

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.

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Scaffolding for Student Success, Alberta Education

Learn more about inclusive education: www.alberta.ca/inclusive-education.aspx

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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?
- 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?

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.

“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.