SCAFFOLDING

Tips on how to help your youth gradually achieve learning independence through scaffolding.

What is Scaffolding?

Scaffolding in teaching refers to techniques used to move students progressively toward stronger understanding and, ultimately, greater independence in the learning process. Scaffolding involves meeting students where they are at, and helping them move their thinking forward. This may mean simplifying a problem for a struggling student, but also suggesting extensions to challenge a more advanced student.

Source: Scaffolding Definition. (2015, April 06). Retrieved from https://www.edglossary.org/scaffolding/

Examples of Scaffolding:

✦ A teacher giving a simplified version of an activity, and gradually increasing the difficulty overtime.

✦ Students being asked to study vocabulary before they are given a difficult text to read.

✦ Teacher explaining a concept in various ways to ensure the

Why is Scaffolding important?

Scaffolding techniques aid learning as they provide the support necessary for students to master complex activities. The support provided through scaffolding helps eliminate potential anxiety from a too-difficult task. It also helps maintain focus and engagement, because it is a way for the teacher to respond to each students' needs. Students tend to become disengaged with an activity when 1.) It's too hard and they feel lost or 2.) It's too easy and they get bored. Consequently, behavioral problems may arise. One of the ways that we can prevent these issues is by providing appropriate tasks that keep students engaged while also challenging and pushing them to expand their knowledge.

Source: If you were Ms. Price, what could you do to help your students when they struggle with a task? (n.d.). Retrieved from https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/sca/cresource/q1/p01/

Tips for Scaffolding

1. Ask a lot of questions.

Scaffolding through inquiry.

A great way to break down a problem or activity is through specific, guiding, and open-ended questions. This not only checks for students' understanding, but also guides the students in solving the problem. Some questions include, "What is/are…?," "What does it mean…?," "What's another way we can explain this?," "How do you know it works?," etc.

2. Meet the students where they are at.

Not all students are on the same page.

Often we assume that students have all the basics skills they need, but that is definitely not true. Therefore, breaking down the basic information or methods of solving a problem is important for facilitating the learning of all students. While some students need more support than others, establishing the basic information in the beginning is a good way to get started. For those who need the extra challenge, provide extensions and additional investigations. Asking the student "What if…?" is a great way to challenge and check for his or her understanding.

3. Break down problems into manageable chunks.

Doable problems keep students motivated.

An activity with many steps or a problem with multiple layers may seem daunting to students. Breaking down the task into smaller pieces makes the students more motivated, as they are less intimidated by the difficulty of the problem. After breaking up the problem in chunks, another great way of scaffolding is to assign different parts of the problem to different students, and creating a safe space for them to discuss their solutions after they have solved their respective chunks.