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*Sincerely,*  
*Karen Haag*

**Directions:**

Handy guide to comparing the steps of 3 popular reading group formats.  
Advantages and disadvantages listed at the end of the document.  
Helpful document to discuss with colleagues, since the formats have  
blurred over the years.

	<b>Guided Reading</b> By Mooney, Fountas & Pinnell, Reading Recovery Levels A-I (1-16)	<b>Book Clubs/ Lit Circles</b> By Tammy Raphael Levels G-High School (Levels 17 and above)	<b>Strategy Circles</b> based on <b><i>Question the Author</i></b> By Beck and McKeown Levels G-High School (Levels 17 and above)
(1) The teacher chooses the books for students to read.	<b>YES</b> (1) Students are assessed and ability grouped by book level. Teachers choose a book to match the level of the students in the group.	<b>NO</b> (1) Groups form as needed. Students select the people they want to work with and the book they want to read. Usually, the teacher selects available books to describe. Students browse and choose.	<b>YES and NO</b> (1) The teacher groups children by ability or by interest: genre study, author study, or nonfiction topic study. Often, the students read short articles that are completed in 1-2 meetings.
(2) Children begin the lesson by reading familiar books.	<b>Usually YES</b> (2) Students warm up to reading by reviewing Big Books, books they've read, or books the teacher read to them, usually for about 5 minutes.	<b>NO</b> (2) Lesson begins with a minilesson. Children dismissed to read or talk. Children come back to reflection circle at the end of the workshop to discuss learning.	<b>NO</b> (2) The students tell the rest of their group about the books they read for the first five minutes or so to build interest in independent reading.
(3) Students picture-walk the book.	<b>YES</b> (3) In the emergent levels, the teacher has the only copy of the book. She holds up the book and shares a book introduction; this is a story about... She covers the text with her hand or with sticky notes while the students preview/picture walk; discuss pictures in the book without reading the words; and teacher "Implants pre-selected words". In the fluent levels, each child has her own book and conducts her own picture walk.	<b>YES</b> (3) Students are taught how to do picture walks in the lower levels and expected to do them when reading independently as well. Students set a purpose for reading during the picture walk.	<b>YES</b> (3) Students use what they learned in guided reading to "picture walk" the cover and summary, the title, the chapter headings and pictures. Often, the selections are short so there is little to picture walk. However, the teacher does build background knowledge in this stage. The children read the title and author, view photos, and set a purpose following the gradual release of responsibility model.
(4) The teacher begins the lesson by asking the students to predict what the book will be about.	<b>YES</b> (4) Children are taught to predict what the book will be about based on evidence in the picture walk. By making a prediction, students determine their purpose for reading.	<b>YES</b> (4) Children are taught to predict what the book will be about based on evidence in the picture walk. By making a prediction, students determine their purpose for reading. The goal is for children to predict independently as well.	<b>YES</b> (4) Children are taught to predict what the book will be about based on evidence in the picture walk. By making a prediction, students determine their purpose for reading.

	<b>Guided Reading</b>	<b>Book Clubs</b>	<b>Strategy Circles (QtA)</b>
(5) Teacher chooses vocabulary to pre-teach <i>before</i> the students start reading.	<b>YES</b> (5) Teachers ask the children to locate 1-4 words pre-selected by the teacher. Teachers choose words that are a part of a pattern in the book (the ___ dog) and also words, patterns, or rhymes with which students are unfamiliar (armchair, not on the hair of my chinny chin chin).	<b>NO</b> (5) Since the children select their own books to read, they apply their strategies to unfamiliar words during the reading. Often, students have a partner available to help if they get stuck. They bring confusing words to their discussion groups.	<b>YES and NO</b> (5) Teachers pick 3-5 words to teach using this 2-part rule: 1. The word is critical to understanding the story AND 2. Students probably will not be able to use their strategies to figure it out. Teachers introduce names and old-fashioned words (like bureau). Sometimes there are no words to preteach that match the criteria.
(6) Students read the book independently .	<b>Mostly YES</b> (6) <i>Emergent readers</i> – The teacher holds the book and points to the words as students read. <i>Developing and Fluent</i> Each student gets a copy of the book. During reading time, teachers structure the lesson so that all students read at the same time. This allows the teacher to read with each child privately and take notes on the child’s use of strategies.	<b>YES</b> (6) During reading workshop, students either read silently or talk about their book. When preparing, students read and mark noticings and wonderings to bring to discussion. Often, students have a partner available to help if they get stuck.	<b>YES or NO</b> (6) If the selection is a challenging one or the teacher selected a mixed-ability group, the teacher reads the text aloud. If the selection is at the children’s instructional level, the students read silently to predetermined points. Teachers determine ahead of time where to stop and discuss. The goal is to teach students to make meaning of text by stopping and thinking when reading independently.
(7) Students figure out the words they don’t know.	<b>YES</b> (7) If the book was chosen appropriately, students apply their strategies to 10% of the words in the lower levels and 5% of the words in the upper levels. As the students read softly, the teacher rotates around the circle and listens to the students read. The teacher gives support where needed – not telling unfamiliar words but helping each child learn reading strategies so they can read the book as independently as possible.	<b>YES</b> (7) Students figure out what words they can from context clues. They come to their groups to ask about words and use the dictionary for others. Teachers teach students to use many fix-up strategies along with “sound it out” so they can be as independent as possible.	<b>YES and NO</b> (7) When the teacher reads the selection aloud, the student doesn’t get practice in figuring out how <i>to pronounce</i> words. However, students ask about <i>meanings</i> during discussion time.  When reading silently, students use their strategies to figure out words they don’t know. They also get immediate help from the discussion circle. When a student asks about a word, the teacher or students teach how to use strategies to figure it out.

	<b>Guided Reading</b>	<b>Book Clubs</b>	<b>Strategy Circles (QtA)</b>
(8) Students come together for closure to clarify what was learned so that teacher can assess learning.	<b>YES</b> (8) Based on observations, teachers teach one skill right away. i.e.; What is the difference between these two confusing words: <i>where</i> and <i>were</i> ? Students or teachers ask questions to clarify understanding. Teachers name strategies they observed students using. Teachers record learning in their notes to determine what to teach next.	<b>YES</b> (8) Closure/reflection circles are integral to developing readers. Individuals or partners share what they learned about reading and/or what they discovered about themselves as readers while they were on their own. Teachers name strategies they observed students using as they were reading, writing, or talking in their groups. Teacher records learning as anecdotal notes to determine what to teach next.	<b>YES</b> (8) Teacher and students have worked through the text together. Teacher selected a strategy to teach. Teacher checks understanding of the use of the strategy throughout the lesson. i.e.; Today we will practice noticing and inferring. Teachers name strategies they observed students using during the reading. Teacher records learning as anecdotal notes to determine what to teach next.
(9) Students follow up the reading with a project of some sort.	<b>YES and NO</b> (9) Responding is done right after students work in group and return to their desks. The follow up activity might be in a center. No follow-up project is needed.	<b>YES</b> (9) Meeting with bookmates is necessary so that students can determine if their timeline for reading has changed. Students might write to the teacher about what they learned about <i>being a better reader</i> . When the students finish the book, they may choose to respond.	<b>YES</b> (9) Since the selection was read section by section, teachers have a good idea of individual comprehension without asking comprehension questions. Students might write in their reader's notebook what they learned about reading or what they learned about a specific, targeted strategy.

### Advantages and Disadvantages

<b>Guided Reading</b>	<b>Book Clubs</b>	<b>Strategy Circles (QtA)</b>
<p>Teacher works with each child 1-on-1 at least every other day.</p> <p>Leveled books move students through concepts of print in a manageable, predictable way.</p> <p>Students meet often on schedule.</p> <p>An overall, benchmarked plan for teaching reading has been created.</p> <p>Requires constant assessment and movement of groups.</p> <p>Sometimes one teacher has too many groups to fit into a reasonable schedule.</p> <p>Books on hand don't always match group needs.</p> <p>Lower-level books are not meaty enough to discuss.</p> <p>Requires Central Storage.</p> <p>Requires an uninterrupted literacy block.</p> <p>Requires some sort of seatwork for others.</p> <p>Teacher is central to a functioning group.</p>	<p>Teacher can use this time - while students work independently - to pull skills groups or confer 1-1 as needed.</p> <p>Teacher does not need to create meaningful seatwork if all student groups meet at the same time.</p> <p>Students may or may not work independently.</p> <p>Some teachers report that it is difficult to get all groups working at one time.</p> <p>Requires Central Storage.</p> <p>Requires an uninterrupted literacy block.</p> <p>Need lots of books.</p> <p>Requires self-discipline.</p> <p>Teacher does not necessarily match books with skills and strategies in a predictable way.</p>	<p>Teacher does a lot of the reading at first, which takes pressure off reluctant readers.</p> <p>Teachers model to how to stop and think and how to figure out unfamiliar words while reading.</p> <p>Can run these groups for short periods of time to read stories or nonfiction articles.</p> <p>Can mix ability groups so that reluctant readers get a chance to discuss with upper-leveled readers under the guidance of the teacher.</p> <p>Requires meaty books for conversation.</p> <p>Doesn't work in lower levels because there's not enough to talk about.</p> <p>Requires Central Storage.</p> <p>Requires an uninterrupted literacy block.</p>