifth grade library class to help students "develop a **lifelong love of reading**" (p. 24). The students were first told to choose their own book from a given selection then organized into groups based on their selection. Within these groups students were mixed with various reading levels. Some included struggling readers. Finally the students were assigned their various roles within the Literature Circles. They selected from questioner, connector, literary luminary or illustrator. It was suggested that if there was a particular role that students did not select that the role should either be revised or removed. It was also noted that Literature Circles roles allowed for students who normally quiet and shy a chance to show their leadership skills through the discussion leader role and a chance to express their ideas and opinions more in the small group setting.

Since Literature Circles have been created they have been altered to adapt to a wide variety of classrooms. In Broadman Moen (1998) the author discusses various changes she made to the original roles created by Daniel (2001). The first change was with the role of the questioner. Broadman Moen made a mini lesson in the proper ways of **asking quality questions** including reading skills like comparing contrasting, describing, and explaining. Then these components were included in the Questioners job description. Another change the author adapted for her classroom was to not assign the role of the questioner to specific students but to make it an assigned role for all students, so that they were all expected to come to class prepared with quality questions for discussion.

In Ferguson & Kern (2012) altered the roles because students could complete the task without actually reading the text on the original Literature Circles format. Ferguson & Kern noted that the original roles of the Vocabulary Builder and the Literary Luminary could be combined because their tasks overlap. Changes were also made by Ferguson & Kern to incorporate more of the **comprehension strategies** that students utilize most. She used the following roles in her classroom; Inference Maker, Sensory Image Maker, Questioner, Connector and combined the roles of Importance Determiner and Synthesizer. The authors also note that students sometimes look forward to Literature Circles but for the wrong reason. Students commented that they looked forward to just the social interaction with their peers. Therefore, another way the authors adapted the Literature Circles was to alter the response sheets for each role. The components of the revised questions required the students to read the text in order to explain their answers. The students were then held accountable for their roles and discussions in the Literature Circles.

In Rush & Lipski (2009) the authors discuss their purpose of using Literature Circles in their classrooms was to help develop students' **social skills** in kindergarten and fifth grade classes. Prior to starting their study, the authors noticed that students that were in their classes had higher academic demands, and in an age of teacher accountability, it is harder to find time to teach students social skill that are necessary to help students be a successful member of the school discourse as well as the community. The authors then came up with the following questions that their study would hopefully solve. First they were going to look at how the use of children's literature aided in the students development of social skills. Next they were going to determine which type of literature was most effective in the development of social skills. Finally, the authors were going to determine what strategies can be used to help the development

of social skills in a classroom. One way that each teacher was able to help students develop social skills was through text selection. They each selected text that can "validate the heritage and traditions" of a multicultural classroom.

### **Common Core Standards**

Another way Literature Circles need to be altered is relating their components **to Common Core Standards**. In Gehsmann & Templeton (2012), the authors discuss how to approach literacy development in an age where teachers are being held accountable for their students' progress. They focused on a third grade classroom where the developmental levels of the students were varied based on spelling inventory. In the classroom students ranged from beginning, transitional, and intermediate. In order to teach the varied ranges of development they suggest that in the daily reading instruction block teachers should include interactive read aloud that would focus on sophisticated vocabulary and thinking skills that are reflected in the Common Core State Standards, mini-lessons that deal with students phonic needs, small group guided reading that would work on their discussion and comprehension skills, and independent reading practice so students would have time to read books that are at their personal reading level.

### **Literature Circles with Learning Disabilities**

Drecktrah and Chiang (1997) conducted a survey completed by 183 elementary teachers. There were three groups of teachers selected to participate: second grade teachers, fifth grade teachers,

and teachers of students with **learning disabilities**. The purpose of the survey was to determine which approach to instruction worked best for reading (direct instruction, whole language, or both). Their study also looked at instructional strategies commonly used in the classroom for teaching students reading strategies, including the instructional strategy of Literature Circles. It was noted that Literature Circles *could* be used effectively with both students in general education students and with students with learning disabilities (Drecktrah & Chaing, 1997).

Anderson and Corbett's (2008) study took a step-by-step approach to how teachers can implement a literature circle with students with special needs. The article describes a **five step approach** for teachers to apply this instructional strategy to their classrooms. The first step was to *select an author who would be interesting to the students* and provide an interactive presentation about that author including information on them and list of work they published. The second step was to have the teacher *select roles from Literature Circles that would best benefit the students' in the class* and then the teacher needs to explicitly model the requirements of each roles tasks and how it is done when reading the text. The third step to applying this instructional strategy is to assign the reading *but have support for the reading for the students with special needs* who will most likely have a difficult time reading the text. The authors suggest using a recorded version of the text so students can listen to the text as they follow along. The fourth step describes the *response sheets* that describes the task that each role was required to fulfill. As students begin to understand the process of the literature circle, these role sheets need to be more creative for students. The final step is to create *an assessment for* the literature circle and make sure students are given the rubric on what they will need to complete the task. The authors suggest that at the end of the selected text students turn in a portfolio of the various

roles that they were to complete. When used this strategy will allow for students who struggle with reading the ability to increase their language skills and self-determination along with

Another study that shows the application of Literature Circles used with students needs is Blum, Lipsett, & Yocom (2002). The authors used pre- and post surveys to determine if Literature Circles helped students with special needs to read, discuss, and analyze literature selections. The study was conducted to determine if “students with special needs can function in an inclusive classroom without major accommodations” (p. 101). Another purpose for this study was to determine if students with special needs would have a sense of self-determination. The study took place in a middle school inclusive classroom which consisted of eighth and ninth graders. The classroom contained four students that were identified with disabilities, three struggling readers, one hearing impaired, and one English Language Learner from China. The researchers used qualitative and quantitative data to determine their results. Data consisted of general observations, interviews, pre-surveys, post surveys, and document collections. The pre-survey and post surveys asked for responses on a 1 to 5 continuum, with one equaling strongly disagree and five meaning strongly agree. Students were given “surveys that measured students’ perceptions of their reading abilities” (p. 103) at the beginning of the school year and at the end of the semester. Results of the pre-post surveys reported a mean score of 15.2 students who had a hard time understanding a story. After a semester of Literature Circles, a mean score of only 4.3 students said they had a difficult time understanding a story. Results showed that the students were able to identify their own areas of struggle in reading and informed the researchers that the Literature Circles helped them in their troubled areas.

## Literature Circles with English Language Learners

In a multi-cultural world that we live in another common trend it to have students in the classroom who are English learners. McElvain (2010) describes how difficult it is for English language learners and untrained educators to meet the required language arts standards that are required for all students to exemplify. Where many English language learners are not achieving grade level proficiency in a mainstream class, it segregates these students from the remaining classmates. Many English language learners feel distraught or less important than the others. This also causes many of English language learners to not want to read in English. To help her struggling English language learners McElvain used a transactional model and combined it with Literature Circles to create a **transactional literature circle**. The transactional model allows the students to utilize the various aspects of knowledge from teachers, parents, peer, and the curriculum to bring information and comprehend what is occurring through the use of discussion. This approach was then combined with Literature Circles in a mainstreamed classroom within seven school districts. Participants were fourth through sixth grade students. McElvain selected 75 English language learners as a control group to determine if the transactional Literature Circles would help students who are non-native English speakers comprehend a text better and develop the skills needed to meet state-regulated standards. The teachers had a sixty-minute reading block in which she would generally start with a whole group fifteen-minute mini-lesson on a skill that students were to work on. The students were to read and respond for the next thirty minutes. For the last fifteen minutes students were then asked to respond in small student

led discussion groups. Another part of the Literature Circles was to include a weekly questions that students were to ask their parents or family members that related to the theme of the text. Incorporating the parents in the literature allowed for the Literature Circles to have a transactional component.

Similarly, Day & Ainley (2008) used Literature Circles with a group of 6th graders that included English language learners. The teacher selected the instructional method of teaching English literature even though "many teachers are still skeptical" (p. 157) of the use of instructional practice of Literature Circles. In an area of where language may play a barrier in discussing books, the authors used picture books that had content that would make the students react and lead for good discussion such as poverty and racism. Another way the authors made Literature Circles work with ELL students was to encourage native language use to ensure clarity of the novels they were using. They also would pair students up who spoke the same native language to read together and read "more accurately and fluently" (p. 163) by supporting each other. They lastly created **small group Literature Circles**. This would allow students who were learning English, to feel more comfortable discussing their thoughts. It would also allow the students more opportunity to participate in the discussion. The more opportunity to speak the English language the more fluent they would become and the more they would comprehend of the language.

Davies-Samaway, Whang, Cade, Gamil, Ludandina, & Phommachanh (1991) examined a classroom which consisted of fifth and sixth grade students. In this classroom, there were nine different languages spoken. Many students were "non-native speakers of English" (p. 197) and were grouped in Literature Circles by common choice of a printed text. The teacher selected the literature circle instructional strategy to provide students "with an opportunity to read about,

discuss, and gain a better understanding of some key issues” (p. 200) of the selected text. Students commented that they enjoyed having the opportunity to discuss the books and that it “was a key element in helping them become more enthusiastic and knowledgeable readers” (p. 204). The author's conclusion was that this social setting allowed students to reveal “themselves as both human beings and literate people” (p. 198) when making **personal connections to the text**.

Another study that shows how Literature Circles helps student who are non-native English language speakers was Witt (2007). Witt implemented Literature Circles in his combination class of fifth and sixth graders. He experimented with this instructional strategy of Literature Circles “to improve the reading skills” (p. 180) of his students. He conducted one-to-one interviews and observations throughout the school year to determine the students’ overall understanding and motivation about reading a text. Modeling Literature Circles and question-prompting aided the students’ discussion and clarification of the events in the story. His results showed that the students were more motivated and his struggling readers felt more confident in their reading skills. One struggling reader said in the one-to-one interview that he enjoyed the Literature Circles because “I have time to share with my friends” and that his friends could help him find “something that I didn’t get they show me where it is, and I can reread it” (p. 184). Thus Witt’s findings indicate that Literature Circles are an effective way to use **social learning** to teach multiple strategies of reading comprehension.

## **Popular Culture**

Another big trend in teaching besides using the instructional approach to teaching literacy in Literature Circles is to include **popular culture** into the lessons. Incorporating the popular culture such as television, movies and YouTube in instructional delivery addresses students' interests so they would be more likely to relate to the text or lessons. This approach to teaching is referred to as post-modernism. Fain Jr. (2004) suggested that teachers should include student popular culture with traditional education so that the students will be shown how the content is relevant to their current lives. Also by relating the educational topics to their lives it is suggested that students will "retain more" (p. 590) of the information.

Hong Xu (2002) conducted a study of how **teachers integrate popular culture** into their literacy instruction. The participants of the study were five female pre-service teachers and 16 in-service teachers ranging from kindergarten to twelfth grade. The study also included 200 kindergarten to twelfth grade students. Teachers were first asked to generate a list of the various popular culture items that is a part of their lives. In this study popular culture may consist of, but is not limited to, "popular music, books and magazines, TV shows, Internet, computer/video games, audio recordings, and commercial advertising" (p. 722). Next, teachers asked their students to create a list of their popular culture items. Then the teachers were to compare the two lists and finally, implement some of the students' popular culture items into a reading or writing lesson. The results showed that teachers' popular culture mainly consisted of "television shows, music, magazines, bestsellers, and professional books and journals" (p. 725). *It also showed that teachers knew very little about their students' popular culture.* The students' lists varied through the grades, but focused on non-print texts such as visual images and music. The teachers were disappointed to notice how the students' "popular culture often did not center on 'book literacy'" (p. 726). Xu explained that *book literacy* refers to books and magazines. Rather than the book

literacy, the students' list incorporated more of "'oral literacy' and 'media literacy'"(p. 726), forms of various non-print texts. The third aspect of the study looked at how teachers were to incorporate the popular culture non-print texts into their literacy lessons. Teachers found that they were able to creatively include the non-print texts, incorporate critical thinking skills and important literary skills into the lessons. Students had a positive response to the new creative lessons. There was an enhanced "student engagement and motivation"(p. 729) when the students' popular culture was included.

Another way of incorporating students' popular culture into the academic lessons was shown in the study by Bullion-Mears, McCauley, YeVette McWhortoer (2007). This study describes how they had middle school students read expository texts by performing the information that was in it to help students comprehend. They suggest that teachers have students create **raps** (a genre of music), **poems, or scripts**. By creating these activities students will have to reread "readings of a texts"(p. 43) to obtain the information and through the repeated reading it will increase their comprehension of the selected topic.

### **Technology with Literacy**

One way to achieve student popular culture and relevance to students' education is through the use of technology. One use of technology that can be used in class is the incorporation of the non-print text like **movies**. In Betil (2009) the author suggests the use of movies that are based on works of literature to help English language learners. The use of video clips and or full length motion pictures along with full texts can be used to help students who are learning the English language. The use of movies "promote vocabulary acquisition, generate real

communication, and enhance reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills" (p. 58) of English language learners.

Another way of combining technology with literacy is through the. Walsh (2009) described a digital literacy project that collaborated with a local contemporary art **internet** museum in New York City's Chinatown. The project focused on using literary elements and incorporating technology into an HTML and Flash format. The project was about Chinese Immigration, a topic that related to the students. The participants were twenty-five 12-13 year old first and second generation Chinese immigrants. The students were taught using a multi-literacies curriculum. They were instructed to research information through the visuals in a text to redesign their current textbooks. Political cartoons and posters were also utilized in this study. Once students understood the new literacies, they created their own political cartoons and posters based on the research they discovered to redesign the school's texts. After they created their story boards, the students uploaded them to a website. The results showed that the students made insightful use of the information they obtained to create their final project.

Lapp, Flood, & Fisher (1999), explored three different studies that looked how teachers **differentiated their literacy instruction** by "capitalizing on student's receptivity of media" (p. 780). All of the studies used print-based texts in conjunction with a non-print based text through in small group format. The teachers then used a variety of teaching activities to implement the lessons. Some activities used were, using an information web-site that provided information on a topic of a text, e-mails to friends to express their opinions on the text in which they were reading, journals to hand write their reactions to the text, character maps to draw and assimilate single words or short descriptions of the protagonist, using movies, and documentaries. The lessons also incorporated "critical thinking skills that directly relate to the visual world" in which the

students live. By differentiating their instruction the teachers acquired data through the multiple medias they utilized in their lessons to determine if students gained a greater comprehension of a text.

### **Literature Circles with Technology**

With technology like computers clearly the way of the future it is important to explore how Literature Circles can progress in a virtual world. Thomas and Hofmeister (2002) explored virtual Literature Circles through **message boards**. Message boards “allow individual teachers to engage students from different schools” (p. 235) on a mutual topic. The incorporation of message boards with Literature Circles allows educators to integrate computer technology in to the reading curriculum. The purpose was to examine the efficacy of technology integration on a traditional literature circle. The subjects were 125 third and fourth grade students in Missouri. The virtual literature circle used a novel that was discussed on a chapter by chapter basis through the message boards. Twenty-five students were then randomly selected to look at their gains in comprehension due to the virtual Literature Circles and their higher level thinking skills in each of their responses.

Moreillon, Hunt, & Ewing (2009) also discuss how Literature Circles can be **used virtually**. The authors used their 8th grade classrooms to select a text and formed groups from the different sections of the same course to participate in a Literature Circles. Everything would be discussed online; therefore it was students' responsibility to first create their groups on the class website. Then they had to design their web page that goes along with their discussions.

This project incorporated many of the State Standards, both academic and technical, that are required of the students.

Klages, Pate, & Conforti, Jr. (2007), conducted a study with university students that investigated **social relationships and academic profitability of a virtual literature circle**. Students enrolled in similar courses at two different Texas Universities. They then were partnered up with whom they e-mailed consistently throughout the semester to discuss their assigned literature circle novel. Next, they were to collaborate on creating a web-page that depicted several themes of their novel. Finally, students evaluated their experiences with the Distance Learning Partner. Klages, Pate, and Conforti Jr. selected Literature Circles as a way to "increase collaboration in a classroom" (p. 294). E-mail was selected to motivate "students who might otherwise be reluctant to participate in face-face interactions" (p. 295). To monitor student participation in the e-mails, each student was required to carbon copy each professor. These e-mails were then collected throughout the semester and analyzed to see how students responded to the literature discussions with the distance learning and how focused the students were.

Kitsis (2010) discusses how she took her high school English class version of Literature Circles and created a **blog** format where students can respond to their group by posting their responses to the website. The blogs consisted of general responses to more explicit higher level thinking responses. These discussion groups lead a final project that required students to present their book to the class. The author also noted that in an age of technology teachers should not be afraid to utilize technology in the classroom curriculum. If a teacher selects to add technology it was suggested to make sure that the teachers are just not simply using it however; make sure they use it effectively.

Another look at to why Literature Circles should become more virtual is in an article from Bowser-Campbell (2011). Bowser-Campbell discusses many negative reasons to why traditional literature circle did not work and of them resulted from removing the teacher from a leadership role in discussion. Removal of the teacher resulted in off topic discussions, students not responding or taking the discussion seriously, students' not listening, arguments and student bullying. This author then observed a graduate literature class where student were devised up into three reading groups and they created a discussion group that would allow for them to respond online. By having the responses being online allows for students who have different communication styles and diverse ideas to be enabled to speak and express them without feeling as if they are going to be interrupted within in the group. Also it allows for students at different confidence levels the ability to speak and feel as though they not being watched or judged in a negative way.

Stewart (2009) studied the academic and social benefits that exist through the partnership of virtual Literature Circles with social networks, such as *Facebook*. Stewart describes a high school librarian, who sets up a virtual literature circle on *Facebook*. The structure of the website allows for the various tasks of a literature circle to be created. Some of the applications that are used to complete the Literature Circles tasks were the, discussion board, chat, and the wall. Everything they submit on the applications is called a posted item. Daniels' (2002), literature roles were implanted into the circles as a form a structure until group members are comfortable with the discussion and are eventually faded out. The texts are in the form of an electronic book that is linked on their *Facebook* under that group. The results of the study conclude that students

who participated with the study encouraged for the virtual literature circle to continue using different texts and that cooperative learning has a positive effect on student learning.

## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

### Design of Professional Development Project

The most appropriate design for an experience that will move theory to practice for current classroom teachers is a face-to-face professional development workshop to prepare teachers of later intermediate elementary students (grades 3-6) to enhance their students' critical thinking and comprehension skills via Literature Circles using non-print , multi-media texts, and a virtual Literature Circle. The professional development workshop should be face-to-face workshop because it is important for teachers to have a constructivist approach to learning how to conduct a Literature Circle and incorporate technology into its components, which would be difficult to do so if teachers have not used the instructional strategy of Literature Circles. The range of grades three to six were selected because those years are academically critical ages where students are now demonstrating the skills that they are required to exhibit that will prepare them for the remainder of their academic careers. Non-print, multi-media texts were selected to differentiate the type of texts in order for students who are audio or visual learners to excel. Also it allows to prepare students for the future with multi-literacies in curriculum. A virtual Literature Circle is important because by combining the components of traditional Literature Circles along with internet allows for students to demonstrate all the required skills that a traditional Literature Circle teaches along with the future digital means students will need for beyond the classroom. The workshop employs an interactive simulation approach where participants engage in a Literature Circle using both print and non-print texts and exploring the idea of virtual Literature Circles. The format of the workshop will take a constructivist approach

to ensure that the participants understand how Literature Circles are performed in order to model to the their students. Its duration is four hours in a single session.

### **Literacy Coaching Workshop Goals and Objectives**

The purpose of the project is to inform intermediate elementary teachers about Literature Circles and how to incorporate the instructional strategy with non-print texts. The first goal of the workshop is for the participants to comprehend and analyze what Literature Circles are. The second goal is how students are demonstrating their foundational knowledge of reading and becomes successful in the classroom. Participants will discover how Literature Circles are a social experience in the construction and development of reading. Participants will also learn through Literature Circles how students can recognize, interpret, and make connections to a text. Participants will also be informed how Literature Circles have evolved in a technical world. Comprehensive reading programs provide a wide variety of traditional print, but it also provides digital and online resources therefore another goal is to inform the participants of the non-print texts that can be utilized in the classroom. Participants will be able to transfer their current knowledge and incorporate new technologies into to the instructional strategies. The workshop's third goal will show participants how Literature Circles can be use with non-print based texts and demonstrate how they can be used online so students can benefit from digital media to communicate and work collaboratively to support other students learning as well as individual learning with technology that they will commonly use throughout their education. Since teachers are now required to incorporate standards into their lesson to ensure student growth, the final

goal of the workshop will contain information on how Literature Circles coincide with the Common Core Standards.

Specific intended learning outcomes for workshop participants include:

- Participants will be able to create a traditional Literature Circle that can be utilized in their classrooms
- Participants will be able to model to their students traditional Literature Circle roles
- Participants will be able to model how to ask high level thinking questions
- Participants will be able to create a virtual Literature Circle that can be utilized in their classroom
- Participants will be able to model to students appropriate responses for Literature Circle roles for virtual Literature Circle.

### **Proposed Audience and Location**

The proposed audience for this workshop will be elementary teachers who teach grades three through six. The workshop will be face to face so participants can participate in both traditional and virtual Literature Circles with supervision for both. Once the participants experience the traditional and virtual Literature Circles, they can learn from their experience and develop a Literature Circle that meets the needs of their students. In order to incorporate the non-print text, the location of the coaching workshop will be in a library or media center where there is promethean board and lap top computers. The promethean board will allow for the incorporation of a non-print text and a power point presentation. Lap top computers will allow

for teachers to log on and see how Literature Circles are used in on the internet. The library or media center will also allow ample space for teachers to locate around the room so that their discussion does not disturb other groups. The location however, prohibits availability of beverages and other refreshments, refreshments will be held in an adjacent location.

### **Proposed Workshop Format and Activities**

The proposed workshop consists of a four hour format (see Appendix A for Agenda). It will begin with a brief welcoming and orientation to the workshop. Next, there will be a power point presentation of what Literature Circles are and how they are an effective strategy in the classroom. Participants will be able to understand that Literature Circles are a cooperative learning strategy that incorporates many theories such as, Vygotsky's and Bandura's social learning theories also Rosenblatts transactional reader response theory (Stewart, 2009; Klages, Pate, & Conforti, Jr., 2007). Participants will also be able to create an effective Literature Circles that will allow for students to acquire vocabulary, build concepts, practice inferring, and development other reading skills that are students are required to demonstrate by Common Core State Standards (Daniels, 2002). The various roles will be introduced and explain the skills that each role will allow students to demonstrate. Participants will be informed on how Literature Circles are a successful instructional strategy that can be utilized with all students. It has been shown to be successful with Learning Disabilities, English Language Learners, and General Education Benefits that arose from the use with Students with Learning Disabilities students were able to have a sense of self-determination when it came to selecting their text and analyze texts in order to discuss with others (Blum, Lipsett, & Yocom, 2002). A benefit from using this

strategy with English Language Learners is a greater opportunities for students to speak the English Language and learn vocabulary through a cooperative learning experience. This is enhanced through Literature Circles allowing socialization amongst peers (Day & Ainley ,2008; Davies-Samaway, Whang, Cade, Gamil, Ludandina, & Phommachanh ,1991) . Another benefit from utilizing Literature Circles with students who have Learning Disabilities was to enhance their reading skills (Witt, 2007). Literature Circles with General Education students also showed positive results with students reading skills. Students were able to make deeper connections with the diverse themes in texts allowing for a deeper comprehension (King, 2001; Gehsmann & Templeton ,2012). Another benefit was to develop student motivation to read. When students were excited to read they developed into a passion for reading. They were eager to participate in the group discussion. This also came from the cooperative learning approach that students with Learning Disabilities benefited from, the socialization. Students when actively interacting with the text and others were able to take more risks in discussion allowing for students to improve in reading levels (Cox & Lacey-Parrish,2010; DeVault ,2009;). Participants will also be informed that the roles are can be adapted to meet the needs of the students. Roles can be changed to allow for students to think more critically and be held accountable in group discussion (Wilfong, 2009; Ferguson & Kern, 2012). Next, the participants will form into groups and actively participate in a short literature circle taking on the various role that are used with Literature Circles using a print based texts. Participants will be grouped into grade level and select a role that they wish to complete for their discussion. Each Literature Circles will then read a chapter of Jerry Spinelli's, Maniac Magee. After teachers complete their group discussions, we will come back as a whole to discuss their Literature Circles and teachers can ask questions or comment. Then there will be a short fifteen minute break.

The second half of the workshop will discuss what non-print texts are and the value they provide in the instruction of literacy. When technology is used in the classroom it is preparing the classes for beyond the classroom. The 21st century is becoming more visual and virtual. It is important to incorporate multi-literacies in curriculum. Allowing student interest of the new technology, such as digital texts or literary movies into a literacy lesson makes student motivation increases (Walsh, 2009; Betil, 2009). Having the literary movies allows for students to see details that they can't when they are just reading. Participants will be informed how students' reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills are being utilized when discussing digital medias (Betil, 2009; Walsh, 2009; Moreillon, Hunt, & Ewing , 2009). Next participants will also hear how the Literature Circles have evolved to fit in a more virtual world. Virtual Literature Circles are the way of discussion of the future. The teachers will hear how Literature Circles are now being used with online discussion on class websites or blogs and be used with multiple students across the school (Klages, Pate, & Conforti, Jr., 2007). Once again, participants will select a different role to perform in the virtual Literature Circle. Then as a whole will watch an episode of *Reading Rainbow* and listen to the story Amazing Grace by Mary Hoffman off of YouTube. Each teacher will then, as a whole, discuss using the literature circle format in an online discussion group and discuss what happened in the episode using the various literature circle roles. After participants will again come together and reflect on the previous activity. Then there will be another short break. Finally teachers will hear how Literature Circles, either traditional or virtual is an instructional strategy that would help students meet Common Core Standards and Professional Standards. The workshop will end with an evaluation survey.

Possible challenges for participants would include participants who do not know or feel comfortable with new technology. One way to make participants feel more comfortable with the technology that is used in the workshop is to allow for participants to have time to actively explore it. Another way is to model on a large screen so the participants can follow along.

### **Proposed Resources for Workshop**

The teachers will be provided with refreshments such as water and coffee in an adjacent location. When they first come in they will be also presented with a hand out of the power point in case anyone would like to write down any additional information they heard from the presentation; therefore there would need to be a projector to enlarge the power point onto a screen. There will be copies of a print based text, Maniac Magee (Spinelli, 2002), that will be used in the presentation when teachers are practicing taking part of a Literature Circle. Internet access would need to be available because there will be an episode of *Reading Rainbow* that has the children's story Amazing Grace (Hoffman, 1991) that will be watched from YouTube. Finally, lap top computers will be used to show how online discussions can be used with literature in the classroom from an online chat room or discussion webpage.

### **Proposed Evaluation of Workshop.**

Participants will be asked to evaluate the workshop. The participants will be given a paper evaluation form (see Appendix B for Evaluation Form). The participants will be asked whether they found the information presented to be useful for their teaching situation or whether

they would try a literature circle with a non-print text in their classrooms. Teachers will also be asked to indicate anything they felt should be changed for the next presentation.

## **CHAPTER FOUR; APPLICATION**

### **Key Findings**

This Chapter analyzes literature review to produce some findings that answer the research question of how can teacher implement the literary strategy of Literature Circles with non-print text. The previously mentioned the information was categorized into sub-groups. The groups were Literature Circles in general education, Literature Circles with students with special needs, Literature Circles with English language learners, non-print texts, non-print texts into Literature Circles, and both Literature Circles and technology. The issue of teachers using Literature Circles with non-print texts compared to print-based texts discovered three primary findings based on the research. The first findings showed that students comprehended the print text better than the non-print texts, but scores were significantly higher when the two were used together (Grimshaw, 2007, DeJong, 2004 ). Another finding was that students were more motivated to use a non-print texts in literacy instruction lessons (Walsh, 2009, Hong Xu, 2002). Finally, with the use of Literature Circles, all types of students improved in literacy (Witt, 2007, Blum, 2002, Davies-Samaway, 1991). The teaching strategy is a positive tool with all types of students such as general education, Special Education, and English language learners. The strategy has also been found to be useful with various grade levels. One of the reasons was because of the social interaction with their peers.

When Literature Circles were implemented into a general education class, the results showed that students' participation increased (Clark, 2007; Witt 2007). The incorporation of the

strategy allocated struggling readers to feel confident in commenting on the selected text (Witt, 2007). The findings show, by using social learning through the strategy of Literature Circles, motivates student engagement with the text and peers.

The results for when Literature Circles are used with students with special needs show that teachers are less likely to implement them in a self-contained classroom. With the No Child Left Behind Act, students with special needs are now more mainstreamed into the general education classrooms. Therefore, the 49% of fifth grade teachers from Drecktrah's and Chiang's (1997) study, may have contained students who have Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) or are labeled as Special Need students. Also the study results show that students with special needs can function in a general education classroom and comprehend the text when the literary strategy is implemented (Blum, Lipsett, and Yocom, 2002).

When English language learners use the literary strategy of Literature Circles the results as follows: (1) Students were able have a greater understanding of the selected print based text. (2) The social interaction contributed to the students' greater understanding because they were able to hear different points of view and make connections to the text. (3) Students, also enjoyed the discussions, which are a crucial component of Literature Circles, because peer interaction stimulated enthusiasm to reading the selected text.

The use of non-print texts allows for teachers to incorporate different types of literacies into a curriculum besides traditional texts. These literacies can include the students' popular culture such as T.V. shows, electronic books, or songs. Hong Xu (2002) refers this specific type of literacy as media literacy. The results show that when students were motivated to participate and enjoyed the overall literacy lessons when the media literacy was employed. Another result

based on the information gathered states that students perform better when a non-print text is used with a print based text or with narrations.

When technology is used through Literature Circles the whole formation of the literature circle can be altered. Technology has introduced the educators to virtual Literature Circles. These virtual Literature Circles, have allowed for students who are timid to discuss orally with a class to participate through the use of blogs or wall posts. Another result of technology with literacy, the use of incorporating interactive projects such as creating web-sties to present information on a the students' understanding of a text.

### **Workshop Goals and Objectives**

The purpose of the project is to enhance intermediate elementary teachers' understanding of Literature Circles and how to incorporate the instructional strategy with non-print texts. The first objective of the workshop is to educate the teachers on what Literature Circles are and how students are demonstrating their foundational knowledge of reading and becomes successful in the classroom. Participants will discover how Literature Circles are a social experience in the construction and development of reading. Participants will also learn through Literature Circles how students can recognize, interpret, and make connections to a text. Participants will also be informed how Literature Circles have evolved in a technical world. Comprehensive reading programs provide a wide variety of traditional print, but it also provides digital and online resources therefore another objective is to inform the participants of the non-print texts that can be utilized in the classroom. Participants will be able to transfer their current knowledge and

incorporate new technologies into the instructional strategies. The workshop's third goal will show participants how Literature Circles can be used with non-print based texts and demonstrate how they can be used online so students can benefit from digital media to communicate and work collaboratively to support other students learning as well as individual learning with technology that they will commonly use throughout their education. Since teachers are now required to incorporate standards into their lesson to ensure student growth, the final goal of the workshop will contain information on how Literature Circles coincide with the Common Core Standards.

### **Proposed Audience and Location**

The proposed audience for this workshop will be elementary teachers who teach grades three through six who are interested in creating a more technical literature circle that utilizes not only traditional print, but digital and online reading and writing experiences that prepare students for the future. In order to incorporate the non-print text, the location of the coaching workshop will be in a library or media center where there is a promethean board, internet access, and lap top computers. The promethean board will allow for the incorporation of a non-print text and a power point presentation. The internet will allow for the You-tube presentation of a digital story also for communicating with the presenter. Lap top computers will allow for teachers to log on and see how Literature Circles are used in on the internet. Since this is an interactive workshop, the library or media center will also allow ample space for teachers to locate around the room so that their discussion does not disturb other groups.

## **Proposed Format of the Workshop & Activities**

The proposed format of the workshop will include a lesson plan format that describes the professional goals based on the International Reading Association's professional standards, materials used, and a detailed explanation of the intended activities and information that will be presented throughout the professional development workshop.

**Objective:** In the professional development workshop, participants will explore and evidence based instructional strategy of Literature Circles with a wide variety of texts, such as traditional and digital texts.

### **International Reading Association Professional Standards:**

The information in the presentation reflects the professional standards of the International Reading Association.

Standard 1: Foundational Knowledge

Standard 2: Curriculum and Instruction

Standard 4: Diversity

Standard 5: Literate Environment

Standard 6: Professional Learning and Leadership

**Materials:** Projector, 25 lap-top computers, 25 *Maniac Magee* by Jerry Spinelli, internet access, 30 power point handouts, power point presentation,

Description:

8:00AM- Participants will congregate in a library or media center.

8:10AM- The presenter will welcome the participants and explain the objective of the professional development workshop.

8:15AM- Participants will respond to the presenter's baseline question via text to poll everywhere website, of what they want to gain from the presentation?

8:20AM- The presenter will read aloud some of the responses and create a word cloud that highlights many of the key terms that the participants wish to hear about in the presentation.

8:25AM - Participants will view a power point presentation about Literature Circles. Participants will hear that Literature Circles are small peer-led discussions groups that discuss literary texts (Blum, Lipsett, & Yocom, 2002) Then they will hear the theoretical foundation of Literature Circles (Vygotsky's Social Constructivist, Bandura's Social Learning Theory, Rosenblatts' Transactional Reader Response Theory, and Socio-Cultural Theory (Klages, 2007; Tracey & Morrow, 2006). Finally, traditional roles that students take on and the reading skill that students demonstrate when completing their tasks (Daniels, 2001).

8:45AM-Participants will take a 15 minute break.

9:00AM- Participants will re-congregate in the media center and break into small groups of 5-6 and select a traditional role that Literature Circles use. After reading aloud Chapter one of Jerry Spinelli's 1990's children's novel, *Maniac Magee*. Participants will then partake in literature circle using their selected traditional role that correlates with Literature Circles.

9:25AM- Participants will again respond to the presenter question via text message, If and how they use Literature Circles in their literacy instruction?

9:30AM- Participants will take a 15 minute break.

9:45AM- Presenter will again discuss some of the responses and show a Word Cloud to show the key terms that came from participants responses.

9:50AM-Participants will view a power point presentation on how technology such as digital media can be used along with Literature Circles to make students more prepared for the

type of texts they will utilize in the future. Participants will hear that Non-print texts and multi-media texts have similar aspects. Non-print texts are texts that do not contain written print.

Types of non-print texts include videos, films, picture books, books on tape, and CD-ROMs (Goodwyn, 1998). ). Whereas the non-print texts do not contain written print, multi-media texts contain some print; however, they are not traditional paper printed text like a paperback novel.

Types of multi-media texts include comic strips, posters, web-sties, a song, and online books (Walsh, 2009). Participants will then here how they can differentiate their Literature Circles to use these types of texts and incorporate a more virtual literate environment Thomas & Hofmeister ,2002; Moreillon, Hunt, & Ewing, 2009; Klages, Pate, & Conforti, Jr., 2007).

Participants will finally hear how the Literature Circles roles can be altered to fit the more virtual approach to the instruction.

10:05AM -Participants will take a 10 minute break.

10:15AM- Participants will then select one of the various roles as they partake in a virtual literature circle. First they watch an episode of *Reading Rainbow* that contains the episode which displays Mary Hoffman's children's novel *Amazing Grace* from the popular website, YouTube. Next the participants will log on the lap top computers to the website [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) and then under Google is a tab that says Blogger. And finally participants will post their response to their Literature circle role and comment on other participants posts.

10:45AM- The participants will then respond via text message to the presenter's question of How virtual Literature circle with non-print multi-media texts relate to Common Core State Standards.

10:50AM- Participants will then take a 10 min break.

11:00AM- Participants will view a power point presentation on virtual Literature Circles with non-print multi-media text. Participants will hear how Literature Circles first relate to New York State Common Core Standards. Then they will hear how Literature Circles demonstrate many of the International Reading Association Professional Standards. Finally participants will hear how virtual Literature Circle meet standards of the International Society for Technology in Education.

11:15AM The presenter will sum up the major findings from the presentation and answer any questions the participants have. Finally the participants will be asked to fill out an evaluation of the presentation and the information that was presented to them.

### **Proposed Evaluation of Workshop**

Participants will be asked to evaluate the workshop on the information that was presented to them. At the beginning of the presentation the participants of the Professional Development Workshop will be asked to respond via text message to respond to questions as a baseline of information on how or if they participants utilize the instructional practice in their classes. Throughout the presentation the presenter will check the participants' process of comprehending the content of the workshop. Then the presenter will create a Word Cloud with the participants' responses to and key words that come from the responses show the participants and the presenter if everyone is comprehending. The participants will be given a paper evaluation form (see Appendix B for Satisfaction Survey) to produce an overall outcome of the presentation that can be used as data for future or further research. The evaluation will first ask the participants basic yes or no response questions about their use of Literature Circles and use of texts and

technology. The second part of the evaluation form will be a short answer. Participants can explain or express their ideas or opinion on presentation and the information that was presented to them in the workshop.

## **Professional Standards**

The following section is a detailed explanation of how the content of the professional development workshop demonstrates the professional standards of the International Reading Association, New York State Common Core, and the International Society for Technology in Education. Many of the professional standards relate with their objectives.

### **IRA Standard 1. Foundational Knowledge; ISTE Standard 4. Critical Thinking , Problem Solving, and Decision Making; NYS Common Core Reading Standards for Literature, Reading Informational Text, Reading Foundational Skills, and Speaking & Listening**

The presenter of the professional development workshop demonstrates how the content of the workshop demonstrates knowledge of the foundations of reading and writing processes and instruction. As a result, candidates demonstrate knowledge of psychological, sociological, and linguistic foundations of reading and writing processes and instruction. Participants will be informed how Literature Circles are a social constructivist approach to teaching. The group work formation allows for students to engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussion with their group members. Students can pose and respond to specific questions, communicate with individual who form different perspectives or cultural backgrounds. It also Allows for students to create a literary critique in response to a particular text that is studied in class.

The content of the workshop demonstrates knowledge of the major components of reading foundational skills (phonemic awareness; word identification and phonics, vocabulary and background knowledge, fluency, comprehension strategies, and motivation) and how they are integrated in fluent reading to support their comprehension of the text. Discussion groups where all group members are required to read the same text will give students a purpose of reading to understand the content of the text in order to discuss with others.

**IRA Standard 2. Instructional Strategies and Curriculum Materials; ISTE Standard 1. Creativity and Innovation; NYS Common Core Standard Reading Foundational Skills and Writing**

The presenter shows how the content of Literature Circles use a wide range of instructional practices, approaches, methods, and curriculum materials to support reading and writing instruction. As a result, candidates use instructional grouping options as appropriate for accomplishing given purposes. Classroom teachers match instructional grouping options to specific instructional purposes that take into account developmental, cultural, and linguistic differences among students. They model and scaffold procedures so that students learn to work effectively. They provide an evidence-based rationale for their selections. Teachers can also use a wide range of instructional practices, approaches, and methods, including technology-based practices, for learners at differing stages of development and from differing cultural and linguistic backgrounds to communicate and work collaboratively to support individual learning.

**IRA Standard 5. Creating a Literate Environment; ISTE Standard 2. Communication and Collaboration; NYS Common Core Standard Reading Foundational Skills**

The workshop demonstrates how the participants can create a literate environment that fosters reading and writing by integrating foundational knowledge, use of instructional practices, approaches and methods, curriculum materials, and the appropriate use of assessments to contribute to projects that contain original works. As a result, candidates: use students' interests, reading abilities, and backgrounds as foundations for the reading and writing program to communicate information and ideas effectively to multiple audience through a variety of media. Classroom teachers incorporate students' interest when selecting a print or non-print text to enhance student interest and motivation to the literacy instructions. They use a wide range of text to ensure the texts are meet the students reading abilities and backgrounds. By utilizing Literature Circles classroom teachers can use a large supply of books, technology-based information, and non-print materials representing multiple levels, broad interests, and cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Classroom teachers can match students' interest with a wide supply of books, technology based information, and incorporate non-print materials that are of different readabilities of the students to support student comprehension of the themes. They will also touch on students diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Literature Circles allows for a cross pairing of students of all different reading and comprehension levels. Teacher or students can model reading and writing enthusiastically as valued lifelong activities. Classroom teachers cab model the specific instructional task enthusiastically that is presented as a lifelong activity. Non-print texts such as movies will be used to show how students' can incorporate literary skills taught in the classroom, such as predicting, summarizing, and other literary elements can be used in their everyday lives.

**IRA Standard 6. Professional Development; ISTE Technology Operations & Concepts;  
NYS Common Core Standard Reading Literature, Reading Informational Text, and  
Reading Foundational Skills**

Teaching requirements has teachers view professional development as a career-long effort and responsibility. As a result, candidates display positive dispositions related to reading and the teaching of reading. Classroom teachers will be able to model how to enthusiastically read and generate meaning to both print and non-print text when instructing the lessons since participating in the professional development workshop of Literature Circles with non-print multi-media texts. Continue to pursue the development of professional knowledge and dispositions. Classroom teachers attend professional development to enhance their knowledge in education and transfer their current knowledge of education to incorporate new technologies.

## **CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

### **Overview of Study and Findings**

The issue of teachers using Literature Circles with non-print texts compared to print-based texts discovered three primary findings based on the research. The first findings showed that students comprehended the print text better than the non-print texts, but scores were significantly higher when the two were used together (Grimshaw, 2007, DeJong, 2004 ). Another finding was that students were more motivated to use a non-print texts in literacy instruction lessons (Walsh, 2009, Hong Xu, 2002). Finally, with the use of Literature Circles, all types of students improved in literacy (Witt, 2007, Blum, 2002, Davies-Samaway, 1991). The teaching strategy is a positive tool with all types of students such as general education, Special Education, and English language learners. The strategy has also been found to be useful with various grade levels. One of the reasons was because of the social interaction with their peers.

### **Significance of the Findings**

With the increase in student motivation through the use of non-print texts students will be able to look forward to the literature instruction. Incorporating the popular culture and technology into instructional delivery addresses students' interests so they would be more likely to relate to the text or lessons. Also popular culture with traditional education shows how the content is relevant to their current lives (Bullion-Mears, McCauley, YeVette McWhortoer ,2007; Hong Xu , 2002; Fain Jr., 2004). . Teachers can creatively include the non-print texts,

incorporate critical thinking skills and important literary skills into the lessons allowing for students to positively respond to the new creative lessons.

Also, the incorporation of technology such as the internet assists for students to respond to activities helps allow for students to express their ideas. Finally the when teachers used both print and non-print text in a lesson students gained a higher comprehension than when teachers used just one of the texts (Betil, 2009; Lapp, Flood, & Fisher, 1999). Using both types of print will allow for more holistic approach to teaching by incorporating texts for both visual and auditory learners and actively gets the student involved in their literacy instruction.

Another significance was the overall increase in student understanding of a print based text through the literary strategy of Literature Circles. Prior to implementing the instructional strategy, teachers need to model how to students are to respond orally and how to actively listen when discussing the text in order for Literature Circles to work appropriately. Teachers also need to model how to ask quality questions (King, 2001; Clark, 2007; Broadman Moen, 1998; Witt, 2007). Modeling the appropriate way to respond is especially important when implementing virtual Literature Circles (Thomas and Hofmeister, 2002; Moreillon, Hunt, & Ewing, 2009). Once students were able understand how respond to a text they are able to express their ideas and utilize their critical thinking skills to comprehend a text. Then they were able to construct their own meaning. It was also found that Literature Circles is a best practice of literacy instruction because it virtually can work with all types of students. This approach can work with Students with Learning Disabilities, English Language Learners, and General Education students (Davies-Samaway, Whang, Cade, Gamil, Ludandina, & Phommachanh, 1991; Similarly, Day & Ainley, 2008; McElvain, 2010; Blum, Lipsett, & Yocom, 2002; Anderson and Corbett's, 2008; Wilfong, 2009; Clark, 2007). This approach allows for students

to demonstrate many of the required tasks that are required for them to know how to perform based on state standards.

### **Limitations of the Findings**

A major limitation of the findings was the lack of research of Literature Circles with non-print texts. The combination of Literature Circles with non-print texts was scarce because Literature Circles are predominantly used with print based texts. Another limitation was the research found was the lack research on Literature Circles geared toward the elementary level. Most of the empirical evidence related to middle school or high school level students. Another limitation to the findings was the lack of empirical research on Literature Circles and comprehension. Since there is no true assessment to measure if Literature Circles increase student comprehension or evaluate the specific leanings.

### **The Answer to the Research Question**

When students are given an opportunity to use their multiple intelligences they get a greater understanding of the content (Heward, 2009). Since Literature Circles incorporate the critical component of literacy such as; vocabulary, summarizing, inference, and questioning the text through discussion with their peers, students will get an overall better comprehension of a text. When student motivation is increase, student comprehension is also increases. Since student motivation increases when Literature Circles are implemented and when non-print based

texts are used, therefore student comprehension will increase when the two are combined and utilized in the classroom.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Further research needs to be conducted on the Literature Circles to ensure that they do help improve the comprehension skills. An empirical study need to be performed that collects data from a group of students with a baseline to determine a beginning level. After Literature Circles are implemented a post assessment is needed to show the growth in students' comprehension of any type of literature circle either traditional or virtual. Also an assessment needs to be created to measure student comprehension through the use of Literature Circles to ensure that Literature Circles match up to the IRA and Common Core standards. Finally, I recommend that an empirical study be conducted on the use of Literature Circles with non print text to ensure that it is proven method of literary skill instruction of vocabulary development and the various levels of comprehension.

## References

- Blum, T.H., Lipsett, L.R., & Yocom, D.J. (2002). Literature Circles a tool for self-determination in one middle school inclusive classroom. *Remedial and Special Education* 23(2), 99-108.
- Clark, L.W. (2007). Discussing *Shiloh*: A conversation beyond the book. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* 51(2), 112-122. doi:10.1598/JAAL.51.2.3
- Day, D., & Ainley, G. (2008). From skeptic to believer: One teacher's journey implementing Literature Circles. *Reading Horizons* 48(3), 157-176.
- Daniels, H. (2002). *Literature Circles: Voice and choice in book clubs & reading groups* (2nd ed.). Stenhouse Publishers: Portland, ME.
- Davies Samway, K., Whang, G., Cade, C. Gamil, M., Ludandina, M.A., & Phommachanh, K. (1991). Reading the skeleton, the heart, and the brain of a book: Students' perspectives on literature study circles. *The Reading Teacher* 45(3), 196-205.
- De Jong, M., Bus, A.G. (2004). The efficacy of electronic books in fostering kindergarten children's emergent story understanding. *Reading Research Quarterly* 39(4), 378-393 doi: 10.1569/PRQ39.4.2.
- Drecktrah, M.E., & Chiang, B. (1997). Instructional strategies used by general educators and teachers of students with learning disabilities. *Remedial and Special Education* 18(3), 174-181.
- Gambrell, L. B., Morrow, L. M., & Pressley, M. (Eds.). (2007). *Best Practices in Literacy Instruction*. Guilford Press: New York.
- Gee, James Paul. (1991). What is Literacy? In C. Mitchell & K. Weiler (eds.). *Rewriting*

- Literacy: Cultural and the Discourse of the Other. (pp.3-11). Series: Critical Studies in Education and Culture, H. A. Giroux & P. Freire (eds.). New York: Bergin & Garvey.*
- Goodwyn, A. (1998). *Literary and media texts in secondary English: New approaches.* New York, NY: Cassell Education.
- Greene Brabham, E. & Kidd Villaume S. (2000). Questions and answers: Continuing conversations about Literature Circles. *The Reading Teacher* 54(3). 278-280.
- Grimshaw, S., Dungworth, N. & McKnight, C. (2007). Electronic books: Children's reading and comprehension. *British Journal of Educational Technology* 38(4), 583-599
- Gunning, T. G. (2008). *Creating literacy instruction for all children* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Heward, W. L. (2009). *Exceptional Children* (9<sup>th</sup> ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- Hoffman, M. (1991). *Amazing Grace.* New York, New York: Dial Books
- Hong Xu, S. (2002). Teachers' full knowledge of students' popular culture and the integration of aspects of that culture in the literacy instruction. *Education* 122 (4), 721-730.
- Klages, C., Pate, S, Conforti, Jr., P.A. (2007). Virtual Literature Circles: A study of learning, collaboration, and synthesis in using collaborative classrooms in cyberspace. *Curriculum and teaching Dialogue* 9(1&2) 293-309.
- Kucer, S. B. (2004). *Dimensions of literacy: A conceptual base for the teaching of reading and writing in school settings.* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Lapp, D., Flood, J., & Fisher, D. (1999). *Intermediality: How the used of multiple media*

- enhances learning. *The Reading Teacher* 52 (7), 776-780.
- Lee, H.J. (2005). Developing a professional development program model based on teachers' needs. *The Professional Educator* 27(1) 39-49.
- Ruddell, R.B. & Unrau, N.J. (2004). *Theoretical models and Processes of Reading*, (5th ed.) Newark, DE: IRA.
- Spinelli, J. (1990). *Maniac MaGee*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown & Company.
- Stewart, P. (2009). Facebook and virtual Literature Circles partnership in building a community of readers. *Knowledge Quest* 37(4) 28-33.
- Thomas, M., & Hofmeister, D. (2002). Assessing the effectiveness of technology integration message boards for strengthening literacy. *Computers & Education* 38, 233-240. doi:10.1016/S0360-1315(01)00079-3.
- Tracey, D. H., Morrow, L. M. (2006). *Lenses on reading: An introduction to Theories and Models*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Vacca, R. T., & Vacca, J. L. (2008). *Content area reading: Literacy and learning across the curriculum* (9<sup>th</sup> ed). New York, NY: Allyn and Bacon.
- Walsh, C.S. (2009). The multi-modal redesign of school texts. *Journal of Research in Reading* 32(1), 126-136. doi10.1111/j.1467-9817.2228.01385.x.
- Witt, S. (2007). "I love reading!":-Fifth and sixth graders react to Literature Circles. *Lutheran Education Journal* 141(3), 179-190.

Appendix A: Proposed workshop Agenda

**USING LITERATURE CIRCLES WITH NON-PRINT TEXTS  
COMPARED TO PRINT-BASED TEXTS**

*The goal of the workshop is to inform teachers of grades 3-6 the possibilities of using Literature Circles with non-print texts to enhance students' literary skills.*



**AGENDA**

**8:00AM:** Registration/ Refreshments

**8:30AM:** Welcome: Introduction and Workshop Layout

**8:45AM:** Rational for Literature Circles with Print-Based Texts

**9:45AM:** BREAK

**10:00AM:** Rational for Virtual Literature Circles with Non-Print Texts

**11:00AM:** Rational for Literature Circles with the Common Core Standards

**11:30AM:** Closing: Questions and Survey



**Appendix B: Satisfaction Survey**

*Please answer the following questions regarding this following presentation. Your input will be incorporated into future presentations.*

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Do you already use Literature Circles in you in literacy instruction?		
Do you have a class website where students can discuss school work?		
Would you use Literature Circles with non-print text?		
Would you conduct an online Literature Circle with your class?		
Was the presenter knowledgeable and present the information clear and concise?		

1.) Please comment on how resourceful this presentation was to you?

---



---



---

2.) How can this information be utilized in your classroom?

---

---

---

---

