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SCAFFOLDING TECHNIQUE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING ENGLISH

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Scaffolding is an instructional practice where a teacher gradually removes guidance and support as students learn and become more competent allowing them to become independent learners. This concept is similar to physical scaffolding used in construction which helps support structures until they can stand on their own. The term *scaffolding* was first introduced by Jerome Bruner a psychologist in the 1960s. This concept of scaffolding is closely tied to the theory of the zone of proximal development which was developed by the psychologist Lev Vygotsky. The theory suggests that there is the optimal window of learning where students can accomplish a task which they couldn't achieve on their own with a help of a knowledgeable guide. Effective scaffolding occurs within this optimal learning window and involves guiding a student to reach their full potential. The "I do you do we do" method is a simple but effective framework for scaffolding learning in the classroom. It helps students learn new skills by gradually shifting the responsibility from the teacher to the students. Here is how each step works:

Step 1: "I do" also known as teacher modeling. In the first step teacher demonstrates the task or skill in front of the class explaining each part of the process clearly. The teacher acts as the expert showing students exactly how to approach the task. This might include thinking aloud to expose students to reasoning behind each step.

Step 2: "We do" also known as guided practice. Students and the teacher work together do the task. This is the collaborative stage where students get involved in a process under the teacher's guidance. The teacher might ask questions, get responses and involve in solving problems as a group. This allows students to practice a new skill with a safety net of teacher support and immediate feedback,

Step 3: "You do" also known as independent practice. In a final stage students are given the opportunity to do the task independently. This is where they apply what they learnt without teacher's guidance. It's a chance for students to demonstrate their understanding and capability. The teacher might circulate to monitor progress and provide help only if necessary encouraging the students to use the skills they've developed. Students might be asked to solve similar problems on their own applying the methods they've learned. This method is effective for scaffolding because it ensures that students are not thrown into challenging tasks without preparation. They receive the support they need at the beginning which is gradually removed fostering independence and confidence in their abilities. By the time you reach the "You do stage" students feel more prepared and capable of handling task on their own.

The *strengths* of scaffolding are the following:

- it can be adapted to the needs of individual learners depending on the individual students needs. Teacher can strategically decide when to provide support, what support should be provided and when to withdraw support;
- scaffolding also encourages active learning as students are not just passive recipients of information but are engaged into learning process;

- scaffolding can build confidence as students are supported through the learning process and can see their own progress.

The *weaknesses* of scaffolding are:

- it can be very time-consuming to implement effectively. Teachers need to assess each student's individual needs and provide tailored support which can be challenging in a classroom with many students;
- if not implemented correctly scaffolding can lead to dependency, some students might become reliant on the support and struggle to perform tasks independently if scaffolding is removed too slowly or too quickly.

Here are five of our favorite scaffolding strategies for ELLs:

- *modeling* – most people learn best when they see or experience something rather than just hear about it. Learning words and concepts in a new language is a lot like changing a tire for your ELs. Therefore, whenever possible, you should explicitly show your students what they're expected to do rather than just telling them;
- *thinking aloud* – a think-aloud session is a great technique to demonstrate how good readers make sense of a text and monitor their understanding as they read. Before having students read a passage themselves, the teacher should first read the passage aloud, stopping along the way to model their thoughts at points that may be difficult or confusing.

Some questions that you can encourage students to ask themselves during a think-aloud include:

- What do I already know about the topic?
- What do I think I'm going to learn?
- Do I understand what I just read?
- What more can I do to better understand?
- What new information did I learn?
- What were the most important points?

While you read, it's good to model how you're working with and thinking about the text to answer the above questions, such as rereading a tricky sentence or using context clues to make predictions. From there, you can have your students read the passage with a partner and practice the think-aloud strategy. Then, once they understand the process, ask the students to read the passage once more individually so they can process it internally;

- *activate prior knowledge* – for new concepts to sink in, they must be built upon prior understanding. So, before you dive into a new topic or text, ask students to share their ideas and experiences related to it. This helps them connect content to their own lives and increases engagement.

1. Scaffolding strategies for ELL students. URL: www.continentalpress.com/blog/scaffolding-strategies-for-ell-students/?srsltid (Accessed 16 Oct 2024)

2. Scaffolding in education. URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JkhS69W_kg8 (Accessed 16 Oct 2024)