Fostering Independence While Teaching Students With or at Risk for Reading Disabilities

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Ms. Banks, a special education teacher, is passionate about providing explicit, systematic reading instruction to her students with reading difficulties. When teaching, she always clearly explains and models each skill. She gives students multiple opportunities to practice skills and carefully monitors their responses, providing corrective feedback when needed. By the end of a lesson, it usually appears as though all of her students have successfully mastered the skill being taught. Yet when she administers curriculum-based measures, it is apparent that some students have not yet achieved mastery. These students' performance on curriculum-based assessments is often dramatically different from the performance she observes when she is providing instruction. Ms. Banks worries about these students, but she does not know what to do to help them. Why do they demonstrate mastery during lessons but not on individually administered assessments?

One week, while reteaching a phonics lesson on vowel digraphs to a small group of struggling readers, Ms. Banks pays special attention to one student, Sean, who scored very poorly on the curriculum-based assessment she had administered the day before. At first glance, it seems as though Sean is performing with a high degree of accuracy during group practice, as are his peers. However, when Ms. Banks takes a closer look, she realizes something. Sean is not quite responding at the same time as the other students. Maybe even subconsciously, he is waiting for other students to begin responding and then looking to them for clues as to the correct response. As the lesson progresses, Ms. Banks catches herself responding along with students during the group and independent practice parts of her lessons in a way that encourages them to look to her for clues or copy her responses instead of relying on their own knowledge.

It is as though a light has come on for Ms. Banks. In line with evidence-based recommendations, she is giving her students lots of opportunities to respond and receive feedback. But she is not giving them opportunities to respond independently, without her or other students. As a result, she is not giving them opportunities to receive corrective feedback that is specific to their individual needs. With this newfound knowledge, Ms. Banks embarks on a mission to change the way she teaches. In particular, she sets out to refine the group- and independent-practice portions of her lessons.

> **... she is giving her students lots of opportunities to respond and receive feedback. But she is not giving them opportunities to respond independently, without her or other students.**

The gradual-release-of-responsibility (GRR) model for delivering instruction is well supported by research evidence and is often identified as a crucial element of instruction for students with learning difficulties. However, there are challenges associated with effectively releasing responsibility to students. As researchers and former teachers, we have experienced and observed the challenges that even strong teachers like Ms. Banks face. This article describes the GRR model of instruction and provides specific guidance and resources to support special education teachers in fostering independence within a GRR framework during small-group reading instruction.
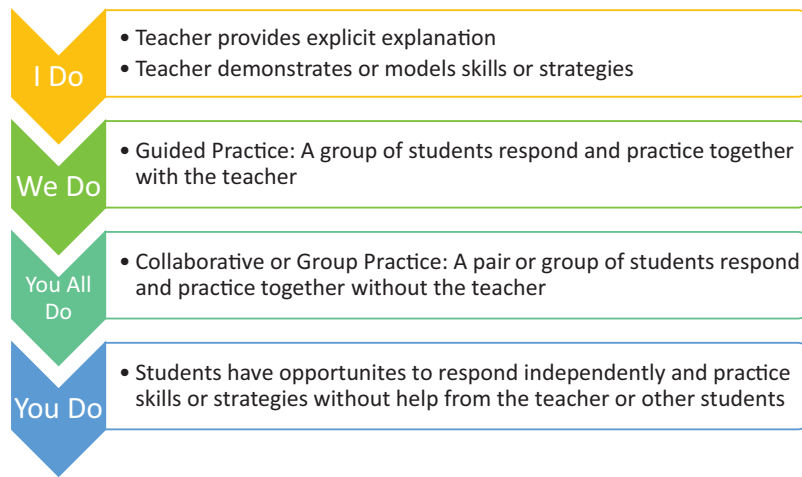
What Is the GRR Model?

The GRR model was developed over 35 years ago to describe the process by which teachers can systematically reduce supports provided during explicit instruction and shift the responsibility for learning to students (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). The first stage in the GRR model is *explanation and modeling*. In this stage, the teacher clearly describes and demonstrates (in step-by-step fashion, if appropriate) how to perform a skill or use a strategy. Students may be prompted to respond during this stage (e.g., the teacher may prompt students to chorally repeat an important point), but the teacher maintains primary responsibility for demonstrating the content being taught. During Stage 2, *guided practice*, the responsibility for learning is gradually shifted to the student. This occurs when the teacher provides students with opportunities to respond in the presence of teacher support. During the guided-practice stage, the teacher may respond along with students or use prompting, additional modeling, or another type of scaffolding to support students' initial efforts to demonstrate their learning. The

third stage of Pearson and Gallagher's original model was *independent practice*, which was defined as the stage when the student assumes all of the responsibility for learning. During independent practice, students are provided with opportunities to retrieve new knowledge, perform a new skill, or apply a new strategy without assistance from the teacher or peers. These three stages are often summed up using the catchphrase "I do, we do, you do," coined by Anita Archer (1988).

As the body of research related to instructional practices grew, the GRR model evolved to include a fourth component, *collaborative learning*, between the guided-practice and independent-practice stages (Fisher & Frey, 2008). In the collaborative learning or *group practice* stage, students have opportunities to practice and apply their learning while interacting or responding together with their peers, in pairs or small groups. Because less teacher support occurs during group practice, more responsibility for demonstrating learning lies with students. However, students are still able to receive peer support before transitioning to full responsibility or independence. Thus, as shown in *Figure 1*, the four stages of instruction might be described as "I do" (teacher modeling and demonstration), "we do" (teacher-guided practice), "you all do" (student pair or small-group collaborative practice), "you do" (student independent practice).

There is overwhelming research evidence to support to use of a GRR model during academic instruction in general (e.g., Alfieri et al., 2011; Marin & Halpern, 2011) and reading instruction in particular (e.g., Foorman et al., 2016; Shanahan et al., 2010). A number of systematic reviews of reading intervention research have concluded that students with or at risk for reading

Figure 1 Gradual-release-of-responsibility model

I Do
- Teacher provides explicit explanation
- Teacher demonstrates or models skills or strategies

We Do
- Guided Practice: A group of students respond and practice together with the teacher

You All Do
- Collaborative or Group Practice: A pair or group of students respond and practice together without the teacher

You Do
- Students have opportunites to respond independently and practice skills or strategies without help from the teacher or other students

disabilities benefit from explicit instruction that involves a systematic GRR approach (e.g., Bryant et al., 2003; Chard et al., 2002; Gersten et al., 2009; Swanson, 1999; Vaughn et al., 2012). However, some research suggests that educators tend to implement the group ("you all do") and independent ("you do") practice stages of the GRR model less consistently than they implement the teacher demonstration ("I do") or teacher-guided practice ("we do") stage.

In a recent study of intervention implementation fidelity conducted by Hall et al. (2020) that corroborates findings reported by other researchers (e.g., Reutzel et al., 2014), teachers frequently omitted opportunities for students to respond independently during scripted small-group instruction designed to follow a GRR model. On occasion, teachers entirely skipped opportunities for students to respond without teacher support, as a group or as individuals (i.e., they seemed to believe that students had already demonstrated sufficient evidence of mastery during the guided-practice or "we do" stage). On other occasions, teachers who intended to provide opportunities for independent responding were observed to inadvertently respond along with students. For example, teachers often stated that it was "your turn" (i.e., the group's turn or each student's turn) to respond but still subtly responded along with the student or students. Students watched the teacher for a verbal or nonverbal cue (e.g., starting the student off by beginning the response,

forming their mouth in the shape required to begin a correct response, or silently mouthing the response). Like Ms. Banks, teachers seemed to want to ensure that their students felt successful. However, in their big-hearted efforts to bolster student confidence, they deprived students of opportunities to independently master new learning.

In addition, in the same study of teachers' intervention implementation fidelity (Hall et al., 2020), teachers sometimes provided corrective feedback following an incorrect response and facilitated student correct responding with teacher scaffolding (all evidence-based practices) but did not subsequently allow students the opportunity to respond correctly *independently* before moving on. Therefore, students were not able to demonstrate independent mastery of the skill being taught.

Implementing GRR During Whole-Class Reading Instruction

The implementation of GRR may look different in different settings. During whole-class reading instruction in the primary grades, the first two stages of GRR ("I do," "we do") might take place as students gather around the teacher on the rug. During the "you all do" stage, students might return to their tables and practice a skill or strategy in pairs and then ("you do") independently. For example, a teacher targeting narrative comprehension might

first read the beginning of a short story to students on the rug, following the read-aloud by demonstrating how to complete a graphic organizer about the characters, setting, and initiating event ("I do"). Next, the teacher could read the beginning of another short story and prompt students to turn and talk to a partner about which story elements belong in the graphic organizer boxes. The teacher would walk around the rug, listening in and providing support; then the teacher would call on pairs of students to share their answers and provide pairs with praise, corrective feedback, and scaffolding so that students can revise incorrect responses ("we do"). Third, the teacher would direct students to go to their desks, read the first section of a short story in pairs, and practice using the graphic organizer with a partner ("you all do"). Finally, students would have the opportunity to practice the skill independently ("you do"), with the teacher continuing to move around the room to provide support if needed.

Implementing GRR During Small-Group Instruction

The GRR model looks a bit different during small-group instruction in the primary grades, when students are usually seated at the "teacher table" throughout a lesson (as is common in Ms. Banks's special education classroom). In theory, the stages of the GRR model are quite similar during small-group instruction and whole-class instruction:

> **It is only when they have opportunities to respond independently—without the benefit of watching how the teacher or their peers move their lips or modulate their voices—that the responsibility for learning is fully transferred to students.**

- Step 1 (I do): The teacher explains and models.
- Step 2 (we do): The teacher engages students in practicing a skill or strategy while providing a high level of support.
- Step 3 (you all do): Students respond in unison.
- Step 4 (you do): Students respond without the support of the teacher or their peers.

However, in practice, the last two stages do not always unfold in this way. With only four or five students in a small group, it is possible for Ms. Banks and other special education teachers to provide a high level of support to students as they respond not only during guided practice ("we do"), but also during group practice ("you all do") and independent practice ("you do")—despite the fact that these stages depend on the teacher providing increasingly reduced levels of support. The "independent practice" or "you do" stage of reading instruction is crucial. It is only when they have opportunities to respond independently—without the benefit of watching how the teacher or their peers move their lips and modulate their voices—that the responsibility for learning is fully transferred to students (e.g., Archer & Hughes, 2011; Pearson & Dole, 1987; Rupley et al., 2009). Independent practice enables confident mastery and prepares students to apply reading skills on their own when they read outside of the small-group setting.

GRR Within Different Components of Reading Instruction

As is represented in *Table 1*, the GRR model is applicable when teachers are targeting foundational reading skills (e.g.,

introducing a new letter-sound or practicing previously introduced letter-sounds) as well as when they are teaching more complex skills (e.g., teaching students to make an inference, identify a main idea, or read with prosody). Here are the steps that Ms. Banks would want to follow during a small-group phonics lesson with first-grade students:

- Step 1 (I do): Introduce a new grapheme–phoneme correspondence. Show students a flashcard representing the spelling pattern, then turn it over to show an illustration of a key word that uses the spelling pattern (e.g., an illustration of a giraffe to help students remember the sound made by the letter combination *gi*). Model saying the sound associated with the spelling pattern.
- Step 2 (we do): Show students the flashcard and prompt them to respond chorally with the correct sound for the spelling pattern on the card, responding along with students. This will give students one more opportunity to watch their teacher's mouth and listen to their teacher's expert pronunciation of the sound, even as they take on some responsibility for responding themselves. Provide scaffolding and corrective feedback when appropriate (followed by an opportunity for students to respond again, correctly, with teacher support).
- Step 3 (you all do): Provide students with an opportunity to chorally respond with the sound for the spelling pattern. Intentionally do *not* respond with students. Listen and provide scaffolding and corrective feedback when appropriate (followed by an opportunity for students to

respond again, correctly, without teacher support).
- Step 4 (you do): Provide opportunities for independent responding, having students take individual turns pronouncing the sound. Make sure you do not give students "clues" to the correct response (e.g., by shaping your mouth in the way you would when beginning to pronounce the sound). Provide corrective feedback and opportunities to respond again, correctly, without teacher or peer support, when appropriate.

Here are the same steps within the GRR model that Ms. Banks could use to teach an example sentence-reading fluency lesson to her first-grade students:

- Step 1 ("I do"): Model reading the first sentence in a list of decodable sentences, making your voice go up dramatically because the sentence ends in a question mark.
- Step 2 ("we do"): Ask students to notice the punctuation mark at the end of the next sentence; prompt them to read it chorally along with you, making their voices do what the punctuation mark tells them to do. Provide corrective feedback and opportunities to respond again correctly.
- Step 3 ("you all do"): Ask students to read the next sentence chorally without you. Intentionally do *not* respond with students. Listen carefully, stopping students to provide corrective feedback/opportunities to respond again correctly).
- Step 4 ("you do"): Call on individual students to read a sentence independently. Intentionally do *not* respond with students. Provide corrective feedback and opportunities to respond again, correctly, when appropriate.

GRR During Small-Group Instruction: Frequently Asked Questions

How do I know when to release responsibility? How might the steps change depending on the levels of understanding that my students demonstrate?. Although the GRR model is described as having four stages,

Table 1 **Examples of GRR Stages Within Components of Small-Group Reading Instruction**

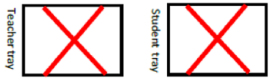| Reading domain and definition	I do: Explain and model	We do: Guided practice	You all do: Group practice	You do: Independent practice
Phonemic awareness: Isolating and manipulating the phonemes in spoken syllables and words	"Listen. I'm going to say the word 'vase' very slowly so that I can hear the first sound." *Teacher says the word slowly, emphasizing the first sound.* "Vvvvvase. Say the word slowly with me: 'vvvase.' The first sound in 'vase' is /vvv/! What's the first sound in vase?"	"Let's do one together. We'll say the word really slowly and listen for the first sound. Ready? Our word is 'zip.'" *Teacher and students say the word slowly together.* "Zzzzzip." "What's the first sound?" *Teacher and students respond:* "/zzzzz/!"	"Your turn. Say the word really slowly as a group, listening for the first sound. Your word is 'land.'" *Students together say the word slowly, drawing out the first sound.* Teacher prompts, "What's the first sound?" *Students respond chorally.*	"Now I'm going to call on one of you at a time. I won't call on you in order. It will be a surprise! I will give you a word. Say it slowly and listen for the first sound. Ready? Allen, your word is 'might.'" *Student responds.* "What's the first sound in 'might'?" *Student responds.*
Phonics: Learning the relationships between the letters (graphemes) of written language and the individual sounds (phonemes) of spoken language and using this knowledge to read and write words	*Teacher shows a flashcard with the letter L on it.* "The name of this letter is L. The sound of this letter is /lll/."	"Let's say the name and sound of this letter together. What's the name?" *Teacher and students respond together:* "L." "What's the sound?" *Teacher and students respond together:* /lll/."	"Your turn. I'll show you a letter card and ask you to tell me either the name or the sound. All of you will respond together. Listen carefully! I might try to trick you!" *Teacher shows the flashcard.* "What's the sound?" *Students respond together.* "What's the sound?" *Students respond together.*	"Now I'm going to call on one of you at a time. *Teacher shows the flashcard.* "Melissa, what's the name of this letter?" *Student responds.* "What's the sound of the letter?" *Student responds.*
Fluency: Reading text accurately, at an appropriate pace and with prosody and expression	"Today you will read [name of book] again, but this time you will work on reading it smoothly. When good readers read, they make their reading sound just like talking. They don't sound like robots. I'll show you what robot reading sounds like. Listen." *Teacher models reading a page of the book in monotone voice.* "Now I'll show you what it sounds like when you make your reading sound like talking." *Teacher reads the same section of the text in a smooth, expressive, not-too-fast way.*	"Let's try reading these pages together. We'll read smoothly, just like we would if we were talking. We won't read like robots!" *Teacher and students read the sentence together, with the teaching helping students find the right pace, with prosody and expression.*	"Your turn. You will read the next page together, as a group. First, look over the page and read the words silently in your head. When I say 'go,' you will all read the words together, smoothly—not like a robot." *Students read the page together, as a group.*	"Shawn, you try this page on your own." *Student reads the page.*

Table 1 **(continued)**

Reading domain and definition	I do: Explain and model	We do: Guided practice	You all do: Group practice	You do: Independent practice
Vocabulary: Learning the pronunciation and meaning of words	*Teacher shows students a card with the word "leap."* "This is the word 'leap.' 'Leap' means to jump high and far. I can use the word 'leap' in a sentence: I saw a dog 'leap' over a puddle."	"What animals have you seen leap? You will turn and talk with your partner. Be sure to use a complete sentence when you answer the question. Our question is, 'What animals have you seen leap?' You can answer by saying: 'I have seen a ____ leap!'" *Teacher listens and scaffolds student responses as they discuss in pairs.*	"OK, now I want everyone to pretend your fingers are ballet dancers. Together, show me with your fingers how a ballet dancer might leap!" *Students demonstrate together with their fingers.*	"Letty, explain how your fingers showed leaping." *Teacher calls on a couple of individual students to share.*
Comprehension: Building a mental representation of a text; constructing meaning while reading	"Today, we're going to practice asking and answering questions. Good readers ask themselves questions as they read to help better understand and draw deeper meaning from text. There are many different types of questions readers can ask about what they are reading. Look at your 'Question Types' cue card. For now, we are only going to focus on the "who" and "where" questions. I am going to show you how to ask questions about this passage. Watch how the questions help me to better understand the passage we just read." *Teacher reads passage aloud, periodically stopping to ask and answer "who" and "where" questions using think-aloud procedures.*	"OK, now we will practice asking and answering questions while we read together. We'll read the first paragraph together and then I will provide sentence stems so you can ask and answer one 'who' and one 'where' question." *Teacher reads a paragraph of text that supports asking and answering a "who" and "where" question, provides student stems (e.g., "Who decided to _____?" _____ decided to _____"), calls on students to complete the sentence stem, and provides feedback.*	"This time you are going to read with your partner and use your cue cards to write down one 'who' and one 'where' question and the answers to the questions in your notebook." *Students read in pairs and take turns writing appropriate questions and answers while the teacher moves between partner groups listening and providing additional scaffolding and feedback as needed.*	"Now, you are going to have a chance to ask and answer questions all on your own! Please read the next paragraph and write one 'who' and one 'where' question and the answers to these questions in your journal." *Teacher monitors student engagement and provides encouragement but provides children an opportunity to complete activity independently before providing support.*

Figure 2 Initial "Put It Together" phonological awareness lesson (less independence)

NEW ACTIVITY!

1.1 PUT IT TOGETHER

Teacher tray [X]   Student tray [X]

COMPONENT: PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS
Objective: Students will blend two words into one compound word.
Materials: None

TEACH THE ROUTINE

We're going to play a game. I will make a fist with my hand (fingers down), and then put my arm out in front of me. I want you to do what I do. Try it. Make a fist and put your left arm out in front of you. Teacher makes a fist and extends their right arm. Students extend their left arms.

Keep your right arm and fist extended and say: **Good job** following directions! Now watch and do what I do! Extend your left arm and fist. Students extend their right arms and fists.

Repeat the routine:
For teachers, the routine is: Right fist out, hold it; left fist out, hold it.
For students the routine is: Left fist out, hold it; right fist out, hold it.

Students must extend their left arms first throughout this activity so they build words going from left to right. Teacher starts with the right arm to be their "mirror". If any student uses the wrong arm, say: Use the arm on the same side as my arm.

TEACH THE CONCEPTS

Now, we're ready! Listen.

Sometimes, two words go together to make one w[...]

We're going to play a new game called *Put It Toget[...]* say a word. Then we'll extend the other arm and say a[...] it together and say the compound word. I'll show you[...]

[I Do]

DEMONSTRATE

My first word is *play*. Put your right fist out *at the[...]*
My next word is *ground*. Put your left fist out *at t[...]*
Now, I'll put them together. Move your hands togethe[...]
Playground. I like to play out on the *playground.*
Watch again. Do the whole routine without stoppin[...]
Play (right fist out)---*ground* (left fist out). *Playgr[...]*

[We Do]

PROVIDE GUIDED PRACTICE

Now, do what I do.
Teacher: *Play...* (right fist out)
Students: *Play...* (left fists out
Teacher: *...ground* (left fist out).
Students: *...ground* (right fists out).
Put it together!
Students and teacher: *Playground* (fists together)
Repeat as needed to establish the routine.

PROVIDE GROUP PRACTICE (STUDENTS RESPOND TOGETHER WITHOUT THE TEACHER)

Let's make another word, but this time you will do the last part by yourselves.

[You All Do]

Do what I do.
Teacher: *Butter...* (right fist out)
Students: *Butter...* (left fist out)

Teacher: *...fly* (left fist out)
Students: *...fly* (right fists out)

Put it together!
Students respond *without* teacher: *Butterfly!* (fists together)

Yes, *butterfly.* Provide scaffolding and feedback.

If time allows, repeat with the word *grandmother.*

TIME TO SHINE!
Observe individual students as they respond together. Scaffold or correct all errors. Provide specific praise for accurate responses.

Minimal scaffold: Repeat, using the Guided Practice routine.
Moderate scaffold: Say the compound word first, then say each individual chunk (using hand motions). Then, model putting it together. Finally, repeat Guided Practice.
Intense scaffold: Repeat the Demonstrate and Guided Practice routines. Return to Teach the Routine, if needed.

these four stages do not always occur linearly. Often, students receiving a small-group reading intervention will need to move back and forth between stages as they develop mastery (Fisher, 2008). It may be necessary for the teacher to repeat and perhaps ultimately to skip stages as students develop their understanding and mastery of given skills (Fisher, 2018).

For example, if Ms. Banks's students were successful at reading decodable sentences during the group- and independent-practice stages on Monday, then on Tuesday Ms. Banks might decide to skip explanation and modeling and jump right to guided or group practice.

However, if Ms. Banks realizes during group practice that her students are having some difficulties remembering the necessary grapheme–phoneme correspondences or blending sounds to read words, then she might go back to the "I do" stage and progress through the stages again until students are able to demonstrate independent mastery. Importantly, when it is necessary to backtrack, it may be necessary to go back and model only a specific part of the skill that students were not able to master independently.

As students develop mastery of a skill that is revisited during the course of the school year, the amount of time the

teacher spends explaining and modeling ("I do") before releasing students to engage in guided, group, and independent practice ("we do," "you all do" and "you do") will decrease (Archer & Hughes, 2011). *Figure 2* represents the first lesson plan in a series of lesson plans targeting phonological awareness by teaching kindergarteners at risk for reading difficulties to "Put It Together!" or to blend parts of words (i.e., compound words, syllables, onsets/rimes, and ultimately phonemes) to make whole words. In the first lesson, the teacher devotes significant time to explaining and modeling ("I do"; cf. "Teach the Routine," "Teach the Concepts," and "Demonstrate"

Figure 3 Subsequent "Put It Together" phonological awareness lesson (more independence)

2.1 PUT IT TOGETHER

Teacher tray ☒ Student tray ☒

COMPONENT: PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS
Objective: Students will blend two syllables into a word.
Materials: None

We Do

PROVIDE GUIDED PRACTICE (STUDENTS RESPOND TOGETHER *WITH* THE TEACHER)

Let's play *Put It Together!*

We'll put two chunks together to make a word.

Do what I do.

Teacher: *chick...* (right fist out) Students: *chick...* (left fists out)

Teacher: *...en* (left fist out) Students: *...en* (right fists out)

Put it together!

Students and teacher: ***Chicken!*** (fists together)

You All Do

PROVIDE GROUP PRACTICE (STUDENTS RESPOND TOGETHER *WITHOUT* THE TEACHER)

Let's make more words, but this time you will do the last part by yourselves.

🔄 **Do what I do.**

Teacher: *free...* (right fist out)
Students: *free...* (left fists out)

Teacher: *...zer* (left fist out)
Students: *...zer* (right fists out)

Put it together!

Students respond *without* teacher:
Freezer! (fists together)

Yes, *freezer*. Provide scaffolding and feedback.

Word List

1. (Sunday) Sun...day: Sunday
2. (hammer) ham...mer: hammer
3. (rattle) rat...tle: rattle
4. (camper) cam...per: camper
5. (shampoo) sham...poo: shampoo

Continue the routine, using the words in the word list.

TIME TO SHINE!

You Do

Give individual turns!
Explain to the students that you will call on one student at a time to put the word together. Everyone will say the individual parts of the word; then, the teacher will name one student to say the whole word.
Do NOT follow a predictable pattern. Keep students on their toes!
Other students think the answer, but don't respond out loud.
Scaffold or correct all errors. Provide specific praise for accurate responses.

■ Minimal scaffold: Repeat, using the Guided Practice routine.
■ Moderate scaffold: Say the two-syllable word first, then say each individual chunk (using hand motions). Then, model putting it together. Finally, repeat Guided Practice.
■ Intense scaffold: Repeat the Demonstrate and Guided Practice routines. Return to Teach the Routine, if needed.

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in *Figure 2*). Students spend less time engaged in guided and group practice ("we do" and "you all do"), and the only opportunities for independent practice ("Time to Shine") are not truly independent; the teacher is only observing individual students in the context of group practice responding. However, when the same activity is taught the next week (see *Figure 3*), there is no scripted "I do" portion of instruction. The teacher launches right into guided practice ("we do") and spends significant time engaging students in group practice ("you all do") and independent practice ("you do," or "Time to Shine"). These lesson plans are from a kindergarten version (still under development; Denton et al., 2020) of the Reading RULES! program developed by researchers at the Children's Learning Institute at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (Denton et al., 2018), which has been shown to positively impact students' development of word reading, decoding, and reading fluency (Solari et al., 2018).

What if my students within a small group have varying levels of understanding?. It is common for primary-grade students with reading disabilities to be at different levels or stages of understanding (Shanahan et al.,

2010). Teachers often worry about unintentionally leaving the most struggling students behind while the rest of the group learns and grows. One way to alleviate this concern is to provide students who demonstrate a lesser degree of understanding with additional opportunities to respond and receive corrective feedback during the independent-practice stage. For example, if Daniela is having a challenging time remembering short vowel sounds while the other students in her small group have demonstrated mastery of these grapheme–phoneme correspondences, it may be necessary for Ms. Banks to conduct independent practice in such a way that she is able to call on Daniela to respond more often than she calls on Daniela's peers, thus allowing Daniela much-needed additional practice with vowel sounds.

Another way to address differing levels of student understanding is to pull an individual student or subset of the students who are at a similar level of understanding and provide extra practice using the GRR model during a different time during the day. Once again, this will allow individual students to have more opportunities to respond and receive specific feedback from the teacher. As few as 5 minutes per day of one-on-one reteaching and practice, provided in addition to the small-group lesson, may help accelerate a student's progress.

How can I keep students engaged during the explanation and modeling stage of instruction?.

Teachers should be encouraged to spend a lot more time on the guided-, group-, and independent-practice stages of instruction than on explanation and modeling (Vaughn et al., 2012). Teacher talk is generally not very engaging for students, so it is best to keep it to a minimum. But it is possible to keep students engaged during the explanation-and-modeling stage of the GRR model by encouraging them to respond even while the teacher maintains primary responsibility for demonstrating a new skill or strategy. Ms. Banks might ask her students to chorally repeat an important word or phrase (e.g., "What's my word?") or to mirror her actions as she demonstrates. If her students are learning a strategy that has multiple steps, Ms. Banks can prompt students to turn to a partner and name each step after it has been described or modeled.

How can I support students' memory for skills they learned previously?.

It is crucially important to incorporate ongoing *distributed practice* into GRR lessons, so that students can practice newly learned skills along with skills they have previously learned (Dunlosky et al., 2014). The grapheme–phoneme correspondence lesson described earlier (i.e., "*gi*" sounds like /ji/) could be followed by a brief cumulative practice session in which Ms. Banks would mix the flashcard for the newly taught sound in with a few cards for previously learned sounds and have students practice all of them. First, students could practice by responding in unison; next, Ms. Banks would ask each student to name a few cards from the stack independently to check their independent mastery of the skills. During the lesson focused on reading fluently by attending to punctuation, Ms. Banks might provide cumulative practice by having students read sentences that end in periods as well as those that end with question marks. Students could do this chorally and then independently.

Conclusion

The GRR model describes the process by which teachers gradually transfer the responsibility for learning (i.e., demonstrating new knowledge or performing new skills) to students during explicit instruction. Key components include explanation and modeling, guided practice, group practice, and independent practice ("I do, we do, you all do, you do"). Using this model during whole-class reading instruction facilitates student learning and improves student outcomes. Research also strongly supports using the GRR model to teach students with reading difficulties during small-group reading instruction. However, it is easy to subconsciously omit opportunities for independent practice during small-group reading instruction. Teachers are likely to see tremendous benefits for student learning when they incorporate *all* stages of the GRR model into their small-group reading instruction in order to enhance student success.

Ms. Banks knows that a change in her approach to group and independent practice is vital for the success of her students. She reaches out to her district for support, and it is able to provide trainings on an evidence-based reading program that emphasizes the use of GRR during small-group reading instruction.

Now, Ms. Banks implements the GRR model during her small-group reading instruction with ease. She is able to seamlessly transition from "I do" to "we do" to "you all do" to "you do" throughout her lessons, and she knows when to skip or repeat a stage depending on the level of understanding that her students demonstrate. Although she still occasionally has to remind herself not to respond along with her students when it is their turn to practice skills independently, she mostly keeps her lips tightly shut while still nodding and encouraging silently. Her students have benefited tremendously from her change in instructional approach: She has seen improvements in their progress-monitoring scores and in their overall abilities as readers.

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