

**Guided Reading Concept Paper:** The purpose of this concept paper is to articulate KIPP Foundation’s point of view on Guided Reading.

### **Why Guided Reading?**

In order for students to meet the demands of the Common Core Standards and eventually the demands of college-level texts, they need to have multiple and significant opportunities to grapple with both literary and informational texts.

- Students need regular opportunities to make meaning of *grade-level* texts, which happens during shared reading. Read alouds also happen with on or beyond grade-level texts.
- Students need opportunities to apply their new reading skills to texts at their *independent reading level*, which happens during independent reading and reading workshop.
- Guided Reading provides teachers with the unique opportunity to coach all students at their *instructional level* in order to support them in flexibly using strategies to make meaning of new texts. (Fountas & Pinnell, *Guided Reading: Good First Teaching for All Children*, 1996)

Because of its small-group format, Guided Reading allows teachers to strategically target instruction to address students’ specific reading needs through the use of ongoing data gathering, assessment, and analysis.

### **What is Guided Reading?**

“Guided Reading is a teaching approach designed to help individual students learn how to process a variety of increasingly challenging texts with understanding and fluency.” (Fountas & Pinnell, *Guiding Readers and Writers*, 2001) Guided Reading is one piece of the balanced literacy instructional toolkit. During in-class rotations or as part of reading intervention, students are able to read numerous texts on their instructional level while receiving coaching to meet them directly in their zone of proximal development (ZPD). Guided Reading is taught in small groups (usually 1-6 students) to provide teachers the chance to confer and coach while giving students more opportunities for discussion and feedback. In order to continually support students’ reading growth, groups are flexible and change frequently throughout the year<sup>1</sup>, based on ongoing reading assessment results. During this small group time, other students are engaged in small group or independent learning activities.

### **Lesson Structure**

Unlike read aloud and shared reading lessons, which can be more teacher-directed, Guided Reading is an opportunity for students to apply and transfer what they’ve learned during shared reading in a supportive coaching environment, with the teacher as an expert by their side. Fountas and Pinnell, Jan Richardson, Scholastic, Uncommon Schools, Success Academy, and Achievement First all recommend a

---

<sup>1</sup> In early reading levels, students should be assessed approximately every six weeks, with students at levels N+ being assessed less frequently and students reading below grade level being assessed more frequently.

similar structure for Guided Reading lessons. This structure is the structure upon which KIPP's recommended approach is based<sup>2</sup>:

	Teachers	Students
<b>Lesson Preparation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use data to identify a focus reading skill for each Guided Reading group</li> <li>• select an instructional level text that will offer opportunities for students to work on that focus skill</li> <li>• plan questions, prompts, and model responses to support students' work on that focus skill</li> <li>• review previous conference notes for students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• know reading group</li> <li>• know reading level</li> </ul>
<b>Before Reading</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• briefly introduce the book</li> <li>• briefly introduce new vocabulary</li> <li>• model strategy/skill</li> <li>• state the purpose for reading</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• raise questions about the text</li> <li>• restate the purpose for reading</li> <li>• find new words in context</li> <li>• practice the strategy/skill</li> </ul>
<b>During Reading</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• confer with students about their use of reading strategies and coach as necessary; coach on word-solving and fluency as needed</li> <li>• prompt based on student needs</li> <li>• ask comprehension questions at key passages</li> <li>• take notes on each student's performance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• whisper-read or silently read text depending on reading level (no round-robin or choral reading)</li> <li>• confer with teacher</li> <li>• practice strategy independently</li> </ul>
<b>After Reading</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• facilitate comprehension discussion</li> <li>• prompt based on student responses and need</li> <li>• takes notes on each student during comprehension conversation</li> <li>• facilitate written response (fluent readers)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• actively participate in comprehension discussion</li> <li>• use good habits of discussion</li> <li>• practice word attack or written response, depending on reading stage and need</li> <li>• reread the story for fluency as time allows</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix for detail by reading stage.



## Structure Keys

- Flexible groups include 1-6 students
- Groups are based on reading level and skill need
- Teachers prepare lessons by selecting instructional level text that offers multiple opportunities for students to practice focus strategy/skill
- Approximately 25 minutes per lesson
- Students read text softly or silently to themselves (not chorally or in round-robin)
- Teachers confer with and prompt students during reading
- Students participate in rigorous comprehension conversation after reading based on focus strategy/skill and key takeaways from the text

### Assessment

Before starting to teach Guided Reading, it is critical to assess students to determine their current reading levels, as well as their reading strengths and challenges. These formal assessment<sup>3</sup> results will help form initial Guided Reading groups, determine an instructional focus, and guide what type of text to select to read with the group.

To conduct an effective initial assessment of all students, it is important to use a reading assessment that increases in difficulty over time, using both literary and informational texts. A comprehensive reading assessment should also assess increasingly complex comprehension skills and include an oral reading portion to assess fluency, accuracy, and phonics. (Bambrick, Settles, & Worrell, 2013)

For reading levels pre-A through P, KIPP recommends using University of Chicago's Strategic Teaching and Evaluation of Progress (STEP) Assessment. STEP is currently piloting its program at higher levels. Between 2009 and 2011, KIPP's Research and Evaluation team examined a myriad of literacy assessments in order to determine which were the most reliable and valid, in addition to providing the most useful information for teachers.

STEP is for grades Pre-K-3 and assesses all components of reading except vocabulary and writing. Intervention strategies are attached to each 'step' on the assessment so teachers have clear guidelines of how to improve student progress. In addition, 48 KIPP schools are currently utilizing STEP to rave reviews.

Until the STEP pilot is complete for levels Q and above, we recommend using either the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System, or Qualitative Reading Inventory. Either of these options can be supplemented with additional texts from Teachers College Reading and Writing Project. Another option is to use the Lexile levels provided by MAP as a starting point, with Scholastic Reading Inventory providing ongoing data.

---

<sup>3</sup> Formal reading assessments usually take place at the beginning of the year and then 3-4 times throughout the year for regrouping and progress monitoring.

## *Ongoing Data Collection*

Formal reading assessments are not the only sources of information that teachers can use to inform instruction. For readers in the emergent through transitional stages (see Appendix A for more on reading stages), and especially for struggling readers, an informal running record should be done each week to analyze students' processing strategies. Running records allow you to calculate a student's accuracy rate with a text and analyze which pieces of information from the text he is or isn't using.<sup>4</sup>

In the *during reading* and *after reading* sections of Guided Reading, conferences provide teachers with valuable information and offer students coaching in their ZPD. Teachers prompt students based on in-the-moment data and support students in immediately applying their new skill. By taking careful notes on these conferences, teachers are able to follow-up and build on previous conferences to inform instruction. The small-group nature of Guided Reading means that all students should receive coaching via prompting and conferring in every lesson.



## *Assessment Keys*

- Create a plan to complete formal reading assessments for each student 3-4 times a year, with additional opportunities for struggling students.
- Organize assessment results into a spreadsheet. This will facilitate pattern analysis.
- Analyze student assessment results. Questions to consider during analysis include:
  - What strategies did the student use to understand the text?
  - What strategies were not used effectively or at all?
  - What will she need to do to better comprehend text at her current level?
  - What will she need to comprehend text at the next level?
- Create an instructional action plan based on assessment results.
- Instructional adjustments should be made immediately following the assessment.
- Gather additional information on students during daily conferencing and weekly running records.

## **Enabling Systems**

Guided Reading is critical component of a balanced literacy program and enables us to differentiate our reading instruction to meet the needs of all learners. In order for Guided Reading to effectively take root in a school's literacy program, the following conditions should be in place:

- **School schedules should include time for all students to participate in Guided Reading.** Students in all quartiles should receive Guided Reading 4-5 times each week.
- **Everyone is a reading teacher.** In order for all students to receive regular Guided Reading, most, if not all, teachers in the building will have a group (or groups). This means prioritizing time and resources for training all instructional personnel on Guided Reading.

---

<sup>4</sup> For more information on running records, including how to take and analyze a running record, see <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/readassess/1304>.

- **School budgets should prioritize extensive leveled libraries.** Matching a text to the needs of readers requires an extensive leveled library. A Guided Reading library can be shared across the school, but should include texts of different genres, topics, and types. This library should include the range of levels represented in the student population, which frequently means reaching beyond the CCSS recommendations.
- **Teachers must be comfortable collecting data daily and using it to immediately inform instruction.** Schools should allow assessment periods 3-4 times throughout the year when teachers will formally collect reading data. Outside of those windows, teachers should collect data each day with running records, anecdotal notes on conferences and comprehension conversations, and written responses. This data should be used to inform student grouping as well as future lessons.

### **Gratitude**

Tremendous gratitude and appreciation go to those who supported the research and development of this concept paper. April Croy, formerly of Scholastic and now of KIPP NYC, and Lisa Shugart of KIPP Summit participated in research and this paper would not have been possible without their significant efforts. Tremendous thanks also go to the experts who participated in this process: Irene Fountas, Gay Su Pinnell, Jan Richardson, Adria Klein, and Janelle Cherrington. Many thanks also to our KIPP teammates who shared their knowledge: Margarita Florez, Nancy Livingston, Maggie Dahn, Lisa Bonnifield, Allie Beman, Aja Settles, Dana Fulmer, and Jim Manly. Additional thanks to our partners at Achievement First, Uncommon Schools, and Success Academies for their openness in sharing.

## **Bibliography**

- Bambrick, P., Settles, A., & Worrell, J. (2013). *Great Habits, Great Readers*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Calkins, L. (2001). *The Art of Teaching Reading*. New York: Longman.
- Clay, M. (1991). *Becoming Literate: The Construction of Inner Control*. Portsmouth: Heinemann.
- Fountas, I., & Pinnell, G. S. (1996). *Guided Reading: Good First Teaching for All Children*. Portsmouth: Heinemann.
- Fountas, I., & Pinnell, G. S. (2001). *Guiding Readers and Writers*. Portsmouth: Heinemann.
- Fountas, I., & Pinnell, G. S. (2014, October 1). *Research Base in Guided Reading*. Retrieved from Scholastic Guided Reading:  
[http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/guidedreading/pdfs/GR\\_Research\\_Paper\\_2010.pdf](http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/guidedreading/pdfs/GR_Research_Paper_2010.pdf)
- Pinnell, G. S., & Fountas, I. (2011). *The Continuum of Literacy Learning Grades Pre-K-8*. Portsmouth: Heinemann.
- Richardson, J. (2013). *Next Step Guided Reading in Action Grades 3 & Up*. New York: Scholastic.
- Richardson, J. (2013). *Next Step Guided Reading in Action Grades K-2*. New York: Scholastic.
- Swartz, S., Shook, R., Klein, A., & al., e. (2003). *Guided Reading and Literacy Centers*. San Diego: Dominie Press, Inc.

## Appendix

### *Guided Reading Structure and Components by Reading Stage*

Reading Stage	Before Reading	During Reading	After Reading
<b>Pre-A Readers</b>  <b>STEP DNA-Pre</b> <b>F&amp;P Level Pre-A</b> <b>Lexile BR</b>	6 minutes	6 minutes	5 minutes
Key Lesson Components	letters sounds phonemic awareness phonological awareness student's name	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• concepts of print (one-to-one, left-to-right, word vs. letter vs. sentence, etc.)</li> <li>• vocabulary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• comprehension conversation</li> <li>• interactive writing (concepts of print)</li> </ul>
<b>Emergent Readers</b>  <b>STEP Pre-1</b> <b>F&amp;P Levels A-C</b> <b>Lexile &lt;100</b>	5 minutes	12 minutes	6 minutes
Key Lesson Components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• introduction</li> <li>• vocabulary</li> <li>• model and practice skill</li> <li>• purpose for reading</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• students reading independently</li> <li>• teacher conferring and prompting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• comprehension conversation</li> <li>• sight words or guided writing</li> </ul>
<b>Early Readers</b>  <b>STEP 2-6</b> <b>Levels D-I</b> <b>Lexile 100-275</b>	5 minutes	12 minutes	8 minutes
Key Lesson Components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• introduction</li> <li>• vocabulary</li> <li>• model and practice skill</li> <li>• purpose for reading</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• students reading independently</li> <li>• teacher conferring and prompting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• comprehension conversation</li> <li>• sight words or guided writing</li> </ul>
<b>Transitional Readers</b>  <b>STEP 7-9</b> <b>F&amp;P Levels J-M</b> <b>Lexile 300-475</b>	5 minutes	12 minutes	8 minutes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• introduction</li> <li>• vocabulary</li> <li>• model and practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• students reading independently</li> <li>• teacher conferring</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• comprehension conversation</li> <li>• word study</li> </ul>

	skill	and prompting	
<b>Self-Extending/ Fluent Readers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• purpose for reading</li> </ul>		
<b>STEP 10+ F&amp;P Levels M+ Lexile 500+</b>	5 minutes (if starting new text) 0 minutes (if continuing)	10 minutes	15 minutes (if new text) 20 minutes (if continuing)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• introduction</li> <li>• vocabulary</li> <li>• model and practice skill</li> <li>• purpose for reading</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• students reading independently</li> <li>• teacher conferring and prompting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• comprehension conversation</li> </ul>