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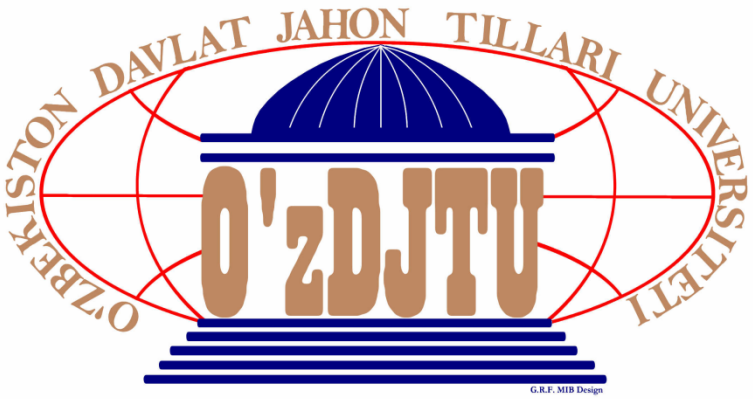


**THE UZBEK STATE WORLD LANGUAGES UNIVERSITY**

**THE THIRD ENGLISH LANGUAGE FACULTY**

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# QUALIFICATION PAPER

On

Analysis of scaffolding for EFL students of the English Language speaking skills.

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**Abstract**

This study focuses on the scaffolding of the speaking skills provided by a researcher of English to support the language development of a class of junior secondary ESL learners of UzSWLU. A range of data collection methods were triangulated including: lesson observation, and questionnaires. The researcher provided the students with scaffolding to develop students speaking skills appropriate to their zone of proximal development, i.e. their current and potential level of language development. The findings indicated that the learners became more responsive in the English lessons; their motivation for learning English was enhanced. Despite the fact that foreign language speaking is a common phenomenon in the teaching of English as a foreign language in Uzbekistan, teachers do not always identify anxious students, and often attribute their unwillingness to participate in speaking tasks to factors such as lack of motivation, or low performance. This paper aims to contribute teachers with strategies for developing foreign language speaking skills. Using qualitative research, it presents a classroom-based case study which aims at examining the characteristics of anxious students with a view to implementing classroom interventions to reduce foreign language speaking anxiety. The effectiveness of these involvements is also presented and evaluated, and the pedagogical implications of the findings are discussed.

## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Scaffolding Theory was presented in the late 1950s by Jerome Bruner, a cognitive psychologist to describe student's oral language acquisition that was helped by their parents when they first begins to speak. Scaffolded instruction is the systematic sequencing of prompted content, materials, tasks and teacher's support to optimize English learning and teaching and a process in which students are given support until they can apply new skills and strategies independently and a provision of an enabling context that provide advice, support and guidance to students. There are three kinds of scaffolding namely functional, process and content. Functional scaffolding supports students to understand how to use or interpret the text by using tutorials, instructions and explanations of representations. Process scaffolding helps students to understand the path within the text. Content scaffolding helps students to figure out an answer.

It's commonly known that CEFR is being gradually implemented in our country right after the adoption of the Presidential Decree Number 1875 which was signed on December 10, 2012. It has been more than a year that all educational places starting from primary schools and ending with higher educational institutions are busy with a hard work on enhancing the process of teaching and learning foreign languages.

Students who exhibit communication anxiety do not feel comfortable communicating in the target language in front of others, due to their limited knowledge of the language, especially in relation to speaking skills. Students who experience fear of negative evaluation do not consider language errors as a natural part of the learning process, but as a threat to their image, and a source for negative evaluations either from the teacher or their peers. As a result, they are silent and withdrawn most of the time, and do not participate in language activities (Ely 1986). Students who experience test anxiety consider the foreign language process,

and especially oral production, as a test situation, rather than an opportunity for communication and skills improvement.

Apart from general foreign language classroom anxiety, many learners are highly anxious with respect to participation in speaking activities. Indeed, it is often suggested that speaking is the most "anxiety-provoking aspect in a second language learning situation" (Cheng, Horwitz, and Schallert, 1999: 420). An examination of sources of foreign language speaking anxiety showed a correlation between a) anxiety and fear of negative evaluation, and b) anxiety and perception of low ability in relation to peers and native speakers (Kitano, 2001). Kitano suggests that teachers should find ways to support students with fear of negative evaluation, which may involve providing these students with positive reinforcement, such as positive comments. In relation to learners' perception of low ability, teachers should make interventions in the classroom environment and practices and create a "sense of community in the classroom", so that students do not perceive it a competitive, while pair and group work can be incorporated (Kitano, 2001).

While foreign language speaking anxiety is a common phenomenon in the teaching of English as a foreign language, it seems that teachers do not always identify anxious students, and attribute their unwillingness to engage in speaking tasks to factors such as lack of motivation, or "poor attitude" (Gregersen, 2003: 30). An additional problem concerns the fact that although there is an abundance of theoretical articles on general language anxiety, there seems to be a relative paucity of empirical studies focusing specifically on the sources of foreign language speaking anxiety and providing practical recommendations and strategies to address it.

### 1.1. Significance of the study

Since this study attempts to analyze the scaffolding for EFL students of the English Language speaking skills, its significance stems from the following considerations:

1. Information from the current study concerning scaffolding for EFL students and developing their speaking skills would be of a great value to teacher education coordinators seeking to determine more beneficial materials for the teaching and learning of English.

2. The current study would assist curriculum developers in designing appropriate syllabus to make EFL teaching and learning at the intermediate level more effective.

3. The results of the research will hopefully be contributed to the general fields of foreign language instruction and applied linguistics.

4. The findings of the current study will hopefully be contributed to the improvement of the practical English lessons, especially for teaching speaking in EFL classes.

Therefore the present research paper is considered to be significant.

### 1.2 Statement of the problem

The linguistic landscape of Uzbek Universities preparing English language specialists is changing rapidly. In the decade between 1991 and 2013, the enrolment of English Language Learners is growing rapidly. There is an urgent need to turn around the situation by teaching learners how to use their English in their everyday lives. A number of research studies have been conducted to explore the scaffolding and acquisition of knowledge. Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976) described what Vygotsky (1960) meant when he explained how learning takes place as a result of the support or scaffolding which enables a learner to internalize what is being learned. The scaffolding is helpful only when it is appropriate to the learner's zone of proximal development (ZPD), i.e. his current and potential level of development. Wood, Bruner and Ross went on to elaborate how learners may be supported by six categories of scaffolding functions, namely, recruiting the learner's interest; simplifying the task; highlighting its features; maintaining motivation; controlling the learner's frustration and modeling. More recently, studies have been conducted to study in depth the possible relationship between

learning and the provision of scaffolding from a broad range of perspectives. For instance, Lidz (1991) looked at the component actions that a teacher would exhibit in a scaffolding situation; Donato (1994) explored the notion of collective scaffolding, focusing on peer learning; Ohta (2000) studied the classroom interaction between peer learners which promotes L2 development in the ZPD; Lantolf (2002) introduced the concept of contingent scaffolding when peer learners interact and Ko, Schallert and Walters (2003) focused upon scaffolding as a two-way exchange with the knowledgeable other and the less knowledgeable other playing equally important roles. To have a better understanding of whether and in what ways scaffolding may facilitate or support the language speaking skills of ESL students, the current study investigated the teaching approach adopted by a reseacher to teach a class of ESL learners and the impact of the scaffolding provided by the researcher upon the language speaking development of the learners. Weissberg (2006) points out that while scaffolding is a relatively familiar concept in the literature on sociocultural theory, there is a lack of agreement on what actually constitutes scaffolding. Indeed the term has been taken to mean completely different things by different researchers. Having said that, Donato (1994) provided a useful definition of the term scaffolding in the context of L2 teaching/learning as "social interaction a knowledgeable participant can create… in which the novice can participate, and extend current skills and knowledge to a higher level of competence" (pp.40). This definition of scaffolding will be adopted for the purposes of the discussion in this paper.

This paper is an in-depth study of how a researcher provided scaffolding to support the language learning speaking skills of a class of ESL learners in the UzSWLU. This study provides insights into how teachers might support the language development of speaking skills of ESL learners.

### 1.3. Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this research is to explore the analysis of scaffolding of speaking skills of EFL students of the English Language. The research focuses on EFL teachers and learners enrolled in university English programs. Moreover the study aims to determine the impact of age, language level and their speaking skills. The study sheds light to the students' perceptions of scaffolding, on improving their knowledge on their language proficiency in general and on their speaking skills in particular.

### 1.4 Research questions

Coming up from the aims of the study, we try to attempt to answer the following questions :

1. How would students define scaffolding?

2. How do teachers use scaffolding in their lessons?

3. What are the characteristics of students who suffer from speaking skills?

4. What are the sources of foreign language speaking anxiety?

5. Can the incorporation of project work and a supportive classroom atmosphere help these students overcome their anxiety and develop their speaking skills?

We maintain that it is possible for second language learners to develop deep knowledge of English and engage in challenging speaking activities if teachers know how to support them pedagogically to achieve their potential. The focus of the paper is on secondary English Language Learners learning via the medium of English Language Speaking Skills.

Learners need to experience the global and local contexts in which their academic life is embedded as consistent and positive. If they are, then learners can develop their academic identity, because they will be treated with respect and they will be

valued and listened to as ‘speakers in their own right’ (Kramsch, 1996). In such a climate, learners can develop skills of language use and argumentation in the different subject matter areas. They will have the ‘right to speak’ (Peirce, 1995) in class, and they will participate actively in their own and each other’s academic development. There are a number of ways in which teachers can assist students in developing English language speaking skills language from the interactive, sociocultural perspective. One such way, scaffolding, is particularly consonant with sociocultural theory (SCT) and is well suited to English Language Learners.

## CHAPTER II. LITERATURE REVIEW.

### 2.1. Background of the study of Scaffolding.

Learning and teaching a language is not simply a matter of learning and teaching vocabulary and grammar, but we have to understand the context of culture and other people's meanings because we share the same cultural knowledge. When we have a communication orally or in writing, we make selections to choose appropriate meanings for the field, tenor and mode of a context of situation (David Butt et al, 1995:23). When a teacher and students have an interaction in the classroom, what they really exchange is information and goods and services. They are negotiating demanding and giving. A teacher can demand information or give information or demand or give goods and services to his or her students. These are realized through lexico-grammatical level (David Butt et al, 1995:64). In the exploration of teachers' scaffolding talks, the crucial meanings were the relationship between the groups and phrases functioning as the Process, the Participants in the process, and the Circumstances. On the other hand, the crucial relationship is between grammatical functions or two grammatical features namely the subject and the finite. In reality the order of subject and finite determine the kind of exchange taking place (David Butt et all, 1995:66). Wood, Bruner and Ross coined the term 'scaffolding' in the 1970s. The term 'scaffolding' was developed to describe the type of assistance offered by a teacher or peer to support learning. In the process of scaffolding, the teacher helps the student master a skill that the student is initially unable to acquire it independently. The teacher offers assistance that is beyond the student's ability. The teacher only helps the student with tasks that are just beyond his or her current ability. "Scaffolding is actually a bridge used to build upon what students already know to arrive at something they do not know. If scaffolding is properly administered, it will act as an enabler, not as a disabler" (Benson, 1997:126-127). Scaffolding Theory was introduced in the

late 1950s by Jerome Bruner, a cognitive psychologist. He used the term to describe student's oral language acquisition that was helped by their parents when they first begins to speak. They are provided with instinctive structures to learn a language. Bed-time stories and read alouds are real examples. Wood, Bruner, and Ross' idea of scaffolding is also in line with Vygotsky's work. Though the term used by Vygotsky was not scaffolding, interactional support and the process by which adults mediate a child's attempts to take on new learning has come to be termed "scaffolding." Initially scaffolding represents the helpful interactions between adult and child that enable the child to do something beyond his or her independent efforts (D Wood, Bruner J & G Ross, 1976:89-100). Besides the use of turn taking, understanding the use of adjacency pair, naming, gesture and facial expression is indeed significant. Diana M. Slade and Roderick J. Gardner (1979:116) stated that taking turn in conversation is not easy for foreign students, as they need to understand such signals. Hence, the use of turn taking by Uzbek students can be interpreted as interruption by English native speakers when the signals are not really understood.

In terms of language and turn taking, Eija Ventola (1979:267-268) stated that "language is a means of communication". It is used to establish and maintain a relationship between people, as there is a significant need to establish and maintain social relationships with others since every day we usually interact with other people. When the teacher interacts with his or her students, what they really need is also turn-taking. They are motivated by interpersonal needs in which they need to establish a relationship with others and have a communication to fill a gap between them. Susanne Eggins and Slade (1997:6) stated that what they actually establish are to know who we are, how we relate to others, and what we think of the world is. In face-to-face interaction between the teacher and students, there are two ways of communication namely verbal and non-verbal communication. The first is important while the latter is not really important to the participants. Meanwhile, Diana M. Slade and Roderick J. Gardner (1985:109) asserted that "conversation is

a joint production". Speakers continuously attract their audience with what the audience already knows and what they want to know.

As people talk, there must be questions and answers. Understanding adjacency pairs is indispensable. The awareness of adjacency pairs can help minimize misunderstanding between the two people. When a teacher makes a question, he tries to construct an opening. As a result, there will be a response to the questions. As the conversation is a joint production between at least two speakers, Diana M. Slade and Roderick J. Gardner (1985:113) stated that the basic structural unit in a conversation is called "adjacency pairs". These are utterances in which two participants make meaning simultaneously to each other. In brief, adjacency pairs are a pair of questions and responses. Regarding adjacency pairs, Erving Goffman (1974:257) asserted that when people make meanings, there must be questions and answers. In questions and answers Harvey Sack has called a 'first pair part' and a 'second pair part', a couplet. Adjacency pairs are a minimal dialogic unit, a round two utterances, spoken by a different person, directly one utterance following on the other. Adjacency pairs are not merely questions and answers; meanwhile, it covers a whole range of pairs. A statement is not a question and a rejoinder is not always an answer. Instead of questions and answers, I will say statements and replies. Statements also need responses although they can be in the form of questions or statement (Erving Goffman, 1974:263).

When people carry out a conversation, every question needs a response. Erving Goffman (1974:290) argued that the notion of statement-reply is as important as that of statement-response in the analysis of casual conversation. A statement is certainly different from a response. As widely known, statements always precedes responses in sequence time. In other words, statements initiate the conversations; responses will come next. Conversationalists content that choosing a statement is much easier than to choose a response. As statements need responses, Mc Carhty (1990:118-119) content that pairs of utterance, the so-called adjacency pairs are obviously mutually dependent. A question expects an answer. A greeting predicts a

greeting; a congratulation expects thanks; an apology wants acceptance; inform waits for acknowledge and leave-taking presumes a leave-taking. Adjacency pairs have different types. First pair-parts at times have identical second-pair parts while others anticipate different pair-parts. Meanwhile, openings and closings in specific situations are in the course of adjacency pairs. They might be used in lectures, courtrooms, and doctor's appointments in the context of certain settings. However, in casual conversation it is rather difficult to specify.

Scaffolded instruction is the systematic sequencing of prompted content, materials, tasks and teacher's support to optimize English learning and teaching (Dickson, Chard and Simmons, 1993:12). Scaffolding can also mean a process in which students are given support until they can apply new skills and strategies independently (Rosenshine and Meister, 1992:26). Scaffolding also means a provision of an enabling context that provide advice, support and guidance to students (McLoughlin & Marshall, 2000). There are three kinds of scaffolding namely functional, process and content. Functional scaffolding helps students to understand how to use or interpret the text by using tutorials, instructions and explanations of representations. Process scaffolding helps students to understand the path within the text. Content scaffolding helps students to figure out an answer (Elsa Lombard, 1995:9). The ways a teacher directs or gives an instruction to his or her students are usually realized through scaffolding talks. Scaffolding talks are expressions of the teacher to interact or give instruction to his or her students in the classroom. Wood, Bruner and Ross coined the term 'scaffolding' in the 1970s. The term 'scaffolding' was developed to describe the type of assistance offered by a teacher or peer to support learning. In the process of scaffolding, the teacher helps the student master a skill that the student is initially unable to acquire it independently. The teacher offers assistance that is beyond the student's ability. The teacher only helps the student with tasks that are just beyond his or her current ability. "Scaffolding is actually a bridge used to build upon what students already know to arrive at something they do not know. If scaffolding is properly

administered, it will act as an enabler, not as a disabler" (Benson, 1997:126-127). Scaffolding Theory was introduced in the late 1950s by Jerome Bruner, a cognitive psychologist. He used the term to describe student's oral language acquisition that was helped by their parents when they first begins to speak. They are provided with instinctive structures to learn a language. Bed-time stories and read alouds are real examples. Wood, Bruner, and Ross' idea of scaffolding is also in line with Vygotsky's work. Though the term used by Vygotsky was not scaffolding, interactional support and the process by which adults mediate a child's attempts to take on new learning has come to be termed "scaffolding." Initially scaffolding represents the helpful interactions between adult and child that enable the child to do something beyond his or her independent efforts (D Wood, Bruner J & G Ross, 1976:89-100).

To support the scaffolding talks, English teachers need classroom English to create the comfortable situation in the classroom. As classroom events are procedural, this procedure should be verbalised. The classroom English is divided into several parts namely opening the lesson, questioning, variability in teaching, organizing the classroom, giving instruction in English, explaining and demonstrating, confirming and checking understanding, reinforcing and ending the lesson (Listyaning S and Zulfa S, 2007:27). Listyaning S and Zulfa S (2007, 28-32) further explained that the first duty of the teacher is to open the lesson. It includes greeting, asking students' condition, introduction if needed, taking attendance and review of the previous lesson. Examples of greeting are good morning, good afternoon, good day, and hello everybody. A teacher can ask his or her students' condition by using some expressions such as how are you today?, how are you getting on?, how's life?, how are things with you?, are you feeling better today?, I hope you are all feeling well, and I hope you have all had a nice weekend or holiday". On the first meeting, a teacher usually begins by introduction. He or she can introduce himself or herself by saying "My name is Mr/Mrs/Ms Ana. I'm your new English teacher now. I'll be teaching you English

this year. I've got five lessons with you each week". A teacher should ask students' condition by saying ". On taking attendance, a teacher can use some expressions such as "let's call the roll, let's take the register, let's check to see who's here, is everybody here, who is absent today?" and others. To review the previous lesson, a teacher usually use the expressions such as "have you done your homework?, can I have your homework, please?, please, hand in your homework and everyone, please submit your homework now".

On the second place, questioning is also significant in classroom English. There are three main types of questioning namely factual, interpretive and evaluative questions. Factual questions have one correct answer only. The answer is not always simple, however, it depends on how broad the question is. "Why do you love me?" is a factual question which has a very complicated answer. Factual questions usually make the best inquiry-based projects as long as they have answers and rooms for exploration. Interpretive questions have more than one correct answer. However, they must be supported with evidence. Depending on their interpretations, people can have different valid answers. The answers are not always incorrect as long as they have a relationship with the text. It is important to ask interpretive questions because students can have various answers and refer to the text. Interpretive questions are significant to start the class discussions, English exercises and inquiry-based learning projects. Evaluative questions ask for some opinions, believes, or points of view, which have no incorrect answers. However, they depend on prior knowledge and experience, which lead to discussions (Listyaning S and Zulfa S, 2007:34-36). Variability in teaching is also significant. It provides different learning experiences for students. There are many learning styles students might have such as auditory, visual and kinestics. Variability in English teaching should facilitate more learning styles. Besides, there are many styles of teaching, teaching techniques and intonations of speech. To make our teaching more interesting and various, it is better for us to use media. Media is a means of communication so that the two parties can understand each other. Mainly

there are three kinds of media namely audio, visual and audio visual. Radio, tape recorder, audio conference, telephone and some others are usually used for audio media. However, pictures, animation, flashcards, powerpoint, graphs, charts, circles, and maps are usually used for visual media. The good ones are portrayed inaudio visual media while the two media are combined to make the teaching more efficient and effective (Listyaning S and Zulfa S, 2007:46). To make the class understand the materials, a teacher should understand how to organize the classroom. The classroom organization is based on clarity of the teacher's explanation and instruction. One must make sure that the instruction is clear and comprehensible. The use of instructions should be carried out and well-informed. Expressions in giving commands and setting up pairs and groups should be well-informed. In giving commands, a teacher can use some expressions such as "get your books and pencils out, pick your pencils up, move the tables back, turn your face around to face the wall chart, put all your things away, close the window beside you, put your pencils down, turn back to face the front, leave these tables here, leave the windows open", etc. Moreover, a teacher can set up pairs and groups by using some expressions such as "are you ready? You are going to do this in pairs, OK, everyone you are going to work in two, OK, everyone, you're going to work in three, everybody, you will be playing this in groups of three or four, go and sit with Linda please and make a pair, everybody, work in pairs face to face with your partner, now, practice the dialogue by standing face to face to each other, I want all of you to sit in a back-to-back pair", etc (Listyaning S and Zulfa S, 2007:62-64). An effective efficient classroom should be organized by an effective efficient teacher as well. To make the classroom effective and efficient, a teacher should deliver and give instructions in English. Students are usually quiet in the first place as they are not accustomed to English instructions. Later they can understand and respond teacher's instructions. There are some expressions a teacher can use when he or she instruct his/her students to sit down and stand up, move around, turn give, ask who wants a turn, ask for helpers and give things out,

explain and demonstrate, confirm and check understanding, start a feedback chat, reinforce and give a homework. (Listyaning S and Zulfa S, 2007:65-75). Finally, a teacher can end the class with a smile.

## 2.2. Scaffolding as a Teaching Strategy – Definition and Description

Scaffolding instruction as a teaching strategy originates from Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and his concept of the *zone of proximal development* (ZPD). "The zone of proximal development is the distance between what student can do by themselves and the next learning that they can be helped to achieve with competent assistance" (Raymond, 2000, p.176). The scaffolding teaching strategy provides adapted support based on the learner's ZPD (Chang, Sung, & Chen, 2002). In scaffolding instruction a more familiar other provides scaffolds or supports to facilitate the learner's development. The scaffolds facilitate a student's ability to build on prior knowledge and internalize new information. The activities provided in scaffolding instruction are just beyond the level of what the learner can do alone (Olson & Pratt, 2000). The more capable other provides the scaffolds so that the learner can accomplish (with assistance) the tasks that he or she could otherwise not complete, thus helping the learner through the ZPD (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000).

Vygotsky defined scaffolding instruction as the "role of teachers and others in supporting the learner's development and providing support structures to get to that next stage or level" (Raymond, 2000, p. 176). An important aspect of scaffolding instruction is that the scaffolds are temporary. As the learner's abilities increase the scaffolding provided by the more knowledgeable other is progressively withdrawn. Finally the learner is able to complete the task or master the concepts independently (Chang, Sung, & Chen, 2002, p. 7). Therefore the goal of the educator when using the scaffolding teaching strategy is for the student to become an independent and self-regulating learner and problem solver (Hartman, 2002). As the learner's knowledge and learning competency increases, the educator gradually reduces the supports provided (Ellis, Larkin, Worthington,

n.d.). According to Vygotsky the external scaffolds provided by the educator can be removed because the learner has developed "…more sophisticated cognitive systems, related to fields of learning such as mathematics or language, the system of knowledge itself becomes part of the scaffold or social support for the new learning" (Raymond, 2000, p. 176).

Caregivers help young student learn how to link old information or familiar situations with new knowledge through verbal and nonverbal communication and modeling behaviors. Observational research on early childhood learning shows that parents and other caregivers facilitate learning by providing scaffolding. The scaffolding provided are activities and tasks that:

- Motivate or enlist the child's interest related to the task
- Simplify the task to make it more manageable and achievable for a child
- Provide some direction in order to help the child focus on achieving the goal
- Clearly indicate differences between the child's work and the standard or desired solution
- Reduce frustration and risk
- Model and clearly define the expectations of the activity to be performed (Bransford, Brown, and Cocking, 2000).

The activities listed above are also detailed in the Executive Summary of the Research Synthesis on Effective Teaching Principles and the Design of Quality Tools for Educators, which refers to these as "…Rogoff's six characteristics of scaffolded instruction" (Ellis, Larkin, Worthington, Principle 5 section, para. 2).

In the educational setting, scaffolding may include models, cues, prompts, hints, partial solutions, think-aloud modeling and direct instruction (Hartman, 2002). In *Teaching Student and Adolescents with Special Needs* the authors provided an example of a procedural facilitator (hint, cue-card, partially completed example). When trying to teach the math skill of rounding, a teacher may list, "…the steps of rounding hundreds beginning with the first step of '1. Look at the

number in the ten's position', (this) provides hints to the students" (Olson and Platt, 2000, p.180). This cue prompts the students to complete the next step of the task. Educators may also use questions as scaffolds to help students solve a problem or complete a task. Teachers may increase the level of questioning or specificity until the student is able to provide a correct response. This type of scaffold is reflected in the following excerpt, "…if you receive no response or an incorrect response after asking the question, "How do we change lady to ladies?" you should proceed with a more intrusive verbal prompt: "What is the rule?" to remind the student that there is a rule. If necessary, continue with "What do we do when a word ends in y to make it plural?" to give the student a part of the rule" (Olson and Platt, 2000, p.186). As the student develops his or her ability with applying the rule, the number and intrusive nature of the questions would be decreased until the student can do the task without prompting.

Following the use of teacher provided scaffolds, the educator may then have the students engage in cooperative learning. In this type of environment students help students in small group settings but still have some teacher assistance. This can serve as a step in the process of decreasing the scaffolds provided by the educator and needed by students (Hartman, 2002).

Teachers have also used scaffolding to engage students in research work and learning. In this context, scaffolding facilitates organization of and focus for students' research (McKenzie, 1999). The structure and clearly defined expectations are the most important component of scaffolding in this context. The teachers provide clarity and support but the students construct the final result through their research. In a chapter on scaffolding, Scaffolding for Success, Jamie McKenzie provides a visual image analogy of how scaffolding works, "The workers cleaning the face of the Washington Monument do not confuse the scaffolding with the monument itself. The scaffolding is secondary. The building is primary." (McKenzie, 1999, Matters of Definition section, para. 6). He goes on to describe eight characteristics of scaffolding. The first six describe aspects of

scaffolding instruction. The last two refer to outcomes resulting from scaffolding and are therefore presented in a later section of this paper. According to McKenzie scaffolding:

1. Provides clear direction and reduces students' confusion – Educators anticipate problems that students might encounter and then develop step by step instructions, which explain what a student must do to meet expectations.
2. Clarifies purpose – Scaffolding helps students understand why they are doing the work and why it is important.
3. Keeps students on task – By providing structure, the scaffolded lesson or research project, provides pathways for the learners. The student can make decisions about which path to choose or what things to explore along the path but they cannot wander off of the path, which is the designated task.
4. Clarifies expectations and incorporates assessment and feedback – Expectations are clear from the beginning of the activity since examples of exemplary work, rubrics, and standards of excellence are shown to the students.
5. Points students to worthy sources – Educators provide sources to reduce confusion, frustration, and time. The students may then decide which of these sources to use.
6. Reduces uncertainty, surprise, and disappointment – Educators test their lessons to determine possible problem areas and then refine the lesson to eliminate difficulties so that learning is maximized (McKenzie, 1999).

Scaffolded instruction is also employed in problem based learning environments. "Problem-based learning (PBL) is an educational approach that challenges students to "learn to learn"." (Ngeow and Yoon, 2001, p. 1). In this type of classroom the teacher must assess the activities that the students can perform independently and what they must learn to complete the task. The teacher then, "…designs activities which offer just enough of a scaffold for students to

overcome this gap in knowledge and skills." (Ngeow and Yoon, 2001, p. 2). The authors also describe several of same scaffolding activities or characteristics that were presented by Bransford, Brown and Cocking and McKenzie thus illustrating scaffolding's applicability to various educational settings.

### 2.3. Scaffolding – Related Theory, Theorists, and Research

Scaffolding instruction as a teaching strategy originates from Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and his concept of the *zone of proximal development* (ZPD). Lev Vygotsky was a Soviet psychologist whose works were surpressed after his death in the 1930s and were not discovered by the West until the late 1950s ("Lev Vygotsky's archive," n.d.). His sociocultural theory proposes that social interaction plays a fundamental role in the development of cognition. ("Social Development Theory," n.d.). Vygotsky "…theorized that learning occurs through participation in social or culturally embedded experiences." (Raymond, 2000, p. 176). In Vygotsky's view, the learner does not learn in isolation. Instead learning is strongly influenced by social interactions, which take place in meaningful contexts. Student's social interaction with more knowledgeable or capable others and their environment significantly impacts their ways of thinking and interpreting situations.

It's worth mentioning that Vygotsky stressed the importance of playfulness and imaginary play to learning. In our own schools, there's an amazing split between teachers who believe that learning should be fun, and those who believe that learning should be hard work. Our interpretation of Vygotsky is that he would agree with both parties (though primarily with the first group): we think he'd maintain that teaching and learning should be play that does 'WORK', by which we mean that the learning will have an immediate application, function, and real-world use.

**A Teaching Model based on Vygotsky**

| **Student Responsibility->** | **Adult-Then Joint-Responsibility->** | | **Self-Responsibility** |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Zone of Actual Development* | *Zone of Proximal Development* | | |
| What the student can do on her own unassisted | Assistance provided by more capable others: teacher or peer or environment:classroom structures and activities | Transition from other assistance to self-assistance<br>**SOCIAL SPEECH**<br>•Adult uses language to model process<br>• Adult and student share language and activity | Assistance provided by the self<br>**PRIVATE SPEECH**<br>student uses for herself language that adults use to regulate behaviour (self-control) | Internalisation, automatisation<br>**INNER SPEECH**<br>The student's silent, abbreviated dialogue that she carries on with self that is the essence of conscious mental activity<br>Private speech internalised and transformed to inner verbal thought (self-regulation) |

Hillocks draws heavily on the research on both student engagement and potential and argues that:

1. The best learning is fun.
2. Engaged learning is fun because it is challenging, relevant, and purposeful but is supported in a way that makes success possible.
3. Almost all students can and will learn given supportive teaching and effective learning environments.

The Vygotskian-inspired, sociocultural-based, learning-centred model is so radically different from the two most dominant models of teaching and learning (teacher-centred and student-centred) that most people have never considered it. This is because this new model is two-sided and requires mutual effort and responsibility on the part of learners and teachers, whereas the dominant models are one-sided and place nearly complete responsibility for learning with the student. As a result, the two-sided model requires a completely different kind of classroom and definition of teaching – one that may not look at all like what we have all experienced during our own schooling.

Because the dominant models of teaching and learning in our culture are linear, one-sided models, it's been typical to consider students responsible for learning: in the curriculum/teacher-centred model the teacher is an adult who runs the show and transmits information to students, whose job it is to 'get it.' In this transmission model the teacher provides an information conduit to the student, who is solely responsible for receiving and later retrieving this data. This model is referred to variously as a teacher-centred, presentational, curriculum-centred, or an industrial model of education.

Others argue that education should be 'student-run'. Proponents of this view often cite constructivist notions by arguing that learning is the province of learners, who must necessarily construct their own understandings. Knowledge is acquired by

learners in the process of their self-initiated inquiries and personal investigations. Again, it is the student who is responsible. No one else can ‘do’ learning for them and their achievement of new knowledge requires active involvement and personal exploration. This progressive model is often seen in workshop types of settings in which teachers provide an environment full of opportunities and materials with which students may choose to engage. This model is often referred to as student-centred, participatory, exploratory, or natural-process learning.

An entirely different point of view is proposed by researchers, theorists, and teachers influenced by Vygotskian psychology, and to some degree by Bakhtinian notions of dialogism. Rogoff, Matusov, and White (1996) propose to call this a ‘community of learners’ model in that, as Vygotsky suggests, it involves both active learners and more expert partners, usually adults, who will provide leadership and assistance to the less skilled learners as they engage together in a community of practice. In this model, it is the teacher who is responsible for students’ learning, or their failure to learn.

Communities of practice attempt to create meaning and solve problems in a real context. Rogoff, Matusov, and White write that learning is not about ‘transmitting’ or ‘acquiring’ knowledge, but is about ‘transformation’, namely about transforming the nature of one's participation in a collaborative endeavour. As the learner's participation is transformed, for example, he becomes a more active and expert member of the community of practice, often moving from observer to participant to leader of collaborative activity. But the more expert partner's participation will also be transformed as she learns about new ways to teach and new ways to participate and how to change her roles relative to the changing roles of others. Everyone is learning and working together to achieve a common purpose that will be useful beyond the world of school.

The community of learners instructional model supersedes the pendulum entirely: it is not a compromise or a ‘balance’ of the adult-run and children-run models. Its

theoretical notion is that learning is a process of transformation of participation in which both adults and children contribute support and direction in shared endeavours (Rogoff, Matusov, and White 1996, 389).

These authors and many others have argued forcefully that the sociocultural context in which learning occurs, and the way in which something is learned, are necessarily a part of the learning. Therefore, students learning according to different models would learn in different situations and in different ways. This would affect how they come to understand and participate with different aspects of how information is represented and used. So, each model results in learning of a very different kind.

Our goal is for students to develop a wide repertoire of reading strategies that they can independently deploy in a wide variety of situations with a wide variety of texts, and our ultimate purpose is that they use these strategies to participate democratically in their communities and cultures. We find that applying Vygotskian learning theory to our teaching is what best helps us to meet these goals. A child develops his or her intellect through internalizing concepts based his or her own interpretation of an activity that occurs in a social setting. The communication that occurs in this setting with more knowledgeable or capable others (parents, teachers, peers, others) helps the child construct an understanding of the concept (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000). The communication helps the child develop inner or egocentric speech. The inner speech is abbreviated speech for oneself that eventually directs personal cognitive activities. Inner speech is developed as the adult initially models a cognitive process and communicates the steps as in "think-aloud" modeling. "…Over time and through repeated experiences, the child begins to internalize, and assumes responsibility for the dialogical actions, (i.e. it becomes a "private speech" spoken aloud by the child to direct personal cognitive activity)." (Ellis, Larking, Worthington, n.d., Principle 5 Research section, para.3).

**Ways of Assisting Readers Through Their Zones of Proximal Development: Modes of Scaffolding**

In subsequent similar activities the amount and or type of modeling and guidance provided by the more knowledgeable other will be reduced until the child is able to complete the activity without these supports or scaffolds, the child's inner speech would now be directing the child's activities. ("Four Stage Model," n.d. and Jaramillo, 1996).

The second foundation for scaffolding instruction is Vygotsky's concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD). The ZPD "…is that area between what a learner can do independently (mastery level) and what can be accomplished with the assistance of a competent adult or peer (instructional level)" (Ellis, Larkin, Worthington, n.d. Principle 5, Research section, para.1). Vygotsky believed that any child could be taught any subject effectively using scaffolding techniques by applying the scaffolds at the ZPD. "Teachers activate this zone when they teach students concepts that are just above their current skills and knowledge level, which motivates them to excel beyond their current skills level" (Jaramillo, 1996, p. 138). Students are guided and supported through learning activities that serve as interactive bridges to get them to the next level. Thus the learner develops or constructs new understandings by elaborating on their prior knowledge through the support provided by more capable others (Raymond, 2000). Studies have actually shown that in the absence of guided learning experiences and social interaction, learning and development are hindered (Bransford, Brown, and Cocking, 2000).

Modern research continues to find that scaffolding is an effective teaching strategy. Two recent studies regarding the use of inscriptions for teaching scientific inquiry and experimentation (external representations – graphs, tables, etc.) found that the use of external representations, representational scaffolds, can serve as an effective strategy for teaching these scientific skills. In one study the instructional goal was to teach fourth graders valid experimentation skills. During the first part of the study a teacher-specified table of variables was the scaffold provided. Students had to select the appropriate variable related to their experiment. The results of this part of the study led to the conclusion that the "…

use of the pre-developed table representation may have helped students abstract the overall structure of the experiment and thus aided their understanding of the design…" (Toth, Results and Discussion section, para. 1). The teacher designed table helped focus the learners' thinking on only those items that were important for the task. Additionally through the use of the table it became obvious to the students if they had omitted an important variable from their experiment. This helped the students learn what things must be considered when designing an experiment (Toth, n.d.).

In the second study, "… the effects of two different external representations (evidence mapping vs. prose writing)…" were evaluated in research with ninth grade students (Toth, n.d., Representational scaffolding while coordinating data with theories section, para. 1). Students used either a software tool or prose writing to record their thinking during a problem-based-learning activity in which they had to find a solution to a scientific challenge. The software tool provided epistemological categories linked with unique shapes. The students that used the software had to categorize the information they were evaluating by selecting the appropriate shape and entering the information into the shape. The students in the prose writing group just documented their thinking by writing. One finding of the study was that the students who used the software tool correctly categorized more of the information as hypothesis and data than those students in the prose writing groups. The correct categorization of information was attributed to "…the effect of the mapping representation that scaffolded students' categorization efforts" (Toth, n.d., Results and Discussion section, para. 1). Eva Toth concluded from the research that the use of , "…teacher-developed table representations was found to scaffold students' progress of inquiry by making the variables of an experiment salient and by perceptually constraining the students' attention to abstract the characteristics of correct experimentation" (Toth, n.d. Conclusion and Educational Significance section, para. 1). She also concluded that the evidence mapping, which used the software tool that scaffolded students' thinking and categorization

efforts, was a "…successful instructional methodology to teach how to categorize and label scientific information and to teach students how to evaluate hypotheses based on empirical data." (Toth, n.d., Conclusions and Educational Significance section, para. 2). The study also found that the use of explicit rubrics supported the scaffolding effect.

Kuo-En Chang, Yao-Ting Sung, and Ine-Dai Chen conducted a study to test the learning effects of three concept-mapping methods on students' text comprehension and summarization abilities and "…to determine how students can most effectively learn from concept mapping" (Chang, Chen, & Sung, 2002, p. 8). For the study three concept-mapping methods were designed "…with varying degrees of scaffolding support, namely, map construction by correction (with constant and highest degree of scaffolding), by scaffold fading (with gradually removed scaffolding), and by generation (with the least scaffolding)" (Chang, Chen, & Sung, 2002, p. 19). The 7 week study was conducted with 126 fifth grade students that were randomly assigned to 4 groups, one for each concept mapping method and a control group. Both pre- and post- text comprehension and summarization tests were administered to evaluate the students' abilities. Each group received the same reading materials and training on concept mapping. The map correction group was given a partially revised expert generated concept map that included some incorrect information. The students had to read the provided materials before correcting the errors in the map. The instruction for the scaffold-fading group consisted of the following: "…(a) read an expert concept map, (b) fill in the blanks of the expert concept map (with whole structure), (c) complete the partial expert concept map (with partial structure), (d) construct the concept map using the given concepts and relation links, and (e) determine the key concepts and relation links from the text to construct the concept map" (Chang, Chen, & Sung, 2002, p.10). Only the reading materials were provided to the students in the map generation group.

The study results showed that the map-correction group performed better on the text comprehension and text summarization posttests than did the scaffold-fading or other groups. It also found that the scaffold-fading group performed much better than the map-generation and control groups on the text summarization posttest but showed no significant difference on the text comprehension posttest (Chang, Chen, & Sung, 2002). The authors explain that the students in the map-correction group performed better because the map-correction scaffolding provided a content framework for and a reminder of the content in the text. The authors go on to explain that the finding regarding the scaffold fading group was not consistent with the findings of "…Day and Cordon (1993) and Kao (1996) that the scaffolding instruction method had better direct and transferring effects than general teaching methods…"(Chang, Chen, & Sung, 2002, p. 20). They cite two factors that may have affected the outcome of their study and generated the inconsistent findings. First, they state that, "… the operations performed after the scaffolding was removed may still have been too difficult for elementary school students" and secondly there "…may have been the lack of sufficient time for training" (Chang, Chen, & Sung, 2002, p. 20).

They conclude that the scaffolds provided by the map-correct method (framework and partial information) seem "…to be a more suitable way for conducting concept mapping for elementary students" (Chang, Chen, & Sung, 2002, p. 19) than the other methods, scaffold-fading or map generation. However any form of concept mapping (scaffolding) "…may serve as a useful graphic strategy for improving text learning" (Chang, Chen, & Sung, 2002, p. 21).

Scaffolding instruction guides the learner to independent and self-regulated competence of skills. This occurs when the learner's inner speech occurs on an automatic, unconscious level (Ellis, Larkin, Worthington, n.d.). In addition to improving learners' cognitive abilities, scaffolding instruction in the context of classroom learning and student research:

1. Delivers efficiency – Since the work is structured, focused, and glitches have been reduced or eliminated prior to initiation, time on task is increased and efficiency in completing the activity is increased.
2. Creates momentum – Through the structure provided by scaffolding, students spend less time searching and more time on learning and discovering, resulting in quicker learning (McKenzie, 1999).

**2.4. Advantages and Disadvantages of Scaffolding**

One of the primary benefits of scaffolding instruction is that it engages the learner. The learner does not passively listen to information presented instead through teacher prompting the learner builds on prior knowledge and forms new knowledge. In working with students who have low self-esteem and learning disabilities, it provides an opportunity to give positive feedback to the students by saying things like "…look what you have just figured out!" This gives them more of a can do versus a "this is too hard" attitude. This leads into another advantage of scaffolding in that if done properly, scaffolding instruction motivates the student so that they want to learn.

Another benefit of this type of instruction is that it can minimize the level of frustration of the learner. This is extremely important with many special needs students, who can become frustrated very easily then shut down and refuse to participate in further learning during that particular setting.

Scaffold instruction is individualized so it can benefit each learner. However, this is also the biggest disadvantage for the teacher since developing the supports and scaffolded lessons to meet the needs of each individual would be extremely time-consuming. Implementation of individualized scaffolds in a classroom with a large number of students would be challenging. Another disadvantage is that unless properly trained, a teacher may not properly implement scaffolding instruction and therefore not see the full effect. Scaffolding also requires that the teacher give up some of the control and allow the students to make errors. This may be difficult for teachers to do. Finally the teachers' manuals and

curriculum guides that I have been exposed to do not include examples of scaffolds or outlines of scaffolding methods that would be appropriate for the specific lesson content. Although there are some drawbacks to the use of scaffolding as a teaching strategy the positive impact it can have on students' learning and development is far more important.

# CHAPTER III. RESEARCH PLAN

The present chapter describes the research design and methodological steps and procedures used to carry out in this study. It describes in detail, the participants, data collection instruments, procedures, methods of data analysis, etc. that were involved in the investigation.

## Participants

The sample consisted of twenty two students in the Year 1 of UzSWLU. All students had been studying English for a total of 7 years, and the average classroom level was intermediate.

## 3.1. Data collection

Qualitative research techniques were employed in the case study, since research questions pointed to the need to gain access to “a wealth of detailed information” (Patton, 2002:14), and to “processes and meanings” that are difficult to measure (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994:4). The following techniques of qualitative data collection were used: a) semi-structured interviews, b) group discussion, and c) direct observation.

## 3.2. Understanding scaffolding in educational research

The interpretation of scaffolding in current educational practice and research is exceedingly diverse (Jacobs 2001; Hammond 2002). As pointed out by Stone (1998), Vygotsky never used the metaphor of scaffolding in his work (as it would not have made sense to a Russian-speaking person). It is no surprise that the implementation and operationalisation of the scaffolding metaphor in educational research is inconsistent and it "is sometimes used loosely to refer to rather different things" (Hammond 2002, pg2).

In a wide sense, scaffolding has been interpreted as "a form of support for the development and learning of student and young people" (Rasmussen 2001, pg570).

The term can be used as an umbrella metaphor to describe the way that "teachers or peers supply students with the tools they need in order to learn" (Jacobs 2001, pg125). The framework of systematic theory, in conjunction with a number of other educational theories (Jacobs 2001; Rasmussen 2001) enriches the context of implementation of the scaffolding metaphor but makes it more generic. Hammond and her colleagues (2002) argue that extended understanding of scaffolding in language and literacy education is needed. They point out the crucial role of language in scaffolding.

A more specific study of scaffolding is presented by Donovan and Smolkin (2002). They take a critical look at the issue of scaffolding in student's writing. They research the role of different levels of scaffolding in student's understanding and demonstration of their knowledge of genre. Tasks range from those that provide minimal or low level support to those that provide middle or high levels of support (contextual and visual support). Interestingly, the highest level in their classification of scaffolding is described as a "direct instruction with revision" (Donovan & Smolkin 2002, pg435). Their research revealed that while scaffolding can assist student it may also, at times, hinder student in demonstrating their full range of genre knowledge (Donovan & Smolkin 2002, pg428). In particular, scaffolding at its "highest" level, when maximum assistance was provided, proved to be hindering for student's learning. This finding confirms our concern that scaffolding, when understood as direct instruction, might become counterproductive. The ways that the essential characteristics of optimal scaffolding are defined need to be further analysed.

There is a variety of definitions of scaffolding presented in the texts for pre-service educators (e.g., Berk 2002; Eggen & Kauchak 1999; McDevitt & Ormrod 2002; Krause et al., 2003). For example, Laura Berk describes scaffolding as ***"A changing quality of support over a teaching session in which adults adjust the assistance they provide to fit the child's current level of performance. Direct instruction is offered when a task is new; less help is provided as competence***

***increases"*** (Berk 2000, pg 261). This definition indicates that direct instruction is at the top level of scaffolding. Some other texts focus on the techniques of scaffolding as various forms of adult support: demonstration; dividing a task into simpler steps; providing guidelines; keeping attention focused (McDevitt & Ormrod 2002) as well as providing examples and questioning (Eggen & Kauchak 1999). Breaking content into manageable pieces seems to be a common feature of scaffolding that has been emphasised in the texts (Berk 2002; Eggen & Kauchak 1999; McDevitt & Ormrod 2002; Krause et al., 2003).

### 3.3. The view of scaffolding by the students of the Year 1: as case study

The quality of teacher involvement in education has been largely associated with scaffolding. Indeed, the metaphor of scaffolding based in socio-cultural theories and widely accepted by educators, can be an effective tool in meeting the Government agendas of nurturing life-long learners. However, there is need for a better, critical understanding of the nature of scaffolding based on a broader awareness of its theoretical underpinnings to ensure its beneficial use.

The project, supported by the University of World Languages in Tashkent, aimed to examine current perceptions of scaffolding by students and their students, both in its conceptual and practical implications. A survey was run with the students in their first year of study English language at the university. The purpose of the survey was to explore understanding of the main characteristics of scaffolding, its theoretical underpinnings and its value in their professional practice. Participation in the survey was voluntary. Forty five students participated in the study. The survey was run as part of the students' study of the theories of teaching and learning. It was conducted as an introduction to the study of socio-cultural theory of Vygotsky and scaffolding techniques. It was explained to the students that their participation in the survey was beneficial for them, as it would help their further study of the topic. The background to this is that the students were introduced to the socio-cultural theory of child development in the first year of their

undergraduate study at the university; they also looked into scaffolding techniques when studying the teaching of a variety of curriculum areas.

The survey included a number of open-ended questions that invited the students to discuss the following issues: how scaffolding is better defined and what value it has for their future teaching; how scaffolding is different from traditional teaching techniques and what are its key characteristics. The responses were coded in accordance with the key characteristics of scaffolding as identified by socio-cultural theorists and researchers which were summarised above (eg active position of the child, joint activity, tool mediation, indirect instruction). Also a number of other features were identified as they emerged from the students' answers. This chapter focuses on generic understanding of scaffolding by teacher students. The data related to scaffolding numeracy was presented elsewhere. Students' responses demonstrated that they valued scaffolding as a helpful technique for their future teaching. All the participants were familiar with the concept of scaffolding and believed it was a teaching technique significantly different to those of a traditional classroom. Their explanations of such differences present a great variety of answers, some being more popular and more in depth than others.

A significant number of students demonstrated an understanding of the importance of the active position of the learner in scaffolded teaching. The following answers were typical:

I think scaffolding is giving the student a more active role in their learning as opposed to teacher directed learning (giving students answers without letting them work it out for themselves) (Jumanazarova Zuhra).

Traditional classroom instruction can see the teacher providing answers without giving the learner an opportunity to discover/understand for him/herself (Botirova Zebo).

A learner can learn to do something self-sufficiently by having an adult assist them when they are still struggling; to help the child make sense of what they are doing so they can use this assisted knowledge next time – thus leading to independence (Mamajonova Mehriniso).

Mostly important this notion was for Year 1 students, for example:

Traditional classroom instruction is when teacher directed. So the teacher stands up the front and teaches the student. Scaffolding is student directed so the learner determine their journey of education, the teacher bases their curriculum on the learner's interests and knowledge as they build knowledge in the student, firstly with a lot of support and slowly stepping back as the student progress and learn (Muminova Kamila).

Recognition of the active position of the learner in scaffolding is highly important as it is an essential part of teaching in the zone of proximal development and is a condition of becoming an independent learner in the future. To achieve this, the characteristics of teacher-learner interaction should be considered.

Learning in social interactions with other people was an essential characteristic of scaffolding pointed out by most of the students. A central feature of such interactions was a joint activity in which teacher and the learner engage. The following responses reflect the social dimensions of working in a group:

It is more of a team effort between teacher and student. They work together rather than being majority teacher directed. Traditional classroom instruction is just giving the students work, telling them how to do it and that is it. Scaffolding is building on the work that has been given and doing it together.

The quality of teacher-learner interactions in scaffolding was explained in a number of different ways.

The students' answers ranged from understanding elaborated scaffolding techniques to a generic and sometimes confused responses. Some of the students

pointed out the importance of indirect instruction such as prompting, hinting, guidance and support:

It means teachers aren't spoon feeding students. The students are guided, supported and even led at times, though they are putting in the effort too. (Nasimova Shahnoza)

I value it because it gives teenagers confidence in what they are doing because they think they are doing it on their own, but teachers are there to help and teach when the teen stumbles (Izzat Turaev).

Scaffolding is "teaching by letting the student to discover things themselves, prompting and hinting them in the right direction rather than just telling them" (Raximova Go'zal).

Other students, however, have difficulties in pronouncing the quality of interaction in scaffolding and described it in general terms. For example, the following definitions are quite uncertain in what scaffolding actually is and what kind of support it includes:

Providing a learner with support to help them achieve success in a particular task (Raximov Sherzod).

A teacher/tutor etc. is alongside the learner as a task is being tackled; areas of weakness can be identified immediately and applied to the task at hand. There is no postponement in advising the student on ways to build upon their knowledge (Salomova Hurshida).

I think scaffolding is the way that teachers help student to understanding their tasks appropriately and direct them and keep student on track of doing the tasks (Karimova Shahnoza)

In some cases the difference between scaffolding and a traditional classroom instruction was not clearly explained. In fact, the descriptions of scaffolding tended

look very similar to those of a direct instruction. For example, the following answers were typical:

I think scaffolding means that help the students to structure the reading. I think scaffolding is the way that teachers help student to understanding their tasks properly and direct them and keep them on track of doing the tasks (Ismatullaev Shavkat).

Providing information to develop speaking skill/knowledge (Mirzamatov Husan).

Interestingly, modeling and breaking the tasks into smaller pieces were popular instructional techniques which students highlighted as important attributes of scaffolding. Breaking the task down into smaller, easy to manage pieces and steps appeared to be attractive to students. For example, they stated:

Scaffolding is a technique that uses steps to gradually develop learning. Scaffolding breaks tasks down into manageable steps so it does not become overwhelming (Sharipova Shahnoza).

Scaffolding – breaking tasks down and being more explicit with the teaching of the steps (Toxirov Olimjon).

I think that scaffolding means breaking up the material into parts (as in a scaffolded story when questions are asked to enable the story to continue) (Malika).

Scaffolding supports students to progress at a level comfortable for them and learning is progressive, that means that they're learning little bits at a time in order to develop understanding (gulmira).

Modelling and demonstration techniques were also often mentioned as important for scaffolding:

When a teacher refers to scaffolding, it is my understanding that they are referring to the way in which they support their students learning through a combination of

demos followed up by teacher-supported activities. Through demonstrations teachers are able to expound how an activity is to be completed through visual stimulus rather than simply issuing a task and expecting the student to know what is required of them (Jamila). It means when, for example, a child says 'cat' and the adult replies 'Yes, that's a cat'. The adult scaffolds or models the correct response and this enables the child to repeat it and develop their skills" (Fazliddin).

It is not a surprise that the above techniques of modeling and breaking the tasks into smaller pieces were attractive to the students as they are easy to grasp and implement. Unfortunately, they do not constitute the essence of scaffolding and can be used as part of any teaching style, for example, a classroom based in the ideas of traditional behaviorism.

Only some students directly connected scaffolding to the notion of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). However, even though the students made an explicit connection to the ZPD, they mostly referred to its definition only, that is the distance between independent and assisted performance.

The most frequently mentioned technique was challenging the learner to perform at a higher level of their ability. The following examples illustrate this point:

I would express scaffolding as demonstration and encouraging people to work in their zone of proximal development that is working outside their comfort zone to increase their knowledge and improve tasks. When a teacher says, 'I scaffolded my student's reading', it means that s/he demonstrated and showed the student how to read and then helped the student by prompting, giving positive feedback and making them read stories that are just a little harder, so to improve their reading (Mirsobir).

I would describe scaffolding as a teacher helping a student by pushing the student to work at a higher level by providing the student with an answer so that the student can then continue working at their own level (nodira).

In the example above, it was obvious, that the use of this characteristic of the ZPD only, did not help in explaining the difference between scaffolding and a direct transfer of the knowledge to the learner.

A technique of changing of the amount of support while the learner is gaining the expertise was mentioned by a number of students:

I think it is the amount of help you provide the students in completing the task. Depending on their abilities, more or less scaffolding may be required to enable students to gain understanding (DILFUZA).

It permits students to develop skills over time, working from what they can do with a lot of support to what they can do with a little help and finally towards independent mastery of the skill being taught: begin with a lot of support from the teacher; slowly remove support; remove support until there is no provision and the students are working independently (AZIZA).

The above technique is an essential characteristic of scaffolding as it refers to the changing level of learner's expertise and moving from shared to independent performance. However, a point of carefulness is in choosing the exact amount of help required for the students to be actively engaged in the task.

Motivation, engaging activity which can make student interested and therefore actively involved in the task are practically not mentioned, was not mentioned at all, even though it is one of the essential characteristics of active engagement in the task.

Just few students cited some more in depth characteristics of scaffolding. For example, one student saw scaffolding as a technique that offers new learners with cultural tools that are essential for becoming an independent learner:

It is more of a support, individual than just a class tutoring. It is giving the student the tools they need to make out the text (Malika).

Another student emphasized such a subtle but crucial characteristic of scaffolding as knowledge construction and consolidation:

Habitually one teacher would instruct a class how to add numbers together, for example, and then give them a worksheet to do it for them. The child has to précis the information the first time in order to be able to fulfill the task. In scaffolding the child is working in the ZPD and can work above their own understanding in order to gain understanding (Zamira).

The lack of awareness of some in depth characteristics of scaffolding indicated that the students might have some difficulties in understanding them and more explicit connections of scaffolding to the theory needed to be made.

### 3.4. Interventions to develop foreign language speaking skills

Having established the sources for their English language speaking anxiety, the following classroom interventions were implemented, to help them overcome it:

**Project work** **Short-term projects**

were used due to the following benefits of project work in foreign language settings cited in the literature: a) students are more personally involved, so they usually have increased motivation (Lee, 2002), b) they do not feel that they are constantly assessed, and c) it is easier for them to focus on communication, rather than on accuracy, and are less concerned with language errors and the consequences of "imagined failure" (MacIntyre, Noels, and Clement, 1997: 269). An additional advantage of project work is that students have an active role and responsibilities in the implementation of project work, which can boost their confidence and reduce the effect of perceptions of low ability in the target language.

### 3.5. Establishing a learning community and a supportive classroom atmosphere

Creating a learning community that provides the environment for "optimal motivation" (Alderman, 2004), and a "collaborative atmosphere" (Gregersen, 2003:30) can help reduce fear of errors. The following classroom interventions were made, drawing principally on suggestions for creating a supportive learning classroom community (Brophy, 2004; Dornyei, 2001).

**Teacher-students relations**

A set of classroom rules and norms was negotiated with the students. Making fun of a wrong answer was not accepted, and a norm of "mistake tolerance" was ratified. Errors were considered a natural part of learning a foreign language, and students were encouraged to ask for help without running the risk of embarrassment (Dornyei, 2001). In addition, teaching practices communicated expectations of success for all students. For example, as far as grouping practices were concerned, groups were formed from mixed ability students, students were given equally academically challenging tasks, and the same questioning strategies were used for all students (Alderman, 2004), so that they realized that there was no differential treatment with respect to their language performance and out-of-school support.

**Providing indirect, rather than direct correction**

We avoided direct, on the spot correction in speaking activities, since it can undermine students' confidence, and because it discourages learners who are anxious about "sounding silly" to experiment with new language (Lightbown and Spada, 1999). We also tried to foster the belief to anxious students that they should aim at continuing a speaking activity, despite making errors. For example, we provided ***scaffolding so that the students had an opportunity to continue speaking*** despite making a mistake. Scaffolding included cognitive modeling, in which we explained the steps necessary for task completion. Alternatively, prompts and questions were provided in order to foster the development of repair strategies in case of a breakdown in communication.

Behaviour that could be considered a threat to these students' social image and a potential source of anxiety was avoided. For example, information about students' test scores was kept private and was not announced to the whole classroom, while portfolios were used to evaluate their progress. These measures aimed at reducing preoccupation with fear of negative evaluation, which can lead to withdrawal from activities that "could increase their language skills"

(Gregersen and Horwitz, 2002: 563).

**Teacher immediacy**

Both verbal (use of humor, use of students' first names) and nonverbal (eye contact, positive gestures) types of immediacy behavior were employed, since they can reduce anxiety and impact positively on motivation to learn (Christophel, 1990; Frymier, 1993).

**Provision of praise**

We soon realized that praising these students in front of their classmates for a minor accomplishment had a negative effect, since they considered it as an indication that the teacher had little confidence in their abilities (Thompson, 1997). As a result, non-verbal praise (e.g. a positive head movement) was most often used, instead of direct verbal praise.

### 3.6. Evaluation of effectiveness of interventions

The effectiveness of the interventions was assessed on the basis of a) students' willingness to participate in speaking tasks, and b) language performance in speaking activities at the end of the school term. Willingness to engage in speaking activities is considered important, because unless students have ample opportunities to practice oral fluency and accuracy skills, they will not develop these skills. To measure willingness, a classroom diary was kept in which these students' willingness to participate in speaking tasks was recorded. Research findings provided strong evidence that at the end of the school term these anxious

students were significantly more willing to participate in speaking activities. Apart from being willing to participate, these students did not avoid eye contact with the teacher, as they did at the beginning of the school term. Avoiding making eye contact with the teacher is a typical non-verbal reaction of anxious students (Gregersen, 2003). At the end of the school term, they were looking directly at the teacher more often and for more time. Although non-verbal communication is not as straightforward as encoded language, we attribute the change in eye contact patterns to the fact that they felt more relaxed, and eager to take part in speaking tasks.

With respect to English language speaking performance, these students showed improvement. We recorded the progress of these students and their performance in speaking tasks. Performance was measured in terms of both accuracy and fluency in a speaking test conducted at the end of the research. Although a similar speaking test was not conducted at the beginning of the school term, improvement was evident for these students. More specifically, most students' accuracy, their "ability to produce grammatically correct sentences" (Richards, Platt, and Weber, 1985: 109) increased, mainly in relation to the use of tenses and prepositions. They still made errors, however, but in most instances this did not stop them from trying to communicate. Their fluency, that is, "natural language use" (Brumfit, 1984: 56) also increased. At the end of the school year they exhibited many characteristics of fluency, such as increased ability to concentrate on content rather than form, and increased conversational speed, compared to the beginning of the school term. They also showed more qualities of natural speech, such as more appropriate use of intonation and stress, ability to produce continuous speech without breakdown of communication, which, among others, are major parameters of language fluency (Richards, Platt, and Weber, 1985: 108-109). Finally, their tendency to revert to their mother tongue when they encountered difficulty disappeared almost completely. Instead, they tried to express themselves in English, using gestures when necessary, and they developed the strategy of asking the teacher for help.

We attribute the greater part of the improvement in speaking accuracy and fluency to project work, which provided them with ample opportunities to practice language in a "natural" setting, negotiate for meaning, and helped them to develop strategies on getting their message across despite language difficulties. In accordance with Gregersen and Horwitz, we found that their suggestion that "anxious students could be taught to focus on continuing a conversation as a goal in itself whenever they make mistakes", can be facilitated by project work (Gregersen and Horwitz, 2002: 570).

At this point, two points need to be clarified. First, the above interventions do not constitute "ideal" interventions to reduce foreign language speaking anxiety. They are simply an attempt to move from theory to practice, focusing on a specific learning situation. In addition, it is not suggested that interventions were necessarily successful. For example, two students showed minimal improvement in willingness to engage in speaking activities and their speaking performance increased slightly. It seems that more individualized measures were needed, since what is effective for an anxious student may not be necessarily effective for another.

## FINAL REFLECTIONS

The results of this study show that, on the whole, students were aware of the practice of scaffolding and appreciated its potential use in their day-to-day teaching. The participants saw the scaffolding metaphor as a useful concept that allows students to move away from the direct instruction of a traditional classroom and search for a richer and more sophisticated educational tool.

While experiencing the need to find an alternative to the traditional forms of educational instruction, student teachers look for a variety of new teaching techniques that are provided by modern pedagogy.

They demonstrated understanding of the differences in the quality of teacher-student interaction when scaffolding approach is used as opposed to direct instruction. A variety of indirect techniques such as questioning, hinting and prompting were mentioned. However, a few participants expressed confusion about the quality of teacher-student interaction. In addition, a high proportion of students' responses suggested a lack of understanding of the relationship between learning environment provided by the teacher and its impact on student's use of prior knowledge.

The majority of student teachers displayed understanding of some basic techniques of scaffolding such as breaking the tasks into smaller pieces, modeling and demonstration, which are relatively easy to grasp and implement. The more complex levels of scaffolding did not receive much attention in students' responses. Just a small number of answers indicated students' awareness of some in depth scaffolding characteristics such as quality of teacher-student interaction and acquisition of cultural tools. The lack of students' awareness of such characteristics of scaffolding suggested that they might have difficulties in their understanding. These results seem to suggest that students lack a clear understanding of the conceptual basis of scaffolding practices and there is a need to implement teaching strategies which could assist such an understanding. The

understanding of the theoretical principles of scaffolding will allow students to anchor their repertoire of scaffolding techniques provided by recent research. Over the past two decades, an increasing number of educators have used the concept of scaffolding to describe and explain the role that teachers can play in guiding student's learning and development.

This chapter presented an analysis of the metaphor of scaffolding in its connection to the theory of Vygotsky, and the zone of proximal development in particular, as its theoretical basis. In spite of the obvious limitations of the metaphor compared to the concept of the ZPD, the notion of scaffolding remains increasingly popular among educators - researchers and practitioners. The term appears in the most modern educational psychology textbooks for students which cover the theory of Vygotsky.

The case study of a group of educational students demonstrated that the scaffolding metaphor is a useful concept that allows students to move away from the direct instruction of a traditional classroom and search for a richer and more sophisticated educational tool. While experiencing the need to find an alternative to the traditional forms of educational instruction, student teachers look for a variety of new teaching techniques that are relatively easy to understand and implement. The scaffolding metaphor provides educators with an easy to grasp justification of the quality of teacher intervention in student's learning. However, due to its metaphorical nature of the term, scaffolding has a potential to be interpreted as any kind of help in general or even as a variation of direct instruction. If scaffolding is understood as direct instruction, it can become a hindrance for student's development as active, self-directed learners. The idea of transformation of shared activity into its individual form is important for becoming a life-long learner. In particular, understanding scaffolding as providing the learners with cultural tools, the appropriation of which enables them to become independent learners. A deeper understanding of the theoretical underpinning of the scaffolding metaphor will promote its creative and informed use by educators. In addition, the attributes that

characterise scaffolding as different to other kinds of instruction need to be articulated.

After data was collected, we found that six of these students were experiencing English language speaking anxiety as a result of: a) fear of negative evaluation from their peers and b) perception of low ability in relation to their peers. Their anxiety was attributed to the above factors, on the basis of the following.

First, these students were unwilling to participate in speaking activities. While a number of factors can potentially account for this, research showed that their unwillingness was not due to the fact that they did not realise the value of learning English, laziness, or lack of interest in the English language. These students' narratives provided strong evidence that they did not participate in speaking activities, because they believed that they were not good at speaking. Consequently, they feared that their fellow students would evaluate them negatively. As Nargiza, a highly anxious student reported:

"I like English, but don't take part in speaking, because I'm so bad at speaking, and my friends will laugh at me."

Nargiza's text highlights her concern with her social image and her preoccupation with how her peers would perceive her. Another source of fear of negative evaluation was the belief that they should produce faultless sentences. This finding seems consistent with Gregersen's (2003) suggestion that anxious learners tend to focus on form rather than content. All of these anxious students feared that mistakes in speaking activities would destroy their social image as able students. Nodir, a highly anxious boy describes feelings created by his exaggerated focus on avoiding language mistakes:

"When I speak I always make an awful lot of mistakes, and I don't like it. That's why I use Uzbek when I'm not sure of what to say. I also speak very slowly to

avoid mistakes. If you listen to me speaking English, you'd think I'm not clever, but it is not so."

Fear of negative evaluation from their peers was also evident by the following characteristic, which was common to most of the above students. When asked to participate in speaking tasks with the teacher only, without their fellow students listening to them, these anxious students were markedly more willing to participate and experiment with language.

Apart from anxiety due to fear of negative evaluation from their peers, all anxious respondents compared their speaking skills negatively in relation with their peers. As an anxious girl commented:

"You listened to them (fellow students), didn't you? They speak English as if it's Uzbek. They're so much better than me. It's better if I just listen and not speak."

The language here is one of desperation and low self-confidence. Not unsurprisingly, this student was withdrawn and silent during speaking activities.

Teachers should realise that language learning, and particularly oral production, is a potentially stressful situation for some students, and that the "tension and discomfort related to language learning call for the attention of the language teaching profession" (Horwitz, 2001: 122). The recommendations we make are consistent with previous studies suggesting that teachers should not be consider withdrawn students as lazy, lacking in motivation, or having "poor attitude" (Gregersen, 2003: 30), when in fact they suffer from anxiety. Instead, they should identify anxious learners and make interventions to help them overcome foreign language anxiety (Aida, 1994).

Because foreign language speaking anxiety in the English classroom may stem from fear of making mistakes and the consequent fear of negative evaluation, and students' perception of low ability in relation to their peers, we suggest that teachers may want to consider the following interventions. First, teachers can

incorporate project work, because it can provide anxious and non-anxious students alike with abundant opportunities to use language in a non-threatening context. We argue that the first step in reducing anxiety is to actually have students participate in speaking tasks. Because students are more eager to participate in oral activities in small groups (Young, 1990), project work can be very helpful. Second, the creation of a friendly classroom atmosphere is important. The case study presented in this article showed that a supportive classroom atmosphere, in which language errors are considered as natural in the process of language acquisition, without overcorrection which can "draw students' attention away from communication and toward a focus on form and accuracy" (Gregersen, 2003: 31), can be instrumental in helping anxious students overcome their perception of low ability and fear of negative evaluation. The final conclusion is that teachers need to assume the role of the researcher in their own classrooms. Before employing strategies to help students overcome foreign language speaking anxiety, foster motivation, and increase foreign language performance, practitioners should get to know their students, their attitudes toward oral production, and to shed light into the reasons that underlie their low performance and their unwillingness to engage in speaking activities. It is suggested that "teacher as a researcher" approach is an invaluable tool. Such an approach, which brings together theory and practice, can have positive effects both on the professional development of English teachers and on students' anxiety levels, motivation and language acquisition.

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# APPENDIX

## SCAFFOLDING SPEAKING

1. How would STUDENTS define scaffolding?

2. How do TEACHERS use scaffolding in their lessons?

3. What are the characteristics of students who suffer from foreign language speaking anxiety?

4. What are the sources of foreign language speaking anxiety?

5. Can the incorporation of project work and a supportive classroom atmosphere help these students overcome their anxiety?

## TIPS ON USING SCAAFFOLDING

Scaffolding and differentiation do have something in common though. In order to meet students where they are and appropriately scaffold a lesson, or differentiate instruction, you have to know the individual and collective zone of proximal development (ZPD) of your learners. (As education researcher Eileen Raymond states, "[T]he ZPD is the distance between what children can do by themselves and the next learning that they can be helped to achieve with competent assistance.")

So let's get to some scaffolding strategies you may or may not have tried yet, or perhaps you've not used them in sometime and just need a gentle reminder on how awesome and helpful they can be when it comes to student learning:

### 1. Show and Tell

How many of us say that we learn best by seeing something rather than hearing about it? Modeling for students is a cornerstone of scaffolding in my experience.

Have you ever interrupted someone with "just show me!" while they were in the middle of explaining to you how to do something? Every chance you have, show or demonstrate to students exactly what they are expected to do.

- Try the fish bowl activity, where a small group in the center are circled by the class as the group in the middle, or fishbowl, engage in an activity, modeling how it's done for the larger group.
- Always show students the outcome or product *before* they do it. If a teacher assigns a persuasive essay or inquiry-based science project, a model should be presented side-by-side with a criteria chart or rubric. You can guide students through each step of the process, model in-hand of the finished product.
- Use think alouds, which will allow you to model your thought process as you: read a text, solve a problem, or design a project. Remember that children's cognitive abilities are still in development so opportunities for them to see developed, critical thinking are essential.

**2. Tap into Prior Knowledge**

Ask students to share their own experiences, hunches, and ideas about the content or concept of study and have them relate and connect it to their own lives. Sometimes you may have to offer hints and suggestions, leading them to the connections a bit, but once they get there, they will grasp it as their own.

Launching the learning in your classroom from the prior knowledge of your students, and using this as a framework for future lessons is not only a scaffolding technique, many would agree it's just plain good teaching.

**3. Give Time to Talk**

All learners need time to process new ideas and information. They also need time to verbally make sense of and articulate their learning with the community of

learners who are also engaged in the same experience and journey. As we all know, structured discussions really work best with children regardless of their level of maturation. If you aren't weaving in think-pair-share, turn-and-talk, triad teams or some other structured talking time throughout the lesson, you should begin including this crucial strategy on a regular basis.

**4. Pre-Teach Vocabulary**

Sometimes referred to as frontloading vocabulary, this is a strategy that we teachers don't use enough. Many of us, myself included, are guilty of sending students all alone down the bumpy, muddy path known as Challenging Text - a road booby trapped with difficult vocabulary. We send them ill prepared and then we are often shocked when they: a) lose interest b) create a ruckus c) fall asleep.

Pre-teaching vocabulary doesn't mean pulling a dozen words from the chapter and having kids look up definitions and write them out (we all know how this will go. Again, see above a, b, and c). Instead, introduce the words to kids in photos, and in context to things they know and are interested in. Use analogies, metaphors and invite students to create a symbol or drawing for each word and give time for discussion of the words (small and whole groups). Not until they've done all this should the dictionaries come out. And the dictionaries will be used only to compare with those definitions they've already discovered on their own.

With the dozen or so words "frontloaded," students are ready, you as their guide, to tackle that challenging text.

**5. Use Visual Aids**

Graphic organizers, pictures, and charts can all serve as scaffolding tools. Graphic organizers are very specific in that they help kids visually represent their ideas, organize information, and grasp concepts such as sequencing and cause and effect.

A graphic organizer shouldn't be The Product, but rather it's a scaffolding tool that helps guide and shape the student's thinking so that they can apply it. Some students can dive right into the discussion, or writing an essay, or synthesizing several different hypotheses without using a graphic organizer of some sort, but many of our students benefit from using them with a difficult reading or challenging new information. Think of graphic organizers as training wheels; they are temporary and meant to be removed.

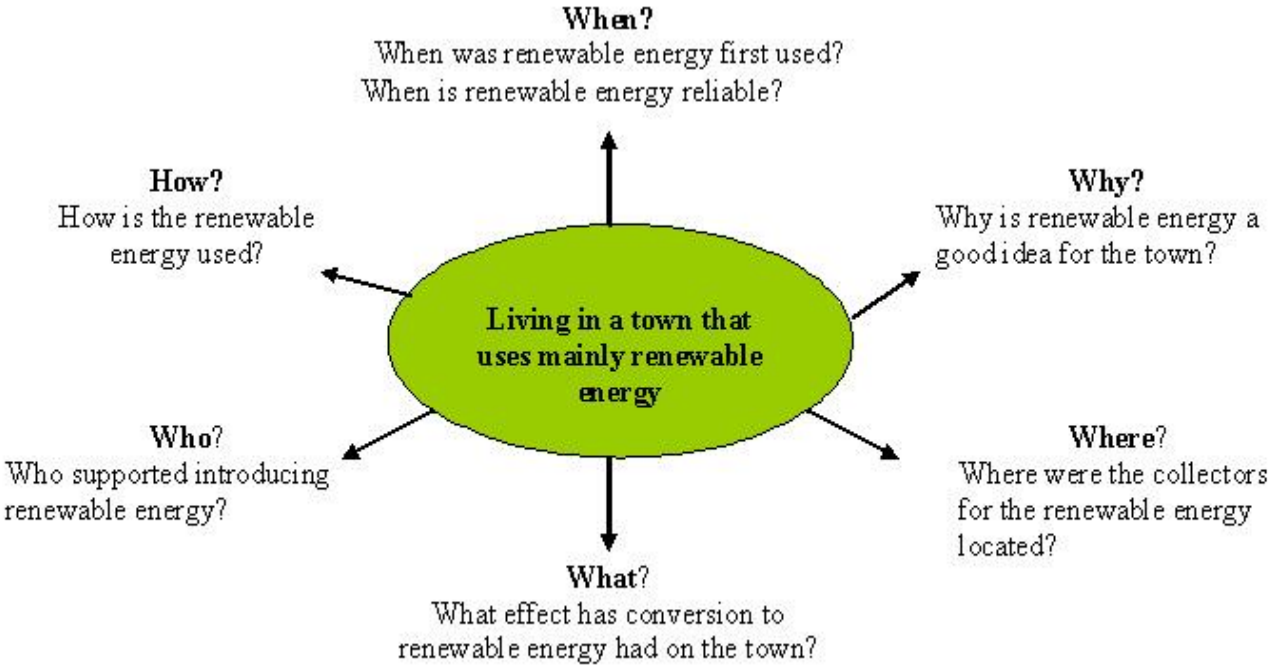
**6. Pause, Ask Questions, Pause, Review**

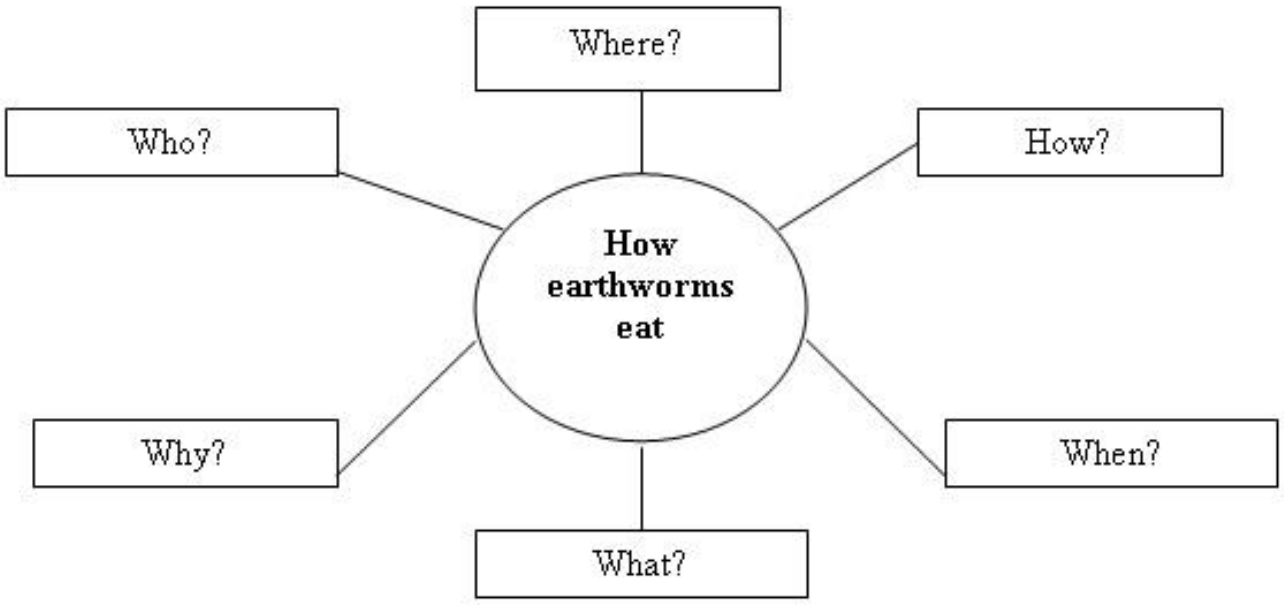
This is a wonderful way to check for understanding while students read a chunk of difficult text or learn a new concept or content. Here's how this strategy works: a new idea from discussion or the reading is shared, then pause (providing think time), then ask a strategic question, pausing again. By strategic, you need to design them ahead of time, make sure they are specific, guiding and open-ended questions. (Great questions fail without giving think time for responses so hold out during that Uncomfortable Silence.) Keep kids engaged as active listeners by calling on someone to "give the gist" of what was just discussed / discovered / questioned. If the class seems stuck by the questions, provide an opportunity for students to discuss it with a neighbor.

**Trying Something New**

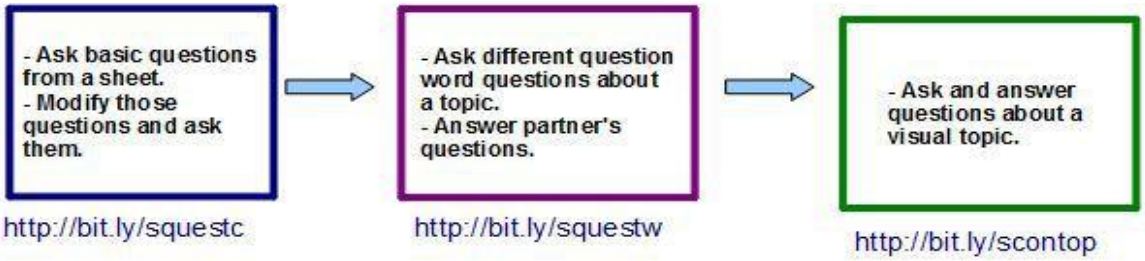
With all the diverse learners in our classrooms, there is a strong need for teachers to learn and experiment with new scaffolding strategies. I often say to teachers I support, you have slowdown in order to go quickly. Scaffolding a lesson may, in fact, take longer to teach, but the end product is of far greater quality and the experience much more rewarding for all involved.

# A SAMPLE OF A SCAFFOLDING MAP



**Scaffold Modern Language Speaking Through Questions for Spontaneous Speaking**




http://bit.ly/squestc http://bit.ly/squestw http://bit.ly/scontop

17 Other Spontaneous Speaking Activities at http://bit.ly/tpthtuttle