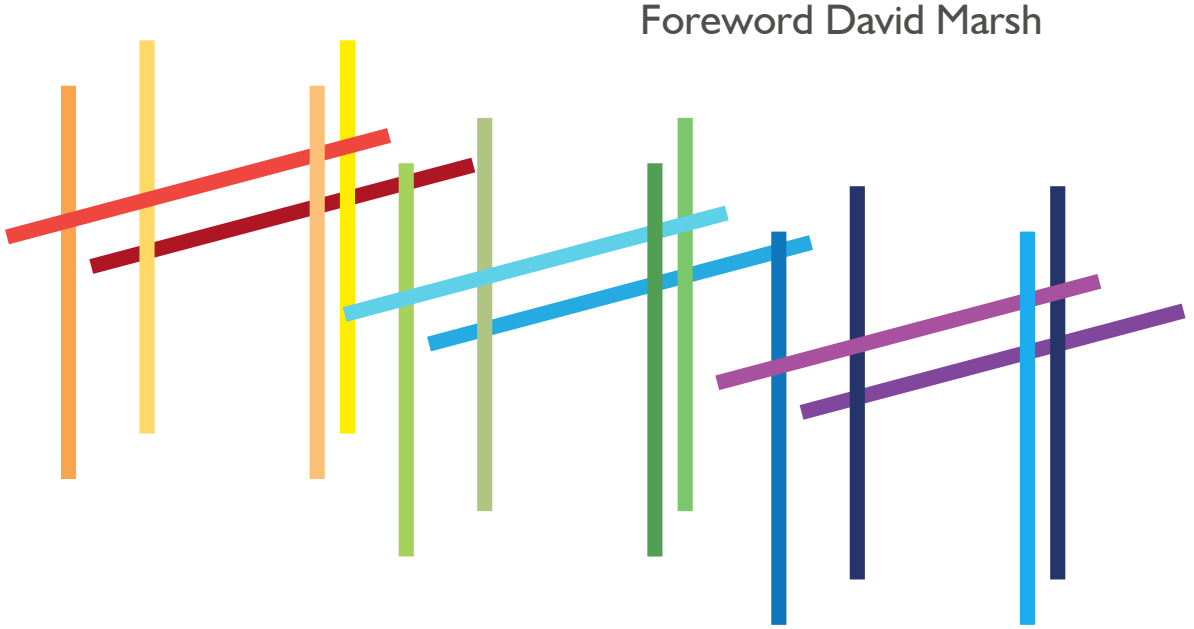
101 SCAFFOLDING TECHNIQUES

FOR LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING

Donna Lee Fields

Foreword David Marsh



EMI, ELT, ESL, CLIL, EFL

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First edition: March 2017
Second edition: September 2019

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© This edition:
Ediciones OCTAEDRO, S.L.
C./ Bailén, 5 – 08010 Barcelona
Tel.: 93 246 40 02 – Fax: 93 231 18 68
www.octaedro.com – octaedro@octaedro.com

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ISBN: 978-84-9921-845-8

Cover design: Katja Vuori
Interior design and layout: Joan Reig
Type setting and organisation of materials: Pilar Ciruelo
Illustration: Pamela Fields, Alana Richards, Rebecca Patti and ingimage
Coordination and production: Joan Reig

Printer: Prodigitalk

Printed in Spain

If you never did you should.
These things are fun and fun is good.

Dr. Seuss, *One fish, two fish*

Dedicated to Cindy de Poy,
whose unconditional
support has lifted me
across many breaches.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost I owe a most indebted thank you to Tomás Motos. He has helped, encouraged, supported me, and is one of the most selfless and patient people I have ever had the honour of knowing. First as a student and then as a mentor, he has been a warm, glowing light at the end of many long, dark tunnels.

To Ana Marí, who introduced me to CLIL and is the truest life-long learner I know.

To Concha, Emma and María José, whose unfailing energy and enthusiasm for these scaffolding ideas kept me going, many times over.

To María Jesus Frigols who waved her magic wand and doors opened.

To Peeter Mehisto, who lent me his vast skills in shaping the introduction, and then gracefully let me fly by myself.

To David Marsh, who inspires simply by his deep integrity and commitment to education. He is one of the most beautifully soft-spoken people I know who can change people's lives so dramatically.

To my parents , who gave me a belief, respect and love for education, and the skills to pursue anything I wanted.

I would also like to thank Juan León for seamlessly accepting the idea of this book. When I called to tell him that in sending in my first draft, he had a piece of my soul, he answered that I had a piece of his as well. Such simplicity can only come from one who has layers upon layers of truth. His quietness has given me room to breathe and believe.

To Pilar Ciruelo who took on this project with an open heart and a lot of faith.

And to my sister, Pamela. She knows why.

Prologue

DAVID MARSH, Ph. D.

Several years ago I was asked by a member of the European Commission, why, out of all the other educational approaches actively supported through European funding, that CLIL has been so successful. I replied that it's because CLIL was neither invented nor owned, but was something which had developed naturally and particularly suitable for the times. I described CLIL as a form of free and open source Linux operating system, which had been invented by by the Helsinki-based Linus Torvalds around the same time we launched CLIL from Finland. CLIL, like Linux, marked a major breakaway from the powerful English language industry, and the conservatism that was maintaining the status quo. In addition, as with Linux, it empowered people to take greater control, to further develop important skills and competences, and to deepen the joy and flow of learning.

One of the main reasons why CLIL is so strong is because one of its fundamental principles is the quality of education. The elements are the following: holistic education, competence-based learning, learner autonomy, fostering creativity and critical thinking, changing curriculum on how to learn (not what to learn) and recognizing the relevance and impact technology has on the lives of our students.

Another fundamental principle of CLIL is that we need to examine our own expectations of our students and remember that all students matter and all students deserve the same opportunities to bring out the very best part of themselves so that they will be able to take an active part in helping our societies.

There's no single model of CLIL. There's no prototype which is being exported from one country to another. What we're seeing around the world is a range of different models, a range of different approaches, depending on the age of the children and depending on the situation where the schools are. The schools that have implemented it do share one thing and that is the interweaving of content and language in a dual-focused way in quality learning environments.

The 'tell me why' generations of years gone by have been replaced by a 'show me how' generation. These are young people who need to feel an immediacy of purpose when they learn; young people who resist learning now for use later. 'Learn as you use and use as you learn', is very much a mantra of the new generations, and CLIL is particularly suitable for tapping into this modern learning mindset.

CLIL has often been a grassroots movement, energized by innovative educators, parents and students, or otherwise by equally innovative administrators and decision-makers, and has developed in different ways according to the needs and interests of those involved. There is great potential in now collecting different types of CLIL practice in order to both strengthen existing practice, and open doors for others to see what can be achieved, even when operating with limited resources. This is one of the strengths of this type of publication which seeks to articulate and share insight and good practice on this fast-moving and exciting educational phenomenon.

When we talk about teaching with the CLIL approach, we're not just talking about how to teach through another language, but how to teach in general. This reflection enables us to take a look at our work as teachers and how we're doing what we're doing.

Neuroscience has given us clues as to why CLIL is so energising and popular in school today. Neurosciences has been a controversial subject in the past few years because of statements made that have turned out not to have any basis in fact. However, educational neurosciences have made it clear that bilingual educational settings have very powerful repercussions in the lives of our students. The research has focused on what happens to the brain when students use more than one language. I stress the word 'use' more than one language because that's very different than 'knowing' more than one language.

Recently, teachers have been asked why it has been so difficult to develop creativity in their classrooms. They say that it is because it is very difficult to develop a high level of creativity in isolation. A language teacher says, 'I have the knowledge, I have the language skills, I have wonderful, motivated students, but I don't have enough time'. A math teacher says, 'My curriculum is so heavy that I don't have enough time to develop these clever ideas that I know would help my students'. One key factor in making the CLIL approach successful is to have support and work in teams. The language and content teachers need to work together to develop lessons that support each other. You can consider the ideas in this book as part of your team. They help you teach your subject and promote creativity, critical thinking - the fundamental principles of CLIL.

Language teaching is evolving and CLIL helps to enhance these practices. There is no doubt that more work is involved in planning lessons that include both content and language. However, teachers that I met years ago in teacher-training sessions have told me that even though planning CLIL lessons is more work, they feel energised. They have an overall satisfaction level which they were lacking before.

I've seen teachers burn out because of the effort they put into planning so it's important to start slowly, to take small steps, bite-size pieces and ideally to work in a team – with language and other content teachers. Part of this support is to have access to materials that will help you promote the principles of CLIL without such an investment in time when planning lessons. Consider *Giving a Helping Hand* a support tool that will make this planning easier. It presents engaging ideas that are deceptively simple that support the CLIL approach. You will see that you can adapt and apply them to their classrooms quickly. I have worked with Donna over the past couple of years and have seen firsthand how engaged students and teachers are when they learn through the activities she presents.

In the end, there are opportunities that enrich our lives and it seems to me that doing something as extraordinary as taking the challenge to teach through another language and help change the lives of your students, is incomparable.

David Marsh, Ph. D.
Jyvaskyla, Finland
2016

Introduction

You're climbing a precipice - the facade of a cliff. Everything has been fine up until now. You've climbed rock faces with very similar terrain. Suddenly you reach a deep and wide gap in the surface. You realise this is much more difficult than you have ever experienced before. Your breathing gets a little shallower, your mind freezes just a little bit, your senses go a little wild and you're not sure what to do. All the confidence that usually pushes you along without thinking is now gone. You don't know how to cross the gap. You crunch down and sink a little bit into yourself...Then you hear a sound from above. You look up and see a hand reaching down. You hear a voice saying 'Take my hand. I'll help you across. I'll show you what to do.' Relief floods across your body. You straighten up. You take the hand reached out to you. And with that little bit of help, you make it over the gap, and continue your climb.

…That's scaffolding.

Scaffolding helps students to reach beyond where they could go on their own. It is a powerful tool for learning. The helping hand of scaffolding can be offered to students by teachers, by other more experienced students, or through learning materials. Scaffolding aims to help students to achieve intended learning outcomes. The helping hand is offered in cases where students are unlikely to complete the task without this extra aid. When the goal is for students to build competences, not just undertake specific tasks, scaffolding is offered quickly as required and withdrawn slowly when no longer needed. The idea is to help students lower their anxiety level and be more open and engaged in learning so that they can continue moving forward.

The overall aim of this book is to offer you strategies and activities that can be used in any subject, adapted to any level, and used with any classroom language. The target population is for teachers of primary, secondary, adult education and professional development. It is a book with a CLIL perspective (Content and Language Integrated Learning) so each technique has a double focus: teaching content through a classroom language, and within that scope, both teaching and learning. The 101+ activities in this book are geared toward bridging home and classroom languages. The materials included in this edition are in English with templates (in the digital annex), in Word format, so as to make it easier for you to adapt them as needed.

I have had the pleasure and honour of working with students and educators in many countries around the world and have seen how the techniques presented in this book transform teaching and learning. Teachers, who before did not know how to get their students involved in their own education, were amazed at the instant transformation of the energy. The byproduct - self-confidence on the part of their students - is what they most comment on. From the perspective of the students – those who had been stuck in a cycle of self-recrimination for the difficulties they experienced in acquiring new skills and understanding the lessons, showed visible relief and enjoyment in being able to interact with materials in ways that helped them assimilate new knowledge almost seamlessly.

Here are two examples of techniques that give a helping hand to students and teachers. You'll find 99 more techniques in this book!

* * *

EXAMPLE: 11. INTO THE LOOKING GLASS

You are a primary teacher, planning a natural science lesson, and the next unit in your class book is on economic sectors. Along with acquiring an understanding of sectors, your students will need to name different professions, explain what their responsibilities are, and how each contributes to the community at large. You'll see below how this can be done in a fast, easy to prepare, cross-curricular card game.

Step by step

1. Choose 10-15 professions and put two identical images of each in textboxes.
2. Underneath each image, write an even number of questions and answers - the questions are answered under the text box with the mirror image, and vice versa (contents and sophistication of vocabulary is adapted according to the level you teach).
3. Repeat this model in the other textboxes for the rest of the professions represented in the next unit.
4. Make enough copies for every two students in the class, cut the sets up individually and give one to each pair of students. The card game is played in the following manner:
   a) Without mixing the cards, students put the pile of professions, face down in the middle of the table.
   b) They work together turning over one card at a time, trying to answer the questions presented, and making questions from the answers given.
   c) They then turn over the next card (the mirror image of the first) and repeat the process, now with more information, correcting any mistakes they might have made with the first card.
   d) When they have finished interacting with all the cards, they split up, partner with other students, and repeat the game. Now they will be able to participate with more confidence.

After this activity, students open their classroom books and quickly realize that they are familiar with most of the material and vocabulary presented.

Example:

<table>
<tr>
<td>
• He is an expert in mining methods and types of coal.
• What types of environments does he work in?
• Miners spend a lot of time lying or sitting in uncomfortable positions, and the work is stressful on the body.
• What are some of the dangers of mining?
• This activity is mostly found in underdeveloped and developing countries.
• He works in the secondary sector.</td>
<td>
• What are his areas of expertise?
• He works in areas that are damp and dark.
• Why is being a miner sometimes very uncomfortable?
• Mining can be dangerous if the walls and ceilings of the mineshafts are not properly secured, if there is not proper ventilation, or if the equipment is not controlled correctly.
• Where are most working mines located on a global scale?
• In which economic sector does he work?</td>
</tr>
</table>

* * *

Some of the cognitive benefits of this scaffolding activity:

- ***Collaboration and cooperation***: This activity is designed so that students learn to work together towards a common goal, helping each other in the process.
- ***Four linguistic skills***: The activity combines reading, aural comprehension, speaking and writing. When any activity includes these four skills, learning deepens. Moreover, meaningful repetition of material helps raise the possibilities of an increase of retention of information - both the content and the language; the combination of images and words also helps deepen this process.
- ***Critical thinking***: Dividing new information into two text blocks means that the students have to think critically in order to answer and formulate questions.
- ***Cross-curricular and multicultural material***: Mixing cross-curricular information helps students to use different intelligences, thereby making the learning experience more challenging and so more meaningful.
- ***Safe environment***: Working in pairs helps create a safe environment so that less-confident students can work more effectively. It is difficult to assimilate new information if a student does not feel safe and protected from emotional embarrassment or ridicule; the safety ropes imbedded in this activity help students to feel supported (ergo more relaxed), and so are able to transfer knowledge from short-term to long-term memory.
- ***Level of difficulty***: The vocabulary and information included can be written with either more or less sophisticated vocabulary depending on the level of your students, but dare to push them! They'll rise to whatever challenges you give them, and interacting with more sophisticated material will ultimately help them to become more successful in their academic and professional careers. Scaffolding helps you to push your students out of their zone of comfort safely.

* * *

EXAMPLE: 9. PAINT ME A STORY

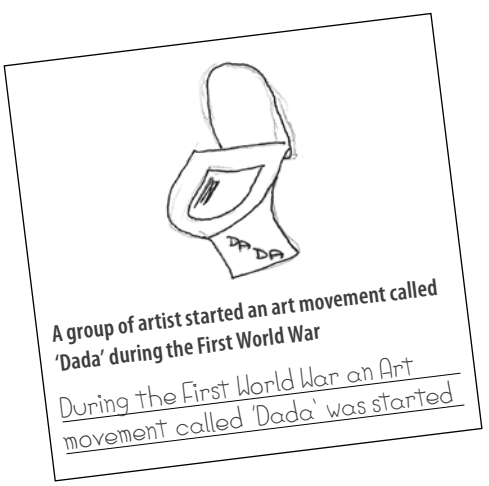
You are a secondary art teacher. The next unit introduces Dadaism. To help your students understand the material, you present the following activity before beginning the unit.

Step by step

1. Choose 8-10 sentences from the unit you're about to read with your students. Write these sentences separately in textboxes, with space above for illustrations (see examples below).
2. In groups, students work together, a) re-writing the sentences in passive voice (or whatever grammar structure you choose), and b) drawing an illustration that represents the idea of the sentence.
3. When everyone has finished, one student reproduces one of the illustrations that group has done, on the board. The other students guess which sentence the illustration represents.
4. Repeat this dynamic until all sentences have been presented and identified.

Assign pages of the text to read at home and students will soon realize that they recognize much of the information.

Example



* * *

Some of the cognitive benefits of this scaffolding technique:

- ***CLOSING THE GAP***: The sentences you chose introduce key information for the unit you're going to read.
- ***deepening learning***: Combining multiple intelligences and skills means that the students have to concentrate more closely on the activity.
- ***four linguistic skills***: The activity is designed so that the students have to read, speak, draw and use key content from the unit. Having been introduced to the information in such an active manner, the vocabulary and content will be much more cognitively accessible to them in their future discussions.

The book you're holding contains 101+ techniques, activities and scaffolding tools that cover most key learning areas and language levels. They give your students opportunities to think critically, problem-solve, and to develop collaborative skills. You'll see that the ideas are designed for different learning styles and honour all intelligences. You can use them in small groups or large classes and they are easy and fast to prepare. It is partnered with a digital annex which contains templates that will help you to easily adapt these ideas to your own needs.

The techniques are offered to help you to make your lessons even more dynamic and interactive than they already are. The hope is that you use them as springboards to create your own exciting and educational activities. The book is meant to give *you* a helping hand in your pursuit of finding ways to help your students.

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101 SCAFFOLDING TECHNIQUES
FOR LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING

Scaffolding is a powerful tool for learning. It enables learners to achieve deep and meaningful learning through the provision of timely and constructive support. It is used as required, just-in-time, to bridge learning gaps, advance learning objectives, and build self-confidence throughout the learning community.

Closely aligned to the concept of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), scaffolding is a key element in learning languages and other subjects across the curriculum.

This publication is about scaffolding which supports learning languages, learning about languages, and learning through languages (Halliday). By providing students with these tools for learning, the teacher can step back and truly become a 'guide on the side' whilst conducting and facilitating teaching through powerful learning environments.

The 101 scaffolding techniques found in this book, alongside the templates in the digital annex, provide the reader with hands-on ideas and examples to develop innovative, exciting and empowered learning.

Donna Lee Fields Ph.D. is a New Yorker, living in Valencia, Spain. She is a Professor of Education at the International University of Valencia, La Florída, Catarroja, a teacher-trainer for international organizations, and has published globally on innovative teaching and student-centred learning. For the past 5 years she has collaborated with David Marsh, creator of CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning), through Educluster Finland, University of Jyväskylä Group.