

IMPLEMENTING INSTRUCTIONAL SCAFFOLDING IN CONTENT-BASED INSTRUCTION IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS SECOND LANGUAGE

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Abstract

Interaction is a predominant factor that aids to seep into communication thus accomplishing specific goals and patterns to achieve desirable objectives according to the demands of the situation. The intensity of interaction is relative to the environment where the speakers are placed or what topic they have chosen. Active learning and teaching take place only when a class is interactively vibrant, teachers are contextually eloquent and the topic is packed with the relevant subject matter. Interaction has to be contextual to be meaningful and helpful to English language learners. Content-Based Instruction is an approach that encourages interaction in the English learning classroom. In fact, Content-Based Instruction rests on interaction and involving the students in self-learning mode. With the teachers' supervision, the potential development can be determined and this is the major concept propounded by Vygotsky. His zone of proximal development, stir an array of inner developmental processes that are competent to manoeuvre only when the child is interacting with people in his environment. Using scaffolding Content-Based Instruction can approach the English language learners to promote themselves from what they are capable of doing at present to what they will be able to do later. Scaffolding is a promising teaching technique and it is an interaction promoting tool that promises to enhance speaking skills in second language learning English students. This paper intends to prove the usability features of scaffolding teaching technique in Content-Based Instruction promoting English language teaching, the characteristics and critical features of scaffolded Instruction, methods of instructional scaffolding, and the challenges and benefits of instructional scaffolding. The article ponders upon the importance of time and the preparation of the course of study undertaken by this technique and throws light on how the language facilitators face the challenges like the choice of the topic till the content reaches the language learner and is expected to go an extra mile in imparting the English language learners.

Keywords: Content-Based Instruction, Instructional Scaffolding, Zone of Proximal Development, Interaction, Language Learners

Introduction

In the last three decades, teaching the English language as the second language has upgraded in its efficiency in delivering the language to foreign language learners. A revolution has taken place with the introduction of Content-Based Instruction as an effective language teaching approach. The role of the language teachers becomes more demanding and hi-tech in the modern teaching-learning condition. The introduction of scaffolding in teaching techniques has taken teaching the second language to another level. The teaching of language goes a level further in understanding the capacity and the level of the student and in assessing their capability in comprehending what has been taught. Moreover, it defines the depth of teachers' learning and the innovative technique which they adept to deliver their understanding. Though the term 'scaffolding' is a novel term that has been used so widely within teaching-learning and general edification, yet it bears a general view-point that it functions as supportive teaching.

Introducing scaffolding in Content-Based Instruction

Scaffolding is an expression that enhances classroom language learning. This technique actively supports and provides necessary help to the students for better learning, understanding, and usage of the English language. The main intention being once the student no longer needs any support, this technique can be removed. Scaffolding is a tool that is used like a walker which has been introduced to a toddler learning to walk. Once it starts to walk, the walker is no longer needed. The same is applicable in terms of a student who is learning the English language. This is done only with a clear indication of the student's mastery and the independent accessibility to the language dealt. The aim of scaffolding stands firm with its objective in helping students from what they can do at present to what they will be able to do in the on-coming days.

Content-Based Instruction is an student-centered approach that promotes all the four major skills in students learning English as the second language. Interaction is the predominant skill that is encouraged by skilful instructors in an instructional scaffolding classroom implementing Content-Based Instruction.

Scaffolding and Vygotsky's zone of proximal development

Vygotsky's zone of proximal development is a practical theory that every student visualizes in a Content-Based Instruction classroom. The nature of a student-centered classroom guides and gives way to collaborative learning that promotes development. Such a learning scenario proves staying power since it speaks about what the students are supposed to experience. This learning experience has a direct influence on the students in an individual manner. Based on a particular subject matter, language learning is implemented on one-on-one communication with the students. It is letting the students understand their capacity and the stage where they are at the initial phase of learning. Self-learning promotes self-assessment in students and they are able to evaluate the profundity of learning achieved during the class hours of learning.

Vygotsky's theory is operational and is practical because it structures the task's difficulty level that is related to the students. At the same time, it put forth the postulation of a cooperative learning atmosphere, that is, jointly participating in solving a problem. This learning motivates and helps the learners to focus on the task assigned in a learning environment. Students need the support of the language facilitators and implementing education enforces a number of contingencies. These vary according to the level learned and the learning intake of the students. Such a kind of learning support will ensure successful learning. Continuous scaffolding by teachers include explanations that are given both directly and indirectly, highlighting modeling of strategies and reconstructing caps. Teachers need to intervene in students' language learning with the goal of encouraging the students to engage them in learning and in acquiring skill development. Scaffolds like reconstructive caps where one or more scaffolds can be used to facilitate students' understanding.

Instructional scaffolding believes in a theory where an extended student-teacher interaction should take place in a classroom. Teachers should provide students an opportunity to make errors. Making mistakes and learning from mistakes is essential in language learning. Such a condition where the errors are corrected gives way for the teachers to explain, to prompt, to cue thus opening up the way for various demonstrations, explanations, or suggestions. In doing so, students give more attention to joint learning along with the teachers. This is a healthy learning scenario where teachers and students work together to arrive at an understanding. This kind of learning is called as 'productive failure.' Productive failure is a technique where students are given an opportunity to learn from their mistakes. Moreover, it guides the students to a kind of instruction the students require. Care should be taken to maintain the errors made by the students

and it should diminish as they start to get a grip on what has been taught. Also, too many errors can also be counterproductive to acquiring knowledge and this may lead the students to lose interest in learning. Otherwise, this theory can work wonders in promoting a healthy language learning atmosphere. Hence it lies solely in the hands of the teachers to make quick decisions whether they have to makeshift from correcting errors to changing their question pattern while teaching. Language instructors should take into account what to attend and to give importance and to ignore the areas of insignificance. In modern times, computers are talked about taking the place of human instructors and this is the area where it lacks efficiency and it is tough for a computer to give skillful instruction when needed by the learner.

Scaffolding and Brain Science

The term 'scaffold' is used in construction sites such as buildings, dams, bridges, so on and so forth. Basically, the scaffold is used to provide support. It functions as a tool. Another major and the most exciting feature of this technique is its range of extension, which is continuous according to the demand, expectation, and the task of the work. It is highly relevant to the working of the human brain.

The prefrontal cortex, the parietal cortex, and the cerebellum are the three areas of the brain that allows the learner to pay concentration, to perform the accurate movements, and to sequence steps. When the sensory-motor cortex takes over, more space will be allotted in the brain thus these areas become less involved in learning skills and this is the place where instructional scaffolds help. In such a condition, the instructional facilitator can give temporary help for the language learners for them to learning, and when the intake of the learning is over, and the support can be discontinued. Again, acquiring skills becomes more automatic, thus providing the necessary 'think time' in order to form new connections. Therefore, working memory is accessible for meaning-making. Automaticity is reliant on a student's working memory. Instead of the attempts in enforcing a lot of information into the brain all at once, unassociated bits of information at a time can be of great support for the language learners. Thus it is in the hands of the teachers to support the students when they are working with new or previously unassociated information, but the students do not need to provide scaffolds when the language learners are working with known information. Teachers need a large portion of information in a consistent way with working memory and long-term transfer. Mental structures that represent the content is one way of performing it. Some of the tools like concept maps, word webs, graphic organizers

give students with schemas that they are capable of applying structured information. These are temporary scaffolds and they provide students with organizational systems for content learning.

It is important to cultivate an understanding of memory systems that has profound implications for learning, and it includes producing systematic and intentional supports of the language learners' understanding rather than leaving them alone to discover information independently. Indeed, the learner has to engage themselves in collaborative learning since productive group works to prompt the students to interact with one another which helps them to generate ideas. This has to work towards the consolidation and application of content that has been dealt with. Moderation of study load has to be maintained in order to avoid counter-productivity in students.

Ensuring teacher's guidance suggests appropriate scaffolds which mean to engage students' attention and involvement in classroom learning. The same proportion of teacher's guidance is supposed to be provided to the students even when they are involved in a group activity with their peers. The major function of a language facilitator was to guide the language learners to new levels of understanding. Strategies guide the students to ensure to have a wealth of opportunities to practice what they have learned. Such usage of information leads the students to obtain long-term memory, which leads to working memory. This can be got without any constraints on the number of items that can be utilized later.

Conceptualising Instructional Scaffolding

Two key perspectives of instructional scaffolding are outlined and their features are discussed as follows.

1. Task-enabling support

This technique focuses on the intellectual task basis of instructional scaffolding. It has to be considered that scaffolding is definitely providing support to the language learner. It does not stop only by providing assistance. It gives the provision of task-enabling support. Thereby, it enables language learners to carry out an assignment which the students will be able to manage on their own. Such support will enhance the English language learner to elevate to a state of aptitude which will lead the students to accomplish the task on their own. This concept of scaffolding as task-enabling support activates learning at a micro-level Vygotsky's cultivating language learning in younger minds. Young trainees are assisted with the help of joint activity within the zone of proximal development (ZPD). This is realized with the help of experienced and educated mentors. This is activated in school erudite discussion. Understanding of teaching

in the ZPD is emphasized as an academic activity within the apprenticeship mould of edification.

Scaffolding does the function of a support master that is much needed for apprentices in order to tackle a task that they are supposed to accomplish. Scaffolding itself acts like an infrastructure that the student is supposed to follow as the child will not be in a position to perform independently. As the language learner acquires skills the necessity of the number of scaffolding decreases. Thus, the language facilitator is the sole director who follows a moving zone for proximal development. Scaffolding believes in handling each student in an independent manner since every student possesses a unique skill and independent learning technique. Hence the function of the task difficulty differs and also varies according to the function of a language learners' skills.

Scaffolding as task-enabling support in teaching-learning environments. A classroom learning experience covers all that students undergo. This involves a classroom engaging teaching and learning practices, class schedule, students' practice of their learning setting which creates diverse levels of challenge and support. Students experience classrooms as zones of many experiences of feelings and emotions like anxiety, frustration, support, boredom, engagement, and development. This zone of development is called an engagement zone which provides another way of understanding Vygotsky's zone of proximal development. This zone leads to a developmental path for the students from a micro-level within tasks to a macro level. This leads the students' learning to a different trajectory with teachers being a strong locus of direction-setters and responsibility.

2. Language-mediated co-regulatory activity

This technique focuses on the nature of scaffolding as a social semiotic activity in which language is the key mediating tool. Language has an honored place in the development of higher human perception and awareness. Language is a premise that is used by human beings to act on, manage, organize, and convert their substantial, societal, and semiotic worlds. Language has a privileged place in a classroom as a cultural toolkit. It is a pivotal point that joins students who aspire from different communities. Also, it acculturates the language learners into the ways of thinking and speaking of the discourse of the community to which they belong. In a classroom, the dialogue I used both by the teacher and the student as a binding force that conveys ideas, views, discourses of feelings, and as a vehicle of correcting mistakes that usually occur while

learning. Dialogue is utilized as a mediating tool. This is used to tackle the students individually and in a collective fashion. All these measures are carried on to accomplish curricula goals.

Participation is the key factor that a student is expected to perform in a dialogue activity. This strengthens the communication skill of the student is functioning in novel ways of performing, conversing, and contemplating. Contextually, instructional scaffolding can be visualized as a typical instrument of mediating, task-based dialogue. This is constructed into tasks that provide students the knowledge, thus accomplishing strategies intended to suffice the requirements of the structured curricula.

Strategical Forms of Scaffolds:

Scaffolds take up many forms. Challenge lies in the proper selection of the appropriate scaffolds which is well-suited for the language learners. This depends in large part on the nature of the content and the requirements of the language learners. Some of the common scaffolds that can be used to support student understanding are listed as follows:

- Selecting an appropriate subject matter
- Breaking content into simpler parts
- Modeling with think-aloud
- Use of graphic organizers
- Developing mind maps
- Drawing visual models
- Making use of prior knowledge
- Consulting students' interests
- Usage of pre-teaching vocabulary
- Utilizing stories
- Asking follow-up questions
- Preparing opportunities for student conversation
- Offering sentence stems or language models

Implementing scaffolds require proper planning, and it is generally opted for providing support for the language learner to get a better understanding of the content that has been carefully chosen. Another aspect that makes it highly useful is its flexibility in enforcing it among the students. Taking the understanding level of the students, its usage can be altered and adjusted.

Guidelines for Instructional Scaffolds

Instructional scaffolds contribute to enhancing the language learners' understanding of learning English as a second language in a fruitful manner. Content-Based Instruction mainly focuses on giving guidance to the learners and so is the main idea of instructional scaffolding. Over the decades the field of education has been working on clarifying the function of instructional scaffolds. The following lines are jotted to explain some of the relevant guidelines that are applicable to English language learners.

a) Intentionality:

The task given to the English language learners is expected to have a clear-cut purpose. The activity which is given to the students to solve can be accomplished by the student with the aid of the skillful tutors. The provision of the support factor helps them to plunge into active learning, thus considering separate activities that contribute to the whole.

b) Appropriateness:

The instructional task posed for all students is expected to be solved. Support will be rendered to only those students who have got no knack to complete the given task. Therefore, help is available not to the students who are able to perform the task and not to the capable ones.

c) Structure:

Questioning activities is a common phenomenon that helping the tutors to assess the learning capacity and are structures around a model of appropriate approaches to the task. Modeling is another feature that supports the students to be lead to a natural sequence of thought and language.

d) Collaboration:

Teachers give tasks to be completed by the students. Language learners take up their tasks according to their comprehensive level, thus responding to the teacher's guidelines and the task gets a recast, expand or remodel and rearranged depending upon the students' efforts. The work

they have accomplished is not to be rejected until what they have done on their own. The tutor's role is collaborative rather than evaluative.

e) Internalization:

The art of scaffolding lies in making the external scaffolding that has been rendered as an activity to get internalized by the students.

f) Pre-engage the student and the curriculum:

Prepare the language learners related to the goals of learning and its outcomes. Explain how the concerned curriculum helps them to attain the goals of educational targets. A language classroom is a collaborative learning arena and it calls for cooperation of both the teachers and the students to sit together and discuss and thus help in selecting appropriate tasks that are related to the study of the subject matter.

g) Establish a shared goal:

When the language instructor shows more interest in the students' development in delivering the task, the students naturally are motivated and prompted to invest their valuable time and energy in accomplishing their tasks. Teacher's involvement motivates students to plan their instructional goals.

h) Actively diagnose students' needs and understanding:

Students are highly sensitive towards the content knowledge of the teacher. Also, the language instructors should cultivate the sensitive and sensible knowledge regarding the students. This helps the teachers to determine and gauge the level of progress that the students are making, which in turn will help the teachers to further involvement in corrective measures.

i) Provide tailored assistance:

Prompting, modeling, questioning, telling, cueing, or discussing- these are some of the techniques that trigger the students to open their mouths and prompt them to engage in language

discourse. These warranted techniques provide necessary clues to the teachers to indulge them in making necessary adjustments in their teaching in order to meet the students' needs.

j) Maintain the pursuit of the goal:

Asking questions followed by explanation and clarification that is needed for the subject matter to be an easy portion to learn for the students will support the language learners to get motivated in what they are intended to learn. Praise and words of encouragement help the students remain focussed on their goals.

k) Give feedback:

Feedback summarizes the current progress of learning that is taking place in the classroom. This aids the students to monitor their own development, their behavioral changes, and the areas that need change for their educational betterment.

l) Control for frustration and risk:

Creating an environment in which the students feel free to learn without any fear or inhibition is the prime expectation when a classroom has been set for discharging language learning. Such an environment not only will encourage the students to learn with interest but will definitely boost their creativity.

m) Assist internalization, independence, and generalization to other contexts:

Self-responsible and self-dependent learning is the crux of implementing instructional scaffolding in Content-Based instruction in teaching English as second language learning. The support that the teacher provides at the initial stage in delivering language teaching of a particular portion of the curriculum gradually decreases when it reaches the end of the learning session.

The important aspect regarding these guidelines lies in functioning them with utmost care. Planning on part of the teachers is essential in while giving task for the language learners in order to make these guidelines useful.

Key Features of Instructional Scaffolds:

Instructional scaffolds are the different techniques that are used in whole-class instruction, small-group teaching, or individualized tutoring. Identification of features is essential to cultivate better learning trends in language learners. Some of the key features of instructional scaffolds are as follows.

1. Inter-subjectivity:

Joint compatibility between the teacher and the student is necessary in order to build a joint ownership of the task. This helps the students and the teacher together in greater involvement. The task gets defined and redefined that paves the way for a better understanding of the content learned. Profound comprehensibility is reached prompting a thorough understanding of the subject matter. Students begin to understand from the perspective of the erudite version.

2. Ongoing diagnosis:

Before the students are educated and presented with any strategies and the process of learning, the tutors are supposed to be aware of what the learner comprehends, the level and the alternate measures of implementing instructional scaffolding has to be clearly planned. In this regard, two theoretical models are taken into consideration. One is a theory of the task or problem and the manner it has to be accomplished. The other is a theory of performance, which does a complete scanning of the development of learning in students. Both of these theories are essential to generate students to possess task mastering. The actual pattern of effective language learning is possible only when the learner is both task and tuttee dependent.

3. Dialogic and interactive:

Instructional scaffolding, when implemented in Content-Based instruction, shares a singular feature and that is an interactive classroom. Engaging a highly conversant classroom is the predominant criteria in enforcing dialogic and interactive features in an English language learning session. An English classroom is not a place of monologue. It is a perfect place for engaging students in a dialogue. A dialogue is a pattern where a teacher and a student can

indulge in conversation, or the same can be conducted between two students. This is done in a group or team-wise learning activity. The activity that is conducted in the classroom has to be thoroughly monitored by the language facilitator. This is done to assess the understanding level that has been inculcated by the student. This calls for a fairly sophisticated feedback system where the teacher continuously checks for the understanding level and this is collected through continuous assessment of the delivered information in the classroom.

4. Fading:

This is a purposive requisite when instructional scaffolding is implemented in Content-Based Instruction. According to Vygotskian terms, this takes place when the language learner has reached internalization. First, imbibing of knowledge occurs when the language learner interacts with his peers, which is called as inner psychological followed by the language learning that takes place within one's own self, which is called as intrapsychological. Therefore, without fading students are tend to become 'prompt-dependent'. In order to cultivate independent learning tendencies in language, students should be weaned off as they start to get a grip on the subject matter taught. This theory helps students reach automaticity.

The most important aspect of implementing instructional scaffolding in learners is that through guided instruction, they are able to create situations and help students build student's knowledge which is essential for them to apply in their real world.

Challenges faced by Instructional Scaffolding

Challenges help in the assessment of the strategies and techniques that are involved in careful planning in doing away the inhibiting features and fastens in the preparation of a proper scaffolding technique. Some of the challenges that are related to scaffolding technique are as follows:

- Instructional scaffolding is a technique that demands a high level of time consuming nature.
- Skillful training faculty are hard to find.
- Students' potential has often been misjudged. Often the students' capabilities are calculated to a high level than their normal capability which is abnormal than their realistic condition.

- The desired behaviors, strategies, or activities are inadequately set as a model, which is hard for the students to acquire.
- Properly trained faculty will reap benefits and in other ways, such a condition is a failure.
- Insufficient textbooks and other subject matters will also slow down the teaching process thus work in a negative manner.

Therefore it is essential to take into account the learning strategies and the challenges that are required for delivering an effective language learning English class.

Benefits of Instructional scaffolding and Content-Based Instruction

When considering the beneficial aspects of scaffolding, it is essential to take into account regarding the content that is taken for the implementation of the technique. Moreover, it is highly important to assess the level of the English language learners and the manner of evaluation and the needed framework of study prior to the implementation of the technique. Some of the benefits of the instructional scaffolding techniques are as follows:

- ❖ Early identification of the learning gifted quality of the student can be done.
- ❖ Instruction is enhanced based on a one-on-one basis.
- ❖ The language learner acquiring the desired skill, knowledge, or ability is assured at a greater level.
- ❖ The learning and teaching that take place stand apart from other kinds and show much difference.
- ❖ The learning delivered is structured, based on definite content, efficiency in completing the activity is increased and all possible shortcomings and limitations are either avoided or eliminated and therefore the efficiency is heightened.
- ❖ Students' interaction is highly managed and maintained. This naturally develops the communication skill of language learners.
- ❖ A high level of momentum thus involving the students to indulge in self-study excites the students to spend more time learning, searching, and discovering resulting in active language learning.
- ❖ Involvement on the part of the language learner is quite prominent.
- ❖ The motivation level to learn is obvious since the students are directly involved in a learning activity.

- ❖ Students are either kept in groups or maintained to concentrate on their portion of the study and so this minimizes the level of frustration for the learners in getting isolated, left, or unnoticed.

Scaffolding in Content-Based Instruction

Content-Based Instruction provides a supportive language learning scenario in a classroom with the enhancement of scaffolding as a teaching technique. Challenge remains in assessing the right point where the area of understanding and the area of incomprehensibility starts. Content-Based Instruction is highly observant in its teaching approach and so the fine zone of proximal development is available to be marked on the language learners. Content-Based Instruction believes in a pragmatic manner of teaching. The situational aspect of this approach well-suits the discharge of the functional usability of instructional scaffolding. The language facilitator holds the classroom activities intact, thus considering the students' understanding capacity, needs, interests, and their level and ability to learn the new ideas that are supposed to be shared in the classroom. Contextual tips, examples, suggestions can be discussed in the learning stage, where the teacher calls for a platform for discussion, debating, or stand-up speech, which unconsciously draws the attention and involves the students into a learning spree. Self-learning and responsible learning are some of the key features of Content-Based Instruction. Providing continuous support calls for a point where there is a need for fading. The instructional scaffolding technique assures the possibility of promoting language learners to learn on their own after prolonged support is rendered. The moment the instructor realizes that the scaffolding is no longer required, the support is retracted from its usage. Instructional scaffolding is a through-and-through student-centered teaching technique and combining it with the proper choice of subject and teacher's efficiency, which is propounded by Content-Based Instruction, the amount of support ensured on the student becomes a successful teaching-learning experience.

Conclusion

Reflecting on the several features and qualities of instructional scaffolding one distinct feature proves it to be remarkable and that is its provision of support. Just as though the teachers are providing support in helping babies learn to walk, language facilitators learn to identify the moments when providing help would be appropriate and when it's time to remove the support rendered. With practice and reflection, teachers get a clear picture in which place they have to

design the specific supports that would best meet the requirements of the language learners. Systematic planning and careful selection of content materials for study help in identifying the complexities and advance dynamics of effective teaching. Instructional scaffolding aids students meet up with new challenges, they may need new types of scaffolds that are susceptible to change according to the demands of the students' learning capacity. Over time, with the addition and consequent elimination of the exact supports at the right moments, most kids achieve self-confidence, constancy, vigor, and sovereignty and are trained to walk with effortlessness, elegance, and automaticity.

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