

Differentiating Literacy Instruction Through Guided  
Reading  
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## **Abstract**

Research reiterates how instilling a strong reading foundation in young students is vital to their growth in the future. Today, students need more support and individualized education to meet the diverse needs students enter school with. Whole group reading instruction does not benefit students in comparison to differentiated instruction. In order to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of the students as well as provide scaffolds to enhance literacy, teachers must incorporate small group instruction such as guided reading groups.

Guided reading are groups of students around the same developmental level that showcase similar learning needs exploring books. Teachers work alongside students, coaching through strategies, word work, fluency and comprehension reading skills. Students working in a social setting, building on skills with support from the teacher working to their full potential. Guided reading groups teach important reading skills before reading, during reading and after reading. Although guided reading is not a curriculum in and of itself, teachers must understand its importance and its place in the classroom. Persuasive information and providing examples will inspire teachers to incorporate a reading instruction format that is grounded in providing the best instruction to each individual child.

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## **Chapter One: Project Proposal**

### **Problem Statement**

Reading instruction continues to be a driving force in our schools today. Ideally, students would progress through high school excelling in reading, which would help them thrive in other subjects. For students, creating a strong reading foundation early can positively impact future academic growth in years to come (Klein & Kogan, 2013). In turn, when students struggle in reading, it consequently has a negative impact on their success in school (Taylor et al., 1997). Today, it is estimated that one in three children experience significant difficulty learning to read (Iaquinta, 2006). A recent report from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) indicates that in 2019, only 34% of students nationally reported proficient scores in reading (National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2019).

With students having increased difficulty with reading, consequences grow more dire as they advance through school. An article written by Timothy Shanahan and Rebecca Barr (1995) states that students who have more difficulty with reading are more likely to have lower self-esteem, an increase in discipline problems in school, perform less well in other subject areas and less likely to complete a high school education. Research solidifies extensive results showcasing that students with a poor start in reading rarely catch up to their peers (Jitendra et al., 2004). Therefore, intervening early and productively is essential for students' acquisition of reading skills. Striving for best practices in reading instruction can help students in their journeys to become successful readers.

With an increased variation in student reading ability in the classroom, teaching to one reading level cannot reach all students. A contributing factor to reading under achievement in students continues to be the limited differentiation in schools to meet the unique needs of each student (Prast et al., 2015). Too often, driven by the fact that they have too much to cover in too little of a time, teachers teach a single lesson at a single pace to a group of students ranging in ability level (Tomlinson & Kalbfleisch, 1998). When teachers differentiate instruction to meet the varying needs of readers, students can participate in more complex literacy experiences (Iaquinta, 2006). Creating a reading instruction plan that focuses on small group differentiated instruction creates the best outcome for students in reading to allow for personalized instruction.

### **Importance and Rationale of the Project**

Reading is a foundational part of an academic school experience. Creating a strong base in reading positively impacts students young and old. According to Stephanie Kozak and Holly Recchia (2019), research continues to highlight the cognitive benefits of reading such as spelling, vocabulary size, and general knowledge. Reading impacts beyond academic success. Empirical research states that reading builds on other abilities reflected in social understanding: the ability to empathize with people's emotions, cognitions and motivations (Kozak & Recchia, 2019). Furthermore, reading positively impacts student's lives outside of school as well. Research reveals high levels of literacy is a strong predictor for success in the

future in school and life (Bingham & Patton-Terry, 2013). Establishing strong reading skills in students at an early level is a vital need.

Many variables come into play when considering what determines a proficient reader in an academic setting. The National Reading Panel (NRP) establishes five elements that are crucial for any early reading approach: phonemic awareness, phonics, reading comprehension, vocabulary, and fluency (National Reading Panel, 2000). These skills are essential to give students the proper footing in order to progress through reading development successfully. Working together, these skills can propel successful readers to develop rapidly as they progress through grades. However, if students do not have a strong understanding in one or two areas, reading acquisition as a whole will suffer (Cheung & Slavin, 2013). Each pillar works together as the collection holds up reading proficiency in students. Students cannot succeed without improving in all areas. However, some researchers might argue certain pillars are more important than others. For example, Kim et al. (2010) argue that phonological awareness has been identified as a strong predictor of reading success or failure. This generalizes if a student has a difficult time with phonological awareness, they will struggle with reading as a whole.

Today, classrooms see an increased number in diversity with students having various learning styles, emotional levels, maturity levels, interests and academic readiness walking through the classroom door (Tomlinson, 2001). With students entering school equipped with a wide range of abilities, teachers must adapt instruction to meet the diverse educational needs of students (Prast et al., 2015).



Researchers estimate the “reading ability span in a typical classroom is two-thirds the average chronological age of students. In a traditional class of 15-year-olds, a teacher should expect a 10-year range in reading levels” (Lawrence-Brown, 2004, p. 36). This gap requires the teacher to find a way to teach to each student's needs. Students bring into the classroom different reading skills and strategies, as well as different learning styles (Jaquinta, 2006). These differences entering the room require teachers to find a way to teach more than just to an “imaginary average” student (Platt, 2018).

Differentiated instruction consists of how teachers respond to the variance among learners, giving students multiple options for taking in information (Tomlinson, 2000). The teacher records the differences and similarities in students and plans instruction that meets various student needs. Differentiated instruction allows teachers to work proactively to maximize the learning opportunities for each student (Prast et al., 2015). Whole group instruction does not teach to every need during a lesson, requiring differentiation to provide the best instruction for reading.

This reading framework and differentiation begins as early as preschool and kindergarten. Kindergarten is a critical period of development during which students learn many skills that foster an academic and social-emotional foundation that students can build on in subsequent grades. Kindergarten can have a profound effect not only on a child's academic success, but also on long-term academic outcomes. Consequently, teaching foundational reading skills is critical to start at a young age. Reading instruction of basic reading skills at an early age is essential, because students who might fall short in basic skills are at a greater chance of reading failure

in the future (Sukhram & Hu, 2013). Intervening early can provide a solid foundation for years to come.

### **Background of the Project**

Reading instruction has had many pendulum swings throughout history. Classrooms have looked different, theories and mindsets have changed, but one thing remains: reading is a fundamental skill to teach students and has many facets. Teachers throughout the years have been working to determine the best methods for teaching reading competency. Throughout the history of education, “individualized instruction” is one of the most frequent expressions in American English (Leamon, 1975). Individual instruction, or differentiation, is not a new term, as it can be traced in many ways throughout the history of education. In the colonial period, the New England states often had town schools. One-room schoolhouses frequented small rural areas and towns, where some students ranged from five to seventeen years old (Gutek, 2011). There, the teacher had a diverse range of skills to teach to. They had to adjust learning to fit the various student needs, where differentiated instruction flourished. Tomlinson (2005) explains:

Teachers had to be flexible in their use of time, space, materials, student groupings, and instructional contact with learners. Teachers could not assume students were essentially alike in their learning needs, and could not support that teaching one topic in one way according to one timetable was a viable practice. (p. 8)

As apparent as differentiation was in the past, the need for this instruction persists in education still today. Our current educational model often relies on the idea that one-size-fits-all when it comes to educational instruction based on the increased value of whole group instruction and high-stakes testing.

One reading instructional feature receiving considerable attention in response to a need for differentiated instruction is small group instruction (Chorzempa & Graham, 2006). Although it is hard to pinpoint the introduction of small ability groups in education, we know it was applied as early as 1913 (Barr & Dreeben, 1991). Throughout the last 100 years, small group instruction has been adapted and transformed. In his book, Emmett Betts (1946) laid out four steps to consider in a directed reading activity. These steps encouraged teachers to prepare students for text, allow time to silent read then oral read, reread for new purpose, and follow-up activities. Although this was the goal, small group instruction did not look like this initially. Students were placed in homogenous groups where students had the same general ability. Between 1960 and 1980, roughly 80% of teachers were using small ability groups as a part of their reading instruction (Chorzempa & Graham, 2006). However, ability grouping was fraught with problems (Ford & Opitz, 2011). The problem did not come from the actual grouping format but rather with the nature of instruction during the small groups. Durkin (1979) mentions that these small groups were teacher directed and basal-driven using round robin reading styles with basic literal questions.

In 1985, this ability grouping design received some scrutiny as negative research on ability groups showcased that students placed in reading groups had more to do with reading achievement than actual ability (Ford & Opitz, 2011). Students would be only working on a general level rather than specific areas to target what the student needed. As a result, teachers put more focus on flexible grouping, and basal publications followed suit (Ford & Opitz, 2011). This new form of grouping unfortunately brought whole group instruction to the fore-front substituting one set of concerns for another. Whole group instruction offered little differentiation for students in reading (Lanning & LeMere, 2000). As the pendulum swung back, it brought a new understanding about the need for small groups. This is when guided reading entered into the scene. As teachers began to rediscover the value that small group instruction brought to the classroom, educators like Fountas and Pinnell advocated for the importance of guided reading groups (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). More focus and consideration for reading strategies came into play, as educators deliberated on how guided reading could avoid falling into the same trap as before.

As guided reading increased in prevalence in education, as well as the implementation of national standards, policy makers began to analyze how to assess reading acquisition in students. This brought forth new assessments and standardization. High-stakes standardized testing in upper grades trickled down to lower grades, now requiring more standards to be met by younger students, especially in literacy (Dombkowski, 2001). Students are expected to build on emergent literacy skills at an earlier age and with more rigor since the implementation of standardized

testing (Brown et al., 2019). With the increase in testing, teachers are left with decisions regarding what form of instruction is best. In order to meet the pressure and needs of a standardized test, teachers resort to teaching to the test. This type of teaching involves a large percentage of whole group instruction, leaving little room for ability-groups and differentiated instruction. Rather than meeting students where they are and challenging them in the pillars in which they struggle, academic pressure forces teachers to teach all students uniformly, with little differentiation. Increased teacher-directed learning limits student growth at an early age. As a result, students now have a difficult time grasping emergent literacy skills in this instruction model (Brown et al., 2019).

### **Statement of Purpose**

Providing good reading instruction for struggling students is a large responsibility of teachers (Taylor et al., 1997). Thus, the purpose of this study is to create a teacher resource guide that will aid teachers when incorporating guided reading into their daily schedule. In order to encourage the need for small group literacy learning each day, I will explain its importance and its positive impact on student learning. This plan will provide teachers with tools on how to inform instruction and create lessons that speak to the various aspects of reading acquisition in students. Although the research shows that small groups positively affect students of all ages, I will primarily be focusing on early literacy guided reading groups geared towards kindergarten students. Teachers will be provided sample lesson plans as well

as ideas for implementation, differentiation and follow up activities. Teachers will also explore assessment tools which will help them to check for understanding and guide instruction beyond guided reading groups.

### **Objectives of the Project**

With the increasing demands of teachers, it is easy to struggle with identifying what is important to teach to students and how to teach it. Teachers will learn about the importance of small group instruction in reading acquisition by reading through research which details the immense benefits of this format of teaching. My objective is to educate teachers on the importance of and give example lessons on, structural learning in small group settings as well as best practice strategies. The project will guide teachers in both identifying important components of small group learning and putting those components into action in an early education program. These lessons will have formative assessments throughout to allow teachers to check for learning and progress in reading for the students with whom they work with. Moving forward, teachers will be able to see this importance and implement this small group instruction to increase reading acquisition in young students.

### **Definition of Terms**

***Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP):*** Decisions that adapt based on an individual child within an age range that can adapt to the experiences, interests and abilities (Repko-Erwin, 2017).

***Scaffolding:*** Teachers assess where a learner is developmentally, in comparison with where they need to be. The teacher then plans for specific instruction tailored between where the child is at and where they need to be (Ford & Opitz, 2011).

***Guided Reading:*** Typically involves an instructional practice in which small groups of students reading at a similar reading level who demonstrate similar reading development and needs work in a small group to read a book (Jaquinta, 2006).

***Response to Intervention (RTI):*** A process used by educators to work on specific reading skills with groups of students.

***Phonological Awareness:*** A student's ability to manipulate and hear phonemes, or the smallest units of sound, in spoken language (Bursuck & Damer, 2011).

***Differentiation:*** Different instructional modifications made for students specifically in the content, the process or the product of learning (Tomlinson, 2005).

### **Limitations of the Project**

This project will focus on how small group instruction meets students' needs in reading instruction. The scope of this project relies on teachers understanding the importance of small group instruction, paired with a guide and sample lessons that assist the teacher in implementing. This plan will allow teachers to see how to include important elements of guided reading and how to assess and group students regularly. These developmentally appropriate lessons will assist teachers in working with sample lessons to elevate their teaching.

One very important concept of guided reading instruction is time for the teacher to teach a small group of students. A limitation of this project could be the inability to successfully manage students who are not in the small group setting. For this to be successful in a general education classroom, students who are not working with the teacher must be actively engaged independently. Teachers will get quality reading instruction time if they are not bothered by other students. This requires the teacher to have a strong management style with high expectations. Students working in the group must also have a set of rules and guidelines to make guided reading groups go smoothly with little distractions. If teachers do not have a classroom management style that requires accountability from students, this project implementation plan could suffer.

Although this resource can provide research and ideas for getting started in small groups, this is not to be used as a singular curriculum. This project can be a limitation if teachers use this project as the sole way to instruct students in reading. Reading instruction in schools must combine a large number of components to ensure students get the tools they need to be a proficient reader. To build up the student's reading pillars, teachers will need to use various curriculums, strategies and interventions to teach each whole child. Although this project will provide a springboard into guided reading instruction, a call for action still remains for reading instruction. Teachers will need to still include read alouds, independent reading, phonics and whole group strategies (Santoro et al., 2016). In guided reading groups, reading ability fluctuates, and grouping requires fluency in groups. Although



grouping may be tricky at first, this project will give some ideas on how to focus on different abilities. Teachers will lead with ideas and practice from this project, and move towards implementing in their own classroom.

## Chapter Two: Literature Review

### Introduction

As estimated, one in three students experience difficulty learning to read (Iaquinta, 2016). Students come into school at various levels with a wide range of skills and needs. In schools today, teachers must respond to the various needs of learners through differentiation (Tomlinson, 2000). This project focuses on the importance of guided reading and small group instruction in a school setting, providing differentiated instruction to small groups of children. Every student has a right to individual reading instruction, and guided reading can meet the varying needs of readers (Stover et al., 2017).

The theory review portion of this chapter highlights theories that play a part in guided reading. Guided reading instruction encompasses many beneficial reading components which rely on various theories. Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural theory plays a large role and is supported by constructivism and transactional theory. Along with these theories, scaffolding and differentiation are a part of constructing an effective program. Following the theories associated with guided reading, the focus of the research portion speaks to how teachers can better implement small group instruction in their classes. Best forms of guided reading advise teachers to structure reading lessons in three parts: *Before Reading*, *During Reading* and *After Reading*. This section explains the role of the teacher as well as important strategies to include while executing guided reading. This section concludes with a summary of main points and its impact on the project.

## **Theory/Rationale**

### **Social Constructivism**

Guided reading and small group instruction incorporate many skills and strategies ranging in different educational theories. Beginning with John Dewey's article, "My Pedagogic Creed" (1963), Dewey asserts that school, a form of community, assists students with constructing an understanding of how to best participate in the "social consciousness of the race" (p.26). A main goal in constructivism is to create a crucial learning experience that allows learners to mediate knowledge within a social context, which leads to the construction of concepts and knowledge (Hirtle, 1996). This learning environment enables students to interact with others while learning, simultaneously helping them with communication. Here, students can be more successful in constructing meaning while building on their existing schema and experiences (Bruner, 1966). When learners construct knowledge while a part of a social context, the learner's cultural reality can be transformed (Hirtle, 1996). The teacher is an important part of this, as they guide students by understanding the student's schema and gearing knowledge taught to specific children.

Discovering how the social aspect of learning positively impacts students led theorists to the social constructivism theory. Building on John Dewey's work, cooperative learning allows students to interact in a social context in order to facilitate learning. Learning occurs through participation in cultural contexts and

literacy is impacted by social interactions. Learning is positively impacted by social interactions, therefore building those interactions into the educational paradigm is vital. Students are able to direct their learning not on their own, but rather with peers in order to deepen their understanding of the meaning. In Lev Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, he speaks to the importance of social interactions in learning. Wass and Golding (2014) summarize that it "explains how the development of conscious intellectual activity is the result of social and cultural influences" (p. 671). This theory involves learners working in tandem, discussing and debating their differing understandings of a text while the teacher facilitates students with individual learning targets (Fletcher et al., 2012). In this assistance-based learning environment, the teacher can challenge students on harder tasks.

In this theory, Vygotsky (1978) introduces the term Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Vygotsky believed that learners operate on two different levels, their "actual developmental level" and their "potential level" (p.85). ZPD then was defined as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p. 86). As the student is interacting with people in their environment, they have access to a variety of internal developmental processes that would otherwise be too difficult to access independently (Vygotsky, 1978). The core idea is students can operate at a higher learning level when they have direct interactions, capable peers, and teachers to assist them which in turn increases the students' independent ability.

In a classroom setting, students will thus need different instructional treatments in order to work in their own ZPD (Prast et al., 2015).

Another guiding theory in guided reading is scaffolding. Although this term pairs very closely with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, he did not specifically use the term scaffold (Frey & Fischer, 2010). Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976) defined scaffold as a process "that enables a child or novice to solve a task or achieve a goal that would be beyond his unassisted efforts" (p. 90). This was developed as a metaphor to describe the assistance a teacher or peer gives to others to support their learning. The teacher assists the students with skills that are beyond the student's capability. The teacher encourages independence but provides support to bridge the gap. As the student takes responsibility or mastery of the task, the teacher will fade back, gradually removing the scaffolding. In turn, the student can now work through these tasks independently. Benson (1997) states, "Scaffolding is actually a bridge used to build upon what students already know to arrive at something they do not know. If scaffolding is properly administered, it will act as an enabler, not as a disabler" (p. 126). Studies have indicated that students score significantly higher after receiving scaffolding reading remediations (Fournier & Graves, 2002).

## **Differentiation**

Another key concept to consider in guided reading is differentiated instruction. Despite the debate around whether differentiation is defined as a theory or a practice, differentiated instruction plays a huge role in reaching students where they

are academically (Subban, 2006). Tomlinson (2005), a leader in this topic, describes differentiated instruction as the idea that students learn best when the teacher provides accommodations for a student's different readiness level, interest, and learning profile. While scaffolding can be seen as offering support to meet objectives, differentiation is seen as changing or modifying instruction to meet the same standards. Due to the variance in student aptitude and the wide range of educational needs in classrooms, teachers are held responsible for adapting education to meet the needs of the students (Prast et al., 2015). It is the responsibility of the teacher to acknowledge the variety in student backgrounds and readiness. In order to provide students with purposeful instruction meeting the student where they are, teachers need to assess the student to determine strengths and areas of growth (Stover et al., 2017). Differentiated instruction can provide learners specific instruction based on their needs, rather than an one-size-fits-all instructional pattern.

Differentiation can be used in a multitude of ways in the classroom. In order to maximize students' success, teachers can adapt instruction in a few different ways. Tomlinson (2000) states that there are four different classroom elements that a teacher can consider modifying. The teacher can revise the content, what the student needs to make sense of. They can also adapt the process, or the activities students engage in as well as the products of the learning the student needs to showcase (Tomlinson, 2000). Lastly, the teacher can work to rework the learning environment and how the classroom feels. Together, these four classroom elements can be modified to best instruction students. In order for the teacher to make informed decisions on how to

individualize instruction, teachers must frequently assess and progress monitor students (Prast et al., 2015). This allows for teachers to examine student strengths and areas of needs to better instruct where the child is at. A significant benefit to differentiation uses student interest to motivate students in learning activities (Stover et al., 2017). By sparking student interest, it also allows students to take ownership of their learning. Differentiation does not require teachers to make a new learning plan for each student daily, it simply urges teachers to provide alternatives as they see fit. Differentiation provides multiple approaches and utilizes a blend of small group, individual, and whole group instruction methods (Tomlinson, 2001).

### **Transactional Reader Response Theory**

The reader response approach is critical in the presentation of guided reading groups. Louise M. Rosenblatt (1976) has been greatly influential in reader response theory. She summarizes her thoughts as reading is more than an exchange of questions or collection of details, rather the transaction between the reader and the text (Spiegel, 1998). In reader response theory, instead of finding the meaning in the text alone, students make the meaning of the text. This type of theory places the importance on readers making meaning through a dynamic, reflective, introspective process while constructing, interpreting and revising meaning (Spiegel, 1998). Rosenblatt (1976) also insists that while building meaning, the text cannot be ignored. Meaning is grounded in text, but is interpreted by individuals. It is also important to consider that with meaning being made by each person individually, there is bound to

be different meanings constructed. Due to the unique nature of human experiences, it is to be expected that different social, ethnical, educational, and personal factors may lead to different interpretations of one text (Alvermann et al., 2013). Guided reading aims to assist students in constructing meaning, making this theory important to consider. Although not an exclusive theory to utilize in small group instruction, educators must be conscious of how students may make meaning of texts.

## **Research/Evaluation**

### **Guided Reading Explanation**

Guided reading instruction takes place in classrooms where the teacher is working with a small group of students on reading goals. This group shares a common text and includes students in a similar place in reading development. These students demonstrate similar learning needs and assistance in processing text (Iaquinta, 2006). Guided reading aims to target students with effective instruction, which matches students' current ability with concepts they may find difficult. This small group instruction model is notably the most important contemporary reading instruction practice in the United States and is best practice for balanced literacy (Fawson & Reutzel, 2000; Denton et al., 2014). Ford and Opitz (2008) created a guided reading national survey asking teachers how they use guided reading in the classroom. The teachers showed wide variety in the way they utilize guided reading during the school year. The data collected showed teachers use small groups anywhere from 3-5 days a week on average, though some teachers never use them.



These teachers also vary in how many days they teach these groups, from one day a week to five days a week. The broad range of ways teachers use guided reading calls into question, what is best for students and what are important qualities in guided reading? As teachers learn more about the importance of small group instruction, specific guidelines should be included to target proper instruction to students.

### **Grouping**

The concept of grouping in small group instruction has evolved during the early years of its implementation. Grouping remains an essential part of delivering systematic and explicit instruction to struggling readers (Archer & Hughes, 2011). Based on historical references, it is essential that teachers do not move back to heterogeneous groups, which would shift the focus away from small groups and towards whole group instruction (Ford & Opitz, 2008). Research has continued to show that large group instruction is difficult to provide differentiation to specific student needs and are not conducive for struggling readers (Lanning & LaMere, 2000). Conversations about how to group students are important to consider in guided reading groups. In a Ford and Opitz (2008) national survey on guided reading, they saw an ample variance between how teachers group students in guided reading. On average, teachers have six students in each group, and per the survey, teachers reported grouping students 60% based on developmental levels, 40% by needs and 6% by other methods, while 22% still grouped by heterogeneous grouping (Ford &

Opitz, 2008). The highest percent of teachers also admitted to changing groups less than once a month.

For guided reading to be most beneficial, teachers need to assess student skills frequently and allow groups to remain flexible and fluid (Ford & Opitz, 2008). Teachers must ensure that membership in these guided reading groups are re-evaluated and reformed as needed (Fountas & Pinnell, 2009). This supports students to continue to receive the differentiated and scaffolded instruction they need to gain higher reading competency. Creating ongoing adjustments to instructional groups tailors instruction to the needs of the students present (Prast et al., 2015).

A meaningful component of grouping is frequent administered student assessments to gauge student strengths and needs in reading. Teachers must use these frequent assessments to inform their guided reading teaching (Denton et al., 2014). Reading Recovery is an intensive, short-term intervention program with one-on-one lessons for struggling readers created by Marie Clay in New Zealand (Lipp & Helfrich, 2016). Although inherently different from guided reading, assessments also significantly inform Reading Recovery lessons. Teachers may use assessments to begin as a screening measure in order to find an overall reading level baseline. An important assessment to find student strengths and needs are running records, which take the form of a read aloud assessment with specific observation of reading tendencies. The teacher marks errors the student makes for reading to use as error analysis that showcases the student's developing strategies (Schwartz, 2005). When teachers analyze specific errors made by the student, the teacher can see patterns in

processing strategies, which can in turn show targeted instruction for a reader (Clay, 2001). When teachers use assessments in a systematic way, teachers are more informed to meet the changing reading needs of students, consequently reforming groups to give students individualized instruction.

### **Teachers**

In guided reading groups, the teacher remains influential in the positive progress of struggling readers while honoring the complexity of development in each student. However, struggling students often work with paraprofessionals in reading intervention services rather than with their teacher (Allington, 2013). Guided reading in the classroom offers teachers the chance to work with these struggling readers and bolster students' strengths in the classroom. Teacher knowledge and belief about reading and important strategies to teach ultimately has a significant impact on the instruction given to students (Bingham & Hall-Kenyon, 2013). It is important for teachers to have a solid understanding of the constructs of the English language when teaching students to identify struggling readers and target instruction to meet each need. It is up to the teacher to identify why a student might be struggling on an objective, and provide scaffolding with strategies to support the reader.

Not only will teachers need to feel confident about reading strategies, but they also will make different decisions for different students at different parts of the lesson (Fountas & Pinnell, 2012). It is the job of the teacher to use research-based instruction, (i.e. differentiation and scaffolding), to craft instruction for individual

students (Snow et al., 1998). A skilled teacher must make decisions throughout the guided reading lesson that are responsive to the learner's reading development (Fountas & Pinnell, 2006). This requires teachers to modify curriculum and guided reading lessons in order to meet the present needs of the students. In many schools, teachers think guided reading revolves around teacher demonstration of reading techniques, during which the teacher takes most of the teaching time (Ford & Opitz, 2008). However, teachers must move away from demonstration and more towards scaffolding instruction, providing support to students as they read. Teachers must monitor students as they read, to assess current and impending impacts on their reading, allowing opportunity for students to practice vocabulary. Teachers can offer students chances to reread to gain more confidence, practice reading strategies, and build fluency (Iaquinta, 2006).

### **Before Reading**

Prior to teachers utilizing guided reading groups, struggling readers were expected to complete skill and drill activities such as worksheets. Ultimately, they did not spend time with authentic texts working with their teacher (Stover et al., 2017). Structuring guided reading time is essential to show students how to work dynamically with a text. When creating a schedule with a guided reading group, building a thoughtfully planned structured time with students is essential, considering without structure it could negatively impact the quality of instruction (Maine & Hofmann, 2016; Ford & Opitz, 2008). The goal of guided reading is to prepare

students to choose their own texts during independent reading time (Routman, 2000). Therefore, teachers must be intentional in choosing texts for guided reading time. Teachers should utilize both fiction and nonfiction texts and explain to students why the book was just right for the group.

The first portion of the meeting time can be labeled *Before Reading*. This is the time for the teacher to introduce the text. During this time, students work on vocabulary present in the text. Results from Fein et al. (2011) signify that students who receive reliable small group instruction outperform their peers in vocabulary assessments. Talking about vocabulary while scaffolding background knowledge before reading can give students assistance in constructing meaning as they read (Iaquinta, 2006). Oftentimes, effective teachers will also begin the guided reading time with reading a familiar book, either a read aloud or a prior guided reading book. This allows students to practice fluency and build confidence before introducing a new book (Lipp & Helfrich, 2016). *Before Reading* gives students skills to focus on as they anticipate working with different strategies.

Structured time is essential for the small group instruction for students to remain on task. This is also very important to consider for the students who are not working in the small group. Ford and Opitz (2008) remind us if teachers are meeting with four groups for 20 minutes per group 3-4 times a week, students would spend 60-80 minutes in small groups. That means that students may spend up to 132 minutes a week away from the teacher. This is a large chunk of time that students will need to engage in structured academic activities outside of group time. Instruction

away from the teacher must remain as influential and relevant as time with the teacher (Ford & Opitz, 2008). This requires teachers to find activities for students to engage in while they are not in guided reading groups.

### **During Reading**

After introducing the text, the teacher then gradually releases control to the students. The gradual release model provides structure for the teacher to move from assuming all responsibility, to the students assuming all responsibility (Frey & Fischer, 2010). After talking about a target, the teacher does more coaching and less modeling with students (Ford & Opitz, 2008). Teachers are interacting with students as they read, reminding students that mastery here is not the expectation. During this stage, Frey and Fischer (2010) strongly encourage teachers to provide scaffolds to support and guide readers. Most importantly, teachers must get out of the way to allow students to work with and practice these strategies. It is important too for the teacher to point out mistakes students might make, and use these as teaching moments. Students who do not realize they made a mistake often create negative habits by practicing their mistake over and over (Denton et al., 2014). During this reading time, the teacher encourages students to read and build confidence.

### **Building Meaning**

During reading, it is necessary to remember how important it is for students to build meaning in the texts they are reading. Though educators go back and forth, Ford and Opitz (2011) emphasize that reading for meaning is the primary goal of guided

reading. During this instructional time, teachers are to support students in constructing meaning of the text in front of them. In the past, if students only engaged in remedial exercises instead of working with authentic texts, students might have viewed reading as a task-oriented activity rather than a meaning making process (Stover et al., 2017). Guided reading creates a structured instructional time for students to utilize social interaction to explore meaning making together. Fluency is generally practiced at the beginning of some guided reading lessons, ultimately comprehension is the focus during and after reading. In a study, Rasinski and Hamman (2010) found norms for reading speed had increased, but comprehension had not been matched in improvement. Focusing more on comprehension, students must talk through clues from the text to build meaning and better understand what they are reading, propelling them to be able to read increasingly difficult texts (Iaquinta, 2006).

### **Building Reading Power**

Another strong component *During Reading* is teaching processing strategies, which involve decoding words to understand meaning. As students are reading, the teacher must present the reader with a slew of strategies they can refer to and use to help decode difficult words. The teacher is responsible for helping students build a network of strategic plans for processing texts (Fountas & Pinnell, 2009). As the student is reading, the teacher can acknowledge and respect skills the student already possess and offer new strategies to scaffold learning (Morgan et al., 2013). Guided

reading time is less about the teacher showing a strategy and more about coaching a student to use a reading strategy. It is critical to acknowledge as research reveals using coaching during reading is a significant distinction between highly effective schools and less effective schools (Ford & Opitz, 2008). As the teacher is providing a scaffold for students to discover more about the process of reading, they “self-monitor, search for cues, discover new things about the text, check one source of information against another, confirm their reading, self-correct, and solve new words using multiple sources of information” (Iaquinta, 2006, p. 414). *During Reading* provides great ways for the teacher to apply scaffolding strategies to enhance a student's reading ability.

### **After Reading**

After the group finishes reading, the teacher then takes the time to discuss and revisit the text. During this time, guided reading reinforces, extends and expands a student's experience with a text (Morgan et al., 2013). An important skill for teachers to practice with students during guided reading is retelling. Moss (2004) states “retellings are an important precursor to helping students develop summarization skills, both oral and written” (p. 711). This time allows teachers to see how well and how much information a student may retain from a text in a small group setting (Moss, 2004). The teacher may start in the beginning of the year modeling how to retell, then gradually release to students. As the students get more comfortable with



retelling, the teacher can guide activities that highlight retelling skills, such as having the teacher leave out key information or using photos to spark retell (Moss, 2004).

The teacher works back to the focal point and engages the group in higher-level thinking activities (Opitz & Ford, 2001). An important component to *After Reading* is having students talk about the text by encouraging dialogue among students (Jaquinta, 2006). During guided reading, with less students receiving directed instruction, more students will be able to engage in dynamic discussion. This allows students to think beyond the text and synthesize based on their own schema (Fountas & Pinnell, 2012). Teachers work to scaffold student's responses by assisting students in interpreting and evaluating questions posed by the text or teacher. In analyzing nine different small group discussions, Soter et al. (2008) found that authentic and open-ended questions helped facilitate effective discussions. Here, partial answers should be expected from students in the beginning as they learn how to answer (Frey & Fischer, 2010). They also found that in effective discussions, some groups needed teacher scaffolding to prompt elaboration, but remained dominated by the students. Students must be encouraged to think about what they read to make connections to the text.

Concluding a guided reading lesson, *After Reading* often involves students extending their learning and discussing. Teachers will often use the remaining time in guided reading to work with words from the text. Having students revisit the text looking for letters or words builds students' strength in identifying words as they read (Rog, 2012). Students also take this time revisiting challenging parts in the text,

allowing students to build fluency and confidence in reading (Rog, 2012). An important component to include at the end of a guided reading lesson is writing. Including guided writing activities can help build student's comprehension on the text (Fountas & Pinnell, 2012). Rog (2012) solidifies the importance of writing stating, "Just as readers can clarify their thinking by writing, writers can learn about the craft by reading. This is a powerful opportunity to enrich students' lives as readers, writers and thinkers" (p. 25). Through writing, the teacher can use shared, interactive or guided writing to connect pieces of the book during reading into skills associated with writing.

### **Summary**

The overuse of whole group instruction plaguing our schools today is not best practice for students; it treats pupils too similarly, and teaches to an "imaginary average" child (Platt, 2018). Guided reading allows students to work more closely with a teacher on targeted, differentiated instruction. Social constructivists believe in the impact that social interactions have with learning, emphasizing the importance of having students discuss and debate to increase learning (Wass & Golding, 2014). Within this theory, Vygotsky (1978) introduces the Zone of Proximal Development, describing the difference between a student's developmental level and their potential level. To teach to a child's ZPD requires the teacher to scaffold and differentiate learning. Scaffolding involves supporting students when new information is presented

and differentiate revolves around adapting the instruction to meet a students' needs (Fournier & Graves, 2002).

Teachers remain a vital part of preventing reading failure with effective guided reading structured plans. In a guided reading lesson, the teacher has the opportunity to reiterate the importance of reading to create meaning. Teachers also can coach students on reading strategies to better decode words and make connections with the text. The teacher must be responsive to the learner, while providing scaffolds to meet the child at their developmental level, and gradually release them to independence in reading. The teacher must modify the curriculum to meet the needs of the students present, and differentiate instruction. Teachers are also responsible for changing groups routinely. Group members must be constantly re-evaluated and reformed to match the changing needs of students. Frequent assessments such as running records can provide teachers with data to find areas of need.

Lessons are often formatted to focus on a particular nonfiction or fiction book. With one focal point guiding the lesson, the teacher begins with any background knowledge and vocabulary that might be necessary for comprehending the book. During the *Before Reading* stage, the teacher leads, thinking of strategies and important things to consider as the group is introducing the book. *During Reading*, students are building confidence as they practice decoding words and creating meaning. The teacher is seen as a coach, supporting students with reading strategies and encouraging them to reread for fluency and comprehension. Lastly, students finish with the *After Reading* stage, talking about different authentic and open-ended

questions that further the meaning of the text. Often this incorporates word work, a chance for students to engage in word and letter building.

### **Conclusion**

Research continues to solidify the importance of small group instruction for reading in a balanced literacy program. This form of instruction not only meets the diverse needs of individual students, but also maximizes learning opportunities. Teachers today may understand the importance of guided reading groups but find it hard to incorporate consistently. Teachers not only need a chance to understand the importance of incorporating guided reading, but also must use this small group time with students to best support both struggling and thriving readers. Guided reading, noted as one of the most complex forms of teaching, requires teachers to branch out and integrate a lot of structure and planning at the forefront (Frey & Fischer, 2010). This project hopes to give teachers the basic research describing its relevance and a plan on how to move forward. Teachers will be able to utilize this project to practice with their own students and create lessons that advance students ahead in reading goals.

## **Chapter Three: Project Description**

### **Introduction**

Classrooms today continue to see a rise in a diversity of student needs, yet many teachers continue to stick with whole group instruction, teaching a one-size-fits-all approach (Tomlinson, 2005). With many varying educational needs present in the classroom, it is no wonder that an estimated one in three students struggle learning to read (Iaquinta, 2006). Teachers are responsible for considering the extensive number of reading skills to teach to young students and providing the best reading instruction remains in their hands. Teachers must make decisions in reading that are responsive to the learner (Fountas & Pinnell, 2009). Educators must prioritize, through increased state testing and academic standards, what reading instruction is best suited for students.

When teachers utilize small group instruction such as guided reading groups, students get proper time working on goals geared towards students individually. As reading acquisition across states today remains in need of assistance, guided reading groups can provide an effective and efficient form for teachers to provide consistent feedback on student reading. Guided reading allows for teachers to work with small groups of students to build skills such as self-monitoring, searching for clues, asking questions, self-correcting and using multiple strategies, which would otherwise be difficult in whole group teaching (Iaquinta, 2006). Teachers remain a vital part of this instructional method, and require planning to provide instruction that meet the different learning styles and needs in a class. Teachers are responsible for creating a

community of readers and planning guided reading lessons with options for variance while considering the needs of the students to administer the most efficient instruction (Fountas & Pinnell, 2012).

In order to implement this instruction, the teachers must understand the importance of guided reading while understanding things to consider when incorporating it into the classroom. This project allows for teachers to learn about guided reading through handouts and lessons that propel teachers into including guided reading properly in their daily instruction. Providing a resource for teachers to use when beginning to explore this reading instruction allows teachers to get comfortable with the format and better anticipate what guided reading looks like on a regular basis.

This project will include project components that outline the various resources available for teachers as they introduce guided reading. This project will contain start up supplies such as small group rules, general activities, lesson plan outlines and information to inform teaching. A calendar and assessment sheet will be attached to assist teachers in informing their grouping strategies along with an activity guide for students who are not working in small groups. Overview of scaffolding and differentiation is included to guide teacher's instruction, as well as sample lessons to get teachers started. This project will highlight evaluation techniques for teachers to frequently check student growth and teaching instruction. It will conclude with the process of implementation and conclusions made based on project development.

## Project Components

Giving the teacher confidence and resources to teach a new reading instruction model allows teachers to better implement the guided reading instructional approach. Lanning and LeMere (2000) remind that an “appropriate and smoothly orchestrated guided reading lesson requires a knowledgeable teacher who understands the reading process, knows her students’ reading strengths and needs and is well acquainted with ‘mountains’ of books” (p. 26). On top of this, the best instruction requires teachers to understand what they are teaching (Lanning & LeMere, 2000). *Benefits of Guided Reading* (Appendix A) highlights what guided reading is and why it is important. Informing a teacher’s instruction creates a better chance for teachers to value the additional time to plan and implement (Fountas & Pinnell, 2009). If guided reading instruction is not required by the school district, this resource can be used by teachers to talk to the benefits of this instruction to other teachers, such as their professional learning community (PLC).

When teachers are building guided reading lessons, it is important to acknowledge how a lesson might change based on student needs. Along with understanding the benefits, teachers must think about how to differentiate instruction to meet the various needs in the small group. As Prast et al. (2015) state, differentiation is vital for teachers to understand and carry out, and a need for professional development is imminent for teachers. Along with including areas for differentiation in guided reading lessons, lessons should include ways to scaffold instruction for students who may be struggling to meet difficult goals. The document

*Differentiation and Scaffolding* (Appendix B) offers teachers the chance to plan for when teachers need to make quick adjustments to lessons. Teachers are able to anticipate changes to the lessons, as well as make quick changes on the fly.

When adding guided reading into a schedule, teachers must consider what students who are not in small group instruction will be working on. These activities must be engaging and still offer students chances to learn and grow in reading. Ford and Opitz (2008) emphasize, “Instruction away from the teacher needs to be as powerful as instruction with the teacher” (p. 717). *Resources for Students Away* (Appendix C) highlights various options for students who are not in a small group. This allows for the teacher to focus specifically on the students in the small group and provide meaningful instruction in a short period of time. *Small Group Rules* (Appendix D) reminds students the rules to abide by. This will keep instruction moving smoothly, naming the expectation of students and allowing for the teacher to have productive time to make the most of the direct instruction time.

An important component of guided reading groups is the structure of the lesson and its consistency in the classroom. The design of guided reading lessons revolves around three points: *Before Reading, During Reading and After Reading* (Ford & Opitz 2008; Fountas & Pinnell, 2009). This structure is focused on gradually releasing students to increase accuracy, comprehension, and fluency while reading (Frey & Fischer, 2010). During each of these times, the teacher crafts questions, coaches students and builds activities to prompt students to gain knowledge and skills. The document titled *Strategies and Ideas* (Appendix E) allows for a quick



overview of some important strategies teachers can input to their guided reading lessons. Teachers have the option to use this as a reference guide to design lessons that fit kindergarten standards and reading goals. Making informal and ongoing observations during guided reading is important to drive opportunities for student growth (Jaquinta, 2006; Fountas & Pinnell, 2009). *Guided Reading Lesson Plan Outline* (Appendix F) supports teachers building a guided reading lesson for a small group of students, with specific areas to make targeted observations that drive scaffolding goals.

To create a firm foundation, three sample lessons are created for teacher review and application. Each lesson is structured for different parts of the kindergarten school year. *Sample Lesson One* (Appendix G) is geared towards the beginning of the school year when students are learning about concepts of print and introductory sight words. Here, teachers are setting the tone for guided reading, including working on rhyming and introducing ways to approach reading, specifically picture walks and retelling. The lesson reviews Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for reading and guiding questions to facilitate discussion and inquiry. Introducing skills in small group instruction allows for targeted instruction where students readily grasp concepts through individual instruction (Lanning & LeMere, 2000). Possible opportunities for scaffolded learning are also present in the lesson plan, allowing teachers to prepare for possible student needs or extensions. Following the lesson includes the lesson's word work activity and extension activity to complete this lesson.

*Sample Lesson Two* (Appendix H) is geared towards students midway through their kindergarten year. This lesson introduces a new high frequency word and has students building and using the word prior to reading this book. Students will be able to practice first sounds, as the teacher uses guided questions to assist students in understanding the text. After reading, students will engage in discussion with each other, learning how to connect text-to-self and text-to-world. After the lesson, the students will have a page to keep for independent reading to connect the learned high frequency word to their daily reading.

Towards the end of the school year, kindergarten students will be ready for *Sample Lesson Three* (Appendix I). In guided reading lessons, it is valuable to include both fiction and nonfiction texts for students, even at a very young age. Santoro (2016) emphasizes that “informational texts hold the key for student growth in vocabulary, language, knowledge acquisition, and thinking - this is, in areas increasingly referred to as deep comprehension” (p. 283). Incorporating a variety of texts allow students to gain skills in both fiction and nonfiction books. This lesson is focused on building background knowledge prior to the reading. Students will question what they may know already about animals that lay eggs and construct new knowledge by the end. Checking for learned knowledge is a final formative assessment, as students can review what they have learned, and strategies on how to remember if they do not.

Changing guided reading groups based on educational needs provides students with instruction most tailored to their personal learning needs (Prast et al., 2015).

*Calendar of Group Selection* (Appendix J) is a sample calendar plan for teachers adjusting groups. More than not, teachers have a difficult time moving groups frequently and adapting to student needs (Ford & Opitz, 2008). This guide keeps teachers on track for making five group changes a year. To guide these group changes, teachers need to frequently assess student progress. Throughout each lesson, teachers should be making observations that guide scaffolding and differentiation through building guided reading lessons. A few days of assessment is imputed into the schedule to allow teachers to focus on assessments with independent students. To keep track of the assessment data collected, *Student Assessment Records* (Appendix K) provides teachers with notes of general observations in class and guided reading as well as running records reports to drive regrouping.

### **Project Evaluation**

First steps in inputting guided reading groups into a teacher's classroom will take some time to master. Guided reading incorporates many components and will come with many needs for change and adjustments. The *Student Assessment Record* (Appendix K) will assist in evaluating students' growth through the course of the school year. Reading instruction impacts student growth in different ways, so simply evaluating student growth in reading levels is not the only way to assess effectiveness of guided reading instruction. Monitoring student growth in reading skills and how students grow through specific skills is a good indication on how small group instruction impacts student reading growth.

As previously stated, teachers are fundamental when it comes to integrating guided reading into the daily schedule. Teacher belief and knowledge of reading strategies greatly influence how students are impacted by new instruction (Bingham & Hall-Kenyon, 2013). Evaluating how teachers implement guided reading is an important step in improving years after. Allowing for teachers to have a location to record self-evaluation and personal observations about instruction from the teacher's perspective is essential. *Personal Evaluation* (Appendix L) provides teachers space to reflect on a daily or weekly level and make notes for positive progression in the years to come. In extension, having another teacher or trusted administration member watch a guided reading lesson, thus gaining another perspective, is important for understanding strengths and areas of growth going forward.

The teacher will be able to identify the benefit of guided reading by watching the progression students make in reading over the year. By incorporating this project into the classroom, students will benefit as they move forward in reading with more independence and willingness to try various strategies. As the teacher works with students in guided reading as a coach, the gradual release method is present as students gain independence in reading and challenge themselves, building confidence.

### **Project Conclusions**

Reading instruction remains a very present and pressing issue in education. The importance of reading acquisition in young children is astronomical, as research reaffirms that literacy performance has a strong link to positive success in school and

life in the future (Bingham & Patton-Terry, 2013). Introducing and supporting reading for students is essential, and throughout history, this has looked a bit different. Today, only a fraction of our students are performing at proficient reading levels on state standardized tests, which in turn, has a higher likelihood to negatively affect other educational subjects as well (Jaquinta, 2006; National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2019). Teachers and administration are left to piece together strategies and instructional practices to meet the constant demands of reading proficiency in students.

Students in today's classrooms have a diversity of needs, with students requiring a more personalized education. Differentiating instruction has always remained an important component of classrooms, some periods of time more than others. Modifying current curriculum to meet the changing needs of students today can seem daunting at first, requiring instruction for each individual student. Whole group instruction, a model that teachers have been leaning towards in recent years, emphasizes a gap as teachers are only teaching to one group of students. Small group instruction provides students with differentiated instruction to a group of children, aiming for similar goals. This independent instructional time allows for the teacher to make frequent adaptations and modifications to meet the changing needs of students in the classroom.

Guided reading instruction encourages differentiation and time to teach reading skills while providing coaching for students. The teacher includes before, during and after reading strategies, to assist students in building confidence and

reading ability as they go back to independently read. This project fulfills a need that schools today must combat. With the increase in various types of curriculum, giving teachers a chance to implement a positive intervention tool with students gives power to the teachers. Informing teachers and allotting opportunities to see the lessons and strategies allows teachers to solidify how to use guided reading in the classroom. This project also offers teachers to adapt lessons to fit the needs of the students and make adjustments to meet students' learning style. This should provide a springboard for teachers to dive into incorporating guided reading in their own classrooms.

This project leaves some questions unanswered. Although important, teachers do not always have a say in what curriculum and instructional patterns happen in the classroom. Guided reading is not a curriculum that requires purchase, but rather a helpful tool for teachers to incorporate. It is up to the teacher to determine the importance of guided reading, and find a way to bring it into the classroom, as this project will not stand on its own. This project is primarily geared towards kindergarten, but many of the components are useful in older grades. Guided reading requires many copies of one book and can be a financial burden on teachers if the school does not have funds to support this. Small group instruction also requires other activities that require supplies needed for students. Word work and extension opportunities in small groups may take additional time and supplies teachers need to create or buy. Teachers are forced then to prioritize creating additional resources specifically for a small group of students. Some teachers may get overwhelmed with the additional measures to teach small groups of students. Many hours of planning,

assessing and constructing material is required. However, this project gives teachers the power to understand the importance and relevance guided reading has in the classroom, while being an advocate for this instructional model in the future.

### **Plans for Implementations**

Guided reading is an instructional guide that can be implemented in a wide range of classrooms. Providing differentiated specific instruction to students has a positive impact, no matter the age. This project is intended to give teachers a starting block to jump into guided reading in the classroom. Many of these resources can be used for any K-5 school setting. The sample lessons and documents following are intended for a kindergarten class outside of Grand Rapids, Michigan. This is intended for teachers to take ownership in inputting an important part of instruction that has been discarded in the past. Guided reading can be a part of a typical intervention block or whole group reading instruction time. This instruction model does not substitute for another reading curriculum, rather it should be used in tangent with a school's current reading curriculum, making it even stronger.

Teachers who work to implement guided reading instruction will be able to provide the support and encouragement to other teachers and administrators. Through the course of personal evaluation and reflection, teachers will be more confident in influencing others to see the benefit of incorporating guided reading into the classroom. Teachers remain the face of guided reading, as they help promote others to consider the use of a new reading instruction. As a personal advocate for small group

instruction, this teacher can use the resources in this project to present the case for how guided reading instruction is important and how to begin to incorporate it into the classroom.



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## **Appendices**

### **Appendix A**

#### **Benefits of Guided Reading**

## Benefits of Guided Reading

To be used to explain to others

### What is guided reading?

Small groups of students working on similar reading skills while focusing on a more difficult text.

### How to Incorporate

Students are placed in fluid groups that work on targeted goals in word work, pre-reading strategies, decoding strategies and comprehension.

### Benefits

- Meet varying instructional needs of students in class
- Expand reading powers and strategies
- Teach students how to read more difficult texts
- Increase fluency
- Construct meaning
- Decode difficult words with proper scaffolding
- Expand vocabulary
- Build writing skills
- Opportunity to differentiate efficiency
- Coach students while they read
- Ongoing observation of students
- Social interaction

**Appendix B**  
**Differentiation and Scaffolding**

## Differentiation

What it is: Providing a variety of instructional modifications to meet the needs of the student

Ways to include it:

- Adapting:
  - Content: what the student must learn
  - Process: what activities the student engages in to learn
  - Products: what the student must show to prove understanding
  - Learning Environment: how the classroom feels

(Tomlinson, 2005)

# VS.

## Scaffolding

What it is: Providing support for a student to reach needs outside of the student's current ability

Ways to include it:

- Assess students using general observations
- Activate background knowledge
- Model for students
- Gradual release of responsibility
- Use visual aids
- Group talk and discussion
- Provide vocabulary

Created by Emily Ringquist, 2020

**Appendix C**  
**Resources for Students Away**

## Resources for Students Away

Below are activities students can work on while they are not meeting in guided reading groups:

- Independent Reading
  - Partner reading
    - Audio books
    - Word study
  - Spelling practice
- Fine motor activities
  - Reading journal
  - Technology apps

**Appendix D**  
**Small Group Rules**



## Small Group Rules

Use a quiet voice



Keep our body calm



SMART!

Be respectful



Listening ears



Try your best!



## **Appendix E**

### **Strategies and Ideas**

## Strategies and Ideas

### Word Work

- ☐ Group rhyming words
- ☐ Match letters
- ☐ Identify beginning sounds
- ☐ High frequency sight words
- ☐ Clap syllables
- ☐ Create words with manipulatives
- ☐ Build sentences
- ☐ Blending words
- ☐ Guess the covered word

### Before Reading

- ☐ Picture walk
- ☐ Make predictions based on pictures
- ☐ Find punctuation
- ☐ Find high frequency words
- ☐ Identify concepts of print
- ☐ Introduce vocabulary words
- ☐ Reiterate lesson focus
- ☐ Develop background knowledge
- ☐ Introduce text
- ☐ Read familiar book

### During Reading

- ☐ Support students through reading strategies
- ☐ "Does that sound right?"
- ☐ "Does that look right?"
- ☐ "Does it make sense?"
- ☐ One-to-one matching
- ☐ Identify character emotion
- ☐ Back up and revisit
- ☐ Making good guesses
- ☐ Think while reading

### After Reading

- ☐ Make connections to the text
- ☐ Find favorite page and read
- ☐ Explain character's emotions
- ☐ Visualize pages
- ☐ Retell important points
- ☐ Fluency practice
- ☐ Share opinions
- ☐ Dictate sentence writing
- ☐ Explain thinking
- ☐ Ask questions
- ☐ Exciting pages

**Appendix F**  
**Guided Reading Lesson Plan Outline**

### Guided Reading Lesson Plan Outline

Students:	Date:
Book Title:	Level: <b>NF F</b>
Focus:	Vocabulary:
Word Work:	
Before Reading:	Observations:
During Reading:	Observations:
After Reading:	Observations
Extension:	

**Appendix G**  
**Sample Lesson One**

## Sample Lesson 1

**Grade:** Kindergarten  
**Reading Level:** Emergent



**Lesson Focus:** I can use picture clues to help understand the story.

**Standards:**

- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.K.2.A](#) Recognize and produce rhyming words.
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.K.3.A](#) Demonstrate basic knowledge of one-to-one letter-sound correspondences by producing the primary sound or many of the most frequent sounds for each consonant.
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.K.7](#) With prompting and support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the story in which they appear (e.g., what moment in a story an illustration depicts).

**Book:** *I See* by Rozanne Lanczak Williams

**Materials:** *I See* by Rozanne Lanczak Williams, finger pointers, rhyming puzzle activity, pencil, sentence strips

**Word Work:** Have students come over to the small group table. Remind students of the small group rules, and allow students to demonstrate what each rule looks like. *"Today, we are going to work on finding words that rhyme. That means words that have a similar ending. When we say them, the endings sound the same. I am going to read 8 words, and we need to match the word with the word that sounds similar."* Allow time for the students to each get a puzzle piece and have students start by working together to see if there are any words that match with similar ending sounds. *"Good! We have dog and log together. Do those end the same? Yes! They both end in 'og'."*

When all pieces are matched, ask students to, independently or together, read the different pairs.

**Scaffold:** If students are struggling, help students by reading aloud each word when comparing it with on puzzle piece. Also, if students need a visual component, highlight the ends of the words on the puzzle pieces and assist students in looking at the end of the word.

**Extension:** Ask the students at the end to think of any additional words that would rhyme with the matched puzzle pieces.

**Book Introduction:** *"We were able to find a lot of words that rhyme! Great job! Today, we are going to read a book called 'I See.' This book is written by Rozanne Lanczak Williams."*

**Before Reading:** *"We are going to start with a picture walk. Just like when we look at the other classrooms while walking down the hallway, we are going to take a walk through our book looking at the pictures. Let's all point to the cover. We are*

going to ask ourselves what we see in the pictures." Point to the cover. "I'll start! On the front cover, I see that there is a mouse. The mouse is on top of a lot of flowers. The flowers are pink and yellow. Let's turn to the next page and find out what we see on that page." Have students raise their hands to share what they see happening on the page. Encourage students to notice what the characters are holding. "What do you think they are doing with that object they are holding?" Allow students to hypothesize what the characters are doing with birthday supplies. "Okay, we are going to go back to the cover and start reading. We are going to all read together and make sure we are using our finger to point to each word. Let's begin with the title."

**During Reading:** While students are tracking their reading, remind students to point to each word on the page. Below are some prompts to stir conversations while students read.

"How many words were on that page?"  
 "What is one word you know already?"  
 "What letter does dog start with?"  
 "Do you see a pattern in what we are reading?"

While students are reading each page, ask students to try to think of rhyming words with some of the animals present (i.e: dog, cat, frog). Tie this to the rhyming words students matched in the Word Work section. Encourage students to think of a new rhyming word or ask them if two words rhyme.

On the last page, assist students in using the picture clues through the story to piece together what the characters are doing on the last page (bringing supplies for a birthday party). Assist students in using the pictures to find out what the words say (happy birthday).

**Scaffolding:** If students are struggling, slow down the reading. Reread the page if it will be beneficial for students to hear the page, then start again. Encourage showing students how to read left to right and watch as students track their reading.

**After Reading:** "We used the pictures to figure out what the words were saying! Let's think back to what we read about and retell what happened in the story. What can we remember about the story?" Allow students to raise hands to piece together some of the information to retell the story. "We can also go through the book and use the pages to help us retell the story."

**Guiding Questions:**

"How did you know the characters were having a birthday party?"  
 "Should the characters bring anything else to the party? Did they forget something?"

Lead students to look at how the last page is different than the rest of the book.



*"Let's go back and read the last page of the book. This page was a lot different than the other pages, so let's go back and read that page together, then each of us will read it by ourselves."*

**Extension:** *"In this book, we saw a lot of animals that attended the birthday party. To finish up this book we are reading, I want you to think of one animal you would invite to the birthday party. We are going to each write our own sentence, 'I see the \_\_\_\_\_.' This uses some of the sight words we have been working on. We will each write the words 'I see the' and then I will write the word of the animal you choose."* Allow students to write the sentence using proper letter formation, and scaffold with allowing students to use the sight words for help. Have students share their sentence with the group, pointing to each word as they go.

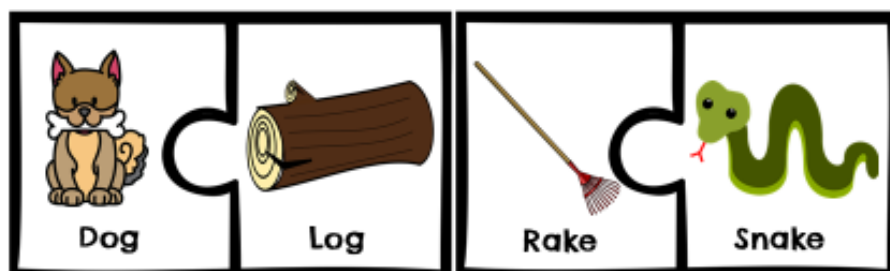
Make sure students use:

- Correct letter identification
- Spacing between words
- Correct spelling of sight words
- Period at the end

## Lesson 1 Outline

Students: AA Level: Student A, Student B, Student C, Student D	Date: November
Book Title: <i>I See</i> by Rozanne Lanczak Williams	Level: B <b>NF</b> <b>F</b>
Focus: Identify rhyming words and introducing pre-reading picture walk to begin focusing on looking at the pictures as a strategy.  "I can use picture clues to help understand the story."	Vocabulary: "Happy Birthday"
Word Work: Students will match rhyming words in a puzzle and read aloud the rhyming words.	
Before Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce the term picture walk.</li> <li>Have students focus on what is happening in the pictures and make a prediction.</li> </ul>	Observations:
During Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make sure students are one-to-one pointing at the words.</li> <li>Encourage students to think of rhyming words.</li> <li>Assist students with understanding why characters are bringing birthday supplies.</li> </ul>	Observations:
After Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have students work to retell the story.</li> <li>Allow students to go back through the text to remember parts of the story.</li> </ul>	Observations
Extension: Ask students what animal they would want to come to their birthday party. Have students use a sentence strip and with a pencil write the sentence "I see the _____." The teacher will fill in the animal name the student decides. Have students go around and share their sentence, pointing to the words as they read.	

## Rhyming Activity - Lesson 1 Word Work



## Observations

[illegible]

## Extension - Lesson 1

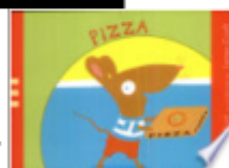
I see the \_\_\_\_\_.



**Appendix H**  
**Sample Lesson Two**

## Sample Lesson 2

**Grade:** Kindergarten  
**Reading Level:** Level B/C



**Lesson Focus:** I can use beginning sounds to figure out the word.

**Standards:**

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.K.1.D** Recognize and name all upper- and lowercase letters of the alphabet.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.K.3.A** Demonstrate basic knowledge of one-to-one letter-sound correspondences by producing the primary sound or many of the most frequent sounds for each consonant.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.K.3.C** Read common high-frequency words by sight (e.g., the, of, to, you, she, my, is, are, do, does).

**Book:** *Pizza* by Phyllis Root

**Materials:** *Pizza* by Phyllis Root, sentence cards, magnetic letters for 'make', fluency worksheet

**Word Work:** "Today, we are going to see a new word in a book that you have not gotten to read yet! This is the word make. This word has four letters. I will give each of you a magnetic letter and we will put the four letters together to make the word make." Students each identify their letter and sound, and with teacher assistance, build the word make in the middle of the table.

"Awesome! We just made the word make! We are going to put the word make in a sentence now. I have some other sight word cards: *I, can, a*. We are going to put these words together to make part of a sentence." Teacher lays out cards to build the sentence "I can make a \_\_\_\_\_." "Let's point to each word as we say it. Now, I am going to let each one of you finish the sentence. Think of something you can make." Students think of something they can make. When a student has thought of something, have them say their sentence individually while pointing to the words aloud to the group.

**Scaffold:** Remind students each word gets one tap, even if their new word has more than one syllable. If a student needs assistance, have the group read the sentence together, while the individual student taps the words.

**Extension:** Have students name the sound their new word begins with.

**Book Introduction:** "The word *make* is also in the book we will be reading for small group today! Today, we are reading *Pizza* by Phyllis Root. In this book, the characters Mouse makes different food, and something happens to the food he makes!"

**Before Reading:** Have students point to the title of the book on the front cover. "I'm wondering why this book is titled *Pizza*? Before reading this book, what can I do to find out a little bit more before we start? Have students think about the value of a

picture walk. As students go through the book, have them make some comments. Lead students to see that there is smoke on some pages, indicating the food burning. Ask students what that might be, as it will assist students in connecting the words in the text.

*"We learned a new word make today. I want you to walk through the words and see if you can find the word make. It looks just like this."* Have students look to the word make on the table. Have students point out make on each page that has it.

*"As we read today, we are going to look for the first sound of some of the words. This will help us figure out what the word says. We will use our beginning sounds and pictures clues to read the word."* Have students read the book all together, as some of the words are not frequent for them.

**During Reading:** While students are tracking their reading together, remind students to point to each word on the page. Below are some prompts to stir conversations while students read.

*"How did you figure out the word mouse?"* You want students to start talking about how they are figuring out words (beginning sounds or looking at the pictures)

*"What do you think the smoke on the picture shows?"* Have a conversation about what might happen if there is smoke coming from food. Students may not have background knowledge on food burning.

*"A character is an animal or person in the story. Who do you think a character is in this book?"*

**Scaffold:** Continue to assist and talk about how to figure out unknown words. The book talks about certain foods that Mouse is making (toast, soup etc.). Get students to start talking about how they can figure out a tough word. Have students notice the first letter of the word and assist students in saying the sound of the word. Push students to begin to connect the beginning sound and the picture to figure out the word.

**After Reading:** *"Wow! Mouse isn't a very good cook is he? What did he do to all the food he was making? Why do you think he got pizza at the end?"* Elicit students to talk about why buying pizza would make sense when he was burning the food. Try to push students to find out how Mouse might be feeling.

*"At your house, have you ever had something burn? Has food ever burned in your house? What was it like and how did you feel?"* Begin a discussion with students for them to make personal connection to Mouse in the book. Ask students if their family has ever bought pizza before or had an experience similar to this.

**Extension:** *"We have been talking about a lot of things that we make! We are going to read a couple fluency sentences about things we can make. We will use the beginning sound and picture to help us read these words."* Give each student a worksheet, and have individual students read the sentences aloud while everyone follows along. Coach students in using the first sound or the picture to help with the final word.

Allow students to take the worksheet and put it in their book boxes to read during independent reading time.



## Lesson 2 Outline

Students: B Level: Student A, Student B, Student C, Student D	Date: January
Book Title: <i>Pizza</i> by Phyllis Root	Level: C <b>NF</b> <b>F</b>
Focus: I can use beginning sounds and pictures to figure out words.	Vocabulary: <i>Make</i>
Word Work: Students will build the word <u>make</u> and finish the sentence "I can <u>make</u> a _____."	
Before Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students will find high frequency words such as <u>make</u>.</li> <li>Students will observe the pictures and talk about what the smoke in the pictures could mean.</li> </ul>	Observations:
During Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students will use beginning sounds and picture clues to find out what Mouse is making.</li> </ul>	Observations:
After Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students will engage in a discussion about what the character is feeling.</li> <li>Discuss and make personal connections to food burning and talk about why Mouse chose to order pizza.</li> </ul>	Observations
Extension: Students will read a worksheet that uses <u>make</u> in a sentence. Students will need to use picture clues and notice the beginning sound of the word to read the sentence.	

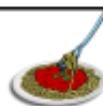
**Word Work - Lesson 2****I****can****make****a**

.

**Observations**

## Extension - Lesson 2

I can make spaghetti.



I can make pizza.



I can make bread.



I can make cake.



I can make soup.



I can make cookies.



**Appendix I**  
**Sample Lesson Three**

## Sample Lesson 3

**Grade:** Kindergarten  
**Reading Level:** Level E



**Lesson Focus:** I can use books about the world to learn to information.

**Standards:**

- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.1.E](#) Use the most frequently occurring prepositions (e.g., to, from, in, out, on, off, for, of, by, with).
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.K.2](#) With prompting and support, identify the main topic and retell key details of a text.

**Book:** *Can you see the eggs?* by Jenny Giles

**Materials:** *Can you see the eggs?* By Jenny Giles, CVC words, Kiwi information page

**Word Work:** "We are going to build some CVC words today and decide if they are real words or nonsense words. I will hand you a card with a small word on it and you will decide for the group if it is a real word or a made up word! Then we will sort the words and see if we all can agree together." Give students each a CVC word and have the students sound the word out aloud.

**Scaffold:** Assist student in sounding out the word if they need help. Read the word and make sure to ask the student if they have every heard a word like that before, to help them understand nonsense words.

"Before we read, we are going to start some work with some positional words. You are going to stand, and I will tell you some position words." Have students stand up and next to their chair. Say these next few sentences, and emphasize the positional word associated with where they are in regards to their chair.

"Stand next to your chair."  
 "Stand behind your chair."  
 "Stand in front of you chair."  
 "Go under your chair."  
 "Sit in your chair."

"We are going to see some of these position words in the book we will read today, *Can You See the Eggs*."

**Book Introduction:** "In our book today, we are going to learn about a new animal. This animal is called a kiwi, and it's not a fruit! Let's pull out our kiwi page to learn a little bit more". Show students the information about the Kiwi on a worksheet. Allow students to ask questions and see where kiwis live and a few facts about them to build background knowledge. Have students talk about things they learned about kiwi.

**Before Reading:** Today, we are going to learn a little bit about animals who lay

eggs. Now, some animals have babies by laying eggs, and some animals do not. Does anyone have a idea of an animal that lays eggs?" Allow students to make some guesses about animals that lay eggs. Write down student's ideas.

*"As we read this book, we are going to find out about different animals that lay eggs. We will see if we already know some, and learn about more animals that do. This book is a nonfiction book, which means a book about the world. We are going to find out new information about the world while we read this book."*

*"Nonfiction books have a main topic and details that support it. We are going to be thinking about the main topic and some details while we read today."*

Have a student read one at a time, monitoring the other students to follow along.

**During Reading:** While students are reading, assist students in monitoring for meaning and utilizing decoding strategies. While reading, keep in mind some of these questions to keep active engagement during the reading.

*"Blackbird is a big word. How many syllables does the word blackbird have?"*

*"What does this page make you think about?"*

*"How did you know the word said ground and not dirt?" (p. 6).*

*"Why do you think the butterfly keeps the eggs under the leaf?"*

Assure that while students are reading, students are following along and making meaning on each page. As students are learning to read more difficult texts, make frequent stops to monitor meaning and recap what students have read. Allow students to say this in their own way as well.

**After Reading:** *"Wow! We learned about a lot of different animals that have eggs, and where they keep them. Who can remember some of the animals that lay eggs? Have students all say an animal they heard about. "Were there any animals that surprised you? Let's check our list and see if any of the animals we read about are on there! Did we know any animals already?"* Refer back to the page so students can see what students knew prior to reading the book. Add the animals that were in the book as well so students can see what knowledge they are adding since reading the book.

**Extension:** Use the Extension worksheet and cut out the animal and the location of where they keep their eggs. *"Now that we have learned so much about where animals lay eggs, we are going to try to remember some key details about which animals lay their eggs where. We need to match the animal with where they lay eggs. We read books about the world so we can learn something new. We can always refer to the book if we need help remembering."* Monitor as students try to explain what animal lays eggs where.

**Scaffold:** Allow students to refer back to the book to find out the answers. Take away some of the options if there are too many choices.

**Word Work - Lesson 3****log****siv****jif****rat****him****hes****Real Words****Nonsense Words**

### All About Kiwis - Lesson 3



A kiwi is a bird that cannot fly. Kiwis have hair like feathers, strong legs and no tail.

Where in the world do kiwis live?

New Zealand



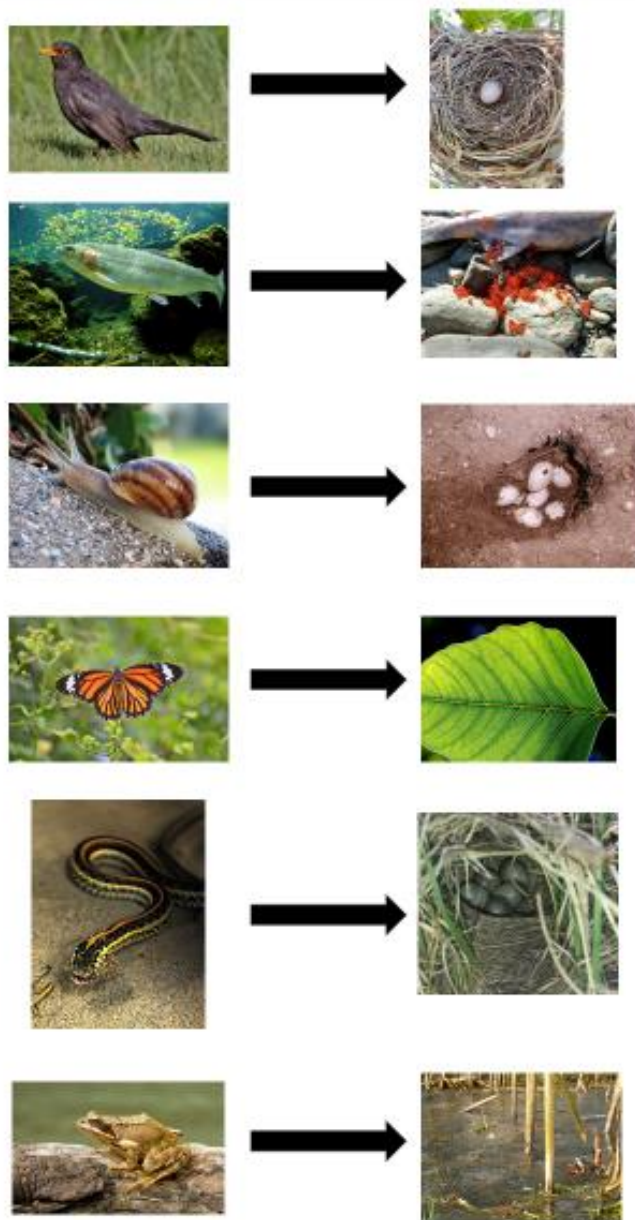
Kiwis can get to be the size of a chicken.



Kiwis live in **burrows** or nests in the ground.



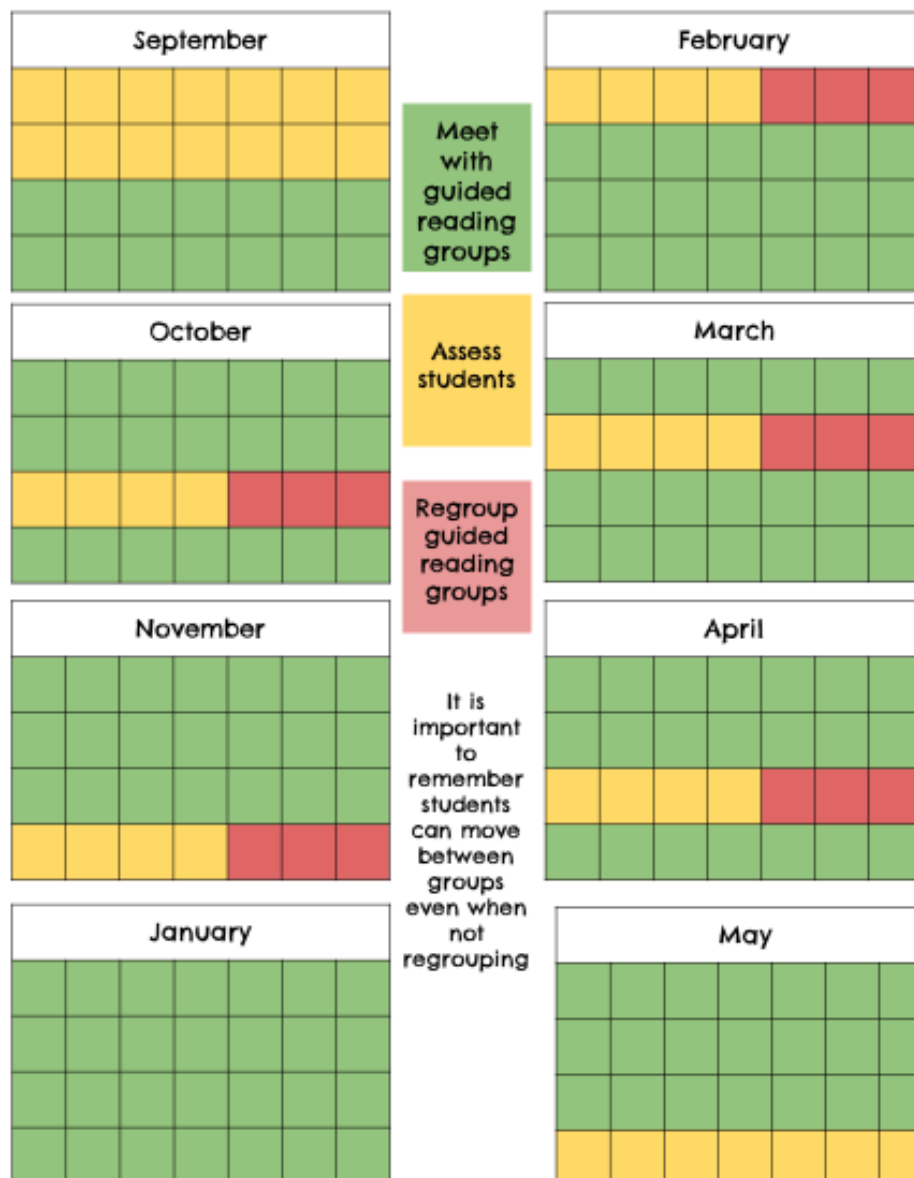
### Extension - Lesson 3



Created by Emily Ringquist, 2020

**Appendix J**  
**Calendar of Groups**

## Calendar of Groups Suggestion



**Appendix K**  
**Student Assessment Records**

## Student Assessment Records

<p>Running Record:</p> <p>Date: _____</p> <p>Level: _____</p> <p>Genre: _____</p> <p>Strengths: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Areas of growth: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Running Record:</p> <p>Date: _____</p> <p>Level: _____</p> <p>Genre: _____</p> <p>Strengths: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Areas of growth: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Running Record:</p> <p>Date: _____</p> <p>Level: _____</p> <p>Genre: _____</p> <p>Strengths: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Areas of growth: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
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## General Observations

**Appendix L**  
**Personal Evaluation**

## Personal Evaluation

### Pre-Guided Reading Inclusion

1. I understand the importance of making time for guided reading instruction.	1	2	3	4	5
1. I know the components of a guided reading lesson.	1	2	3	4	5
1. I know strategies to incorporate into lessons to best benefit students.	1	2	3	4	5
1. I know ways to group students and how frequently to assess and regroup.	1	2	3	4	5
1. I can create my own guided reading lessons.	1	2	3	4	5
General Notes:					

### Post Guided Reading Inclusion

1. I understand the importance of making time for guided reading instruction.	1	2	3	4	5
1. I know the components of a guided reading lesson.	1	2	3	4	5
1. I know strategies to incorporate into lessons to best benefit students.	1	2	3	4	5
1. I know ways to group students and how frequently to assess and regroup.	1	2	3	4	5
1. I can create my own guided reading lessons.	1	2	3	4	5
General Notes:					

**Data Form**