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| **Guided Reading Group** | **Strategy Group** |
| Teacher acts like a coach on game day, first setting the group up for the game to come, and then offering words of advice from the sidelines as the players tackle the job of reading the text beginning to end. | Teacher acts like a coach during a practice, stating a discreet skill she notices the group needs to work on, teaching it, modeling it, then allowing time for practice of that skill. |
| Teacher supports and guides students through an entire text, and in this way, teaches them the types of problems they might encounter in a text on this level. | Teacher explicitly teaches one skill, models the skill with her own book, then coaches children through practicing the skill on their own books. |
| Readers are on the same reading level. | Readers are usually on different reading levels. |
| Readers read from the same text, chosen by the teacher because it is on the group’s instructional level. | Readers practice the new skill on a text at their own level (usually from their book box, sometimes supplied by the teacher). |
| Readers may learn several strategies in one meeting. | Readers focus on only one strategy per meeting. |
| Groups are formed as a result of some type of teacher benchmarking that indicates the approximate reading level of every student. | Groups are formed as a result of teacher observation and notes ~ usually during one on one reading conferences or during other small group meetings. |
| Once a group is formed, it stays together for several meetings until it’s determined that one or more children are ready to move to a different level. The younger the reader, the more levels they move through per year. By 4th and 5thgrade, guided reading groups will only change 2 or 3 times in year. | Groups are formed to address a strategy need, and once that need is fulfilled (usually 1-3 meetings) that exact group does not meet again for the same purpose. Teacher reforms groups based on new strategies. |
| Guided reading groups are helpful when students are just being pushed up to a new level. Through GR, they can learn all the new text features and possible pitfalls they might encounter on texts of a new level. | Strategy groups are helpful once students are established in their reading level (but not yet ready to move onto the next) and collecting strategies to add to their reader’s toolbox. |