

I Do, We Do, You Do

Why explicit instruction and the gradual release of responsibility work

Students learn a hard skill best when a teacher shows them how, practices it with them, and then hands it over step by step. This is explicit instruction, and its rhythm is the gradual release of responsibility, from I do, to we do, to you do. It is one of the most dependable approaches in all of education.

The gradual release model

The model names three phases that move responsibility from the teacher to the student, teacher modeling, guided practice, and independent application, with the goal that the student ends up owning the task (**Pearson & Gallagher, 1983**). Nothing is left to chance, and no student is asked to do alone what has not first been shown and practiced together.

The evidence is strong and broad

A meta analysis of a half century of research, covering hundreds of studies, found that explicit, direct instruction produced positive effects across reading, writing, math, and other subjects, with an average effect large enough to matter in any classroom (**Stockard, Wood, Coughlin, & Rasplika Khoury, 2018**). Clear modeling followed by supported practice simply works.

Show it, practice it together, then hand it over. That order is what makes a hard skill feel possible.

What this means for Teach BIG

This is why our teacher scripts model each move first, then guide students through it, then release them to do it on their own. The I do, we do, you do pattern is built into

every lesson, so students are never dropped at the deep end, they are walked to independence one supported step at a time.

References

- Pearson, P. D., & Gallagher, M. C. (1983). The instruction of reading comprehension. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 8(3), 317 to 344.
- Stockard, J., Wood, T. W., Coughlin, C., & Rasplika Khoury, C. (2018). The effectiveness of direct instruction curricula: A meta analysis of a half century of research. *Review of Educational Research*, 88(4), 479 to 507.