

Inclusive Education

Conversation Guide for the video: *Scaffolding for Student Success*

Instructional scaffolding provides students with the “just right” supports they need to participate in learning, complete a challenging task, or learn a new concept.



Key understandings

- Good teaching recognizes that the construction of learning moves from what is already known or can be done to the new.
- Teachers start with knowing students' strengths and needs, and then provide “scaffolding” for individuals and groups of students to support the construction of new learning.
- Common scaffolds for learning include building and activating background knowledge, modelling, guided practice, prompts, strategy instruction, graphic organizers and use of technology such as text-to-speech.
- Effective scaffolding provides tailored assistance adjusted on an as-needed basis, controls for frustration, builds learner confidence and uses descriptive feedback so students can understand what they are doing right and how they can do better.
- Scaffolding builds independence by gradually shifting the responsibility for learning from the teacher to the student. As students' abilities improve, scaffolds can be reduced or removed.
- For students with learning difficulties, the intensity of scaffolding may change but the support may need to be ongoing so students can actively participate in learning and move forward.
- To maximize student success, the use of any scaffold, including technology, must be combined with effective instruction.

Questions for Discussion

- How does this video affirm or challenge what you know about supporting every student?
- In your experience, what are some examples of scaffolded supports that have benefitted individual and small groups of students?

Learn more about inclusive education: <https://education.alberta.ca/inclusive-education>

©2018 Government of Alberta | Published: July 2018

- How would you respond to an educator, parent or student who objects to the use of scaffolding because it is cheating or makes things “too easy” for a student?
- Describe a time when you benefitted from a “scaffold” to complete a challenging task or learn something new.
- How could the information in this video be helpful to your work in the future?

“Scaffolding provides students with the “just right” supports they need to participate in learning, complete a challenging task or learn a new concept.”

Scaffolding for Student Success, Alberta Education

Taking the Pulse at the School and Authority Level

- What is the current capacity to support this change in teaching practice?
- How are current information sources (research, evidence and lessons learned) informing professional growth activities in regards to scaffolding?



Adapted from A Guide to Support Implementation: Essential Conditions, www.essentialconditions.ca

More Information

- Alberta Education’s [Inclusive Education Library](#) provides ideas on scaffolding as well as other instructional supports.
- The [Alberta Assessment Consortium](#) offers scaffolding tools, templates and samples that teachers can adapt for their own use.
- *Scaffolding*—Dr. Olenka Bilash is a professor of Secondary Education in the University of Alberta’s Faculty of Education. Her website provides information for teachers on [instructional scaffolding](#).

- [Using Flexible Technology to Meet the Needs of Diverse Learners](#)—This article from WestEd, a non-profit research, development and service agency based in San Francisco, addresses the use of technology as a flexible scaffold for student learning.

Alberta Examples

The following Alberta school authorities are among those who have developed staff resources on scaffolding for student success:

- Chinook’s Edge School Division - A [Student Program Planning & Conversation Sheet](#) connects students’ strengths and areas of need to successful learning through scaffolding actions and supports.
- Prairie Land Regional Division - The school authority’s focus on [21st Century learning skills](#) offers information on scaffolding techniques that teachers might use in a successful learning environment.
- Rocky View Schools Division - The school authority’s focus on inquiry and project-based learning includes scaffolding as a stage in [instructional design](#) to ensure the learning is accessible for all students.

“Fair isn’t everybody getting the same thing... Fair is everybody getting what they need to be successful.”

Wormeli, R. (2006). *Fair isn’t always equal: Assessing and grading in the differentiated classroom*. Portland, MN: Stenhouse.