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LITERATURE CIRCLES IN EFL:
HOW THEY STIMULATE THE SOCIAL INTERACTION
AND PROMOTE COLLABORATIVE LEARNING
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ЛИТЕРАТУРНИ КРЪГОВЕ В EFL:
КАК ТЕ СТИМУЛИРА СОЦИАЛНОТО ВЗАИМОДЕЙСТВИЕ
И НАСЪРЧАВА СЪВМЕСТНОТО УЧЕНЕ
ОСМАН БЕДЕЛ

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DECLARATION

The work submitted in this dissertation is the result of my own investigation, except where otherwise stated.

It has not already been accepted for any degree, and is also not being concurrently submitted for any other degree.

Signature _____

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6 October 2011

I endorse the declaration by the candidate.

Signature _____

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LITERATURE CIRCLES IN EFL:
HOW THEY STIMULATE COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

ABSTRACT

Most English language learners often say that reading, which is a vital element of language learning, is boring and difficult. This problematic situation might be the result of not practicing EFL reading in the right way. This research intends to investigate the language interactions and classroom discourse taking place during literature circles and how these might affect the language development of EFL learners. Literature circles are classroom discussion groups made of students who read a specific section of a book or a piece of literature and perform the tasks that correspond to their roles that change for every meeting. The suggested thesis statement is that, as a balanced element of the school curriculum, literature circles can provide an exciting way to promote student engagement in extensive reading by means of cooperative learning and collaborative work and offer the potential to promote reading for enjoyment. The results reveal that, throughout the literature circles, the students were highly motivated for reading and in that way improved their interactional skills in English as they were provided with a bona fide atmosphere of practicing language with similar tasks as they had before but this time for a more realistic purpose and in a more authentic environment.

Keywords: EFL, book discussion clubs, literature, reading circles, classroom interaction, collaborative language learning

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my beloved wife Sıdıka, for her love, support and patience during the time it has taken me to complete it, and my children, Melih Dağhan and Meltem İdil, for their endless love, joy and encouragement.

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Table of Contents

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
Statement of the Problem	1
Background and Aims.....	2
Object of the Study	3
Thesis Statement	3
Outline of the Study	4
 CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	6
Theoretical Considerations	9
Historical Background	11
Current Research.....	12
 CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	15
Research Method and Design	16
Conceptual framework.	19
Research objectives.....	21
Research questions.....	22
Thesis statement.....	24
Participants.....	24
Sampling frame.	25
Confidentiality and privacy.....	26
Instrument Selection	26
Data Elements and Definitions	27
Research Procedure.....	29
Data Analysis.....	36
 CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION.....	38
Findings	38
Classroom observations.	38
Video recordings.	42
Student questionnaires.	43
Problems experienced.	67

Discussion	69
General Conclusions.	77
Practical and Theoretical Implications.....	79
Recommendations for Future Research.	79
 CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION.....	81
Summary	84
Implications	86
Limitations and Suggestions	86
 REFERENCES	88
 APPENDICES	93
Appendix A: Twelve Most Common Themes in Literature	93
Appendix B: Teacher Observation Checklist (Social and Thinking Skills)	94
Appendix C: Results - Interactive Skills Observation (Social/Thinking).....	96
Appendix D1: Questionnaire – Discussion Self-Assessment	98
Appendix D2: Questionnaire – Discussion Group Assessment.....	99
Appendix D3: Questionnaire – Literature Circles Evaluation	100
Appendix D4: Questionnaires – Discussion Group Evaluation.....	101
Appendix E: Sample Transcriptions of the Video Recordings	102
Appendix G: Sample Reading Circles Schedule.....	112
Appendix H: Sample Tasks from Student Journals	113
Appendix I: Screen Captures of Some Video Recordings of Literature Circles.....	116
Appendix J: Group Dynamics – Social Skills Categorization	117
Appendix K1: Sample – Discussion Self-Assessment.....	118
Appendix K2: Sample – Discussion Group Assessment	118
Appendix K3: Sample – Literature Circles Evaluation.....	119
Appendix K4: Sample – Discussion Group Evaluation.....	121

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 1: What Literature Circles Are	8
Table 2: Literature Circles in a Comprehensive Literacy Program.....	22
Table 3: Bale’s Interaction Process Analysis (IPA) – Code Categories	36
Table 4: Involvement Rates of Participants – General Figures.....	39
Graph 1: Involvement rate of participants in Social Skills	39
Graph 2: Involvement rate of participants in Thinking Skills.....	40
Table 5: Most Frequent Expressions Literature Circle Groups Use	41
Graph 3: Self-Assessment Results	45
Table 6: Self-Assessment Statistics	47
Graph 4: Discussion Group Assessment Results	51
Table 7: Discussion Group Assessment Statistics	52
Graph 5: Literature Circles Evaluation Results	59
Table 8: Literature Circles Evaluation Statistics	61
Graph 6: Reading Circles – Discussion Roles	70

LITERATURE CIRCLES IN THE EFL CLASSROOM:
HOW THEY STIMULATE THE SOCIAL INTERACTION
AND PROMOTE COLLABORATIVE LEARNING IN EFL

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

As a practicing English teacher in Bulgaria, I was going through some conference proceedings, searching for a textbook for my extensive reading class when I came across ‘Bookworms Club’ series editor, Mark Furr’s exciting remarks about literature circles, where he simply states that they are ‘magic’ (Furr, 2004, p. 1). He thinks that they are the magic formula for natural, enjoyable discussions in English language classes. He eagerly tells his experience about literature circles, which he believes, transformed his students from passive, rather shy, reticent Japanese university students into students who eagerly refer to their texts in order to support their arguments while sharing their opinions in English. I was curious about the dramatic effect of ‘student to student’ interactions taking place in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes during these literature circles and decided to conduct a study on ‘Literature Circles in EFL’ to find out how they stimulate social interaction and promote collaborative learning among EFL learners.

Statement of the Problem

According to Georgieva (2004, p. 21), the growing agreement among TEFL specialists and practitioners alike that language learning is, in fact, learning to communicate, has brought about a radical shift in focus in national syllabuses and teaching materials towards skills of communication. Today, nearly all EFL coursebooks compete to include the most up-to-date and interesting texts for the target age group, while on the other hand the fiction literature has a treasure of themes (see Appendix A, p. 93) which, I believe, relate more to our everyday lives. All this goes

against what most English language learners and many English teachers as well believe: poems, short stories, and plays do not have a major role in classrooms aimed at developing communicative competence in English, and literary texts are only for advanced learners. In reality, most students often think that the study of English literature is boring and difficult. This problematic situation might be the result of not teaching literature in the right way. Most English learners think that studying literature is definitely not the right way to develop either language skills or interest into literature.

Background and Aims

When I was in quest of where the idea for literature circles first came from, I learned about the adult book discussion clubs, the centuries-old tradition of informally talking about stories and books among adult readers. These adult book clubs are groups of people who meet regularly to discuss the specific book they have read and express their opinions, likes or dislikes about it. Integrating these book clubs into school curriculum was first practiced by an American teacher and researcher, Harvey Daniels and his colleagues, who started a project in Chicago in connection with bringing these adult book discussion groups into elementary and secondary school native language (L1) classes (Daniels, 2002, p. 1). Together, they have done a great deal of research and Daniels has reported the success of literature circles in L1 English classrooms in North America, especially mentioning that literature circles have developed a prolific professional literature and research base in the US (Daniels, 2002, p. 7).

In this paper, I attempted to investigate and expected to find out what language interactions and classroom discourse are taking place in literature circles and how this might affect the language development of foreign language learners. The research further aimed to discover if studying literary texts makes language acquisition more focused on meaning than form and if it is beneficial to include such literature in EFL curriculum at all stages of language learning.

Object of the Study

Presently, most of the foreign language teachers, like me, are in search of specific learning approaches that have strong student centered components like cooperative and collaborative learning techniques. In this study, the term ‘Literature Circles in EFL’ refers to small groups of students reading the same piece of literature to accomplish different tasks like preparing questions, reporting challenging vocabulary, finding cultural items, determining the well written parts or making connections with their own lives and contemporary society. The members of the groups later come together in the classroom to have a discussion under the supervision of their English teacher on the piece of literature they covered. Being greatly influenced by the effect of these literature circles in L1 English classrooms in North America, I was urged to conduct a research to find out more about how teachers can increase the student interaction and adapt literature circles into EFL classes to increase foreign language competence. The main question arising from the problem at this stage was: Is there an effective way to use literature in the EFL classroom? I was also focused on how much the student interaction in an EFL class could be encouraged through literature circles.

Thesis Statement

Considering the aforementioned objectives of the study, the main thesis statement of the research suggests that, as a balanced element of the school curriculum, literature circles can provide an exciting way to promote student engagement in social interactions and improve foreign language learning by means of cooperative learning and collaborative work and offer the potential to promote reading for pleasure.

Basically, this has been the formulation of the main thesis statement, which attempts to explain how the discussions during literature circles increase student-to-student interaction, which leads to better learning of foreign languages, and the way how language can be integrated into the activity routines of the classroom.

At this stage, it would be appropriate to mention that the first sparkle for this research study has been the successful implementation of the reading circles in L1 classes in North America. In the light of this inspiration, careful review of the related literature and other successful practices of literature circles in EFL classes around the world have provided the stimulus to find out the interaction patterns perfected within these discussion groups.

Outline of the Study

Together with this introduction chapter, this thesis is organized in five main chapters. The first chapter, apart from providing an overview of the study and the influencing factors in its development, also briefly introduced the setting, main thesis statement and methods used in the study.

The second chapter, apart from the theoretical considerations behind the study, includes the literature review, which provides the necessary background information to familiarize with the prior research and the relevant theory about collaborative learning, literature circles and classroom interaction among students.

The third chapter, which is about the study design and the methodology of the research, begins with the explanation about why the mixed method was particularly preferred for the research on literature circles in EFL classes. Next, the specific data about the participants and how they were chosen is explained and the rationale for the use of specific sample size is clarified. Then, all tools and instruments used in the study and included in the appendix section are described in detail. What follows is the detailed report of how the research was actually carried out the research and the data collection procedure. The last thing in this chapter would be the step-by-step data analysis procedure which is followed by a summary of the research design and methodology.

The fourth chapter mainly contains the findings and discussion of the research. The results part presents the data collected with class observations, discussions' video recordings, interviews and questionnaires which provide relevant information for the research questions. The following section includes the discussion of the findings from

the research project, presents general conclusions and practical and theoretical implications and finally recommendations for the future.

The fifth chapter is the final chapter where the entire research is summed up, revisiting the initial problem and thesis statement and presenting the conclusions reached, as well as the limitations and practical implications of the research project. Here, I have also mentioned my thoughts about the overall impact of this research in the field and how the results may affect the EFL classroom. Finally I introduced my suggestions for further research on the field which I believe would have great practical implications for the EFL classroom.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The previous introductory chapter briefly presented the issue related to the implementation of extensive reading activities into EFL classes and it concluded with an outline of the study. The purpose of this chapter is to present a survey of the related literature in an attempt to better present the literature circles as well as their associated use for EFL. As a start, ‘Theoretical Considerations’ section will focus on the theories behind the research giving definitions of the key concepts like independent reading, reader response theory and collaborative learning. Next, the ‘Historical Background’ section gives a summary of the previous research results that can be further discussed or challenged. Finally, ‘Current Research’ section concludes with the contemporary studies on literature circles and practices on their adaptation to language classes.

To start with the nature of the topic under discussion the research mainly deals with the usage of literary texts to improve interactional skills of language learners. For this reason it would be appropriate to clarify that literature has been defined differently by many scholars at different periods of history. Understanding of literature depends on the individual reader’s memories, associations, thoughts, and questions; the author stimulates this within the reader by the words and sentences (Probst, 1992, p. 75). Literature, most basically, can be defined as a body of written works. The term has traditionally been used to describe the imaginative works of poetry and prose distinguished by the intentions of their authors and the perceived aesthetic excellence of their execution. Taking the necessary criteria into consideration, literature may be classified according to a variety of systems, including language, national origin, historical period, genre, and subject matter (Literature, 2011). What this study mainly focuses on is the language aspect of literature. More specifically, it concentrates on methods of using literature to enhance the quality of foreign language learning at schools.

While the definition of literature is so blurred, can we share the same goals of teaching literature? Obviously not! But in our specific subject area, the goal is using literature to improve the effectiveness of foreign language teaching. In her book,

Showalter defines the objective in teaching literature as: "... to train our students to think, read, analyze, and write like literary scholars, or approach literary problems as trained specialists in the field do, to learn a literary methodology, in short to 'do' literature as scientists 'do' science" (Showalter, 2003, p. 25). This idea exactly matches with our intentions to use literature in foreign language learning. In the case of learning a foreign language, studying literature is for the sake of all those new words, collocations, phrasal verbs, idioms and most importantly for a better command of interactional patterns to communicate with others. The main function literature performs in EFL classes is that; it enables working on language items in a more realistic atmosphere by having students read, think, analyze, write and discuss in the classroom in the form of 'reading for pleasure' and 'discussion groups'.

In the light of all this, we can define 'literature circles in EFL' as the teacher accompanied classroom discussion groups among English language learners, who regularly get together in class to speak about and share their ideas, and comment on others' interpretations about the previously determined section of a graded reader or an authentic text in English, using their 'role-sheets' and 'student journals' in collaboration with each other. This is our EFL consideration of the literature circles, but apart from this people had already been using literature circles for quite a long time.

As DaLie (2001, p. 85) explains, a literature circle is a students' equivalent of an adult book club in the classroom. The aim is to encourage student-choice and a love of reading in young people. The true intent of Literature Circles is to allow students to practice and develop the skills and strategies of good readers. During these discussions, small groups of students gather to discuss a piece of literature in depth. Discussions are guided by students' responses to what they have read. You may hear talks about events and characters in the book, the author's craft, or personal experiences related to the story (Schlick Noe & Johnson, 1999, p. ix). Literature circles can also be described as a form of independent reading, structured as collaborative small groups, and guided by reader-response principles in light of current comprehension research (Daniels, 2002, p. 38).

About the practical outcomes of literature circles, Kasten (1995, p. 70) believes that they promote peer discussions, negotiation of ideas, and the expression of comprehension, which is a feature that is most common in literature circles. Here is a general understanding of literature circles, where we can clearly see that the easiest way to understand what literature circles are is to examine what they are not.

Table 1: What Literature Circles Are

Literature Circles are . . .	Literature Circles are not . . .
Reader response centered	Teacher and text centered
Part of a balanced literacy program	The entire reading curriculum
Groups formed by book choice	Teacher-assigned groups formed solely by ability
Structured for student independence, responsibility, and ownership	Unstructured, uncontrolled "talk time" without accountability
Guided primarily by student insights and questions	Guided primarily by teacher- or curriculum-based questions
Intended as a context in which to <i>apply</i> reading and writing skills	Intended as a place to do skills work
Flexible and fluid; never look the same twice	Tied to a prescriptive "recipe"

From *Getting Started with Literature Circles*
 by Katherine L. Schlick Noe & Nancy J. Johnson
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Theoretical Considerations

Currently, most of the foreign language teachers are in search of specific learning approaches that have strong student centered components like cooperative and collaborative learning. Similarly, classroom interaction functions as an important tool children use to develop their cognitive abilities as well as to build up self-esteem, a sense of belonging and capacity for autonomous learning (Georgieva, 1999, p. 108). Collie and Slater (1987) on the other hand state that there are four main reasons which lead a language teacher to use literature in the classroom. These main factors requiring the use of literature as a powerful resource in the classroom context are valuable authentic material, cultural enrichment, language enrichment and personal involvement. The reason behind reading and studying literature can be given as integrating language into the EFL classroom, which supports language learning by literary text types at all levels of difficulty. Thus the basic ‘skills and competences’ like reading, speaking, writing, listening, mediating, and ‘linguistic domains’ such as lexis, grammar and pragmatics can be improved (Thaler, 2008, p. 23). Eventually, all this leads to what is called ‘language development’.

To emphasize the parameters of the topic in terms of what it includes and excludes we can refer to the main thesis statement of this study which suggests that, as part of the school curriculum, literature circles can provide an exciting way to promote student engagement in social interactions and improve foreign language learning by means of cooperative learning and collaborative work and offer the potential to promote reading for pleasure. For these purposes, this research is not directly about teaching of literature, but studies the effects of teaching literature on foreign language learning. It gives an insight of how literature circles can be collaboratively integrated into foreign language learning.

The research intends to discover if studying literary texts makes language acquisition more focused on meaning than form and if it is beneficial to include such literature in EFL curriculum at all stages of language learning. To make a clear distinction between form and meaning, it would be best to define ‘meaning-focused’ approach to foreign language instruction as providing exposure to rich input and

meaningful use of the foreign language in context, which is intended to lead to incidental acquisition of the foreign language (Norris & Ortega, 2001, p. 160). On the contrary, 'form-focused' instruction is defined as "any planned or incidental instructional activity that is intended to induce language learners to pay attention to linguistic form" (Ellis, 2001, p. 2).

Collaborative learning can be defined as the keystone for literature circle studies in foreign language classes. As Macaro (1997, p. 134) defines, collaborative learning is when learners are encouraged to achieve common learning goals by working together rather than with the teacher and when they demonstrate that they value and respect each other's language input. And the teacher becomes a facilitator for the students to achieve these goals. In collaborative learning, there is a sharing of authority and acceptance of responsibility among group members for the group's actions. The underlying premise of collaborative learning is based upon consensus building through cooperation by group members, in contrast to competition in which individuals best other group members (Panitz, 1996, p. 2). Although cooperative learning is assumed to be more or less the same with collaborative learning, Panitz (1996, p. 2) makes a brief and immediately comprehensible distinction. He defines cooperative learning as more directive than a collaborative system and closely controlled by the teacher. While there are many mechanisms for group analysis and introspection, the fundamental approach is teacher centered whereas collaborative learning is more student centered.

My main source of information has been Harvey Daniels' studies on implementing literature circles in North American L1 classes (Daniels, 2002). These discussion groups have been quite popular recently and have been adapted to school curriculum by many L1 English language teachers in the US. Besides, Dr. Katherine L. Schlick Noe's books and resources on the Internet have certainly been of great benefit (Noe, 2011). This "Literature Circles Resource Center" on the Internet is designed to support L1 teachers as they plan and use literature circles in their elementary and middle school classrooms. Getting more specific about the usage of literature circles in EFL, Mark Furr has been one of the few people who designed

graded reader activities for EFL classes to be used for literature circles, which he calls 'reading circles'. Furr explains the motivation of students to acquire the four skills in reading circles as, "the material is both comprehensible and interesting to talk about, and it consists of a framework in terms of organization and arrangement of exercises which makes having a real discussion in English an achievable goal for students" (Furr, 2009, p. 5).

Historical Background

Examining literature circles in EFL, to start with the chronological background, we shall first find out what a book club is. Traditionally, an adult book club or a reading group is a company of several readers who regularly meet to discuss the books they read each month. As for the historical background of book clubs in America, the first recorded 'literature circle' has been portrayed by Laskin & Hughes as cited in Daniels (2002, p. 30) aboard a boat bound for the colonies. The noted Puritan figure Anne Hutchinson gathered a women's study group to discuss each Sunday's shipboard sermon, during their voyage to America. Hutchinson continued the practice, holding twice weekly theological discussions in her parlor, in Boston.

Back in the early 1980's, a number of teachers and students around the US simultaneously and independently invented the idea of literature circles. Pioneers like Becky Abraham Searle in Chicago and Karen Smith in Arizona began organizing their students into small, peer-led book discussion groups (Daniels, 2006, p. 10).

In 1982, Karen Smith was an elementary school teacher in Phoenix, Arizona, who was once given a box of novels by a fellow teacher and left them in the classroom and forgot about them. Later on during that year, some of her fifth grade students found the books with a fortunate coincidence and organized themselves loosely into groups and started to discuss the novels. She was surprised at the degree of their engagement with the books and the complexity of their discussions, as they had no outside help or instruction from their teacher. Smith is now known to be one of the first teachers who implemented literature circles into school context (Daniels, 2002, p. 32). The idea of literature circles at school was later developed by Kathy G.

Short and Gloria Kauffman based on Karen Smith's work with literature studies. Their argument about the implementation of these reading groups into school curriculum is discussed in Kathy G. Short's dissertation (Short, 1989).

To explain the current mainstream versus alternative theoretical viewpoints, Daniels (2002, p. 1), states in his Introduction to *Literature Circles*, that literature circles have changed over time like the schools and even the world itself. He further explains that "what used to be a quiet, home-grown activity in a few scattered classrooms has become a trend, a boom, almost a fad". As we can see, the book clubs which are popular in public soon became effective in school life as well. He claims that now literally millions of students are involved in some kind of small, peer-led reading discussion group, which they call literature circles or activities that look very much the same (Daniels, 2002, p. 1). The transition of book clubs from social life to school curriculum has been quite a natural one.

This transfer of book club experience into the classroom by teachers is very well defined by Daniels (2002) in his book *Literature Circles* where he briefly summarized the process:

"When we go back to our jobs as schoolteachers, we are trying to transfer the energy, the depth of thought and emotion, the lifelong commitment to books and ideas we have experienced ourselves. Whenever we run into problems translating book clubs to the school world, our own grown-up book club experience serves as our management touchstone. We can always ask ourselves first. Well, how do we deal with this problem in our own reading groups? In short, many of us who have been experimenting with literature circles are simply trying to import a powerful, beautiful, naturally occurring literacy structure called "book clubs" into the public schools—without messing them up. " (p. 3)

Current Research

In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in literature circles and there are a number of studies conducted to see their performance in language learning classes. In this section, brief information about the current research and possible approaches to the subject will be presented.

A recent research on literature circles is conducted by Harvey Daniels. The research links literature circles to the student achievement. The study mainly helped

teachers implement literature circles as part of L1 reading curriculum. According to the research school-wide results were encouraging (Daniels, 2002, p. 32).

Another study of fourth graders by Klinger, Vaughn, and Schumm (1998, p. 17) found that students in peer-led groups made greater gains than control groups in reading comprehension and equal gains in content knowledge after reading and discussing social studies material in peer-led groups. This effect was confirmed through a standardized reading test, a social studies unit test, and audiotapes of group work.

In their chapter which explores how literature circles work for students and in particular for English learners, Gilmore and Day (2006, p. 208) suggest that students who are learning English feel more comfortable speaking in small-group settings. Literature circles are a wonderful way to scaffold English learners for this reason. Literature circles also allow fluent English speakers to learn more about students and their cultures in a more intimate way. Through literature circles, all students are able to share what they think and how they feel about books.

In the same way, Carrison (2005, p. 110) in her article, which discusses benefits of using literature circles with EFL students to strengthen literacy skills and student confidence, expresses that using literature circles is a fun and exciting way to afford students' choice while at the same time exposing them to powerful strategies to build confidence and enhance their language and literacy. She defines literature circles as "decreased anxiety about reading and participation, increased motivation on everyone's part, and improved reading accuracy and comprehension".

Deana Day is another researcher who suggests that literature circles are valuable and important for young adolescents. Areas that helped this teacher become a believer in literature circles included: students' ability to talk about books in the literature circles, students' natural discussions on the major themes and literary elements, students' understanding of the texts, and their active engagement and excitement (Day, 2008, p. 157).

A paper by Kim Myonghee was written exploring literature circles work in the context of L2 instruction through a close scrutiny of classroom interactions in an adult

ESL class where nine ESL learners read fictional works and discussed the readings. The findings suggest that the literature discussions helped the students emotionally and intellectually to participate in the literary text, generating an opportunity for enjoyable L2 reading experiences. In addition, the literature discussions contributed to promoting students' L2 communicative competence by offering chances for them to produce extended output (Myonghee, 2004, p. 145).

Christina Sanchez is yet another researcher whose purpose is to address the question: What language interactions occur within literature circles and how might this affect the oral language development of English learners? Her study addresses the question with six English learners in the fourth grade who are responding to literature in a literature circle. She has observed her students engaging in meaningful discussions about literature and expressing many levels of thinking. After completing her research report she is convinced that literature circles are one key to the successful development of English oral language for second language learners (Sanchez, 1999, p. 4).

In his paper Kim presents a three-step framework for teachers to design literature-related activities: (1) pre-reading, (2) discussion, (3) project and evaluation. He states that these three steps help foreign language students achieve a true personal encounter with texts and interpret, appreciate and gain satisfaction from them. He suggests that if literature in the EFL classroom is taught in a response-based manner, it is not just a vehicle for language teaching, but a form of aesthetic enlightenment (Kim, 2000, p. 3).

Hsu, mentions that, as the extension of reader-response theory, literature circles provide more specific direction and guidance for L2 learners to approach literature by rotating different kinds of discussion roles. He believes in giving students more freedom to decide what they want to learn, to read, and to get out of each reading classroom. He defines his goal of implementing literature circles as; to provide the opportunities for his students to explore the literacy experiences and become active and life-long readers. (Hsu, 2000, p. 10)

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The preceding chapters presented the background of the study, defined the research problems, annotated the findings of relevant literature related to using literature circles in EFL classes to improve the language proficiency of students at schools and presented the theoretical underpinning for the study. In the first section of this chapter, the research design is described and the research hypotheses and questions are also presented. Then, the chapter describes the participants, instrument selection, data elements and definitions, research procedure and explains the data analysis procedure.

This part, which is about the methodology and the study design of the research, firstly explains why the ‘Mixed Method’, which uses both deductive and inductive methods, obtains both quantitative and qualitative data, and takes a balanced approach to the research, was particularly preferred for the research on literature circles in EFL. Furthermore, the specifications of the participants and the reasons why they were selected are explained and the rationale for the use of the determined sample size is defined in detail. Moreover, all tools and instruments used in the study and included in the appendix section are precisely described. What follows is the detailed report of how the research is actually carried out, and the procedure for the collection of the necessary data. Finally, a step-by-step data analysis procedure of the study is explained, which is accompanied by a summary of the research design and methodology as conclusion.

This is an empirical research on EFL classes, which was conducted as a study of the relation between student-interaction and foreign language acquisition, aiming to explore whether literature circles facilitate foreign language acquisition through the stimulation of student-interaction in EFL classes. Fundamentally, the literature circle discussions stem from three main streams of thought: independent reading, reader response theory, and collaborative learning. The importance of independent reading to student’s lifelong literacy development has recently been stressed in every major report showing that reading achievement is more highly correlated with independent

reading than with any other single factor. As Grozdanova (2010, p. 148) reminds us, teachers need to expand their professional repertoire with teaching devices that will enhance learners' autonomy and ability to take part in the genuine exchange of information. Similarly, the term collaborative learning is increasingly being used to define the small-group work achieved by designing higher-order, student-centred, open-ended activities. Finally, the reader response theory, which is developed by Rosenblatt, has been a fundamental insight in Literature as Exploration that a text is just ink on a page until a reader comes along and gives it life (Daniels, 2002, p. 33).

Research Method and Design

This section gives a short summary and the comparison of the qualitative and quantitative research methods and the reasons behind the choice of a Mixed Method (Qualitative-Quantitative) for the study on literature circles in EFL classes.

After reviewing the related literature and formulating a research problem, it was time to conceptualize a research design, a study was planned to explain how to increase student interaction which leads to better learning of foreign languages and integrate language into the activity routines of the classroom. Therefore, the data which is necessary for the research was planned to be collected by methods of analyzing classroom interaction which involves the analysis of classroom talk during the literature circles. To achieve this, a classroom observation form (see Appendix B, p. 94) for the teacher was chosen which complies with Bales' Interaction Process Analysis (IPA) System (Bales, 1999, p. 183). Later, the data collected will be interpreted according to Bales' IPA system and may be exposed to conceptual analysis and may lead to further relevant data collection or writing conclusions for the research.

While searching for more information on the classroom observation research methodology for the project, I came across Lemke's statements where he embraces a social perspective on language that sees schools not as 'knowledge delivery systems' but as social institutions in which people affect each other's lives. He argues that classroom education is talk, "It is the social use of language to enact regular activity

structures and to share systems of meaning among teachers and students” (Lemke, p. 1). Related to this we cannot think of having experimental groups and a control groups at an educational school environment. In this case a qualitative method seems to be more appropriate. But on the other hand it would be very beneficial to evaluate the results of a questionnaire in terms of numbers and percentages.

The deductive approach is defined as a testing of theories. The researcher proceeds with a set of theories and conceptual precepts in mind and formulates the study’s hypothesis on its basis. Following from that, the research proceeds to test the proposed hypothesis. Conclusions of this type of approach emerge logically from available facts.

The inductive approach, on the other hand, starts with the collected empirical data and proceeds to formulate concepts and theories in accordance with that data. This type of approach moves from specific observations to broader generalizations and theories and the conclusions are based on gathered facts.

Quantitative tools are used for the production of statistical data which proceeds from numbers and statistical methods. It moves from theory to confirmation and tends to be based on deductive reasoning to test casual hypothesis. Considering the procedures like sampling strategies and experimental designs involved in quantitative research, the researcher’s role is to observe and measure and objectivity is of utmost concern.

In comparison, qualitative researchers seek to make sense of personal stories and the ways in which they interact. Qualitative inquiry is an umbrella term for various philosophical orientations to interpretive research like ethnography, case study, participatory research, etc. Qualitative research builds the theory through inductive reasoning, moving from observations to theory. Qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them.

On the other hand, the ‘Mixed Method’, which is preferred for this research on literature circles in EFL, conceptualizes a wholistic approach, which closes the gap between the deductive and inductive reasoning and attempts to corroborate and

complement findings, and takes a balanced approach to research, completes the cycle between the hypothesis and theory.

Although formal experiments are widely used to collect evidence on language learning and use, they are comparatively rare in genuine classrooms which have been constituted for teaching purposes, not for the purpose of data collection (Nunan, 1992, p. 92). This research intends to observe the interaction among students in EFL classrooms during the discussions in literature circles, which involve the social use of language to enact regular activity structures and to share systems of meaning among the teachers and students (Lemke, 1985, p. 1). For this reason a flexible qualitative method, which allows greater adaptation of the interaction between the researcher and the participants, was decided to be the best method for class observation, which is followed by a semi-structured interviewing among such a small group of participants. By doing so the researcher would be able to ask more open-ended questions when necessary and the participants would be free to respond in their own words.

Ellis (1990, p. 15) states that an ethnographic study of interaction would be suitable for the classroom interaction and L2 acquisition, to test a number of hypotheses relating to how interaction in the classroom contributes to L2 acquisition and to explore which types of interaction best facilitate acquisition. In this way, the participants respond more elaborately and in greater detail and the researcher also has the opportunity to respond immediately to what participants say. While not questioning the effectiveness of the other research methods, I concluded that, a qualitative research would be the best for such a study and besides I believe that the newly generated ideas and hypotheses could be the base of a future quantitative study.

To put it briefly, after all these considerations I decided to use the mixed method for the research, which in turn involves the study of the results derived from the semi-structured interviewing, whose groundwork is done according to the issues raised by the stimulated-recall sessions following the classroom observations on student interaction related to variables defined by Bales' Interaction Process Analysis.

Conceptual framework.

This exploratory study examines whether relations exist between ‘stimulated social interaction’ in a foreign language and ‘development of conversational skills’ in an EFL environment with respect to the selected data processing methods. The variables observed include social interactions involved during literature circles lessons and related project work. This study further investigates how social interaction can be stimulated to improve the foreign language learning. In contrast, a lack of social interaction between students during literature lessons may be due to wrong adaptations of literature study into foreign language learning.

The research project mainly focuses on literature circles, which Daniels (2002, p. 35) describes as a quite sophisticated and highly evolved part of the wider collaborative learning movement. Before we make a distinction between cooperative and collaborative learning, we should know that the act of learning takes place in social interactions through joint, collaborative activity. Baquendano- López (2004, p. 247) points out that learning takes place first at the social level which is the ‘interpersonal level’ and is later appropriated by the individual one which is the ‘intrapersonal level’. Daniels (2002, p. 35) introduces a distinction between ‘cooperative learning’, which is mainly used to describe traditional skills-oriented school tasks assigned by teachers to student groups, and ‘collaborative learning’, which is preferred for more higher-order, student-centered and open-ended activities.

To find the relation between literature circles and communicative and cooperative learning, I depart from Raphael and Gavelek’s (2001, p. 98) view that literature circles can be traced to the idea of cooperative learning study groups where students work collaboratively on specific projects or tasks. It is generally difficult to make a distinction between cooperative and collaborative learning methods at the beginning. When we consider the advantages of small group structure and active student participation in collaborative and cooperative tasks over passive, lecture based teaching, the two terms seem quite close in meaning.

Cooperative learning is more directive than a collaborative system and is closely controlled by the teacher. The fundamental approach in a cooperative system is teacher centered. While, on the other hand, the underlying premise of collaborative learning is based upon consensus building by group members, where there is a sharing of authority and acceptance of responsibility among group members for the group's actions. On the other hand, experts define the differences between these methodologies as one of knowledge and power (Rockwood, 1995a, p. 8). It can be concluded that cooperative learning is based on foundational knowledge while collaborative learning is more on the constructionist's view that knowledge is a social construct.

Cooperative learning requires the instructor as the center of authority and is usually more closed-ended and usually has specific answers. In comparison, collaborative learning does not entail the instructor's authority and requires small groups which are often given more open-ended, complex tasks. In both ways learning is supported by a discovery based approach. Both methods require group skills and come with a framework upon which the group's activity resides, but cooperative learning is usually more structurally defined than collaborative learning.

Advantages of group-work are mostly the same as those mentioned in role-play section but still I would like to agree with those quoted by J. Harmer (1991, p. 245) in his textbook *The Practice of English Language teaching* where he claims that:

„In some ways group work is more dynamic than pair work: there are more people to react with and against in a group and, therefore, there is a greater possibility of discussion. There is a greater chance that at least one member of the group will be able to solve a problem when it arises, and working in groups is potentially more relaxing than working in pairs, for the latter puts a greater demand on the student's ability to co-operate closely with only one other person. It is also true to say that group work tasks can often be more exciting and dynamic than some pair work tasks. (p. 245)

Research objectives.

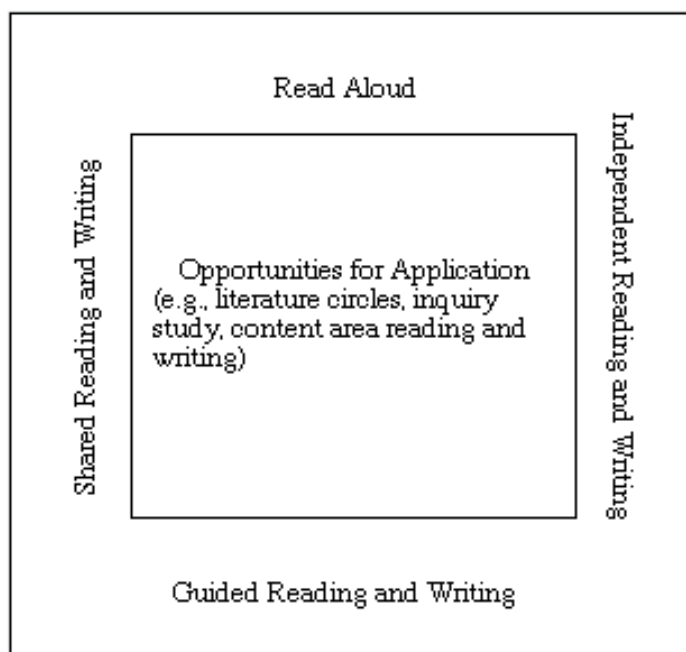
Setting off with the motivation behind the study it is apparent that this research can be important on the grounds that, with greater needs on improving foreign language learning and skills development for general language competency and exam preparation, there is a need for research into the process underlying the performance and literary materials used to stimulate the student interaction in foreign language classes through the collaborative work in literature circles. As Nunan (1992, p. 43) states, this kind of research can provide guidance for teacher education, instructional materials, and curriculum development.

As it is clear that, classroom interaction and social learning will appeal to teachers and researchers who have an interest in classroom discourse, this research tends to find out more about the extent and importance of literary discourse in foreign language acquisition and the need and importance of literary texts for a comprehensive attainment of higher levels of language skills.

Setting out from the previously mentioned problematic issues related to the difficulty of implementing literature into EFL classes, such as the lack of student centered collaborative learning techniques, my initial aim with this research was to find out how literature circles stimulate the social interaction among language learners and promote the collaborative learning in the EFL classroom. I also attempted to investigate and expected to find out what language interactions and classroom discourse are taking place in literature circles and how this might affect the language development of foreign language learners. The research further aimed to discover if studying literary texts makes language acquisition more focused on meaning than form and if it is beneficial to include such literature in EFL curriculum at all stages of language learning.

According to the current scientific approach on the subject matter, literature circles might fit into a comprehensive literacy program as a way for students to apply what they are learning about reading and writing:

Table 2: Literature Circles in a Comprehensive Literacy Program



From Chapter 1, Getting Started with Literature Circles
by Katherine L. Schlick Noe & Nancy J. Johnson.
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At this point, I would like to explain the context in which my research exists by briefing the main research questions and thesis statement and try to show how my research fits into the greater scheme of things.

Research questions.

Another significant issue was the formulation of the research questions derived from the above mentioned research objectives. Wendy C. Kasten believes that literature circles promote peer discussions, negotiation of ideas, and the expression of comprehension. The expression of comprehension is a feature that is most common in literature circles (Kasten, p. 70). Emerging from the common needs of language teachers and learners it is clear that classroom interaction and social learning will

appeal to anybody who has an interest in classroom discourse. Owing to this fact, this research aims to find out more about the extent and importance of literary discourse in foreign language acquisition.

The main focus of the research was on the responses and findings of the following major research questions: What language interactions and classroom discourse are taking place in literature circles and how might this affect the language development of foreign language learners? The intended research further aims to discover if teaching of literature or literary texts makes language acquisition more ‘use-focused’ rather than ‘form-focused’ and if it is beneficial to include literature or literary texts in EFL curriculum at all the stages of language learning in general.

Some other research questions specific to foreign language learning were: Is there an effective way to use literature in the EFL classroom? How much the student interaction in an EFL class could be encouraged through literature circles? How literature circles stimulate the social interaction among language learners and promote the collaborative learning in the EFL classroom? Why is it better than classical extensive reading methods? What are the students’ thoughts and feelings about it? What are the teachers’ observations? How do students communication skills get better in this way?

The current study on literature circles also aims to discover whether teaching of literature or literary texts makes language acquisition more ‘use-focused’ instead of ‘form-focused’ and if it is beneficial to include literature or literary texts in EFL curriculum at all the stages of language learning in general.

Setting off from these statements, this research intended to find out more about how teachers can increase the student interaction and adapt literature circles into EFL classes to improve foreign language competence. Consequently, the question which formed the basis for the selection of literature was: Is there an effective way to use literature in the EFL classroom? I was especially focused on how much the student interaction in an EFL class could be encouraged through literature circles.

Thesis statement.

My main thesis statement suggests that, as a balanced element of the school curriculum, literature circles can provide an exciting way to promote student engagement in social interaction and improve foreign language learning by means of cooperative learning and collaborative work and offer the potential to promote reading for enjoyment.

Participants

This section of the study explains the specific details about the participants of the research, like the reasons why they were chosen or their learning backgrounds. The rationale for the choice of the small sample size is also clarified in this section.

Considering the sample size for a qualitative research, Patton (1987, p. 180) states that, “The sample should be large enough to be credible, given the purpose of evaluation, but small enough to permit adequate depth and detail for each case or unit in the sample”. While selecting participants for our specific research study, sample size was kept reasonably small in order to provide better evidence and to make best use of the resources available for intensive research (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003, p. 77). Within the context of this study, the participants were primarily picked to provide a realistically available authentic classroom atmosphere to be observed and evaluated.

The study was implemented on two groups of pre-intermediate and advanced level English students, and in both cases it was identical in terms of its objectives, procedures, methodologies, and expected results. The first group consisted of 34 fourteen-year-old teenagers from eighth grade studying English at pre-intermediate level. On the other hand, the second group included 33 eighteen-year-old young adults from twelfth grade studying English at advanced level.

The main reason behind the choice of eighth grade students for the research was the age group they belonged to. According to Piaget, formal operation stage (11-12 years and beyond), was when children can logically think about abstract propositions and test hypotheses systematically. It means that before these ages children are not capable of understanding things in certain ways (Lloyd, 1995, p. 16),

which would not be appropriate to have discussions on literary excerpts. This theory of Piaget has mainly been used as the basis for scheduling the school curriculum. What is more, eighth-grade is the English Language preparatory year in language-profile high schools in Bulgaria, with more than 20 hours of English language instruction weekly. This was another advantage of having eighth-graders as participants in this research.

On the other hand, the formal operation stage is said to last until about 16 (Catell, 2000, p. 58), so the twelfth-graders, who are 18 on average, are the closest age group to the start of adulthood in a high school. What is more, they start studying English literature intensively in twelfth-grade and begin dealing with more academic tasks while getting ready for university entrance exams.

Sampling frame.

The survey was conducted on two groups of students at a private high school in Sofia, Bulgaria. The first group consisted of 34 fourteen-year-old teenagers in eighth-grade and the second group included 33 eighteen-year-old young adults in twelfth-grade. The aforementioned high school is an English language profile school, where eighth-grade is a preparatory year with 21 hours of English language instruction weekly, starting from elementary level up to the intermediate throughout the year.

In the school, starting from the ninth-grade onwards, the language of instruction for math, physics, chemistry and biology is English, as well. Twelfth-grade is the graduation year, when students study intensively to get ready for university entrance exams such as, State-Graduation-Exam, TOEFL, IELTS or SAT. Because of these reasons English language is the most crucial subject for the mentioned age groups. The school has a multicultural setting as there are many students from different nationalities and family backgrounds. The class sizes are rather small with an average of 15 students per class.

Confidentiality and privacy.

As the research involves video recordings of the discussions in classroom, some privacy issues raised during the research. The ethical duty of confidentiality must, at times, be balanced against competing ethical considerations or legal or professional requirements that call for disclosure of information obtained or created in a research context. But to be on the safe side, none of the recordings were made secretly or against the students wishes. The recordings were only used for the intended study and were not shared with any other third party for any other purpose. The video captures used to illustrate the classroom layout were intentionally kept small in size so that the faces of the students were unrecognizable. Besides, the names on the questionnaires were covered and fake names were used for the transcriptions and other forms used for the study.

Instrument Selection

This section aims to describe all the tools and instruments used in the study and included in the appendix, in detail. While conducting such a research, the type and the nature of the required data should be identified first, and the methods which are best suited to collect the identified data is to be selected (Blumberg, Cooper, & Schindler, 2005). The researcher must limit his selection of data collection methods, not to the type of data required, but to the collection methods available to him (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2005). Apart from the choice of methodology for the research, the most important element would be the instruments used to collect and analyze the data.

According to Merriam, there is no single way to conduct a field study, so a combination of methods, e.g., unstructured interviewing, direct observation, semi-structured or structured interviewing can be used (Merriam, 1998). To reach the goal in this research, three data collection methods were used. Firstly, classroom observation was conducted in the form of video recordings of the discussions in literature circles, to find out the frequency of the usage of the interactive patterns defined by Bales' IPA system a classroom observation form which complies with Bales' criteria was used to mark the frequency of the social and thinking skills by the

participants (see Appendix C, p. 96). Secondly, stimulated-recall sessions were held, watching the recordings and talking about the interaction types and patterns with the participants. Finally, semi-structured interviews are designed according to the evaluation of the observations and stimulated-recall sessions conducted.

The textbooks, which were used for this research, were picked according to the age groups of the participants. For the teenagers, Furr's "Oxford Bookworms Club Reading Circles" (2009) was selected due to its rich graded short-story content. For the young adults group, Vasseva, Mladenova, & Krispin's "Insights Through Literature" (2004) was preferred as it contains assorted excerpts from various types of literary work, to be used one for each literature circle.

As might be expected, the underlying data source is primarily semi structured, such as the video recordings of the literature circles, stimulated-recall sessions followed by interviews and questionnaires filled in by students and the researcher's notes on the discussions conducted in class. The two main variables being observed will be classroom activities like; activity type, participant organization, content, student modality and materials and classroom language like; use of target language, information gap, sustained speech, reaction to code or message, incorporation of preceding utterance, discourse initiation and relative restriction of linguistic form mentioned as the communicative orientation of language teaching by Nunan (1992, p. 99).

Data Elements and Definitions

The first type of data used for research is the students' questionnaires, which were used to collect their own perceptions of literature circles, of the group discussions and of their own performances (see Appendix D, p. 98). The second data type is the transcriptions of video recordings of dialogues during the literature circles. Using these recordings enabled us to analyze the language and interactions taking place in groups (see Appendix E, p. 102). The last type of data that is used throughout the research is the teacher's own participant observation notes where the teacher

evaluated the participant interactions and the general atmosphere of the EFL classroom.

About the choice of data collection during classroom observations, Nunan (1992, p. 92) states that, although formal experiments are widely used to collect evidence on language learning and use, they are comparatively rare in genuine classrooms which have been constituted for teaching purposes, not for the purpose of data collection.

On the other hand, as Ellis (1990, p. 15) argues for the empirical research of L2 classrooms, he mentions that an ethnographic study of interaction would be suitable for the classroom interaction and L2 acquisition whose goal is to test a number of hypotheses relating to, how interaction in the classroom contributes to L2 acquisition and to explore which types of interaction best facilitate acquisition. In addition, another reason in favor of the qualitative research method is the less formal relation between the researcher and participants (teacher-student), so that the students would respond more elaborately and in greater detail. The researcher would also have the opportunity to respond immediately to what participants say by tailoring subsequent questions with the information the participant has provided.

Considering all this, as a method for the research, I realized that a flexible qualitative method which allows greater adaptation of the interaction between researcher and the students seemed to be the best method for class observation among such a small participant group. In this way, I would be able to ask more open-ended questions when necessary and the participants would be free to respond in their own words instead of just saying simply 'yes' or 'no'. Also, by conducting such a qualitative research first, some new ideas and a thesis statement may be generated for a later quantitative research.

The source for the data would primarily be semi structured methods such as the video recordings of the literature circles, stimulated-recall sessions followed by interviews and questionnaires filled in by students and teachers notes on the discussions conducted in class. The main variables being observed would be 'classroom language' like: use of target language, information gap, sustained speech, reaction to code or message, incorporation

of preceding utterance, discourse initiation and relative restriction of linguistic form mentioned as the ‘communicative orientation of language teaching’ by Nunan (1992, p. 99).

Literature in EFL classes might refer to different types of texts depending on the level of the learners. For the literature circles of teenager participants of this research, graded short stories were found to be suitable as they advance from elementary level to intermediate throughout the year. Graded literature uses specially adapted materials to teach a specific point of language. These fiction stories have been simplified for the EFL learners, so that they can read materials suitable for their level of competence. On the other hand, for the literary discussion groups held by young adult students, who were already at advanced level in English, excerpts from unabridged editions of English literature classics were found more appropriate as they include more authentic samples of language use.

Research Procedure

As for the procedure of this research, the data which was used to test the thesis statement was collected by methods of analyzing classroom interaction which involves the analysis of classroom talk during the literature circles. Later, the data collected was interpreted according to Bales’ IPA system together with the reflections from the stimulated-recall sessions and was exposed to conceptual theoretical work and eventually led to the development of the semi-structured interview for the final results.

Firstly, I want to give an insight of the literature circles held in L1 classes described by Daniels, where the students have the freedom to choose the books they will read. For every meeting they have to read a specific section of the book and do the tasks that correspond to their roles they share. These discussion roles include connector, questioner, literary luminary, illustrator, summarizer, researcher, word wizard and scene setter. Later they are given some role sheets (see Appendix F, p. 109) with tasks to be completed until the day of discussion. On the day of the discussion they form groups of five and start talking about the part of the book they

have read. The teacher just goes around the classroom and makes sure everything is going on well and provides assistance whenever necessary. During the discussions, the students present their work and share ideas with others about the part of the book they have read.

Secondly, I will briefly describe how I started using literature circles in my EFL classes. I have been conducting literature circles in my extensive reading classes for the last three years and the procedure has always been dynamic since the beginning. We started with an EFL-reader collection (Furr, Bookworms Club Reading Circles, 2009) specifically designed for conducting discussions on graded short stories that were presented in volumes each containing seven stories of the same level of difficulty. At the beginning of the year we prepared a chart (see Appendix G, p. 112) where we had the names of the stories to be covered throughout the year and the roles to be shared by the students. In the class the names of students were matched with the stories and discussion roles so that everyone knew how to get ready for each discussion. The stories were followed by some vocabulary and comprehension exercises in the books with repeating patterns. The teacher's pack included instructions, role-sheets and even badges for the students. The students were assigned some tasks which changed every time they had a discussion. These tasks basically included preparing questions, studying the vocabulary, preparing a summary, determining the well written parts, discovering the cultural items and making connections to real life. The students had to read the story and fill in the role-sheets (see Appendix F, p. 109) provided by the teacher and get ready for the discussion in the classroom afterwards. Later in the classroom they got together in groups and discussed the issues they had prepared.

Lastly, I will describe the latest version of our procedure for conducting literature circles in class. We still have roles but no restricting role-sheets as the students know what to do very well. Instead, they use their journals (notebooks) to put down the points raised during their reading (see Appendix H, p. 113). The groups are formed by students themselves. Due to the small number of students in classes we usually have two groups of six or seven students. They share the discussion roles

themselves provided they change for every discussion. The only thing everyone always has to do is prepare comprehension questions.

The discussions are conducted throughout the school year with the aimed classes who are organized in small groups on the specific literary texts parallel to their language competency levels. The eighth graders now have a choice of graded short stories as they move from elementary to intermediate level through the academic year. Twelfth graders on the other hand have a choice of authentic excerpts from various novels.

Teachers conducting literary circles should be aware of the fact that sometimes some of the discussion roles may be dysfunctional in nature, especially if they are not related to the text being covered. In these cases where a discussion role is dysfunctional for the text being covered, the teacher's role is to help the students effectively make the transition from dysfunctional discussion role to a supporting or functional role related to the text. Process observation requires patience and the ability to focus on everyone in the group. Attention to these issues and roles can help you to better understand how the group is affecting its members and vice versa. Here is a list of the possible dysfunctional behaviours teachers should warn students to keep away from.

Possible Dysfunctional Behaviors in Groups:

- Cutting off others
- Attacking people rather than issues
- Topic jumping
- Withholding reactions, feelings or information
- Dominating
- Attending to side issues - nitpicking
- Side grouping - side conversations
- Avoiding responsibility
- Operating on assumptions - "not checking it out"

Adapted from (Leadership)

On the other hand, there are some qualities students should acquire for the discussions which the teacher should be promoting. Some of them are given below to give a general idea of the aimed behaviour during the literature circles. The items are collected under two headings as, ‘Helpful Behaviors in Groups’ and ‘How to Maintain a Sense of Freedom and Mutual Responsibility’

Helpful Behaviors in Groups :

- Seek to make each person welcome
- Ask for comments from those reacting nonverbally
- Encourage each to listen to others
- Request that all state their feelings
- Give positive feedback or support
- Involve everyone – ask for everyone’s reactions
- Keep relationships honest and supportive

How to Maintain a Sense of Freedom and Mutual Responsibility :

- Listen to those who speak
- Encourage group members to state their opinions
- Avoid direct argument with a group member
- Ask individuals to try something –never insist
- Use inclusive language (i.e. “we”)
- Exhibit “Sharing Behavior ” (offer rides, bring snacks)

Adapted from (Leadership)

Following are some advice for teachers to organize the discussions in a better way so that students can benefit from the literature circles in the best way. The second list includes the key questions for the teacher to observe the discussions in the best

way. Organized under two headings as ‘teacher’s roles’ and ‘What to look for in groups’.

Some Key Teacher’s Roles for Literature Circles:

- As a teacher, it is your job to stimulate and promote goal-oriented thinking and behavior during the literature circles. Make students feel strong (help them feel that have the ability to influence their environment).
- Structure cooperative relationships rather than competitive.
- Build group members’ trust in the group leader (lack of mutual trust means lack of faith in the system).
- Resolve conflicts by mutual confrontation of issues rather than avoidance or forcing a particular solution.

Adapted from (Leadership)

What to Look for in Groups:

- Who are the high participators?
- Who are the low participators?
- What are the greeting behaviors? Do they serve to bond the group?
- Who talks to whom?
- Early arrival and late departure phenomenon - do people want to spend time together?
- Who keeps the ball rolling? And why?
- How are the silent people treated? And how is their silence interpreted?

Adapted from (Leadership)

The teachers should closely observe the discussions to find out how students work together, which roles they fill and whether they are contributing equally.

Discussion observations and analysis can help identify problems early thus hopefully mitigate the need for a major correction as the year progresses. The teachers position

as a group member provides a great opportunity to regularly observe how things are going. Depending on the frequency of meetings and an understanding of what to look for, teachers can be instrumental in ensuring group and individual success.

Before we move deep into the procedure, teachers' roles for the discussions should be made clear. In literature circles, the teacher's role is quite similar to Community Language Learning (CLL) teacher's role as CLL is an approach in which students work together to develop aspects of a language they would like to learn. The teacher acts as a counselor and a paraphrase, while the learner acts as a collaborator, although sometimes these roles can be changed.

The CLL method was developed by Charles A. Curran, a professor of psychology at Loyola University in Chicago. As Richards (1986) explains:

This method refers to two roles: that of the knower (teacher) and student (learner). Also the method draws on the counseling metaphor and refers to these respective roles as a counselor and a client. To restate, the counselor blends what the client feels and what he is learning in order to make the experience a meaningful one. Often, this supportive role requires greater energy expenditure than an 'average' teacher. (p. 113)

During the study, some of the discussions were video-recorded with the permission of the participants (see Appendix I, p. 116). These videos were later watched together with the class to evaluate overall discussion quality and the language mistakes made. In this way students can clearly see their needs and eagerly plan to improve their rather weak skills. You can find sample transcriptions of the discussions in (Appendix E, p. 102).

These discussions at the video recordings are based on Stimulated Recall, a technique in which the researcher records and transcribes parts of a lesson and then gets the teacher and the students to comment on what was happening at the time that the teaching and learning took place (Nunan, 1992, p. 94). It is a particularly useful technique in collaborative research because it enables teachers and students as well as the researcher to present their various interpretations of what is going on in the

classroom, and for these interpretations to be linked explicitly to the points in the lesson which gave rise to them (Nunan, 1992, p. 94).

The last thing in this chapter is the step-by-step data analysis procedure which is followed by a summary of the research design and methodology. The handling of qualitative data is composed of several stages, which involve the class observation notes of the teacher, stimulated-recall session, survey questionnaires and the data analysis. Taking the data collection steps and guidelines suggested by Huberman & Miles (Qualitative Data Analysis: An expanded sourcebook, 1994), this section shall explain the procedures and processes, thereby clarifying the method by which the primary data for this study was collected and later analyzed.

As may have been deduced from above, the research adopts a conceptual model which builds on qualitative and deductive methodological approaches. Selection of the instruments like the observation and evaluation forms, together with the survey questionnaires were primarily based on Bales' categorization of the interaction patterns in small groups (Bales, 1999, p. 183). Given the high number of variables to be observed through a small number of rather regular participants with limited resource constraints, it was decided that the defined methodological approach would best satisfy the targeted goals and respond to the research questions.

It is my belief that this research can be justified on the grounds that, with greater needs on improving foreign language learning and skills development for general language competency and exam preparation, there is a need for a research into the process underlying the performance and literary materials used to stimulate the student interaction in foreign language classes through collaborative work on literature circles. As Nunan (1992, p. 43) states, this kind of research can provide guidance for teacher education, instructional materials, and curriculum development.

From within the structure of the stated methodological approach, the next chapter shall review the findings and discussion of the interviews, primarily focusing on the effect of literature circles on the interactional patterns of students in an EFL class.

Data Analysis

The main focus of the analysis will be the continuous observation of communication patterns in literature circles. The main concern will be over how the previously mentioned ‘classroom language’ variables affect the language development of foreign language learners. For the analysis of the collected data, Bales’ IPA system is to be used especially to identify and record the nature of each separate act in ongoing group interaction. IPA is devised by Bales for the continuous observation of communication patterns in interactive groups. It is mainly based on the assumption that group success depends on both how well the group can solve its tasks (task function) and how satisfied it can keep its members (socio-emotional function). Bales identified 12 interactional “moves” in four categories:

Table 3:

Bale’s Interaction Process Analysis (IPA) – Code Categories

Social emotional Area: Positive Reactions

1. Shows solidarity, raises other's status, gives help, reward
2. Shows tension release, jokes, laughs, shows satisfaction
3. Agrees, shows passive acceptance, understands, concurs, complies

Task Area: Attempted Answers

4. Gives suggestion, direction, implying autonomy for other
5. Gives opinion, evaluation, repeats, analysis, express feeling, wish
6. Gives orientation, information, repeats, clarifies, confirms

Task Area: Questions

7. Asks for orientation, information, repetition, confirmation
8. Asks for opinion, evaluation, analysis, expression of feeling
9. Asks for suggestion, direction, possible ways of action

Social emotional Area: Negative Reactions

10. Disagrees, shows passive rejection, formality, withholds help
11. Shows tension, asks for help, withdraws out of field
12. Shows antagonism, deflates other's status, defends or asserts self

Source: (Bales, 1999, p.183)

Bales, Robert F. 1999. *Social Interaction Systems: Theory and Measurement*.
New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers.

(1) socio-emotional positive (shows solidarity, tension reduction, agreement); (2) socio-emotional negative (shows antagonism, tension, disagreement); (3) task-related attempted solutions (gives suggestions, opinions, orientation); and (4) task-related questions (asks for suggestions, opinions, orientation). At least one rater observes each group member, and scores occurrences of each interactional “move.” This method has been used in a variety of settings, and is a reliable and useful way to analyze group interactions (Manstead, 1995, p. 328).

After analyzing the classroom interaction during the reading circles according to Bales’ IPA system and gathering the information from the interviews and questionnaires, it is clearly seen that literature circles stimulate the student interaction in terms of Bales’ criteria in a dramatic way. This probably must have been the reason why Furr (2004, p. 1) uses the word ‘magic’ to define literature circles.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The issues raised in this section relate the findings to the broader frame of book clubs and transfer them from paper to the real and practical life. This first part is the reflection of the classroom observations during the literature circles experience we had with the eighth and twelfth graders throughout the 2009-2010 academic year. Although I implemented the method to various classes, the focus of the study was specifically on these two classes.

Classroom observations.

Throughout the observation year I kept notes about the performances of participants during the discussions. For the classification of the interaction patterns that occur in literature circles I chose Bales' Interaction Process Analysis (IPA) categorization, which is the result of his research on interaction in small groups during the 1940s and 1950s and has been used ever since. His system classifies interaction into twelve categories so that each item has to do with a specific pattern of interaction (Bales, 1999, p. 183). While designing and choosing classroom observation forms and participant survey-questionnaires, Bales' twelve categories were taken into consideration to have a more systematic observation procedure. The content of the observation forms and survey questionnaires used for this research are all based on these twelve interaction pattern of IPA by Bales.

One of the forms I used for classroom observation was "Teacher Checklist for involvement in Social and Thinking Skills in Literature Circles" (see Appendix B, p. 94), which was originated from Daniels' work (2002, p. 240). To fill in this form, I observed if these social and thinking skills are easily applied by each participant during the discussions. The detailed results are presented in Appendix C, (p. 96). Below, I present a summary of the results in Table 3 categorized under four major titles as "Girls vs. Boys" and "Teenagers vs. Young adults". As clearly seen in this

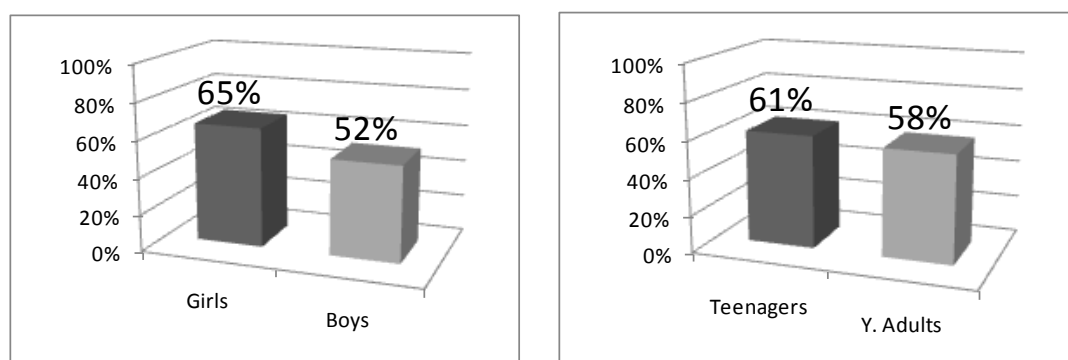
table, it is difficult to make a distinction between the rates of involvement in terms of either gender or age group.

Table 4 : Involvement Rates of Participants – General Figures

Teacher Observation Checklist for	Girls	Boys	Teenagers	Y. Adults
Social Skills	65%	52%	61%	58%
Thinking Skills	64%	62%	60%	65%

The following Graph 1 presents the graphical illustration of the data derived from the Social Skills Involvement Form. As observed during the literature circle discussions the girls seem to be more involved than boys by 13%. On the other hand teenagers have a slightly higher involvement rate in social skills than young adults by only 3%.

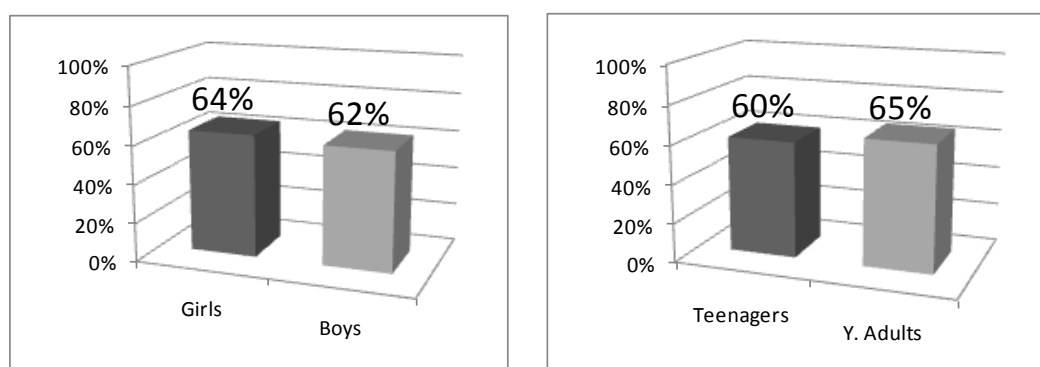
Graph 1: Involvement rate of participants in **Social Skills**



The next Graph 2 below demonstrates the graphical illustration of the data derived from the social thinking skills involvement. The left part comparing boys' and girls'

involvement rates in thinking skills during literature circles gives only a 2% difference in favor of girls. The right part, on the other hand, introduces the comparison of teenagers' and young adults' involvement rates. Young adults are observed to be 6% more involved in thinking skills than teenagers.

Graph 2: Involvement rate of participants in **Thinking Skills**



During the literature circles students are expected to have a natural conversation with their friends about authentic materials they cover. Right at this point the foreign language competency comes to stage as the language they are speaking is not their native language. How is it possible to expect foreign language learners to have a real conversation using the language they are practicing? Actually, this is the exact reason for them to be at school with their teacher, who should provide them with the appropriate language items they need as an example. The students should first find out how to talk about the current issue so that they can practice it. Talking about the book passages they have read before, most students use phrases of agreement and disagreement or the teacher actually should provide them with the correct examples so that they can learn by using them whenever necessary. This is one of the primary roles of the teacher: identifying what the students will need during the conversations and catering them the right patterns or phrases.

The most popular vocabulary groups during these discussions are agreement, disagreement, asking for an opinion, stating an opinion, interruptions and settling an argument phrases. Here is a list of the most frequent expressions literature circle groups use for discussions:

Table 5:

Most frequent expressions literature circle groups use for discussions

Stating an opinion	• In my opinion... • The way I see it... • If you want my honest opinion.... • According to Lisa... • As far as I'm concerned... • If you ask me...
Asking for an opinion	• What's your idea? • What are your thoughts on all of this? • How do you feel about that? • Do you have anything to say about this? • What do you think? • Do you agree? • Wouldn't you say?
Expressing agreement	• I agree with you 100 percent. • I couldn't agree with you more. • That's so true. • That's for sure. • (slang) Tell me about it! • You're absolutely right. • Absolutely. • That's exactly how I feel. • Exactly. • I'm afraid I agree with James. • I have to side with Dad on this one. • No doubt about it. • (agree with negative statement) Me neither. • (weak) I suppose so / I guess so. • You have a point there. • I was just going to say that.
Expressing disagreement	• I don't think so. • (strong) No way. • I'm afraid I disagree. • (strong) I totally disagree. • I beg to differ. • (strong) I'd say the exact opposite. • Not necessarily. • That's not always true. • That's not always the case. • No, I'm not so sure about that
Interruptions	• Can I add something here? • Is it okay if I jump in for a second? • If I might add something... • Can I throw my two cents in? • Sorry to interrupt, but... • (after accidentally interrupting someone) Sorry, go ahead. OR Sorry, you were saying... • (after being interrupted) You didn't let me finish.
Settling an argument	• Let's just move on, shall we? • Let's drop it. • I think we're going to have to agree to disagree. • (sarcastic) Whatever you say. / If you say so.

Another very frequent situation experienced during the literature circle discussions is the need to use communicational strategies and the phrases that correspond to them. Daniels, (2009) has divided them into seven categories and exemplified a few examples of their uses. These seven categories are:

- 1- Be responsible to the group
- 2- Listen actively
- 3- Speak up
- 4- Encourage others
- 5- Prove your point
- 6- Show tolerance and respect
- 7- Reflect and Correct

For further reference, you can find the complete list of social strategy use examples in Appendix J, (p.117).

Video recordings.

As it was mentioned earlier about the privacy issues, none of the recordings were made against the students' wishes. For most of the students it was a first time experience being video-taped especially speaking in a foreign language. Therefore, listening to their own voices speaking in English was really exciting for some of them and surprising for the others. A research on communicative language teaching in Bulgaria has revealed that the majority of the Bulgarian students do not feel embarrassed in a communicative setting, where they are expected to speak up in class and to contribute to their own learning process by asking questions and responding critically to the presented material (Bex, 2008, p. 49).

The school, where the research was conducted, has got a multicultural learning environment. Almost in every class, there are students at least from two different regions of the world. Owing to this fact, English has become the second language of communication. As Georgieva argues (2011, p. 42), what globalization of English has brought about is significant broadening of the range of functions and cross-cultural

contexts of use of EFL among partners who are, more often than not, all non-native speakers. As a result EFL has shifted in status and has assumed a new sociopolitical role as a tool of wider communication.

The students were used to picking up someone else's mistakes in the class but it was the first time they evaluated their own speech. Although they were a bit nervous during the first recordings, later they got used to the camera and were able to speak freely. In this way they had a chance to correct their mistakes and improve their speaking skills.

They found their own mistakes and make notes about them. For the next meeting they worked hard to perfect their speaking skills. The authentic conversations going on during the literature circles provided great opportunities for them to organize and share their ideas in a better way.

Student questionnaires.

When the first half of the school year was over, I conducted a survey which consisted of four sections. The criterion for the choice of the questionnaires was Bales' IPA system. For this purpose I found the "Literature Circles in Action - Lesson Plans" questionnaires the most appropriate (Erlendson & Antifaiff, 2004) (see Appendix D, p. 98). The four sections of the survey each focus on a different area of the study. These include questionnaires related to: self-assessment of the participants; assessment of discussion groups; evaluation of the literature circles; and an evaluation guide for the discussion group with two open-ended questions. While evaluating the results, the averages were calculated over 40 participants' responses.

Before mentioning the questionnaires, I would like to make a point by citing an anecdote by Georgieva (2011) to give a very brief profile of an English learner in Bulgaria at the time when she was a student.

As one who has first-hand experience of the EFL teaching methods of those days, I can say that at the end of our schooling we felt much better prepared to come to grips with difficult literary or scientific texts than to ask about the way if we got lost. A good illustration of the kind of English we were speaking is

the comment made by my first native speaker interlocutor, a British elderly woman. “Your English is so quaint,” she said. “You sound like Dickens to me”. (p. 45)

Nowadays majority of the students are aware of the fact that, what they need to practice in foreign languages is not theoretical facts in a coursebook but real purposeful conversations expressing how they think or feel about a relevant concept. The best way to achieve this is the authentic social interactions generated in the classroom. Literature circles are a good opportunity to achieve this goal, and it is so evident that even the students themselves can see this.

On the strength of this evidence Grozdanova (2003, p. 50) concludes that teaching foreign languages should go beyond individual lexical items and aim at developing the learner’s lexical competence in such a way that each new word be absorbed by the existing system and further consolidated as part of a readjusted and expanded system that functions smoothly in free communication.

The 1st Questionnaire

The first questionnaire was the “Self-assessment of the Participants in Discussion Groups” which included ten statements (see Appendix D1, p. 98). The participants preferred one of the three choices (very good, satisfactory, needs improving) to assess their performances in their discussions. The statements given are as follows:

1. I shared my ideas and offered my suggestions
2. I spoke clearly and slowly enough
3. I answered others questions
4. I remained on topic and helped the group stay focused
5. I encouraged others to participate
6. I disagreed without hurting others feelings
7. I summarized or repeated my ideas when necessary
8. I gave reasons for opinions

9. I listened courteously and effectively
10. I tried to understand and extend the suggestions of others

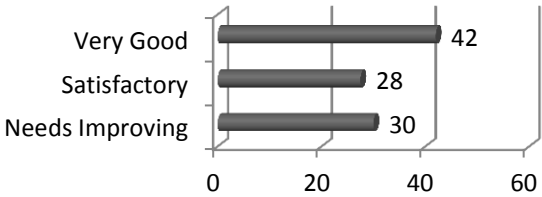
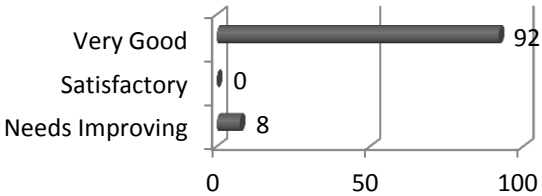
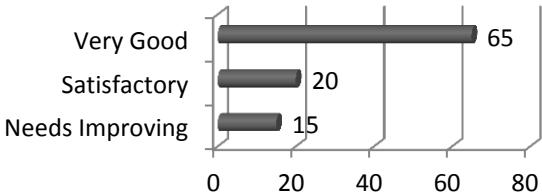
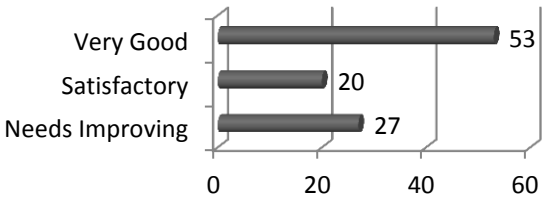
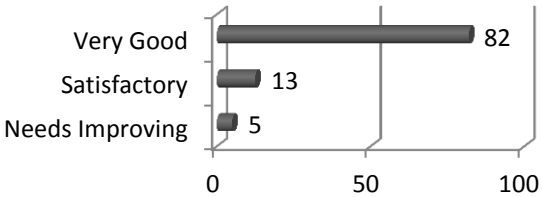
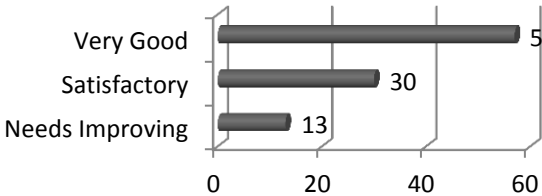
The results of this questionnaire gave us an overview of the self-confidence level of the participants in discussion groups.

Statistics – Discussion Self-Assessment

- The averages are calculated over 40 participants' responses to questionnaires.
- The numbers given in the charts are percentage values of the total responses by teenage and young adult participants.

Graph 3: Self-Assessment Results

1. I shared my ideas and offered my suggestions	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Assessment Category</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Very Good</td> <td>52</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Satisfactory</td> <td>28</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Needs Improving</td> <td>20</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Assessment Category	Percentage	Very Good	52	Satisfactory	28	Needs Improving	20
Assessment Category	Percentage								
Very Good	52								
Satisfactory	28								
Needs Improving	20								
2. I spoke clearly and slowly enough	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Assessment Category</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Very Good</td> <td>50</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Satisfactory</td> <td>28</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Needs Improving</td> <td>22</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Assessment Category	Percentage	Very Good	50	Satisfactory	28	Needs Improving	22
Assessment Category	Percentage								
Very Good	50								
Satisfactory	28								
Needs Improving	22								
3. I answered others questions	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Assessment Category</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Very Good</td> <td>74</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Satisfactory</td> <td>13</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Needs Improving</td> <td>13</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Assessment Category	Percentage	Very Good	74	Satisfactory	13	Needs Improving	13
Assessment Category	Percentage								
Very Good	74								
Satisfactory	13								
Needs Improving	13								
4. I remained on topic and helped the group stay focused	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Assessment Category</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Very Good</td> <td>64</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Satisfactory</td> <td>23</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Needs Improving</td> <td>13</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Assessment Category	Percentage	Very Good	64	Satisfactory	23	Needs Improving	13
Assessment Category	Percentage								
Very Good	64								
Satisfactory	23								
Needs Improving	13								

5. I encouraged others to participate	 <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Rating</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Very Good</td> <td>42</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Satisfactory</td> <td>28</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Needs Improving</td> <td>30</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Rating	Percentage	Very Good	42	Satisfactory	28	Needs Improving	30
Rating	Percentage								
Very Good	42								
Satisfactory	28								
Needs Improving	30								
6. I disagreed without hurting others feelings	 <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Rating</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Very Good</td> <td>92</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Satisfactory</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Needs Improving</td> <td>8</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Rating	Percentage	Very Good	92	Satisfactory	0	Needs Improving	8
Rating	Percentage								
Very Good	92								
Satisfactory	0								
Needs Improving	8								
7. I summarized or repeated my ideas when necessary	 <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Rating</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Very Good</td> <td>65</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Satisfactory</td> <td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Needs Improving</td> <td>15</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Rating	Percentage	Very Good	65	Satisfactory	20	Needs Improving	15
Rating	Percentage								
Very Good	65								
Satisfactory	20								
Needs Improving	15								
8. I gave reasons for opinions	 <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Rating</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Very Good</td> <td>53</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Satisfactory</td> <td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Needs Improving</td> <td>27</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Rating	Percentage	Very Good	53	Satisfactory	20	Needs Improving	27
Rating	Percentage								
Very Good	53								
Satisfactory	20								
Needs Improving	27								
9. I listened courteously and effectively	 <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Rating</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Very Good</td> <td>82</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Satisfactory</td> <td>13</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Needs Improving</td> <td>5</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Rating	Percentage	Very Good	82	Satisfactory	13	Needs Improving	5
Rating	Percentage								
Very Good	82								
Satisfactory	13								
Needs Improving	5								
10. I tried to understand and extend the suggestions of others	 <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Rating</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Very Good</td> <td>57</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Satisfactory</td> <td>30</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Needs Improving</td> <td>13</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Rating	Percentage	Very Good	57	Satisfactory	30	Needs Improving	13
Rating	Percentage								
Very Good	57								
Satisfactory	30								
Needs Improving	13								

The numbers given in the charts are percentage values

Table 6: Self-Assessment statistics

Self Assessment	Teenagers			Young adults			Total		
	Needs Improving	Satisfactory	Very Good	Needs Improving	Satisfactory	Very Good	Needs Improving	Satisfactory	Very Good
I shared my ideas and offered my suggestions	10	25	75	30	30	29	20	28	52
I spoke clearly and slowly enough	20	30	50	24	25	50	22	28	50
I answered others questions	10	20	70	15	5	78	13	13	74
I remained on topic and helped the group stay focused	15	30	55	10	15	73	13	23	64
I encouraged others to participate	15	30	55	45	25	29	30	28	42
I disagreed without hurting others feelings	3	0	100	12	0	84	8	0	92
I summarized or repeated my ideas when necessary	5	20	80	25	20	50	15	20	65
I gave reasons for opinions	10	40	55	44	0	51	27	20	53
I listened courteously and effectively	10	5	85	0	20	79	5	13	82
I tried to understand and extend the suggestions of others	10	35	60	16	25	54	13	30	57

It is apparent from these results that participants feel quite self-confident especially about answering others' questions, disagreeing kindly and listening courteously and effectively. They also feel safe about keeping focused on topic, summarizing their ideas when necessary, and extending the suggestions of others. But on the other hand, it is also significant that they need to improve their skills of encouraging others to participate, giving reasons for their opinions, offering their suggestion and speaking clearly enough. Here are some sample responses of participants:

Sample Responses – Discussion Self-Assessment

The students were asked about their 'most important contribution' and a 'self-evaluation of their performances' in reading circles discussions.

My most important contribution to the discussion was:

- I express my ideas in the best way.
- I make good connections with the real life.
- Doing my part in the best way.
- I discuss my ideas with others.
- When I tell my point of view.
- Listening actively and preparing the vocabulary
- I make good connections with the real life
- I ask questions and get prepared well
- I helped the group stay focused and I encouraged the others to participate
- I'm best at listening to my friends
- I think I'm good at explaining and answering questions
- What I did best was making connections
- I'm good at listening and asking questions
- I try not to interrupt my friends
- I'm good at giving examples and interacting with my friends

My plan for future environment:

- We have to learn more vocabulary to understand the texts better.
- I should learn to keep calm during group discussions.
- We can have larger groups for more participants
- To concentrate and participate more during the discussions
- To learn more words and read more books.
- I should practice speaking more.
- Reading more books
- I'll practice reading and learning new words
- I'll try to talk more slowly
- Train my speaking skills
- To talk a bit more in discussions and share more opinions or suggestions
- Reading more books and speaking slowly
- To talk more and try to express better opinions
- I should improve my general level of English
- Improve my vocabulary, read more books and more discussion practice

To give an idea of the process, a completed participant questionnaire is also included in Appendix K1, (p. 118).

The 2nd Questionnaire

The second questionnaire was about the “Assessment of the Discussion Groups” which included five statements (see Appendix D2, p. 99). The participants were asked to share their opinions (yes, no, sometimes) on these statements to assess the specific discussion group environment. The statements are as follows:

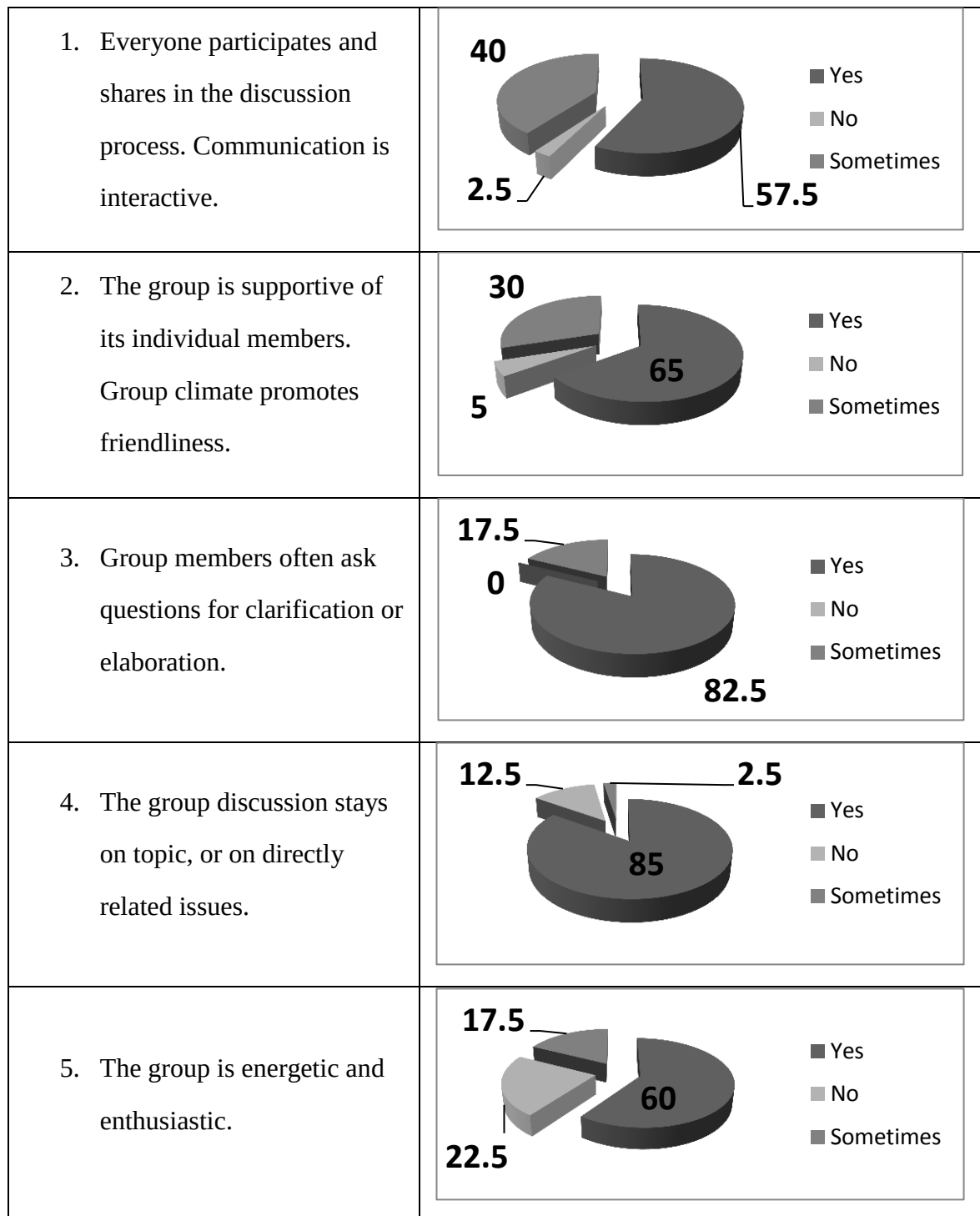
1. Everyone participates and shares in the discussion process.
Communication is interactive.
2. The group is supportive of its individual members. Group climate promotes friendliness.
3. Group members often ask questions for clarification or elaboration.
4. The group discussion stays on topic, or on directly related issues.
5. The group is energetic and enthusiastic.

The results of this questionnaire gave us an understanding of the effectiveness of literature circles as discussion groups.

Statistics – Discussion Group Assessment

- The averages are calculated over 40 participants’ responses to questionnaires.
- The numbers given in the charts are percentage values of the total responses by teenage and young adult participants.

Graph 4: Discussion Group Assessment Results



The numbers given in the charts are percentage values

Table 7: Discussion Group Assessment Statistics

Discussion Group Evaluation	Teenagers			Young adults			Total		
	Yes	No	Sometimes	Yes	No	Sometimes	Yes	No	Sometimes
Everyone participates and shares in the discussion process. Communication is	60	5	35	55	0	45	57.5	2.5	40
The group is supportive of its individual members. Group climate promotes	60	10	30	70	0	30	65	5	30
Group members often ask questions for clarification or elaboration.	60	5	35	60	40	0	60	22.5	17.5
The group discussion stays on topic, or on directly related issues.	85	10	5	85	15	0	85	12.5	2.5
The group is energetic and enthusiastic.	80	0	20	85	0	15	82.5	0	17.5

Data from this questionnaire reveals that participants believe that the group members often ask questions for clarification and the group discussion stays on topic. There is also a shared idea that the members should participate more and that they should be supportive of each other by encouraging their friends in need. What is interesting about these results is that nearly one fourth of the participants believe that the groups are not energetic and enthusiastic. Here are some sample responses of participants:

Sample Responses – Discussion Group Assessment

The students were asked to provide evidence for types of interaction patterns and answer questions related to the effectiveness of the discussion groups. Below are some randomly chosen responses.

(Smt. = Sometimes)

Everyone participates and shares in the discussion process. Communication is interactive.

Yes - We tell and discuss our ideas to each other.

Smt. - Some of the group members just sit without saying a word.

Yes - The issues raised remind the others something and it becomes interactive.

Yes - Because we are discussing and the teacher wants everybody to participate.

Yes - We are having a discussion in which everyone participates

Yes - As a group we have to participate and make a discussion.

Smt. - Some have problems with the language that's why they don't participate.

Smt. - We don't have so many ideas and questions to ask.

Smt. - Sometimes we don't know what to say.

Smt. - Sometimes we prefer to keep silent and listen to our friends

The group is supportive of its individual members. Group climate promotes friendliness.

Smt. - Because, it's important to hear everyone's ideas.

Yes - During the discussions I sometimes say words which are helpful.

Smt. - Who know more want to say all they know and the others have to listen.

Smt. - Some of us aren't used to talking in front of others and they are nervous.

Smt. - If someone cannot remember a word or something else.

Smt. - When any of the group members seems to be uncomfortable.

Yes. - We try to help our friends so they can say something and not stay silent.

Yes - Everyone is trying to help each other.

Yes - We always help each other, because everyone has good and bad skills.

Yes - Everyone takes part by answering, even though they got nothing to tell.

Group members often ask questions for clarification or elaboration.

Yes - to understand exactly what happened and to get the main idea.

Yes - I just interrupt and ask the part which I couldn't figure out.

Yes - The questions we ask are nearly always for making it clear for us.

Smt. - I sometimes ask questions but if I don't understand I try to find it myself.

Smt. - I cannot understand the point of a person if it is badly explained.

Smt. - It is difficult to ask questions but we need that to understand.

Yes. - So that we understand everything.

Smt. - We need to ask questions to understand better.

Smt. - Members communicate better by asking questions.

Yes - We ask questions to understand and make others speak.

The group discussion stays on topic, or on directly related issues.

Smt. - Giving examples from real life makes the story interesting in my opinion.

Yes - We discuss the topic and never talk for unrelated topics.

Smt. - We are mostly on the topic but sometimes give examples from real life.

Yes - We are usually concentrated on the main topic.

Yes - Of course as we try to make direct connections with related issues.

Yes - We always stayed on topic.

Smt. - We sometimes start talking about other things.

Smt. - If the topic is interesting we stay focused.

Yes - We are generally busy asking and answering questions about the topic.

Yes - Because we got prepared before we talk about the topic.

The group is energetic and enthusiastic.

Yes - Because, we had a lot of fun.

Smt. - Because, sometimes we are sleepy and cannot concentrate.

Smt. - The group is interested in topics but not energetic, even sleepy sometimes.

No - We are always sleepy at the end of the day and we are tired.

Smt. - It really depends on the people.

Smt. - Sometimes we are sleepy or board in the afternoons after lunch.

Yes. - Everyone wants to share his ideas.

Smt. - It depends on the topic we are talking about.

Smt. - It depends on the task.

Yes - Every body tries to talk and do his best.

What was the best thing about the way this group worked together?

- Learning new words and speaking freely makes the discussion exciting.
- Everyone knew where to talk and where to listen so no one disturbed others.
- We are thinking as a group. We share ideas and experience, which is good.
- The discussion was held in a good way so that the communication was successful.
- We ask questions to each other. I like talking about cultural items.
- The video recordings helped the group to talk more and more carefully.
- The roles for the discussion were prepared well so discussions were good.
- We are concentrated and ready, especially when the discussions are videotaped.
- Everybody was listening carefully to each other and share ideas.
- We help each other not to stay silent. We listen to each other to stay on topic.

What was one problem the group had?

How did you solve that problem?

- Watching another discussion group silently was problematic for me.
I couldn't help interfering others conversations.
- The vocabulary is the main problem, when we cannot remember some words.
We help each other; we look the words up in the dictionary.
- We have a lot to say but don't know enough vocabulary.
I don't know what to do.
- There are many unknown words and the literature vocabulary is difficult.
Thanks to the rich vocabulary and well organized English dictionaries
- Sometimes somebody makes a joke and everybody laughs, that's not good.
No idea.
- The group was nervous about the video recordings but later they got used to it.
By not looking at the camera and being more interactive.
- When someone doesn't do the preparation and ask for help from others.
We try to help everyone to do his task and to be prepared for the lesson.
- The vocabulary is the main problem, when we cannot remember some words.
We help each other and we look up the words in the dictionary.
- We have a lot to say but lack the necessary vocabulary.
Try to learn new vocabulary
- Some of us didn't participate much in the discussion.
By asking questions to them.

What else might you have done?

- We might have had some presentations to understand the topic better.
- Read more books.
- Ask our teacher for explanations.
- Get ready better for our part.
- To explain the things in Bulgarian to understand the topic better.
- We might have some presentation to understand the topic better.
- Read more books, maybe.
- Have some humor.
- We can improve our body language as well to help each other.
- Ask better questions and learn to tell our ideas better.

What specific plans do you have for improvement?

- We need to read more books to listen some things and to speak for more practice
- Practice more speaking and learning more vocabulary.
- Unfortunately, the best way for improvement is reading books in English.
- I should read more books to be good at English reading comprehension questions.
- Speak in English and read and watch movies in English to improve speaking.
- We need to read more books and practice speaking and listening.
- Practice speaking more and learning new vocabulary.
- Speaking more and having more discussions.
- Reading more books and watching English programs on TV.
- I should improve my discussion skills to tell my ideas better.

To give an idea of the process, a completed participant questionnaire is also included in Appendix K2, (p.119)

The 3rd Questionnaire

The third questionnaire was the “Literature Circles Evaluation” which gives a specific insight of the general values in literature circles (See Appendix D3, p. 100). The participants chose one of the three responses (need to improve, do it, do it well) to assess the specific characteristics of the literature circles. The statements are as follows:

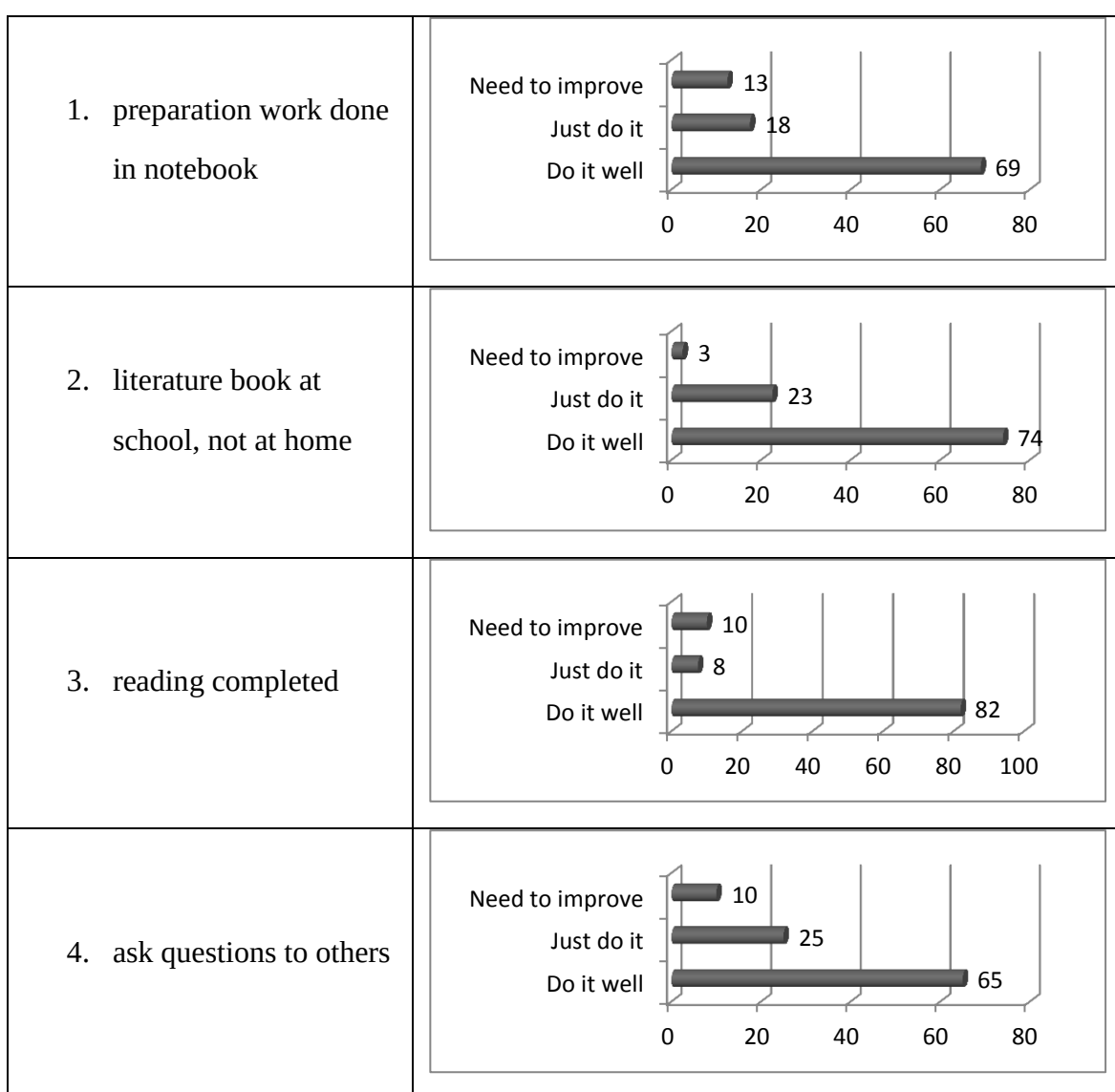
1. preparation work done in notebook
2. literature book at school, not at home
3. reading completed
4. ask questions to others
5. offer my own ideas
6. encourage and respect others' opinions
7. make eye contact with others
8. keep my voice at arm's length (not to disturb other participants)

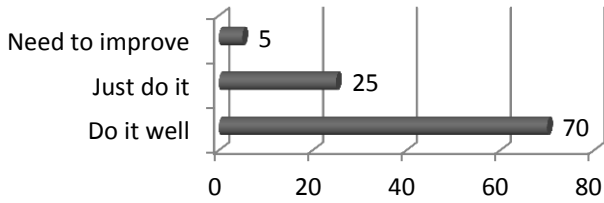
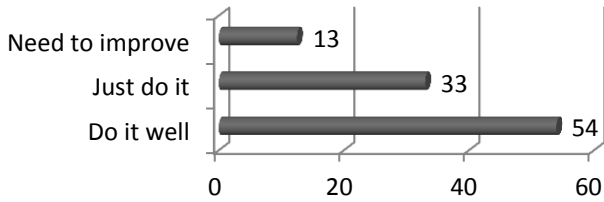
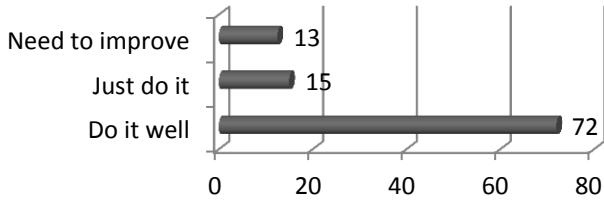
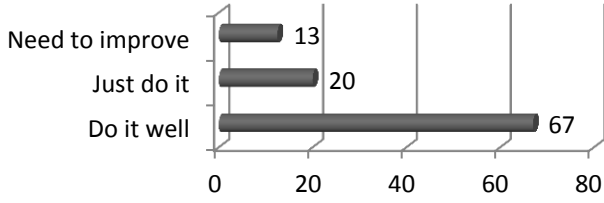
The results of the third questionnaire make the participant's performance qualities clear in literature circles.

Statistics – Literature Circles Evaluation

- The averages are calculated over 40 participants' responses to questionnaires.
- The numbers given in the charts are percentage values of the total responses by teenage and young adult participants.

Graph 5: Literature Circles Evaluation Results



5. offer my own ideas	 Need to improve 5 Just do it 25 Do it well 70 0 20 40 60 80
6. encourage and respect others' opinions	 Need to improve 13 Just do it 33 Do it well 54 0 20 40 60
7. make eye contact with others	 Need to improve 13 Just do it 15 Do it well 72 0 20 40 60 80
8. keep my voice at arm's length	 Need to improve 13 Just do it 20 Do it well 67 0 20 40 60 80

The numbers given in the charts are percentage values

Table 8: Literature Circles Evaluation Statistics

Literature Circles Evaluation	Teenagers			Young adults			Total		
	<i>Do it well</i>	<i>Just do it</i>	<i>Need to improve</i>	<i>Do it well</i>	<i>Just do it</i>	<i>Need to improve</i>	<i>Do it well</i>	<i>Just do it</i>	<i>Need to improve</i>
preparation work done in notebook	75	20	5	63	15	20	69	18	13
literature book at school, not at home	80	20	0	68	25	5	74	23	3
reading completed	90	5	5	74	10	15	82	8	10
ask questions to others	70	25	5	60	25	15	65	25	10
offer my own ideas	65	25	7	75	25	3	70	25	5
encourage and respect others' opinions	50	40	10	58	26	15	54	33	13
make eye contact with others	65	20	15	79	10	10	72	15	13
keep my voice at arm's length	75	25	10	59	15	15	67	20	13

From this data it is apparent that most participants are careful about the literature circle materials like the books or the journals. We also see here that, nearly all participants read their parts completely and keep eye contact with others during the discussions. In contrast, it is clear that there is an urgent need to improve students' question asking skills. Similarly the participants do not feel at ease encouraging and respecting their group members' ideas and they also agree that they should lower their voices. To give an idea a completed participant questionnaire is also included in Appendix K3, (p. 120).

The 4th Questionnaire

The fourth questionnaire was the "Discussion Group Evaluation Form" which has two major open-ended writing tasks to find out what skills do participants believe that they are good at and most importantly, what skills do they think that are most crucial for literature circle discussions (See Appendix D4, p. 101). The two open-ended writing tasks included are as follows:

1. My overall rating of myself is as follows:
2. I think the person who worked the hardest in my group is ... because:

The results of this questionnaire shows us firstly, the areas or skills that students feel most confident about and secondly what skills do they most value during the literature circle discussions.

Sample Responses – Discussion Group Evaluation

The students were asked about their overall ratings in discussion groups. The second question was about their ideas on who performs best in the group and most importantly why they think so.

My overall rating of myself is as follows:

- Classroom discussions are very good because when we discuss the topic we have much more ideas and we start to understand better and also we start

looking to the text from other sides. Although some students aren't ready more than half is always ready for discussions.

- I think classroom discussions are kind of preparation for our future presentations in front of the public maybe. First we got used to talking in front of a small group of people. Then the number of the audience will increase.
- The discussions are good but the time is too short so everybody does his or her part and little dialogue is done among the group. I like everyone else write what I should tell in my notebook and wait till the healthy atmosphere for discussing is reached but it doesn't become sometimes. At these times we without making discussion finish the circles.
- I think that sometimes I am nervous and I cannot speak freely. But sometimes, when we are in a small group at class I speak and discuss. I think that the discussing with the others is good for me, because I improve my English. I tried to participate, but, there is very good students which are good at discussions.
- I think our discussions are good for me, because in this way I can improve my English. I learn new words and I can improve expressing my points of view.
- The discussions motivate me and I learn new vocabulary. But I am not good and I want to improve my speaking.
- Actually these discussions are really beneficial in my opinion as they improve my speaking. To be honest they are not nervous for me, but sometimes I don't like talking on books and poems. I prefer to speak on philosophical issues.
- I think I can listen and read well. I can ask questions but I think I can't speak very well, and I can't summarize. For better presentations and speak better I have to read more books and to practice vocabulary so that I can speak better, I hope.
- I think, I am good at encouraging others to participate and I think I help the group stay focused. I'm a bit nervous when I talk in front of the camera. I should improve and stay calm. I also think that I speak faster than I should, so I'll try speaking slowly and clearly.

- I think that my written preparation is excellent. But I still need to practice participating actively in the discussion.
- I think that I'm good at asking good questions. I want to speak fluently, so I have to read a lot of books. The next, I want to correct is to listen to my friends because sometimes I get bored, because of the stories.
- I speak very fluently so I have no trouble stating my opinions, but sometimes I stay quiet and just listen to the others. I'm good at making judgments and corrections. I'm also pretty good at explaining things and clearing things up. Most of the time I'm very attentive. However, I don't think I encourage other people to speak more. I also don't like to say a lot because I think it would make me look like a know-it-all.
- I think that I am good at finding differences and similarities between the real life and the story and between the story and my culture. I am also a good summarizer because I can tell the story slowly and everyone understands. My problem is that I can't prepare good questions. I am not good at studying vocabulary and discussions.
- I think that I'm good at listening to my friends in my class. But I have to be more serious, because when we make our presentations I feel nervous.
- My discussion is good, but I think the best is telling my ideas, but I don't have more time because of that can't tell everything in the best way. I have to improve my talking.
- I think I listen very carefully when somebody is talking and I respect his opinion. I always do my homework and roles very carefully and I'm hard-working because I want to improve my English.
- I normally do not write in my notebook what I'm going to talk about in the discussions. I just read my task and say what comes to my mind. I think I should work on writing and preparing the task at home. I think I'm good at listening to others and understanding them.

- I should try to speak more while discussing and also try to stay on topic. I always start to talk about something else and go off the topic. I must find a solution for this.
- These kinds of discussions help me check my level of English. Especially my speaking skills, the fluency and vocabulary. And also check our listening skills. I think I do my best.
- I think that the effects were only on the positive side. That taught us how to speak in front of public. This can improve my speaking skills.

I think the person who worked the hardest in my group is ... because:

- He always says different things than others and also prepares as he should.
- He knows what to say and most of the time he says right things. He also speaks coherently and fluently.
- Everyone does what they should but a person can't always be prepared maybe because of exam stress or something else so we can't expect the best from everyone.
- She is very clever and always has the answers for everything, even when she is not prepared, she give very good and excellent answers.
- She is good at discussions. She is always concentrated and knows how to express her ideas.
- In my opinion everyone concentrates on his or her own role and does his/her best.
- She can speak very well and I can understand her. She can ask questions and summarize well.
- She takes part when we talk about the stories. So she is the best in my group.
- That's me, because in our group there weren't many students who speak English very well. Probably if my group was different I would chose someone else. I think Andy also talked well, but he laughed a lot as well.

- He is a serious person. He makes everyone participate in the conversation and he is a hardworking person.
- She speaks fluently and she is every time ready with her homework. She reads a lot of books, that's why she is good.
- She was the most active and she encouraged the group members to talk more. She also made some good points and she spoke very clearly and fluently.
- She tells everything correctly. She participates often, she correct us when we had a mistake. She's also good at making summaries and finding words from the text. She also prepares good questions.
- She writes everything on time and she listens to all of us. And she always tells something true and interesting.
- She speaks fluently and her words, questions, passages and connections are the best.
- She always does her homework and her English is very good. She is good at vocabulary, her words are usually good. But I think sometimes she is a little bit unkind when somebody tells his opinion.
- He was really trying hard to express his ideas and he saved the group from failure.
- He talked too much and tried to make others talk by asking them questions.
- She knew what to do comfortably even in difficult situations.
- He does everything perfectly. He helps the group. He makes discussions very interesting.

To give an idea, a completed participant questionnaire is also included in Appendix K4 (p. 121).

From the feedback collected from the students it can be concluded that the positive behavior expected from students during the discussions can be summarized as equal participation, friendliness & encouragement, asking follow-up questions, using first names and maintaining eye contact. There are also some skills required for literature circles discussions. These skills are mainly basic listening, staying focused on the group, supporting & linking and recognizing good ideas. There are some others like, using the text to support an idea, paraphrasing and asking follow-up questions. While discussing the issues describing their feelings and reactions together with disagreeing with ideas respectfully are also required qualities for discussion partners. Of course there are some more challenging qualities, too. Silent, patient listening, which is especially necessary when groups are reporting to entire class, energizing the group and Directing the group's work are some good examples of such tasks.

Some other points to care are mentioned by the students themselves as not to spread out the reading and try to do it all the night before it's due, always take the books out for the discussion, find passages as you read and bookmark them using post-its. The list continues with staying focused and on-task, being friendly with the others in the group, asking a lot of follow-up questions and getting everyone's opinion, and not to be afraid while disagreeing. If there is a problem in the group, it is advised that the students bring it up and try to work it out. Don't just get frustrated and angry.

Problems experienced.

Compared to their varied benefits, literature circles have also got some relatively minor problems. In this section, some of them will be explained. The following difficulties are both described by Daniels (2002, p. 10) in his book and experienced by the participants and the researcher during this study.

The first issue is assessment. Mostly, the first thing teachers worry about literature circles is, how they are going to grade the students' performances. Firstly, testing takes a lot of time and it is difficult to evaluate an interactive process. But on

the other side, teachers still can assess students as if it is a project work. The outcomes would usually be an oral discussion performance, an audio-visual presentation, a joint portfolio or a poster. Any of the ways mentioned above would take much of the class time but still present an acceptable way to evaluate student performance.

The other problem is related to the role sheets, which are used to organize and record student's ideas and thoughts while getting ready for the next circle. Although these role sheets are of great benefit at first, they may become troublesome after some time. Students or teachers would be complaining that they are too mechanical. For every meeting you have to fill in time the same 'form' with the same exercises and tasks. But most of the teachers tend to quit using the role sheets after the students once get used to the routine of the literature circles.

The last annoyance to be mentioned here about the literature circles is the 'terminology drift' as Daniels (2002, p. 11) calls it. Every time somebody hears about literature circles for the first time—no matter if that is a teacher or a student—they visualize their own version in their minds and it takes some time to reconcile your ideas. That is not an important issue because most groups do not continue their literature circles the way they started. They transform and improve their discussions according to group needs and language competencies of the students. They try new things and adapt new ideas into their discussion 'rituals'.

Some other problematic issues you might come across—especially in Bulgarian context—during your literature circle classes might be the reaction you get from the parents and school administration. Usually, if they are not explained thoroughly what literature circles are, they do not get these classes as real classes. They think it is a waste of time; something that everyone can do at home. For that reason, if the teachers are planning to start literature circles they should explain the parents, school administration and even the students what a literature circle is very carefully and completely not to be misunderstood.

Discussion

In this paper, I explored how literature circles stimulate the student interaction in EFL class. The analysis of the student-to-student interactions in EFL provides evidence that literature discussions not only involve foreign language learners in extensive reading for pleasure but also to improve their communicative competency. The learners were encouraged to give meaningful responses to the prompts given, such as the role sheets or their friends' questions, ranging from a simple to a greater recognition and analysis of literary elements. Most of the time, students worked hard together to understand a text better and make real life connections with the readings in their books. They also had a variety of chances to respond to cross-cultural topics, which let them experience other cultures indirectly.

In the beginning, conducting literature circles instead of the regular extensive reading classes was strange and worrying for the students, but from the first day, they enjoyed even the seating arrangement we had in small groups. In regular extensive reading classes we usually had a set book which everyone read at home and did related comprehension tasks in the classroom so that we made sure everyone read his or her part and learned the new language structures. It was also interesting at first but later the repeating pattern of the comprehension tasks caused weariness among the students. They found all these repeating patterns boring; similar word matching exercises followed by gap filling cloze tests; sentence completion tasks for the use of English part; and finally open ended questions about the reading.

Since the aim of literature circles is not only reading books and discussing among friends but practicing language skills, the materials used, preparation assignments, and the discussions had to be carefully planned and controlled. Deciding on the dates of discussion and sharing the roles are the most important parts of literature circles. For this reason we used the schedule (see Appendix G, p. 112) provided with the reading circles book we used. Forming the groups and sharing the discussion roles are two other important points for preparation. I had small-sized

classes which could form two groups of five or six students each. For literature circles, you have to define specific roles which the group members exchange for each discussion. You can find sample defined roles in Daniels' book (*Literature Circles: Voice and Choice in Book Clubs and Reading Groups*, 2002) or Furr's (*Bookworms Club Reading Circles*, 2009) reading circles series (see Appendix F, p. 109).

These roles assign students to achieve tasks working on the given text.

Graph 3: Reading Circles – Discussion Roles



(Daniels, *Literature Circles: Voice and Choice in Book Clubs and Reading Groups*, 2002)

Each of these roles focus on different aspects of the text like: summary, vocabulary, preparing questions, determining cultural items, focusing on specific passages and making real life connections. To help students achieve these tasks some role sheets (Appendix F, p.109) are offered as a guide for the preparation. These handouts help students organize their study and also come in handy during the discussions. The role sheets at the beginning were quite useful for checking how to get prepared. But later they become insufficient. The students started arranging everything before the presentations so that everyone knew what to ask and whom to ask. Although these handouts are really useful for the first stages of literature circles and getting used to the discussions, after some time they might become a hassle as students start losing them or when you see the old ones all around the place. That was when we adopted the idea of 'student journals' (Daniels, *Literature Circles: Voice and*

Choice in Book Clubs and Reading Groups, 2002, p. 154). These journals undertook the task of role sheets but this time without any limitations or restrictions. Student journals are notebooks, where students keep record of the task-related data. Now record keeping was more organized and open ended.

As an EFL teacher, I am primarily responsible for the language learning process of the students. For this reason, setting up the scene with the groups and books and leave them to themselves as they discuss the stories did not seem reasonable to me. Small groups performing at the same time in the classroom are problematic for EFL classes as the students might be using L1 during their conversations and the teacher would hardly be aware of that. That is why we started 'group presentations,' which were held in front of the classroom like an open book discussion. In this way I was able to videotape the discussion and the other students had a chance to observe their friends. The problem with these presentations was that the groups had to do it in turns, which was time consuming. But the other students, who were watching, had more time to get prepared.

After these presentations we watched the discussion video together with the students pausing for mispronounced or wrongly used vocabulary or grammar items. The best thing about these stimulated-recall sessions was being able to discuss the interaction patterns as well. We talked about how to get the speech ground, interrupt friends or ask polite questions and disagree without hurting your friend's feelings. It was rather like Community Language Learning (CLL) where the teacher acts like a consultant and helps students use the language according to their needs (Larsen-Freeman, 2000, p. 90). During these stimulated-recall sessions (Nunan, 1992, p. 94), while we were watching the recorded video, we could talk about the students' errors and needs and they were so motivated about learning to say something in the best way or the right way of pronouncing a challenging word. In this way I had the opportunity to observe their interaction patterns and the reasons behind them.

Literature circles can get problematic for foreign language classes if the teacher sticks to a specific procedure and does not change it. When the teacher uses such a mechanic structure the students would tend to do what they have to and

nothing more. For example they would get prepared for their part of the text and present it in the group and not respond to their friends' statements as they have not read the whole text. These students would not interact with the rest of the group and damage the enthusiastic atmosphere in the group. Another thing such students tend to do is, arranging who asks which question to whom, so that they do not have to read and study the whole text.

The teacher's role is just like the one in Community Language Learning. The teacher is like a consultant who helps whenever necessary. The students read stories or novels instead of course books. After that, they discuss the characters, events and consequences just like a group of teenagers coming out of a movie theater discussing the film they watched. As can be seen here these discussions provide them with an environment similar to the real-life conditions. They decide what to tell, who to ask, how to respond and even agree or disagree. In this way, the students become more aware of their needs and incompetency and take more responsibility of their own learning. Thus the teacher acts like a counselor recommending different ways of expressing their ideas, giving vocabulary support and most importantly modeling as an expert.

Actually, literature circles are quite flexible in terms of organization, because the activities and student-roles can be adapted to any age group or language level. They are perfect for mixed-ability classes as the roles can be achieved with different levels of competency. We had mixed ability groups and the weaker tried to start talking among others while the others assisted and encouraged them. The students did their tasks according to their level of English, provided they improve it throughout the literature circles. In this way the weaker students felt more comfortable as they could only say a little, and that was sufficient for their individual level. These students were encouraged to take part in the discussions no matter what their English levels were. For example, while more proficient students compare the characters of two heroes from the story, weaker ones talked about the physical appearances.

As we had a small number of students in class we had two or three groups in each class. Each time a group has a discussion in front of the class, the rest

usually listened passively or prepared their part of the speech. Later I asked the listeners to carefully take notes and later make comments about their friends' performances. It was especially fruitful with twelfth-graders. During the first discussions as the roles are shared and everyone knew what to do, they arranged the questions and vocabulary part among themselves in such a way that during the conversation everybody knew what to say and when. It was more like a theatre play than a discussion. At first it may seem like cheating but it took them so much preparation that the preparation itself was a lesson for them. Another initial problem we had in the class was socially nervous students, who could not speak in front of public and have real difficulty talking even in small groups. That was a difficult task as each student had to be dealt with individually.

During the first days of the presentations the students were shy because of being in front of the class and maybe the camera. But later they got over this as they became more self-confident. They even started making use of their body language, and they took eye contact into consideration as well. What is more, because some of the group presentations were being video recorded, the students felt the urge to be ready for the presentations. Besides verbal language, they practiced their body language and fluency as well. They started using fillers and conjunctions better than before.

Another problem we had at the beginning was that the students found it very difficult to listen to others in the group and respond, but as they improved their skills and got rid of the nervousness it became more challenging and interactive. When the students were concentrated on what they were going to say next or how they were going to respond, it was nearly impossible for them to listen effectively and ask questions or respond to what is told by others. As the students' speaking skills improved, the allocated time was not enough for them. This time, they had a lot to say and some other issues were raised related to this like struggling to get the speech ground, interruptions and politeness issues. As a result, students' skills to make a speech without preparation improved. Eventually, students started building up

complicated sentences to express their ideas and ask questions to get information, and their interest towards literature in English grew enormously.

Sometimes even the students themselves invented activities related to these discussions. For example, after presenting the vocabulary they gave the definition of a word and asked for the actual word. It was a beneficial activity, which motivated them to listen to their friends more attentively. In this way, the students accepted the preparation procedures for the literature circles not only as regular homework they had to do but as a presentation among their social group where they feel like boasting about their roles. They were even painstakingly careful about their physical appearances as well.

Yet, another student-generated activity was the organization of a bookworm competition and at the end of the semester the winner, who had read the most books, was awarded. This is just an example of how they assimilated the concept of reading in a foreign language. At first they were looking up every new word they came across the pages, which was a depressing task. Now, they are aware of the fact that it is more productive not to look up every word but just the ones that prevent them from understanding the text. For this reason the students now, try to read without interruptions and as much as they can.

During the period we studied in literature circles the students became aware of the importance of pronunciation and intonation and learned how to study it. They tried to improve their fluency by trying not to have pauses or speak flatteringly. At first the most challenging part was to understand the idea behind the discussion roles. After sometime, together with the students we decided to make the process more challenging. This time they had to prepare all the roles for discussion in their student journals and the roles were distributed randomly right before the discussions. This element of surprise was also interesting for them. Besides, they did not have the chance to arrange which questions to ask whom. This literature circles idea was something new for them as teenagers, sitting around a table and talking seriously like adults. They enjoyed it and had fun especially when they were well prepared or were not nervous. When the students were quite experienced about the group discussions,

they were able to attend the speech and make contributions actively even though they are not well prepared for the task.

The idea of reading circles was really useful, in that it was not something theoretical, which is usually the case with literature classes, but it was a task based approach where the end product—the discussions in our case—was very important. The students learned speaking extemporaneously about more academic issues, asking questions, summarizing, giving reasons, making a point interruption, etc. As their discussion skills improved the focus of attention moved from the events to the characters and the social issues covered in the literature.

When it comes to young adults, they prefer making their preparation at school rather than as a homework assignment. So, when we had double lessons, they used the first hour to get prepared together with their friends using dictionaries etc. and the second hour for the presentation. They had more difficulty in keeping journals or records compared to teenagers. We generally had literature circles with this group in the afternoons and for that reason they sometimes felt bored and sleepy.

The students who had already been reading books enjoyed the literature circles a lot. The authentic texts extracted from novels were really challenging for them but they managed to learn a great deal of vocabulary from these texts. While some of them preferred focusing on characters and events, some others were interested in discussing the social background of the short story or excerpt.

Although they were nervous during the video recordings, some of them told me that it improved their public speaking and presentation skills. Some of them also claimed that video recordings paved the way for more serious preparations before the reading circles.

During the first discussions, until the task was clearly understood, they were so concentrated on their own performances that they could not listen to the other members in the group. But as time passed, they got used to the procedure and gained self-confidence. It was then that they started listening actively, asking questions, expressing their agreement or disagreement and encouraging others to take part.

Being able to assist each other to keep the conversation going on was very important for them. During the first discussions it was mostly monologues but later in time it became more like a conversation or discussion. Some of them enjoyed reading the text aloud during the preparation period.

The ones who were not used to speaking in front of people complained about the domineering students who kept talking all the time. Later as they assimilated the idea of a literature circle, they shared the roles and formed the groups themselves and had no problems conducting the discussion. Most importantly, during the period when they had literature circles, they became aware of their weaknesses. They realized that there are some structures they cannot use proficiently. They became aware of the vocabulary they need to learn and other language items such as how to express their ideas, agreements or disagreements. They improved their summarizing skills as well. During the preparation sessions they used the dictionaries actively and sometimes made further research on the topic at home. While it was nervous and stressful for them at the beginning, later they enjoyed the discussions and now think that literature circles are a very valuable form of language practice.

The discussion part presented here tried to explain and evaluate the data given in the findings section in the light of my classroom observations. Besides my point of view derived from the observations, I tried to give a constructive and critical analysis of the research findings as the interpretation of the outcomes presented in the previous section. I believe that the issues raised in this section relate the findings to the broader frame of book clubs and transfer them from theory to practice.

The students also need to develop a range of communicative strategies and use them productively when needed. The communicative language classroom is best suited for this, as it provides multiple opportunities for one-to-one communication, small group discussions, project work, team work, role-plays and other activities providing communication practice. (Slavova, *Communication skills: The new social currency*, 2008, p. 5)

These observations can be applied to English language teaching as part of culture learning. Uncovering the social processes behind the current norms of

behavior of the dominant culture is a vital part of critical understanding, instead of blind ‘aping’ of, or resistance to, dominant models. Understanding, not imitation or rejection, is ‘the right thing to do’ in the foreign language and culture. A socio-historical approach to politeness can help learners see the changing patterns of socially appropriate behavior in the target culture and look at their own cultural patterns from an enlightened perspective. This can contribute to developing communicative flexibility and tolerance to differences – a more realistic objective than following a supposed ‘native speaker’ ideal, especially in a globalizing and highly mobile world where English is increasingly used as a lingua franca between non-native speakers. (Slavova, ‘Doing the right thing’ in the Foreign Tongue: Politeness and the learner of English, 2001, p. 11)

General Conclusions.

This paper has given an account of and the reasons for the necessary widespread use of literature circles in EFL classes. As it is also mentioned by Ernst-Slavit, Carrison, & Spiesman-Laughlin (2009, p. 91), literature circles provide opportunities for oral language and literacy growth for all students, including English language learners. But we can still find many teachers who are hesitant to use this instructional approach with students who are learning English.

One of the more significant findings to emerge from this study is that, with the instructional strategies used for literature circles students enjoy reading for pleasure and classroom discussions. During a literature circle discussion, it is very common to see students struggling to get their ideas across to their friends. Students also appreciate the procedure associated to literature circles, maybe better than the course content, language acquisition, the four skills and improvement of social skills.

In the long run these skills, acquired through literature circles, can help children realize a better social life. The lifelong learning outcomes of literature circles can be listed as the development of social relations together with the realization of personal identity and world view.

The best environment for the literature circles to perform well in a class is again created by students in small heterogeneous groups of four to six students each. The groups should be heterogeneous in terms of students' language competency levels and skills and psychological development and social skills. In this way by the end of the school year all the students will have had first hand experience and training in working within cooperative learning groups.

As a teacher, while conducting literature circle discussions in class, I observed that as students get more experienced in reading, they develop and demonstrate literacy competencies in different fields such as, critical thinking capacities and abilities as students reviewed, evaluated, and either recommended or rejected the book as one that would be read. Another capacity which developed in students is media literacy skills as they explored the relationship between a book's cover and its contents. The third competency which improved is reading, writing, oral communication, and comprehension competencies as students created and prepared materials for the projects. The last one can be named as social competencies through the collaboration and cooperation required in the literature circles.

There might be many end products of literature circles which led to the development of various capacities in students. Besides those demonstrated literacy competencies, preparation of material for the projects like presentations and dramatizations has also challenged the students' technology, communication, personal, and social competencies as well. The projects themselves accommodated students' different reading levels, language capacities, abilities, and learning styles.

Throughout the study, students were reading books, writing their comments, and creating a variety of texts, and were listening, speaking, and communicating in different ways. The discussions have been a kind of motivation for the application and development of their reading, writing, listening, and speaking abilities and skills. Although the literature circle was limited to their classroom, they still could see the big picture and understood the reason for the development of their communication skills.

Practical and Theoretical Implications.

Practising a foreign language with literature circles is a team process where students support and rely on each other while learning English. For this purpose, the classroom is an excellent place to develop conversational skills students will need later in life. Other than the extensive reading and preparation stages literature circles discussions are interactive processes and as members, students develop and share a common goal in their discussion groups. Together, they contribute each other's understanding of the problem with questions, insights and solutions and respond to, and work to understand, others' questions, insights and solutions. Each student should encourage the other to speak and contribute. Students also should consider other's contributions whether they are accountable and dependent for everyone.

Besides improving the communication skills in foreign language learning, literature circles have also got some lifelong learning aims. The students who have literature circles for their extensive reading classes at school are observed to have developed a more confident personal identity and better social relationships throughout the years they joined discussions. Moreover, literature circles have improved their media literacy, like developing an understanding of how a book's cover affects perception of its contents or express a critical about a book. After joining these discussions regularly, they can also determine the purpose and audience of a book they read.

Recommendations for Future Research.

The focus of the study was to find out the effects of literature circles on foreign language learning. The perspective was chosen deliberately as extensive pleasure reading among language learners has been a problematic issue. Research with this perspective had not yet been completed as the study only concentrates on classroom interactions of student. However, to create a more accurate overall view of the whole contracting process the research should be continued and earn respects of both teachers and student. This would give an even better understanding of the whole process of literature discussion groups. There are many other variables and factors affecting the implementation of literature circles into the school curriculum.

One of the central and important issues for further study would be how literature circles help to develop thoughtful, competent, and critical readers, as well as improve student reading levels and attitudes. Another study should also include some information about how literature circles can advance gender equity in the classroom or how peer discussion increases content comprehension. Further research can be done on what kinds of note-taking best help young readers to prepare for productive peer-led discussions? Some other areas related to literature circles waiting to be discovered might be, 'How do book club experiences affect students' writing? (Daniels, 2006).

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

This study has researched a new method of using literature in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) to stimulate the social interaction among language learners. A bottom up approach based on the observation of the classroom interaction and the conducting of a questionnaire survey has been applied, combining qualitative observation results with statistical information from the survey using the mixed method. The methods of using literature circles to practice foreign language show encouraging results for both teenagers and young adults and are more efficient compared to other conventional techniques used in EFL classrooms.

This chapter gives a summary of the problem and sums up the entire research revisiting the initial research questions and thesis statement. The chapter re-examines the main findings and the discussion, presenting the conclusions reached and the results gained in the light of research questions mentioned before. The limitations and practical implications of the research, which I believe, would be beneficial for the people working in the field of foreign language teaching, are also included in this chapter. Here I further discuss the exploration of possible future directions for the research, my thoughts about the overall impact of this research in the field, how the results may affect the EFL classroom and my suggestions for a further quantitative research.

The main rationale for this research was to find out the benefits of using literature circles in EFL learning environments. The study has set out to determine the effects of these student reading groups on language learning as most of the foreign language learners find extensive reading boring and those classes are the most challenging ones for the teachers as well.

One of the significant findings to emerge from this research on literature circles is that they help language learning through stimulation of the classroom atmosphere by having the teachers and students focus on the interaction patterns during the literature discussions. The suggested thesis statement with this research was that, literature circles as a balanced element of the school curriculum can provide

an exciting way to promote student engagement in extensive reading by means of cooperative learning and collaborative work and offer the potential to promote reading for enjoyment. The main focus of the analysis part was the contrast in interactions and classroom discourse taking place in literature circles and regular alternative extensive reading classes. The main concern was concentrated on how these variables affect the language development of English language learners. The main variables observed were ‘classroom activities’ like activity type, participant organization, content, student modality and materials and ‘classroom language’ like the use of target language, information gaps, sustained speech, reaction to code or message, incorporation of preceding utterances, discourse initiation and relative restrictions of linguistic forms.

The results of the study presented in the findings chapter clearly show that the development of the classroom interaction assists language learning and literature circles create an effective way of bringing the classroom interaction to life. If we take the reflections of the student and the results of the observations into consideration, it is evident that the implication of literature circles is a rather different procedure compared to ordinary classroom instruction. Literature circles bring excitement and energy into the language classroom. During this study the participants enjoyed the sense of responsibility for their own learning and decided to improve their interaction skills to become better English language learners at school and good communicators in the society.

As for the benefits in EFL classes, it is also observed that literature circles facilitate learning by giving students an opportunity to share opinions in a specially designed classroom atmosphere, practicing situations very similar to real life experiences. I believe that the effectiveness of this method is greatly dependent on the teacher’s motivation. If the teacher manages to produce a collaborative learning environment with the suitable materials, I believe that the students will be readily eager to participate and support the shared experience and knowledge created in the classroom.

One of the more significant findings to emerge from this study is that, the students were motivated to read and by this way improved their foreign language skills during the process of this research. They experienced a different atmosphere of practicing language. They did similar assignments as they did before but this time for a more realistic purpose and in a more authentic environment.

I believe that the implications of this research for the EFL teachers would be encouraging as the study promotes after class extensive reading and development of discussion skills through the encouragement of interaction patterns which many teachers are after. The limitations I encountered during the study were the small number of participants in a real school environment which is not appropriate for an experimental quantitative study. That is why I preferred a qualitative study built on observations and questionnaires. But I believe that the results derived from real students in an authentic classroom environment provided us with genuine practical results. Observations and participant questionnaires provide enough background for a further study. Other disadvantages were the high number of variables to be observed and again limited control over the instructional process and observing the learning outcomes in relation to the broadness of the issue.

Although this study is based on the classroom interaction as the criteria to be observed in literature circles, future studies may focus on some other variables like the development of reading and writing skills, or even grammar and vocabulary improvement through literature circles. Moreover, by using some other research methods, the results of this study may be compared with the findings of those other studies which will use different research methods. It would increase the validity and reliability issues in the findings. In addition to these points, the research could further explore the development of materials and procedures appropriate for different purposes or levels of competency in foreign languages.

It is my belief that this study has gathered supporting ideas related to the similar research projects. This impact, I hope will motivate the language teachers to be interested in the subject more and try similar applications which will provide further evidence for future studies.

As a result, it is clear that the teachers and learners have problems regarding the usage of literary texts in EFL classes and the solution requires a new point of view on the teaching of literature both by teachers and by textbooks. The results of such a study can motivate the teachers to use literature resources more effectively encouraging real life interaction in the classroom. For instance, in accordance with the findings of the study, it can be suggested that teaching with the help of reading texts should not be limited to only fiction literature. As well as the novels and short stories, some other texts like fact files should also be adapted for the discussion groups.

Originating from the results of this study further research can be done by collecting more quantitative data on the subject. Maybe, some experimental quantitative research designs would be suitable for this purpose.

Summary

The aim of using literature circles in EFL is to encourage student-choice and a love of reading in young people so that the student-to-student interactions improve in the classroom giving way to better practicing of English.

In reality, most students often think that the study of English literature is boring and difficult. This problematic situation might be the result of not teaching literature in the right way. The main question arising from the problem at this stage is, if there is an effective way to use literature in the EFL classroom. The study is also focused on how much the student interaction in an EFL class can be encouraged through literature circles.

Originating from the above-mentioned issues related to the difficulty of implementing literature in EFL classes, the initial aim with this research was to find out how literature circles stimulate the social interaction among language learners and promote the collaborative learning in the EFL classroom.

This research can be important on the grounds that, with greater needs on improving foreign language learning and skills development for general language competency and exam preparation, there is a need for a research into the process underlying the performance and literary materials used to stimulate the student

interaction in foreign language classes through collaborative work on literature circles.

This research primarily concentrates on: What language interactions and classroom discourse are taking place in literature circles and how might this affect the language development of foreign language learners? The intended research further aims to discover if teaching of literature or literary texts makes language acquisition more ‘use-focused’ instead of ‘form-focused’ and if it is beneficial to include literature or literary texts in EFL curriculum at all the stages of language learning in general.

The main thesis statement suggests that, literature circles as a part of the school curriculum can provide an exciting way to promote student engagement in social interaction and improve foreign language learning by means of cooperative learning and collaborative work and offer the potential to promote reading for enjoyment. Literature circles fit into a comprehensive literacy program as a way for students to apply what they are learning about reading and writing:

The research is designed to use the mixed method, which in turn involves the study of the results derived from the semi-structured interviewing, whose groundwork is done according to the issues raised by the stimulated-recall sessions following the classroom observations on student interaction related to variables defined by Bales’ Interaction Process Analysis

The study was conducted on two groups of students at a private high school in Sofia, Bulgaria. The first group consisted of 34 fourteen-year-old teenagers in eighth-grade and the second group included 33 eighteen-year-old young adults in twelfth-grade.

A flexible mixed method which allows greater adaptation of the interaction between the teacher and the students seemed to be the best method for class observation among such a small participant group.

The source for the data will primarily be semi structured methods such as the video recordings of the literature circles, stimulated-recall sessions followed by

interviews and questionnaires filled in by students and teachers notes on the discussions conducted in class.

For the analysis of the collected data, Bales' Interaction Process Analysis (IPA) system is to be used especially to identify and record the nature of each separate act in ongoing group interaction.

After analyzing the classroom interaction during the reading circles according to Bales' IPA system and gathering the information from the interviews and questionnaires, it is clearly seen that literature circles stimulate the student interaction in terms of Bales' criteria in a dramatic way.

Implications

Findings of this research have implications for EFL teachers as well as any other foreign language teacher. Because the research only involved two groups of students at a private school in Sofia, the findings and implications might represent local conclusions that cannot be generalized. However, this study may still be used as a resource for teachers who have not used literature circles in EFL classes and are looking forward to try out some new methods. I would recommend it to teachers who are in search of effective extensive reading classes.

Limitations and Suggestions

Some of the drawbacks that the research suffered from can be summarized as the limited number of participants that could be accessed compared to the wide variety of the classroom interactions observed. To provide enough detailed evidence for such a study, the number of participants had to be kept reasonably small. The reason for such a low number has been the fact that the participants were mainly chosen to provide an authentic classroom atmosphere to be observed and evaluated in relation to the determined criteria.

Another drawback has been the limited control over the instructional process and observing the learning outcomes in relation to the broadness of the issue. As the study intends to observe the student interaction in a foreign language learning

environment, teacher involvement has been kept at minimum in order not to interfere with the authentic atmosphere of student interaction during the discussions. The meticulous observation process has also been quite difficult taking all the related criteria into consideration.

For a better understanding of the limitations, more information on the participants and data collection and analysis can be found in the third chapter, which explains the methodology in detail. But still, considering all these drawbacks, we can say that the results reached with this study open a way for a future quantitative research over literature circles in EFL.

As teachers and educators, there are many questions waiting to be dealt with in front of us like, “Are there more opportunities we can provide our students with for a better learning environment?” or “What are the contemporary models of professional teacher development?” I strongly believe that this study has put another brick on the literature circle studies in the field, contributing to the growth of this collaborative work.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Twelve Most Common Themes in Literature

1. **Man Struggles Against Nature:**
Man is always at battle with human nature, whether the drives described are sexual, material or against the aging process itself.
2. **Man Struggles Against Societal Pressure:**
Mankind is always struggling to determine if societal pressure is best for living. Check out books like *Revolutionary Road* or *Mrs. Dalloway* for examples of characters who know how society says they should live, but feel society's dictation is contrary to what makes them happy.
3. **Man Struggles to Understand Divinity:**
Mankind tries to understand and make peace with God, but satisfaction is elusive and difficult.
4. **Crime Does Not Pay:**
A popular theme played out in books throughout time is the concept that honesty is honored and criminals will eventually be caught. *Crime and Punishment* and "The Telltale Heart" are two stories written on this theme.
5. **Overcoming Adversity:**
Many books laud characters who accept a tough situation and turn it into triumph. Scarlett O'Hara in *Gone With the Wind* exemplifies a shrewd person who finds a way to come out on top despite failed relationships and an economic depression after the Civil War.
6. **Friendship is Dependant on Sacrifice:**
This is the idea that you can't have friends if you don't act like a friend.
7. **The Importance of Family:**
Sacrifices for family are honored and explored, as are the family bonds that survive adversity.
8. **Yin and Yang:**
Just when you think life is finally going to be easy, something bad happens to balance it all out.
9. **Love is the Worthiest of Pursuits:**
Many writers assert the idea that love conquers all, appealing to the romantic side of us.
10. **Death is Part of the Life Cycle:**
Literary works with this theme show how death and life are intricately connected.
11. **Sacrifices Bring Reward:**
Sacrifices and hard work pay off in the end, despite the challenges along the way.
12. **Human Beings All Have the Same Needs:**
From Montagues to Capulets in *Romeo and Juliet* or the characters in S.E. Hinton's *The Outsiders*, book after book asserts that rich or poor, educated or dumb, all human beings need love and other basic needs met.

Source:

Mork, R. (n.d.). 12 Most Common Themes in Literature. Retrieved December 20, 2010, from Life123:
<http://www.life123.com/parenting/education/children-reading/12-most-common-themes-in-literature.shtml>

Appendix B: Teacher Observation Checklist (Social and Thinking Skills)

Literature Circle Group _____

Name of student _____ Date _____

Checklist for SOCIAL skills

Prepared for the book discussion	
Attends to the topic	
Stays on the subject	
Participates actively in the group	
Takes turns	
Asks questions	
Makes eye contact	
Leans forward	
Nods, confirms, responds	
“Piggybacks” on others’ comments	
Allows all members to participate	
Avoids dominating	
Pulls other people in	
Takes turns actively listening	
Avoids interrupting	
Speaks directly to each other	
Honours member’s “burning issues”	
Speaks up when disagrees and disagrees constructively	
Supports opinions with evidence	
Helps others find evidence	
Explains what he or she is thinking	
Shows respect for others’ ideas	

Checklist for THINKING skills

Makes connections with personal experience, current events, other books, artwork	
Makes pictures in his or her head to visualize the scene, people, events	
Puts themselves into the story	
Rereads to clarify	
Checks and confirms facts	
Savors the story, language, events	
Questions the author, characters	
Analyzes, interprets	
Makes inferences	
Draws conclusions	
Makes judgments	
Evaluates the book, author, characters	
Attends to the author's craft/style	
Notices words and language	
Discusses literary elements	
Reads passages aloud	
Looks for patterns	
Draws/illustrates/maps sections of text	

Source:

Daniels, H. (2002). Literature Circles: Voice and Choice in Book Clubs and Reading Groups (2nd Edition ed.). Portland, Maine: Stenhouse. p. 240

Appendix C: Results - Interactive Skills Observation (Social/Thinking)

Interactive Skills Observation Results – Social

Checklist for social skills	GIRLS / 33		BOYS / 28		TEENAGERS / 25		YOUNG ADULTS / 36		TOTAL / 61	
	NO	PERCENT	NO	PERCENT	NO	PERCENT	NO	PERCENT	NO	PERCENT
Prepared for the book discussion	25	76	17	61	19	76	23	64	42	69
Attends to the topic	28	85	21	75	22	88	27	75	49	80
Stays on the subject	25	76	17	61	17	68	25	69	42	69
Participates actively in the group	28	85	17	61	18	72	27	75	45	74
Takes turns	21	64	11	39	11	44	21	58	32	52
Asks questions	22	67	10	36	14	56	18	50	32	52
Makes eye contact	21	64	21	75	19	76	23	64	42	69
Leans forward	21	64	10	36	16	64	15	42	31	51
Nods, confirms, responds	20	61	21	75	18	72	23	64	41	67
"Piggybacks" on others' comments	16	48	16	57	14	56	18	50	32	52
Allows all members to participate	20	61	11	39	15	60	16	44	31	51
Avoids dominating	16	48	8	29	12	48	12	33	24	39
Pulls other people in	18	55	8	29	13	52	13	36	26	43
Takes turns actively listening	22	67	15	54	15	60	22	61	37	61
Avoids interrupting	21	64	14	50	13	52	22	61	35	57
Speaks directly to each other	19	58	12	43	15	60	16	44	31	51
Honors member's "burning issues"	19	58	12	43	11	44	20	56	31	51
Disagrees constructively	23	70	22	79	19	76	26	72	45	74
Supports opinions with evidence	21	64	16	57	11	44	26	72	37	61
Helps others find evidence	15	45	10	36	8	32	17	47	25	41
Explains what he or she is thinking	23	70	15	54	14	56	24	67	38	62
Shows respect for others' ideas	28	85	17	61	20	80	25	69	45	74

Interactive Skills Observation Results – **Thinking**

<u>Checklist for thinking skills</u>	GIRLS / 33		BOYS / 28		TEENAGERS / 25		YOUNG ADULTS / 36		TOTAL / 61	
	NO	PERCENT	NO	PERCENT	NO	PERCENT	NO	PERCENT	NO	PERCENT
Makes connections with personal experience	22	67	20	71	18	72	24	67	42	69
Makes pictures in his or her head to visualize	24	73	18	64	21	84	21	58	42	69
Puts themselves into the story	22	67	12	43	18	72	16	44	34	56
Rereads to clarify	24	73	14	50	13	52	25	69	38	62
Checks and confirms facts	16	48	19	68	13	52	22	61	35	57
Savors the story, language, events	20	61	16	57	14	56	22	61	36	59
Questions the author, characters	24	73	16	57	19	76	21	58	40	66
Analyzes, interprets	18	55	21	75	14	56	25	69	39	64
Makes inferences	23	70	17	61	14	56	26	72	40	66
Draws conclusions	26	79	22	79	18	72	30	83	48	79
Makes judgments	23	70	16	57	14	56	25	69	39	64
Evaluates the book, author, characters	20	61	17	61	13	52	24	67	37	61
Attends to the author's craft/style	25	76	15	54	14	56	26	72	40	66
Notifies words and language	16	48	22	79	17	68	21	58	38	62
Discusses literary elements	20	61	19	68	12	48	27	75	39	64
Reads passages aloud	9	27	12	43	6	24	15	42	21	34
Looks for patterns	23	70	19	68	13	52	29	81	42	69
Draws/illustrates/maps sections of text	24	73	19	68	21	84	22	61	43	70

Appendix D1: Questionnaire – Discussion Self-Assessment

Name: _____

My group was discussing _____

Rate each entry as **1** - Needs Improving **2** - Satisfactory **3** - Very Good

		Example
I shared my ideas and offered my suggestions	1 2 3	
I spoke clearly and slowly enough	1 2 3	
I answered others questions	1 2 3	
I remained on topic and helped the group stay focused	1 2 3	
I encouraged others to participate	1 2 3	
I disagreed without hurting others feelings	1 2 3	
I summarized or repeated my ideas when necessary	1 2 3	
I gave reasons for opinions	1 2 3	
I listened courteously and effectively	1 2 3	
I tried to understand and extend the suggestions of others	1 2 3	

My most important contribution to the discussion was

My plan for improvement is

Source: (Erlendson & Antifaiff, Literature Circles in Action - Lesson Plans, 2004)

Erlendson, M., & Antifaiff, G. (2004, March 11). Literature Circles in Action - Lesson Plans. Retrieved January 20, 2011, from Journey Through Literature:

http://wblrd.sk.ca/~elemelasup/unitlessonplans/grade_5/gr5_plans.htm

Appendix D2: Questionnaire – Discussion Group Assessment

Name: _____

Groups Discussion Topic or Focus: _____

Check appropriate box. Provide evidence where possible.

	Yes	No	Some times	Evidence
Everyone participates and shares in the discussion process. Communication is interactive.				
The group is supportive of its individual members. Group climate promotes friendliness.				
Group members often ask questions for clarification or elaboration.				
The group discussion stays on topic, or on directly related issues.				
The group is energetic and enthusiastic.				

What was the best thing about the way this group worked together?

What was one problem the group had?

How did you solve that problem?

What else might you have done?

What specific plans do you have for improvement?

Source: (Erlendson & Antifaiff, Literature Circles in Action - Lesson Plans, 2004)

Erlendson, M., & Antifaiff, G. (2004, March 11). Literature Circles in Action - Lesson Plans. Retrieved January 20, 2011, from Journey Through Literature:

http://wblrd.sk.ca/~elemelasup/unitlessonplans/grade_5/gr5_plans.htm

Appendix D3: Questionnaire – Literature Circles Evaluation

Name: _____		
	Student	Teacher
I am prepared for our meetings. • preparation work done in notebook • brought my book to school • reading completed	1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3	1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3
I participate well in discussions. • ask questions of others • offer my own ideas • encourage and respect others • make eye contact with others • keep my voice at arm's length	1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3	1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3
Key: Student/Teacher Comments 1. I am doing my job well. 2. Yes, I do this. 3. I do not always do this and need to improve.		

Source: (Erlendson & Antifaiff, Literature Circles in Action - Lesson Plans, 2004)

Erlendson, M., & Antifaiff, G. (2004, March 11). Literature Circles in Action - Lesson Plans. Retrieved January 20, 2011, from Journey Through Literature:

http://wblrd.sk.ca/~elemelasup/unitlessonplans/grade_5/gr5_plans.htm

Appendix D4: Questionnaires – Discussion Group Evaluation

- ☐ I brought my book to class.
- ☐ I read the assigned pages on time.
- ☐ I talked about the book in the discussion group.
- ☐ I listened to what other people had to say about the book.
- ☐ I did not fool around in my group.
- ☐ I marked places I did not understand or places I wanted to discuss with my group (post-it notes, bookmarks, etc.).
- ☐ I wrote in my notebook and finished all assignments on time.

My overall rating of myself is as follows:

I think the person who worked the hardest in my group is

because

Source: (Erlendson & Antifaiff, Literature Circles in Action - Lesson Plans, 2004)

Erlendson, M., & Antifaiff, G. (2004, March 11). Literature Circles in Action - Lesson Plans. Retrieved January 20, 2011, from Journey Through Literature:
http://wblrd.sk.ca/~elemelasup/unitlessonplans/grade_5/gr5_plans.htm

Appendix E: Sample Transcriptions of the Video Recordings

- Transcription of the twelfth-graders' discussion
- Participants' names have been changed for privacy issues
- A text on Fiction Writing - Passage person starts:

1 Linda: I will talk about well written parts or paragraphs. I think one of the most
 2 important paragraphs in writing crime fiction story is V because the
 3 paragraph describes the background of the genre, the characters and
 4 happenings. It talks about the habitual behavior of the characters and it
 5 tells you how you should write your crime story and what kind of things
 6 you should include because every character has his own habits and you
 7 should stay in circle of those habits, so the character won't do anything
 8 that he wouldn't actually do in real life.

9 Linda: Is it the character or the story line that makes the criminal stories so
 10 intriguing?

11 Ann: Maybe both. It doesn't matter.

12 Linda: Could you specify that please.

13 Ann: Of course, I mean maybe if the storyline is good it can make the story
 14 better but if the characters are better than the story ... maybe it can make
 15 the story ... there are two types of stories ...

16 Linda: So, let's just say, we have ... sorry for interrupting but ... a crappy story
 17 with an excellent character of the main role, would you still read that
 18 story because of the character or would you just let it go because of the
 19 story line?

20 Ann: Maybe I'd read it. Why not!

21 Carol: I wouldn't continue

22 Linda: Why not?

23 Carol: Because I prefer the story to be better ...

24 Linda: Not the character ...

- 25 Brian: I think both of them are connected because if the story is good and the
26 character is not good maybe the whole story will not be interesting
- 27 Linda: So, you say ... you think that the character is fake ...
- 28 Brian: Yes.
- 29 Ann: It depends.
- 30 Valery: Both depend on each other.
- 31 Brian: Yes.
- 32 Linda: And it depends on the story. Okay, the second ... How do we chose the
33 characters do we sort them randomly or do they have something special
34 in them that makes them stay out of the bulk.
- 35 Carol: You must have a prototype.
- 36 Linda: Okay. So you have something made up in your imagination and you just
37 walk around the street and pick random people.
- 38 Carol: Pick random people; people you know? For example you ... you make ...
39 that's not criminal but ...
- 40 Linda: Why would you think that my stories are criminal?
- 41 Carol: Well, I don't know.
- 42 Linda: I get it rather as a compliment as it shows intelligent skills ... you should
43 be intelligent to be a criminal, to not get caught, anyway ...
- 44 Ann: Maybe it can be a combination of the characters. Why not! Pick some
45 random and someone you know.
- 46 Linda: So, would you pick someone you know or you imagine knowing?
- 47 Ann: Maybe both. I mean it would become a better character.
- 48 Carol: So, I've got some important ideas. And I agree with Linda about what
49 she said about paragraph D. Because here it's mentioned that these
50 characters must be under pressure and this will increase the spinning of
51 the yarn ... This is a very good piece of advice because nobody likes a
52 simple character who has no problems and especially if he's a criminal
53 he does not think how he's going to work it out ...

- Transcription of eighth-graders' discussion - Comprehension questions:
- Participants' names have been changed for privacy issues

54 Sally: Ok, I will ask you a question. What was the scary thing with the old
55 man?

56 Mary: The scary thing was his vulture eyes.

57 Daisy: I want to ask. What was the different in the old man? I mean, why was
58 he different?

59 Sally: Because he can ...

60 Mary: Because he can see the ... hear the voices of the heaven and in the
61 heaven.

62 Sally: Yes, and he was strange because he had ...

63 Mary: He had vulture eyes ...

64 Sally: Yes, and he was angry with this eye and that's why he killed him and I
65 think he's so strange about this

66 Mary: The old man doesn't do him anything but, sometimes he feels mad
67 because he hears some strange voices and he want to make something.

68 Gilda: I think it's not strange to hear the beating of a man's heart you killed
69 because after the murder you always think about it and ...

70 Annie: Yes but he wasn't guilty, he was feeling good of it. And then he started
71 hearing it.

72 Sally: Yes, and he said that he thinks he is not mad.

73 Mary: I also have some questions. Why did the police came next morning after
74 the killing?

75 Gilda: Because neighbours heard a scream and called the police.

76 Mary: Did the police find anything in the house about the murder?

77 Sally: At first not, but then he heard a strange noise and became angry and at
78 the end he said that he killed him.

- 79 Daisy: And I want to ask you. Do you remember how many nights before the
80 mad man kill the old man ...
- 81 Mary: Eight nights I think.
- 82 Gilda: At the eight night
- 83 Mary: Eight nights, at the eighth night he killed him. And do you remember
84 how he killed him
- 85 Daisy: Yes. He cut his ...
- 86 Mary: He cut his body ...
- 87 Daisy: Ok. Let's continue with the words
- 88 Sally: I will start to read words. Boards; I think it's a special word because he
89 put the man under the boards and people cannot see that he is missing.
90 It's long, thin, flat piece of wood.
- 91 Mary: Another important word is vulture because of the eyes of the man. It
92 means a large bird that eats dead animals.
- 93 Daisy: And I think that one of the most important words is mad, because the
94 killer is mad. It means very angry or crazy.
- 95 Sally: And, heaven is also interesting because this is the home of God where
96 many people believe that they will go when they die. And I think it's so
97 special about the story. Do you have any words?
- 98 Mary: Yes, I found some important word; disease. It's illness or sickness.
- 99 Albert: And I found lantern. It is a light enclosed in a glass box. It helps to see in
100 the dark.
- 101 Sally: What is the word?
- 102 Albert: Lantern.
- 103 Gilda: Let's talk about the connections. The murderer puts the body under his
104 house. I think, if it was in real life, I don't think that he would hide it at
105 his own house. Because, the police would find it so he should hide it
106 away so that he will be sure that no one can find it.
- 107 Sally: Yes, and he will not say to the police because they will ...

- Transcription of the eighth-grader discussion – Starting the discussion:
- Participants' names have been changed for privacy issues.

109 Amina: We start with a couple of questions, and my first question goes to
 110 Detelina. If you can continue the story what is going to happen next?

111 Detelina: I think, nothing. There will be, happily ever after they will live. They
 112 will have kids. They will be happy and the man will stop drinking so
 113 much.

114 Amina: Okay. What do you think about Andrew?

115 Detelina: He is a nice person but he has a problem with drinking and he has to stop
 116 like ... he could drink again but not in so big litters. He has to drink a
 117 little bit.

118 Amina: Okay. Martin, what do you think ... Do you think that Jane did the right
 119 thing by marrying Andrew?

120 Martin: Well, I'm not sure. For one thing, she does have a baby and it would be
 121 bad if it's left without a father. But, then again, the father who doesn't
 122 want to marry ... well that means that the marriage won't be happy, that
 123 they'll always be angry at each other and so it's not exactly the best idea
 124 but if you have no other choice ...

125 Amina: Are they a good couple and do you think that they should be together?

126 Martin: Well, ... if they are a good couple ... They are a good couple I guess.
 127 But, I mean, come on, locking them in the church tower so that Andrew
 128 doesn't escape ... That's kind of funny, isn't it?

129 Amina: If you were ... Rumen, if you were Jane, what would you do in her
 130 place?

131 Rumen: What will I do?

132 Amina: Yeah!

133 Rumen: in her place ... Actually, I'm not so sure ... I would ... I don't know ...
 134 I'm not so sure

- 135 Amina: Are you going to be an alone mother or are you going to marry Andrew?
- 136 Rumen: Actually ... I don't know. I would marry probably but ...
- 137 Amina: Why did they wanted to keep that story a secret?
- 138 Detelina: Because they, ... that's a shame story, being locked in a church.
139 Everybody will laugh at them. That's why they wanted to keep it a
140 secret.
- 141 Amina: How did the story got out, and how did everyone knew about their night
142 in the church tower?
- 143 Detelina: It started from one person and from another and that's how the whole
144 city knew about that.
- 145 Amina: How do Jane and Andrew feel when they remember their wedding day?
- 146 Detelina: I don't ... I don't know. Maybe they'll feel ashamed that. Again they
147 were locked in a church tower and the witnesses left because they didn't
148 want to wake with them. I don't think they will be happy when they
149 remember ...
- 150 Amina: Merve, was Andrew a good Husband?
- 151 Merve: No, I think.
- 152 Amina: And why do you think that he is a bad husband?
- 153 Detelina: Because he drank so much.
- 154 Amina: Okay, now Detelina will continue with words.
- 155 Detelina: I have thirteen words. My first word is anxious ...
156 ...
- 157 Detelina: And, I'm going to ask Rumen; what is disgraceful?
- 158 Rumen: Discreteteful! I don't know, I'm not so sure.
- 159 Detelina: You didn't listen to me! Very bad, making people feel sorry and
160 ashamed.
- 161 Detelina: Amina, what is hunt?

162 Amina Hunt is when people riding horses and hunt for wild animals with their
163 dogs.

164 Detelina: And, anxious ... What is anxious. Again Amina,

165 Amina: When you want to do something really really bad.

166 Detelina: And, witness ... Merve

167 Merve: A person who will see something happened and tell that is happened ...

168 Detelina: Thank you! Those were my words.

169 Amina: Next one will be the summarizer.

170 Merve: Okay. Once upon a time there was a man called Andrew that drank too
171 much ...

Appendix F: Reading Circles Student Role Sheets

READING CIRCLES ROLE SHEETS

In Reading Circles, each student has their own role. The six roles are usually Discussion Leader, Summarizer, Connector, Word Master, Passage Person, Culture Collector. These role sheets will help you prepare for your Reading Circle discussions in the classroom.

Summarizer

STORY: _____

NAME: _____



The Summarizer's job is to . . .

- read the story and make notes about the characters, events, and ideas.
- find the key points that everyone must know to understand and remember the story.
- retell the story in a short summary (one or two minutes) in your own words.
- talk about your summary to the group, using your writing to help you.

Your reading circle will find your summary very useful, because it will help to remind them of the plot and the characters in the story. You may need to read the story more than once to make a good summary, and you may need to repeat it to the group a second time.

MY KEY POINTS:

READING CIRCLES ROLE SHEETS

In Reading Circles, each student has their own role. The six roles are usually Discussion Leader, Summarizer, Connector, Word Master, Passage Person, Culture Collector. These role sheets will help you prepare for your Reading Circle discussions in the classroom.

Discussion Leader

STORY: _____

NAME: _____



The Discussion Leader's job is to . . .

- read the story twice, and prepare at least five general questions about it.
- ask one or two questions to start the Reading Circle discussion.
- make sure that everyone has a chance to speak and joins in the discussion.
- call on each member to present their prepared role information.
- guide the discussion and keep it going.

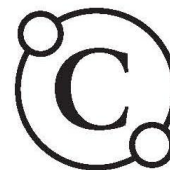
Usually the best discussion questions come from your own thoughts, feelings, and questions as you read. (What surprised you, made you smile, made you feel sad?) Write down your questions as soon as you have finished reading. It is best to use your own questions, but you can also use some of the ideas at the bottom of this page.

MY QUESTIONS:

READING CIRCLES ROLE SHEETS

In Reading Circles, each student has their own role. The six roles are usually Discussion Leader, Summarizer, Connector, Word Master, Passage Person, Culture Collector. These role sheets will help you prepare for your Reading Circle discussions in the classroom.

Connector



STORY: _____

NAME: _____

The Connector's job is to . . .

- read the story twice, and look for connections between the story and the world outside.
- make notes about at least two possible connections to your own experiences, or to the experiences of friends and family, or to real-life events.
- tell the group about the connections and ask for their comments or questions.
- ask the group if they can think of any connections themselves.

These questions will help you think about connections while you are reading.

Events: Has anything similar ever happened to you, or to someone you know? Does anything in the story remind you of events in the real world? For example, events you have read about in newspapers, or heard about on television news programmes.

Characters: Do any of them remind you of people you know? How? Why? Have you ever had the same thoughts or feelings as these characters have? Do you know anybody who thinks, feels, behaves like that?

MY CONNECTIONS:

READING CIRCLES ROLE SHEETS

In Reading Circles, each student has their own role. The six roles are usually Discussion Leader, Summarizer, Connector, Word Master, Passage Person, Culture Collector. These role sheets will help you prepare for your Reading Circle discussions in the classroom.

Word Master



STORY: _____

NAME: _____

The Word Master's job is to . . .

- read the story, and look for words or short phrases that are new or difficult to understand, or that are important in the story.
- choose five words (only five) that you think are important for this story.
- explain the meanings of these five words in simple English to the group.
- tell the group why these words are important for understanding this story.

Your five words do not have to be new or unknown words. Look for words in the story that really stand out in some way. These may be words that are:

- repeated often
- used in an unusual way
- important to the meaning of the story

MY WORDS

MEANING OF THE WORD

REASON FOR CHOOSING THE WORD

READING CIRCLES ROLE SHEETS

In Reading Circles, each student has their own role. The six roles are usually Discussion Leader, Summarizer, Connector, Word Master, Passage Person, Culture Collector. These role sheets will help you prepare for your Reading Circle discussions in the classroom.

Passage Person

STORY: _____

NAME: _____



The Passage Person's job is to . . .

- read the story, and find important, interesting, or difficult passages.
- make notes about at least three passages that are important for the plot, or that explain the characters, or that have very interesting or powerful language.
- read each passage to the group, or ask another group member to read it.
- ask the group one or two questions about each passage.

A passage is usually one paragraph, but sometimes it can be just one or two sentences, or perhaps a piece of dialogue. You might choose a passage to discuss because it is:

- important
- informative
- surprising
- funny
- confusing
- well-written

MY PASSAGES:

PAGE _____ LINES _____

REASONS FOR CHOOSING THE PASSAGE

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PASSAGE

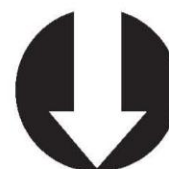
READING CIRCLES ROLE SHEETS

In Reading Circles, each student has their own role. The six roles are usually Discussion Leader, Summarizer, Connector, Word Master, Passage Person, Culture Collector. These role sheets will help you prepare for your Reading Circle discussions in the classroom.

Culture Collector

STORY: _____

NAME: _____



The Culture Collector's job is to . . .

- read the story, and look for both differences and similarities between your own culture and the culture found in the story.
- make notes about two or three passages that show these cultural points.
- read each passage to the group, or ask another group member to read it.
- ask the group some questions about these, and any other cultural points in the story.

Here are some questions to help you think about cultural differences.

Theme: What is the theme of this story (for example, getting married, meeting a ghost, murder, unhappy children)? Is this an important theme in your own culture? Do people think about this theme in the same way, or differently?

People: Do characters in this story say or do things that people never say or do in your culture? Do they say or do some things that everybody in the world says or does?

MY CULTURAL COLLECTION (differences and similarities):

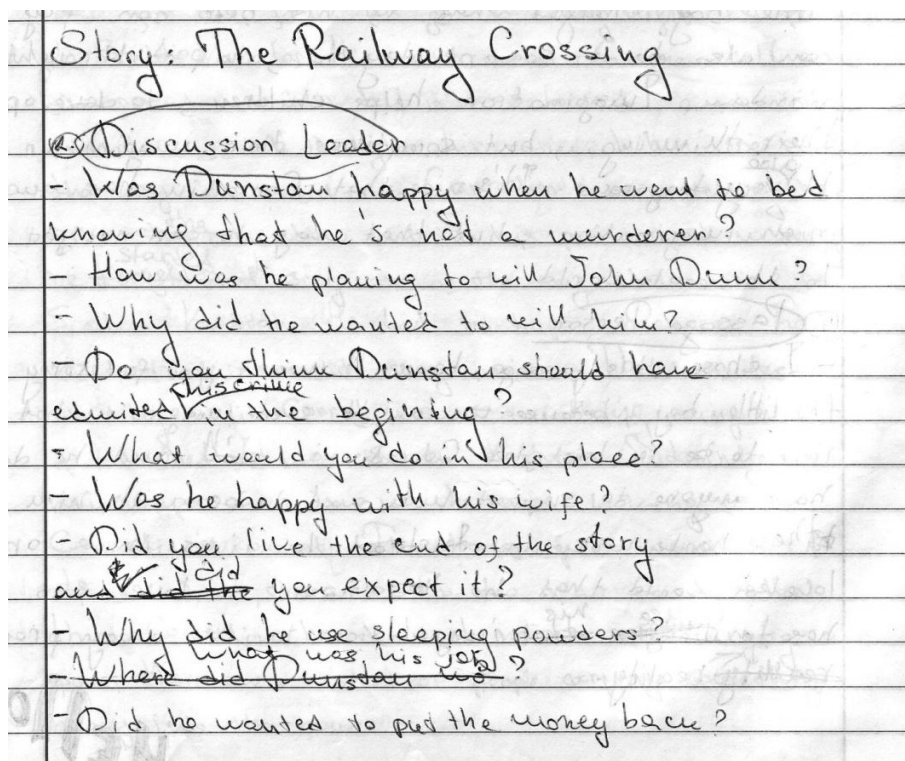
1 PAGE _____ LINES _____ :

Appendix G: Sample Reading Circles Schedule

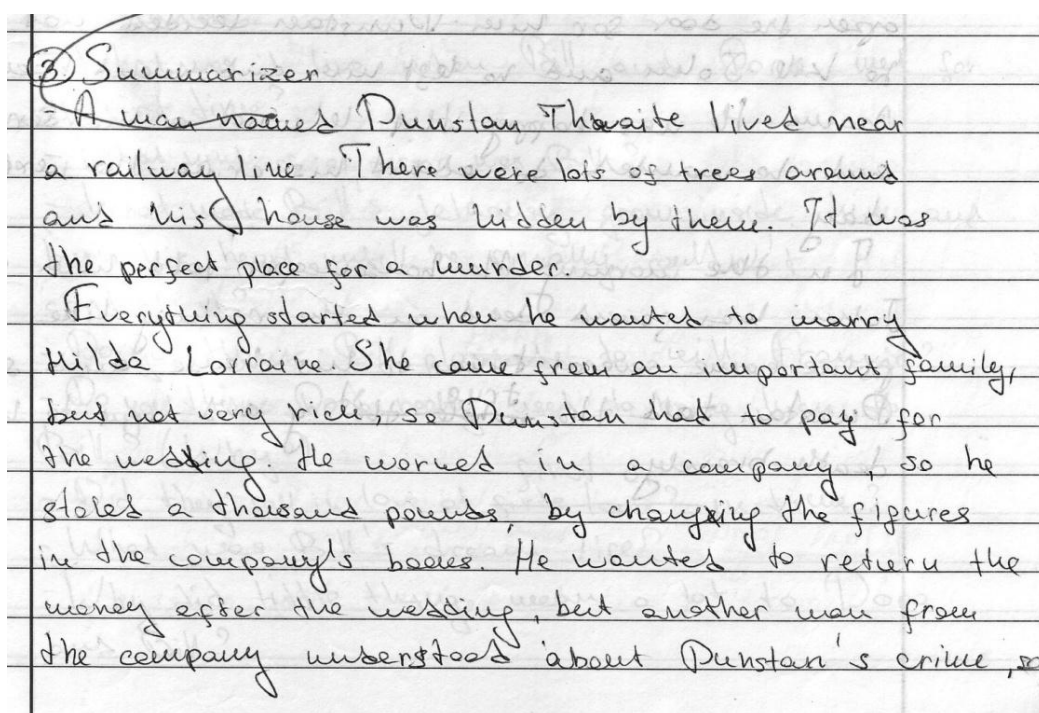
B O O K W O R M S C L U B															
R E A D I N G C I R C L E S S C H E D U L E															
		1 st meeting		2 nd meeting		3 rd meeting		4 th meeting		5 th meeting		6 th meeting		7 th meeting	
DATE		06.10.2009		13.10.2009		21.10.2009		27.10.2009		03.11.2009		10.11.2009		17.11.2009	
STORY TITLE		The Horse of Death		The Little Hunters at the Lake		Mr Harris and the Night Train		Sister Love		Omega File 349: London, England		Tildy's Moment		Andrew, Jane, the Paxson, and the Fox	
ROLE		NAMES		NAMES		NAMES		NAMES		NAMES		NAMES		NAMES	
		1 st group	2 nd group	1 st group	2 nd group	1 st group	2 nd group	1 st group	2 nd group	1 st group	2 nd group	1 st group	2 nd group	1 st group	2 nd group
DISCUSSION LEADER		Rumen	Martin	Ayhan	Amina	Detelina	Redzhep	Adrian	Joana	Ozan	Merve	Rumen	Martin	Amina	Ayhan
SUMMARIZER		Redzhep	Margarita	Vusala	Ozan	Adrian	Amina	Rumen	Ayhan	Adrian	Joana	Margarita	Redzhep	Vusala	Ozan
CONNECTOR		Detelina	Vusala	Margarita	Joana	Martin	Ayhan	Redzhep	Ozan	Victoria	Amina	Detelina	Merve	Adrian	Margarita
WORD MASTER		Ozan	Victoria	Adrian	Redzhep	Merve	Margarita	Amina	Martin	Ayhan	Rumen	Victoria	Joana	Detelina	Redzhep
PASSAGE PERSON		Amina	Ayhan	Victoria	Martin	Rumen	Joana	Merve	Detelina	Margarita	Redzhep	Adrian	Ayhan	Martin	Victoria
CULTURE CONNECTOR		Adrian	Joana	Detelina	Rumen	Victoria	Ozan	Margarita	Victoria	Martin	Detelina	Amina	Ozan	Rumen	Joana

Appendix H: Sample Tasks from Student Journals

Discussion Leader:



Summarizer:



Connector:

o Connector ✓

In the story when John Openshaw tells to police about the pips and his uncle and Father they laugh at him. At the real life I think they will laugh again.

In my opinion If there is such kind of group and you stole something then they will find you faster not how is it in the story after years.

In the real life people move to other cities because they are moving or they are afraid for their life and in the story is like this. John stole some documents and they are looking for him.

Word Master:

(4.) Word Master

alcohol - liquid in drinks like beer and whiskey that can make people drunk

axe - a tool for cutting trees and wood

bricks - small hard blocks that are used for building walls

cellar - a room in the ground under a house

chest - the front part of the top of the body

cruel - not kind; bringing pain or trouble to someone

evil - morally bad; causing trouble

hell - the place where bad people go when they die

horrible - bad or unpleasant

mad - with a sick mind

outlined - showing the line or shape of something

plaster - something soft and wet which is put over bricks and which hardens to make the wall flat and straight

socket - the hole in the head where the eye is

Passage Person:

4. Passage Person ✓
1. In my view the exposition is on pg. 44 and its when John Openshaw goes to detective Sherlock Homes's office and Before this is written about the time - 1887 ~~year~~ - september. It's well-written.
 2. The complication, in my opinion, is when John tells about his uncle, the lobed room, the pips and his father. - 45-46 pages
 3. The rising action is when John receive the ^{surprising} pips of orange and goes to the detective.
 4. The next important part is when H.C.C. kills the John. This is the climax.
 5. The last part of the story is the resolution. It's not surprising. It's on pages 50-51 when the H.C.C. are death and Sherlock Homes sends the seeds.

Culture Collector:

- CULTURAL ITEMS: ✓
- * I remember a fairy tale, in which a man had lost his wife and he had just one daughter, who he loved a lot. They had a big beautiful house with many rooms, but one of them was always locked. Just the father of the girl could enter to that room. One day the daughter asked his father what was in the room, but he didn't tell her and just said that when she grows up her father will let her enter the room. The girl waited for years. At the end, when the girl went in the room she saw nothing, but a ^{large} ~~big~~ book. She was upset, but her parent told her that the knowledge is the most important thing in your whole life.

Appendix I: Screen Captures of Some Video Recordings of Literature Circles

These video captures are included here to give an idea of the classroom settings during the literature circles. Sizes are intentionally kept small so that the faces are unrecognizable.



Appendix J: Group Dynamics – Social Skills Categorization

Strategy	Examples/Actions	Looks/Sounds Like	Doesn't Sound/Look Like
1. Be Responsible to the Group	- Come prepared: work completed, materials and notes in hand - Bring interesting questions/ideas to the discussion - Fess up if unprepared - Focus on the work and members - Establish and live by your group's ground rules - Settle issues within the group	"Does everyone have their articles? Good, let's get going." "I'm sorry, guys, I didn't get the reading done." "Ok, then today you'll take notes on our conversation."	"What? There's a meeting today?" "I left my stuff at home." "Teacher, Bobby keeps distracting our group."
2. Listen Actively	- Use names - Make eye contact - Nod, confirm, look interested - Lean in, sit close together - Summarize or paraphrase	"Joe, pull your chair up closer" "I think I heard you say..." "So you think..."	Not looking at others "Can you say that again? I wasn't listening." Huh?"
3. Speak Up	- Join in, speak often, be active - Use a moderate voice level - Connect your ideas with what others just said - Overcome your shyness - Ask lead and follow-up questions - Draw on use your notes or annotations, or drawings	"What you said just reminded me of..." "What made you feel that way?" "Let me show you my drawing."	"(silence)" Whispering or shouting Not using/looking at notes when conversation lulls
4. Share the Air and Encourage Others	- Take turns - Be aware of who's contributing, work to even out the airtime - Monitor yourself for dominating or shirking the conversation - Invite others in - Show friendliness and support	"Can you say more about that, Chris?" "I better finish my point and let someone else talk." "That's a cool idea, Tom." "Great working with you today, guys."	"blah blah blah blah blah blah" "I pass." Declining to join in when invited. "I'm not sitting next to you."
5. Prove Your Point/Support	- Explain, give examples - Refer to specific passages - Read aloud important sections - Dig deeper into the text, re-read important parts	"I think Jim treats Huck as a son because..." "Right here on page 15, it says that...." The person I interviewed said that..."	"This book is dumb." "No, I didn't consider any other interpretations." "Well, that's my opinion anyway."
6. Show Tolerance and Respect	- Receive others' ideas respectfully - No put-downs allowed - Offer your own different viewpoint—don't be steamrolled - Use neutral language: "I was thinking of it this way" - Try to restate opposing views - Celebrate and enjoy divergent viewpoints	"Wow, I thought of something totally different." "I can see your point, but what about...." "I'm glad you brought that up; I never would have seen it that way."	"Where did you get a dumb idea like that?" "You are so wrong!" "Are you kidding me?" "What book are you reading?"
7. Reflect and Correct	- Identify specific behaviors that helped or hurt the discussion - Talk openly about problems - Make plans to try out new strategies next meeting and then review their effectiveness	"What went well today and where did we run into problems?" "We are not sharing the talk time evenly." "OK, so what will we do differently during our next meeting?" "We're behind schedule on this project – how can we catch up?"	"We rocked." "We sucked." "It was okay." "Who cares?"

From: Daniels, H. (2009). Social Skills. Retrieved 9 2010, from Walloon Institute:
http://www.walloon.com/conference_handouts/CCIRA2009/CCIRAandWSRADaniels.2009.doc

Appendix K1: Sample – Discussion Self-Assessment

Self-Assessment Form for Discussion Groups

My Contribution to Group Discussion

Name: [REDACTED]

My group was discussing short story - Five Orange Pips

Rate each entry as 1 - Needs Improving 2 - Satisfactory 3 - Very Good

		Example
I shared my ideas and offered my suggestions	1 2 (3)	I talked about everything I wrote in my notebook.
I spoke clearly and slowly <u>enough</u>	1 (2) 3	I think ^{more} I should speak slowly.
I answered others questions	1 2 (3)	I answered and talked about every question.
I remained on topic and helped the group stay focused	1 2 (3)	Yes, because when the others laughed I told them to stop and continue with the present.
I encouraged others to participate	1 2 (3)	I said to Kristian to share his ideas.
I disagreed without hurting others feelings	1 2 (3)	I think I was kind enough.
I summarized or repeated my ideas when necessary	1 (2) 3	I think that some of my friends sometimes didn't understand what I was talking about.
I gave reasons for opinions	1 (2) 3	I gave examples, but I'm not sure about opinions.
I listened courteously and effectively	1 2 (3)	I followed everything they were saying.
I tried to understand and extend the suggestions of others	1 (2) 3	I listened to them, but I'm a kind of person that thinks that my suggestions are the best.

My most important contribution to the discussion was I helped the group stay focused and I encourage others to participate

My plan for improvement is talk ^{more} slowly

Reference:

Erlendson, M., & Antifai, G. (2004, March 11). *Literature Circles in Action - Lesson Plans*. Retrieved January 20, 2011, from Journey Through Literature: http://wbldr.sk.ca/~elemelap/unitlessonplans/grade_5/gr5_plans.htm

Appendix K2: Sample – Discussion Group Assessment

Assessment Form for Discussion Groups

Name: [REDACTED]

Groups Discussion Topic or Focus: Writing crime fiction

Check appropriate box. Provide evidence where possible.

	Yes	No	Some times	Evidence
Everyone participates and shares in the discussion process. Communication is interactive.			✓	Sometimes we do not know what to say.
The group is supportive of its individual members. Group climate promotes friendliness.	✓			everyone is trying to help each other.
Group members often ask questions for clarification or elaboration.		✓		they prefer to be silent
The group discussion stays on topic, or on directly related issues.	✓			We always stayed on topic
The group is energetic and enthusiastic.			✓	Depends on the task.

What was the best thing about the way this group worked together?

We listened each other and tried to stay on topic

What was one problem the group had?

Some of us didn't participate in the discussion.

How did you solve that problem?

By asking questions to them.

What else might you have done?

What specific plans do you have for improvement?

Reading more books and watching English programs.

Reference:

Erlendson, M., & Antifaff, G. (2004, March 11). *Literature Circles in Action - Lesson Plans*. Retrieved January 20, 2011, from Journey Through Literature: http://wblrd.sk.ca/~elemelasup/unitlessonplans/grade_5/gr5_plans.htm

Appendix K3: Sample – Literature Circles Evaluation

Literature Circle Evaluation Form

Name: [REDACTED] _____		
	Student	Teacher
I am prepared for our meetings. - preparation work done in notebook - literature book at school, not at home - reading completed	~~1~~ 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3	1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3
I participate well in discussions. - ask questions ^{to} of others - offer my own ideas - encourage and respect others' opinions - make eye contact with others - keep my voice at arm's length	1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3	1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3
Key: Student/Teacher Comments - I am doing my job well. - Yes, I do this. - I do not always do this and need to improve.		

Reference:

Erlendson, M., & Antifaiff, G. (2004, March 11). *Literature Circles in Action - Lesson Plans*. Retrieved January 20, 2011, from Journey Through Literature: http://wbtrd.sk.ca/~elemelasup/unitlessonplans/grade_5/gr5_plans.htm

Appendix K4: Sample – Discussion Group Evaluation

Discussion Group Evaluation Guide

- ☒ I brought my book to class.
- ☒ I read the assigned pages on time.
- ☒ I talked about the book in the discussion group.
- ☒ I listened to what other people had to say about the book.
- ☐ I did not fool around in my group.
- ☐ I marked places I did not understand or places I wanted to discuss with my group (post-it notes, bookmarks, etc.).
- ☒ I wrote in my notebook and finished all assignments on time.

My overall rating of myself is as follows:

I speak very fluently so I have no trouble stating my opinions, but sometimes I stay quiet and just listen to the others. I'm good at making judgements and corrections. I'm also pretty good at explaining things and clearing things up. Most of the time I'm very attentive. However, I don't think I encourage other people to speak more. I also don't like to say a LOT because I think it'd make me look like a know-it-all.

I think the person who worked the hardest in my group is

because

She was the most active and she encouraged the group members to talk more. She also made some good points and she spoke very clearly and fluently.

Reference:

Erlendson, M., & Antifaiff, G. (2004, March 11). *Literature Circles in Action - Lesson Plans*. Retrieved January 20, 2011, from Journey Through Literature: http://wbldr.sk.ca/~elemelasup/unitlessonplans/grade_5/gr5_plans.htm