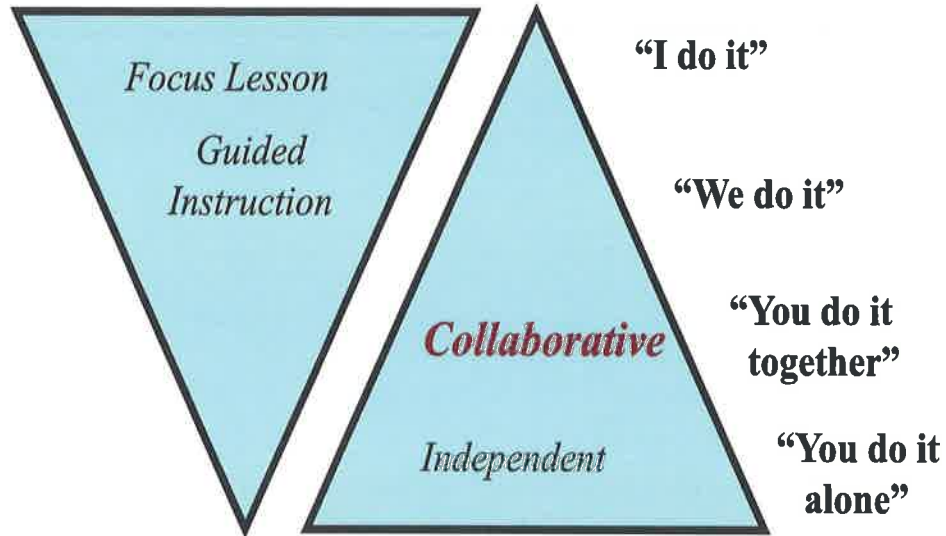


Fisher Frey Gradual Release of Responsibility Model

TEACHER RESPONSIBILITY



STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY

A Model for Success for All Students

Fisher, D., & Frey, N. (2008). *Better learning through structured teaching: A framework for the gradual release of responsibility*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Gradual Release of Responsibility Model

Douglas Fisher and Nancy Frey describe how teachers can help students develop stronger learning skills by ensuring that instruction moves on a continuum from modeling to independent tasks. The gradual release of responsibility model of instruction suggests that the cognitive load should shift slowly and purposefully from teacher-as-model, to joint responsibility, to independent practice and application by the learner (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). The gradual release of responsibility model stipulates that the teacher moves from assuming "all the responsibility for performing a task ... to a situation in which the students assume all of the responsibility" (Duke & Pearson, 2002, p. 211). This gradual release may occur over a day, a week, a month, or a year. Graves and Fitzgerald (2003) note "effective instruction often follows a progression in which teachers gradually do less of the work and students gradually assume increased responsibility for their learning. It is through this process of gradually assuming more and more responsibility for their learning that students become competent, independent learners" (p. 98).

The gradual release of responsibility model is the intersection of several theories, including the following:

- Piaget's (1952) work on cognitive structures and schema
- Vygotsky's (1962, 1978) work on zones of proximal development
- Bandura's (1965) work on attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation
- Wood, Bruner, and Ross's (1976) work on scaffolded instruction

Taken together, these theories suggest that learning occurs through interactions with others, and when these interactions are intentional, specific learning occurs. Unfortunately, most current implementation efforts of the gradual release of responsibility model limit these interactions to adult and child exchanges. A common framework for implementing the model is *I do it; we do it; you do it*. In other words, many current models lack a vital component: learning through collaboration with peers.

The effectiveness of peer learning has been demonstrated with English language learners (Gersten & Baker, 2000), students with disabilities (Stevens & Slavin, 1995), and learners identified as gifted (Coleman & Gallagher, 1995). While the effectiveness of peer learning has been documented, it has typically been examined as a singular practice, isolated from the overall instructional design of the lesson. A more complete implementation model for the gradual release of responsibility moves from modeled to guided instruction, followed by collaborative learning, and finally independent experiences. The following model illustrates the gradual release of responsibility: