



Implementing Guided Reading Into the Balanced Reading  
Curriculum of a Multi-age Classroom

by

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## Part I: The Purpose/Problem

### Introduction

It is important to establish a balanced reading curriculum in the early elementary classroom. Educators need to examine the components that can be used to create a balanced reading curriculum. According to Regie Routman (1991) and Cunningham and Hall (1998), the balanced reading curriculum includes four parts: guided reading, shared reading, independent, and language opportunities to respond critically and thoughtfully. Guided reading is the component that allows the teacher to instruct a small group of children in reading. During the guiding reading session, the student learns and uses new reading strategies that coincide with the text. This study examines two main philosophies of guided reading. The integral part of this study is the implementation of the benefits of guided reading into a multi-age classroom's quest for reading success.

### Purpose Statement

A balanced reading curriculum includes both reading and writing components. In the multi-age classroom, students possessing a variety of reading levels can be found. The guided reading component enhances the reading instruction in the balanced reading curriculum (Cunningham & Hall, 1998). It allows the student to read at their instructional level of competence and progress accordingly.

In the multi-age, kindergarten through grade two classroom being examined, it appears the students were not progressing at their grade level. This assumption was supported when the teacher administered the Qualitative Reading Inventory-4 (Leslie & Caldwell, 2006) (See Appendix A). Some of the students were lagging behind in reading development. Individual needs were not being met since some of the students were reading below or above their instructional levels of competence. Due to the diverse

nature of the student body, it was necessary to add the component of guided reading to enhance the balanced reading curriculum.

Recent research supports guided reading as a beneficial component for individual student success and achievement (Evers, 2007; Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). Implementing the guided reading to a balanced reading curriculum allows the teacher to know each student's individual reading level and achievement. Each student works with reading material that best supports his or her individual learning needs. The teacher gathers specific information about each student's reading progress. The information allows the teacher to create the most appropriate reading setting for each student. The number one reason for the addition of the guided reading component is to provide better reading instruction to meet the individual reading levels of each student (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

#### Definition of Terms

##### *Balanced reading curriculum*

According to Regie Routman (1991) and Cunningham and Hall (1998), a balanced reading curriculum includes reading aloud, shared reading, guided reading, independent reading, and language opportunities to respond critically and thoughtfully.

##### *Guided Reading*

In the reading session, the teacher instructs a grouping of two to no more than six children within the group. The teacher instructs the small select group with reading strategies at the level of their reading ability. While the teacher works with a select group, the other students work independently on another task. The lesson has three stages that consist of a picture walk for developing background, independent reading while using strategies, and finally discussion to show comprehension (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).



### *Reading Levels*

There are three levels of reading for a child: independent, instructional, and frustration (Leslie & Caldwell, 2006).

### *Flexible ability based groups*

A group of children matched according to the specific reading strategies that need to be taught as well as their ability to read fluently. The group remains flexible because as a child improves or digresses he or she may move to a group that meets his or her specific needs (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

### *Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI-4)*

An informal reading inventory that is used to determine a student's reading levels: independent, instructional, and frustration (Leslie & Caldwell, 2006).

### *Woodcock Johnson III Tests of Achievement (2001)*

An achievement test used to identify a student's strengths and weaknesses in many areas of academic knowledge (Woodcock, McGrew, & Mather, 2001).

### *Reading A-Z running records*

Running records are a tool supplied by [www.readinga-z.com](http://www.readinga-z.com) to match their benchmark book (See Appendix B). The running record is used to assess the student's reading ability while reading the benchmark book. It allows the teacher to record the student's oral reading behavior.

## CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

### Introduction

An educator can read many different views or ideas on the topic of guided reading (Cunningham, Hall, & Cunningham, 2000; Evers, 2007; Fountas & Pinnell, 1996; Routman, 1991). This study will, however, focus specifically on two prominent researchers' views. Two researchers for consideration are Patricia Cunningham and her view of guided reading and the other view would be that of Fountas and Pinnell.

### Cunningham: Four Blocks Literacy Model

Cunningham, Hall, & Cunningham (2000) begins with a Four-Blocks Literacy Model with guided reading as one component of this program. The other three blocks included in the model are self-selected reading, working with words, and writing. The four blocks work together to create a balanced program that teaches children to read and write while acknowledging each child has their own learning style.

During guided reading, the material chosen by the teacher is used to teach and guide students in reading comprehension strategies. Guided reading is done with a variety of materials from big books to trade books, basals, etc. The guided reading may coincide with a shared reading of big books. After reading, the teacher determines closing activities that promote comprehension.

Cunningham, Hall, & Cunningham (2000) states the teacher determines guided reading groups in a variety of ways; however, they are not determined by ability. They may be whole class, small group, partner, and individual. Cunningham's grouping philosophy is based on research that students who are in the "bottom group" perceive themselves as poor readers so they do not advance (Cunningham & Allington, 1999). Teacher expectations may not be set high enough for the students who are in the bottom

grouping. The student remains within their group, at the bottom, never advancing any faster than before. The idea is to select material at just the right level for the majority of the children, or the teacher may alternate levels of reading material. The students might read two to three selections of grade level material complimented by two to three days of easier reading material. Mixed ability grouping allows fluent readers to partner read to struggling readers (Cunningham & Allington, 1999).

As stated earlier, the teacher is a guide (Cunningham, Hall, & Cunningham, 2000). The teacher begins the guided reading session with a brief introduction which may include a “picture walk” to anticipate what the book is about. In the introduction the teacher and students locate new words. Next, the students read in whisper voices as the teacher listens, coaches, and supports individual students when intervention is necessary. The teacher usually does not supply the word but guides the student to its pronunciation and meaning. Finally, teacher and students discuss their feelings about the book. If time allows, they may read parts of the book out loud (Cunningham & Allington, 1999).

#### Fountas and Pinnell: Guided Reading Philosophy

Fountas and Pinnell (1996) call guided reading “the heart of a balanced literacy program” (p. 30). Through guided reading, the child matures into an independent reader. The material for guided reading is determined by the teacher. Fountas and Pinnell (1996) would stress that the teacher choosing the material is an essential component. The teacher must have a clear purpose in mind while selecting reading material. Fountas and Pinnell (1996) compare text selection in this analogy “Like a piece of jewelry, each book is selected with care” (p. 107).

The teacher bases groups on similar needs and levels of reading (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). The teacher will know the needs of the students and will group children accordingly so they can use the strategies they already possess while applying newly modeled strategies (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). There

are three elements of information in every text: meaning, structure, and visual clues. Each child brings a fourth element of information with their background knowledge. The teacher needs to provide literary experiences that allow the child to use all four cueing systems interactively. The children may not be able to use the different cueing systems when they are reading the same text such as found in the prescriptive basal readers. By using basals, students become a homogeneous group. When homogeneous grouping is used, it indicates all the children have the same needs and read at the same reading level (Clay, 1993). Fountas and Pinnell (1996) recognize that “whole group” reading may be too difficult for some students and “mumble reading” may occur since the text is too challenging. All children do not read at the same reading level because their abilities and needs vary, therefore flexible grouping is necessary. Flexible grouping allows a student to move out of one group to another. If a child is advancing faster than others in the group, he or she would move to a group with a similar reading level. At the same time, if a child has had a set-back he or she may be regrouped to accommodate needs. A child does not remain in one group, but moves when necessary to meet his or her needs. It is critical for the teacher to know the needs of each individual student (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

Evers (2007) agrees with Fountas and Pinnell by describing guided reading as a teaching technique that provides feedback which is diagnostic, instructional, and evaluative. The three roles are accomplished when the teacher becomes a facilitator, researcher, and observer. The teacher observes and evaluates the students’ reading abilities. From the information obtained through assessment, the teacher creates small reading groups based on the students’ needs (Ediger, 2000). The teacher analyzes and selects proper literature for each group, allowing differentiated instruction based on needs (Strickland, Ganske, & Monroe, 2002; Tyner, 2004). The teacher continually assesses the students’ progress in order to determine the students’ strengths and weaknesses. The teacher must be flexible, allowing groupings to change (Ediger, 2000; Evers, 2007). The teacher facilitates learning by listening and communicating with

the students after reading (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). Ultimately, the final goal of guided reading is to help the children learn to use reading strategies independently.

### Summary

Research has shown that guided reading is an integral part of a balanced reading curriculum. Researchers, Cunningham, Hall, & Cunningham (2000) and Fountas and Pinnell (1996), demonstrate the importance of small groups for assessing and teaching reading skills of individual students (Morrow, 2005; Opitz, 1994). Both philosophies recognize the importance of teachers as guides who help students maintain and acquire new reading strategies. They both agree that guided reading is a means to teach reading strategies. The guided reading lesson allows the students to discuss the story, relate background knowledge, predict, and learn new vocabulary (Cunningham, Hall, & Cunningham, 2000; Fountas & Pinnell, 1996; Strickland & Morrow, 2000). The teacher is able to guide individual students in word recognition strategies during guided reading.

The two philosophies differ in group selection: homogenous and heterogeneous. Cunningham, Hall, & Cunningham (2000) clearly do not promote ability based groups. Fountas & Pinnell (1996) believe the best learning takes place in flexible ability based groups. Cunningham believes that ability grouping stunts the students' progress while Fountas & Pinnell believe it allows the students to gain confidence that leads to reading achievement. They also do not agree about the material to be used in guided reading. Cunningham, Hall, & Cunningham (2000) believe a variety of material should be used. Some of the material should be based on grade levels while alternated with easier reading material. The material should be meaningful and not contrived material written to meet a certain reading level. Fountas & Pinnell(1996) believe that material should be at the student's appropriate reading level which can be

done through a variety of modes. Leveled reading material will help the student to comprehend so that they can apply and learn reading strategies.

## PART III: IMPLEMENTATION

### Introduction

This study examined the effects of implementing the guided reading view of Fountas and Pinnell (1996) into the balanced reading curriculum. One main tenant of guided reading was the grouping of students into small flexible ability based groups. Their dynamics and members changed as the students' needs changed.

### Procedures

As was stated earlier, guided reading is one component of a balanced reading curriculum that requires the teacher to work with a small group of two to six students of similar abilities (Cunningham & Hall, 1998; Routman, 2000). While the teacher worked with this select group, the other students worked independently or in groups on another task. The teacher focused on the select group without interruption from the other students. Before reading with the select group, the teacher familiarized the students with the story by taking a "picture walk," allowing the students to predict the events of the story by describing the pictures. At this time new vocabulary was introduced. During reading, the students read independently with the teacher guiding students in strategies and word recognition. Finally, the teacher and students discussed the story along with the strategies the students applied while reading.

Since the guided reading philosophy was based on ability grouping, it was necessary to level the classroom library and book collections (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996) (See Appendix C). Leveling the readers was an ongoing process that began during the summer months and continued through the school year. Various websites and books were used to determine the book levels (See Appendix D). The books were leveled according to the criteria based on the guided reading philosophy (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). Fountas & Pinnell (2002) leveled books with alphabetic notation. The teacher matched the student's

reading ability to the appropriate book level. Doing so was different from the past reading instruction which was primarily everyone reading from the same basal readers or novels. The students were not grouped by ability; however, due to small class sizes they were usually in small group instruction.

After leveling the books, the library was set up according to the levels. Baskets were purchased and labeled with letters A-S. The books were labeled with a sticker that contained the corresponding alphabetic leveling of A-S and then assigned to the correct baskets. The classroom reading collections found in the classroom library were also labeled accordingly.

After labeling the classroom books, purchasing more leveled readers was necessary. In order to provide ample resources for reading, the school purchased a subscription to A-Z reading .com (See Appendix E). The purchasing of leveled readers was a continuous process, but A-Z reading.com was a source that would give the classroom materials in a quick, affordable manner. In addition, A-Z reading.com provided another source for determining students' progress with benchmark stories that allowed the teacher to efficiently perform running records (See Appendix F).

To begin ability grouped guided reading, assessment was necessary to determine the abilities of all the students in the classroom. In the beginning, only students in grades one and two were going to be assessed for reading levels. However, due to the diverse abilities in the kindergarten, all students in grades kindergarten through grade two were analyzed. To determine ability, the Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI-4) (Leslie & Caldwell, 2006) was used because it offered more than one test in each level of reading along with fiction and non-fiction selections. Offering more than one test was valuable for retesting. If the teacher retested a student in the same level, it allowed the teacher to use an alternate test that was not familiar. Guided reading was used in all grade levels kindergarten through grade two.



Each student was met individually for testing. Once the abilities were established the groups were determined. Five initial groups were created based on abilities and consisting of students from different grades. The groups did not receive any label for identification since the groups were to be flexible. Students moved in or out of the initial group (See Appendix G).

Leveled reading material was found to meet the needs of the individual groups. As each reading material was selected, the appropriate reading strategies were determined to match the students' needs.

The next important step was to create a schedule that allowed the teacher to meet with the groups on a rotation (See Appendix H). For example, the teacher met with Group C for four days in a row and on the fifth day there would be no meeting. Group C's meeting days could be Tuesday through Friday with no meeting on Monday. This rotation ensured that the groups met with the teacher on a regular basis. Since there were six groups, it was necessary for the teacher to meet with each group at least four times a week. The two groups consisting of kindergarten students only were met with every day. Due to the needs presented by the group containing only kindergarten students, the teacher felt it was vital they receive instruction every day.

Finally, alternate activities were established to be used by the students while the teacher met with a specified group. Meaningful literacy centers that evolved around reading and writing were created to occupy the students (Kane, 1995). The students were taught the routine that took place while the reading session was in progress. Center usage and independence were taught and modeled for the first week of school during the reading session so the students became familiar with the center routine. It was important for the students to learn independence so the teacher would not be interrupted while meeting with the appropriate reading group (Cambourne & Labbo, 2000; Perlmutter & Burrell, 2001).

## Artifacts

The students were assessed with the *QRI-4* (Leslie & Caldwell, 2006). Their individual reading levels were compared with the reading levels of Fountas and Pinnell (See Appendix I). The *QRI-4* levels students according to the following levels: Pre-primer, Primer, Level 1, Level 2, Level 3, etc. (See Appendix A). After assessing the students, four students' reading level fell in the A-C range, two students in the C-E range, three students in the E-G range, and four students in the J-L range. Seven of the kindergarten students still possessed pre-reading skills and were in the AA range. As stated earlier, the students were grouped in flexible groupings that would allow them to move from one group to another so the groups were not assigned a label. In order to create understanding for this paper, the teacher labeled the five groups as A1, A2, B, C, D, E. The group of seven kindergarten students posed a difficult situation since they were larger than the prescribed number of six. The kindergarteners were broken into two groups who covered the same content, who performed the same skills, who read the same books, and who interacted with the same learning centers, etc. At the beginning of the school year, Group A consisted of seven kindergarten students so it was broken into Group A1 which contained four students and Group A2 which had three students. Group B consisted of one kindergarten student and three first grade students. Group C consisted of two second grade students while Group D consisted of one second grade student and two first grade students. Finally, Group E consisted of three second grade students and one first grade student.

At the end of the first semester, the groupings changed. There were five groups instead of six. Groups A1 and A2 still maintained the seven kindergarten students. Groups B and E consisted of the original students. Groups C and D saw the most student changes (See Appendix G). As time progresses, the teacher could predict that there will be more changes in all of the groups.

Table 1

**Students' Progression through Fountas and Pinnell Guided Reading Levels**

Students	25-Aug	5-Sep	19-Sep	6-Oct	13-Oct	11-Nov	1-Dec	5-Jan
FK-1	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
FK-2				aa	aa	A	A	B
FK-3				aa	aa	A	A	B
FK-4				aa	aa	A	A	B
FK-5				aa	aa	A	A	B
FK-6				aa	aa	A	A	A
FM-6				aa	aa	A	A	A
FM-7				aa	aa	A	A	A
F1-1	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
F1-2	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
F1-3	J	J	K	K	L	L	M	M
F2-1	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
F2-2	E	F	G	H	I	H	I	J
F2-3	J	J	K	K	L	L	M	M
M1-1	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
M1-2	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
M1-3	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	K
M2-1	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
M2-2	J	J	K	K	L	L	M	M
M2-3	J	J	K	K	L	L	M	M

By using running records and reassessment with the QRI-4 (Leslie & Caldwell, 2006), all groups and individuals showed progress in reading ability. Table 1 indicates the progression of the students through the guided reading levels. The yellow highlighted areas recognize areas of regression or stability. According to Table 1, all students progressed on a steady basis. The students who began in level A progressed at a more rapid pace than those who began in the higher level reading material. Due to the complexity of higher reading levels, progression appeared to move slowly but steadily.

One student (F2-2) regressed during the first semester. Student F2-2 was not improving when moved to Level I. She was moved back to level H and progression began again. By the end of the semester, the student had recovered and progressed. It was necessary for student M1-3 to remain in level K for a longer amount of time since his instructional level had not improved when assessed.

The orange highlighted area demonstrates a review of letters and sounds that took place prior to the usage of leveled readers. These students demonstrated the need for a review of the alphabet along with sight words. All of these students were in kindergarten. Their assessment demonstrated it was necessary to review basic skills.

In order to better understand how the students grew as readers through guided reading, a questionnaire was given to see the students' perceptions of themselves as readers. The students reevaluated their thoughts at the end of the semester. The students met with the teacher to fill out the questionnaire (See Appendix J). The questionnaire asked the students about their perceptions of reading. The teacher read the questions and the students circled the smiley face that demonstrated their feelings. There were eleven questions asked. The last question was the most important: How do you feel about how well you can read? At the beginning of the year, there were sixteen who were happy with their reading abilities, one who did not have feelings either way, and three who were unhappy with their reading ability. At the end of the semester, the results were nineteen students were happy with their reading abilities and one was indifferent. The answers to the next valuable question showed an improvement in attitude. How do you feel when your class has reading time? The original answers were fourteen happy, three not sure, and four unhappy. The final semester results were fifteen happy and five not sure. Next, the teacher performed an interview with each of the first and second grade students about their feelings towards reading class this year compared to last year. All ten preferred reading class compared to last year. They were asked why they felt this way. There were many different reasons (See Appendix K). The teacher

asked all of the students in kindergarten to grade two what part of the balanced reading curriculum they preferred. Ten children preferred independent reading, eight preferred guided reading, and two preferred shared reading. Guided reading did take preference over shared reading which was similar to the past reading instruction.

At parent-teacher conferences, the parents of two students in group C voiced their concern about their children's reading abilities. The two children are step siblings so the parents were concerned about both children. However, there was greater concern for the female. The female (F2-1) in group C as has struggled with hearing and speech difficulties due to the early loss of teeth and hearing loss from chronic ear infections. Since there were parental concerns combined with the teacher's concerns, an evaluation was done using the *Woodcock Johnson III Tests of Achievement* (2001). This measure was taken to assess any information about her reading abilities and needs. Table 2 shows which tests were administered along with the results as percentages.

**Table 2 *Woodcock Johnson III* (2001) Results for Student F2-1**

Tests Performed	Results as Percentages
Letter-Word Identification	87%
Word Attack	100%
Reading Vocabulary	93%
Reading Fluency	81%

Her reading ability did not show a large deficit; however, the ability to read fluently was a half year behind grade level. The other pattern of difficulty found in the testing was her ability in letter-word identification. She appeared to have difficulty with vowel sound recognition.

The female student (F2-1) has shown great improvements in her reading progress. Previously, she struggled even though there were only six students in the reading group. Since she has been allowed to

read at her instructional level, she has continued to show progress (See Table 1). She began the year with an instructional guided reading level of C. She ended the semester with an instructional reading level of K.

## Results

The guided reading view of Fountas and Pinnell was used for this study. After administering the *QRI-4*, the students were grouped into reading groups based on their reading abilities and needs. Adding the ability leveled guided reading component to the balanced reading curriculum has been a positive experience. All of the students have shown progress moving through an average of four to six levels this first semester (See Table 1). For example, a struggling female second grade student (F2-1) has shown progress at a rapid rate since she is allowed to read material at her instructional level. Progress has been determined and information obtained from benchmark testing. Benchmark tests were obtained from [www.readinga-z.com](http://www.readinga-z.com). Reading A-Z provides teachers with benchmark readers and recording forms that can be used to assess each student's reading level along with patterns of behavior in their oral reading.

Based on the answers from a questionnaire and interview, all of the students display a better view of themselves as readers along with the reading experience (See Appendix J). The ten students who were in the classroom the year before prefer the reading instruction this year compared to last year. At the beginning of the semester, three students were unhappy with themselves as readers while fifteen were happy with their reading. At the end of the semester, only one was still unhappy with their reading while all of the others were happy with their reading.

Flexible ability based groups work well in the multi-grade classroom since it allows the students to work at the level that meets their needs. There are a wide variety of abilities in the multi-grade classroom. Ability based grouping allows students to work at their appropriate level which enables it to

match well with the multi-grade classroom. Students are able to “float” in and out of groups based on their needs. Since this is a natural occurrence, no one recognizes the changes. The children adjust to the changes without question because it is natural to the organization of the classroom. Each child is able to appreciate their own abilities and celebrate each person as an individual.

Due to the increase of reading groups, the teacher might anticipate a larger block for reading instruction would be necessary. This has not been the case. The reading block that had been used in the past has continued to work. The students have scheduled meeting dates and may not meet with the teacher every day. This does not mean the students are not reading at this time. They are working in carefully planned activities or centers that support their reading needs.

## IV: REFLECTIVE ESSAY

### Introduction

Guided reading is a component of a balanced reading curriculum that has received much attention in the past decade. It is important for me to assess the use of guided reading as a component of a balanced reading curriculum to meet the expanse of needs that can be found in the students in a multi-grade kindergarten to second grade classroom. Guided reading has received much attention due to the research of Patricia Cunningham and Fountas and Pinnell. During the reading session, I am a facilitator who works with a group of six or less students. I instruct and guide the students in reading strategies as the students work with reading material that is written at their instructional level. While I work with a select group, the other students work independently on another task. The lesson has three stages: picture walk for developing background, independent reading for applying strategies, and finally discussion to show comprehension.

I am intrigued by the concept of guided reading performed with small ability based groups. I questioned how guided reading could be implemented in a multi-grade classroom. After researching, I implemented the guided reading component in the kindergarten through grade two classroom. My desire is to improve the reading instruction with a balanced reading curriculum that includes guided reading. I want all students to show progress in their reading abilities in a comfortable non-threatening setting. The quest began so that I could grow in understanding of guided reading and experience it first hand in a unique setting of the multi-grade classroom.

Previously, the classroom instruction was homogeneous. If the children were in first grade then they were in first grade reading, if the children were in second grade then they were in second grade reading, etc. The students who read above or below their grade level were encouraged to read other books at their level in their independent reading time. Most of the reading materials used were basals or trade



books that were grade appropriate. I had only three reading sessions in the three grade classroom, one for each grade. The reading groups and the abilities varied greatly similar to the guided reading philosophy of Patricia Cunningham. The reading curriculum included shared reading, independent reading and plenty of language opportunities. Even though I had three of the components, I knew something was missing since not all of the students were progressing.

This school year, there have been major changes in the reading curriculum because I have added guided reading according to the view of Fountas and Pinnell. Children are grouped according to their reading abilities. These groups are unnamed and subject to change when it is necessary for a student to move to another group. There are at least five small reading groups that meet with me throughout the week. They are called to their reading time by the title of the reading material.

The selection of reading material has changed. In the past, primarily, the material was the grade prescribed basal with a smattering of trade books that were grade appropriate. Now, I select material with a purpose in mind and according to the level of the reader's abilities. When I select material, I choose material to help the student improve in their reading level along with improving in the use of the four cueing systems. A variety of materials are used from basal stories, leveled trade books, etc. All of the materials are leveled according to the guided reading levels of Fountas and Pinnell.

A major change is the amount of informal testing that takes place. Regularly the students' reading abilities are checked by benchmark assessments. Benchmarks are performed on a bi-weekly basis. The benchmarks allow me to determine when a student should move to another level of guided readers. I now have valuable reading records I can share with parents about the progress and patterns in their child's reading development. In the past, I always felt I was knowledgeable about the students due to the small

class sizes. Now, I have a picture of each student's reading development created from the informal assessments. Guided reading gives me a solid knowledge base of each student.

The reading time slot in the classroom has a whole new look. Instead of me meeting with a group of students for reading instruction while the others perform some type of seatwork, all students are actively involved in some type of reading. The students of groups that are not meeting for instruction are working in centers. Children can be found at one of the two writing centers working on a story they will share later. Another pair of children is at the listening center enjoying a book on tape. Children are reading the walls while wearing interesting glasses and unusual but fun pointer sticks. There are a variety of centers, and the children are on rotation through the centers as they follow the weekly schedule. The room begins to sound like a hum of bees as the students quietly read around the room.

### Conclusions

One of my greatest concerns was how to implement guided reading in a multi-grade classroom that included kindergarten. Even though I had a legitimate concern about implementing guided reading in a multi-grade classroom, I learned that the guided reading program was doable. Due to diversity in every classroom, guided reading easily fits into the multi-grade classroom. It has helped me to meet the diversity of needs of each student. It remains manageable in the tight schedule of the multi-grade setting.

The addition of the guided reading component to a balanced reading curriculum has been beneficial for the students in the acquisition of reading improvement. All of the students have shown progress (See Table 1). I believe steady growth will continue. The students are progressing and working at or above their appropriate grade level. All of the students appear to be on track to end the school year at the appropriate grade level or above.

The largest accomplishment has been the students' desire to read. The students now enjoy going to the book boxes and finding books they are comfortable reading. They love to read! They are bringing books from home to share with one another or to read in their free time. Library time is so exciting! After returning from the school library they are on fire to read. You hear a rumble of little voices filling the room as they work on using reading strategies to read the books they checked out from the library. They want to share with others what they are reading. The students look forward to going into the preschool room to share a new book they have learned to read. They enjoy exploring follow up activities that allow them to share their book with others. In the past, even though reading was an important part of the classroom, many students did not choose reading as their first option when it was free time. When it was Drop Everything and Read Time, the students would often stall instead of finding their books. Now they have books prepared to read. Guided reading has enabled the students to find appropriate reading material along with providing them with the desire to read.

Guided reading has enhanced the balanced reading curriculum. Since the students are achieving and growing as readers they are able to successfully read independently and orally. Since they are reading well, they appear to be improving in the language opportunities that are provided. The children's writing and spelling appear to be progressing with confidence. Guided reading has allowed the students to grow in their reading ability so they show progress in the other components of the balanced reading program.

### Recommendations

Even though the children's reading ability increased, more reflection is necessary. It is necessary to gain information from the middle grade teacher about the incoming third grade students compared to other years. His insight about their reading progress compared to the past incoming third grade students would be useful. It would be valuable to gain information from parents who have had students in the

classroom when guided reading was not a component and when it was a component. It would be interesting to note if they have seen differences. It would be useful to hand out a questionnaire to the specific group of parents at the third quarter parent teacher conferences. Timely acquisition of the information will provide the best feedback of the impact of the study.

More preparation is necessary to continue. More leveled readers need to be purchased along with more centers needing to be created. Continuation of leveling the classroom library books is necessary so that all books may be in use.

Further study needs to be done to decide how to continue reading instruction in the middle grades after the students leave the primary grade classroom. Questions to be considered: Is ability grouping still necessary for teaching reading in the middle grades? Will the students need leveled books to choose from during independent reading time? Do they have the knowledge to choose books that are appropriate for their reading ability? Will the students continue to read during independent time? Are the students using their learned reading strategies, and do they continue to develop new ones?

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## Appendix A: Students' *QRI-4* Test Results as Compared to Guided Reading

### Initial Evaluation *QRI-4* Student Results

STUDENT	<i>QRI-4</i> Level
MK-1	*
MK-2	
FK-1	
FK-2	
FK-3	
FK-4	
FK-5	
FK-6	Pre primer I
M1-1	Pre primer I
M1-2	Pre primer I
M1-3	Primer
F1-1	Pre primer I
F1-2	Primer
F1-3	First
M2-1	Pre primer II
M2-2	First
M2-3	First
F2-1	Pre primer II
F2-2	Primer
F2-3	First

\*The yellow highlighted section represents students who were unable to perform the test because the students were in Kindergarten.



## Text Level Correlation Chart

1 Reading Recovery Levels	2 Rigby Catalog Reading Stages	3 Grade Level Equivalent	4 Rigby PM PM Plus Levels	5 Fountas & Pinnell Level	6 PALS	7 Wright Group McGraw-Hill	8 Success For All	9 DRA/ DRA2 Levels™	10 Lexiles	11 DRP Degrees of Reading Power	12 QRI IV	
A,B	<b>Emergent</b>	Beginning Kindergarten	Starters 1	A	Readiness	A	1-3	A	BR	NA		
1		Middle K	Starters 2	B**	Readiness	B		1	BR	NA		
2		End K	3-4 red	C	Pre-primer A	C		2	BR	NA		
3		<b>Early</b>	Beginning Grade 1	5-6 red/yellow	D	Pre-primer B	E	4-25	3	100	NA	Pre-Primer
4												
5												
6												
7	<b>Early</b>	Middle Grade 1	7-8 yellow	E	Pre-primer C	F	25	6-8		NA	Pre-Primer	
8												
9												
10		End Grade 1	9-10 blue	F	Primer (1.1)	G	26-37	10		NA	Primer Level (1.1)	
11												
12												
13	End Grade 1	11-12 blue/green	G		H	38-48	12			First (1.2)		
14												
15												
16	<b>Early Fluent</b>	Beg. Grade 2	13-14 green	H		I	2.0	14	300	NA	Second (2.2)	
17												
18		Middle Grade 2	15-16 orange	I**	First (1.2)	J		16		NA		38 & 41
19												
20	End Grade 2	17-18 turquoise	J	First (1.2)	K	18	300	NA	43			
21												
22	<b>Fluent</b>	Grade 3	19-20 purple	K	Second (2.1)	L	20	400	500	44	Third (3.2)	
23												
24												
25		Grade 4	21 gold	L**		M	24	400	500	50	54	Fourth (4.2)
26												
27												
28		Grade 5	22 gold	M	Second (2.2)	N	28	700	750	53	57	Fifth (5.2)
29												
30												
31		Grade 6	23 silver	N	Third (3.1)	O	30	750	850	54	57	Sixth (6.2)
32												
33												
34	Grade 7	24 silver	O**	Third (3.1)	P	34	850	950	54	57	Sixth (6.2)	
35												
36												
37	Grade 8	25 emerald	P	Third (3.2)	Q	38	950	1000	54	57	Sixth (6.2)	
38												
39												
40	Grade 8	26 emerald	Q,R	Fourth (4.1)	S,T	40	1000	1100	54	57	Sixth (6.2)	
41												
42												
43	Grade 8	27 ruby	S,T	Fourth (4.2)		40	1000	1100	54	57	Sixth (6.2)	
44												
45												
46	Grade 8	28 sapphire*		U,V,W		50	1000	1100	54	57	Sixth (6.2)	
47												
48												
49	Grade 8	29 sapphire		X,Y		60	1000	1100	54	57	Sixth (6.2)	
50												
51												
52	Grade 8			Z		70	1000	1100	54	57	Sixth (6.2)	
53												
54												
55	Grade 8					80	1000	1100	54	57	Sixth (6.2)	
56												
57												
58	Grade 8					80	1000	1100	54	57	Sixth (6.2)	
59												
60												

Revised 5/6/2009

This table shows how these levels correlate to each other.

1. Reading Recovery™ is a registered service mark of Ohio State University
2. Rigby PM & PM Plus (Rigby, Barrington, IL)
3. Swartz, Shook, Klein, et al. Grade Level Equivalent is based on *Guided Reading & Literacy Centers*, (Dominie Press, Inc., Carlsbad, CA., 2003)
4. Rigby PM & PM Plus (Rigby, Barrington, IL)
5. Fountas and Pinnell, *Matching Books to Readers, Using Leveled Books in Guided Reading K-3 Leveled Books for Readers Grades 3-6* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1999)
6. PALS Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening, Pre-K – 3, (Charlottesville, VA: UVA, 2003)
7. The Wright Group/McGraw Hill (Bothell, WA)
8. Success for All Foundation (SFAF), Baltimore, MD
9. Beaver, Joetta, *Developmental Reading Assessment Resource Guide 2* (Glenview, IL: Celebration Press, 2006)
10. Stenner, Smith, Burdock, *The Lexile Framework for Reading* (MetaMetrics, Inc. Durham, NC, 1984)
11. DRP Degrees of Reading Power ©Touchstone Applied Science Associates (TASA), Inc.
12. Lauren Leslie and JoAnne Caldwell, QRI - Qualitative Reading Inventory-4 (Boston: Pearson, 2006)

- **Independent** = 98 – 100% accuracy in Reading,  
= 90% accuracy in Comprehension (9/10, 8/8, 6/6 or 5/5 questions answered correctly)
- **Instructional** = 90 – 97% accuracy in Reading,  
= 70 – 89% accuracy in Comprehension (7/10, 6/8, 4/6 or 4/5 questions answered correctly)  
\*\*\* Indicates Grade Level Performance\*\*\*
- **Frustration** = 89 % and below accuracy in Reading,  
= 69% and below accuracy in Comprehension (0-6/10, 0-5/8, 0-3/6 or 0-3/5 questions answered correctly)

<http://hayden.spps.org/sites/06cb8d12-9c17-4830-8c61-6fa8a909903a/uploads/TEXTCO~1.doc>

Revised 5/6/2009

## Appendix B: Running Record Example

Example of Running Record from <http://www.readinga-z.com>

### Reading a-z Running Record

**Level E**

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**In the Sea**  
**117 words**

Have the student read out loud as you record.

Assessed by \_\_\_\_\_

page	E = errors M = meaning	S-C = self-correction S = structure V = visual	E	S-C	E			S-C			
					M	S	V	M	S	V	
3	The big blue whale lives in the sea. Does anything else live in the sea?										
4	The hungry shark hunts in the sea. Does anything else hunt in the sea?										
5	The giant sea turtle floats in the sea. Does anything else float in the sea?										
6	Schools of fish swim in the sea. Does anything else swim in the sea?										
7	The eight - armed octopus moves in the sea. Does anything else move in the sea?										
8	The barking seal glides in the sea. Does anything else glide in the sea?										
9	Crabs and lobsters crawl in the sea. Does anything else crawl in the sea?										
10	Yes, yes. Lots of things live in the sea. Can you name more swimming sea things?										
<b>Totals</b>											

Accuracy Rate:

Error Rate:

Self-correction Rate:

Thank you for contacting Customer Support for the Learning A-Z Family of Websites.

You have our permission.  
Richard Kozlowski  
Customer Service  
Learning A-Z

## Appendix C: Examples of Leveled Book Collections

### **Level A**

*Wake Up!*  
*Moonbear's Books*  
*Have A Hug*

### **Level B**

*Annie, Bea, and Chi Chi Dolores*  
*I Love Snow!*

### **Level C**

*Bugs!*  
*The Biggest Snowman Ever*

### **Level D**

*The Red Shed*  
*Mr. Munch*

### **Level E**

*I Am Water*  
*Try, Try Again*

### **Level F**

*A Parade for Sam*  
*Biscuit and the Little Pup*

### **Level G**

*Who Stole the Cookies*  
*I Am Fire*

### **Level H**

*I Am Snow*  
*No New Pets*

### **Level I**

*The Wheels on the Bus*  
*The Red Hen*

### **Level J**

*Clifford's Halloween*  
*Wendy's Puppies*

### **Level K**

*Franklin's Secret Club*  
*Giggle, Giggle, Quack*

### **Level L**

*Tikki Tikki Tembo*  
*Miss Daisy is Crazy*

### **Level M**

*Molly's Pilgrim*  
*Goldie*

### **Level N**

*Flat Stanley*  
*The Year of the Panda*

### **Level O**

*Muggie Maggie*  
*The Courage of Sarah Noble*

## Appendix D: Sources Used for Book Leveling

<http://home.comcast.net/~ngiansante/index.html>

[http://www.pps.k12.or.us/curriculum/literacy/leveled\\_books/lb\\_grade\\_level.pdf](http://www.pps.k12.or.us/curriculum/literacy/leveled_books/lb_grade_level.pdf)

[http://www.pps.k12.or.us/instruction-c/literacy/leveled\\_books/](http://www.pps.k12.or.us/instruction-c/literacy/leveled_books/)

<http://www.readinga-z.com>

<http://scholastic.com>

Fountas, I & Pinnell, G. (2006). *The Fountas and Pinnell leveled book list K-8*.

Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Appendix E: Examples of Leveled Readers Used from [www.readinga-z.com](http://www.readinga-z.com)

**Level aa**

*Over*  
*My Family*

**Level A**

*I Can* (f)  
*My Body* (nf)  
*My Dog* (f)  
*Opposites* (nf)

**Level C**

*How Many* (nf)  
*We Count* (nf)  
*Fall* (nf)

**Level D**

*Frog is Hungry* (f)  
*What?*(f)

**Level E**

*Hugs* (f)  
*The Four Seasons* (nf)

**Level F**

*Hibernation* (nf)  
*Josh Gets Glasses* (f)

**Level G**

*My Day* (f)  
*Maria Joins the Team* (f)  
*The Chase* (f)

**Level H**

*Maria's Thanksgiving* (nf)  
*Animals, Animals* (f)

**Level I**

*The 100<sup>th</sup> Day Project* (nf)  
*Arthur's Bad News Day* (nf)

**Level J**

*Ocean Animals* (nf)

**Level K**

*Maria's Family Celebrations* (f)  
*Simple Machines* (nf)

**Level L**

*Jessica Loves Soccer* (nf)  
*Smelly Clyde* (nf)  
*The Igloo* (nf)

Appendix F: Example of Benchmark stories used from [www.readinga-z.com](http://www.readinga-z.com)

**Level A**

*I Go*

**Level C**

*I Can Help*

**Level D**

*The Wheel*

**Level E**

*Bath Time*

**Level F**

*Monkey to the Top*

**Level G**

*Signs are Everywhere*

**Level H**

*How Long Does It Take?*

**Level I**

*On Vacation*

**Level J**

*Animal Olympics*

**Level K**

*The Mailman's Hat*

**Level L**

*Harold the Hungry Plant*

**Level M**

*Spiders*

## Appendix G: Flexible Groupings

### Coding Key

F: female      M: male

K: kindergarten

1-3: First number represents grade level; second number is a number assigned to the student.

### Groupings : August 25, 2008

Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D	Group E
FK-1	FK-6	F2-1	F1-2	F1-3
FK-2	F1-1	M2-1	M1-3	F2-3
FK-3	M1-1		F2-2	M2-2
FK-4	M1-2			M2-3
FK-5				
MK-1				
MK-2				

### Groupings : November 11, 2008

Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D	Group E
FK-1	FK-6	F2-1	F1-2	F1-3
FK-2	F1-1	F2-2	M1-3	F2-3
FK-3	M1-1	M2-1		M2-2
FK-4	M1-2			M2-3
FK-5				
MK-1				
MK-2				

**Groupings: January 5, 2009**

<b>Group A</b>	<b>Group B</b>	<b>Group C</b>	<b>Group D</b>	<b>Group E</b>
FK-1	FK-6		M1-3	F1-2
FK-2	F1-1		F2-1	F1-3
FK-3	M1-1		F2-2	F2-3
FK-4	M1-2		M2-1	M2-2
FK-5				M2-3
FM-6				
FM-7				



## Appendix H: Group Rotation Schedule

- Group A1 and Group A2: Kindergarten students
- Group B: Kindergarten student and grade one students
- Group C: Grade one and grade two students
- Group D: Grade one and grade two students
- Group E: Grade one and grade two students

\*Remember the group member may change at any time due to an individual student's progress. The group labels are only for the purpose of demonstrating the schedule.

<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
Group A1/ Group A2	Group A1/ GroupA2	Group A1/ GroupA2	Group A 1/ GroupA2	Group A1/ GroupA2
Group B		Group B	Group B	Group B
	Group C	Group C	Group C	Group C
Group D	Group D	Group D		Group D
Group E	Group E		Group E	Group E

### Appendix I: Reading a-z Reading Level Comparison Chart

Grade	Reading a-z	Fountas & Pinnell	Reading Recovery	DRA
K	aa	A	1	A - 1
K	A	A	1	A - 1
K	B	B	2	2
K	C	C	3 - 4	3 - 4
1	D	D	5 - 6	6
1	E	E	7 - 8	8
1	F	F	9 - 10	10
1	G	G	11 - 12	12
1	H	H	13 - 14	14
1	I	I	15 - 16	16
1	J	J	17	18
2	K	J	17	18
2	L	K	18	20
2	M	L	19	24
2	N	M	20	28
2	O	M	20	28
2	P	M	28	28
3	Q	N	30	30
3	R	N	30	30
3	S	O	34	34
3	T	P	38	38
4	U	Q	40	40
4	V	Q	40	40
4	W	R	40	40
5	X	S	40	40
5	Y	T	40	40
5	Z	U - W	N/A	50

Adapted from <http://www.readinga-z.com>

## Appendix J: Questionnaire

Figure 4

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ The date is \_\_\_\_\_

### Primary Reading Survey

#### How Do You Feel When:

1. your teacher reads a story to you?



2. your class has reading time?



3. you can read with a friend?



4. you read out loud to your teacher?



5. you read out loud to someone at home?



6. someone reads to you at home?



7. someone gives you a book for a present?



8. you read a book to yourself at home?



#### How Do You Think:

9. your teacher feels when you read out loud?

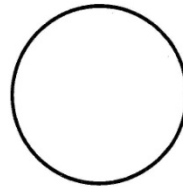


10. your family feels when you read out loud?



#### How Do You Feel About How Well You Can Read?

Make this face look the way you feel.



## Appendix K: Reading Interview

Do you like reading class better this year?

Yes: 10

No: 0

Why do you like reading class better this year compared to last year?

“Better books”

“lots of new books”

“It’s funner than last year.”

“exploring new books”

“We have more time.”

“new books—getting into reading”

“You have chapter books; more variety.”

“You read at your level.”

“I can read better now.”

“We can think while we read; it is really nice to just read.”

What component of the reading curriculum do you like best?

Independent reading: 10

Guided Reading: 8

Shared Reading: 2

Created by Kimberly Gartner (2009)