Guided Reading Basics

What is Guided Reading?

The purpose of guided reading is to meet the varying instructional needs of all the students in the class.

By using the guided reading approach the teacher is making it possible for students not only to read a more difficult text; but also reflect on the text, understand it, and use it as a way of learning more about reading. Guided reading makes it possible to teach at the cutting edge of students' understanding. Students are given the task of problem solving and reading more productively and intensively.

Guided reading is designed to help individual readers build an effective system for processing a variety of increasingly challenging texts with understanding and fluency. Guided reading occurs in a small group setting because the small group allows for interaction from readers that benefit them all. The teacher selects and introduces texts to readers, supports them while reading the text, engages the readers in discussion, and makes teaching points after the reading. After reading the text, the teacher extends the meaning of the text through writing, text analysis, or another learning experience. The lesson may also include work with words based on the specific needs of the group.

Using benchmark assessments and observations, the teacher determines the approximate instructional reading level of each student. The teacher then forms a temporary group of students that are alike in their development of a reading process. As the individual students grow and develop in their reading abilities, groups may change in their make-up.

What are leveled books?

A leveled book collection consists of books organized along a gradient of difficulty from easiest to read to hardest to read. This gradient (A-Z) helps teachers select texts for their guided reading instruction. They are "just right" texts that offer students a bit of challenge without being too far out of their ability level. These texts are then used to help children expand what they know how to do as readers and expand their successful engagement with the meaning, language, and print of the text.