



DEDICATED TO TEACHERS

October 2021

Fountas & Pinnell Classroom™
BACKGROUND INFORMATION

INTRODUCTION

With over 25 years of literacy leadership, the extensive work of Irene Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell has coalesced into [Fountas & Pinnell Classroom™](#): a comprehensive, systematic design for high-impact literacy instruction.

OVERVIEW

Fountas & Pinnell Classroom™ (FPC) is a cohesive, multi-text approach to literacy instruction for all students in grades PreK–6. *FPC* is designed to support whole-group, small-group and independent learning through interactive read-aloud; reading minilessons; writing minilessons; shared reading; phonics, spelling, and word study; guided reading; book clubs; and independent reading. *FPC* is rich with authentic texts, lessons, minilessons, conferring/discussion cards, phonics/spelling/word study lessons, and professional learning tools for systematic, transformative literacy instruction.

Fountas & Pinnell Classroom™ stands apart from reading programs in its commitment to the following principles:

1. **INSTRUCTIONAL COHERENCE:** While the benefits of the whole are inherent in each of the parts, *FPC* is designed as a coherent literacy system. Each instructional context in *FPC* is reciprocally connected to the others, improving student outcomes, and creating equitable literacy opportunities for all students. [The Fountas & Pinnell Literacy Continuum](#) serves as the instructional anchor for every lesson, goal, and book in *FPC*. Lesson principles are derived from *The Literacy Continuum* (the articulation of how literacy develops in children over time).
2. **RESPONSIVE TEACHING:** The moment-to-moment instructional decisions that teachers make, based on their observations and analysis of children’s learning behaviors, are honored and supported by *FPC*. In *FPC*, teachers are given guidance for teaching individual students with a variety of strengths and needs, not for teaching a program. While every instructional context provides scaffolded support with a suggested sequence, each lesson is a blueprint for instruction to best support learners.
3. **MULTI-TEXT APPROACH:** Books, lots of authentic books, are at the heart of *FPC*: books to stir imagination; challenging books to lift every reader; and diverse books to expand readers’ knowledge of the world. Every book in *FPC* is carefully written or selected to support an instructional context.
4. **STUDENT INQUIRY:** Children are curious. *FPC* allows children’s curiosity to propel authentic learning and discovery. As children think across texts, they pursue lines of inquiry that interest and engage them as learners and build knowledge of different topics and themes across a

range of disciplines.

5. LANGUAGE-BASED: Reading is thinking grounded in text. Children’s talk reflects their thinking. *Fountas & Pinnell Classroom™* is rich with robust opportunities for evidence-based discussions within each instructional context.
6. TEACHER EXPERTISE: Lessons both rely upon and contribute to the development of teacher expertise. The extensive professional learning tools woven into *FPC* help educators develop their craft, strengthen instructional decision-making, and deliver high-impact literacy instruction.

THE FOUNTAS & PINNELL CLASSROOM™ INSTRUCTIONAL CONTEXTS

Fountas & Pinnell Classroom™ is organized into multiple instructional contexts, with explicit links between contexts. Resources for each context include books, lesson folders, conferring cards, discussion cards, or minilessons, as well as online resources and other supporting materials for a systematic and cohesive approach to literacy instruction.

1. INTERACTIVE READ-ALoud: A collection of the highest-quality age-appropriate, grade-appropriate trade books (organized into text sets) help children make connections across texts, expand vocabulary, nurture their ability to think about, talk about, and write about texts, promote the joy of reading, and fully engage their interests.
2. SHARED READING: An exquisite collection of original texts (enlarged, accompanying small versions, and audiobooks) that foster students’ abilities to construct meaning in a supported context so they can learn critical concepts of how texts work. Available in English and Spanish.
3. PHONICS, SPELLING, AND WORD STUDY: Explicit lessons for whole-group instruction and small-group application that help students explore, attend to, learn about, and efficiently use sounds, letters, and words.
4. READING MINILESSONS: Explicit, practical whole-class lessons to develop children’s deep knowledge and application of literacy concepts, writing about reading, and strategies/skills.
5. WRITING MINILESSONS: Brief, focused, explicit lessons that help children understand and apply the characteristics of effective writing and nurture their ability to write with purpose and voice. (Approximate Availability: Grades 2/3 available Summer/Fall 2022 and grades 4/5/6 available Summer/Fall 2023.)
6. GUIDED READING: The most powerful and engaging authentic, original, leveled books to build each student’s ability to process increasingly challenging texts with fluency and comprehension.
7. BOOK CLUBS: An authentic opportunity to bring students together for in-depth discussion of a captivating trade book they have read to extend thinking and learn about themselves as readers.
8. INDEPENDENT READING: A carefully curated collection of authentic children’s literature that provides the opportunity for students to develop tastes as readers and to read a large number of self-selected books independently. With accompanying conferring cards, teachers make specific teaching points in brief conferences that lead each reader forward.

FOUNDATIONAL RESEARCH

The development of *Fountas & Pinnell Classroom™* rests on more than 25 years of the author’s own classroom experience with proven results and incorporates leading thinking around literacy instruction, as well as research about how literacy develops in children over time. *FPC* is deeply rooted in decades of research-based professional books and curricular resources such as *Leveled Literacy Intervention* and *Benchmark Assessment Systems*. Fountas and Pinnell’s curriculum systems were developed from this research and are intricately connected to and complement one another for

instructional coherence.

- *FPC* is grounded in a wide base of academic research and reflects recommendations for instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, language development, and comprehension.
- Lessons reflect classroom-based research on how children learn and include practices that have been confirmed by teachers as they pilot-tested the *FPC* lesson frameworks in classrooms.

As an essential context of *FPC*, the *PWS* System aligns with the [FPC research base](#) but also contains a [PWS specific research base](#). In each *PWS* lesson, books from *FPC* have been intentionally chosen to support and extend the phonics/word study principle within the reading and writing of continuous text.

Fountas & Pinnell Classroom™ Spotlights: In partnership with the Center for Research in Educational Policy (CREP) from the University of Memphis, Heinemann has launched the [FPC Spotlight Series](#) – an analysis of school/district data and educator interviews to study and confirm the positive impact *FPC* is having on student achievement, student engagement, teacher decision-making and understanding of literacy development, and shifts in school culture.

RESPONSIVE TEACHING

Teachers using *FPC* enhance ways to more effectively:

- use formative, systematic observation and assessment to understand each child’s strengths and growth areas;
- select lessons for working at the edge of students' learning;
- use facilitative, concise language that leads literacy learning forward;
- support independence and student agency.

A suggested sequence for each instructional context is provided to help teachers plan the year, but teachers can adapt their plans to reflect their observation/assessment of children’s learning.

Every lesson includes specific guidance for meeting the needs of English learners. Suggestions for modifying or scaffolding instruction to support English learners in processing the text, using language to participate in discussions, and benefiting from the teaching are provided in every lesson.

ONGOING PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

FPC supports teachers in developing their capacity for observing students’ literacy development so that they can make instructional decisions to meet students where they are and lead them forward. The extensive professional learning tools woven into *FPC* help educators develop their craft and deliver high-impact literacy instruction.

***FPC* develops teacher expertise by:**

- providing a comprehensive description of the essential reading, writing, language, and phonics understandings that children need to control at each grade level;
- linking each lesson to *The Literacy Continuum*;
- connecting literacy principles to children’s work in other instructional contexts so learning can extend to other instructional opportunities.

The single most important factor in students’ literacy success is skillful, informed teaching. With both embedded and extended opportunities for sustained, scalable professional growth of district administrators, literacy coaches, and teachers, [professional learning](#) undergirds the *FPC* System.

Embedded with Purchase

- Getting Started videos and lesson tutorial videos in Online Resources
- Tools for planning and organizing lessons
- Complimentary Implementation Online Support Course: Video and interactive sessions that focus on the instructional contexts of *FPC*.

Fee-Based Professional Learning (post purchase)

SCHOOL-BASED SEMINARS: developed by Fountas and Pinnell and delivered by expert consultants.

VIRTUAL WORKSHOPS: led by expert Fountas & Pinnell consultants centered on explicit *FPC* topics.

ONLINE COURSES: Leading edge on-demand and webinar series deliver round-the-clock access to professional learning on critical *FPC* topics.

Heinemann is committed to supporting educators with sustainable, scalable professional learning from implementation to transformative teaching and learning. We strive to amplify the voices of those who share our respect for the professionalism and compassion of educators' efforts to help children become literate, empathetic, knowledgeable citizens. Explore more about Fountas and Pinnell's vision of literacy education:

- [*Literacy Leadership from the Classroom: Learning from Teacher Leaders*](#)
- [*Facilitative Talk: Shaping a Culture of Professional Learning Over Time*](#)
- [*The Critical Role of Text Complexity in Teaching Children to Read*](#)
- [*Every Child, Every Classroom, Every Day: From Vision to Action in Literacy Learning*](#)

CONCLUSION

Fountas & Pinnell Classroom™ is making a difference for children and teachers, and Heinemann is proud of the impact *FPC* is making in classrooms every day.