

Comparison of Traditional and Guided Reading Groups

Traditional Reading Groups	Guided Reading Groups
Groups remain stable in composition.	Groups are dynamic, flexible, and change on a regular basis.
Students progress through a specific sequence of stories and skills.	Stories are chosen at appropriate level for each group; there is no prescribed sequence.
Introductions focus on new vocabulary.	Introductions focus on meaning with some attention to new and interesting vocabulary.
Skills practice follows reading.	Skills practice is embedded in shared reading.
Focus is on the lesson, not the student.	Focus is on the student, not the lesson.
Teacher follows prepared "script" from the teacher's guide.	Teacher and students actively interact with text.
Questions are generally limited to factual recall.	Questions develop higher order thinking skills and strategic reading.
Teacher is interpreter and checker of meaning.	Teacher and students interact with text to construct meaning.
Students take turn reading orally.	Students read entire text silently or with a partner.
Students take turn reading orally.	Focus is on understanding meaning.
Students respond to story in workbooks or on prepared worksheets.	Students respond to story through personal and authentic activities.
Readers are dependent on teacher direction and support.	Students read independently and confidently.
Students are tested on skills and literal recall at the end of each story/unit.	Assessment is ongoing and embedded in instruction.

Reference: Bureau of Education Research Training Materials: Using Guided Reading

Phonic Instruction – Shared Reading

Becky Anderson sits with a Big Book propped on one knee as her first graders are clustered on the floor in front of her. Pointing to each word, she reads, "...and he pulled the rabbit out of his..." She pauses and asks,

"Who can tell me the next word?" Four voices shout, "Hat!"

"Good," says Becky. "Who can tell me why?"

"It's in the picture," one student answers.

"Yes, and what letter does *hat* begin with?" Becky asks.

"H!"

"That's right," says Becky. "Does anyone see another word that begins with *h*? Keesha, come and point out the word. Good! That word is *his*, and it begins with *h*. Let's all say *his* and *hat* out loud. Can you hear that they begin with the same sound?"

Becky is taking advantage of a shared reading session to teach her students a lesson in decoding, the process of identifying the written form of a spoken word. She uses three types of cues. Semantics (meaning) and structural analysis help the students identify the word *hat*; phonics (letter-sound associations) help them learn to recognize *hat* and *his*.