

Literature Discussion Groups: A Context for Developing Deep Comprehension



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Literature Discussion Groups

- Small group discussions about books
- Predictable, yet flexible, structure
- Conversational norms and discourse chains



Mini-Lesson

- Prior to the Literature Discussion Group, the teacher provides a mini-lesson on one of five areas:
 - Organizing to learn
 - Conversational norms
 - Comprehending strategies
 - Vocabulary strategies
 - Problem-solving strategies



Literature Discussion Groups

- Small group discussions about books
- Predictable, yet flexible, structure
- Teacher led groups
 - Then peer discussions
 - Individual teacher conference



Dorn, L. & Soffos, C. (2005). *Teaching for Deep Comprehension: A Reading Workshop Approach*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers.

Component 1: Introducing & Selecting a Book

- Teacher collects several books within a particular genre or author study
- Teacher gives brief book talk on each book
- Students rate their top 3 choices
- Most popular book is used for book discussion
- Remaining texts are placed in classroom library for read-aloud, choice reading, or later discussion group.



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Component 2: Independent Reading

- Students read silently
 - They use response logs, story maps, sticky notes to monitor their thinking and prepare for teacher conference and group discussion.



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Component 3: Teacher Conference

- Teacher conducts individual conferences.
 - Student brings response log and/or story map to conference
 - Teacher prompts student for comprehending, problem-solving, and self-reflecting



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Component 4: Literature Discussion Group

- Teacher convenes group
- Students bring logs and books
- Teacher is participant observer, prompting as needed



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Types of Literature Focus Groups

- ✓ Settings
- ✓ Characters
- ✓ Episodes
- ✓ Time lines
- ✓ Multiple problems
- ✓ Resolutions
- ✓ Cause and Effect
- ✓ Mood of Selection
- ✓ Author's Purpose
- ✓ Sequence of Events
- ✓ Fact and Opinion
- ✓ Conclusions



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Component 5: Peer Discussion

- Extension of literature discussion groups with the teacher.
- Students continue discussing texts after they leave the group.
- Teacher sits outside the group and observes how well students are doing.
- Teacher guides students to self-assess their group interactions.



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Component 6: Text Maps & Story Organizers

	- Because of Winn-Dixie -		
Characters - India Opal - Beaker - Winn-Dixie - The store manager	Settings - Last summer - Winn-Dixie grocery store	Questions - Where did Winn-Dixie come from? - Who owns him? - Will Opal get to keep him?	Predictions/opinions - Chapter 1 - He's a stray Cribby showing mottled fur he is lost (no one claims him) - Yes (the book's title gives us a clue) - Chapter 2 - Maybe she died or her parents die. Guess No (the trailer park rules she is an exception)
Teacher/Dad Opal Winn-Dixie	Naomi, Florida Friendly Grove Trailer Park	Where is her mom? Does she have brothers/sisters?	Chapter 3 - She is getting older. Either able to understand - Why is Opal afraid her dad will get mad if she asks about her mom?
Teacher/Dad Opal Winn-Dixie	Opal's house (trailer park)	Why is Opal thinking about her mother more since they moved? Why is Opal afraid her dad will get mad if she asks about her mom?	Chapter 4 - Somewhere for people who drink
Opal (has old hair & truck- he has her mom) Teacher Winn-Dixie		Where is Opal's mom? Will she ever come back? Did her mom die?	Chapter 5 - Maybe they are poor or they are starting a new church
Opal Winn-Dixie Teacher People at the church	The Open Arms Baptist Church	Why is the church in an old store? Did Opal's mom send Winn-Dixie to the church?	

Component 7: Literature Extensions

- Peer Discussions
- Read another book in the collection
- Conduct an Internet search on the author
- Write a letter to the author
- Rewrite text into play, assign parts and perform for the class
- Interview the author or illustrator
- Create a timeline of events
- Do a character analysis



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