Live Webinar With Fountas & Pinnell

Levels Are a Teacher’s Tool, NOT a Child’s Label

Content provided by

Fountas & Pinnell LITERACY
ELEVATING TEACHER EXPERTISE
LIVE Webinar with Irene Fountas & Gay Su Pinnell

Levels are a Teacher’s Tool, NOT a Child’s Label

Question 1:

What is a text level?

Levels are for books, NOT for children.
Ten Text Characteristics

1. Genre/Form
2. Text Structure
3. Content
4. Themes and Ideas
5. Language and Literary Features
6. Sentence Complexity
7. Vocabulary
8. Words
9. Illustrations
10. Book and Print Features

F&P TEXT LEVEL GRADIENT™

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOUNTAS &amp; PINNELL LEVELS</th>
<th>GRADE-LEVEL GOALS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Grade One</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Grade Two</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>Grade Three</td>
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<td>E</td>
<td>Grade Four</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>Grade Five</td>
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<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Grade Six</td>
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<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Grade Seven-Twelve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>High School/Adult</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A text gradient is:</th>
<th>A text gradient is not:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>◦ A tool for teachers to use in analyzing texts.</td>
<td>◦ A tool for students to use in choosing books for independent reading.</td>
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<tr>
<td>◦ A tool for selecting books for small-group reading instruction.</td>
<td>◦ A tool for students to use in tracking their own progress.</td>
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<td>◦ A tool for recording progress over time in reading.</td>
<td>◦ A label that students attach to themselves as readers.</td>
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<td>◦ A support for teachers in guiding readers to make good choices for independent reading [when necessary].</td>
<td>◦ An incentive for students to practice reading.</td>
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<tr>
<td>◦ A guide to determining whether readers are meeting grade-level expectations.</td>
<td>◦ A way for students to compare themselves with others.</td>
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<td>◦ A signal that a reader may need intensive intervention in reading.</td>
<td>◦ A grade on a report card.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>◦ A label to be communicated to parents.</td>
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Question 2:

What is a multi-text approach and why is a deep knowledge of texts, their characteristics, and their demands important?
<table>
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<tr>
<th>INSTRUCTIONAL CONTEXT</th>
<th>TYPE OF TEXT</th>
<th>LEVELED TEXT?</th>
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</table>
| Interactive Read-Aloud         | • Short texts, usually picture books and occasional novels (organized in text sets)  
|                                | • Teacher-selected, age-appropriate, grade-appropriate complex texts that expand language, content knowledge and thinking | No           |
| Shared Reading                 | • Short texts (enlarged) and occasional novels or segment of a novel          | No           |
|                                | • Teacher-selected, age-appropriate, grade-appropriate texts that expand competencies and lead guided reading forward |              |
| Guided Reading                 | • Short texts and occasional longer texts                                    | Yes          |
|                                | • Teacher-selected texts that expand thinking within, beyond, and about a text |              |
| Book Clubs                     | • Short texts and some novels                                                 | No           |
|                                | • Student-selected, age-appropriate, grade-appropriate, complex texts that expand thinking within, beyond, and about a text |              |
| Independent Reading            | • Short texts and novels                                                      | No           |
|                                | • Student-selected books, magazines, and digital texts that expand thinking within, beyond, and about a text |              |

Question 3:

Why do levels matter?
The dog is running.

The coconut rolls in the waves.
The coconut won’t stay in the waves for very long.
Sasha kept walking until she saw a woman and a crying child.

"My boy is very hungry," the woman told Sasha. "But I have nothing to feed him."

Sasha felt bad for the hungry child, and she gave her bread to the woman.

"This will fill his belly," Sasha said.

"Thank you," said the woman. "Please take this pencil as a gift. It isn’t much, but it’s all that I have to give."

It was early September, and still the weather was nothing but heat. Splashing and laughter came from the lake. Deena crossed the driveway, hoping it would be cooler in the house.

The gravel was sharp underfoot. Deena looked for sandier places to step and—gah! She screamed and yanked her foot away from the moving rock.

No, not a rock. It was a dusky-dark baby snapper the size of Deena’s big toe.

The shell was bumpy with ridges, and the whole turtle was a sad, dusky gray, even its thin little tail. Deena backed away.

The turtle didn’t move. She had scared it with her jump and yell. It just sat there, baking in its hot shell.
From Body to Mummy

After the embalmers perfected their method, mummification became very popular in Egypt. Everyone wanted their loved ones to live on after death. With so many customers, the embalmers needed a system to help them handle all the bodies. How's how some scientists think it worked.

Immediately after death, embalmers took the body to the Ibu (I-bu), which means “Place of Washing.” There, probably in an open-sided tent near the Nile River, the body was carefully washed in a salty mixture of water and natron.

Next, the body was moved to the “House of Mummification” or Per-Nefer (pair-naf), to be cleaned out and dried. To dry all the fluids, the body was first placed on its back on a slanted table. The embalmers started their work by removing the brain. They didn’t want to damage the head, so they inserted a hooked instrument into one nostril and twisted the hook inside the skull. Then they used a long-handled spoon to scoop out the brain matter. The Egyptians didn’t believe the brain was worth anything, so they just threw it away.

STEP ONE: Ibu
At Ibu the body was thoroughly washed. It is likely that this took place near the Nile, but far from any town, so townpeople didn’t have to smell the bodies.

STEP TWO: Per-Nefer
At Per-Nefer the brain and other organs were removed from the body and the body was dried in a narrow so that it would not rot. The body was left to dry for more than a month.

STEP THREE: Wabet
At Wabet the body was shaped, rubbed with sweet-smelling oils, and wrapped in cloth.
Question 4: Should teachers share levels with children or parents?

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Tips for Communicating Student Progress and Supporting Literacy Learning at Home

• Share student reading and/or writing about reading

• Communicate progress and support in everyday language

• Talk about the child’s engagement with reading

• Encourage talk about books

• Visit the library together
Question 5:
Should the classroom library or school library be organized by text levels?
Classroom Libraries

• The Importance of the Classroom Library

• What a Classroom Library Looks Like

• Goals of a Classroom Library
Establish Independent Choice Reading in the Classroom

• Create a well-organized, attractive classroom library

• Identify a personal place for student materials

• Introduce the classroom library

• Teach students to make good choices (NOT by level)

• Continue to introduce new books to students and develop the habit of reading silently for a period of time

• Establish the use of a Reader’s Notebook
Tips for Building and Organizing a Classroom Library

• Organize books into baskets by topic, genre, author, illustrator, etc.

• Engage students in sorting books and organizing the library

• Include multiple copies of popular books

• Create a “Books We’ve Shared” basket

• Include books of various difficulty levels

• Feature books that reflect students’ interests, topics of study and diversity of the world
Question 6:

What books should be included in the classroom library?
• A balance of fiction and nonfiction books to include all genres of interest and importance to the age group

• Authors/illustrators and series children love

• Books related to topics of study in science and social studies at the grade level

• Collect books that reflect the diversity of cultures and families of the world so all children can see themselves and others in the books they read
A high-quality collection represents the diversity of the world in which children live.
Question 6: How can teachers advocate for the appropriate use of levels in their school?
“Having a library is a treasure, and having a librarian is a gift. And when reading teachers, classroom teachers, specialists, and school librarians come together as a team, their collective knowledge about texts can help every child love to read independently, love to read in their classroom, and love to read at home.”

—Irene C. Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell
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