

Florida Center for Reading Research

Wright Group Literacy

What is Wright Group?

Wright Group is a reading/writing/language arts curriculum that is designed to be used either as a stand-alone comprehensive program or a program that complements and supplements a basal reading series. The company has been established for twenty years, publishing books to be read in the classroom to enrich language skills, but it is only in the past several years that they have broadened their scope to become the *Wright Group Literacy* program. The more far-reaching program includes instruction in writing skills, comprehension strategies, vocabulary, phonemic awareness, high frequency sight words, fluency, and phonics. The Wright Group kindergarten program will be the focus of this report.

There are four types of reading and instructional activities in which the students participate. These include phonemic awareness/phonics instruction, shared large group reading, guided small group reading, and independent or partner reading at literacy centers. A kindergarten daily lesson typically consists of 20-30 minutes with the whole class doing phonemic awareness and phonics, reading and discussing a wall-chart size poem, reviewing a familiar big book, and introducing a new big book correlated with the phonics lesson. Small groups of children then rotate through a guided reading session with the teacher, while others work at literacy or writing centers, practice paired or independent reading, and complete blackline masters.

Shared Reading Lessons are five-day lesson plans that accompany each big book, with an emphasis placed on modeling fluent reading, noting rhythm, rhyme, and language patterns, and studying literary elements such as character, setting, theme, and problem/solution. A variety of topics in comprehension, phonological awareness, concepts of print and mechanics, phonics, word study and vocabulary are introduced, taught, practiced, and assessed. The shared big books are colorful and engaging, with language patterns that make "reading" them easier for the children. By the end of the week, children are reading the book chorally with the teacher.

Children are placed into leveled reading groups on the basis of structured reading assessments given by the teacher. Guided reading selections at the kindergarten level progress from level A to level D, with numerous selections of text and multiple copies of each text at each level. At the early emergent (kindergarten) level, activities are grouped into three categories: before, during, and after reading activities. The purpose of Before Reading activities is to activate any previous knowledge and to make predictions about the reading selection. During Reading students practice their reading and are observed by the teacher for ongoing assessment monitoring. The purpose of the After Reading session is to discuss the text, reflect on reading strategies used, and ensure comprehension. There is a scope and sequence associated with the leveled readers and lesson plans for the guided reading; these lessons' skills are not designed to integrate with the skills (comprehension, phonics, concepts of print, phonological awareness, high frequency words, and word study) being taught to the large group during group sharing time.

Program materials also include guided writing lessons, phonics and picture cards, cassette recordings of the big book stories, and an extensive assessment resource that teachers are encouraged to implement frequently to monitor the children's progress. Throughout the curriculum there are notes for the teacher which



would be helpful in teaching students speaking English as a second language or who are progressing through the curriculum at a more advanced rate and are prepared for more challenging instruction.

In sum, there are four instructional sources from which the teacher works. There are prepared lessons on phonics cards, on guided reading cards, and in 5-day booklets for shared reading. Additional materials for literacy and writing centers comprise the fourth source. Lessons are language-rich, with extensive conversation and oral language development fostered in student-teacher interchanges. Lessons are recursive to some extent, so that review is built into the curriculum for students who will benefit from extra exposure and practice.

Is Wright Group aligned with Reading First?

Wright Group Literacy thoroughly encompasses the five components of evidence-based reading instruction that are identified in Reading First documents. Phonemic awareness and phonics receive special attention through lesson plans written specifically to emphasize these skills. Word families as well as individual consonant and vowel sounds are taught. Broader phonological awareness skills (such as alliteration, rhyming, and counting syllables, etc.) are incorporated in lesson plans as well. Vocabulary instruction is generated by the rich vocabulary found in the books themselves, with guidelines for the teachers as to how to capitalize on this resource to broaden the language and vocabulary skills of their students. Fluency is developed through repeated readings during shared reading time and in repeated partner and independent reading sessions. Basic comprehension strategies are taught and discussed during both shared group and guided reading time, though they are not always taught explicitly and in depth.

Professional development for districts purchasing *Wright Group Literacy* includes up to a full day of teacher training. In addition, teachers receive the following materials: a correlation of *Wright Group* materials to Florida Language Arts, a binder containing an overview of the program with a scope and sequence, a staff development videotape presenting information about the *Wright Group* philosophy, the *Wright Group* materials, information on how to organize and use the materials, and information regarding the materials' relation to principles of scientifically-based reading research.

Research Support for Wright Group



Many of the *Wright Group* materials were developed in the 1980's, and both the big books and the guided reading texts have been in use as independent units of reading materials in classrooms for approximately twenty years. The *Wright Group* reports positive results from implementation of these materials when used in conjunction with basal reading programs. The *Wright Group Literacy* project as a complete program has only come into existence recently, however, so no formal research regarding its efficacy has been conducted to date. There are plans to conduct such research in the near future. The instructional content of the *Wright Group Literacy* program, however, is based on sound research practices regarding phonemic awareness, phonics, comprehension, vocabulary, and fluency as advocated by the National Reading Panel.

Strengths & Weaknesses

Strengths of *Wright Group*:

- The books and big books used in guided and shared reading are engaging, well written, and well illustrated. Big books have predictable language and repeated patterns. The difficulty of books used in guided and individual reading is regulated by the amount of text presented on each page, the number of sight vs. decodable words, and the assistance of illustrations.
- Teachers are encouraged to maintain ongoing assessment with their students, and a considerable amount of curricular material has been written and is devoted to assessment of students. Instruction to teachers on how to successfully use and make use of the assessment options are very thorough.
- An extensive writing component is built into the curriculum.
- Comprehension skills are built throughout the week of shared reading time, as the difficulty and sophistication of the questions presented increase from day to day during the five-day lesson.
- Developing oral language is an important component to this program.
- The books for small group and individual reading are well organized in levels of increasing difficulty, with multiple copies of each book.

Weaknesses of *Wright Group*:

- The organizational chart defining the scope and sequence accompanying the *Wright Group Literacy* program at the kindergarten level is loosely constructed and provides the teacher with many options. Guidelines are too broad to integrate well the components of shared reading, phonics skills cards, and writing. Guided reading selections come with a separate scope and sequence that is not integrated with the overarching program. This may make it difficult for teachers to know how to integrate the many components of the program.

Which Florida counties have schools that implement Wright Group?

Because of the newness of the program, there are currently no schools in Florida that are using the *Wright Group Literacy* program at the kindergarten level. There are many Florida counties that have schools that use components of the *Wright Group*.

For More Information

<http://www.wrightgroup.com/>

References

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Important Note: FCRR Reports are prepared in response to requests from Florida school districts for review of specific reading programs. The reports are intended to be a source of information about programs that will help teachers, principals, and district personnel in their choice of materials that can be used by skilled teachers to provide

effective instruction. Whether or not a program has been reviewed does **not** constitute endorsement or lack of endorsement by the FCRR.

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