

Five Ways To: Scaffold Classroom Dialogue

The essence of scaffolding is that students are elevated to a level of performance and thinking they would struggle to achieve unaided. Supported practice extends their knowledge and develops new habits. As the teacher gradually withdraws their support, students learn to use their

knowledge independently. Teachers commonly use scaffolding to support students' written responses, but it can be equally effective at assisting student talk. Scaffolds help students organise their ideas during discussions and questions, eliciting more sophisticated responses.

Full Sentences

Step-up the vocab

Sequence the ideas

Express an opinion

Comparison and analysis

Full Sentences

Students often offer half-formed minimal answers. Asking them to reframe responses in complete sentences makes them practise a broader range of vocabulary, consolidating their understanding and building fluency with formal speech.

Metals and non-metals.

The main difference is that some of the materials are metals but the others are non-metals.

What's the key difference between these types of materials?

Well done. Now put that in a sentence.

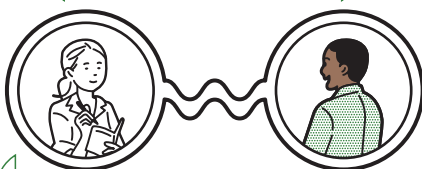


Step-up the vocab

Students naturally gravitate to using words they are already comfortable using, avoiding newer words, worried they are wrong or because they're not yet confident enough to use them. Use specific target words, write them on the board, or refer to them in a text and then ask students to reframe answers including these words.

Let's describe the graph. What pattern does it show?..... Abdi?

The line goes up and then goes up less steeply.



Yes. Good – but now let's include some of the key words: – and say what is actually changing. (gradient, increase, decrease are written on the board)

Ok.... the temperature increases but then after two minutes, the gradient decreases which means temperature rises more slowly.

Sequence the ideas

Presenting and organising more than one idea into a sequence can be challenging. These scaffolds help students do that. For example, ask students to describe a series of events, use Think Pair Share for rehearsal and then ask them to give their response in the specific form of the scaffold.

At first the ice was heating up; **then** it began to melt.

Firstly, they would build a castle; **secondly**, they would defend it with archers and **finally**, they would fire a cannon towards the opposing army.

If water seeps into the cracks, **then** it will freeze and expand creating pressure on the rock.

Express an opinion

Several simple scaffolds can be used to support students to express opinions in formal manner, helping them to explore their ideas and distinguish between facts and opinions in general.

I agree that Picasso's work is the most significant, **because** he had the most radical influence on other artists' work.



Comparison & analysis

A common form of analysis and schema-building is to compare, contrast and categorise. Students often benefit from prompts that support this kind of response.

On one hand... but on the other hand...

An advantage is... ; a disadvantage is...

In the past ... but now...

Both, however, whereas

An **advantage** of producing more is that the price comes down; a **disadvantage** is that it creates more waste.

