Zone of Proximal Development

Zone of proximal development
Focused teaching

Anxiety

What the learner will be able to achieve independently →

Scaffolding occurs through the support of the 'more knowing other'

Level of challenge

Zone of proximal development

What the learner can currently achieve independently →

What the learner can achieve with assistance

Boredom

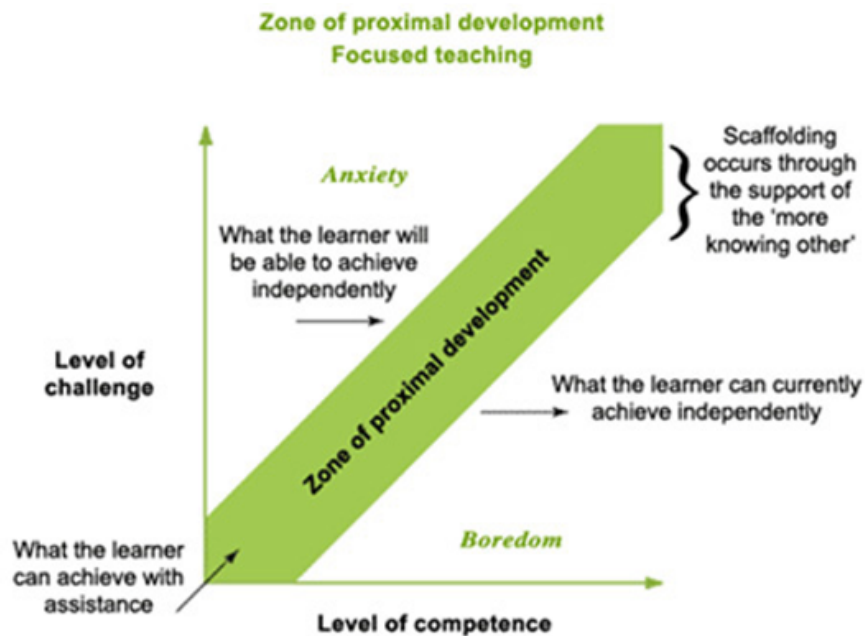**Level of competence**

A Brief Overview

In terms of reading, the Zone of Proximal Development (*a la* Lev Vygotsky) is where we want most readers to be. It is a level just above where they are currently capable of reading with competency and fluency on their own but where they can read successfully with some assistance or scaffolding from extratextual sources. Reading within the ZDP challenges the reader without overwhelming them; it is a place in which educators, parents, librarians, etc. can gently help the reader grasp ever-more-complex texts and thus grow as a reader.

ZDP theory holds that texts too far above the ZDP for a reader will lead to reader frustration, anxiety, and even a drop in reading self-efficacy. Similarly, ZDP holds that reading at or below one's normal reading level will result in boredom and little to no reading growth.

It is important to note that this is a generalized model. There are numerous instances in which readers will grow more competent (and read above their ZPD) on their own. For this to happen, however, the reader must be deeply engaged and committed to reading texts that fall above the ZDP.