



# Using Guided Reading in the Primary Classroom

By Tam Ka Lok Lam Ka Fai Sin Im Leng Loi Sio Hong

Report of the National Reading Panel (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, National Institutes of Health, & National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000) pointed out that using balanced reading approach is suitable for students learn to read. In addition, the National Council of Teachers of English (2002) suggested that using guided reading instruction in the classroom can let the students have a well development in reading literacy.

upper primary students as well.

Actually, guided reading is a small-group reading instruction which designed to provide teaching and learning activities to support students in developing reading proficiency. For students' role, guided reading refers to reading activity which included different kinds of fiction and nonfiction texts are shared and read together. As for teacher's role, guided reading is an opportunity to guide students to become independent readers.

## Defining Guided Reading

According to the history development, guided reading was developed by Fountas & Pinnell in 1996. It was a reading programme for grade one to grade three students. However, Tierney & Readence (2000) found out that guided reading could be adapted for

## The Teacher's role in Guided Reading

In fact, every guided reading lesson can be different. Each group of readers has different strengths and weaknesses (Iaquinta, 2006). Therefore, teachers need to use different activities to develop the strengths



and help the weaknesses. Moreover, the activities should be provided with the right amount of challenge, which means it should not be too hard or too easy. Teachers observe the students how they read, prompting their strategies and word identification as needed. At the same time, teachers should listen to their students reading the texts aloud. When the children complete reading sections, teachers should often invite them to re-read the texts to build fluency and to practice reading new vocabulary as well. In this way, teachers can help the students to learn how to use different sources of information and put them together to read and to learn. This process of reading must be dynamically supported by an interaction of text reading among the teacher and students involved (Iaquinta, 2006).

### The Previous Researches in Guided Reading

Most of the researchers concluded that providing small group instruction can help students improve their reading achievement. For example, in comparative studies of first-grade reading interventions, Taylor, Short, Shearer, and Frye (1995) had studied small groups of six to seven and Hiebert, Colt, Catoto, and Gury (1992) studied small groups

of three, all of which showed that the group received the small-group intervention did better than the comparison group.

### Providing Sustained Silent Reading Time

Manning and Manning (1984) suggested that teachers should provide SSR (Sustained Silent Reading) time in each guided reading lesson. In the SSR, students have their choices to read the book that they like to read. Teachers can increase the likelihood that more time for contextual reading will improve students' reading skills. Teachers can provide opportunities and guidance for children to make choices in text selections. They can monitor students' selections of books to ensure an appropriate difficulty level during the SSR time. Meanwhile, Students should be given the opportunity to discuss their reading in pairs or small groups but not just read 'silently'.

### Matching the Requirements of the Basic Academic Attainments

The following attainments can be hopefully expected after guided reading is applied, which can be used as "long term goals" for the curriculum development.

Table 1: The attainments for lower primary

Attainments	Contents
A-1-5	Understand simple classroom language and be able to follow the development of a lesson and the arrangement for homework;
B-1-10	Retell short stories presented by the teacher or in storybooks with teacher's guidance;
C-1-3	Guess the pronunciation of a new word from its spelling;
C-1-4	Recognize previously learnt words in texts;
C-1-6	Recognise common text types such as notices, short stories, poems, etc.;
C-1-8	Scan a text to look for specific pieces of information;
C-1-9	Understand the key points of a text with some guidance from the teacher;
C-1-10	Acquire an interest in reading and enjoy extensive reading;
C-1-11	Share post-reading thoughts with others;
D-1-4	Complete simple practical tasks in writing;
D-1-5	Begin to write short paragraphs under teacher's guidance;
D-1-7	Write simple sentences to describe pictures and on familiar topics;

(Resource from: The Curriculum Development Website of DSEJ. Retrieved from <http://www.dsej.gov.mo/crdc/edu/requirements-e.html>)

Table 2: The attainments for upper primary

Attainments	Contents
A-2-10	Understand descriptions and explanations presented by teachers and teaching materials .
B-2-3	Read aloud expressively and rhythmically;
B-2-5	Describe one self and familiar people detailedly;
B-2-6	Share personal experiences briefly;
B-2-7	Tell brief stories;
C-2-2	Skim through a text quickly to get a general idea of its content;
C-2-3	Read or re-read a text to look for specific pieces of information;
C-2-4	Make use of background knowledge in making sense of a text;
C-2-5	Understand the main points of articles on different topics and be able to respond in different formats such as oral summary and brief reading report;
C-2-6	Infer the meaning of words and sentences from context, sentence structure, illustrations, etc.;
C-2-10	Be able to tackle various text types;
C-2-11	Have an awareness of the similarities and differences between various cultures through reading;
C-2-14	Read attentively and with purpose;
C-2-15	Choose a variety of reading materials for pleasure reading.
D-2-5	Write simple narratives and descriptions with teacher support;
D-2-6	Present one's own ideas coherently;

(Resource from: The Curriculum Development Website of DSEJ. Retrieved from <http://www.dsej.gov.mo/crdc/edu/requirements-e.html>)



## Implementing Guided Reading within Macao Context

Most of the students have the graded readers in English lessons. Thus, teachers can use guided reading as the teaching method to guide their students how to read the graded readers as extensive reading. Where applicable, schools had better use the heroic stories as a starting point to motivate students to read the stories. It is because most of the heroic stories have a good model to let the students imitate (Tam & U, 2017). In addition, Tam and Loi (2018) also suggested that the traditional Chinese medium schools in Macao could have the Literature-based Language Arts in their curriculum. Hence, school can use this as an opportunity to let the students read different genres by using guided reading.

## Conclusion

Since reading is an important skill for the students, teachers should use different reading instructions in the classroom to develop their students' reading skills. In fact, guided reading is just one of the reading strategies. Teachers can explore different reading strategies like using Reading Workshop, Literature Circles and Share

Reading so that students can become an independent reader. 🌱

## References:

- Fountas, I. C., & Pinnell, G. S. (1996). *Guided reading: Good first teaching for all children*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Hiebert, E. H., Colt, J. M., Catto, S., & Gury, E. (1992). Reading and writing of first-grade students in a restructured Chapter 1 program. *American Educational Research Journal, 29*, 545–572.
- Ianquinta, A. (2006). Guided Reading: A Research-Based Response to the Challenges of Early Reading Instruction. *Early Childhood Education Journal, 33*(6).
- Manning, G. L., and M. Manning. (1984). What Models of Recreational Reading Make a Difference? *Reading World, 23*(4), 375-380.
- National Council of Teachers of English. (NCTE) (2002). *Annual report*. Urbana, IL: NCTE.
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, National

Institutes of Health, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. (2000). *Report of the national reading panel: Teaching children to read*. (NIH Pub. No. 00-4769). Bethesda, MD: National Institutes of Health.

Tam, K L & U, C K (2017, November) *Enhancing English Language Learning Motivation and Reading abilities to Upper Primary Students by Using Classic Heroic Stories in a Traditional Chinese Medium School; a Case Study*. Paper Presented at The Seventh International Conference on Translation and Cross-Culture Studies. Topic: Stories of Heroes, Taiwan Chengchi University, Taipei.

Tam, K. L., & Loi, S. H. (2018). Promoting Literature-based Language Arts in the Primary Education Curriculum for the Traditional Chinese Medium Schools. *Teacher Magazine*, 58, 44-48.

Taylor, B., Short, R. A., Shearer, B. A., & Frye, B. (1995). First grade teachers provide early reading intervention in the classroom. In R. L. Allington & S. A. Walmsley (Eds.), *No quick fix: Rethinking*

*literacy programs in America's elementary classrooms* (pp. 159–176). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Tierney, R. J. & Readence, J. (2000). *Reading strategies and practices: A compendium (5th Edition)*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon

Tam Ka Lok, Sin Im Leng,  
Loi Sio Hong, Lam Ka Fai

English Teacher, Hou Kong Middle School (Primary Section)