

attends to language and content development is critical in meeting the needs of English language learners.

Scaffolding, instructional strategies or tools used to assist students in accessing the content, include modeling, giving feedback, activating prior knowledge, as well as sensory, graphic, or interactive supports. Examples of sensory supports for language arts might be environmental print or photographs; for mathematics, number lines or blocks; for science, physical models or illustrations of cycles, for social studies, maps or video clips. While scaffolding aids in making the content comprehensible language support provides students with the words and sentence structures needed to interact with the content and acquire it.

Language support includes word walls, sentence starters, and sentence frames. Students should be given ample opportunities to actively engage meaningfully with the language of the content. In addition, high frequency vocabulary words sometimes called “tier two” words should be explicitly taught. Words such as performed, indicate, issue, or factor are found across subjects and add specificity to language. They often frame the discipline-specific vocabulary and are needed to understand the content. The use of both scaffolding and language support are related to an ELL’s English language proficiency level. As language proficiency increases the use of scaffolds and support should be reduced.

By integrating the teaching of content with attention to the academic language of that content in all four language domains, listening, speaking, reading, and writing, educators unlock the mysteries of the content and empower ELLs with the keys to its language.

References

National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition. Frequently Asked Questions. (2010, July). *The growing numbers of limited English proficient student*. Retrieved from http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/files/uploads/20/North_Carolina_G_0708.pdf
