

TEACHING AND LEARNING GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS

Welcome to our monthly Learning Newsletter. These newsletters look to help you to implement tried and tested learning strategies at home, in order to benefit your child and further enhance their educational experiences in the long term.

Scaffolding

One of the many ways that we look to develop pupils' knowledge is to scaffold learning. In education, scaffolding refers to a variety of instructional techniques used to move students progressively toward stronger understanding and, ultimately, greater independence in the learning process.

In the classroom this might look like:

Imagine someone plopping a giant box of odds and ends in front of you and telling you to figure out what to do with them with no further instructions. Without any guidance as to the purpose of the activity, specific expectations or basic information, it would be overwhelming and discouraging, to say the least.

Pupils can feel the same way if not given guidance. Scaffolding is a way to provide support for students by breaking learning down into manageable chunks as they progress toward stronger understanding and ultimately greater independence.



Here are ten ways we can scaffold learning for our pupils.

1. Give mini-lessons.

Break new concepts down into bite-sized pieces that build on one another. Teaching a series of mini-lessons provides students with a safety net that moves them progressively toward deeper understanding.

2. Model/demonstrate.

Show students an example of what they will be learning. For example, demonstrate a science experiment so they can see how it's done before they do it themselves. Or gather them around the board and let them watch us solve a maths problem in a new way.

Verbalise our thought process as we demonstrate. This gives students a model for an inner dialogue they can copy.

3. Describe concepts in multiple ways.

Support different learning styles by approaching new concepts from multiple angles. Show them, tell them, and let them try it for themselves. The more ways we approach learning, the more sense it will make for students.

4. Incorporate visual aids.

Show a video, pass out colourful images, or provide a concrete object to start off a new lesson. For example, if we're teaching a lesson on polyhedrons, place models of different types on tables for students to see and touch.

5. Give students talk time.

We give pupils plenty of time to process new information by partnering them up or breaking into small groups. Have them articulate concepts in their own words to one another. Come back together as a whole group and share any insights that might be helpful to everyone. This is also a great time to implement cooperative learning structures.

6. Give students time to practice.

After we model learning for our students, take some time to practice with them. Have a few students come up to the board and try a math problem. Or write a paragraph together on chart paper. Think of this guided practice as a series of rehearsals before the final performance.

7. During lessons, check for understanding.

Check in often to make sure students are with us. A simple thumbs up, a sticky note check-in, or a desktop flip chart are a few of the ideas we can use to see who's good to go, who's almost there and who needs some one-on-one.

8. Activate prior knowledge.

Show students the big picture. Make connections to concepts and skills students have already learned. Connect to experiences they have had such as field trips or other projects.

9. Front-load concept-specific vocabulary.

Arm students with specific academic language they will need to understand ahead of time so that vocabulary doesn't become a stumbling block to higher level learning.

10. Set them up for success.

Students (like most of us) perform better when they fully understand what is expected of them. Describe the purpose of the assignment, and give them concrete examples of the learning goals they are expected to achieve. Give them clear directions and show them exemplars of high quality work. Finally, provide them with a rubric so they know exactly what to do to successfully master the concept.

These strategies translate to activities you might do with your child at home e.g. when teaching them a new skill, show them how it's done and what the best outcome looks like - we call this a WAGOLL (what a good one looks like).

Literacy tip of the week...

Tip of the Week

AS WELL A LOT

Both of these phrases are **TWO separate words meaning**

1/ in addition.

2. A great deal.

ASWELL and Are NOT words and should NEVER be written as a word.

It affects the clarity (clearness) of your work.

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Issue Focus: **Scaffolding**

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if you wish to discuss anything
covered in this newsletter