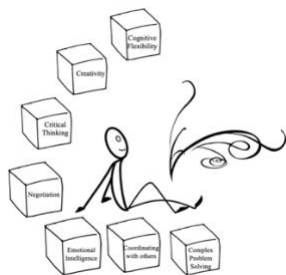# Scaffolding Academic Language with Intentional Errors (Pre-School)
Donna Lee Fields, Ph.D.

The brain sparks and grows when we make mistakes - even if we are not aware of it - because it is a time of struggle: the brain is challenged, and this is the time when it develops the most.

Boaler, Jo
Mathematical Mindsets

Errors need to be celebrated in our classroom and we need to help our students to embrace the effort they make in their studies and focus on the process - mistakes and successes alike - and not only the outcomes. Even and especially in our young learners.

This scaffold puts a twist on the concept of celebrating mistakes. To truly show our students how errors are valuable for their own development, we create a whole activity around mistakes that we have intentionally embedded in the lesson, song, or project they are about to begin. At the end of the activity, we further expand the dynamic by helping them to reflect on the steps of the activity - how they felt having the opportunity to consider different alternatives instead of receiving the information without any opportunity to collaborate or participate. Essentially, they'll be reflecting on how it feels to learn through an action!

As in best learning practices, this technique encourages students to use past knowledge to recognise inconsistencies in the information. Through critical thinking, they work together not only to study and understand the images and combinations, but they also look for context and then make the appropriate adjustments (they suggest more accurate images).

To cater to even more learning styles and to adhere to the changes the OECD (through the PISA exams) encourages, this activity asks students to physically move throughout the classroom, and interact with the material and their classmates at the same time. The example we use here is from a unit on natural sciences, but you'll see how you can adapt it to your subject with ease by using the templates provided.

Comment from teacher in Helsinki, Finland: 'I was at first very reluctant to use this scaffold because I thought my students would be overwhelmed with the difficulty of the task. What I found was that the activity is not only incredibly effective, but the students become very quickly engaged and interactive.'

SCAFFOLDINGMAGIC.COM

Step by Step:

1. From a lesson, project, song, video you're about to introduce, choose 15-20 images that give an overview of information.

2. Place the images in the textboxes you'll find in the template.

3. Include one intentional error of an inconsistent image in each text box.

4. Add a number to each box that – in your mind – refers to the number of some part of the images.

5. Print them out and mount them on the wall. *(See examples of textboxes below.)*
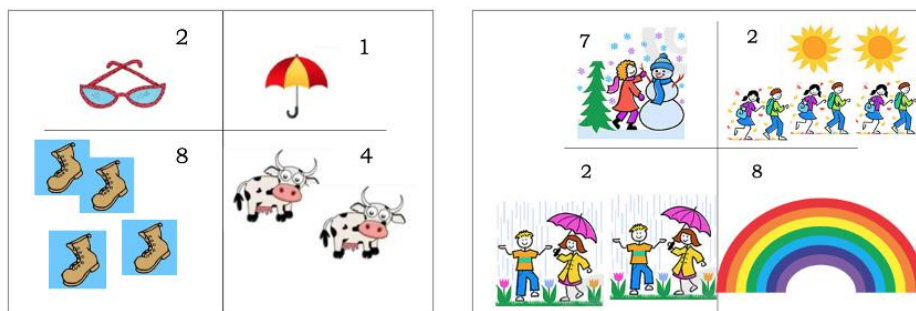
With these images, you have days of conversations about possible errors your students can find.

- The number of various parts of the images – that correspond or don't correspond to the number you've placed in that box
- Colours
- Animals
- Weather
- Cothes
- Etc.

You can also use directional vocabulary so that later on, this will come more naturally to your students, and please insist that they speak in full sentences (if they can speak in full sentences in their home language, they can do the same in the classroom language):

Example:

Teacher: Let's describe the images in the upper-left-hand corner?
Students: Sunglasses.
Teacher: Oh – I see sunglasses, right?
Students: Yes. I see sunglasses.
Teacher: Are there 2 pairs of sunglasses?
Students: There is one pair of sunglasses.
Teacher: So, the number 2 is not accurate, right?
Students: The number 2 is not accurate.
…

Teacher: Let's look at the images in the lower-right-hand corner.
              Are there two 4 cows?

|	
Students:	No, there are 2 cows.
Teacher:	Oh, so the number 4 is not accurate. But is there 4 of something? Are there 4 tails (You're now helping them with academic language so they can respond and use it.)
Students:	No, there are 2 tails.
Teacher:	Are there 4 udders where the cow gives milk?
Students:	No, there are 2 udders.
Teacher:	Are there 4 horns?
Students:	Yes. There are 4 horns.

…

You can talk about the combination of 4 images in each text box – whether the clothes logically go together whether the weather is the same in each, whether there are colours that are missing, etc. There are so many possibilities and fun in this activity, and you can repeat it on another day (repetition is vital in Pre-School) so that the academic language is repeated, and you give students the opportunity to begin thinking more laterally.)

6. *Formative Assessment:* Project the sets of images again and students identify the inconsistencies between the numbers and the images.

Reflection: Ask students to express their feelings on having to find mistakes in materials you prepared for them.

video explanation…
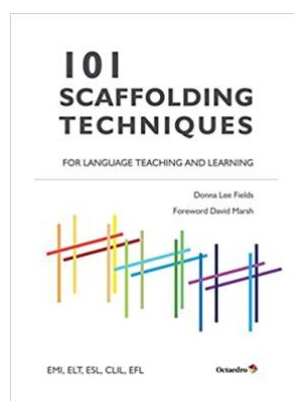
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transcript of video explanation:

Hi, I'm Donna Fields and welcome to CLIL Scaffolding 4. This is series of webinars designed to give you quick, easy and adaptable scaffolding techniques. Scaffolding is an activity or technique that helps push students out of their zone of proximal development** to a more complex level of knowledge. (I use the image: giving a helping hand!)

Today, we're going to talk about how to use scaffolding technique #52, that you can find in my book *101 Scaffolding Techniques For Language Teaching And Learning* and has been translated into Spanish.

Today the objective for this session is show how easy it is to use scaffolding technique #52 in a primary and secondary lesson. You can also use it in adult classes, professional training, any classes you teach and in any language.

Scaffolding technique #52 is called 'Something's not right'. The idea is that you're going to present text that your students are responsible for learning with deliberate mistakes included. You're going to tell your students there are mistakes, and their job is to find them. By finding the mistakes they're going to have to read the text, consider the corresponding images, and use deductive reasoning and previous studies of language and content to locate where the 'something not right' is.

Let's begin with a secondary history class. These are the first few pages of a chapter on the Middle Ages. The images are nice and they're large, but there's a lot of written information that's not explained in the images and a lot of reading the students will have to do. This is a CLIL class, so the language of the text is different from the students' home language. They'll need to assimilate a lot of new concepts in a language that they may not be completely comfortable in. In other words, it's going to be overwhelming for most of them. So what can we do? I'll show you. it takes a bit of preparation, but it's worth it and you can use it year after year.

First, you make copies of several pages of the chapter with the images. (I usually make copies of 10-15 pages.) Type the information into text boxes. include 2-3 mistakes in each page (and if you want, you can identify the type of mistake you've included for instance 3 spelling mistakes, 3 grammar mistakes, and so on), paste the text boxes on top of the corresponding page, laminate the pages (if you want), and post them around the classroom walls. (I've highlighted the mistakes here so you can see them. Obviously, that's not what I show the students.) I also put numbers on each page. You'll see what the numbers are for.

Now, I make tables for the students. So now, in pairs, they go around the room, read the text of each of the pages on the wall, write down the number of the page, find the mistakes and write them in the table. They also discuss the mistakes and write down what they think the correction is.

Here is a table partially filled out. The students found the three spelling mistakes in page #5. You'll see that they don't have to go in numerical order as long as, in the end, they fill in the entire table.

You've now helped scaffold (pre-teach) content and language for the unit and catered to physical intelligence - letting them move while learning.

Let's try this with material from a primary geography class. The students need to read: Incredible Earth. The font is nice and big, the vocabulary seems easy, but you need to remember that learning content in a language that is not your home language is stressful for most students. So, let's break it down into smaller pieces, introduce it to them in an interactive way and give them an opportunity to feel proud of themselves by letting them to make deductive conclusions about content and language.

We
- scan in the pages of the reader (again, I usually use 10-15 pages which in this case is the whole book!)
- type in the text in text boxes
- include 1-2 mistakes in each page
- tape the textboxes to the corresponding page
- number them (laminate the pages if you want to)

- post them on the classroom walls
- give each pair of students a table, and with their partner
- they go around the room (it doesn't matter the order as long as they read all of them in the end)
- they read
- find the mistakes using past knowledge of the language and deductive reasoning for content, and
- write in what the correction probably is.

That's it! You've built a bridge for your students to cross from their previous studies to what they're moving into and in a way that's different and engaging. Classroom management obviously is key, here, but you can find very effective classroom management tips in my CLIL Giving a Helping Hand Webinar Shorts #4 to help you with that.

So, all you SUPER TEACHER out there, thank you so much again for joining.

I look forward to seeing you next time. Please leave me any comments at:
You can find me at these sites:

https://scaffoldingmagic.com/

and

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Instagram

and subscribe. There will be a lot more videos to come. Bye everyone!

**Zone Of Proximal Development: The zone of proximal development is the difference between what a learner can do without help.