



MEETING STUDENTS' NEEDS THROUGH SCAFFOLDING

Lessons that involve highly complex text require a great deal of scaffolding. Many of the suggestions we make in the Meeting Students' Needs column of the NYS lessons are scaffolds—temporary instructional supports designed to help students successfully read texts that are supposedly too hard for them. **Many scaffolds are excellent for all types of learners—English Language Learners (ELLs), students with special needs and/or students who are just generally challenged by reading.**

Scaffolding becomes differentiation when students access or have access to scaffolding only when needed. Scaffolds that are provided to the whole class might be appropriate and necessary, but whole class scaffolds are not differentiation.

FRONT-END SCAFFOLDING

Front-end scaffolding is defined as the actions teachers take to prepare students to better understand how to access complex text before they read it. Traditionally, front-end scaffolding has included information to build greater context for the text, front-loading vocabulary, summarizing the text, and/or making predictions about what is to be read. Close analytical reading requires that teachers greatly reduce the amount of front-end scaffolding to offer students the opportunity to read independently and create meaning and questions first. It also offers students the opportunity to own their own learning and build stamina.

Examples of front-end scaffolding that maintain the integrity of close reading lessons include:

- Using learning targets to help students understand the purpose for the reading
- Providing visual cues to help students understand targets
- Identifying, bolding, and writing in the margins to define words that cannot be understood through the context of the text
- Chunking long readings into short passages, (literally distributing sections on index cards, for example), so that students see only the section they need to tackle
- Reading the passage aloud before students read independently
- Providing an audio or video recording of a teacher read-aloud that students can access when needed (such as SchoolTube, podcasts, ezPDF, or GoodReader)
- Supplying a reading calendar at the beginning of longer-term reading assignments, so that teachers in support roles (special needs, ELL, AIS) and families can plan for pacing
- Prehighlighting text for some learners so that when they reread independently, they can focus on the essential information
- Eliminating the need for students to copy information—and if something is needed (such as a definition of vocabulary), providing it on the handout or other student materials



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BACK-END SCAFFOLDING

Back-end scaffolding, on the other hand, is defined as what teachers plan to do after students read complex text to help deepen understanding of the text. When teachers provide back-end scaffolds, they follow the “Release-Catch-Release model,” allowing students to grapple with hard text FIRST, and then helping students as needed.

Examples of back-end scaffolds include, but are not limited to:

- Providing “hint cards” that help students get “unstuck” so they can get the gist—these might be placed on the chalkboard tray, for example, and students would take them only if they are super-stuck
- Encouraging/enabling students to annotate the text, or—if they can’t write directly on the text—providing sticky notes or placing texts inside plastic sleeves (GoodReader is an app that allows students to mark up text on an Ipad. Adobe Reader works on a wide variety of electronic platforms)
- Supplying sentence starters so all students can participate in focused discussion
- Placing students in heterogeneous groups to discuss the text and answer text-dependent questions
- Providing task cards and anchor charts so that expectations are consistently available
- Highlighting key words in task directions
- Simplifying task directions and/or create checklists from them so that students can self-monitor their progress
- Placing students in homogeneous groups and providing more specific, direct support to the students who need it most
- If special education teachers, teachers of ELLs, teaching assistants, etc. are pushed in to the ELA block, teaching in “stations” so that students work in smaller groups
- Designing question sets that build in complexity and offer students multiple opportunities to explore the answers:
 - * Students discuss the answer with peers, then write answers independently and defend answers to the whole class.
 - * Provide time for students to draft write responses before asking for oral response.
- Identifying and defining vocabulary that students struggled with
- Using CoBuild (plain language) dictionaries
- Providing partially completed or more structured graphic organizers to the students who need them
- Providing sentence or paragraph frames so students can write about what they read
- **AFTER students have given it a shot:**
 - * Examine a model and have students compare their work to the model and then revise.
 - * Provide a teacher think-aloud about how he/she came to conclusions and have students revise based on this additional analysis.
 - * Review text together as a class (smartboard or document camera) and highlight the evidence.