

Learners' Potential

Strategies for Making Content Accessible

Second Edition

Diane Staehr Fenner

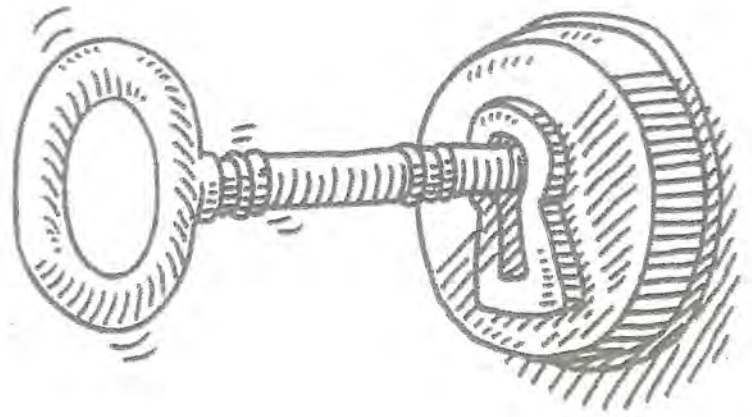
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SCAFFOLDING INSTRUCTION FOR MLs

3

During an end-of-unit assessment, students in Mr. Lee's seventh-grade math class work to solve word problems in which they make comparisons between decimals. As the students solve the problems, they are also expected to explain their thinking in writing. During the assessment, the principal, Ms. McNally, visits the class. She notices that the MLs in the classroom receive various types of scaffolds to support their work. For example, emergent MLs of lower proficiency levels are given sentence frames and word banks, and emergent MLs at higher proficiency levels use sentence stems to support their work.

During her post observation discussion with Mr. Lee, Ms. McNally asks him about these supports and questions whether it is unfair to the non-MLs in the class. Mr. Lee explains that he is assessing students' skills in mathematics and mathematical thinking. The scaffolds, or temporary supports, that he provides MLs give them the language assistance needed in order for them to more accurately demonstrate what they know and can do. He also explains that as the students are given these types of scaffolds during instruction, it would be a significant disadvantage to the students to remove the scaffolds during the assessment. He further explains that his language objective for the unit leading up to the assessment was for students to be able to explain the steps that they used to solve a word problem using key academic vocabulary. As the MLs in his class gain greater language proficiency (including the acquisition of mathematical vocabulary and expressions), he will remove the scaffolds, and the students will be able to complete the work independently. In fact, three emergent MLs in the class took the assessment without any scaffolds because they had demonstrated during instruction that they could explain their thinking without the additional language support.

As we describe in the prior scenario, in order for MLs to meet the challenging demands of content-based instruction and acquire the academic language required to do so, they need instructional supports in the form of scaffolds. Findings by the National Literacy Panel on Language Minority Children and Youth illustrate that

effective instructional practices designed for English-proficient students may be insufficient to meet the learning needs of MLs (August & Shanahan, 2006). This means that MLs require additional types of supports in order to benefit from instruction to the same extent as their English-proficient peers (Goldenberg, 2008). August (2018), in her synthesis of research-based practices for supporting MLs, described the importance of providing both visual supports (e.g., pictures, short videos, graphic organizers) and verbal supports (e.g., glossaries, sentence and paragraph frames) to help MLs learn core content and access the same grade-level content of non-MLs.

This chapter will provide a definition of scaffolds, categories and examples of scaffolds, and strategies for selecting and developing scaffolds based on the academic task and MLs' proficiency levels, as well as other ML background factors. You will also have an opportunity to think about how to select and use scaffolds in your own context. As using scaffolds is a nonnegotiable component of supporting MLs' content and language development, each chapter in this book also includes a variety of scaffolding practices. Throughout this chapter, we indicate specific chapters or pages in the book that you can refer to in order to find out more information on a particular strategy.

What Is a Scaffold?

A scaffold is a temporary support a teacher provides to a student that enables the student to perform a task they would not be able to perform alone (Gibbons, 2015; National Governors Association for Best Practices, CCSSO, 2010). This support could come from the instructional materials and resources provided to the student, the instructional practices the teacher uses, or how students are grouped during instruction. de Oliveira and Westerlund (2023) explain that scaffolding is a dynamic process that is (1) targeted and responsive to learners' performance and needs, (2) involves gradual withdrawing of support as students develop essential knowledge and skills, and (3) is framed around a transfer of responsibility designed to increase student independence and autonomy (van de Pol et al., 2010, as cited in de Oliveria & Westerlund, 2023). The goal of scaffolding is for students to be able to engage with rigorous grade-level content and ultimately to be able to perform academic tasks independently, no longer requiring scaffolds.

Scaffolding includes both **macro (planned scaffolding)** and **micro (in-the-moment, spontaneous scaffolding)** (de Oliveira & Westerlund, 2023). WIDA (2022) describes macroscaffolding practices as occurring "when teachers develop a long-term vision with clear learning goals for their students and sequence lessons that build students' cumulative and coherent body of knowledge" (p. 3). In contrast to macroscaffolding, microscaffolding practices are those that happen spontaneously during interactions between teachers and students (WIDA, 2022).

In support of macroscaffolding practices, J. Hammond (2023) emphasizes that, for MLs, the cumulative nature of scaffolding that results from strategic “selection and sequencing of tasks within and between lessons” is critical (p. 16). In other words, intentionally planning lessons and academic learning tasks that systematically build on one another and provide targeted support related to the content and language skills that MLs need is an essential component of scaffolding. These strategically planned scaffolds will move students toward greater independence in their learning.

Returning to our opening scenario, an example of a macroscaffolding practice is the decision that Mr. Lee made in advance as he was unit planning to brainstorm with students the language that they could use to explain their thinking and to co-create an anchor chart with this language. Mr. Lee also intentionally planned to have students use the anchor chart when they explained how they found solutions to problems. Following the co-creation of the anchor chart, he embedded opportunities for students to practice with this language during whole-group and small-group discussions and also provided opportunities for students to use this language in their math journals. These thoughtfully planned opportunities for academic language use built on each other and allowed Mr. Lee to gradually remove the scaffolds for some MLs. Mr. Lee based the word bank, sentence stems, and sentence frames provided as scaffolds during the assessment to some MLs on the anchor chart that they had co-created in class. However, as not all students needed the anchor chart, he removed it during the assessment. As the other MLs in his class acquire the language used to explain their mathematical thinking, Mr. Lee plans to remove all scaffolds related to this learning goal.

In contrast to the strategically planned scaffolds described above, microsccaffolds are scaffolding practices that teachers instinctively provide during instruction. Examples of microsccaffolding practices include a teacher revoicing what a student said, asking for clarification, building on what students say, or clarifying information (de Oliveira & Westerlund, 2023; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine [NASEM], 2018). These types of “teacher moves” (Michaels & O’Connor, 2015) can strengthen ML participation and understanding. For example, imagine that a student in Mr. Lee’s class is explaining how she solved the problem but is not using the specific academic language that students have been practicing in class. Mr. Lee might ask clarifying questions of the student and also direct her attention to the anchor chart in order to support her in strengthening her response.

Let’s turn our attention now to consider the different types of scaffolding strategies that you can use to support MLs’ understanding of content and academic language development. In Application Activity 3.1, jot down a list of the scaffolds that you use in your classroom or that you see others using. We’ve added an example to get you started. Then, answer the reflection questions that follow.

APPLICATION ACTIVITY 3.1: SCAFFOLDS IN MY CONTEXT

Graphic organizers

APPLICATION ACTIVITY 3.1: REFLECTION QUESTIONS

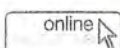


1. What are some scaffolds that work best for the MLs in your classroom or context?

2. What factors do you (or your colleagues) take into consideration when selecting appropriate scaffolds for MLs (e.g., prior schooling, home language literacy), and why?

3. How do you (or your colleagues) differentiate the scaffolding that you provide in order to leverage the strengths and meet the needs of MLs of varying language proficiency levels?

4. What steps do you take to plan for the gradual removal of scaffolds?



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What Are Different Types of Scaffolds?

Instructional scaffolds can be grouped into three main categories: (1) instructional materials, (2) instructional practices, and (3) instructional groupings. **Instructional materials are visual and hands-on teacher-created or teacher-curated resources that students can use to understand content and support language production** such as pictures, sentence stems, or graphic organizers. **Instructional practices are the actions that a teacher takes to support student understanding and engagement** such as modeling language and clarifying concepts. **Instructional groupings are the ways that a teacher can intentionally group students in order to provide peer support, teacher support, and/or differentiated resources.** In discussions of scaffolds, educators often focus on the instructional materials that they use, but it can be very helpful to consider how the three types of scaffolds can work hand-in-hand to strengthen MLs' access to content and language use. Return to the list of scaffolds that you wrote down in Application Activity 3.1. Now, group these scaffolds into the three categories. What do you notice about the types of scaffolds that you listed?

APPLICATION ACTIVITY 3.2: CATEGORIZING SCAFFOLDS

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

INSTRUCTIONAL
GROUPINGS

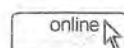
FIGURE 3.1 CATEGORIES OF SCAFFOLDS

CATEGORIES OF SCAFFOLDS	EXAMPLES
Instructional Materials Audio, visual, or hands-on resources created or curated by an educator used to support MLs' engagement with content and language acquisition 	• Amplified texts (texts with embedded supports such as visuals and vocabulary) • Anchor charts • Audio versions of texts • Bilingual dictionaries and glossaries • English dictionaries and glossaries • Graphic organizers • Home language materials • Sentence frames and paragraph frames • Sentence stems • Visuals and manipulatives • Word banks and word walls
Instructional Practices Actions an educator takes to support MLs' understanding of content and engagement during instruction 	• Activating and concisely teaching background knowledge • Clarifying and paraphrasing key concepts • Embedding instruction of vocabulary and academic language structures • Interactive modeling (teacher or student models an activity, language, or skill and all students reflect on what was modeled) • Multimodal and translanguaging opportunities (using a variety of modes to practice content, such as speaking, drawing, hands-on activities; using more than one of MLs' languages for communication) • Practicing academic language with non-academic topics (e.g., practicing language for comparison using a familiar topic) • Reduced linguistic load

CATEGORIES OF SCAFFOLDS	EXAMPLES
Instructional Groupings Intentionally grouping students to provide peer support, teacher support, or differentiated resources aligned to lesson objectives	• Structured pair work • Structured small-group work • Teacher-led small-group work • Examples of intentional groupings: academic skills grouping, home language grouping, language proficiency grouping, mixed proficiency grouping for language modeling and relationship building



Source: Adapted from Table C-1. Supports and Scaffolding Recommendations by Level in the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education (2016).



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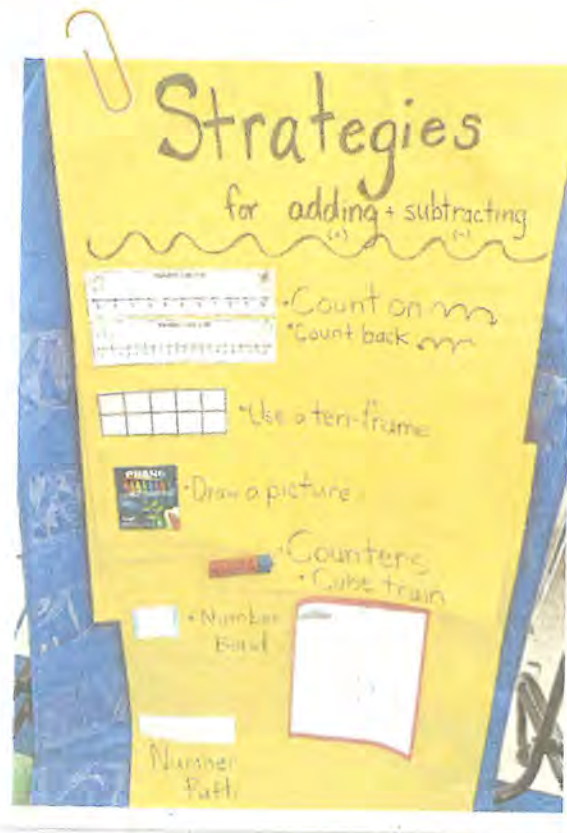
Figure 3.1, “Categories of Scaffolds,” provides examples of each type of scaffold. We have also left space for you to add in your own ideas to the list. In determining which scaffolds to use for a particular unit, lesson, or instructional task, consider which scaffolds would be most effective in each category to leverage the strengths and support the needs of your MLs in meeting content and language objectives. Next, we provide more information on the three categories and examples of scaffolds in each category.

What Types of Instructional Materials Can I Use to Scaffold Instruction?

Instructional materials are the visual and hands-on tools that you can provide to MLs to support them in accessing content, sharing their understanding of content orally or in writing, and developing language.

Amplified texts are instructional materials that can help MLs gain access to essential content knowledge and support their understanding of academic language. While MLs need opportunities to grapple with challenging grade-level texts, there are also times when they will benefit from an amplified text that supports their understanding of content. **An amplified text has embedded supports such as headers and subheaders to chunk texts, embedded definitions of challenging vocabulary, visuals to support understanding, and key information highlighted** (Billings & Walqui, 2021). For more on developing amplified texts, see Chapter 8.

Anchor charts that include examples of target language and language structures that align to your language objectives can support MLs in using this language when speaking and writing. Anchor charts can also support comprehension. As MLs become more familiar with a particular language structure or text structure that is



First-grade students use this anchor chart when explaining the strategy that they used to solve a math problem.

Source: Susan Bitler.

being practiced (e.g., cause-and-effect language), they will also be better prepared to break down or deconstruct complex sentences or texts. Co-creating anchor charts with your class can be an effective way to tap into students' prior knowledge and demonstrate modeled language. In the picture, you can see an anchor chart used by first-grade teacher Susan Bitler to support students in explaining the strategy that they used to solve an addition or subtraction problem in math.

Audio versions of texts can be especially helpful for MLs at lower levels of proficiency and MLs who are emergent readers. Listening to audio versions of texts while following along with the text and looking at accompanying visuals can support comprehension and development of listening and literacy skills.

Bilingual dictionaries and glossaries can be beneficial for students who are literate in their home language. In order to most effectively support MLs, bilingual glossaries should include a translation of each word, student-friendly definitions of key terms, and visual representations of each word, whenever possible. For more information on creating student-friendly definitions, see Chapter 5. Bilingual glossaries can also provide opportunities for students to build their knowledge of **cognates, words in different languages that have the same linguistic derivation** (e.g., *membrane* and *membrana*). Figure 3.2 provides an example of

a bilingual glossary. To use a bilingual glossary during instruction, students can be asked to add underlined words in a text to the glossary. The teacher can provide a student-friendly definition or the class can develop a definition together. The student can be asked to provide the example from the text, include a picture or

FIGURE 3.2 BILINGUAL GLOSSARY EXAMPLE

GLOSSARY				
WORD AND TRANSLATION	ENGLISH DEFINITION	EXAMPLE FROM TEXT	PICTURE OR PHRASE TO REPRESENT THE WORD	COGNATE (YES OR NO)
<i>diagnosis</i> <i>diagnóstico</i>	Identifying an illness or problem	"All she did was give me some stupid 'diagnosis'" (p. 5).		Yes
<i>soul</i> <i>alma</i>	<i>spirit</i>	"The Place Without a Soul—that's what my best friend, Bree, and I decided to call this neighbourhood" (p. 1).		No

Source: Adapted from August, D., Staehr Fenner, D., & Snyder, S. (2014). *Scaffolding instruction for English language learners: Resource guide for ELA*, p. 70. Reprinted with permission of American Institutes for Research. Text quotes from Marquardt, M. (2016). Photographs by iStock.com/FatCamera and iStock.com/recep-bg.

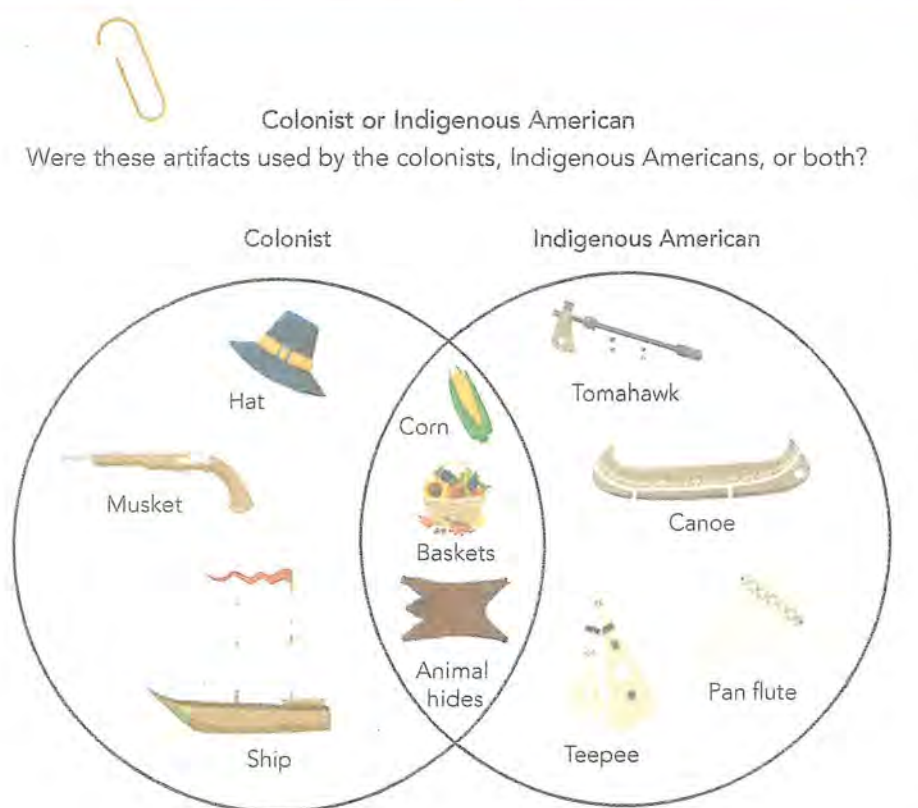
phrase that will support their understanding, and note whether or not the word is a cognate in their home language.

English dictionaries and glossaries can be an effective scaffold for MLs to support them in learning academic vocabulary and engaging with complex texts. English dictionaries (online or paper) are appropriate resources for students who possess literacy skills in English or in their home language. Using an English dictionary is suitable for students who may not be literate in their home language but who have literacy skills in English. It is critical that MLs using an English or bilingual dictionary be provided explicit instruction and guided practice to use the dictionary. The recommendations for creating and using English glossaries are similar to the recommendations for developing bilingual glossaries, but English glossaries do not include translations or cognates.

Graphic organizers can support MLs in a variety of ways, including helping them to organize new information and verbalize the relationships between concepts. You should select which graphic organizer to use based on the task

students are being asked to complete. For example, you would use one type of graphic organizer to introduce a new topic (e.g., concept map) and another type of graphic organizer to support students in discussing the development of a story (e.g., story map). Graphic organizers most likely will need to be used in conjunction with other scaffolds, especially for MLs at lower proficiency levels. The graphic organizer in Figure 3.3 could be used as part of a vocabulary sorting activity to reinforce key vocabulary. Students could then use the scaffold to compare and contrast the experiences of colonists and Indigenous Americans (e.g., both colonists and Indigenous Americans grew corn) orally and in writing.

FIGURE 3.3 GRAPHIC ORGANIZER: EXAMPLE OF VENN DIAGRAM



Source: Adapted from a Venn diagram graphic organizer created using Kidspiration®. Illustrations by iStock.com/Teneresa, iStock.com/Soloveva2686, iStock.com/deepfuze.

Home language materials can be an effective scaffold for some MLs. Instructional practices and materials that capitalize on MLs' home language knowledge and skills have been shown to support them in developing literacy and content knowledge in English (August et al., 2009; Escamilla et al., 2022; Francis et al., 2006; Restrepo et al., 2010). Home language support can be provided in various ways, but you should have a sense of MLs' home language literacy skills

in order to determine how to best build on MLs' home language knowledge and skills. Examples of supporting materials in the home language include bilingual dictionaries (online or print), supplementary texts in the home language, home language translations, home language videos, and appropriate bilingual homework activities. For more information on home language use and resources, see Chapter 2.

Sentence frames and paragraph frames can be useful for MLs at lower levels of language proficiency. **Sentence frames (a complete sentence with spaces for students to fill in missing words)** can be used with word banks to support emergent MLs in responding to content-based questions and participating in oral pair and group work

To support students in producing larger amounts of text, you can provide students with paragraph and essay frames. These longer frames can also be one way to provide a gradual release of support. More structured support can be provided at the beginning of the paragraph or essay frame with the idea that students will need less support as they progress in their writing. In Figure 3.4, you can see how different color fonts are used to distinguish between the sentence frames and the directions for what to include in the blanks. Paragraph frames can also be used in conjunction with graphic organizers, glossaries, or word banks, as appropriate.

FIGURE 3.4 PARAGRAPH FRAME EXAMPLE

Text Analysis Essay

In _____ a central theme was _____.

The author developed the central theme through the use of _____
 _____ (insert literary device). _____ (literary device) is
 _____ (define literary device used).

For example, _____.

(Include an example of the use of the literary device in the text). In this example, the author _____.

(Explain, in your own words, how the author used the device to support the theme).

Another example is when _____.

In conclusion, _____. (Restate your main argument about the central theme of the text and how the author developed the theme).

Sentence stems are similar to sentence frames, but they include only the beginning few words of a sentence. As emergent MLs develop language proficiency, you can transition away from providing sentence frames during instruction and allow for more open-ended responses using sentence stems. Examples of sentence stems are provided in Figure 4.9 in Chapter 4. Both stems

and frames can be codeveloped with students as a way to support authentic language use and increase student autonomy in their learning.

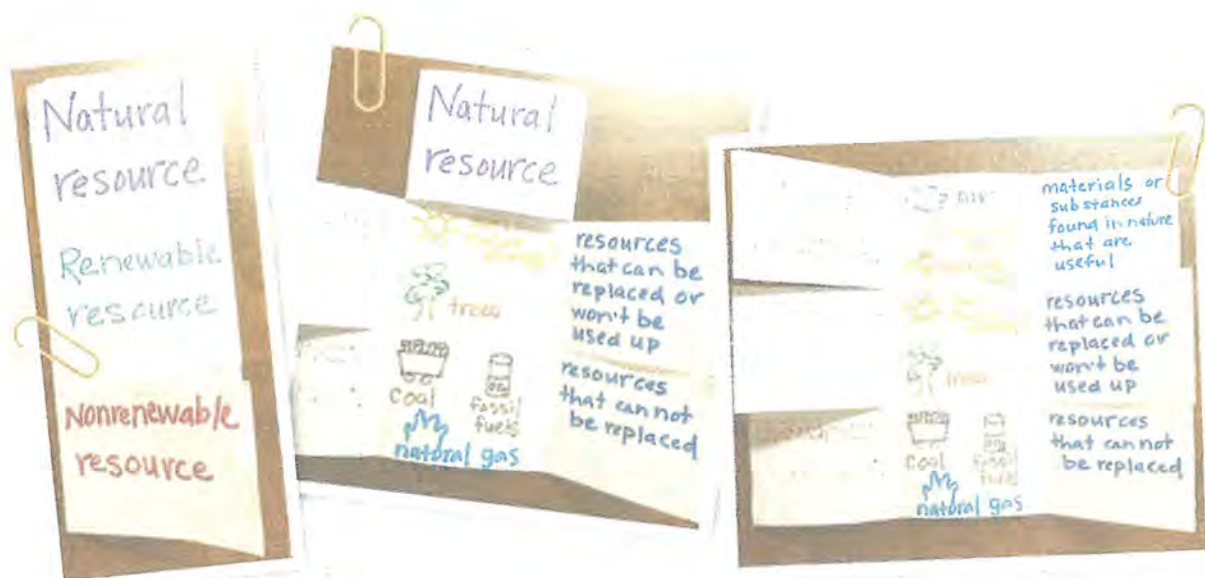
Using visuals and manipulatives to support the understanding of key ideas and vocabulary is another effective tool for MLs. You can use visuals when introducing or reinforcing new vocabulary, when providing concise background knowledge to support understanding of a text, and when learning about a new content topic. Examples of visuals include pictures, videos, and concrete objects (i.e., realia). Figure 3.5 demonstrates how a simple visual can provide a lot of information that students might need when solving a math problem including the name of the coin, what to count by when adding, what it looks like, and different ways to represent the amount.

FIGURE 3.5 VISUAL EXAMPLE FOR MATH



Source: Adapted from a visual created by Amanda Brudecki. Coin image by iStock.com/janzwolinski.

Manipulatives are physical or virtual items that students can touch or move to support learning such as taking part in a card sort activity (e.g., sorting events on a timeline), using counters or base ten blocks for math, or creating a foldable graphic organizer (see the picture of the science foldable). Manipulatives can be effective in helping students conceptualize challenging concepts. Buckley (2023) recommends using “atypical manipulatives” that allow students to share something of themselves. Students can be asked to bring in small objects that they have a connection to, and these manipulatives can be used during a lesson. She encourages educators to listen to the stories that students tell about their objects. Foldables, a student-created manipulative, can incorporate student-created definitions, visuals, and home language translations (if appropriate). They can also provide an easy way for a student to review key concepts.



This science foldable on natural resources is a tool to help students build and practice their understanding of different types of resources. The resource includes a student-friendly definition and some visual examples.

Word banks and interactive word walls can be an effective scaffold for MLs in a variety of tasks. For example, MLs might use word banks or word walls when responding to content questions (orally or in writing). MLs might also refer to word walls or word banks when engaging in other content-based tasks, such as completing a graphic organizer, writing a summary of their understanding of a topic, or engaging in an academic conversation. Word banks and word walls can be developed to be used either with a specific task or in conjunction with a content-based unit. However, they should be developed in tandem with vocabulary instruction and practice. A word wall that is interactive is co-created with students and can also be accompanied by visuals and home language translations whenever possible. Word banks and word walls should not be so lengthy as to overwhelm MLs and prevent their use.

What Instructional Practices Can I Use to Scaffold Instruction?

In addition to providing scaffolded materials, you can also scaffold instruction for MLs through specific instructional practices that are both planned and in-the-moment.

Activating and concisely teaching background knowledge needed for the lesson is an essential scaffold to support MLs in learning new content and engaging with complex texts. MLs may differ from their non-ML peers in terms of the type of content knowledge that they bring to the classroom. Teachers of MLs should determine what background knowledge is necessary for an academic task and how to concisely teach the information needed or draw on students' previous learning and experiences to help set the context for the lesson. Chapter 7 provides in-depth guidance in determining which background knowledge is essential to teach as well as concrete steps for concisely teaching background knowledge.

Clarifying and paraphrasing key concepts is another important instructional scaffold for MLs. While teaching, educators naturally check in with students to confirm understanding. However, MLs can sometimes be overlooked during these comprehension checks and are often hesitant to speak up when they don't understand. As you are teaching, consider how you can build in comprehension checks that will give you a sense of what your MLs understand. For example, whiteboards can be a tool for providing a quick formative assessment with MLs. You should also intentionally build in wait time for students to process and produce language.

Embedded instruction of vocabulary and academic-language structures is a component of effective instruction for MLs (August, 2018). Instruction that includes an intensive focus on a few key vocabulary words across several days and using varied instructional practices has been shown to be highly effective in supporting MLs' understanding of new content (Baker et al., 2014). It is also important for MLs to receive explicit language instruction that goes beyond a focus on words (NASEM, 2018). For example, giving students opportunities to deconstruct challenging academic-language structures and then practice producing similar language structures will support MLs' engagement with complex texts while promoting their language development. Chapters 5 and 6 delve into what academic language is and suggest strategies for teaching and practicing academic language at the word/phrase, sentence, and discourse levels.

Interactive modeling is a highly effective strategy to support ML understanding. We specify "interactive" because we want students to have an active role in reflecting on what was modeled for them. Teachers can model thought processes, language skills, content skills, and learning activities. Imagine during a read-aloud a teacher comes across a challenging word that she thinks many of the students will not know and is important to understanding the text. This teacher might do a think-aloud to talk through what she could do to identify the meaning of the word. For example, she might first sound out the word and say it aloud. She then might look at the word parts to see if those give any clues to understanding the meaning of the word. Next, she might think aloud about the sentence as a whole and what types of words would make sense in the context. After this think-aloud, the teacher could ask the class to share what they noticed about the strategies that she used. She might even use that opportunity to co-create an anchor chart of strategies that students could refer to when doing independent reading. The vignette of Ms. Alvi's

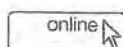
ELD classroom provides an example of how you might model a skill that students will then reflect on and practice.

Ms. Alvi's ELD Classroom: Paragraph Writing

Ms. Alvi teaches a beginner ELD class to fifth- and sixth-grade emergent MLs. In her class, students have been studying community issues and working on developing claims and counterclaims in their writing. In order to help them prepare to write on a community issue of their choice, she has the class construct an idea web, based on an example of littering in local parks. She asks the students to make connections to their experiences with littering in their home countries, explain why littering is an important issue, and discuss how the problem might be addressed by the community. She also asks students to provide challenges that the community could face in trying to address this issue. Once the class has collaboratively developed the idea web, Ms. Alvi models for students how they can transition from a graphic organizer to writing a paragraph. She asks for students to identify the main idea from the web, and she also asks them to identify similar ideas in the web. As a class, they write a sample paragraph on the board. Then, Ms. Alvi asks her students to work in pairs to complete a similar task about their own community issue.

REFLECTION QUESTION

Which strategies do you use to model activities, academic strategies, or skills with your students?



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Multimodal and translanguage opportunities benefit MLs by giving them the opportunity to explore content using multiple modalities and all languages available to them (Grabe, 1991; Grapin, 2018; McLaughlin, 1987; NASEM, 2018). **Modalities refer to the different ways that communication takes place and include nonlinguistic modalities** (e.g., pictures, graphs, symbols, gestures) **and linguistic modalities** (e.g., talk and text) (NASEM, 2018). The WIDA ELD Standards Framework (WIDA, 2020a) states that “multimodality allows all students to use multiple means to engage, interpret, represent, act, and express their ideas in the classroom. For example, as students read, they also might refer to illustrations or diagrams, and as students write, they might also represent their ideas numerically or graphically” (p. 19).

Translanguage, as described in Chapter 2, **is the use of more than one language for communication**. Incorporating translanguage opportunities into lessons allows for students to draw on all their linguistic resources when exploring a topic (Creese & Blackledge, 2010; O. Garcia et al., 2017). To engage students in

using multiple modalities and translanguaging in learning about causes of the U.S. Civil War, for example, students might be asked to:

- watch a video on the Civil War (in English or their home language) and answer questions,
- do a carousel walk to discuss different images from the U.S. Civil War, and jot down their reflections on sticky notes (which could be discussed in English or their home language),
- take part in a jigsaw reading in which each group member reads and shares about a short passage related to the topic, and
- work in peer groups to develop a poster presentation on one cause of the war.

Practicing academic language with non-academic topics is an excellent way to support MLs' language development and use of academic language. For example, if you are working on sequencing language to describe the events of a story, consider teaching a mini language lesson on sequencing words (e.g., first, next, finally) and have students practice by describing a sequence of events in their own life. By focusing explicitly on academic language during the mini lesson, you will provide students a structured opportunity to practice the language that you will later ask them to apply to the academic content.

A reduced linguistic load is a scaffold that can benefit MLs at lower proficiency levels. In order to decrease the linguistic load, paraphrase key concepts using simple and direct language, and write down essential ideas so that emergent MLs can review this information later, as needed. When giving directions, be cognizant of vocabulary or language structures that may be confusing to emergent MLs, and look for opportunities to appropriately reduce the linguistic load while not watering down content. Always try to provide clear directions in writing as well. We are cautious when talking about a reduced linguistic load because we don't want to remove MLs' opportunities to engage with rigorous, academic language. However, adjusting your vocabulary, rate of speech, and sentence complexity based on MLs' levels of proficiency when giving directions, providing examples, and clarifying ideas will support MLs' comprehension (Goldenberg, 2008).

What Instructional Groupings Can I Use to Scaffold Instruction?

In addition to instructional materials and instructional practices, student groupings can be an effective scaffold (Mackey & Gass, 2006; WIDA, 2013). In order to ensure that MLs are benefiting from group work, students will need sufficient structure and guidance in engaging in the pair or group task. Depending on their level of language proficiency, MLs will most likely need other types of

scaffolds to facilitate the task. Further, educators should intentionally group students based on the lesson or unit's learning objectives (Brooks & Thurston, 2010; WIDA, 2013). As you think about how to group students, consider the questions in Figure 3.6 and possible ways of grouping students. We would like to note that these are merely possibilities and are not prescriptive. You know your students best, and we encourage you to use your professional expertise when grouping MLs. You will also want to provide some opportunities for students to choose who they would like to work with.

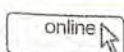
FIGURE 3.6 CONSIDERATIONS IN INTENTIONALLY GROUPING STUDENTS

CONSIDERATION: DO I WANT TO . . .	POSSIBLE GROUPING
Use this time to support emergent MLs in negotiating meaning and building academic language through interactions with English-proficient peers?	Heterogenous grouping of mixed English language proficiency levels and English-proficient students
Provide students with differentiated materials or differentiated learning tasks?	Homogenous grouping based on language proficiency levels, academic skills, or home languages—each group of students will get a different set of materials based on their strengths and needs
Use this time to work with a small group of students on specific content or language skills?	Homogenous grouping based on language proficiency levels and/or academic skills
Provide an opportunity for translanguageing or home language support for MLs?	Homogenous grouping based on home languages
Use students' strengths as a way to support group roles?	Heterogenous grouping based on individual students' strengths to support such group roles as leader, scribe, and reporter
Consider students' background knowledge, interests, personalities, or other factors that may impact group work?	All types of groupings

REFLECTION QUESTIONS



1. What are your takeaways from these considerations in ML student groupings?
2. What other considerations do you use when grouping students?
3. What is a new way of grouping students that you would like to try?



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All of these considerations are valid reasons to group students. What is most important is that you be intentional about how you group students and that your groupings align to your learning and activity objectives and the needs of

your students. For example, you could group MLs with the same home language to work together, thus bringing in home language support that you personally may not be able to provide. Alternatively, you may create mixed-ability or language proficiency pairs or groups in which some students are providing additional support to others or providing language modeling. You can also choose to group students in homogeneous groups in order to provide directed support to students with similar strengths and needs. For example, you could provide targeted mini lessons (e.g., features of academic language or specific language functions) based on the needs of the group. It is important that you draw on students' strengths so that all students can have an opportunity to demonstrate what they can do. You will want to mix up your groups every so often so that students have opportunities to work with different students, practice different skills, and get new perspectives. For more on strategies to support MLs in small groups, please see Chapter 4.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS



Review the list of scaffolds in Figure 3.1, then answer these reflection questions:

1. Which category of instructional scaffolding (i.e., materials, practices, groupings) would you like to strengthen in your context? Why?
2. What step will you take next?

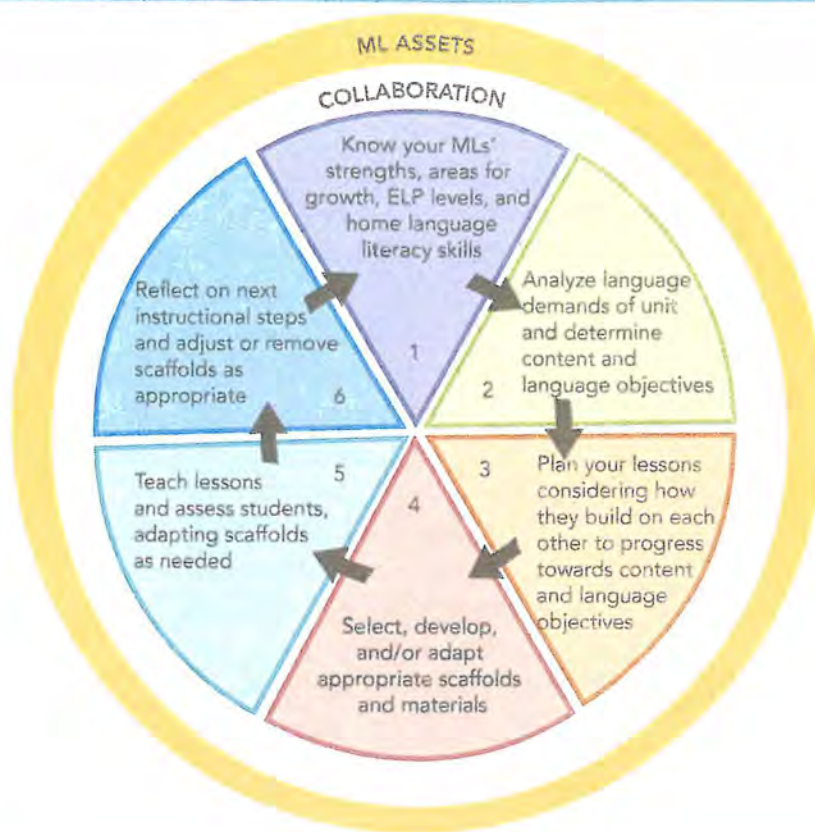


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What Steps Should I Take to Scaffold a Unit?

Planning and preparing to teach differentiated scaffolded units that leverage the strengths and meet the needs of MLs of varying proficiency levels can seem like a daunting task. However, once you gain practice and familiarity with these steps, the process will become an intuitive part of planning. Also, if the thought of differentiating a unit for MLs of varying proficiency levels seems overwhelming, begin by trying one or two scaffolds that will support all of the MLs in your classroom on a particular task or working toward a specific learning goal. As you experiment with different types of scaffolds, your ability to meet the varied needs of the MLs that you work with will grow. Figure 3.7 highlights the six steps we recommend when scaffolding a unit. These same steps can be used when scaffolding an individual lesson or activity. The process is cyclical in order to support ongoing implementation and reflection on scaffolding. This cycle is most effective when implemented within a framework of collaboration (with colleagues and students) and when MLs' assets are used as a foundation for learning.

FIGURE 3.7 SIX STEPS FOR SCAFFOLDING A UNIT



Steps for Developing Scaffolded Units

1. **Know your MLs' strengths, areas for growth, English language proficiency (ELP) levels, and home language literacy skills.**

Scaffolding must be responsive to the particular needs of students and provide the right level of support (Walqui & Schmida, 2023). Before you begin scaffolding units for MLs, you must have an understanding of their backgrounds, strengths, and areas for growth, just as Mr. Lee did in the opening scenario. It may be helpful to keep an index card or use an online tool provided by your school or district to keep track of information on each student that will help you to appropriately scaffold instruction. You could also use the template provided in Chapter 2, Figure 2.3, "What I Know About My ML." In determining appropriate scaffolds, you will want to know the student's home language, level of literacy in their home language and English, educational background, and ELP level. You will also want to consider your student's strengths and needs related to their understanding of the content and language development in order to best determine what supports to provide and how to help students progress toward meeting content and language objectives. Additionally, it is important to consider how you will know when it is time to remove a specific support. You can give a brief preassessment to your students before beginning each unit in order to gauge your students' understanding of content, vocabulary, and language skills. Effective preassessments can

help you determine specific scaffolds that you will need to support student understanding and also how to effectively implement scaffolded units to advance MLs' language development. Chapter 9 provides more information on types of formative assessments that you can use.

2. **Analyze the language demands of the unit and determine the content and language objectives for the unit.** For each unit that you will teach, it is essential that you analyze the academic-language demands of each task. In other words, what will MLs have to do during the unit, and what challenges might they face? Chapter 6 provides specifics on how to analyze the language demands of a text or academic task. Once you understand the language demands of the unit (e.g., academic vocabulary, complex sentences, expectations for language use), you can begin to determine how you will support the MLs in your classroom.

As you consider how to scaffold a specific activity, lesson, or unit, think about the three categories of scaffolds that you may wish to include. It is important to remember the specific needs of your MLs and recognize that their needs will vary depending on the academic task that they are working on. For example, an emergent ML may be testing at an intermediate English proficiency level overall but may need the scaffolded support that is more appropriate for a student at a high beginner level when completing writing tasks because the student needs a greater degree of support in organizing their ideas.

There are no hard and fast rules for selecting appropriate scaffolds for MLs of varying proficiency levels. However, it is important to keep in mind that the goal of scaffolding is to gradually remove scaffolds after providing sufficient structure and support. Ultimately, your MLs should be able to complete academic tasks with the same instructional tools and practices provided to their non-ML peers. That is to say, some scaffolds might be developmentally appropriate for all students (e.g., graphic organizers or pair work) and may be used as supports for the whole class. It is also important to note that an ML's need for a particular scaffold will vary depending on the familiarity of the content and the complexity of the task. For example, a student may be able to draw comparisons between two sports teams the student is familiar with using only sentence stems as a scaffold. However, when asked to draw comparisons between two content-based, grade-level texts read in class, the student may need sentence stems, a word bank, and a graphic organizer in order to be able to successfully complete the task.

Figure 3.8, "Suggested Scaffolds at Each Proficiency Level," provides some general guidelines for selecting scaffolds for MLs at different language proficiency levels. However, it is always important to take into consideration the strengths and needs of your individual MLs when making decisions about scaffolding. For example, students' grade level, amount of background knowledge on a particular topic, and proficiency level within a particular domain (i.e., listening, speaking, reading, and writing) will all influence the need for a particular scaffold.

FIGURE 3.8 SUGGESTED SCAFFOLDS AT EACH PROFICIENCY LEVEL

Key			
Icon	Description		
	Scaffold is critical for MLs to access language and content dependent on task and individual student needs.		
	Scaffold may be necessary for MLs to access language and content dependent on task and individual student needs.		
	Scaffold may be appropriate for MLs to access language and content dependent on task and individual student needs.		

Scaffold	Beginning ELP Level	Intermediate ELP Level	Advanced ELP Level
Activating and concisely teaching background knowledge			
Amplified texts			
Anchor charts			
Audio versions of texts			
Bilingual dictionaries and glossaries			
Clarifying and paraphrasing key concepts			
Embedding instruction of vocabulary and academic-language structures			
English dictionaries and glossaries			
Graphic organizers			
Home language materials			
Intentional student grouping			
Interactive modeling			
Multimodal and translanguaging opportunities			
Practicing academic language with non-academic topics			
Reduced linguistic load			N/A
Sentence and paragraph frames			N/A
Sentence stems			
Visuals and manipulatives			
Word banks and word walls			

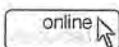
Source: Adapted from August, D., Staehr Fenner, D. & Snyder, S. (2014). *Scaffolding instruction for English language learners: Resource guide for ELA*, p. 25. Reprinted with permission of American Institutes for Research.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS



Review Figure 3.8, and answer the following questions:

1. What takeaways do you have about how to gradually remove scaffolds based on Figure 3.8?
2. Are there any recommendations that you disagree with? Why?



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3. **Plan your lessons considering how they build on each other to progress toward your content and language objectives.** Once you have determined the academic-language demands of a unit, you will need to account for these language demands when planning your individual lessons. Keeping your learning objectives in sight, consider the scaffolds that are going to most effectively support your MLs in working toward those objectives. Figure 3.9, the Scaffolded Unit Planning Checklist, provides areas to consider as you are planning your unit.

As an example of how lessons can build incrementally with scaffolded support, imagine that you are going to teach a fourth-grade science unit in which students will be asked to identify the structures of a plant and explain their functions using targeted academic language. You would want to consider how you will introduce and give students opportunities to practice both the specific terminology associated with plant structures as well as the language needed to explain their functions (e.g., a function of roots is to absorb water and minerals from the soil). In order to build incrementally toward your content and language goals, you might first practice identifying the different parts of plants. Then, you might introduce language for describing the functions. Students could do a sort in which they match the structure with the function and orally make a connection between the two. Finally, you might ask students to write picture captions to describe plants and their functions using a word bank (if needed).

4. **Select, develop, or adapt appropriate scaffolds and materials.** Once you have determined a plan for your unit you will need to select, develop, or adapt the scaffolds and other materials that you will use. Examples of scaffolds and materials that you might develop or select include the following:
 - Graphic organizers
 - Home language supporting materials
 - Manipulatives
 - Sentence stems, sentence frames, and paragraph frames
 - Visuals
 - Word banks

FIGURE 3.9 SCAFFOLDED UNIT PLANNING CHECKLIST

1  I know the strengths and needs of each ML... in relation to the language demands of the unit. I have set individual goals to help my MLs progress in their acquisition of language and content. ☐ Yes ☐ No	6  I have determined how to intentionally group students... in order to most effectively support their learning of content and acquisition of English. ☐ Yes ☐ No
2  I have analyzed the language demands... of the unit and identified areas that may be challenging for my MLs. I have determined language objectives for the unit. ☐ Yes ☐ No	7  I have included opportunities for students to practice key concepts... in varied ways using multiple modalities and translanguaging (as appropriate). ☐ Yes ☐ No
3  I have developed a list of key vocabulary... and determined how I will teach and provide opportunities to practice this vocabulary. ☐ Yes ☐ No	8  I have selected home language resources... (as appropriate) that can support MLs in learning the new content and academic language. ☐ Yes ☐ No
4  I have determined how I will teach and provide students an opportunity to practice the language structures or language skills... that correspond to the language objectives. I have considered how my lessons build on each other in order to meet the language objectives of the unit. ☐ Yes ☐ No	9  I have selected or developed scaffolded materials... to support MLs of varying language proficiency levels (e.g., graphic organizers, sentence stems and/or sentence frames, visuals). ☐ Yes ☐ No
5  I have determined how to activate MLs' background knowledge and/or selected... which background knowledge to teach (if any) and how to teach it in a concise manner. ☐ Yes ☐ No	10  I have determined how I will assess student learning... and how I will scaffold assessments for MLs of varying language proficiency levels. ☐ Yes ☐ No

Source: Adapted from Snyder & Staehr Fenner (2021), p. 143.



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5. **Teach the lessons and assess students, adapting scaffolds and materials as needed.** As is common in teaching, you may realize during the course of a lesson that you need to adjust your instruction or materials to better leverage your students' strengths and meet their needs. Perhaps your students have mastered a key concept, and you need to spend less time on it than you thought. Maybe some students are struggling with a particular aspect of the lesson, and you need to develop some additional opportunities for students to practice that skill or concept.

Formative assessments can help guide your decision-making in this area. See Chapter 9 for more information on designing formative assessments for MLs. You will also need to consider how to scaffold any assessment that you create. For example, it is not reasonable to expect that an emergent ML (particularly an ML at beginner or intermediate levels of proficiency) who has been completing tasks using scaffolds, such as sentence stems, word banks, and graphic organizers, will be able to successfully complete an assessment without these supports.

6. **Reflect on next instructional steps and adjust or remove scaffolds as appropriate.** After teaching the unit, take the time to reflect on its effectiveness with your MLs. Consider whether the scaffolds that you provided were effective in supporting MLs in meeting the language and content objectives. We also encourage you to ask students what worked well for them and what could be improved. Often, we do not ask students to provide their input in our instruction as this may put us in a more vulnerable position as teachers. Decide how you might modify the scaffolds you provide in your next unit as well as which scaffolds may no longer be needed for specific MLs.

APPLICATION ACTIVITY 3.3: SELECTING APPROPRIATE SCAFFOLDS

Read the scenario. Then, complete the template in Figure 3.10 to explain which scaffolds you would choose to use for the unit. Provide a reason for your selected scaffolds in the "Rationale" column. We have completed the instructional materials scaffolds and rationale for emergent MLs with beginning-level proficiency to get you started.

Scenario: A ninth-grade class will begin a unit on conservation. In the class, nine of the 24 students are emergent MLs. They range in proficiency level from beginner to advanced. Students will read and discuss several texts that explain why conservation is necessary and include strategies for conserving natural resources. The students will work in groups to select one conservation strategy that they will present to the class. They will be asked to use persuasive language to explain why their conservation strategy is important. Students will create a poster that they will use to present their strategy to the class. If you were the teacher of the class, which scaffolds would you use, and why? Refer to the scaffolds in Figure 3.8 to guide your work.

FIGURE 3.10 SELECTING APPROPRIATE SCAFFOLDS

PROFICIENCY LEVEL	SELECTED INSTRUCTIONAL SCAFFOLDS	RATIONALE
Beginner	Materials: Word bank with visuals Practice: Grouping:	A word bank with visuals will support beginner MLs in learning and using the key academic vocabulary needed for the unit.
Intermediate	Materials: Practice: Grouping:	
Advanced	Materials: Practice: Grouping:	

Let's now explore specific considerations for scaffolding instructional content for ML newcomer students and students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE) and the role that collaboration, equity, advocacy, and leadership can play in fostering scaffolded instruction for MLs.



ML NEWCOMER STUDENTS AND SLIFE CONSIDERATIONS

What Are Key Considerations for Scaffolding for ML Newcomer Students and SLIFE?

ML newcomer students and SLIFE need instruction that is highly scaffolded to support their understanding of new content.

Considerations:

- Many ML newcomer students, and SLIFE in particular, will benefit from educators being explicit about the relevance of a particular topic or learning task to their long-term goals (DeCapua et al., 2020). In other words, share with students why the learning is important for them in order to build a sense of relevancy.

(Continued)

(Continued)

- In planning lessons for ML newcomer students and SLIFE, there is an urgent need to embed scaffolds that will support students' understanding of and engagement with content learning and also support language development. When introducing new academic skills or tasks, have students practice all skills and tasks with familiar language and content first before having students apply the skills and language to more decontextualized content. For example, if you want students to use cause-and-effect language to describe outcomes of scientific experiments, consider first having them practice that language using images of everyday events that represent a cause-and-effect scenario (DeCapua & Marshall, 2013; DeCapua et al., 2020).
- Many ML newcomer students and SLIFE come from collectivist cultures with strong oral traditions (in which they focus on sharing traditions and histories orally rather than writing) and benefit from opportunities to discuss content orally with peers before writing (DeCapua & Marshall, 2023; DeCapua et al., 2020).

Example: Let's return to Joseph, the seventh-grade student who we introduced in Chapter 2. In Joseph's art class, students will be required to write a short essay comparing the works of two different artists. Joseph is worried about the assignment, and he is also not clear on its relevance. His art teacher, Ms. Zielinska, explains that being able to make comparisons and use comparative language is an important skill that is needed in all subjects. In order to support Joseph and other MLs in the class with this assignment, Ms. Zielinska brainstorms with the class ways that pieces of art can be alike or different. They develop a list of words and phrases that can be used to describe artwork. The word wall includes images to represent each word and phrase. Ms. Zielinska also has students work in pairs to compare two pieces of art using sentence stems that she has introduced and practiced with students. For the final writing assignment, Ms. Zielinska gives students a graphic organizer to use to organize their ideas. Students are given the opportunity to complete the graphic organizer in pairs, but then they are asked to complete the final assignment individually. Ms. Zielinska gives Joseph a paragraph frame to support his writing and meets with him one-on-one to assist him in using the scaffolds that she has provided (i.e., word wall with visuals, graphic organizer, paragraph frame). After completing the assignment, Joseph feels proud of his final product, and he has a better understanding of the process and language to use when making comparisons.

What Is the Role of Collaboration in Scaffolding Instruction for MLs?

As you add to your scaffolding repertoire, look for other educators who can support you in this work. Content teachers can turn to the ELD teachers in their school for resources and advice on how to scaffold a particular lesson or unit.

ELD teachers could work with content teachers to make sure they know the critical vocabulary and language structures that MLs need to master as well as the objectives and key understandings for each unit of instruction. The Scaffolding Self-Assessment Checklist found in Appendix E in the online companion website can be a helpful tool for collaborating around scaffolding. Teaching teams can review the checklist and prioritize scaffolds that they want to strengthen in their contexts. To access the companion website, please visit resources.corwin.com/FennerUnlocking2E.

What Is the Role of Equity, Advocacy, and Leadership in Developing Scaffolded Materials?

An essential component of advocacy for MLs is equitable educational opportunities and access to effective instruction (Staehr Fenner, 2014a). In order for MLs to have access to content to the same extent as their non-ML peers and to minimize the achievement gap that exists between MLs and non-MLs, MLs need instructional practices and materials that are adapted to meet their specific needs (Goldenberg, 2008). Advocating for equity for MLs requires that educators go beyond providing high-quality instructional practices and think critically about what the specific MLs in their classroom will need to acquire language and master content while providing them access to challenging grade-level content.

Next Steps

Throughout this book, we have provided you an opportunity to develop a unit plan that is comprehensive in implementing research-based practices for MLs. Appendix A is the complete unit planning template. Appendix B is a model of a completed template. These two appendices can be found on the online companion website. To access the companion website, please visit resources.corwin.com/FennerUnlocking2E. In each chapter of this book, we'll give you an opportunity to reflect on one piece of the unit plan and share supporting tools with you. In this chapter, we suggest you begin by identifying the unit you would like to implement, the standards you wish to address, and your content and language objectives. If you teach more than one class or content area, select one to focus on. We encourage you to be as specific as possible related to the learning objectives. Then, describe the MLs in your class including their strengths, needs, and interests. Additionally, consider possible scaffolds that you might provide MLs at different levels of English language proficiency. If you are not currently in the classroom, consider a classroom that you observed or the classroom of a peer.



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APPLICATION ACTIVITY 3.4: UNIT PLANNING, STEP 1

Complete the *Unit Overview* and Step 1 in the *Unit Preparation* sections of the Unlocking MLs' Potential Unit Planning Template (the portion of Appendix A reproduced in Figure 3.11).

FIGURE 3.11 PORTION OF THE UNLOCKING MLs' POTENTIAL UNIT PLANNING TEMPLATE (APPENDIX A)

UNIT OVERVIEW	
Timeframe:	Topic:
Subject:	Grade Level:
Standard(s) ☐ Content:	Objective(s) ☐ Content:
☐ English Language Development:	☐ Language:
UNIT PREPARATION	
Describe Your MLs (e.g., home language literacy, English language proficiency level, interests)	
Figure 2.3 What I Know About My ML	

UNIT DELIVERY

Scaffolds*Figure 3.1 Categories of Scaffolds**Figure 3.8 Suggested Scaffolds at Each Proficiency Level**Figure 3.9 Scaffolded Unit Planning Checklist*What **scaffolds** will you provide to MLs of varying proficiency levels?

ELP LEVEL(S)	SCAFFOLDS
Beginning	
Intermediate	
Advanced	

**APPLICATION ACTIVITY 3.4:
REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

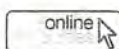
1. What specific language objectives do you have for your MLs for this unit?
What are the language or language skills that you will be focusing on during the unit?

(Continued)

(Continued)

2. What are the strengths that your MLs have? How can you build on these strengths during this unit?

3. As you think about the scaffolds discussed in this chapter, what is one scaffold that is new to you, or that you would like to use more effectively that you plan to incorporate into this unit?

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**SupportEd
TOOLBOX**

For ready-to-use, practical tools to support scaffolding instruction, please see SupportEd.com/unlocking-toolbox.

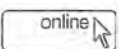
Conclusion

In this chapter, we have shared descriptions and examples of different types of scaffolds, general recommendations for scaffolding instruction, and guidelines to use in determining which scaffolds to use in order to leverage the strengths and meet the needs of MLs of varying proficiency levels in your classrooms. Throughout the remainder of the book, we provide additional strategies for scaffolding materials and examples of scaffolded materials that correspond to each instructional practice. As you work through the exercises in the remaining chapters, it may be helpful to refer back to this chapter for scaffolding ideas and considerations. In the next chapter, you will learn more specifics on how to incorporate peer learning activities into your instruction in order to support MLs' language development and understanding of new content.

CHAPTER 3 REFLECTION QUESTIONS



1. If you are teaching in a collaborative setting, how might you divide the work to plan and prepare for teaching scaffolded units?
2. What steps will you take to strengthen scaffolded instruction for MLs in your upcoming instructional units?

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