Best Practices for Teaching Being a Reader Small-group Reading Sets 1-5 Remotely

By Gina Fugnitto | Categories: Being a Reader, Implementation, Being a Reader Program, Remote Learning

Teachers expect the unexpected; we never know what a school day will hold for us and are always ready. Yet, all our years of preparing, planning, teaching, and pivoting did not prepare us for this!

So, here we are, grappling with how to teach our small reading groups remotely. During this unprecedented time, we strive to support you. In this blog, we share our best practices for teaching Being a Reader Small-group Reading Sets 1–5 remotely (live or recorded).

Before we dive in, we encourage you to read the blog, Ready, Set, Go...Remote Learning- Focusing on What's Important + Reasonable as well as consider the ways you are helping your students feel a sense of connectedness and community, which we believe to be most essential during this new phase of schooling.

It's important to remember that remote learning is not the same school experience for students as learning together in your classroom. Students will be missing the power of community experiences across Collaborative Literacy: shared reading, whole-group Making Meaning lessons, IDR, independent work, and small-group instruction. All of these literacy experiences are connected and play an integral part in developing our young readers.

With that in mind, we encourage you to use your small-group reading remote instructional time to connect with your young readers, solidify previously taught skills, and build students’ confidence as readers.

**Being a Reader Small-group Sets 1–5 via a Live Virtual Platform**

Best Practices:

- Use a “gallery view” so that you are able to see all your students at once as you would sitting at a small-group table.
- Teach (relearn) your students how to engage in the lesson in the new virtual setting. Students may not transfer the in-person procedures they know to the new environment. For example, you may need to reteach the visual cues that are essential for ensuring choral responses.
- Spend instructional time reviewing known skills, practicing reading words as a group, and engaging in lots and lots of individual reading and rereading. Select snippets of instruction and use the instructional cues to support students’ review of:
  - Phonological Awareness
  - Spelling-Sounds
  - Decodable Words/Reading a Mixed List
  - High-Frequency Words
  - Guided Spelling
Text reading. Tip: Be sure to include the Reteaching Books from previous sets.

- Consider how to provide corrective feedback in an authentic way. Tip: Know that you might not “catch” every student move or error as you would sitting at a small-group table.
- Consider how you will gather Group Progress Assessment data. Reflect on the data and determine the implications to planning and instruction.
- Set up 1:1 sessions with students 2-3 times per week. These sessions will give you an opportunity to connect with the student by listening to them read, conferring about their reading, and providing any support necessary. Tip: These 1:1 sessions are going to be your verification of instruction.
- Set-up 1:1 sessions with students to administer Mastery Tests as necessary. Tip: These 1:1 sessions will provide you Mastery Test data, whereas the 1:1 sessions in which you listen to the students read and confer with them will provide comprehensive information about mastery and application.

**Being a Reader Small-group Sets 1–5 via a Recorded Virtual Platform**

**Best Practices:**

- Provide students with guidance to review spelling-sounds and high-frequency words. Tip: The high-frequency word routine (read-spell-read) is perfect for sharing with a sibling or parent/caregiver.
- Provide students with guidance on how to engage in rereading previously read text. Tip: Ask students to write about their reading.
- Set up 1:1 sessions with students, if possible. These sessions will give you an opportunity to connect with the student by listening to them read, conferring about their reading, and providing any support necessary. Tip: These 1:1 sessions will be your opportunity to ensure that students retain previously learned instruction.

Consider recording the small-group lessons. Recording the lessons provides the opportunity for students to engage in all parts of the structured lesson with guidance. Recording the lessons also allows for flexibility for the students/families to engage in learning at a time that works best for them. Go to the Remote Learning resources for Being a Reader, click Reading, then Small-group Reading Sets 1-5 to access video for Small-group Reading Sets 1-5. Watch a sampling of the video and consider in what ways Katie Fuchs is striving to engage young readers and consider how Robin Pfeiffer engages her “student” (Mr. Pfeiffer) to support the reader.

**Independent Practice**

- Students can read and reread books from their current set and previous sets. Students might:
  - Use a free PDF mark-up app (such as Markup) to annotate and highlight these texts. It might be fun to revisit texts and look for high-frequency words.
  - Write another story about the characters.
  - Look for words that have the newly learned spelling pattern.
  - Play a memory game with words from the story.
- Students can revisit picture/word sorts. Provide the students a variety of sorts from previous weeks and sets of instruction. It is powerful for students to revisit various sorts as well as read and reread words with known spelling-sound correspondences.
- Students can use the high-frequency word cards for the words they are working on to play Memory or Go Fish at home. The high-frequency word cards’ blackline masters are located within the Set Resources (they occur every 5 weeks):
  - Set 1, Week 5
Set 2, Week 2
Set 2, Week 7
Set 3, Week 4
Set 4, Week 1
Set 4, Week 6
Set 5, Week 3
Set 5, Week 8
Set 5, Week 13

**Being a Reader Small-group Sets 1-5 Resources**

All of the materials listed below are available to share and use with families. Feel free to share as needed (both print and digital delivery).

- Via the Learning Portal:
  - Word Bank
  - Sorts PDFs
  - High-Frequency Word Review PDFs
  - Text PDFs
- Via the Remote Learning resources for Being a Reader:
  - Spelling-Sound Chart

Extend your *Being a Reader* knowledge:

You might be interested in catching up on our *Being a Reader* blogs or watching specific sessions in this archived webinar series: Enhancing Collaborative Literacy Instruction, Embarking on the Journey with Collaborative Literacy, Strengthening the Power of Collaborative Literacy Instruction.

Extend your virtual facilitation knowledge:

Read the blog series, “What I Have Learned Facilitating Learning Online.” Part 1 focuses on the five best practices for facilitating live sessions. Part 2 focuses on building community and navigating a virtual platform. Part 3 focuses on the five best practices for recorded sessions.

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