



INTRODUCTION

Literacy Footprints is a system designed for classroom, intervention, ELL, and special education teachers, as well as support staff who are instructing primary children to read and write. Each of the five kits (Kindergarten, First Grade, Second Grade, Third Grade, and Fourth Grade) contains sequenced, high-quality leveled texts in a variety of genres. Students will encounter traditional tales, realistic fiction, fantasy, and informational text. The lesson cards that accompany the books follow Jan Richardson’s **Next Step** lesson format (Richardson, 2009 and 2016).

KINDERGARTEN	FIRST GRADE	SECOND GRADE	THIRD GRADE	FOURTH GRADE
Levels A-F	Levels A-K	Levels F-N	Levels L-Q	Levels O-T
100 books/lessons	130 books/lessons	91 books/lessons	62 books/lessons	60 books/lessons

Teachers consistently ask for a theory-based, easy-to-follow set of lessons and books for teaching guided reading. Literacy Footprints addresses this need and reduces planning time by providing a comprehensive collection of books with companion lesson cards that include suggestions for each part of the lesson. The Literacy Footprints Guided Reading system provides a strong platform for leading guided reading lessons. Literacy Footprints will bring teachers through the process of planning a powerful guided reading lesson that integrates reading, writing, and word study. In using Literacy Footprints, teachers will implement effective lessons and will also be able to plan and deliver effective guided reading lessons using any texts.

WHY GUIDED READING?

Guided reading is a research-based approach to teaching reading (laquinta, 2006) that is an essential part of a balanced and comprehensive literacy program. This small-group reading instruction is designed to provide differentiated teaching to a broad range of learners in a classroom (Pinnell & Fountas, 2010). The teacher uses a range of assessment tools to determine their students’ strengths and deficits, then places them into small groups according to instructional needs. This allows the teacher to focus precisely on what the students need to learn in order to advance. The teacher selects a text that provides students with a few challenges, as well as enough support to read it with a high degree of accuracy (90% or greater). Before students read the text, the teacher prepares them by providing some information about the story’s topic. This introduction to the text is designed to give students scaffolds, as well as opportunities for problem solving. The students read the entire text in a soft voice. The teacher listens to each student and teaches, prompts, and/or reinforces strategic actions. After students finish reading, the teacher invites the group to discuss the text and guides the discussion toward improving students’ comprehension. The teacher often selects one or two teaching points from the text to work on with the group to further expand their strategic processing.

Through careful text selection and strong teaching, skillful educators can help students learn to problem solve, decode, and deeply comprehend more and more challenging materials. Most importantly, guided reading can help students become independent learners who want to read.

THE NEXT STEP IN GUIDED READING

In her books, *The Next Step in Guided Reading* and *The Next Step Forward in Guided Reading*, Jan Richardson details specific targeted lessons for students at each stage of their reading development. She provides a framework for teachers to follow as they plan and carry out a guided reading lesson.

Pre-A Lessons

There are four components in a Pre-A lesson. The components are designed to improve visual memory, phonemic awareness, oral language, and concepts of print. These four areas are the building blocks of emergent literacy (Clay, 1991) and strong predictors of reading success (*Developing Early Literacy*, 2008).

As part of daily literacy instruction, students who cannot identify at least 40 upper- and lowercase letters trace an alphabet book every day. In Richardson’s research, she found that students who participated in this activity gained an average of 18 letters during 18 sessions (2009). Additionally, Pre-A learners do one or more activities with their name in a **Next Step** lesson: tracing their name, making it with magnetic letters, and writing it and naming the letters. Young children most easily and quickly learn the letters found in their first names; this is known as the own-name effect (Reutzel, 2015). As students gain control and knowledge of the letters in their name, they are introduced to and learn new letters.





Emergent Guided Reading Plan (Levels A-C)

The Emergent Guided Reading lesson plan requires two 20-minute sessions over a course of two days.

DAY 1

Sight word review: Students practice writing words they have learned before. This helps students build a visual memory for words they will see in books and write in stories.

Introduction to the new book: The teacher selects books for the guided reading group that will offer opportunities for students to consolidate strategic processes, as well as encounter new challenges. The educator provides the students with a gist statement, a general description of what the book is about. They have students look at the pictures in the book and share what they notice. Since early reading makes heavy demands on both the processing and storage functions of a young working memory (Sousa, 2014), the book introduction helps novice readers understand and use the information they read. New sight words and unfamiliar concepts are reviewed before reading. To encourage cross-checking behavior, students are asked to choose between two possible options after looking at a familiar concept in a picture.

Students read the book: The students read the book independently. The teacher observes students' reading and prompts for strategies if anyone encounters difficulties.

Teaching points: After the students read the story, the teacher selects a few teaching points to highlight for the whole group. The teaching points are chosen from notes taken during the reading.

Discussion prompt: The teacher asks the students a question to explore deeper comprehension.

Teach one sight word: The teacher selects one sight word from the new book to teach to the students. The teacher uses four procedures to help them learn the word: What's Missing, Mix and Fix, Table Writing, and Write and Retrieve.

Word study: It is important for students to gain phonemic awareness and learn how to decode words (i.e., decipher printed words by linking them to spoken words that the student already knows) (Sousa, 2014). During each lesson, the teacher shows students how to link letters to sounds, connect sounds to letters, and decode new words through three different word study activities: picture sorts, making words, and sound boxes. The activities help students learn to hear sounds in words. During the emergent lessons, students learn to hear initial consonants and medial short vowels.

DAY 2

Familiar reading: The students read the book from Day 1 again. If time allows, they may also read other familiar books.

Teaching point: The teacher selects one or two teaching points to make based on their observation of the reading.

Sight words: The teacher reteaches the sight word they taught on Day 1. The teacher uses the same four procedures: What's Missing, Mix and Fix, Table Writing, and Write and Retrieve.

Guided writing: The teacher dictates a simple sentence to the students to write. The sentence includes some known sight words, the new word from Day 1, and some new words that the students will need to say slowly and listen to the sounds before writing. The educator asks students to spell sight words correctly and use invented spelling for unknown words. Teaching points provide students with instruction in a variety of skills that will enhance and improve their reading and writing abilities. Richardson advises providing handwriting instruction based on observations of students (2009). Achieving fluent transcription of handwritten letters is an essential prerequisite for achieving many—if not all—of the other Common Core State Standards for writing (Reutzel, 2015). Students use sound boxes to learn to hear sounds in words (Clay, 2005) and are encouraged to stretch out words and use invented spelling for more difficult words they want to write.



Early Guided Reading Plan (Levels D-I)

Early Guided Reading lessons have a two-day design similar to the Emergent plan.

DAY 1

Sight word review: This is optional after Level E.

Introduction to the new book: The teacher writes words students may have difficulty decoding on a dry-erase board. If a word is unfamiliar, the teacher draws attention to the picture in the book and explains the concept.

Students read the book: As the students read independently, the teacher prompts for self-monitoring, decoding, fluency, and comprehension.

Teaching points: Following the reading, the teacher selects one or two teaching points from something they observed during the reading. The teaching points demonstrate a new reading strategy, such as word solving (using known parts, analogies, breaking large words apart and covering endings), rereading at difficulty, and building fluency and comprehension.

Discussion prompt: The teacher prepares one question that requires students to make inferences or draw conclusions.

Teach one sight word: This is optional after Level E.

Word study: The teacher uses picture sorts, sound boxes, and analogy charts to make words. The Early Guided Reading lessons focus on digraphs and blends.

DAY 2

Sight word review: This is optional after Level E.

Guided writing: Students write a short response to the book they read. The teacher works with individual students. At Levels D and E, the teacher may choose to dictate a sentence that includes sight words. After Level E, students create their own stories.

Teaching points: The teacher selects teaching points to work on with individual students as they write their stories.

Transitional Guided Reading Plan (Levels J-P)

The Transitional Guided Reading lesson plan is a three-day process.

DAY 1

Introduction to the new book: The teacher has students preview the book, introduces new words, and prepares students to read words that may be difficult to decode. The teacher also introduces new vocabulary not defined in the text by (1) saying the word and a simple definition, (2) connecting the word to students' background knowledge, (3) relating the word to the text, and (4) having a student turn and explain the meaning of the word to another student in the group.

Students read the book: Since Levels J-P texts are usually longer, students will take two days to read the new book. While they read quietly or silently, the teacher observes, prompts, coaches, and teaches individual students.

Teaching points: Following the reading, the educator selects a few teaching points to highlight for the whole group. The teacher works on monitoring for meaning and decoding vocabulary strategies, fluency, and comprehension.

Discussion prompt: The teacher prepares a question that requires students to make inferences or draw conclusions from the text.

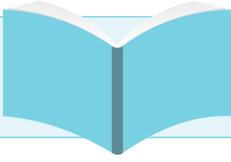
Word study: This optional step is for students who need additional support in decoding.

DAY 2

Reading and rereading: Students continue reading the book. If they finish early, they reread the book.

Teaching points: The teacher selects one or two teaching points to work on with the whole group.

Word study: This optional step is a follow-up to the lesson from Day 1.



DAY 3

Rereading for fluency: This optional step is for students who need to improve their fluency.

Guided writing: The students write one or two paragraphs in response to the text. The teacher starts by helping students plan the writing. Students discuss the story together and list key words on sticky notes or a dry-erase board. Then the students write while the teacher circulates and assists individual students. The teacher addresses teaching points with individuals regarding spelling, organizing, writing complete sentences, using appropriate punctuation, and creating sentence variety.

THE NEXT STEP IN GUIDED READING: SUMMARY OF LITERACY GAINS

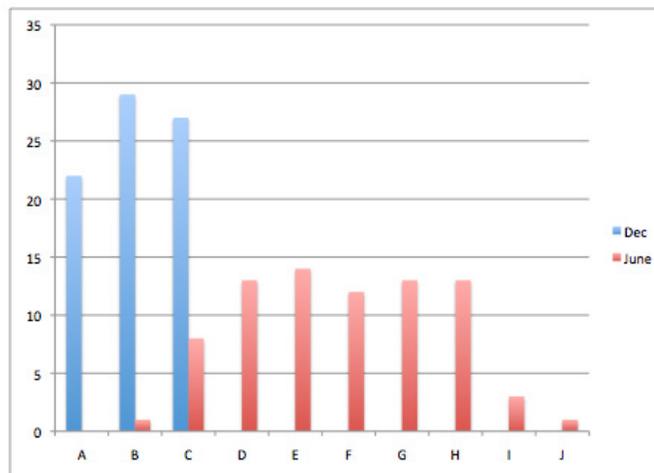
Data was collected on students in a Title I school with 72% free and reduced lunch and 50% English Language Learners (ELLs). Teachers in the school provided literacy instruction to their students over the course of one school year, following the lesson format of Jan Richardson's *The Next Step in Guided Reading*. Below is a summary of the gains made and charts with data from individual students, grades K-2. Remarkable gains were made by students at each grade level. A significant number of the students at year-end scored at or above grade level as assessed by guided reading level (*The Developmental Reading Assessment*).

Kindergarten

Letter learning: For nine weeks in the fall, kindergarten students participated in small-group instruction using the Pre-A lesson format. Students gained an average of 26 letters (upper- and lowercase).

NUMBER OF STUDENTS (COMPLETED 9 WEEKS)	80
MEAN LETTER IDENTIFICATION - INITIAL	23.8
MEAN LETTER IDENTIFICATION - WEEK 9	49.6
MEAN GAIN IN LETTER IDENTIFICATION	25.9
PERCENT KNOWING ALL LETTERS - WEEK 9	80%

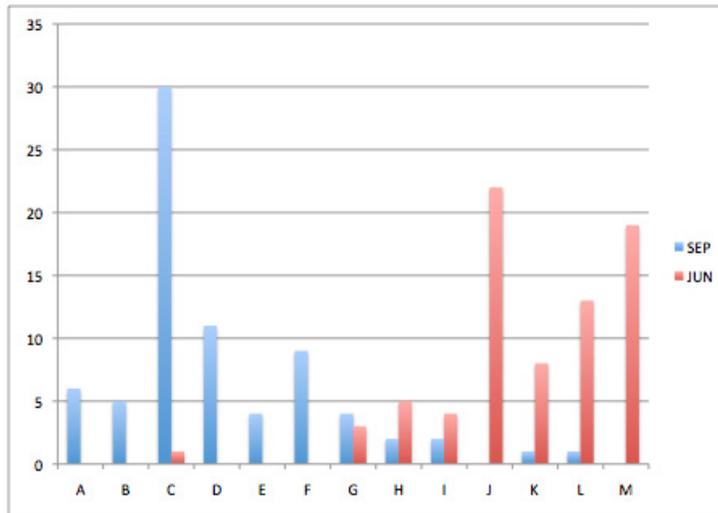
Reading: In December, students began guided reading. Students achieved a mean gain of 3.7 benchmark levels. In June, the median reading level was F (more than half of the students were at or above benchmark Level F), with 87% at or above the grade-level benchmark (Level D). Below is a histogram showing the distribution of benchmark levels for December (blue) and June (red). The number of students starting guided reading in December and completing the school year was 78.





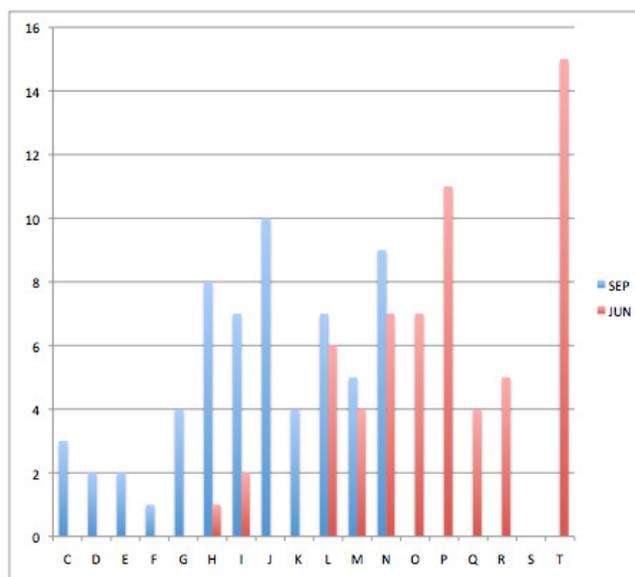
First Grade

Reading: Students achieved a mean gain of 7.0 benchmark levels. In June, the median reading level was K (more than half of the students were at or above benchmark Level K), with 83% at or above the grade-level benchmark (Level J). Below is a histogram showing the distribution of benchmark levels for September (blue) and June (red). The number of students starting in September and finishing the school year was 75.



Second Grade

Reading: Students achieved a mean gain of 6.1 benchmark levels. In June, the median reading level was P (more than half of the students were at or above benchmark Level P), with 85% at or above the grade-level benchmark (Level M). Below is a histogram showing the distribution of benchmark levels for September (blue) and June (red). The number of students starting in September and finishing the school year was 62.





LITERACY FOOTPRINTS:

PLANNED SEQUENTIAL LESSONS FOLLOWING THE *NEXT STEP* FRAMEWORK

Guided reading requires great skill on a teacher's part. An educator must manage meaningful literacy activities for students who are not working directly with them, as well as skillfully select and plan each guided reading lesson for the wide range of learners in their classroom.

In guided reading, the goal is to teach the reader, not the text. For many educators who have been using a different approach to teaching reading, making the transition can be challenging. "Often, teachers use the small-group format, the steps of the lesson, and a set of leveled books but bring their old theory to this new practice. Professional development support does not go far enough to enable them to do powerful teaching beyond these initial steps. Guided reading is much more." (Fountas & Pinnell, 2012, p. 279).

Teachers need to learn to observe students' reading behaviors and learn to make momentary decisions about how to guide them to engage in problem solving that expands their reading skill. The teacher must learn to make decisions that work toward a goal of helping students think and act for themselves—and not focus on the reading being done correctly.

Novice teachers and educators new to guided reading find it difficult to select books and plan daily lessons for multiple groups. There is evidence that teachers' expertise increases with ongoing professional development and practice (Fountas & Pinnell, 2012). Teachers begin to know the books they have available and are able to plan lessons more quickly and efficiently. It can take several years before a teacher's expertise reaches a level that supports all the learners in a classroom.

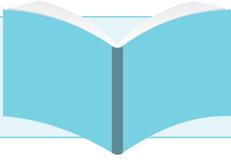
Literacy Footprints has been developed to meet the needs of schools and districts as they work to support teachers in effective teaching of guided reading. The lessons are not a script to follow but rather an instructional map with options depending on students and student responses. As they use the lessons, teachers will learn the routines, discover how a well-planned book introduction works with a variety of genres across multiple levels, and determine how to create echoes across the lesson to ensure that students are not flooded with too many new concepts or skills. Teachers will also learn how to help students develop self-extending systems that allow each student to discover more about reading each time they read.

All the Literacy Footprints lessons include a suggested sequence of books to read with a book introduction, follow-up discussion questions, and teaching suggestions. In addition, each lesson provides a guided writing lesson for Day 2 or Day 3. Research showed that process writing in combination with learning writing strategies dramatically improved student performance (Reutzel, 2015). Reading and writing are reciprocal processes; improving one skill can enhance the other (Clay, 2005).

Phonemic awareness and phonics skills are essential for students learning to read (*Report of the National Reading Panel, 2006*). Word study activities on each Literacy Footprints lesson card provide instruction on how to teach students to link letters to sounds, blend sounds together, decode new words, and use analogies (rime and onset) to read and spell new words. Focusing early phonemic awareness instruction on blending, segmenting, and manipulating phonemes has been shown to produce greater improvements in phonemic awareness and future reading (Reutzel, 2015).

Literacy Footprints is designed to use with all children learning to read, including those who are struggling. Classroom, intervention, ELL, and special education teachers will benefit from using the lesson plans with their students. Most—if not all—children who are having difficulty learning to read do not require qualitatively different instruction from children who are making faster progress. More often, they need application of the same principles by someone who can apply them expertly (Ford & Opitz, 2011). Some children may require more books at a particular level to solidify literacy-processing behaviors. Progress-monitoring checkpoints during the Literacy Footprints lesson sequence will help teachers make decisions about when students need to continue at a particular reading level and when they are ready to move on to new challenges.

Learning to read is complex. Knowing how to respond to students' confusions, praise for partially correct behaviors, and guide students to new understandings requires sharp observation and a solid understanding of reading processing. The Literacy Footprints system will support schools in their implementation of guided reading and help ensure *all* children learn how to read.



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