



# Building Life Long Readers Who Thrive



## LITERACY CHAMPION: CAROLYN GWINN, Ph.D.

Carolyn Gwinn, Ph.D., draws upon literacy specific experiences at the school, district, university, and state levels to design and deliver diamond quality, virtual and face-to-face professional development. Previous opportunities as a classroom teacher, Reading Recovery® teacher, an instructional coach, a district-level literacy curriculum and instruction specialist, a lecturer and adjunct professor, and expanded service to the State of Minnesota, inform her efforts. Nationally, Carolyn is a well-regarded speaker and author.

Dr. Gwinn's goal is to enhance literacy teaching and learning for all students, teachers, and administrators as she delivers multi-faceted, customized professional development, with a focus on small group instruction, intervention, and visionary planning, implementation, and refinement, amongst other topics.

## One to Know: Helping Striving Readers Thrive

RISE and RISE Up, as described in *The Next Step Forward in Reading Intervention* (Richardson & Lewis, 2018), are tested and proven targeted interventions designed to help striving readers, in the elementary and middle school grades, become efficient, ardent readers. Through scaffolded support, students gain proficiency with word study and phonics, decoding and fluency, comprehension, and writing as they read literature representing various genres. Students are challenged to grow their confidence and deepen competence as a means to meet and exceed grade-level reading expectations. In the end, the ultimate prize is transitioning striving readers to those who thrive, as evidenced by their love for reading self-selected, rich literature.



The RISE and RISE Up interventions are multifaceted. As a launch, instructors gather assessment information to learn of student strengths and needs; in turn, this drives instructional planning that results in teaching with fidelity student by student. Students with similar needs, 12 to 16 at a time, are divided into groups of three or four. Across six to eight weeks, and on a daily basis for 45-60 minutes/day, students rotate in 15-minute intervals through instructional stations. The stations are led by Title I, special education, and EL teachers, as well as instructional coaches, retired teachers, and teaching assistants. Ideally, there is one credentialed teacher who oversees student progress, lesson development and implementation, and communication with stakeholders. Regarding resources, the RISE kit includes 96 books, six of which Carolyn authored. The RISE Up collection features 96 articles. Both interventions provide teacher friendly lessons, in station handbooks, as guides. Carolyn contributed to lesson design for RISE Up.

Instructional content for RISE and RISE Up stations is organized around essential areas of focus, which collectively create a comprehensive learning experience, with the ultimate goal of inspiring readers to LOVE reading. As noted in Figure 1, RISE learners read a new book, strengthen their word study and phonics skills, then increase comprehension by rereading yesterday's new book and engaging in guided writing. RISE Up students read a new article to expand literal comprehension, reread yesterday's article to promote deeper comprehension, and participate in guided writing, as viewed in Figure 2.

THE RISE and RISE Up action research study, which took place in 20 Title I schools and districts, featuring 1,814 striving readers, showed that students, on average, progressed six months in about two months. This result, as well as others, further articulated in the full study, support the value of engagement in these interventions to help striving readers thrive. The full study is available [here](#) (Richardson, J., & Lewis, E. 2018. RISE and RISE Up Action Research Study).

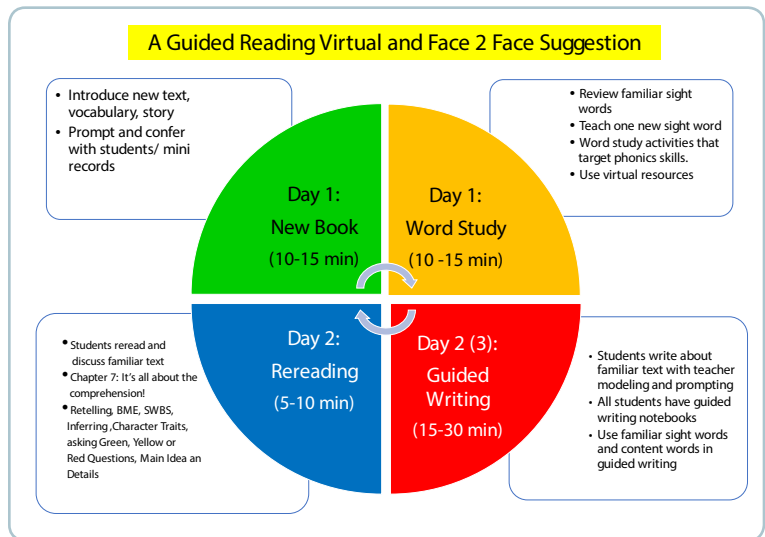


Figure 1: RISE

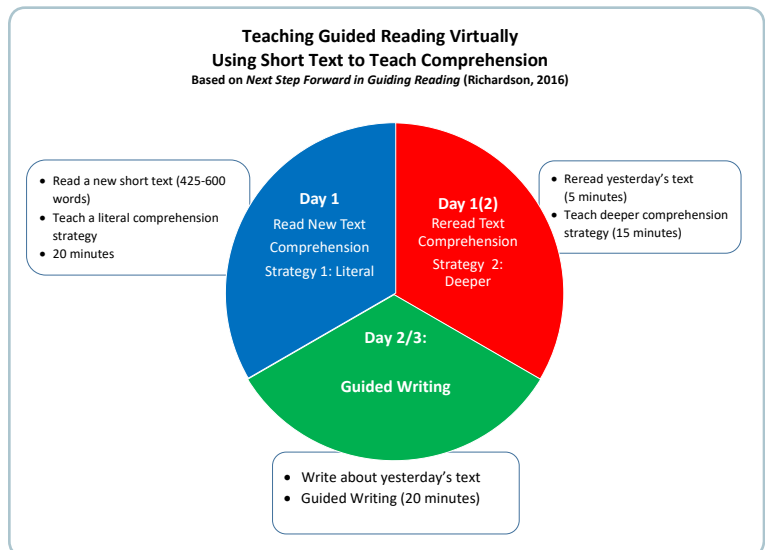


Figure 2: RISE Up

## What to Know and Do

In light of an enthusiastic response to RISE and RISE Up nationwide and the availability of CARES ACT funds, these interventions have expanded to include tutoring. In this way, Richardson’s Assess-Decide-Guide framework (Richardson, 2016) is embedded in small group instruction in the classroom, in intervention, and now in tutoring; the intersection across these three learning opportunities is a certain win-win for students.

Dr. Gwinn works collaboratively with Literacy Consultant, Reading Recovery® teacher, and RISE co-author Ellen Lewis and district and school leadership, to lead the design, implementation and refinement of the tutoring program in a North Carolina school district. Carolyn’s efforts focus on the following:

- Facilitate visionary planning with district leadership to customize tutoring, based on student needs.
- Train tutors, master teachers, to meet face to face and/or virtually with students on a regular basis using the RISE and RISE Up resources. Provide support to tutors across the implementation.
- Serve as liaison among district leadership, principals, instructional coaches, teachers, interventionists, and tutors as they collaborate to monitor student progress and make needed adjustments.
- Reflect on program design and implementation to inform next steps.

The driving force behind the RISE tutoring program is to accelerate student learning as passionate team members work in tandem to provide a cohesive, high quality experience with long term impact. Learner needs are addressed as students meet in small groups, with an assigned tutor, two times per week; during this time, students receive scaffolded instruction focused on reading, word study and phonics, comprehension, and writing, based on assessment information and guided by station handbooks.

As noted below, students in the North Carolina school district benefit from this data-driven, time-intensive, and engagement-focused opportunity.

*“The RISE Tutoring Program has had a profound impact on student achievement at Highland Elementary School. Dr. Gwinn and her amazing team of literacy experts/tutors have collaborated with our school staff to implement targeted reading interventions for at risk readers. The data speaks for itself—this program works! We are overjoyed by the successes.”*

—Dr. Spivey, Principal, Harnett County Schools

*“The RISE Program combines the high-quality instructional tool of RISE with embedded master literacy training and stellar implementation leadership. The collective ownership of the work within the RISE Tutoring Program is key to the success we have experienced in student acceleration and teacher capacity growth relative to customized instructional planning and delivery.”*

—Dana Stephens; Director, Title I Program  
Harnett County Schools

## More to Know and Do

- Consider the benefits of a RISE and RISE Up specific tutoring program.
- Develop, implement, and reflect upon—with stakeholders—a multi-layered plan for high quality, scaffolded support during instruction in the classroom, intervention, and tutoring. Use student data to guide decisions; make adjustments as needed.

It is critical to note that the targeted nature of RISE and RISE Up is intended to develop readers who not only CAN read, but also, who LOVE to read; these interventions prepare students to more quickly read rich literature capably. This reality is critical, knowing that students most love reading books they choose.

## How to Reach Carolyn Gwinn:

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Carolyn is available for the delivery of tailored professional development. Carolyn is available for the delivery of tailored professional development, meeting the needs of students, teachers, and leadership teams. She offers presentations, lesson demonstrations, classroom walkthroughs, tutoring, and collaboration with teams to design, implement, and refine literacy programming (e.g., RISE and RISE Up and the coordinating tutoring program). Dr. Lois Bridges, Executive Director of Bring Me A Book, describes Carolyn's work as follows:



*"In all ways possible, Carolyn Gwinn is an exceptional educator. Her extensive professional study and in-depth knowledge of literacy development and the high-quality instruction all children deserve and need, make her an indispensable guide to the art and science of teaching reading. And while her instructional expertise is outstanding, so, too, is her kind and loving heart. She is an educator extraordinaire beloved by all those fortunate to work with her—children, families, and fellow teachers, new and veteran alike."*

