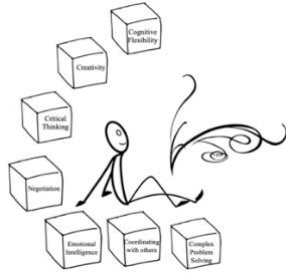


Scaffolding Academic Language with 'What's Missing?' (Pre-School)



Donna Lee Fields, Ph.D.



theory behind the scaffold...

'Intelligence is not necessarily hereditary. Education can transform a child' asserts [Karl Witte*](#), a pioneer in blended learning. We have the tools, he says, to help our students to change the course of their academic and then professional lives, no matter the level of their abilities before they enter our classes. First we have to believe this concept (have high expectations), and then we need to be proactive in presenting the appropriate tools to our students. We fill our lessons with activities and techniques that will give them opportunities to build a solid foundation of knowledge upon which they construct their thinking. We identify and elucidate academic language before beginning a lesson, unit or project, and create exercises geared toward developing verbal, oral, and aural skills.

Academic language is so important that experts assert that the warehouse of words a person has stored away is directly connected to their quality of thinking: higher quality of words equals higher quality of thinking.** In this age of the [Fourth Industrial Revolution](#), the quality of thinking our students reach in our classes, will be the difference between being qualified for jobs that technology is (still) not capable of performing, and watching the world from the sidelines.

This applies even to our youngest learners. We can help them to assimilate academic language even before they begin to read. If we verbalise [first-, second- and third-tier words](#)*** through dynamic activities, we are helping them to become familiar with academic language that will serve them for the rest of their academic and professional lives.

The examples given here target 1) every day school supplies and 2) ways you can approach the reading of stories in your classes. You'll see how you can adapt it to any other topic you're about to introduce.

**[Zwiers, Jeff Academic Conversations: Classroom Talk that Fosters Critical Thinking and Content Understandings](#)

***[Beck, Isabel L. Creating Robust Vocabulary](#)

Step by Step:

1. Choose 5-10 images from the unit, story, or song your students are about to begin. Place them in textboxes. (See [Template](#).)



2. Print them out, project them on the white board, and/or give sets of these to your students.
3. Show 4-6 images at a time. Verbalise the image linguistically and in full sentences, and your students repeat the full sentences. (*Example: 'This is a pencil sharpener.' 'This is a school bag.'*)

If you want to get advanced, you can include its uses. (*Example: 'This is a pencil sharpener. We use it to sharpen pencils.'* 'This is a school bag. We use it to carry school supplies.')

4. If you have given all of your students a set of the images, you ask them to place the same images in front of them. For the youngest learners, this will help them to kinesthetically connect to the lesson.
5. Once you have shown all the images at once, show the next slide which has one image less than the previous slide. (If you had 4 images on the first slide, show 3 of these images on the second slide.)

Slide 1 with all images



Slide 2 with one image less



Students with the images in front of them will be removing the images themselves and so it may seem counter-indicated to include this step in this type of activity, but for 3-year-olds, it will help them to assimilate the dynamic and the information.

6. The activity continues until you are satisfied that the students have learnt the words/images thoroughly.
7. *Formative Assessment:* Show PPT with individual images and ask pairs of students to verbalise what they see – in full sentences.
8. *Reflection:* Ask students to talk to their partners and decide how they liked the activity. How did it make them feel to verbalise images, to try to remember the image that was missing, to take control and remove one of the images themselves?

*Witte, Karl (1914). The Education of Karl Witte: Or, The Training of the Child. New York, Thomas Y. Crowell Company.

**Zwiers, Jeff & Crawford, Marie (2011). *Academic Conversations: Classroom Talk that Fosters Critical Thinking and Content Understandings*, USA, Stenhouse Publishers.

***Beck, Isabel L. (2008). *Creating Robust Vocabulary*, New York, Guilford Publishing.

**** Recommended dictionary for sentence examples: *Collins COBUILD dictionary*

You can do the same with images from a story you are about to read. (See an example below taken from the beautifully illustrated story *The Red Dragon* by [Roseanne Thong](#).)

In this case, you can include images, colours, objects, animals, landscape, etc. You can use a variety of themes especially if and when you repeat the story.

Slide 1 with all images



Slide 2 with one image less





[amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

video explanation of scaffold...



transcript of video explanation...:

Hi, I'm Donna Fields and welcome to CLIL Scaffolding 6, a series of webinars designed to give you support for using scaffolding in your classroom.

Scaffolding is used to bridge learning gaps between what the student has learned in the past, to what they're expected to know at certain points in their education. (I say 'giving a helping hand'!)

You can find these techniques in my book *101 Scaffolding Techniques for Language Teaching and Learning* that's also been translated into Spanish.

Today's objective is to show how to use scaffolding technique #61 can be used to teach academic language. I'll give you examples for a primary and secondary class and you can adapt them to any lessons you give.

Scaffolding technique #61 helps activate more sophisticated memory skills. Instead of rote memorization, which is a practice that usually goes into short-term memory and then quickly forgotten, we want to help students embed words and terms in their long-term memory. How do we do this?

Let's look at a secondary political science class. We're about to teach a chapter on the history Rome's government. The text is designed for secondary students; however, if you have students whose home language is different from that of the text, you'll need to give them language support so that they assimilate the content with far less stress. (Frankly,

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even students whose language is English, in this case, might have problems with the vocabulary if they are not well-read!)

First, we identify words and terms that might be foreign to students or that might have different meanings in different subject areas.

Second, type these words into textboxes. (I'm showing you six of the words I've chosen. I'd usually make a set of 15-20 words for this activity.)

Third, find an image to add to each textbox. Studies show that using images plus text doubles the learning impact. You can find literal images of the word and that pushes students even further to distinguish between more than one meaning of the same word.

Fourth, give the students the tools that will help them feel confident when speaking. Prepare and handout a 'decipher sheet' that shows the words you've identified, their meanings *in the context of the text they're going to read*, and sentences using those words *in that context*.****

Now, the activity. Give each pair a set of the text boxes cut up individually. They place 5-6 of them down at a time. One student turns around while the other student takes one of the cards away. The first student turns back and has to remember which card is missing, say the word, describe the image, define it and use the word in a sentence. (You can decide if they can read the definition and sentence from the decipher sheet.)

The activity continues until you're convinced that the students have assimilated the meaning of the words fairly well. (I would say 15-20 minutes maximum.) You can always repeat the activity another time.

Let's try this in a primary natural science class. We're about to begin a chapter on 'Energy'. I usually go to the review pages at the end of the chapter because that's where we'll find *all* the vocabulary the students will need to know. instead of trying to find them throughout the chapter.

Same as before, we identify academic words. The obvious ones are highlighted: kinetic, electrical, chemical, light, sound, thermal. However, for students whose home language is other than the language of this text, there are more academic words that are not so obvious such as: forms, heat, non-living, knife, plug, burn, bulb, noise, switch.

- We put these words into text boxes.
- Add images.
- In primary, I'd say it's less important to stress the definition than to use the words in sentences. The images are fairly self-explanatory. Here's a table you can give them.
- Cut up the textboxes individually.
- Give a set to each pair of students.
- One student turns around, the other student takes one away one of the textboxes.
- The first student turns back and needs to remember the missing word, state the word, describe the image, and use it in a sentence.
- The activity continues until the students are more comfortable with the words and are able to use them in sentences fairly easily.

And that's it! A scaffolding technique you can try in your classes to help your students learn academic language.

So, all you SUPER TEACHERS I hope to see you next time. Please send any comments you may have.

You can find me at these sites:

<https://scaffoldingmagic.com/>

and

[Linkedin](#)

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In the meantime, have fun in your classes! Bye!