

### Polished Entry 1: Zones of Mastery

On October 3rd we learned about Vygotsky and his concept of zones of proximal development. The broad strokes of this concept is that students actually learn when presented with a task that challenges them, often enough that they require some assistance, but is attainable. A task that is too challenging will not inspire learning, as the child will flounder, and a task that is too easy provides no challenge and thus no learning occurs. This 'sweet spot' is where we want our lessons to fall, and it is different for each student. By developing inclusive lessons with the 'high ceiling low floor' methodology, and inclusive DI and UDL practices, we can meet this need for the majority of students in most lessons.

This concept of proximal zones of development for me is quite obviously tied to mastery, one of the four quadrants of the circle of courage. Mastery focuses on achieving personal goals, and feeling as though one has accomplished something. It is by using the proximal zones of development that we help students feel accomplished. If a task is too easy, there is no feeling of mastery, as there was no struggle involved. And if a task is too challenging and becomes unattainable, there is no mastery, as the student was unable to reach their goal. When we find the sweet spot of struggle and success, we allow the students to feel as though they have accomplished something, and to feel a sense of mastery.