

How does scaffolding support pupils to meet success criteria in a KS3 lesson?

	Targed/Target	Yr hyn yr wyf wedi'i wneud yn yr aseiniad hwn. What I have done in this assignment.
Targed/Target 1	Relate my reflection to my academic writing	I have tried to work my reflections with my academic writing but did find difficulty in this.
Targed/Target 2	Present my work in shorter paragraphs	I have made a conscious effort to create paragraphs of appropriate length.

During my time on my school placement, I received a target on how I was explaining tasks to the pupils. The teacher explained how I was not scaffolding the tasks gradual enough to work towards the main task.

Once scaffolding was demonstrated to me, I was able to implement this into my lessons and could see an improvement in my pupil's understandings. Since then, I have grown an interest in the importance of scaffolding tasks or explanations for pupils and how much of an effect it has on their learning experience. I have since made a conscious effort while planning and delivering my lessons to ensure that I am explaining the tasks well and offering enough support to the pupils.

Once I realised how the pupils were meeting success criteria more confidently, I really wanted to focus on the importance and benefits of scaffolding tasks and explanations. I discussed with my research partner my goals in the lesson study and fortunately this was the same goal as her.

Our research question is "How does scaffolding support pupils to meet success criteria in a KS3 lesson?" Therefore we will be comparing the difference between 2 lessons, the first with reduced scaffolding to a lesson fully supported with

scaffolded tasks. As I will be demonstrating the scaffolded lesson, my class will not feel a large difference, as this is how I plan most lessons.

I looked further into how scaffolding can be used and if there was any benefits or known limitations to it by reading books and looking at online resources. These resources show that scaffolding could be used by teachers, peers and resources (Belland, 2016). Teachers and resources are obvious ways to support pupils but I feel the peer support sometimes can be underestimated. Scaffolding is based on supporting the pupil's current performance (Belland, 2016) but this should build their understanding not just giving help to the pupils (Gibbons, 2002).

An effective way to scaffold a lesson is to break your lesson into several small tasks to lead to a main task to avoid misunderstandings from the start (Gershon, 2017). There are other ways to offer support to pupils using scaffolding such as prompting pupils. This could be written or vocal prompts, questioning or statements (Sherrington, 2019, Gershon, 2017, Gershon, 2013a+b). Along with using prompts, modelling answers or creating an answer as a class is a good practical way of demonstrating what is good practise. (Gershon, 2013b, 2016b, 2017 + Sherrington, 2019). These examples were shared across several sources that show the effectiveness of these. Each time I came across these factors, they were spoken about in a positive way in how they support pupils in their learning experience.

Using techniques that support pupils is beneficial to their learning but it should only be used for part of their experience. "Scaffolding is where we take students some of the way."(Gershon, 2016b: loc. 605). I feel this is an important statement to consider, as it is important that you do not give too much support to the pupils and just give them the answers. This should be used as 'small steps' as Williams, 2012 refers to scaffolding. It is not appropriate to expect an end result instantly and therefore you need to look at how you will get to that end goal. Using 'small steps' or scaffolded tasks (William, 2012) and each task should progress in its difficulty (Gershon, 2013b) in order to build up to your end goal.

The teacher plays an essential role in pupils learning experiences and they should be aware of how they can support and assist them in their understanding. Giving them step-by-step instructions is a helpful way of explaining tasks (Gershon, 2017) and an important part of scaffolding is the explanation process (Sherrington, 2019). However, in order to explain the process well, and ensure there is enough support for the pupils, the teacher needs to invest time to analyse the curriculum and it's materials to see how it can be broken down into smaller tasks (Sherrington, 2019). This may not always be achievable due to limited time available or the teacher

not managing their time appropriately in order to offer a suitable amount of support to their lessons.

Despite this, the teacher should be able to pitch the work at the correct level of difficulty for their pupils, ensuring that there is enough challenge available while providing sufficient support (Gershon, 2013b). The teacher should also be able to make some predictions of the outcome of their lessons using the pupil's prior knowledge (Gershon, 2016a) and then be able to stretch their more able and talented pupils, while still supporting those who have lower prior attainment levels (Gershon, 2013b).

The way you adjust your tasks has been a common discussion across the literature looked at with the majority of sources emphasising the importance of challenging the pupils. (Gershon, 2016a) It is important to ensure that you are keeping high expectations throughout your teaching and how simplifying tasks is not the answer. Simplifying tasks would be limiting the outcome of the pupils and instead of simplifying a task; you should look at how those pupils will reach those high expectations. This is where the suggestions of modelling answers, scaffolding tasks, re-explaining tasks or information and prompting the pupils will help you as a teacher and help the pupils reach the same end goal. (Gershon 2016b, Gibbons 2002). However, Belland 2016 claims that you should simplify some of the task elements but then retain the complexity of other task elements (Belland, 2016). This would argue the points of Gershon and Gibbons as they clearly say how you should not look at simplifying your tasks. It is a suggestion that you can offer different tasks to pupils providing they will reach the same end goal – this is commonly known as differentiation. (Gershon, 2017)

Gershon continues to suggest that you can start your lessons with independent learning which will not be suitable for all pupils as everyone learns differently. This would then support the pupils who may not need scaffolding. If you offer the least amount of help at the start of your lessons, it is allow all pupils to have a chance at being challenged. (Gershon, 2017)

To have pupils reach a good level of understanding of your lesson you want them to be in their 'zone of proximal development' which is a theory by Vygotsky but everyone's zone is at different levels (Gershon, 2017). Gibbons discusses Vygotsky's theory of the zone of proximal development and how you have to be in this zone in order to develop their understanding (Gibbons, 2002).

There also has been suggestions in allowing pupils time to think (Gershon, 2017) and discuss their ideas, possibly in pairs or small groups, before sharing or

feeding back (Black, P. J. and King's College, London. Department of Education Professional studies, 2002).

Teachers often will share success criteria with their class which can be beneficial to the pupils to know where they need to be (Gershon, 2017) but sometimes success criteria can be difficult to understand and can appear dense (Sherrington, 2019).

Considering I will be teaching a language lesson, I tried to find some points of scaffolding in a language lesson to which it suggested that using real-life contexts would help the pupils. Trying to make the lessons as 'real life' as possible will benefit the pupils as learning a second language is a continual process where each lesson will add onto their prior knowledge (Gibbons, 2002).

I also made a conscious effort into looking at whether there was any literature supporting peer assessing to which there was pro's and con's to this. Bulla explains how peer assessing should be introduced gradually to the pupils. I believe that pupils will feel an additional responsibility for marking someone else's work and would need a clear understanding to what they are expected to do, hence the gradual introduction (Bulla, 2015). Peer assessing would help pupils self-reflect on their own work, (Bloomsbury Learning Environment, 2017) which would help them become more independent with their work (Bulla, 2015). There is the risk of pupils taking advantage of this responsibility and the teacher not being able to trust them to be honest in their assessing (Bulla 2015 + Bloomsbury Learning Environment, 2017). Despite this, the teacher is able to monitor the pupils and this will give them an opportunity to see how mark schemes work (Bloomsbury Learning Environment, 2017).

Overall, scaffolding hopefully will lead to the pupils becoming more independent in their work (Belland, 2016 + Sherrington, 2019). It should be known that scaffolding should be temporary as using scaffolding constantly could lead to pupils become reliant to that level of support at all times (Sherrington, 2019).

The methodology used in this project is lesson study research. Lesson study research focuses on the pupils' learning and thinking rather than the teaching and what the teacher is doing. The observations that take place are not focused on the teacher, but the learning that occurs (Lewis, C.C. & Hurd, J. 2011).

A strong statement used by Peter Dudley is that lesson study occurs using real pupils in a real classroom (Dudley, 2015: pg.2). This stood out to me as it shows that it is an authentic way to conduct reliable research as the people who would be

affected by educational changes would be playing a key role in the research conducted.

The fact that the teachers know the pupils, they will be able to roughly predict the pupils learning and are able to see if it is happening during the lesson. (Dudley, 2015)

One of the main points across the literature focuses on the fact that lesson study is conducted by teachers and they are working together to improve learning (Lewis, C.C. & Hurd, J. 2011 + Dudley, 2015). They are able to challenge each other and therefore build on each other's knowledge. Due to the fact it is teacher led and teacher driven ensures that the training and research is not just information fed from sources that could be unreliable.

As with all research projects, there are always risks and problems could arise, but as the teachers are in their natural environment they are equipped and knowledgeable enough to deal with these risks in a professional way (Dudley, 2015). Along with this, as teachers are in their natural environment there is no special equipment needed as teachers are just teaching. Also, as teachers are the professional people to teach, minimal training is required (Dudley, 2015).

Lesson study research is known to not only prove teaching and learning, it has also been known to improve schools and raising their standard. (Dudley, 2015)

There was also a mention on how it is common for student teachers to conduct a lesson study, and it had proven to have positive results in how they teach. There has been a case where the student teacher has matured and grown in confidence during the study as they have gained an understanding into how the pupils think (Dudley, 2015).

The methods of data collection that were used during this lesson study included reflection, non-participant observation and focus group.

The observation process was decided to be a non-participating observation to where we created an observation schedule which included a checklist of factors to look for in the pupils engagement during the lesson which was just a tick list once observed. There was an opportunity to add additional notes as well, as sometimes a tick will not give you enough information for what is observed and you would not want to lose the opportunity to note crucial information during a lesson study. The observer was to observe three specific pupils as you can be more specific and can focus on three pupils rather than a full class of over thirty pupils.

Our reflection process was based on Gibbs 1988 reflection model. We created a similar version of this model, which suited what we were looking for and would need to reflect on. After each lesson we planned to meet to discuss the lesson

and the interview process and feedback received. Along with the discussion we would fill out the reflection template to look back on what were the successes of the lesson and what would we change by the next lesson. This will allow us to look at specifics and think about the effect our teaching methods have on the pupils, which you don't normally allocate yourself time to do so.

The focus group consisted of three pupils from each class. These pupils were decided based on their prior attainment levels. We wanted a mixed range of pupils. Therefore we picked one pupil with high prior attainment levels, one with medium prior attainment levels and one with lower prior attainment levels. We thought it would be interesting to see how each of the pupils coped with the lesson and whether there would have been differences in their feedback. We also made sure to have a mix of boys and girls to make it as fair as possible. The pupils chosen also had brought back their consent forms signed by the parents and were happy to participate in the research.

This research project is mainly using qualitative data as it is looking at the how's and why's something is happening rather than just statistics (McLeod, 2019). You could argue the layout of our observation schedule follows a quantitative data method as it is not explaining anything and just giving you a fact, but what follows that will make the findings qualitative data. The majority of observational research will use qualitative data as it will be collected from a smaller sample of participants and in the case of this research project the findings will be more of a descriptive nature rather than figures and statistics.

There are many factors to consider when conducting a lesson study. There are risks to the pupils such as emotional distress of being observed and their safeguarding and anonymity must be a priority. Specific to this lesson study, how the pupils felt in the first lesson due to the lack of scaffolding offered is something we needed to consider and support was offered by the end of the lesson and further support has been available if needed.

You also need to protect yourself as an investigator and ensure that you are following all the correct procedures to avoid any allegations and a class teacher will be present at all times during the research activity. It is also the researchers role to ensure that they are honest during the whole activity and to avoid showing bias at any time.

As this research is being conducted by a student teacher, it is their role to remain respectful of the expectations of the University as their reputation could be compromised if professional conduct is not followed.

The first lesson during this lesson study was focusing on peer assessing and how they needed to complete a task. The pupils were happy to mark their fellow peers work but were offered limited support, which caused some difficulties. They were offered a mark scheme, but this was also difficult to understand.

To start off, the pupils were left to attempt to mark the assessments without any guidance to which the pupils were off task and did not know how to complete the task at all. They also offered no suggestions.

Once there was a class discussion, a method of marking was agreed by the class to which they were allowed to attempt this. Once again, there was a limited explanation to how to complete this so the pupils were off task and talking amongst themselves – not about the work. One of the case pupils did ask the teacher a question but was still showing signs of confusion. Due to the lack of support offered and the lack of engagement, it was difficult to gain their attention back when needed.

The next stage was to give the pupils a set mark scheme to which they did attempt to use it but did not understand what the mark scheme was referring to. However, there was more of an effort made to complete the task this time and the pupils were asking each other for help along with asking the teacher for support. The case pupil who has a higher prior attainment level was able to follow some parts of the mark scheme and gave the task a good attempt but was honest to admit during the lesson that they did not understand the specifics in the mark scheme so could not complete the task. Once they had reached this point the pupils showed signs of being off task again and continued to have personal discussions.

The teacher then offered the class a brief explanation to the mark scheme to where the pupils then seemed a lot more engaged and were quieter, but once again ended up off task.

Finally, the teacher broke down the mark scheme to the class and showed a modelled answer to where the pupils were able to complete the task and were happy to feedback how they done the task and were able to share how they could have improved their own work from seeing the mark scheme.

Once the lesson was over, the three selected case pupils were honest and happy to discuss the lesson. They said at the beginning of the lesson they felt uncomfortable to mark their peers work as they said 'they are not a teacher'. When questioned what they meant by this, they explained that they did not feel confident enough to say whether the work was good or where there were errors. After they were offered the correct support, they explained they felt better equipped to mark the assessments. They were honest in saying that they felt the mark scheme was hard to

understand and hard to know how strict to be with it but were able to understand enough of it to complete the task to a good standard. One of the pupils shared that they would have appreciated a worked answer where they complete a marking task as a class to gain a better understanding to which the other pupils agreed completely with this suggestion. By the end of the lesson they said they understood how to complete the task and knew where they needed to improve their own work but would have appreciated the support from the start to avoid confusion and wasting time.

As researchers, we learned that pupils need support in order to learn a new skill and that you should gradually increase the difficulty rather than going into the start of the lesson with the most difficult version of the task and then easing the tasks in difficulty.

For the next lesson, we decided to avoid offering multiple methods to complete tasks (like the beginning of this lesson) as this just confused the pupils with the change of methods.

For the next time this type of lesson will be taught, we have decided that giving the pupils the mark scheme from the start of the lesson will be more beneficial along with fully explaining the mark scheme to the pupils. Offering a worked answer may still be needed but should definitely be considered as well.

For the second lesson in this lesson study, we decided to offer support throughout the lesson, increasing the level of independence in each task. This lesson was a language lesson and therefore teaching the class new vocabulary was needed. The end task was to respond to a statement based on the topic of the lesson. The vocabulary needed for the lesson was given to the class at the beginning of the lesson and was drilled to ensure pronunciations were correct. The level of support was decreased with each task but prompt questions were on the board if they were needed.

At the start of the lesson, the class were engaged but were chatty. However, the pupils were happy to share answers and ask questions to the teacher and their peers.

The next few tasks seemed to have the same outcome, where the pupils completed the task. The level of talking reduced with each task and the questions turned into the pupils just wanting reassurance that their work was correct or at least on the right path. They were also independently looking for their support, using language phrases and words that were available on the walls around the classroom.

By the final task, where they were responding to a statement, the pupils were working in silence despite not being asked for silence. This shows that the pupils were fully engaged in their task and all pupils completed the task to a high standard

suitable to their capabilities. The case pupil who has a lower prior attainment level did ask for reassurance during the final task but was still working well and this was more of a confidence issue rather than understanding.

Once again, there were three pupils of different attainment levels chosen for this focus group and a mix of boys and girls were chosen to make it as fair as possible. The pupils were very open and happy to share any views they had on this lesson and spoke very maturely while reflecting.

All three pupils shared that they understood who was available for support (the teacher and their peers) as this follows the policy of the school. As a school, the pupils are encouraged to ask a peer before asking a teacher to which the pupils regularly follow. The pupils also know what tools and resources they have available to them such as their language books and the range of vocabulary and phrases on the walls around the classroom. They explained that they felt challenged during the lesson but it was to a manageable level. The pupil with medium prior attainment levels shared that they did not find the work easy but was able to complete every task set with the support that was provided. They also explained that they knew what they needed to do for each task throughout the lesson and were able to explain what they had learned during the lesson.

After this lesson, my research partner and I discussed the successes and any issues from this lesson and agreed that offering support and scaffolding a lesson proved to be beneficial to the pupils for their learning experience. We were then able to conclude that this was an appropriate way to conduct our lessons in the future.

For my next lesson, I would follow a similar structure providing it was suitable for the lesson but definitely continue to reduce the level of support task by task and increase the level of independence throughout the lesson.

From this lesson study, I found that our observation schedule was not useful during the observation as it was difficult to just use a checklist. It was much easier to use it to offer prompts to me and then to make general notes on each part of the lesson.

From looking at my reflection of the lesson study alongside the literature read, I feel I am able to relate to some of the theories although I do have some concerns and disagreements with what I have learned.

I agree with how scaffolding should lead to the pupils becoming more independent as stated above to which I feel this was shown in the second lesson of the lesson study. As a teacher, you should ensure that the pupils do not become reliant on the support offered and are able to complete tasks without being spoon-

fed. The first lesson offered the opposite order of this suggestion where independence was offered at the beginning of the lesson, which was proven unsuccessful as no one in the class understood how to complete the task, and needed more support and explanation. This would argue the point that Gershon, 2017 suggests giving the pupils full independence at the beginning of the lesson.

By offering sufficient support throughout the lesson and decreasing the level of support to allow independence by the final task proved to be a success as the pupils were able to complete the final task with minimal support – mainly from the pupils with lower prior attainment levels.

The use of prompts/ modelling answer, which was supported by several sources also worked as a success in both lessons. This was one method that was used in both lessons just at different times. In each lesson the pupils were able to use the prompts or model answers to their benefit and then proceed to complete the necessary task.

While reflecting on the theory stated by Gershon, 2013b of allowing the pupils to have a discussion before writing worked well in the second lesson of the lesson study. However, this was a language lesson and it worked very well but I am unsure how well it would work in other lessons. I feel it is always beneficial to have a discussion before formally creating an answer as they are still practising the use of the second language just in a different way but I am unsure if it would be beneficial for time in other subjects.

Bulla 2015 explained how peer assessing should be introduced gradually to which this is almost what the case pupils fed back to us after the first lesson of the lesson study. They wanted the explanations at the start of the lesson instead of being left to complete the task unaided and not aware of the expectations of marking a peers assessment. This was something discussed during our reflection and was interesting to see there was literature explaining this.

After looking at my findings along with the literature available on this topic I will now look at the strengths and limitations of my research.

I feel confident in how we adjusted the second lesson from our feedback and reflections from the first lesson. This was achievable from the success of the focus group and how the information collected was honest, fair and appropriate.

Fortunately, the second focus group was just as successful. I also feel it was a good decision to choose three pupils with different attainment levels as we were able to see how each level responded to the support and are now able to look into how we can further support these pupils to achieve their full potential in our lessons.

Before the lesson study, I was unsure whether a non-participant observer would actually be the best decision as they were not able to connect with the pupils and get live feedback during the lesson but after seeing how mature the pupils were in the focus group, I can now appreciate that not participating in the lesson made the lesson more authentic and did not compromise the pupils learning as they did not feel pressured or any different to any other lesson.

Although I feel there were many positives from my research, I feel there were some limitations that could have been altered and if I were to do this lesson study again I would definitely consider changing these if appropriate and if I am able to.

Being in a secondary school environment meant it was difficult to have the opportunity to work alongside someone in the same subject as you as a student teacher. Therefore, my lesson study was across two different subjects that are not in the same areas of learning experience. This could have affected our research due to the different format of our lessons. Having different subjects looking at the same learning method can be hard to compare as you are teaching different things in a completely different way. If it was the same subject across the lesson study, I feel the research would be a lot more reliable and beneficial on the whole.

As stated previously, I found it difficult to follow the observation schedule during the lesson and when I tried to follow it, I wasted too much time looking at the prompts than at the lesson and the pupil's engagement. Instead I would have preferred a prompt list and just took notes – to which this was what I was doing by the end of the lesson and felt a lot more confident in my feedback and reflections by doing this.

In my ethics form, I noted how limiting support to pupils could be unethical. I feel it was needed for the purpose of this research and support was given to the pupils by the end of the lesson but a lot of time was wasted in order to complete this research that could have been used in different ways to benefit the pupils. It is hard to argue this though, as it was a crucial part of the research but from the pupils perspective this was not very appropriate for their time.

I have learnt during this process that a lot of my findings and reflections agree and work alongside a lot of the theories shared, even the difficulties faced are explained in literature.

After this lesson study, and in my next placement school, I will continue to scaffold my lessons and offer support to the pupils. However, I will consider using differentiation alongside scaffolding in order to offer further support to the pupils with lower prior attainment levels. I set my lessons with very high expectations and in a class with mixed attainment levels, sometimes this can prove difficult to those with

lower prior attainment levels. I regularly use differentiation in my lessons but will look at incorporating it into scaffolded lessons to ensure every pupil has the best chance to succeed in the lessons.

On the whole, during this lesson study I have been able to witness the benefits of scaffolding and how it almost plays a crucial part to a lesson structure.

If I were to do this research again, I would hope to have the opportunity to do both lessons across the same subject to make my findings more reliable. Also, as I now know that scaffolding is beneficial, I would now like to focus on specific methods and which methods are the most effective for a pupil's development as currently I am supportive of all methods except offering no support to start.

I feel all teachers should support and consider using scaffolding techniques – possibly all methods. I feel the use of using prompts/model answers is useful across all subjects – although I cannot currently confirm this. Reducing the amount of support during the lesson worked very well for me and I would happily recommend for any teacher to trial this method as it will lead to the pupils completing tasks independently. Hopefully, this will work towards the pupils becoming more independent learners which is one of the four principles of Professor Donaldson's new curriculum for Wales. (Donaldson, 2015)

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