

Short, K. G. (1992). Researching intertextuality within collaborative classroom learning environments. *Linguistics and Education*, 4, 313-333.

Key Words: response to reading, explicit comprehension instruction, instructional models

Summary: Long-term studies in elementary classrooms in both rural and urban settings focused on literature circles with children ranging from first through sixth grade. Findings indicate that the type of learning environment created in the classrooms had a major impact on the intertextual connections that students made through interactions with each other. That is, literature circles supported intertextuality by involving students in a collaborative community and providing different perspectives and ways of knowing through multiple sign systems and disciplines.

Assumptions:

- Students can improve their understanding of texts through making intertextual links rather than through reading and writing a single individual passage.
- Intertextuality is a metaphor for learning in that it allows students to see learning as a process of making connections, of searching for patterns to make sense of the world around them.

Findings:

- Literature circles were collaborative communities that affected the intertextual connections that students created through interacting with each other.
- As they shared connections with others, learners tried to make use of the diverse perspectives available in the groups.
- Learners went beyond their current abilities to create knowledge through the consensus they constructed.
- Literature circles allowed learners to experience different perspectives and ways of knowing through multiple sign systems and disciplines.

Conclusions:

Teachers should encourage the development of strategies to make intertextual connections and to use a variety of disciplines and sign systems.

Suggestions for Teachers:

- Use literature circles to promote students' independent construction of meaning.
- Help students explore how they can make intertextual links in literature circle conversations.

Suggestions for Literacy Leaders:

- Ensure that teachers have access to multiple copies of engaging books for students to read in literature circles.
- Help teachers explore the benefits of using literature circles as an instructional routine.