GUIDED READING:
A MANUAL FOR GRADE 1 EDUCATORS

by

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Abstract

Grade 1 is markedly the most challenging and exciting time in a child's school experience. These children are no longer the youngest at school, and chances are they have gained an inch or two in height; in this sense, it is a year to feel big. This also marks a time of learning how to read, one of the biggest milestones during the Grade 1 school year. Learning to read is an essential, and fundamental, component of being a successful student, as it spans across all grades and all curriculum. Guided reading can serve as an effective and practical teaching program in order to effectively support students' journey of developing reading proficiency. This project describes my development of a guided reading manual for Grade 1 teachers, which applies my personal experience as a primary teacher as well as qualitative content analysis to analyze literature on guided reading programs and reading development. This manual deals with five key components of a guided reading program: history, small group instruction, developing reading proficiency, scaffolded teacher instruction, and practical suggestions. Included in the manual is information pertaining to guided reading in these five domains, and offers practical suggestions and strategies to implement guided reading programs into a Grade 1 classroom; thus, providing a concrete, practical, and research based manual for guided reading specifically targeted towards Grade 1 teachers.

Table of Contents

Guided Reading: A Manual for Grade 1 Educators

Chapter 1: Introduction

Grade 1 is a very exciting year. It is also a very exciting time in a child's life. Students in Grade 1 are no longer the youngest at school, they have achieved a little more independence in their abilities or skills, and chances are they have gained an inch or two in height since kindergarten. In this sense, Grade 1 is a year for these students to feel special (Kaufman, 2002).

Grade 1 also marks a year full of firsts. For the first time, many students will begin to write simple stories, develop an understanding of addition and subtraction, and even begin to conduct small science experiments (Kaufman, 2002). Most importantly, by the end of Grade 1, the majority of students will be able to make use of their letter knowledge and begin to read words and sentences for the first time (Kaufman, 2002). This magical moment of reading acquisition is perhaps one of the greatest academic achievements, and pressures, within the Grade 1 educational program. As a previous Grade 1 teacher, I faced the challenge of ensuring that all my students were competent readers by the end of the school year.

In an ideal world, Grade 1 teachers could spend significantly more time providing targeted instruction one-on-one with students who are learning, or struggling to learn, how to read. But one-on-one interventions are rarely feasible given the reality of the educational system today. Instead, many districts and educators have become advocates for small-group instruction. Most comprehensive literacy programs include some element of small-group instruction; guided reading is an evidence-based practice that is arguably

one of the most common forms of small-group reading instruction practices today (Ford & Opitz, 2011).

The goal of guided reading is to help students become competent and independent readers (Abbott, Dornbush & Giddings, 2012). Students with similar abilities are carefully organized into small groups. The teacher provides reading instruction targeted to those abilities, and uses reading materials that are appropriate to each student's level (Marchand-Martella, Martella & Lambert, 2015). The teacher is able to streamline instruction to meet the individual, yet similar, needs of the students within each small group setting. Scaffolding is a major theme within the guided reading program; teachers closely monitor students and, based on their observations, make decisions when to intervene and offer careful instruction, or prompting at times of need (Marchand-Martella et al., 2015). When used effectively, guided reading serves as an instructional tool that nurtures and supports both readers and reading (Abbott et al., 2012).

When it comes to reading, Grade 1 is an important time in a child's school experience (Lemelin & Boivin, 2007). It is a time when each child develops a sense of whether he or she is a good reader, and whether he or she enjoys reading; it also marks a time when children are defined as good or poor readers. I believe it is important that each child feel positive about this experience. Becoming a proficient reader is also imperative as it spans across all grades and all curriculum; struggles with literacy will lead to later difficulties in other subject areas, including math and science. Fuchs, Compton, Bryant and Hamlett (2012) stated that, in 2009, two thirds of fourth graders across America were reading below proficient, as set out by the National Assessment Governing Board; many of these children experienced reading difficulties early on. Fuchs et al. (2012) also

suggested that first grade cognitive and reading abilities can serve as predictors of comprehension and academic struggles in later grades. Similarly, the Ontario Ministry of Education (2003) argued that once children struggle to read in Grade 1, catching up proves to be difficult. Students that enter Grade 4 with reading deficits are considered *at risk* as the literacy demands begin to increase drastically (Connell & Prinz, 1999), which is also true based on my personal experience as an educator. I have taught students in Grade 3 and Grade 4 who have difficulties reading; after reviewing report cards from previous years, there is an overwhelming relationship between the early-risk factors that were identified and later school success. Therefore, teaching our students to be competent readers in Grade 1 should be a priority, as this sets the foundation for a successful academic career.

The ability to read is important; however, the task of teaching reading acquisition becomes even more cumbersome when faced with the demands of our classroom environments classrooms today. Within any classroom, there is a wide range of both abilities and achieved levels present. Different attitudes towards literacy and learning, cultural backgrounds, home environments, class sizes, and learning needs all pose challenges to teachers (Laquinta, 2006). A guided reading program is designed to meet a wide range of needs and abilities, and so it offers a practical solution to effectively meet this challenge (Ford & Opitz, 2011).

Guided reading is a proven strategy that can help students become good readers; it effectively helps both good readers and those who struggle. Fountas and Pinell (1996) argued that guided reading serves as a great first reading practice that works to reduce the number of students requiring intervention programs later on; when the right books are

selected, students are able to read with 90% accuracy. Not only does this remove or

reduce the frustration from students who encounter a discouraging number of road

blocks, it also allows these students to read with a greater sense of enjoyment and

confidence. Furthermore, students with higher level reading abilities are provided with

skills and strategies to allow them to read increasingly more difficult texts on their own,

en route to reading excellence.

Background to the Researcher

As an adult, I have always had a love for children and I have known since I was in

my intermediate years of elementary school that I wanted to become a teacher. I have

always remembered my good teachers; those who really made a difference. In my

journey to becoming a teacher, I knew that I wanted to make a positive difference in my

students' lives. Now being in the profession for nearly 10 years, I feel my goal as a

primary educator is to also provide my students with the best start possible. I want

nothing more than for my students to succeed, and therefore providing them with a strong

foundation is essential. I have often struggled to find the right teaching tools and to find

the literacy programs that will ensure success for all students. This task is perhaps even

more cumbersome today with the wealth of knowledge, programs, manuals, and

resources that are available.

I have always had success with guided reading. Having used guided reading

extensively in my classrooms, there are two benefits of the program. One benefit is that it

provides a framework to meet the needs of all students in a classroom, at their own paces

and own abilities; guided reading serves as an effective method for teaching a variety of

reading skills to accompany the program's texts. I believe this variety increases the

confidence of many readers, as they are able to feel successful within the guided reading

group. Another benefit is that guided reading allows the teacher to closely monitor students. I believe that some students who might have fallen through the cracks are less likely to do so with the close monitoring associated with a guided reading program in place.

Background to the Study

While I have witnessed the benefits of guided reading programs, I also think there are a few challenges with the programs today. I came to this realization through my own teaching practice, in collaboration with colleagues, and from some preliminary research undertaken. I have highlighted a few key areas that pose challenges for educators, and those that I have addressed in my straightforward evidence-based manual. In order to do so, I will first outline the history of guided reading which will provide information for a better understanding of the manual.

Guided reading has undergone some changes over the years which is especially true in relation to the successes of reading recovery, an early intervention literacy program developed by Marie M. Clay, in the 1970s (Clay, 1980). According to Clay, learning to read and write is a process of upmost importance (Clay, 1980). For many, this process goes well, but for some children, literacy learning produces many challenges and unproductive outcomes (Clay, 1980). Out of this trend came the design of reading recovery, developed by Clay in response to these literacy challenges, and in attempt to prevent children from floundering (Clay, 1980). Reading recovery quickly gained popularity, and became a highly effective short-term intervention for one-on-one tutoring for low achieving first graders (Jesson & Limbrick, 2014). It was used to serve those who were not catching on to the complex set of concepts and skills that make reading and writing possible (Jesson & Limbrick, 2014). Central to reading recovery was the belief

that reading was viewed as a complex meaning making process, which required the learner to develop a sense of metacognition when it came to their own reading behaviours; in this sense, it was a problem solving activity which required a great deal of engagement from the learner to solve, and uncover, reading problems as they were encountered (Clay, 1980). Once readers made strides in their literacy abilities, they were exited from the program and no longer received services (Jesson & Limbrick, 2014). Reading recovery now operates in countries such as the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, and Canada (Jesson & Limbrick, 2014).

Because of the success of reading recovery, and some changing pedagogical views surrounding reading acquisition during that time, the 1980s proved to be a time of transition for guided reading practices. Some of these changes were extremely positive, while others are problematic, and have become inherent parts of guided reading programs today. Guided reading is now commonly used in classrooms across the country; while it is often considered new, it is anything but revolutionary (Ford & Opitz, 2011). Guided reading practices have been around since the early 1900s, and although the term 'guided reading' was not coined at the time, the goal was simple: to improve reading outcomes of learners (Ford & Opitz, 2011).

Today, many guided reading programs are linked to a publisher, and work with purchasing specific books to go with a very specific program. With a surge of guided reading programs taking place in elementary classrooms over the past decade, publishers have responded favorably to teacher's "love affair" of leveled books by issuing thousands of new fiction and non-fiction titles each year (Fountas & Pinnell, 2012). According to the Scholastic Canada website, one set of guided reading books costs $339.50. This is for

one leveled set of readers and instructional materials. For many schools, funds are limited and resources are not always easily obtained; this could pose a barrier for many educators and become a reason guided reading programs are inadequately run, or non-existent. In addition, guided reading should teach generalized skills that can be applied to any appropriate reading resource, not just the purchased books provided. It is more about building and developing reading power and a network of skills.

Another challenge of guided reading programs is that they work within a narrow framework; as a practice today, guided reading has become more scripted which was never the intent. Teachers are instructed on what to do, the questions to ask, and responses to say. It is too easy for teachers to pickup the purchased worksheets and teacher guides, and begin instruction without thoroughly understanding the program. This is a concern, as guided reading is not a one-size-fits all approach. Students learn best when they receive the best teaching, which needs to be individualized for the learner. In my experience, the programs available for purchase lack sufficient teacher instruction, or training, which should explicitly and clearly break down how guided reading is properly conducted. A guided reading program is only as effective as the teacher. It takes a teacher, skilled teacher in the art of scaffolding, understanding how to run the program to ensure that students are successful and able to mainstream their skills to other literacy resources and areas as well; only when students are able to do so, are the guided reading benefits reached and maximized.

In my preliminary research, I noted one common criticism of guided reading programs was that there are too many levels with too much overlap between and among the levels. Because of this, teachers are spending much of their instructional time

matching children to their exact reading level. According to Morgan, Wilcox, and Eldredge (2000), knowing a few more, or a few less words, than another child does not make a significant difference in terms of reading outcomes and teaching strategies. Therefore, children should not get less interaction time because of the lengthy and time consuming guided reading grouping process (Morgan et al., 2000). While groups are necessary, perhaps fewer groups the better. From my personal experience and through discussion and collaboration with colleagues, this has proven to be true; too much emphasis is being placed upon reading groups and reading levels, to the point that it has begun to take away from valuable teaching opportunities and reading time.

In summary, I am convinced that reading acquisition in Grade 1 is imperative for later school success, and I believe reading acquisition should be a goal of every Grade 1 teacher for every Grade 1 student. While I believe that guided reading is an evidence-based method to achieve this goal, I have found explicit instruction for this method rather limited.

The guided reading manual that I created as part of my research is specifically designed for Grade 1 teachers. This manual is not linked to any publisher, so it can be used more fluidly with a variety of instructional materials which is an important aspect that sets my manual apart from others, as teachers can utilize the resources and literature already being used within the classroom. It also serves to outline the fundamentals of reading acquisition, and enables the teacher to become more proficient in delivering reading instruction by having a more solid understanding about the guided reading process itself. These goals are accomplished in user-friendly language, making it clear and concise, free of academic jargon and lengthy paragraphs to decipher. It is also written

firsthand from a teacher's perspective, giving it more credibility as teachers know that a

fellow colleague has written this manual for their use and assistance. The firsthand

accounts of what works and what does not given the constraints and challenges present in

our classrooms today, effectively combine the strength of guided reading with the reality

of its taking place within the 21st century classroom.

Research Topic

My research topic was developing a guided reading manual designed for Grade 1

teachers. The topic of focus for this guided reading manual is blending guided reading

theory with practice. Using it effectively nurtures and supports both readers and reading,

so this manual provides teachers with easy to implement reading tools that can further

develop the reading skills of students at various levels. While the emphasis remains on

guided reading in instructional groups, it is without specific reference to books and

worksheets. In this sense, it is a general guide to teaching reading instruction without the

narrow framework that many guided reading resources come with nowadays.

Research Question

There is a markedly significant difference between implementing parts of a

guided reading lesson or program, and delivering quality reading instruction so that

students are building a strong network of reading skills and strategies. This is so

important, as reading acquisition in Grade 1 is directly related to later school success. In

addition, being a proficient reader is imperative as it spans all grades and all curriculums.

Based on this, the question that drove the research was "How do Grade 1 educators

implement a successful guided reading program within their classroom so that they

support reading instruction in the most effective manner? In doing so, Grade 1 educators

will be better enabled to perform guided reading instruction most effectively. In tackling

this question, I also made greater use of the strengths of the program in order teach

reading skills to both good and struggling readers.

Research Methodology and Methods

My research took the form of qualitative content analysis, which is a successful

method for writing guidebooks, manuals, and handbooks (Berg & Lune, 2012). In

addition, as a novice researcher, I appreciated its systematic and straightforward

approach. I learned from my prior experiences with coding and examining variables and

patterns of literature, as well as during the research process and throughout writing the

manual. It proved to be a convenient research method to conduct, as its unobtrusive

nature allowed me to gather data as I pleased, without being directly involved in the

process. From past experiences, dealing with participants was a much more challenging

task, as more variables are then present and issues such as privacy and bias come to play

(Saldaña, 2008).

Overview of the Project

The goal of this project was creating a manual specifically designed for Grade 1

teachers. The manual highlights key areas of reading acquisition and how guided reading

programs can be used most effectively in order to support reading development within the

Grade 1 classroom.

In Chapter 1, we explored the history and background of guided reading, as well

as some of the benefits and challenges of the program today. Chapter 2 examines the

current literature pertaining to guided reading programs, particularly those that pertained

to the themes included in the manual. The research conduced here and obtained from the

literature review has aided me in writing the key areas that the manual addresses. Chapter

3 highlights the research methods used to gather and identify relevant information for

writing the manual. It also outlines in more detail the specific areas that the manual

includes and information included within each. Chapter 4 includes a summary of themes

uncovered through the research process, as well as the manual. The first part of the

manual begins by offering educators some general information and background

pertaining to guided reading, as well as information on the indented audience for the

manual. It then works through the other seven parts of the manual, each following a

similar layout and having a balance between offering evidence based research coined

with practical use and implementation. The layout and language is personable and visibly

appealing; this is deliberate, and in efforts to stray from the academic language and feel

that many guided reading instructional manuals and handbooks currently available have.

Lastly, Chapter 5 includes my personal location for writing this manual, my experiences

during the process, some limitations of the manual, and my last reflection and closing

remarks.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Guided reading is not a new concept, and neither are the programs available to support it. There is an abundance of literature pertaining to guided reading programs and the success that these programs can have within the educational setting. From this, it is clear to see the positive effects of guided reading on reading acquisition and, perhaps, the need for it. Grade 1 is a landmark year that sets the foundation for later school success. Guided reading can serve as an effective program within the Grade 1 classroom to help all students become increasingly proficient readers.

During my literature review I examined many scholarly articles, government websites, school district websites, other handbooks and manuals, and used these to draw conclusions regarding what is most important, what is lacking, and therefore what is needed. I started my research by looking at guided reading in a broad sense, before narrowing my research plan down to uncover some more specific parts of guided reading that helped me to write each unique section of the manual.

In the first section of this literature review, I will outline the history and overview of guided reading to lay the foundation for the program and philosophy. I will then outline the benefits of guided reading before moving into the role of the classroom teacher. From my research, guided reading cannot be looked at without discussing evidence-based methods of how to conduct this program within the classroom. I have been able to narrow down four components of a successful guided reading program. These four, organizing, implementing, managing, and monitoring, will be discussed and outlined in greater detail.

Guided Reading History and Overview

The history of guided reading cannot be looked at without its connection to reading recovery, and other early reading intervention programs. This link is imperative to understanding guided reading as a practice today.

Dating back to the 1950s and 1960s, a remedial program at the Cambridge Institute of Education aimed to reduce the number of non-literate children at the intermediate grades (Peters, 1993). At the time, it was not termed "recovery" as it could not have been, considering the children involved had no reading ability to recover; these children were simply non-readers (Peters, 1993). This program was intended for older children, with normal levels of intelligence, who never learned how to read (Peters, 1993). These children were already separated by a substantial gap from other readers, and patterns of long-term failure had already set in (Peters, 1993). In a holistic sense, this program worked with these children to develop literacy skills, but it also worked to foster a more positive sense of self (Peters, 1993). This particular program operated between 1956 and 1958. During this time, a total of 45 children around the age of 10, 9 girls and 36 boys, attended this institute (Peters, 1993). They received 22 months of instruction, with an hour per day of targeted reading intervention (Peters, 1993). Recovery programs, such as the one outlined here, began the movement of literacy intervention for non-readers (Peters, 1993).

Marie Clay's work in later years was influenced from programs such as this, and in the late 1970s Reading Recovery was developed (Clay, 1980). Reading recovery was a school-based intervention program that focused on children who, after one year of school, did not make the necessary gains in reading and writing abilities (Clay, 1980). It was therefore a program to accelerate the rate of progress of the lowest achieving children;

this would enable them to function, and make progress, with their peers at average levels (Wright, 1992). In this program, children received individual daily 30-minute lessons from a specifically trained teacher; no one method or approach to teaching is used, and every child's program was different, as it was tailored to the unique needs of each learner (Wright, 1992). Once children had made accelerated gains, they were released from the program (Wright, 1992).

In a study conducted, Wright (1992) looked at the effectiveness of reading recovery. Comparison groups were selected from two different schools, those in the program and those who were not. All children involved in the study were considerably low readers, and the children identified by class teachers as the lowest 30% in literacy (Wright, 1992). The Clay Diagnostic survey was given as a baseline, in order to measure current levels of progress (Wright, 1992). The diagnostic survey consists of six separate assessments: book level, letter identification, concepts about print, word tests, writing vocabulary, and dictation (Wright, 1992). This particular study was carried out over a 1-year span. From this study, Wright (1992) concludes that reading recovery is a very effective early intervention method, as children in the program reached 94.4% average levels of attainment in literacy, after only a mean 16.8 weeks of teaching. It is difficult, however, to conclude that improvements are entirely due to the program, and not the effect of increased teacher time; but with such accelerated gains, it can be argued that there is something more involved.

Guided reading is not a new instructional program; it has been around for decades, but has undergone some major changes in both its execution and theoretical underpinnings. The introduction of guided reading, in its modern sense, was during the

late 1990s in primary classrooms in England (Fisher, 2008). During this time, and in combination with the successes of reading recovery, there marked a major shift in pedagogy in how reading acquisition was viewed; the shift moved from simply listening to readers, to groupings of children with similar strengths, or weaknesses, and teaching them how to read, understand, and create meaning from texts (Fisher, 2008). This change essentially marked the inception of guided reading as we know it, and is the important theoretical foundation of successful guided reading programs today (Fisher, 2008).

Ford and Opitz (2011) provided an examination of guided reading over the last 50 years. The perspective is written from personal experiences in the teaching profession, as well as from experiences working alongside, or interviewing, educators. They discussed guided reading from a historical viewpoint and talked about the changes that have occurred over the past 50 years. One of the major changes regards teacher instruction. Initially guided reading instruction took the form of teacher directed learning, and focused on covering material rather than teaching learners. There was then a major shift from teachers transmitting information to teachers coaching students; this was one of the most important shifts in the practice of guided reading. According to Ford and Opitz (2011) research revealed one of the biggest distinctions between highly effective guided reading programs and ones less effective had to do with teacher instruction. This article provided an overview of guided reading programs, and how it has developed through the years: changing perspectives in the educational field, shifts in ways of thinking, and accommodating new research ideas, have all contributed to the development of guided reading. Having a better understanding of the history and background of guided reading helps to understand it was a practice today.

Both early literacy programs have been proven successful for intervention programs used to boost reaching achievement (Jesson & Limbrick, 2014). However, there is less evidence to uncover the long-term results of these programs. In a case study conducted by Jesson and Limbrick (2014) they investigated reading recovery and whether gains in reading achievement are maintained over a 2-4 year period. They employed a cross sectional design that took place in New Zealand, and involved students that had recently participated in reading recovery during their second year of schooling, at the age of 6 (Jesson & Limbrick, 2014). In total, 505 students were part of this study, 62% boys 38% girls, and there was a mix of ethnicities, as well as socioeconomic status (Jesson & Limbrick, 2014). Using standardized assessment tools, they assessed student's abilities in reading and writing after they had been exited from the reading recovery program (Jesson & Limbrick, 2014). After receiving reading recovery intervention, 60% of students had retained parity in reading and writing with their age cohort (Jesson & Limbrick, 2014). In this particular study, early intervention was a necessary condition for learning to read, and student's achievements could be maintained closely to similar aged peers. However, with only 60% of students maintaining age appropriate reading levels, exiting students from the reading recovery programs might not be in student's best interests. Therefore, it could be argued that guided reading programs, that provide reading instruction regardless of abilities, could be a more useful program to ensure, and maintain, reading success over time.

Some limitations of this study include data collection, which relied upon the test information provided by the schools. Therefore, there could be some potential issues surrounding accuracy, or reliability of data. The subjective nature of the qualitative data

collected in these schools does pose some problems, and with data collected from only three schools generalizations are rather limited.

Guided Reading Benefits

There are proven benefits of guided reading to teach students reading skills. Reading acquisition is imperative for later school success, as it sets the foundation for later reading acquisition. Difficulties learning to read are not uncommon, and children that do not adequately learn this important set of skills early on are likely to experience difficulties later in their academic career.

According to the National Institute of Child and Health Development (NICHD, 2001), 45% of children experience difficulty learning how to read. Further research indicated that 88% of students who are considered "poor readers" in Grade 1 are likely to remain poor readers upon entering Grade 4 (Fawson & Ruetzel, 2000).

In a meta-analysis conducted by Laquinta (2006), she addressed primary educators and illuminated the importance of guided reading programs to teach necessary reading skills. Laquinta (2006) examined 22 works of research conducted over the preceding two decades. These studies largely worked with primary teachers at the kindergarten to Grade 4 levels. By taking into account the patterns found in the research data, Laquinta (2006) argues that children who get off to a poor start in reading rarely catch up. Laquinta (2006) states that guided reading is a best practice and should be a necessary part of a balanced literacy program. This study outlined some of the struggles students face during reading acquisition, and suggests guided reading as a proven method to address this unsettling fact.

To become a proficient reader requires students' developing a network of reading skills and strategies; reading the words on the page does not always mean that students

have become proficient readers. Comprehension, understanding the written material, is another equally important factor when determining students' reading success. Guided reading serves as an effective method, in which students are developing, and learning, an important network of reading skills.

In a case study conducted by Lorent and Chanin (2010), they investigated the impact of guided reading groups on comprehension improvement using both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The authors worked with four teachers and 73 students in Grade 2 classrooms. Additionally, Lorent and Chanin (2010) looked at the role of guided reading instruction, as this is central to understanding its effectiveness. The qualitative methodology for this study included teacher and student surveys, teacher interviews, and focused observations of guided reading instruction. The data was then triangulated to determine the impact of guided reading instruction. Lorent and Chanin (2010) stated that teacher interviews provided important information pertaining to their opinions, and knowledge, of guided reading programs, while focused observations of guided reading instruction provided important data regarding the implementation and effectiveness of instructional strategies.

The quantitative methodology for this study involved looking at two specific standardized tests, the *Developmental Reading Assessment* and the comprehension subtest of "Storytown". A pre-test (Fall scores) and post-test (Spring scores) was used to compare students' scores. The results of the testing found that there was a significant difference between the two test averages in all four classrooms, thus concluding that students performed higher in the spring assessment than the fall (Lorent & Chanin, 2010).

Combining the results from both the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the study, the authors conclude that guided reading groups had an impact in overall reading and comprehension improvement (Lorent & Chanin, 2010). Lorent and Chanin (2010) suggest that guided reading programs are an effective method to increase students' abilities to comprehend text, and should be used in classrooms as a method of reading instruction and acquisition.

The Role of the Classroom Teacher

Guided reading, as a literacy program, cannot be examined in isolation. The teacher plays an important role when looking at how a guided reading program is most effectively conducted. Therefore, it is important to look at the research in regards to the role of the classroom teacher.

In a mixed-method study conducted by Underwood (2010) the author investigated whether guided reading instruction resulted in significant improvements in reading achievement over a two-year period. A central aim of the study was examining the teacher's level of proficiency, commitment, and perception of guided reading instruction on its overall success. There were three questions driving the research study: Do teachers believe guided reading instruction is an effective instructional approach? How does teacher commitment to the instructional approach affect the success of guided reading instruction? What instructional skills or strategies are required to develop an effective reading program? To answer these questions, surveys and focus groups were used to investigate teacher commitment in the qualitative portion of the study. Sample and statistical tests were employed in the quantitative portion.

The results of the study indicated that preliminary results did not show significant improvements in reading achievement over a one-year span of guided reading instruction

(Underwood, 2010). However, when these same students were followed over a two-year period, significant improvements were noted (Underwood, 2010). In addition, the qualitative results from the study indicated teachers who were committed to guided reading instruction, and perceived guided reading to be the preferred chosen method, benefited students most (Underwood, 2010). From these results, Underwood (2010) outlines that when a new program or intervention is introduced, it is onerous to judge during its inception year. Furthermore, teachers should have some additional training in the guided reading process in order to provide guided reading instruction with maximum results (Underwood, 2010).

Whitehead (2002) outlined the guided reading program and how it taught students some specific strategies to help them with understanding written text. Whitehead (2002) argued that some specific strategies that were taught during guided reading, such as perspective and imaginary thinking, provided students with an increased level of comprehension, and an improved ability to understand and relate more closely to the text. Included in this article were comments from students and teachers who were involved in a project; this project was designed to test and trial some of these strategies. The outcomes were extremely positive on student reading achievement, and therefore Whitehead (2002) suggested that the strategies taught to students during guided reading might be one way of raising the ability of all students learning to read.

Components of a Guided Reading Program
To better look at guided reading, it is helpful to break it down to look at its component parts. An effective guided reading program can be broken down into: organization, implementation, management, and monitoring.

Organization. Getting organized is fundamental in the process of guided reading. How a teacher physically organizes a guided reading area will depend on what works for the individual teacher, the students, works well within the classroom space, and takes into account personal organization style. However, there are a few key elements that all guided reading programs should have. These include: a space in which the teacher can equally access all students within the small group, knowledge of each student's reading ability so group assignments can be most effective, and appropriate books specifically designed to provide targeted instruction at the correct reading level.

In an article written by Kaufman (2002), the personal struggles and successes as a previous first grade teacher are outlined. Kaufman was able to narrow down the successes that were experienced, and how these were made possible. Central to the article are the necessary steps prior to implementing any literacy program. After much reorganizing, experimenting, and restructuring, Kaufman was able to work out the kinks and create a balanced literacy classroom with instruction that was seamless (Kaufman, 2002). Kaufman outlines that structure and effective classroom management are the precursor when organizing any literacy program within a first grade classroom, such as guided reading (Kaufman, 2002).

Implementation. Implementing a successful guided reading program can be a challenging task for a variety of reasons. Fawson and Reutzel (2000) outlined the specific struggles faced by many teachers in how to properly implement a guided reading program within their classrooms. One of the highlighted struggles was the frustrations experienced by teachers who needed to provide large numbers of leveled books in sufficient quantities in order to run a guided reading program. The authors provided the reader a list of

resources for classroom teachers who are still building their library repertoire, or those who do not wish to purchase large numbers of books, by providing information on how to use basal readers or other common texts to support guided reading. They also provided a list of common basal readers for reference as the implementation of guided reading is dependent on providing appropriate texts.

Management. Managing guided reading groups is an on-going and necessary step to ensure that they run successfully. Students need to know what is expected of them and how to behave. It is also a program in which the other students in the classroom need to work independently and quietly so that noise and interruptions don't affect the guided reading session. Having to balance and manage this dynamic can pose a challenge. Implementing a good management plan will help the teacher and students stay organized and focused. This is crucial so that teaching and learning are more effective and students can achieve the results that guided reading lessons are capable of producing.

Ford and Opitz (2002) highlighted some errors witnessed during the management of guided reading practices. Through their interactions with teachers and a thorough review on articles and books, Ford and Optiz (2002) concluded that teachers who have not effectively set up and organized a guided reading program are not equipped to effectively manage one; if teachers are having to leave the guided reading group to tend to the needs of other students, this is ultimately affecting the guided reading process (Ford & Opitz, 2002). Three suggestions are outlined by the authors. First, collaboration with other teachers or specialists is important so that there are two professionals in the room during the guided reading time (Ford & Opitz, 2002). This makes working with multiple groups, and managing them, more feasible. A second suggestion provided was to

use an established literacy program such as journals or writer's workshop that students have been taught and feel comfortable with working on independently (Ford & Opitz, 2002). A third suggestion was using learning centres, one being the guided reading station where the teacher is stationed; within this framework, students work through the various stations according to a specific time and schedule (Ford & Opitz, 2002).

  Monitoring. Monitoring guided reading groups is an essential component of guided reading. It is fundamental with guided reading to carefully organize students based on reading ability in order to provide instruction. Teachers must know at what level their students are functioning. Monitoring students and ongoing assessments are necessary steps to ensure students are in the right group, with the appropriate reading material, and provided with the correct amount of instruction, scaffolding, and support. Fluidity of students in and out of groups is a necessary and expected part of guided reading instruction. Some of the assessment tools to aid in monitoring guided reading groups can include: running records, reading levels, behaviours to notice and support, rubrics, fiction and non-fiction comprehension, quick rating scale, and individual progress chart.

  In a publication by Learning Media and distributed by Pacific Learning, the importance of ongoing analysis of individual students' strengths and needs was highlighted. Because teachers worked closely with students during the small group instruction, monitoring responses and reading skills became an integral and central component of a successful guided reading group. As students learned and integrated information at different rates, the teacher must support and acknowledge these changes throughout the process.

Conclusion

Guided reading is an effective literacy program to support readers and reading development. There is an extensive amount of literature about guided reading programs. I was able to locate and access information regarding guided reading programs in general, as well as information geared towards more specific parts of the guided reading program.

The research conducted in my literature review was used to construct a guided reading manual for Grade 1 teachers. One of the main goals of the manual is to educate teachers so they have a deeper understanding about guided reading as a practice, but to do so in a way that is welcoming, easy to understand, and easy to implement. In addition, the manual is not intended to have links to specific worksheets or books so that teachers can apply the strategies to any reading resource, or theme, within their classroom, therefore making it a more meaningful and fluid experience.

Chapter 3: Research Methods

As stated previously, I am a primary school teacher in the Surrey School District. In my experience working as a Grade 1 teacher, and in collaboration and discussions with colleagues, I came to the realization that a guided reading manual specifically targeted towards Grade 1 teachers was needed. The primary intention for this study was to develop a user-friendly, informative, and practical guided reading manual; this manual would enable Grade 1 teachers to run successful guided reading programs, and better support students in developing reading proficiency.

In Chapter 3, I will begin with an overview of the research paradigm that I adopted with an explanation of why it was the best approach to take for this study. I will then discuss qualitative content analysis from theoretical and philosophical standpoints so that the reader will gain a better understanding of the method. Next, I will then outline the practical steps I took during the research process in both detail and depth. Lastly, I will outline the themes that emerged from the research process through careful analysis of the data. It is these themes that serve as the foundation for writing the guided reading manual.

Qualitative Research Paradigm

The design of a research study begins with the selection of a topic and a paradigm (Creswell, 2004). I had already selected the topic of guided reading, and, therefore, I had to choose the paradigm. A paradigm can be understood as a worldview or framework in which the beliefs, values, and methods, of the research takes place; in this sense, it serves as the set of principles that guide the researcher's work (Creswell, 2004).

Creswell (2004) outlined three approaches to adopting a research paradigm. A quantitative approach employs strategies of research inquiry such as experiments, interviews, and surveys, and collects data on predetermined instruments that eventually

yield statistical data (Creswell, 2004). A qualitative approach uses strategies of inquiry such as narratives, ethnographies, and studies. The researcher uses these written accounts to collect open-ended, emerging data with the primary intent of developing themes from the data (Creswell, 2004). A mixed method approach involves strategies of inquiry that include collecting data to best understand research problems (Creswell, 1994). The data collection requires gathering both numerical information as well as text information, so that the final database represents both quantitative and qualitative approaches (Creswell, 2004).

Creswell (2004) also offered criteria for selecting an approach which included: the research problem or inquiry, the personal experience of the researcher, and the audience. As a novice researcher, I found it helpful to read through the different research paradigms as well as criteria for consideration; from this, it quickly became clear which research paradigm was best suited for my research study.

The research paradigm chosen for constructing a guided reading manual for Grade 1 teachers was a qualitative approach. A qualitative approach is most frequently used for analyzing written material, and is a proven method for writing manuals, guidebooks, and handbooks (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). It focuses on artifacts of social communication; these artifacts include written accounts or anything that can be discovered from text (Berg & Lune, 2012). Qualitative research methods look at text in terms of themes, patterns, or messages, which need to be processed and reduced so that they can be closely analyzed (Mayring, 2000).

Because I knew the first steps of my research would require reading and reviewing vast amounts of literature previously written about guided reading programs,

as well as looking at manuals or handbooks currently available, a qualitative approach

was best suited. After these initial steps of literature review, I then had to look carefully

for emerging patterns or themes; a qualitative paradigm served as the framework that also

matched these research objectives perfectly. Therefore, this qualitative paradigm served

as a guide that allowed me to sort through various literatures in a relatively organized and

systematic fashion, and detect themes, or patterns, as they were uncovered.

Methodology

As a novice researcher, I believed it was important to conduct unobtrusive

research. In unobtrusive research, the researcher does not have direct contact with people.

I will discuss some examples of methods used in an unobtrusive research methodology.

One type of method within unobtrusive research is participant observation. With

this method, the researcher attempts to observe social action first hand in an everyday or

naturalistic setting (Timseena, 2009). The aim is to gain familiarity of an individual, or

given group of people, without being directly involved (Timseena, 2009). This type of

method relies heavily upon the researcher's observational and interpretive skills, as it is

not structured nor planned (Timseena, 2009). This can serve as a useful research method

for unveiling social aspects that are usually hidden or not well known. However, some

disadvantages include low reliability and difficult sampling (Timseena, 2009).

Another type of unobtrusive research includes analyzing archival records, both

public and private (Berg, 2001). Public archives typically bring to mind the form of a

library, but includes any running record that is primarily prepared for mass public

consumption (Berg, 2001). Examples of public archives include: graveyard tombstones,

hospital admittance records, computer-accessed bulletin boards, motor-vehicle registries,

newspaper morgues, and arrest records (Berg, 2001). Public records are most useful for

obtaining information pertaining to the history or status of communities. Private archives, on the other hand, are created for smaller more specific audiences. Examples of private archives include: autobiographies, diaries, letters, home movies and videos, and artistic artifacts such as drawings (Berg, 2001). Private records are particularly useful for creating case studies or life histories (Berg, 2001).

In both cases, there is a wide range of knowledge that can be derived through archival research, and there is an abundance of information and technological innovations available in connection to archival data (Berg, 2001). It can serve as an appealing unobtrusive research method as researchers have accessibility to large quantities of inexpensive data, and an ease of locating written documents due to a systematic filing system (Berg, 2001). However, researchers are cautioned when using this type of research. Missing or inaccurate documents, and lengthy travel times to locate and analyze tangible records can pose challenges to archival researchers, and the results (Berg, 2001).

Secondary analysis of data is yet another unobtrusive research method in which the researcher focuses on the re-use of existing data (Smith, 2008). A researcher might use secondary analysis of data in efforts of pursuing a research interest distinct from that of the original work; this may include a new research question, or an alternative perspective to the original question of interest (Smith, 2008). This approach can be used to generate new knowledge, hypothesis, or further support for existing theories, therefore providing a wider use of the original data (Smith, 2008).

Some advantages of secondary analysis of data are that the study design and data collection process is already complete; this can be convenient and time efficient for some researchers (Smith, 2008). It can also lead to data being analyzed and replicated from two

different perspectives, therefore providing opportunities for new discovery (Smith, 2008).

However, there are some challenges to using secondary analysis of data. Critics have

argued that data should not be reduced to anything other than its original intent. The

secondary analysis researcher was also not part of the initial data collection and research

process; therefore, the researcher cannot fully understand the context and implications of

the original data (Smith, 2008).

      Content analysis is a widely used unobtrusive research technique, and the last

method that will be examined (Berg & Lune, 2012). In content analysis, the researcher

examines social artifacts, typically written documents (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Content

analysis enables researchers to sift through large quantities of text data with relative ease

and in a systematic fashion, narrowing it down into manageable units or themes (Stemler,

2001). It has therefore been defined as a systematic, replicable technique for compressing

many words of text into fewer content categories based on explicit rules of coding

(Stemler, 2001). Content analysis can include both quantitative and qualitative

approaches.

      Within a quantitative content analysis approach, the researcher is attempting to

quantify a research problem through gathering numerical data (Riffe, Lacy & Fico, 2014).

The researcher then uses the measurable data to formulate facts or opinions, or uncover

patterns in research (Riffe, Lacy & Fico, 2014). A qualitative content analysis approach is

used to gain a deeper understanding of opinions, reasons, and motivations (Hsieh &

Shannon, 2005). It is also used to uncover trends in thoughts, opinions, and ideas (Hsieh

& Shannon, 2005). These trends, or similarities, uncovered from the data are described,

summarized, and classified. The researcher then uses this data to come to a set of

generalizations or conclusions about the research topic under study (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

Qualitative content analysis was the chosen method for my research project since it was in closest alignment with my research plan, focus, and topic under study. I was looking to uncover trends in the research in order to come to my own set of generalizations and conclusions about guided reading; therefore, a quantitative approach was not appropriate. I was also looking to examine large amounts of written documents pertaining to guided reading programs, and examine them in a systematic fashion, mirroring a qualitative content analysis approach. The unobtrusive methods of participant observation, analyzing archival records, and secondary analysis of data, would not enable me to conduct the type of research my project and topic under study required.

Qualitative content analysis also allowed me to obtain data without being directly involved in the research-gathering process. Conducting interviews or being directly involved in the research process can bring forth many variables that a researcher might like to avoid (Berg & Lune, 2012). In avoiding direct contact with participants, the researcher eliminates any change of privacy matters and possible biases that could occur when dealing with human subjects (Saldaña, 2009). Another issue that can occur with human subjects is personal biases, which might flaw results and bring additional, and perhaps challenging, variables into the equation (Saldaña, 2009). As a novice researcher, I preferred the type of predictable, straightforward, and systematic approach offered through the unobtrusive method of qualitative content analysis.

Method - Qualitative Content Analysis
When reviewing an abundance of literature pertaining to qualitative content analysis, I came across many steps to conducting qualitative content analysis. Mayring

(2000) offered one explanation on a step-by-step procedure of qualitative content analysis called deductive category application, the main idea of which is to provide detailed definitions, examples, and coding rules for each category (Mayring, 2000). Within the approach of deductive category application, the researcher can determine under what circumstance a text passage may be coded within a category. These categories are then put together under a coding agenda (Mayring, 2000). The six steps according to a deductive category application include: the research question, theoretical based definitions of the aspects of analysis, main categories, and sub categories, revision of categories and coding agenda, final working through the texts, and finally the interpretation of the results in terms of quantitative steps of analysis (Mayring, 2000).

Berg and Lune (2012) outlined another approach to conducting qualitative content analysis, which had the strongest influence on my research process. Being a novice researcher, I appreciated the clear and concise steps they outlined when conducting research. I was also familiar with their work, and have had some prior experiences using this particular model, and so felt most comfortable being guided by it. The steps outlined by Berg and Lune are: collect and organize data, begin coding, analyze codes for themes, sort the material according to these themes and begin looking for emerging patterns, analyze and look for meaningful patters, and finally use the identified patterns coined with previous research to settle on a set of generalizations about the research topic (Berg & Lune, 2012). This detailed and concise content analysis plan proved very useful during the research process.

Analysis

The first part of my research was data collection. I began my search for literature online; I looked for scholarly articles through the University of Northern British

Columbia Library website, as well as other written documents that could be accessed through the Internet, such as handbooks and manuals. In addition, I spent time looking closely at teacher websites and blogs. I immersed myself in the literature by reading and re-reading material pertaining to guided reading, starting off with a general scope. I kept my research question at the forefront of my mind during this process; I found that having it written down where it was visible, and easily referenced, proved to be helpful as this served as my guiding focus.

I found that using a concept map, as outlined by Berg and Lune (2012), was a very helpful technique during data collection in order to better understand some of the relationships that began to emerge; it also allowed me to be more mindful, concise, and clear about my research approach. My concept map was created manually, and served as a visual framework, or drawing board, for working through my research; being a visual and hands on learner, I appreciated this helpful tool.

I initially had 15 concepts identified, these were: *reading recovery*, *language and literacy*, *emergent readers*, *independent readers*, *teacher practice*, *level texts*, *Grade 1*, *teacher knowledge*, *support specific needs*, *reading proficiency*, *student assessment*, *reading skills*, *small group instruction*, *procedure*, and *primary classroom*. My concept map contained these 15 concepts, as well as nodes, lines, and labels to represent relationships or areas of meaning (Berg & Lune, 2012). From further research, I quickly became overwhelmed and soon discovered I had far too many concepts. I also revisited the article from Berg and Lune (2012), which suggested that you begin with 10 concepts or ideas. They also state that concept maps go through series of refinements, which further validated my decision to reorganize (Berg & Lune, 2012). From re-reading and

further analyzing the literature, I saw that some of these concepts could be narrowed down or integrated. In this sense, creating my concept map served as a brainstorming session, allowing me to think through ideas and integrate some newer concepts with older ones.

From refining my research and going back to examine the data again, I noticed some overlapping trends that would help in reducing some of my initial concepts even further. Underwood (2012) stated "it requires teachers to have a firm grasp on the content that is presented in the various texts as well as a large amount of knowledge of the strategies themselves to move students forward" (p. 52). Using descriptive coding practices, this excerpt was coded *teacher knowledge*. Rupley and Blair (2009) stated, "at the heart of directed instruction method are explicit explanations, modeling, demonstrating, and practices to guide students" (p. 127). Using descriptive coding practices again, this excerpt was coded *teacher practice*. Both of these codes could be placed under the larger concept of *scaffolded teacher instruction*; scaffolding pertains to the role of a teacher in moving a student progressively forward towards a stronger understanding and, ultimately, greater independence.

I therefore ended up with five key concepts: *history, small group instruction, developing reading proficiency, scaffolded teacher instruction,* and *practical suggestions*. These would serve as the foundation for the guided reading manual, and taken directly from the literature reviewed.

The second step of my research process was to begin coding. As a novice researcher, I closely mirrored the coding instructions offered by Saldaña (2012). During this process, I knew I was applying codes in order to: segregate, group, link, or

consolidate meaning (Saldaña, 2012). From this, I would be better able to organize or group data into categories of similar characteristic.

During this process I coded the material directly onto the margins of the page, printing off documents and making photocopies when necessary. I used a colour-coding system involving the use of highlighters and different coloured pens, in efforts to keep things clear and visibly distinct. Since I already established my five key concepts, I was examining and reviewing literature to find information pertaining to guided reading that fit into the categories of: *history, small group instruction, developing reading proficiency, scaffolded teacher instruction,* and *practical suggestions*. I knew from prior research, and personal experience, that these five concepts were relevant and appropriate. This allowed me to use a coding frame, rather than open coding whereas I would be looking for an emergence of new categories or concepts (Holton, 2010). However, I also knew that I had to keep an open mind if new categories were revealed throughout the coding process.

During this particular stage in my research process I often wondered if I was coding too much or not enough; I did not want to miss anything valuable. A significant proportion of my first cycle coding included descriptive codes. Descriptive codes are used to summarize entire sentences or passages of text, likely because I didn't want to leave anything out (Saldaña, 2009). The other type of coding conducted was In Vivo coding. With In Vivo coding, the researcher uses an actual word from the text in order to summarize it (Saldaña, 2009). Using both these coding practices allowed me to capture information and data being analyzed in either a word or short phrase, and allowed me to narrow down the data systematically (Saldaña, 2009).

During this initial stage of analysis and coding some themes began to emerge, such as *reading strategies* and *reading groups*. With being a teacher and having a personal understanding and experience with guided reading, I had an idea of what some themes may be early on. I knew, however, that I had to be flexible in my thinking as these themes could change once I began more closely analyzing the data. I also had to be mindful that having an existing theory or notion about guided reading could pose some limitations; I might have a tendency to approach the data with an already informed, or strong bias, and in doing so might be more inclined to find evidence that was supportive rather than unsupportive (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). As a new researcher, I think it was important to acknowledge this fact; I was then more effectively able to identify, and handle, some of the emotional reactions that had occurred as a result.

Once my first cycle coding was completed, second cycle coding was the third step in my research process (see Table 1). According to Saldaña (2009), with second and even third cycle coding, the researcher can expect the codes to become even more refined, with

Table 1

Table of Themes (in boldface) from Content Analysis

Name	Example from Manual	Sources	References
Guided reading program	Instructional program to teach reading development Balanced literacy classroom	6	19
Reading acquisition	Literacy spans all grades and all curricular areas	3	9
Grade 1	Important year for students Foundation for academic success		
Components	Organization Implementation Management Monitoring	3	5
History	Anything but revolutionary Been around for decades	2	10

Traditional	Rigid groups	3	4
	Teacher directed		
	Book selection, leveled texts		
Redesign	From past to present	2	9
	Changes in program to reflect current research and needs		
Small-group instruction	Homogenized grouping	5	14
Support	Meets specific needs of students	4	12
	Diverse learners in today's classroom		
	Building confidence of learners within group setting		
Text	Match texts to students reading ability	4	6
	Meaningful and relevant		
Dynamic	Groups change in response to student need	3	11
	Flexible and fluid		
Developing reading Proficiency	Independent skilled readers	4	26
	Reading at instructional level with accuracy		
Comprehension skills	Understanding literary elements	3	21
Fluency	Skilled readers read words accurately, rapidly, and efficiently	2	3
	Fluency aids in all other aspects of reading		
Strategies	Problem solving skills	2	18
	Decoding knowledge		
	Making predictions		
	Using picture clues		
	Asking questions		
Scaffolded teacher Instruction	Providing skillfull support and prompts when needed	4	17
	Beyond student current capability		
Faciliate	Guide and observe	3	15
	Break reading down to facilitate new understanding		
	Acquiring new skills		
	Dialogue		
Develop independent readers	Gradual release of responsibility to the student	5	11
	Moving towards greater independence		
Practical Suggestions	How does this look in my classroom?	3	14
Classroom	Literacy centers	2	2
	Texts, fiction and non-fiction		
Planning	Unit planning incorporation	1	1
	Building into monthly themes		

Additional Resources	Online accessible resources	2	34
	Printed resources	2	13

the development of some major themes (Saldaña, 2009). For my second cycle coding, I

used the approach of pattern coding during this particular research step. Within the

approach of pattern coding there is an attempt to give meaning to already prescribed

codes based on similarity; this is in efforts of pulling together a lot of material into a more

"meaningful unit" of analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In addition, pattern coding is

useful for the development of major themes, as well as searching for causes and

explanations in the data. Therefore, pattern coding was an appropriate choice in order to

most effectively highlight key themes and explanations from initial coding procedures

(Saldaña, 2009).

During second cycle coding I reviewed my codes with more meticulous attention;

reorganizing codes, relabeling, or dropping some codes altogether was a necessary and

central focus. I did this through noting reoccurrences on post-it-notes, as they were small

and manageable, and could stick directly to my papers or be moved as I saw fit. This was

a very important step in the coding process for me; as a novice researcher, I was hesitant

to miss anything significant. As a result I ended up coding a lot, as it seemed like a good

idea during the process but resulted in an extensive list. Upon later review and

examination, some of my codes were infrequent and, therefore, seemed marginal at this

point; these types of codes were dropped all together, such as *table talk*. I was also able to

merge some of the codes based on similarity, as previously outlined. Saturation is reached

when no further coding is feasible (Fusch & Ness, 2015). This type of re-configuring

helped me to develop a smaller, more refined list, eventually reaching saturation.

My third cycle of coding entailed transforming codes into themes. According to Saldaña (2009), if the coding procedure was both insightful and analytic, then the researcher should, at this point, have some major categories or themes. During this process I revisited my codes and looked for any overlap, similarities, repetitions or patterns. Through the use of an online document, I was able to make use of various colours, italicizing or bolding codes, all based on relationships; this helped to categorize codes more effectively into larger themes.

In order to effectively organize the themes found, I used a separate template from a word document that identified the name of the literature and theme present. To prevent this task from becoming an overwhelming and daunting procedure, I had to be mindful of how many themes were present within each piece of literature. Because themes can come from both the data and the researcher's prior understanding of the topic under study, I had to be mindful of my own interpretations affecting the theming process. Once I had discovered all of the themes, I then had to decide which were most salient for the research project. I did this by looking at re-occurrences and examining themes more closely to see if any could be combined to create larger, and more complex, themes. For instance, the themes of *reading strategies* and *independent readers* could be placed under a larger theme of *developing reading proficiency*. Therefore, at this point of the research process, the initial five themes identified remained imperative and important overarching themes; it is these five themes that served as the foundation for writing the guided reading manual.

Using the information from my content analysis research, I was able to construct a 26-page guided reading manual for Grade 1 teachers. This serves as the final step of the

research process, as outlined by Berg and Lune (2012). Within the qualitative content analysis framework, researchers use the identified patters coined with previous research to settle on a set of generalizations about the research topic (Berg & Lune, 2013). From the research conducted, it became evident that a guided reading manual for Grade 1 teachers was needed; in order to do so, I would use the themes discovered through the research, in combination with previously written literature pertaining to guided reading programs.

Being a primary teacher, I have experienced what it is like within a Grade 1 classroom. The pressure to teach these young minds to read can be an overwhelming task. In addition, the resources used to teach some targeted reading skills are often lacking in their diversity, and are not free from monetary constraints as they are linked to publishers, and work within a narrow framework. This can make it difficult to generalize instruction and strategies, and the pressure to run an amalgamation of reading programs can become daunting; this becomes even more problematic when research is telling us that reading acquisition is imperative, especially in Grade 1.

When we speak of a balanced literacy classroom, guided reading can serve as the foundation for this type of environment. From my personal experiences, in combination with the results from the research, I see a need for a manual that will better support Grade 1 teachers in delivering, and maintaining, quality guided reading instruction within their classrooms. Therefore, the main goal of the project was to ensure teachers have an effective blueprint to run guided reading programs in their Grade 1 classrooms, and one that is research based.

Conclusion

In order for the reader to obtain a better understanding of the research process, Chapter 3 has highlighted the steps taken from beginning to end. It started by outlining different research paradigms available for constructing a research study, and my rationale for choosing a qualitative approach. It then moved into discussing the methodology for the research; content analysis proved to be a useful approach, and I followed the steps outlined by Berg and Lune (2012). These steps were clear and concise; being a novice researcher, it also allowed me to remain mindful, engaged, constructive, and thoughtful throughout the research process.

Chapter 3 also highlighted the detailed account of the research method chosen, and how I went about conducting it through the use of qualitative content analysis. It provides a very clear and detailed account of my research plan, coding techniques, and data collection.

From this, my five major themes were revealed; this serves as the foundation for writing my project, the manual. I was able to make some generalizations about guided reading programs, and use these, in combination with existing literature, to establish a much-needed guided reading manual. This manual will serve as a useful resource so that Grade 1 teachers can conduct successful guided reading programs within their classrooms.

Chapter 4: The Manual

The results from the research process have allowed me to create a manual for Grade 1 teachers that can be used to teach guided reading programs in their classrooms. The manual is specifically intended for fellow colleagues in the Surrey School District, but could be utilized by any teacher in the education profession. The goal of the manual is to serve as a guiding aid to better support reading, in terms of both teaching and learning.

Chapter 4 will begin with a detailed outline of the manual. This will include a break down of each section, and the format it will follow. This is so the reader can obtain a better understanding of the formal outline for the manual, and what to expect.

Chapter 4 will then include the manual. I have created a research-based manual for Grade 1 teachers who are interested in running successful guided reading programs in their classrooms. The manual contains 26-pages of practical, meaningful, and straightforward information pertaining to guided reading and the Grade 1 classroom.

The Manual Outline
The manual contains eight sections, all of which outline different aspects of guided reading. It is easy to read, with user-friendly language that is free of heavy academic jargon. It also teaches the strategies and skills required to run such a program, and, perhaps most importantly, offers practical solutions and suggestions for how these can be implemented fluidly. In doing so, the manual contains a wealth of practical information that can specifically be applied within a Grade 1 classroom.

The manual was created with the research at the forefront. The themes ultimately chosen as the guide for constructing the manual were the ones most salient, as proven throughout the research process. These themes have been included in Chapter 3, Table 1.

In addition, the themes pertaining to guided reading in the areas of *history*, *small group instruction*, *developing reading proficiency*, *scaffolded teacher instruction*, and *practical suggestions* emerged as most significant, and came to form the major sections included in the manual; these were also included in Table 1, and bolded to emphasize their importance. Staying true to these themes thus gives my manual reliability, credibility, and objectivity (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2005).

The outline of the manual was carefully constructed. It was important to keep the research at the forefront and stick to the themes uncovered from the research. It was also important to provide information in a natural and sequential flow, in order to build a deeper understanding and knowledge of the program. The eight parts of the manual include:

Part One: Introduction. This section introduces the practice of guided reading in a general sense. It also includes a description of what the manual has to offer, the target audience, as well as some thought provoking questions that encourage reflection and consideration. Some of these include:

- How can I better reach the literacy needs of all the learners in my classroom?
- What do my students' "really need" to know by the end of Grade 1?
- How can I run guided reading programs in my classroom so that they are most effective?

Part Two: Looking back to move forward. It order to better understand guided reading programs today, this section largely focuses on the history of guided reading and some of the changes that have taken place over the decades. Although there is a tendency to view it as a new practice, it is anything but revolutionary. Expanding the view of

guided reading instruction through a historical lens, and its changes over the years, contributes to an overall vision of guided reading that is more well rounded; this expanded understanding creates an instructional tool that better supports our students in the journey of reading proficiency. While this section includes helpful information, it is also paired with pictures and a colorful table; this is in efforts of making it resourceful, but also visually appealing to tease the reader into diving further.

Part Three: What, why, who? Part three of the manual is a very straightforward account of what guided reading is, why it should be an integral part of a Grade 1 classroom, and who benefits from it. In doing so, this section outlines the importance of reading acquisition at the Grade 1 level with connection to the prescribed learning outcomes. It also highlights the link between reading acquisition and later school success. Many teachers may not be aware of this imperative link, so it is important to present some evidence based research regarding long term outcomes. The literature presented is straight forward, concise, and relevant. In this section both print and point form wording is used, pictures, a chart, and a link to the BC curriculum website for quick and easy reference.

Part Four: The target audience. The target audience is the students. This section includes information on student grouping and why this is an important component within the framework of a guided reading program. Given the nature of the 21st century classroom, there is a diverse level of needs and abilities present amongst our students. When looking at guided reading programs, it is effective because it requires the teacher to work with a small group of students of similar reading behaviours, at a particular point in time. Within this framework, teachers can more closely monitor and provide the

instruction to meet all students' needs in a timely, constructive, organized, and targeted manner. In addition to the information provided, there is an arrow art illustration used to highlight the importance and ease of small group instruction practices.

Part Five: The Recipe for Success. Running a successful guided reading program within the Grade 1 classroom requires the consideration of four key areas: organization, implementation, management, and monitoring. The manual offers information, ideas, and suggestions for each:

1.   Organization. This is the "planning" stage. The manual offers information about identifying reading levels, and strategies to go about creating reading groups; included is a chart with creative guided reading group name ideas, and suggestions for student participation and engagement.

2.   Implementing – the manual offers suggestions regarding ways that guided reading programs can be incorporated or blended seamlessly into an existing program. It also provides information regarding the guided reading lesson itself, such as: objectives, selecting reading materials, and during and after reading strategies. It is important to note this will not be a prescribed set of worksheets and books, but rather things that teachers can take away and incorporate into their own practice, therefore making it their own and becoming more meaningful.

3.   Managing – classroom management is an important component to ensure guided reading groups run successfully, and continue to do so. Examples of a management plan, techniques, and strategies are offered for Grade 1 students that are developmentally, and age, appropriate.

4.   Monitoring – the importance of ongoing analysis of individual students'

strengths and needs is highlighted. Fluidity of students in and out of groups is a necessary

and expected part of guided reading instruction. Examples of reading assessment

monitoring sheets are provided.

Part Six: The driver's seat. The teacher is the ultimate person in charge when it

comes to students' developing reading proficiency. This section outlines the important

role of the teacher in scaffolding during the guided reading process. It will stray from the

traditional guide with leveled book methods, and simply outline what scaffolded teacher

instruction is, why we do it, and how it can be taught; this is clearly outlined in six steps.

Through building upon a deeper understanding of scaffolded teacher instruction, teachers

are enabled to use scaffolded instruction as a fluid resource that can be used for a variety

of curricular areas and instructional texts, in both fiction and non-fiction genres. Included

in this section are pictures and a flow chart.

Part Seven: Developing reading proficiency. A successful guided reading

program cannot be implemented without having a core understanding about what reading

proficiency looks like. Included will be a summative account that includes what reading

proficiency looks like, and what proficient readers are expected to do. Things such as

comprehension and fluency will be included. Several pictures and point form wording is

included in this section.

Part Eight: How does this look in my classroom? What many teachers want are

practical and resourceful tips. Therefore, this section is specifically geared towards

providing the practical applications of how to incorporate guided reading in the

classroom. This is done with keeping the Grade 1 curriculum and environment at the

forefront. This section offers five practical suggestions so that teachers could implement

such a program with confidence.

   Part Nine: Additional Resources. This section includes a list of some evidence-

based resources that can be accessed for more information. This list will include online

resources, articles, and websites. I will review all resources, to ensure quality of content

and relevance.

GUIDED READING!

A Manual for Grade 1 Teachers

Table of Contents

Part One: Introduction

You are reading this manual because you have made the decision to become an educator. There is no other career quite like ours and, for that, give yourself a big pat on the back! The amount of impact teachers make on their students' lives is enormous. It spans well beyond the role as teacher, but includes thing such as advocate, role model, and supporter. In this sense, teachers have the power to influence, direct, and perhaps shape the course of our students' futures.

Grade 1 is an important year, as this marks the beginning of these students' academic careers. Grade 1 teachers then have an important job in providing a strong foundation for these students, one that will eventually lead to successful and independent learners. To become this, reading acquisition is an imperative and significant milestone; the importance of literacy is well known, and therefore one of the most important goals for Grade 1 students is reading acquisition.

This manual was created to help facilitate successful reading acquisition within the Grade 1 classroom, through the use of guided reading programs. The Surrey School District hopes this manual will help guide you in having a more deeply rooted understanding of guided reading, so that you can most effectively implement such a program within your Grade 1 classroom.

WHAT IS
Guided Reading?

Guided reading is an instructional approach that involves a teacher working with a small

group of children at a similar reading level. The teacher provides targeted reading

instruction and support to these students, eventually leading to increased problem solving

skills, reading strategies, and independent readers and thinkers.

What is the purpose of Guided Reading?

The purpose of guided reading is to encourage the reading development of students.

During guided reading, students are to be given books that they can read with 90%

accuracy. From this, students are able to understand and enjoy the story because it is

accessible to them and, because of this, increases reading enjoyment and confidence in

their abilities. The ultimate goal for a student is the ability to read a variety of texts with

understanding and ease.

Why is it important?

Reading acquisition is imperative to becoming a successful learner and adult. It spans

across all grades and all curriculum. Grade 1 sets the foundation for later school success.

When are children ready?

The target grade for implementing a guided reading program is during the Grade 1 school year. By this point, students should have developed phonemic awareness, which is an important precursor for reading words. Of course ability levels will vary, but guided reading serves as an effective method as it groups students according to ability. Within each unique group, different skills and strategies are being developed.

What does this manual offer?
This manual offers current research-based information about:

☐ Guided reading

☐ Small group instruction

☐ Importance of Grade 1

☐ Reading development and proficiency

☐ The art of scaffolded teacher instruction

☐ Practical suggestions and ideas for the classroom

☐ Additional resources for Grade 1 teachers

Who is this manual for?
This manual is right for you if you are a:

☐ Teacher

☐ Administrator

☐ Educational Assistant

☐ Learning Support Teacher

Questions to consider...

+ How can I better reach the literacy needs of all the learners in my classroom?

+ What do my students "really need" to know by the end of Grade 1?

+ How can I run guided reading programs in my classroom so that they are most effective?

+ How can I expand my repertoire of teaching strategies and questions to promote higher level thinking and learning?

+ What does reading proficiency look like?

+ What is my role in the guided reading process?

+ How can I transfer the skills of guided reading into other curricular areas and texts?

+ How will guided reading look in my primary classroom?

+ What if I don't have the proper resources in my classroom to teach guided reading?

This manual addresses these questions in a straightforward manner, and is unlike other guided reading programs readily available.

1. This manual is written by a fellow colleague, and prior Grade 1 teacher

2. It is not linked to a publisher, and can be used as a fluid resource

3. It is written with the Grade 1 teacher in mind, and the student at the heart

4. It is informative, resourceful, research based, yet welcoming to read

5. It offers practical suggestions specifically for the Grade 1 classroom

Part Two: Looking Back to Move Forward

Did you know guided reading is not a new practice, and has been around for many decades? It is therefore important to look back çbefore moving forward èto better understand guided reading in a holistic sense. Expanding the view of guided reading instruction through a historical lens, and its changes over the years, contributes to an overall vision of guided reading that is more well rounded; this expanded understanding creates an instructional tool that better supports our students in the journey of reading proficiency.

Traditionally, guided reading programs were fraught with problems. This was largely due to the nature of reading instruction and grouping processes of the past. This led to guided reading programs becoming quite unpopular during some decades; as a result, guided reading instruction had to be redesigned. Many of these changes are a result from research, which leads to new understandings surrounding best teaching practice and reading instruction. It is therefore important to acknowledge and understand these changes, as we learn from the mistakes of the past.

These changes bring us to new understandings and ways about approaching reading instruction. This is also in efforts of clearing up any misunderstandings or misconceptions about guided reading programs today. In doing so, we are better informed about the things we do and, perhaps, why we do them.

In the table below I have highlighted some of the most significant changes in guided reading programs, from past to present.

From past to present…

| 1950 | è è è è è è è è | 2016 |

From Past…	To Present…
Was not called guided reading, although guided reading practices have always been used in some form.	Guided reading coined as a program in 1990s, out of reading recovery.
1950s and 1960s guided reading programs used to teach students who were completely illiterate.	Linked to publishers and programs for purchase.
Reading recovery began in the 1980s and teachers were specifically trained to teach students on-to-one. When gains had been made, students were exited from the program.	Guided reading is used to teach reading skills to all students of various levels, regardless of ability. Students are taught within a small group setting of similar abilities.
Teacher directed learning, teacher's transmitted information, and teachers held more responsibility in the process than the learner.	When gains in reading are made, students are moved to another group. Teachers coach students during the reading process, and work through texts together.
Basal readers primarily used as reading resources, and very directed instruction.	No specific teacher training is required.
Groups made according to reading achievement, not reading ability.	Guided reading is a fluid program made up of flexible grouping formats.
No subtle names for groups, simply high, middle, and low. Grouping practices led to negative social stigmas for many students.	Strategy based. Groups are made creatively and discretely.
Small group instruction was static.	Learner shares the responsibility with the teacher.
Skill based.	

Part Three: What, why, who?

What?

Guided reading is an effective instructional practice to teach reading skills to Grade 1 students. The teacher works with a small group of students to develop a variety of reading skills. Each group of students will read at different levels, and so differentiated instruction is at the heart of the program. It also requires the teacher to provide scaffolded support, allowing students to be in an area of learning in which they could not do independently; this is in efforts of moving the student progressively forward, towards increased independence. The ultimate goal of guided reading is to develop proficient and independent readers.

During guide reading:

> Teacher reinforces specific skills while students work in a small group

> Teacher engages students in questioning and discussions

> Teacher acts as a guide and facilitator

> Student does the reading and practices strategies

> Student builds independence

> Teacher and students can engage in post reading discussions or activities

Why?

Reading is imperative; it spans across all grades and all curriculum. Grade 1 is a

landmark year in which reading development begins, and begins the pathway to later

school and academic success. Therefore, Grade 1 is a crucial year in terms of developing

reading acquisition. To highlight this important fact, I will use the analogy of reading

acquisition in Grade 1 to building a house. If the foundation of the house is not sturdy and

strong, everything built from that point onward would be vulnerable. The house will

eventually require repairs or intensive renovations, as it will always have areas of

weakness. This is the same when we speak about students learning how to read; the

foundation for reading begins in Grade 1, and a strong foundation is crucial.

As teachers, we have all had THAT student who has struggled to meet expectations at

grade level. As teachers, we have spoken to parents and support staff, attempted different

strategies, adapted assignments and materials, and maybe even attended a School Based

Team meeting. You have also spoken to the child's previous teacher, or at least reviewed

their report cards from the previous years. What do you find? The same issues have been

documented in the earlier grades. Is this a fluke? No. Research on early reading

difficulties is very clear; struggles in early grades are directly related to difficulties later

on. Therefore, because reading spans across all grades and all curriculum, this serves as

an extremely important skill. Failure to adequately learn it, catching up proves to be difficult and the gap widens.

Who?

It all starts in Grade 1; Grade 1 students need to learn how to read! This is on the mind of every Grade 1 teacher, and the pressure is on to teach this important skill. This has been a long established standard of Grade 1, and is reflected in the curriculum; the link for Grade 1 expectations and competencies has been included at the end of this section. According to the ministry of education, and the BC curriculum website, a large emphasis is placed upon reading skills and reading development during the Grade 1 year. I have included these for your quick reference below:

Content - students in Grade 1 are expected to know the following:

u Elements of story

u Print awareness

u Phonemic awareness

u Literary elements

Curricular competencies - students in Grade 1 are expected to learn how to:

u Read fluently at grade level

u Use developmentally appropriate reading strategies to make meaning

u Engage actively as listeners and readers

u Recognize structure and elements of story

Guided reading serves as an effective program to teach reading skills to a wide range of students because it provides the teacher with the ability to teach differentiated skills to various learners, all within a group of similar ability. Within this type of environment,

teachers are then better able to monitor students' needs, abilities, and strengths, and focus

on developing independent skills within the small group setting. Below is an illustration

to demonstrate that guided reading can serve as the program to effectively meet the

curricular competencies and content skills that Grade 1 students are expected to know,

and achieve.

Illustrative Model of Guided Reading

Curriculum link: http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/curric_grade_packages/grkcurric_req.pdf

Part Four: The Target Audience

 The target audience is the students in your Grade 1 classroom! And,

within this primary classroom, you may have up to 24 students. Out of these students,

you will likely have an amalgamation of different nationalities, beliefs, cultures,

backgrounds, and family dynamics. What all of this means is that every child will have

been brought up with different life experiences, leading to a variety of outlooks on life

and learning. Teaching the diverse needs present within a classroom can therefore pose a

challenge. When we take into account new district goals, pressures from parents,

collaboration time with colleagues, the challenges seem to amount.

 Guided reading is a program that can help alleviate some of these challenges. It serves as

an effective program in order to meet the diverse needs present within any given

classroom. Because it requires the teacher to organize groups based on similar need, the

teacher is better equipped or enabled to provide differentiated instruction to a wide range

of learners and learning styles at a given time. Research shows that beginning readers

benefit most from being taught explicit skills during intensive small group instruction.

This enables teachers to focus on specific skills, needs, and strategies by targeting in on

varied groups of children.

 As a Grade 1 teacher, I would image there is already an idea of perceived reading

abilities when it comes to your students. Therefore, no lengthy or tedious assessments

need to take place (you are not re-inventing the wheel). Work with what you know, or

assessments you have already conducted or have been expected to do. The glory of

guided reading is that is not fixed - if a group isn't working change it! I have included

some skills and strategies that can be developed amongst 3 different reading levels.

Small group instruction:

Reading skills and strategies in your below Grade 1 group can include:

- Reinforcing phonemic awareness skills

- Using word parts to figure out unknown words

- Using picture clues

- Practice decoding skills

- Knowing how books work

- Building reading confidence

Reading skills and strategies in your average Grade 1 group can include:

- Making predictions

- Using simple text features to derive meaning

- Re-reading when confused

- Understanding some simple literary elements

- Improving comprehension skills by making, confirming, or revising predictions

- Building reading confidence

Reading skills and strategies in your at Grade 1 level group can include:

- Read words they have never seen before

- Emphasis on expression during read alouds

- Engage in discussions and dialogue regarding the literature

- Make inferences and connections to the story

- Reading with increasing fluency

- Building reading confidence

The use of small group instruction, which is an inherent trait of guided reading, is a valuable way to meet the diverse learning needs of students in your classroom. It is also a way to develop individual skills amongst students in the group of similar need. Once students have mastered the skills, they can move on to more challenging concepts. The arrow illustration below highlights that guided reading is a continuum of strategy and reading development, and can be used for all learners within a Grade 1 classroom, regardless of reading level.

Exceeding
Grade level

Meeting
grade level

Approaching
grade level

Below
grade level
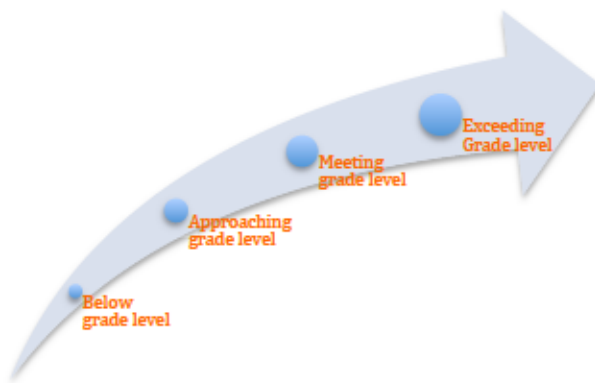
Part Five: The Recipe for Success

To run a successful guided reading program requires consideration in four key areas; think of these as the recipe for success. These four areas include:

1. Organization

2. Implementation

3. Management

4. Monitoring

These four areas will allow you to navigate through the year with guided reading relatively seamlessly. Like with baking a cake, unless you have given careful consideration to each one of these four components, your guided reading program might not run optimally. To reinforce this point, I will use the analogy to baking. Baking isn't very forgiving, especially if you are making a cake. If you skip or omit one of the key, and perhaps even small, ingredients, your cake it is not going to turn out as intended. Well, the same can be said for your guided reading program. Therefore, this section includes illustrations and tables to outline in greater detail each key component, and includes some examples of how this may look in your Grade 1 classroom.

ORGANIZE

Organization! This is the beginning stage of setting up your guided reading classroom. Do NOT feel like you need to re-invent the wheel. Use your prior knowledge about your

Group names: Animals, Colours, Sports Teams, etc. Can be anything! Make the students a part of the process; get them involved, excited, and engaged in their learning! Put up for display.

students' abilities and needs to navigate them into groups. Seek help from your Learning Support Team teacher for assistance if need be. He or she will already have some assessments on your students.

IMPLEMENT

A Grade 1 classroom already incorporates aspects of center time. Take your timetable or day plan and implement a guided reading lesson into it. Rotate so that you are seeing each group at least once per week, perhaps your lower achieving groups you can see more, as fit.

Implementing the guided reading lesson:

Teacher introduces the text and leads some discussion about it

Picture walk to look through the pictures and pages of the story

Each student reads a section of the text

Readers use prior knowledge and skills to figure out new words and meaning

Teacher prompts, coaches, encourages, or confirms students' attempts at problem solving

Group engages in meaningful discussions before, during, and after reading

Extension activity optional

MANAGE

Management is a key component of guided reading programs. It is not only about the expectations of the group members under teacher instruction, but what the other class members are doing while you are busy working with the small group. Having an effective management plan in place will

Classroom management tips that have worked well in Grade 1:

◆ Stop light: red, yellow, and green

◆ Points system, reward chart

◆ Have well designed, engaging activities

◆ Maximize proximity control

allow you to conduct a guided reading lesson most effectively, and without major disruption.

◆ Model and discuss expectations

◆ Have non-verbal attention getting signals

MONITOR

Your job is to monitor students in each group. Guided reading groups are intended to be fluid and flexible, so do not hesitate to move students around. You will also need to identify the group needs to make decisions about the next lesson.

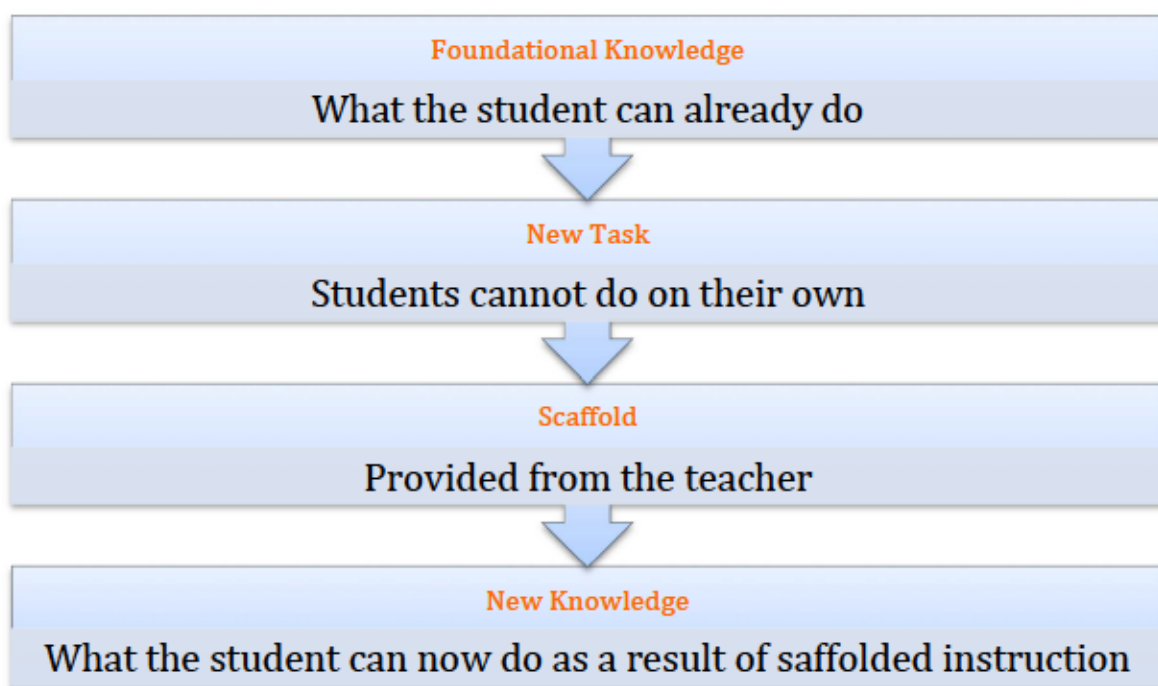Ideas for monitoring student and group abilities may include:

❖ Running records

❖ Anecdotal notes

❖ Individual progress chart, or rubric

❖ Quick rating scale

❖ Group monitoring record sheet

Part 6: The Driver's Seat

When it comes to the guided reading lesson, the person ultimately in charge is you, the teacher! While it requires equal involvement between student and teacher, your role as facilitator and guide is one of upmost importance. Research indicates that the teacher has the strongest influence on student's development of reading skills and acquisition. Because of this, knowing how to effectively support and nurture your students reading journey is imperative.

Scaffolding is an important and crucial role of the guided reading lesson. Scaffolding requires breaking up the learning into manageable chunks, and providing a tool or aid for each chunk. In this sense, scaffolding allows students to be in an area of learning in which they could not be independently; it requires knowing your student's current abilities and levels of functioning, to move forward into areas of next learning. The teacher acts as facilitator and guide within the scaffolding framework, and offers careful assistance or help in times of need.

Illustrative Model of Scaffolding

Foundational Knowledge
What the student can already do

↓

New Task
Students cannot do on their own

↓

Scaffold
Provided from the teacher

↓

New Knowledge
What the student can now do as a result of saffolded instruction

When it comes to scaffolding during a guided reading lesson, I have included six important scaffolding strategies. These can easily be applied, and are applicable for Grade 1 learners, within a guided reading group.

Six Scaffolding Strategies:

1. **Model** – modeling can serve as the cornerstone of scaffolding! Students in Grade 1 need modeling, modeling, and more modeling! Seeing is doing, so therefore it is important to model and demonstrate to students what they are expected to do within the guided reading lesson. Think alouds can serve as a powerful modeling technique; model your thought process as you read a text and problem solve. As students become more experienced within the guided reading process, your modeling strategies can become lessened.

2. **Tap into prior knowledge** – ask students to share their own ideas or concepts about the text and connect it to their own lives. Engaging in this type of scaffolding strategy allows students to make meaningful connections to stories, and have it make sense to them in their own world. This is just plain good teaching practice!

3. **Give time to talk** – all learners need time to think through and process new ideas and information. Students need time to talk and verbalize their learning. Structured discussions work well with any age group, whether in the form of pair share or direct conversation.

4. **Pre-teach vocabulary** – don't send your students down the road of challenging text trapped with difficult vocabulary without preparation! It is important to introduce some of the more challenging words or concepts prior to reading, which is also known as "frontloading" vocabulary. Before reading, introduce words by using the pictures, or within a context to things they already know or are interested in. In doing so, students will be much better equipped to handle the text and make sense of it.

5. **Use visual aids** – visual aids can be used as a scaffolding tool, whether in the form of graphic organizer, pictures, or charts. Graphic organizers can serve as the tool to help students organize their thinking when responding to the text. They can also assist students in organizing information, or to grasp important concepts such as sequencing or cause and effect. The key is to keep them simple and straightforward, so they remain helpful and not a hindrance.

6. **Pause, Ask Questions, Pause, Review** – Check for understanding as students read through the content of the text. Make sure the questions are guiding, specific, thoughtful, and open ended. Do your best to hold out during any uncomfortable silences, thereby giving students time to think through their thoughts and ideas. If the group seems stuck on the question, provide the chance for them to engage in dialogue with each other, or a neighbor.

Part 7: Developing Reading Proficiency

How do reading abilities develop?

- Phonemic Awareness – hear, identify, and manipulate sounds

- Phonics – relationship between letters

- Fluency – the bridge between word recognition and comprehension

- Comprehension – understanding what is read

Phonemic Awareness

Fluency

Phonics
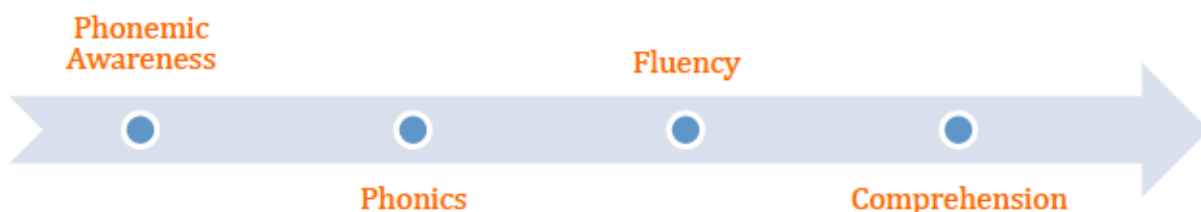
Comprehension

What does reading proficiency look like in Grade 1?

Good readers can:

- Read a variety of texts at the Grade 1 level

- Convey comprehension of literary elements, both verbally and in writing

- Make predictions and connections to the story

- Read fluently: reading text accurately, at a steady pace, and with expression

- Monitor their reading and self correct

- Use a variety of reading strategies

Good Readers

Eyes – good readers LOOK for clues to draw conclusions, make predictions, and more.

Nose – good readers SNIFF OUT important details when reading.

Heart – good readers LOVE to make brain-movies while reading.

Stomach – good readers are HUNGRY to connect the text to things they already know, making it more meaningful to them.

Feet – good readers FIRMLY understand the elements of a story and use it to deepen their comprehension.

Head – good readers monitor their own THINKING while reading.

Mouth – good readers ASK questions before, during, and after reading.

Hands – good readers PUT IT ALL TOGETHER to retell and summarize.

Knee – good readers know they NEED to understand text, and know the strategies of what to do when they don't.

Part 8: How does this look in my classroom?

For every classroom, guided reading programs may run and look different; that is okay! As long as the fundamentals of the program are being considered and have been established, how you set up guided reading in your classroom is entirely up to you. However, if you have frequently struggled to establish guided reading programs effectively in your classroom, this section offers some practical suggestions for how this can be executed within your Grade 1 classroom, relatively seamlessly.

Below I have included five practical suggestions for implementing guided reading within your Grade 1 classroom, and ways of incorporating it into things you are likely already have, or doing.

Five Practical Suggestions:

1. **Centers** - chances are you already have your own center system established. Therefore, you can build guided reading into your already existing center time, and have it be one of the stations.

2. **Buddies** - use a buddy class to work on a pre-arranged activity, or buddy reading, while you work closely with a guided reading group.

3. **Team Teaching** — some schools focus heavily on collaboration, and provide ample opportunities for teachers, reading specialists, or other support staff to work alongside each other. Therefore, team teaching results in two adults being in the room at one time. This can make it manageable to work with a guided reading group during these times.

4. **Using an established program** — use an established program like Big 3 or Journals, both common practices within the Grade 1 classroom, to work with a small group of students. During this time, the students are working independently. If students are well versed and comfortable in a more independent classroom routine, this provides a natural way for students to remain actively focused and engaged while you work with a guided reading group.

5. **Books** – you don't need to purchase a program, and allocate funds to establishing an extensive book repertoire! Use the resources you already have; the library will have a wealth of books, including varied ability levels and topics. Choose books that pertain to a topic of interest amongst a particular group; ask them what they would like to read or learn more about, or choose books that coincide with your current theme and will deepen understanding regarding a larger idea. You can make photocopies of book pages if necessary, so all children have the text readily available to them. You can also seek resources from the Learning Support Teacher, fellow colleagues, or the books already in your classroom.

Part 9: Additional Resources

Included in this section are additional resources in the form of articles and websites that

pertain to different aspects of guided reading:

History of guided reading:

- ➢ http://readingrecovery.org/reading-recovery/teaching-children/marie-clay

- ➢ http://www.fountasandpinnellleveledbooks.com/aboutleveledtexts.aspx

- ➢ http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/reading_horizons/vol50/iss4/3/

Small group instruction:

- ➢ http://www.readingrockets.org/article/best-practice-rti-small-group-instruction-students-making-minimal-progress-tier-3

- ➢ http://www.oswego.org/files/49/Small%20Group%20Reading%20Instruction%20booklet.docx.pdf

Developing reading proficiency:

- ➢ https://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/pubs/nrp/documents/report.pdf

Scaffolded teacher instruction:

- ➢ http://edglossary.org/scaffolding/

- ➢ http://www.niu.edu/facdev/resources/guide/strategies/instructional_scaffolding_to_improve_learning.pdf

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Chapter 5: Conclusions

I love my job as a teacher. I have enjoyed working in the profession for nearly 10 years, and the wealth of experiences and knowledge I have obtained during this time. As a primary teacher, I have witnessed the importance of developing successful readers; I know these skills span all grades and age groups. When I was teaching Grade 1, I felt the pressure to teach the diverse number of students in my classroom reading skills that would eventually lead them to an academic career of success and independence. I often had difficulty finding the right teaching tool to aid in the development of reading abilities amongst the varied learners in my room, but found success with guided reading programs. Through extensively using guided reading programs in my classrooms, I experienced benefits of the program, as well as some challenges. Therefore, I saw a need for a manual that would bridge this gap and strengthen the use of the program for Grade 1 teachers and students.

A strong motivating factor for creating this manual was my passion for teaching and learning. Because of this, I strongly believe that every student has the right to an optimal education. From my personal experiences, coined with research, I know that reading acquisition during the Grade 1 year serves as our students' foundation; reading is important as words, both spoken and written, are the building blocks to academic success and life. In order to achieve this, I saw guided reading as an effective and practical program that could nurture the reading development of various learners and provide students with the best start possible.

Another motivating factor was my belief that every educator has the right to a teaching resource that is practical, easy to understand, informative, and will deliver high quality instruction. This manual was created with the Grade 1 teacher and students at the heart; it serves an informative and research-based guide to promoting reading acquisition within Grade 1 classrooms. It is welcoming to read, visually appealing, and written first hand from a teacher's perspective; thus taking into account the reality of our classrooms today, and bridging the gap between theory and practice. Included in this manual are practical suggestions so that Grade 1 teachers can easily implement such a program within their already existing classroom environments, with a thorough and descriptive detailed account of what guided reading is and the fundamentals of the program. Having a well-rounded and more comprehensive understanding of guided reading creates an instructional tool that better supports and nurtures reading development.

Lastly, the third motivating factor behind writing the manual was the need to bridge the gap between the benefits and challenges of the program. While I have used guided reading programs in my classrooms extensively, I have often found a few challenges with it. One of the challenges is that it works well within a narrow framework; there are prescribed sets of worksheets, activities, and even questions to ask and things to say. This makes it difficult to generalize instruction and skills into other subject areas. Another challenge with the guided reading programs is that they are linked to a publisher. These programs are not cheap, and require purchasing specific materials and books in order to successfully run the program. This might pose as a barrier if funds are limited and specific books need to be purchased. I have

developed a manual that can be used fluidly, as it teaches the skills required to run guided reading programs within an open context.

This project has been wonderful in that it has allowed me to take an area of learning that was passionate to me, and create a manual for the benefit of others. As I reflect back on the experience of completing my Master's degree I am overwhelmed with an amalgamation of feelings, from exhaustion and frustration to pride and excitement! Completing this degree has been a dream of mine for as long as I can remember. It has felt like a long road travelled, but one that I have grown and learned from. Writing this manual has helped me develop professionally, and has deepened my understanding of guided reading and reading importance during the early years. I not only feel that I am now better equipped as an educator, but that I have provided others with an instruction tool which they can also benefit from. As a primary teacher, my ultimate goal is to strengthen teaching practice and instruction for the benefit of our students.

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