Apprenticeship Experiences in Small Groups

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We turn now to your specific actions during small group work. The information in this chapter provides you with the structure you will lean on as you learn specific routines in later chapters.

The steps of teaching and learning are adapted from the work of Collins, Hawkins, and Carver. These three researchers described the need for apprenticeship-like experiences in the classroom (Collins et al., 1991).

An apprentice works closely with a more skilled other to learn a trade; it's as old as human civilization, of course! Collins et al. focused on the idea of *cognitive apprenticeship*, wherein the learner closely observes and then emulates the ways of

thinking of the more skilled teacher. They made the point that in modern society, with greater numbers of students, schooling has made the apprenticeship model difficult, as it requires a very small teacher-to-learner ratio. But guess what? In small-group instruction, the model can thrive.

GIVING MULTILINGUAL STUDENTS THE PRACTICE THEY NEED

The apprenticeship model is especially beneficial for multilingual learners because it helps teachers be mindful that students are doing the work, not you. The model helps you teach within their zone of proximal development. As students stretch themselves to read more difficult and demanding texts and learn vocabulary along the way, they require you to step back. Do less, so they can do more. Doing less means focusing on their exact needs through scaffolding and coaching (Akhavan & Walsh, 2020). Doing less means precision and responsive scaffolding, as opposed to heavy I-do modeling that leads to rote learning. Beginning on page 42, I'll go into more detail about how to apply the gradual release of responsibility model (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983) almost as an overlay to the apprenticeship model.

A Recursive Model

Apprenticing is not a linear model. You can start in one place in the model and move to another (see following graphic). For instance, a student might say that she is having a problem reading a word in a book and tell you she doesn't know how to sound it out (*articulation*); you could suggest a tactic the student take in being able to figure out the word, perhaps looking at the root and then figuring out the meaning (*scaffolding)*. You could model how to do this for the student based on the roots that you have been studying in class (*modeling*).
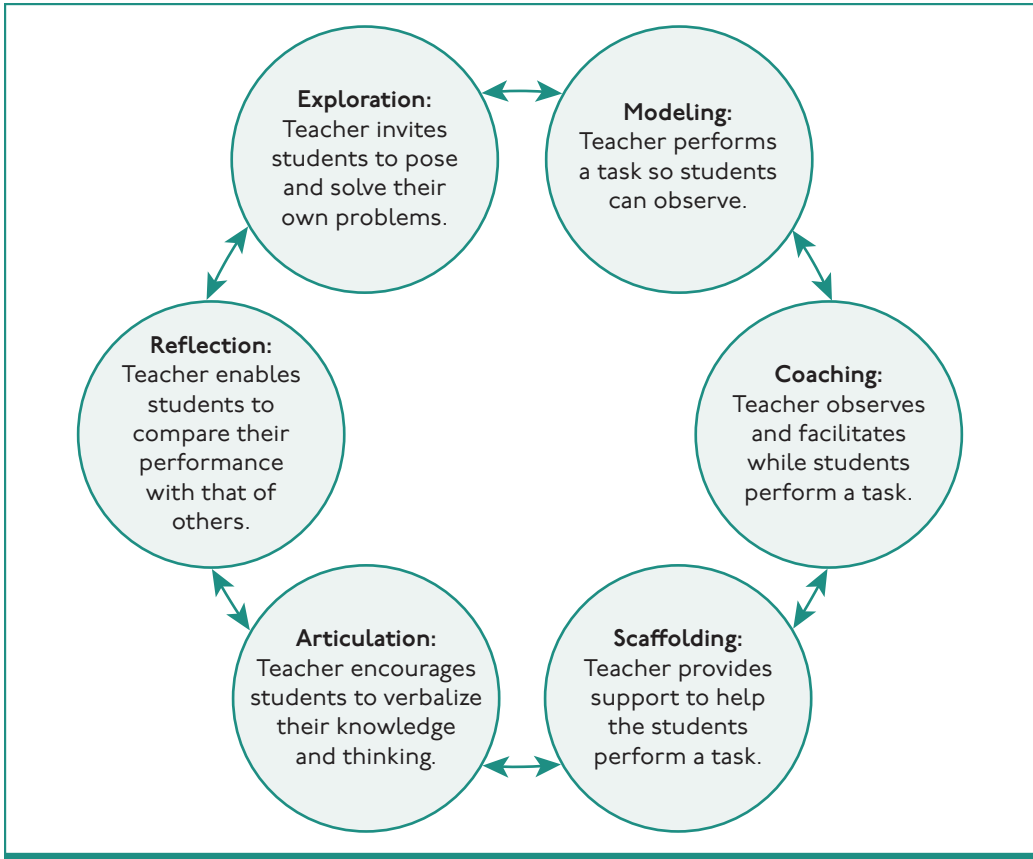
Adapted from Collins et al. (1991).

While it doesn't matter where you start in the process of cognitive apprenticeship, what is important to note is that when you model, coach, and scaffold, you encourage students to work out their reading trouble and then articulate what they are doing, reflect on what they tried, and then extend the learning to new texts that they are working to read. By taking these steps, you can empower students as readers and increase the effectiveness of your work at the reading table.

ASSET LENS

Share with students a philosophy of your learning community. In and beyond the reading table, all students need a palpable sense of the following:

- You belong here.
- You are part of the community.
- As a group, we won't accept behavior that gets our learning off-track.
- We are moving forward.
- I will support you.
- You will understand.

—Akhavan (2007)

Find a Swift Tempo

Effective literacy instruction has a lively, engaging pace. When working with multilingual students, pacing is important. In my work with teachers, the two most common challenges they have are talking and moving through a lesson too quickly and doing too much of the work for the student. The speed you want to adopt at the reading table isn't so fast-paced that it leaves students behind in the dust, but it certainly shouldn't drag either. Instruction needs to target what they need to know and move at a pace that is motivating and engaging and supports all learners so they have the chance to understand (Perry et al., 2006).

APPRENTICING IN ACTION

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Let's look at classroom examples of each teacher and learner role in action. With only twenty minutes a day for this work with students, you'll find the need to watch the clock until you feel comfortable integrating the phases of instruction. The biggest challenge might be watching your time and keeping on track. Make sure you are not eating up too many precious minutes with modeling.

Modeling at the Reading Table

What we model at the reading table depends on our learning target and our objective. We might be focused on increasing students' foundational skills in reading, and our objective could be teaching students to break their reading text into parts (chunk it), read (read it), and then stop and think about what they read saying or writing their thoughts out (say it). If I were working on this reading strategy, I would model how I planned to chunk the text I was reading, then read the section and stop where I had planned to stop, and then retell what the text said. Then I would say, "Did you notice what I just did? I decided on a stopping point in the text; I read until the place I chose to stop; and then I thought about what I read and I said out loud what the text said." It is important in modeling to explicitly point out what it is that we are modeling before

> What we model at the reading table depends on our learning target and our objective.

we model it and restate what we did right after we model it (chunk it, read it, say it).

Strategy: Chunk it, read it, say it

- Chunk it: Students predetermine what amount of text they will read.

- Read it: Students read the text, stopping at the predetermined point.

- Say it: Students reflect on what they read, discuss it with an elbow partner or with the teacher, or write their thoughts in a notebook.

We can model how to

- Sound out words

- Read out loud in front of students

- Read silently for a few seconds

- Think while speaking out loud about what we read

- Write about what we read

- Write letters, words, and sentences

- Use graphic organizers

- Think out loud while using graphic organizers

Coaching at the Reading Table

> **When students are with us at the reading table, they are mostly reading on their own.**

We coach readers at the reading table. When students are with us at the reading table, they are mostly reading on their own. We may be reading to them, and we may be reading with them, but we need to keep these two activities short. We need to focus on students reading on their own with us there to coach and support them as they read. We are supporting them as they figure out the words for themselves and work on comprehension.

Younger readers read out loud (they can whisper read so it's not too loud), and more experienced readers most likely will read to themselves. While they are reading, we support them so that they can be successful with attacking words and also maintain comprehension. The students are doing the work, not us. The

students own the cognitive lift. When their brains are doing the work, they will be more engaged. If we do the reading work (we answer our own questions, we read aloud all the time and don't design opportunity for student independent reading), too often students will likely become disengaged and feel like they are not progressing (Helman, 2016a, Helman 2016b). Because they are reading text that stretches them, we are there to help them.

Often when students are reading on their own, I ask them to read for me a few lines so that I can check their accuracy and fluency. As I lean in and listen to students read, I coach actions they can take when they come to words they don't know (I want them to attack the word, not skip it). I would remind students of decoding and word work strategies that we have worked on together as a group in the past as they read to me so that I can reinforce their actions and encourage them to keep working on their own.

We can coach to support independent reading for emerging readers by

- Reminding them to look at the beginning of the word and begin to sound out the word

- Reminding them to look all the way through the word

- Reminding them to chunk the word into syllables and sound out the syllables

- Reminding them to look for sounds they know in the word like *-er* or *-ing*

We can coach to support independent readers/fluent readers by

- Focusing students on fluent reading, phrasing, and intonation

- Modeling for and guiding students to read fluidly and with expression

- Reminding students to stop and think about what they have read, and if they don't know, then reread

- Helping students figure out the meaning of unknown words by rereading

- Guiding students to visualize what they are reading so they can see a "movie in their minds"

- Asking them to stop reading and paraphrase what they have read

- Guiding them to make connections while reading to their life experiences, something they know or have learned, or something that they have seen and heard before

ASSET LENS

The clearer we are in our teaching, the clearer students are in what is expected of them. Our multilingual learners need to know that we have their backs—that we are consistently attending to these three things, for their benefit:

1. Directing their use of reading strategies

2. Guiding their use of vocabulary—working over time to make sure they don't get lost, that they understand basic vocabulary, that they understand the vocabulary in the books in front of them, and that they understand the academic and content vocabulary that relates to the text

3. Scaffolding them toward independence, using tools, talk, and text to make sure they are taking over the work of fluent engaged reading

Scaffolding at the Reading Table

We scaffold for multilingual students by using some of the same supports as we did when students were emergent and early readers, but as they expand their language proficiency, we scaffold by having them rely on tools that help them comprehend. The tools themselves are scaffolds—such as dialogue journals, response journals, sticky notes, 3-2-1-exit cards, personal word dictionaries, and personal word rings. But notice that the work they do falls into the reflection zone of the apprenticeship model. This is a good example of how the model is recursive and there are blurred lines between the six phases.

We can scaffold for readers by

- Offering/using a concrete tool, such as a graphic organizer, sound boxes, or a clothespin for spacing while writing.

Tactile scaffolds are there to make the language we use and the content more comprehensible.

- Offering a supportive process, such as referring to a high frequency word wall, or a succinct strategy, such as Read it, chunk it, write it.

We scaffold when

- Teaching a reading skill or strategy
- Students read on their own
- Students discuss their comprehension of what they have read
- Students write about their reading
- Students write, working with spelling and word patterns

We can scaffold new to English or emergent readers by

- Working with letters, sounds, and sight words (see Chapter 6). Using magnetic letters, letter cards, sound cards, and realia so they are able to touch, label, or handle everyday objects
- Showing pictures, using videos on a device to teach vocabulary, and writing on whiteboards to practice letters and words

We can scaffold students growing in proficiency in English and/or who are early readers by

- Using the scaffolds stated previously
- Providing sentence strips and sentence frames; helping students be able to form sentences
- Using word cards to have students manipulate words and sentences in pocket charts
- Using sentence-building cards for students to manipulate sentence creation
- Creating word banks with pictures to develop students' vocabularies
- Labeling known items
- Highlighting and posting words associated with everyday objects and information students are learning about

Articulation at the Reading Table

Students will be talking about what they are reading from the first moment they pick up a book. **We develop articulation by having students**

- Discuss their books in single words and short phrases (at first).

- Talk about their thinking about what they are reading with more depth or what they are working on with you related to reading (once they are ready). See more about oral language development in Chapter 6.

- Discuss their reading in short statements once they are at the developing stage.

As they grow in language acquisition, their sentences will be longer and more content specific based on their reading. What they will be able to discuss and how they talk about it will increase as they grow. For example, students at the developing stage may not yet talk in full sentences but rather talk in longer phrases. As they grow and develop their English proficiency, they will be able to discuss more and at more length. See the following general guidelines about what is reasonable to expect in student discussions based on their language acquisition level. This recaps information in Chapter 1, but it's helpful to see it again in the context of articulation.

Entering	Students can point, gesture, draw, act out.
Emerging	Students can speak in one- to two-word phrases, respond with familiar phrases, and use key words. They will form sentences using present-tense verbs.
Developing	Students can speak in short sentences and begin to communicate more often socially.
Expanding	Students begin to use language for academic purposes more often. They will be able to produce statements about texts, convey their opinions, and explain information and ideas.
Bridging	Students will be able to back up opinions and write arguments and evaluate texts and books, including story and text elements and other literary elements and nonfiction text topics. They will be able to understand and use increasingly difficult academic vocabulary. They will be able to support claims with evidence from various sources and use claims and evidence to argue and persuade.
Reaching	Students will use technical language connected to specific content areas and use a variety of sentence lengths and sentences of varying complexity.

In Chapter 6, you will learn more about discussion and oral language and what to expect based on students' language acquisition level.

Reflection at the Reading Table

When students reflect on their reading, they can check their own progress and engage in goal setting. This is a good practice for students, as when they are aware of their own learning, they can celebrate what they have accomplished and set their sights on learning new words to expand their vocabularies.

Reflection is most effective when

- Paired with self-regulation and feedback from the teacher

- It involves helping the student with greater skill in self-regulation use strategies that have been taught (Hattie, 2008). For example, "You already know a lot of cognates. Apply what you know about cognates to the words in this text." Or "You already know the features in an opinion piece, see if you can identify the author's point."

- Feedback from the teacher is coupled with student self-reflection. (This helps students apply what they know and see a purpose in applying new learning to their reading and writing.)

Exploration at the Reading Table

Students at the **bridging** and **extending** levels of language proficiency will be ready to pose and solve their own problems.

We support exploration by having students

- Work with you at the reading table on content-area reading where they need extra support.

- Work on knowledge development when reading content area texts through vocabulary discussions. (Knowledge building is the sixth pillar of reading [Hiebert, 2019].)

- Expand their ability to comprehend multiple types of texts by varying genres.

Often English learners need additional help with the reading they encounter during science and social studies, and you can bring these texts to the reading table to help them with the vocabulary and understand the concepts the words represent.

Now that you have the six apprenticeship steps in mind, I want you to pause to notice how these steps are really an expansion of the gradual release of responsibility model (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). As I pointed out in the introduction, research on teaching multilingual learners has all pointed to one conclusion: These learners need to work with grade-level content and have the benefit of a teacher who knows how to harness the power of differentiated instruction. High-challenge, high-scaffold lessons are paced and orchestrated so students spend time working in their ZDP, in the you-do phase.

> We meet with small groups for twenty to twenty-five minutes. We might teach directly the "I do" for five minutes and spend five to seven minutes with the "we do." But the most minutes—seven to ten minutes—are devoted to the "you do."
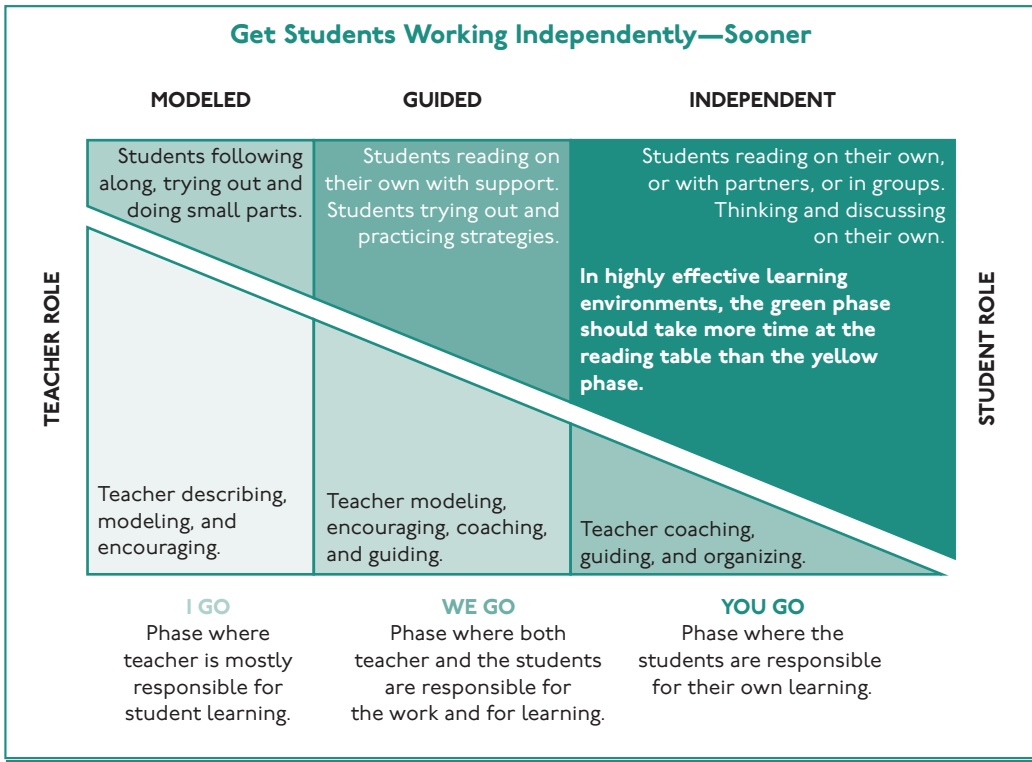
FAVORING THE "YOU-DO" PHASE

Most of our students need more time talking, working, and trying during small-group instruction—and throughout the day. Teachers tend to model and talk too much. For multilingual learners, it's even more urgent that we refrain from well-intentioned but hyper-helping! We meet with small groups for twenty to twenty-five minutes. We might teach directly the "I do" for five minutes and spend five to seven minutes with the "we do." But the most minutes—seven to ten minutes—are devoted to the "you do." As shown in the following graphics, you will take your cues on I do, we do, and you do based on the stages of your multilingual learners. And remember, it's not a lockstep, linear process; you can swing back to modeling or collaborative work whenever you sense the need for reteaching and greater support.

I Do: Direct Instruction Phase

The I-do phase is short so that multilinguals have ample time to read and practice. Try to keep it to three minutes; no more than five. It's clear and direct, offering a single teaching point for a single purpose (figuring out words, developing fluency, inferring, for example). You model a single strategy so learners can focus and apply more easily. Day by day, model by model, you teach a variety of skills.

Give students time to do the word with you at the table with you supporting.

Get Students Working Independently—Sooner

	MODELED	GUIDED	INDEPENDENT	
TEACHER ROLE	Students following along, trying out and doing small parts.	Students reading on their own with support. Students trying out and practicing strategies.	Students reading on their own, or with partners, or in groups. Thinking and discussing on their own. **In highly effective learning environments, the green phase should take more time at the reading table than the yellow phase.**	**STUDENT ROLE**
	Teacher describing, modeling, and encouraging.	Teacher modeling, encouraging, coaching, and guiding.	Teacher coaching, guiding, and organizing.	
	I GO Phase where teacher is mostly responsible for student learning.	**WE GO** Phase where both teacher and the students are responsible for the work and for learning.	**YOU GO** Phase where the students are responsible for their own learning.	

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We Do: Supportive Phase

In the we-do phase, we coach as students apply the strategy to their reading. It's five to seven minutes; as we see students in group ready to read independently, we can signal to them to go for it and have them slide into the you-do phase. This frees us up to do work together with the students who we see struggling a bit to do tasks that are beyond their language proficiency level. To avoid them getting frustrated and shutting down, we scaffold. We do this by sharing an additional strategy or having on hand from the get-go manipulatives, pictures, diagrams, and videos to build understanding of the language expectations. To accomplish this, we can use whiteboards, virtual whiteboards, flashcards, sentence strips, writing journals, laptops (for multimedia), picture books, predictable texts, magnetic letters, magnetic word tiles, nonfiction text filled with text features, and real objects to help us demonstrate language meaning.

You Do: Independent Phase

Whether students are emerging as multilingual learners, expanding in their language abilities, or bridging to higher levels of fluency, we will provide opportunities for students to be in the independent phase of the GRR. We want them to be in the independent phase more quickly because the more students read (on their own with us coaching and supporting), the more time they will have to read. Also, we don't have a lot of time at the reading table, and we need to be mindful of reading volume. The more students practice their reading with us there to support and guide through effective feedback, the greater their learning will be (Hattie, 2008). The better they will be able to read. During the you-do phase, you are focused on feedback. When you give feedback to students based exactly on what you see them doing while they are reading independently, you can guide them to us the skills and strategies they know.

Looking Ahead

In this chapter, I used the apprenticeship model to help you think about your role at the reading table as model and coach. In the next chapter, I share *all* the routines you can select from for your lessons. They span listening, speaking, reading, and writing. I call it a *menu of options*, and every item on it supports both language acquisition and reading development.