

GUIDING READERS

Making the Most of the 18 - minute Guided Reading Lesson

Lori Jamison Rog

© Hawker Brownlow Education



Contents

Introduction 6

1 Guided Reading: What We Know Now 9

Harmonizing the Literacy Block 11

Independent Learning: Reading and Writing 11

Just-Right Reading 12

Time for Talk 14

Read It Again: Revisiting Texts 15

The Reading–Writing Connection 15

2 The Guided Reading Lesson Sequence 17

Planning the Guided Reading Lesson Sequence 17

Start with Learning Goals 18

Find the Right Text 18

Prepare a Text Introduction 19

Map Out Lesson Routines 20

Plan Must-Do Tasks for Follow-Up 20

The Teacher in Guided Reading: Prompting and Guiding 21

The Student in Guided Reading: Reading and Talking 22

TTYN: Talk to Your Neighbor 23

The Guided Reading Lesson Sequence 23

Day 1: Text Introduction and First-Draft Reading 24

Day 2: Dipping Back into the Text 24

Day 3: Thinking Beyond the Words 25

Tips, Tools, and Techniques 25

1. Establish Routines 25

2. Minimize Transition Times 26

3. Eliminate Interruptions 26

4. Build In Assessment 27

5. Manage Materials 27

3 Guiding Emergent Readers 31

Texts for Emergent Readers 32

The Guided Reading Lesson for Emergent Readers 32

Before Reading 33

During Reading 33

After Reading 34

Sample Areas of Focus 35

Lesson Routines 36

Working with Sounds	36
Working with Letters and Words	39
Working with Books	41
The Reading–Writing Connection	43

4 Guiding Early Readers 46

Texts for Early Readers	47
The Guided Reading Lesson for Early Readers	48
Before Reading	48
During Reading	48
After Reading	49
Sample Areas of Focus	49
Lesson Routines	51
Comprehension of Text	51
Letter Knowledge and Word-Solving Strategies	54
Increasing Fluency	60
Responding to Reading	61
The Reading–Writing Connection	62

5 Guiding Developing Readers 72

Texts for Developing Readers	73
The Guided Reading Lesson for Developing Readers	74
Before Reading	75
During Reading	75
After Reading	76
Sample Areas of Focus	76
Lesson Routines	77
Comprehension Strategies	77
Word-Solving Strategies	81
Reading with Fluency	83
Responding to Reading	84
The Reading–Writing Connection	85

6 Guiding Fluent Readers 90

Texts for Fluent Readers	92
The Guided Reading Lesson for Fluent Readers	93
Before Reading	93
During Reading	93
After Reading	94
Sample Areas of Focus	94
Lesson Routines	95
Comprehension Strategies	95
Word-Solving Strategies	102
Reading with Fluency	103
Responding to Reading	105
The Reading–Writing Connection	107

7 Guiding Struggling Readers in Upper Grades 116

What Do We Know about Struggling Readers?	117
---	-----

Choosing Appropriate Texts 119
 Readability Formulas 119
 Hi-Lo Texts 121
Using Assessment to Guide Instruction 122
Lesson Routines 122
 Comprehension Strategies 123
 Fluency Routines 127
The Reading–Writing Connection 128

8 The Nonfiction Connection 131

Challenges and Supports in Info-Text 131
Matching Readers and Texts 132
The Guided Reading Lesson with Informational Texts 133
 Before-Reading Routines 133
 During-Reading Routines 136
 After-Reading Routines 140

9 Functional Reading 149

Selecting Texts for Guided Reading 149
Environmental Print for Beginning Readers 150
Lesson Routines 152

Appendix 159

Milk-Carton Dice 159
Four-Square Organizer 159
Poof Book 160
Foldable Comparison Chart 160
Flap Book 161
Circular Foldable 161
Tips for Reading Manipulatives 162
Game Board and Spinner Templates 163

Resources 164

Index 166

Introduction

My husband and I, at our advanced ages, have decided to learn to speak Italian. One of the ways we practice is to read articles from *Corriere della Sera*, an Italian newspaper, while our teacher Filippo scaffolds us with word- and text-level support. Filippo knows to choose articles that are just beyond our reach: if the text is too hard, we won't have the strategies to cope with it; if the text is too easy, our understanding of the language won't increase.

Sometimes Filippo will choose a text that serves a specific purpose, such as an Italian translation of a Charlie Brown comic strip to practice the *congiuntivo* verb tense. These lessons involve a little explicit teaching, a little modeling, and a whole lot of guided practice. We do the reading work while Filippo observes and intervenes as needed. To me, these lessons are what guided reading is all about: small, needs-based groupings; careful text selection; assessment-driven instruction; responsive teaching; and a delicate balance of success and challenge.

In 2003, I wrote a book called *Guided Reading Basics: Organizing, Managing and Implementing a Balanced Literacy Program in K-3*, which reflected what I had learned from early work on guided reading in my school division. These days, I travel across North America, working with schools and districts on best practices in reading and writing, and I believe that guided reading is more important than ever. But some of my thinking about guided reading has evolved in the past ten years.

Back then, if you dropped in on my guided reading lesson, you would likely see children reading quietly from individual texts while I listened to them, one by one, offering encouragement and occasional prompting. Today, you would still be likely to see children reading while I listen and guide. But you might also see children talking about strategies they have used, or engaged in interactive writing, or even playing games to practice specific skills. You are likely to see students reading leveled books, but you might also see them reading brochures, cartoons, websites, road signs, or recipes.

Ten years ago, my lesson preparation involved little more than selecting an appropriate text; my teaching was spontaneous and off the cuff, driven mainly by issues that arose from the students' reading. I still believe in the importance of that just-in-time teaching. But today, I rely on planning a little more and inspiration a little less. My lessons are more likely to be carefully structured around focus strategies and skills, with pre-determined pause points and discussion prompts, plenty of talk, and a range of guided practice routines.

In this book, I describe a model of guided reading instruction that is more intentional, prepared, and focused than the one I used a decade ago. I still want my students to learn to flexibly apply a range of processes to increasingly

sophisticated text, but I now know that, on the journey to that independence, they may need to focus on specific reading strategies and processes. Today's guided reading is more purposefully aligned with the rest of the literacy program. For example, if I have been teaching the class about self-questioning during reading as part of my read-aloud, then I might have all my guided reading groups practicing "I wonders" with texts at their respective levels. And, while today's guided reading still emphasizes processing connected print, I might use part of the guided reading lesson to sort word cards or to build words with letter tiles—if that's what meets the needs of the group. Embedded into a global focus on making meaning from text are specific learning goals that I can teach, reinforce, and assess. This might mean using some of the guided reading session to play games with boards and dice to reinforce Kindergarteners' letter knowledge or explicitly teaching an advanced group of first-graders about a comprehension strategy that the rest of the class might not be ready for. It might mean pulling together a group of Grade 2 students who are at disparate reading levels but who all need to work on phrasing in oral reading. It might mean supporting students as they learn to read a website or travel brochure, even if it isn't technically at their "just-right" reading level.

I still believe that the structure of the guided reading lesson should be more about student reading and less about teacher talk. I still believe that students should be spending most of their time navigating connected text. I still believe in seizing the teachable moment. But in today's guided reading lesson, you'll see a lot more guided practice of specific strategies, much more talk about text, and a whole variety of literacy activities to meet student needs. Call it "guided reading" or call it "small-group instruction"—it's all about *guiding readers*. If we box ourselves into a narrow definition of guided reading, then we miss many of the opportunities that small-group instruction offers. The semantics don't matter, but the learning does. I have that small group in front of me with a precious 18-minute window in which to do what I can to help them become a little better at reading, writing, and thinking.

Why 18 minutes? That time frame initially arose out of a need to organize my literacy block into 20-minute segments. I would set a timer at 18 minutes to provide two minutes of transition time from one group to the next. As it turned out, 18 minutes was a serendipitous period of time. It is long enough for some sustained reading—by both the guided reading group and the independent learners—without depleting the limited attention spans of younger students.

Eighteen minutes is...the length of a coffee break (if you're not a teacher), the length of a sitcom without commercials, the length of time it takes to walk 1000 paces. The 18-minute time frame has received increasing attention recently with the renowned TED conferences, in which prominent thinkers and leaders in a variety of fields related to technology, entertainment, or design have 18 minutes to deliver speeches on their most important ideas. Again, why 18 minutes? Eighteen minutes is considered long enough to be serious, yet short enough to hold listeners' attention.

The 18-minute guided reading lesson may very well be the finest teaching we do. It provides that just-in-time teaching at the point of need, that opportunity to practice the habits of highly effective readers in a safe and supportive environment, that sensitive scaffolding that bridges readers from what they can do independently today to what they will be able to do tomorrow.

Eighteen minutes, however, isn't much time with a text. That's why I now plan for *sequences* of three or more guided reading lessons with each reading passage.

This extended experience with a text provides opportunities for rereading, discussing, working with print and language features, and elevating thinking.

For me, the greatest strength of guided reading is that it offers support for all the readers in our classrooms: the strongest and the weakest, the motivated and the indifferent, the million-word kids and the thousand-word kids. Even proficient readers—those who are already reading beyond grade-level expectations—need opportunities to extend their reach in literacy. We are dealing with a greater diversity of students in our classrooms than ever before. Guided reading enables us to support each one of them.

This book is all about the teaching component of the guided-reading model: what we do with that group of four, or five, or six, or more students sitting in front of us ready to be readers. It offers a collection of practical teaching routines for guided reading instruction at each of the four broad developmental stages: emergent readers (who are not yet connecting letters and sounds and who “read” mainly from pictures and memory); early readers (who are beginning to decode and recognize some words automatically); developing readers (for whom word-solving comes more automatically and flexibly, so they can devote more energy to higher-level comprehension and longer text); and fluent readers (who are building competence and confidence with increasingly sophisticated concepts, structures, and vocabulary). Each section includes a brief overview of the characteristics of readers at that stage, guidelines for selecting appropriate texts for those readers, a sampling of learning goals, and a collection of teaching ideas for helping students reach some of those goals. A chapter on guided reading for struggling readers in upper grades offers ideas on supporting reluctant readers to build the confidence and competence they need to be lifelong readers. The final chapters on nonfiction reading include ideas for teaching students to read informational text, as well as nontraditional and functional texts such as websites, directions, schedules, and even traffic signs.

In this book you will find a collection of practical teaching and learning routines to help make guided reading instruction more intentional, manageable, and engaging. There are many lessons, tips, ideas, and practice activities to meet a wide range of learning goals. You’ll find ideas for sticky-note reading and the Reading Toolkit; active games for letter- and word-level study; graphic organizers and “foldables” for organizing and recording information; and techniques, such as “noisy punctuation” and “reading sliders,” for building fluency. Although the routines have been organized by developmental stage, most can be modified to suit readers at different levels and for different purposes.

Guiding Readers: Making the Most of the 18-minute Guided Reading Lesson is the work of a reflective teacher, a lifelong learner—and a struggling student of Italian. I hope it will provide you with ideas for teaching, food for thought about your own practices, and encouragement to continue learning, growing, and taking risks in an ongoing effort to improve literacy instruction for all our students.