Letting go of the gradual release model in literacy instruction in Kenya

Jessica Mejia
March 27, 2018
Purpose of Gradual Release Model:

Move from teacher having the knowledge of a skill or concept to learners understanding and applying the skill or concept.
Kenya Tusome Early Grade Literacy Programme

Duration: 2015 - 2019
Grades 1-3
Languages: Kiswahili and English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>75,000+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head teachers</td>
<td>23,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaches (CSOs)</td>
<td>1270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupils (yearly)</td>
<td>3.6 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What is gradual release traditionally been useful for in early literacy in Tusome?

Foundational skills:
• Letter names and sounds
• Word reading
• Fluency

- **Naming Letters and Sounds**
  - **I do – Step 1**
  - *Put the small letter m on the blackboard/pocket chart. Point to the letter and say,*
  - T: The name of this letter is *m*. It is the small letter *m*.
  - T: The sound of this letter is */m*/.
  - **We do – Step 2**
  - T: Let’s do it together. The name of this letter is?
  - T & L: *m*.
  - T: The sound of this letter is?
  - T & L: */m*/.
  - **You do – Step 3**
  - T: Now you do it alone. The name of this letter is?
  - L: *m*.
  - T: The sound of this letter is?
  - L: */m*/.
  - T: Open your book to page 31. Point to the small letter *m* on the page.
What has gradual release traditionally been less useful for in early literacy in Tusome?

- Higher order skills
- Making connections
- Discussions
- Creative writing
- Problem solving

Questions

I do – Step 1
T: Write this question on the blackboard: Who met Tam?
T: The first question is: Who met Tam?
T: I go back to the story and look for the answer.
T: I found the answer in the story. It is here. Show children the sentence where the answer appears. Let me read it for you. Mat met Tam.

We do – Step 2
T: Write this question on the blackboard: What did Tam say?
T: Read question. Let us see if the answer is in the story.
T & L: Look for the answer in the story.
T: Is the answer in the story? If it is, we show thumbs up; if it is not, we show thumbs down.
T & L: Thumbs up.
T: The answer is in the story. Show children the sentence where the answer appears. Let’s read the answer.

You do – Step 3
T: Now you will answer one more question from the story. Write this question on the blackboard: What did Mat do?
T: Raise your hand when you find the answer. Call on 2 pupils.
T: Is the answer in the story?
L: Answer.
T: Who can show us the answer? Let 3-4 pupils answer.
T: Give feedback.
Grade 3 Instructional Approach

• Need to prepare learners for upper primary
  – learning from text not just enjoying it.
• Want to move toward letting go of the strict adherence to I do We do You to allow for more conversations and making connections
• Added:
  – four nonfiction genres
  – four comprehension strategies
  – Writing process
Kenya Tusome use of Gradual Release Model

Grades 1-2 English and Kiswahili
- Sounds recognition
- Oral blending
- Letter names and sounds identification
- Word blending
- Text reading
- Comprehension questions
- Grammar activities

Grade 3 English and Kiswahili
- Word study
- Grammar
Word Reading Activities

Grades 1-2

- Blending

T: Now we are going to practise reading words.

*Put the word met on the blackboard/pocket chart.*

I do:

*Sweep your finger under the letters while reading:*

T: Watch me. /m//e//t/. The word is met.

We do/ You do:

T: Now we will do it together. Remember to say the sound of each letter when I point at it.

T & L: /m//e//t/ met.

*Repeat steps 1-3 with /a//m/ am, /t//a//m/ tam and /m//a//t/ mat.*

Open your books to page 38. Put your finger on the circle. First say each sound in the word then say the word.

Grade 3

- Word Study

*Write the words on the board. sweeping, say, clean, sleep, playing*

We do: Let’s look at our new words. What do you notice about these words? What is the same about these words? (They all have two vowels making a long vowel sound.)

I do: These words have two vowels making a long vowel sound. What is a vowel? *(Letter you say with your mouth closed.)* When there are 2 vowels together usually, they make the sound of the first vowel. Listen as I read the first word. Sometimes letter y is also considered as a vowel. *Sweep your finger under the word as you read it.*

Sweeping: What vowel sounds do you hear? Yes /ee/

We do: Let’s read it together. *Sweep your finger under the parts of the word as you read it with the learners. Give feedback as necessary.*

You do: Now read the word on your own.

You do: Sweeping

I do: Point to the second word. This word is say. It has the sounds /ay/. *Read the word and sweep your finger under the word.*

You do: Now, read the word on your own.

You do: Say

*Sweep your finger under the word as the learners read it on their own. Give feedback as necessary. What vowel sound do you hear?*

You do: /ay/

You do: Have Learners read the rest of the words. Ask small groups of learners to read. Ask what the consonant blend sounds are for each word.

You do: Open page 7 of your books and read the words.
Comprehension Activities

Grade 1-2

Questions

T: Now that we have read the story, we will practise answering questions to see if we understood what we read.

I do:

T: The first question is: What is the name of the girl?
T: I go back to the story and look for the answer.
T: Let me read it for you. Tam is here. The girl is Tam.

Read the sentence with the answer.

We do: What is the name of the boy?

You do: Where is Mat?

Read the question to pupils. Model answering the question with pupils using thumbs up/down to find if the answer is in the story.

Questions:

T: I look at the story again. I see that at the beginning, Sam and Nan go to the shop.
T: I am going to write that in the table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beginning</th>
<th>Middle</th>
<th>End</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sam and Nan go to the shop.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We do:

T: Work with your partner to see what happened in the middle of the story. What happened next? What do they do at the shops? Give the pupils time.
T: Who can tell us what happened next?
L: They eat and eat.
T: Write, ‘They eat and eat’ in the middle column of the table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beginning</th>
<th>Middle</th>
<th>End</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sam and Nan go to the shop.</td>
<td>They eat and eat and eat.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You do:

T: At the beginning of the story, Sam and Nan go to the shop.
Then, they eat and eat. What happens at the end of the story? How do they feel after eating too much?
T: Work with your partner to see what happened at the end.
T: Who can tell us what happened at the end of the story?
L: Respond.
T: Yes, ‘They take a nap.’
T: Write, ‘They take a nap.’ in the table at the end.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beginning</th>
<th>Middle</th>
<th>End</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sam and Nan go to the shop.</td>
<td>They eat and eat and eat.</td>
<td>They take a nap.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Comprehension – no gradual release

Grade 3

Comprehension
Main idea

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who or What (the main person or thing)</th>
<th>Most important thing (about the who or what)</th>
<th>Main idea (10 words or less)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

I do: Remember the main idea is the most important idea in a text.
We do: Who or what is the text mostly about? What is the most important thing that happens? OR What is the most important information given in the text?
We do: Let us now write a sentence telling about the main idea. What is the text mostly about? What is the most important thing that happens or the most important information given?
You do: Write main idea as you discuss it aloud.

Questions

Title ______
Characters ______
Setting ______

What happened at the beginning?
What happened in the middle?
What happened at the end?

I do: Draw the schoolhouse.
We do/You do: What is the title of the story? Where does the story take place? What is the story mostly about? What happens at the beginning of the story? What happens next? What happens at the end?
We do: Retell the whole story.
You do: Retell the story to your partner.
Writing process – no gradual release

Every piece of writing starts with an introduction. In a story we usually introduce the setting and characters in the first sentence or paragraph. Who can help me think of a beginning sentence to explain the setting and characters? *(Learners may need guidance for this first sentence. It’s okay to give suggestions if they do not have any.)*

**We do:** Now what did we say would happen first? Who can help me think of a sentence to describe the first event?

**We do:** Now we said our problem would be.... What sentence can we write to show how our characters have this problem?

**We do:** Now we said we would resolve the problem by.... How can we tell that in a sentence?

**We do:** Now let’s go back and read our story and see if we included all the parts in our first draft. Read the story and tell your partner if you think anything is missing.*

*Take a picture or make a copy of the draft exactly as it is and save it for next week.*
Grade 3 Materials Pilot

Informal pilot conducted during materials development process

- 10 grade 3 teachers
- Trained for 1 day
- Taught 3 consecutive lessons
  - Introduction, practice and review/assessment lessons
- Observations and interviews of teachers and learners
- Focus on ease of understanding and use of materials
### Story Retell Feedback

- Teachers need more support
- ¼ pupils should do retell from start to end
- Suggestion: add retell questions in pupil book
- Writing questions is tedious
- Use a graphic organizer
- Use retell on Day 5

### Writing Feedback

- About half supported the activity
- Nearly all said more support needed
- Too soon in the school year for this activity.
- Instructions are not clear.
- The session took too long.
- Instructions are too many
Writing section. Like? Dislike?
- Fine 10 mentions
- Enjoy 7 mentions
- Too easy 4 mentions
- More writing 2 mentions
- [It was] too much writing 1 mention

Retell section. Like? Dislike?
- Okay 5 mentions
- Challenging 4 mentions
- Include some questions 2 mentions
- Enjoyable 2 mentions
Challenges and Implications

Moving directly to national scale unlike grade 1 and 2

What does that mean for teachers, behavior change, and teacher training?

Teacher Training:
• Overwhelming teachers with new activities and new instructional approach
• Reduced time and budget for training teachers
• Differences in instructional activities and approach require separate trainings for grade 1-2 and 3
THANK YOU

Jmejia@rti.org