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PECULIARITIES OF USING SCAFFOLDING FOR SEN LEARNERS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

Education of children with special educational needs (SEN) is one of the main prerequisites for their successful socialization and effective self-realization. To ensure their full participation, it is necessary to switch to a social model that is cultivated in the international community, and use scaffolding as one of the main methods of support when a child studies in the “zone of proximal development” which can optimize this process. The article highlights the main types of educational needs and claims that, because of the current situation in Ukraine, it is advisable to add refugee children and internally displaced persons to the list, as they tend to demonstrate similar patterns of behavior: tension, lack of motivation and concentration, destructive behavior, distancing, isolation, etc. The article examines the essence of scaffolding as a leading strategy that provides students with the opportunity to focus on solving a problem and achieving goals that are beyond their individual efforts or capabilities in the process of learning a foreign language. It is emphasized that in the process of teaching, its planning, adaptation or modification of educational programs, it is necessary to adhere to the principles of the theory of Multiple Intelligences, Multisensory Approach to learning and to establish interdisciplinary connections with the native language in order to avoid affective states: stress, anxiety, mental and emotional exhaustion, and depression. Attention is paid to teachers' personal and professional characteristics, their ability to implement timely corrective interventions for students with special educational needs; the advantages, basic principles and some effective forms and methods of scaffolding in the process of developing SEN learners' reading and writing skills are considered. It is emphasized that to enable learners to grow independently, teachers must have access to high-quality teaching and information to ensure the implementation and monitoring of foreign language learning outcomes and to provide appropriate support for students with special educational needs.

Key words: *special educational needs, scaffolding, zone of proximal development, intervention.*

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ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ЗАСТОСУВАННЯ СКАФФОЛДИНГУ У НАВЧАННІ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ ДІТЕЙ З ОСОБЛИВИМИ ОСВІТНИМИ ПРОБЛЕМАМИ

Отримання освіти дітьми з особливими освітніми потребами (ООП) є однією з основних передумов їх успішної соціалізації, забезпечення їх повноцінної участі в житті суспільства, ефективною самореалізації. З метою соціалізації дітей з ООП необхідним є перехід на соціальну модель, яка культивується у міжнародній спільноті, а використання скаффолдингу як одного із основних методів підтримки, коли дитина навчається у «зоні найближчого розвитку», дозволяє оптимізувати цей процес. У статті виокремлюються основні види освітніх потреб та зазначається, що у зв'язку із поточною ситуацією в Україні до переліку доцільно додати дітей-біженців та внутрішньо-переміщених осіб, які можуть демонструвати подібні моделі поведінки: напруженість, відсутність мотивації та концентрації, деструктивну поведінку, дистанціювання, ізоляцію тощо. Стаття розглядає сутність скаффолдингу як провідної стратегії, яка забезпечує учнів можливістю зосереджуватись на розв'язанні проблеми та досягненні поставлених цілей, які знаходяться за межами їх індивідуальних зусиль чи можливостей у процесі навчання іноземної мови. Наголошується, що у процесі навчання та здійснення його планування, адаптації чи модифікації навчальних програм, необхідно дотримуватись принципів теорії множинного інтелекту, мультисенсорного підходу до навчання та встановлювати міждисциплінарні зв'язки з рідною мовою з метою уникнення афективних станів: стресу, тривожності, розумового та емоційного виснаження та пригнічення. Увага приділяється особистісним та професійним характеристикам педагога, його вмінням впроваджувати своєчасне корекційне втручання для учнів з ООП, розглядаються переваги, основні принципи та деякі ефективні методи, форми та прийоми скаффолдингу в процесі формування навичок читання та письма учнів з ООП. Вчителі, у свою чергу, повинні мати доступ до високоякісного навчання та інформації, щоб забезпечувати реалізацію та контроль результатів вивчення іноземної мови, а також надавати відповідну підтримку учням із особливими освітніми потребами.

Ключові слова: особливі освітні потреби, скаффолдинг, зона найближчого розвитку, навчальне втручання.

Topicality. Nowadays, when special needs students should be in learning environments with regular students, teachers must be skilled at providing additional help to these students within the context of a traditional classroom. These goals can be accomplished through accommodation and modification. Modification occurs when students cannot use the same material as the other students because of its level or presentation. Providing documents at different reading levels or audio adaptations of stories or text requires more planning but allows you to cover the same standards as regular programs.

Recent research and studies. The analysis of scientific literature allows to state that the problem of obtaining education for SEN children is in the center of attention of scientists all over the world: V. Andrushchenko, O. Akimova, E. Andreeva, P. Blatchford, V. Bondarya, T. Ilyashenko, M. Giangreco, S. Hurley, A. Kolupaeva, N. Sabat, J. Suter, R. Webster, M. Yarmachenko determine the need for implementation of inclusive education provided by appropriately trained teachers, and their peers support; J. Beishuizen, K. Guzman, D. Johnson, R. Johnson, F. Oort, H. Pedraza, S. Rojas-Drummond, O. Torreblanca, M. Velez,

J. Van de Pol, M. Volman state that adults can use scaffolds for management/ frustration control, cognitive structuring, recruitment (to get a student interested) and direction maintenance (to keep the child on task); L. Dawes, N. Mercer, W. Meyer, B. Turner, R. Wegerif emphasise on a typical list of oral strategies which includes: modelling, instructing, explaining, questioning, prompting and feeding back, etc. However, it is obvious that the peculiarities of using scaffolding for SEN learners in the process of mastering a foreign language constitute much more than merely helping the learner and need further study.

The subject-matter of the article is to introduce scaffolding methods that can develop SEN students' learning and thinking abilities, analyze effective personal and professional teachers' characteristics that will help create an environment that works well for struggling learners and help them thrive.

Results and discussion. Most learning happens in the classroom where students spend most of their day. A lot of work is done to make sure that as many learners benefit from quality teaching and timely interventions for pupils with SEN. Some of these interventions work well and provide a chance to improve learning, they do not stop at learning outcomes but strengthen relationships and build confidence. The current situation with the war in Ukraine, COVID, blackouts, etc. put enormous pressure on both schools and teachers, and vulnerable learners. Although there is pretty much research done on meeting the needs of all pupils, attention should be paid to the detail and specificity about how SEN learners should be taught, how to differentiate and adapt content or provide supportive assistance/guidance and scaffold.

Pupils who study English may experience any learning difficulties or disorders (one or more), including cognition and learning needs (e.g.: dyslexia or delayed language development), behavior, social and emotional needs (e.g.: ADHD), sensory and physical needs (e.g.: visual impairment, hearing impairment), medical conditions (e.g.: epilepsy, diabetes) or they may be ahead of their peers – gifted or talented. If they fall under any of these categories, it is evident in both L1 and L2. To provide extra support for struggling students learning English, it is vital to understand and evaluate a student's complete language and life experience. Moreover, it is necessary to be aware of those students who are refugees or internally displaced children due to the current situation and who have to go through an adjustment period. As they find themselves in an absolutely new surrounding with new people and set rules and ways of behavior, they may demonstrate behavioral patterns similar to those found in SEN learners: tension, lack of motivation

and concentration, disruptive behaviours, distancing and isolation, etc. however, given time, relevant instruction and guidance, appropriate teaching methods and encouraging support all the students can increase their knowledge of English.

It is an obvious fact that SEN learners vary significantly, and if school is not currently able to follow the social model approach to SEN, it is only up to teachers to be flexible, think creatively and cater to the needs of SEN learners and create more inclusive experiences for all pupils.

At the beginning of teacher-student interaction/ collaboration, it is basically to make a student with special educational needs feel valued and welcome. To help a learner it is beneficial to sit a child near the teacher's desk where he/she can easily be assisted when needed. All the students should get to know each other better through in-class activities and projects they do together via regular regrouping activities (in small groups and pairs, playing language games, creating stories and role-plays, individual work, etc.), however, a teacher should constantly back up a SEN learner. Half-class drills are very useful when practicing a new language: if all the learners are talking simultaneously, no one feels as if they stand out. When half of the class asks the questions and the other half answers, learners do not feel singled out which reduces stress and allows time for students to develop muscle memory and confidence, before having to speak alone. Working together and competent pairing with a supportive group or partner does make a significant difference for these students and helps the student with a difference or disorder feel productive and confident.

Creating short stories about famous people who have overcome disabilities and setbacks can encourage learners who are struggling, and inspire them to believe that they can also triumph in spite of the challenges they face. Moreover, regular encouragement of students to share their experiences and viewpoints helps to link their learning to what they already know.

Frazier, K. (2018) emphasizes that the majority of the tasks for SEN learners should be based on their preferences and strong aspects of their personalities. According to the theory of Multiple Intelligences (Gardner, 2011), it is advisable for a teacher to find out what the student really likes to do (favourite activities, books, music, games, etc.), and wants to do (at school, outside, dreams, etc.), and then include those likes and wants in the class activities and lesson themes. In addition, SEN learners may be overwhelmed by sounds and sights that are different from their L1. Due to this there might appear "response fatigue"

and they cannot handle any more new and different stimuli, consequently, they might be withdrawn. So it is essential to establish interdisciplinary connections to help in learning L2, and thus to work out the best way to teach them.

Both students with special educational needs, and regular students need to have visual, auditory, and kinesthetic input. Multisensory approach can help the student practice and reinforce the new language in a variety of ways. Numerous songs, chants, dialogues, and even narrations that are repetitive and focus on the rhythm of the language are helpful for a second language learning: all students more easily learn to say new words and language in songs as in the majority most of them generally enjoy music and thus, focus on learning subconsciously. Dancing, moving, and clapping to the music or the rhythm helps both regular and SEN learners with speaking as well as hearing disorders to enhance knowledge, improve skills, reduce tension, build up a positive microclimate. Plenty of visuals in the class can also contribute. For instance, for students with sensory needs, various cards with a picture and written word for vocabulary words are ideal: they need to focus on the written words and/or images from the beginning as it promotes learning in a playful way. A relevant number of cards and pictures placed around the classroom with essential information may serve as support when needed, however, the number of them should vary according to learners' needs and disabilities not to distract a child's attention from the learning process.

One of the key means that can support teachers on the way to learners' progress is scaffolding. Scaffolding itself can be used in a variety of content areas and across all age and grade levels. McLeod, S. A. (2019) states that within education, it is generally acknowledged that L. Vygotsky's social learning theory, where he describes the Zone of Proximal Development, provided a theoretical basis for the practice of scaffolding. It provides a special type of help that assists learners to move toward new concepts, skills, or understandings. Actually, L. Vygotsky himself never mentioned the term of scaffolding. It was first introduced by J. Bruner, D. Wood, and G. Ross (1976) while applying Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development to various educational contexts.

According to The Glossary of Education Reform for Journalists, Parents and Community Members (2022): "In education, *scaffolding* refers to a variety of instructional techniques used to move students progressively toward stronger understanding and, ultimately, greater independence in the learning

process". This means that learners obtain help and reach higher levels of comprehension and develop skills and competence via the teacher's successive support. Once the learner, with the benefit of supportive strategies masters the tasks, and the learner is able to complete the task again on his own, scaffolding can be removed and the responsibility for the learning process is eventually transferred to the learner. In general, scaffolding itself refers to providing contextual supports for meaning through the use of either simplified language, visuals / graphics, or teacher modeling, cooperative learning via focused questions, and positive interactions.

To develop student's learning and thinking ability Kristi Kaepfel (Kaepfel, 2019) recommends the following:

1. *Be explicit about learning objectives and the purpose of the skills built.* Due to this learners have a clear target and can trace their progress toward the goals. When a teacher knows the answer to the question where in life the skill or knowledge can be beneficial, it helps to improve the transfer of material to outside the classroom context.

2. *Use explicit cognitive reading strategies in the classroom which helps make meaning from a text.* Knowing what you need to get out of reading will help teachers choose the appropriate reading and learning strategy to maximize comprehension and reading efficiency. These reading strategies help learners to read critically by focusing on the material to understand and actively engage with the material by being aware of one's own thought process when reading. Using prior knowledge, previewing, questioning, adjusting reading rate, paraphrasing, visualizing, chunking, predicting, evaluating, graphic organizers, reading on, re-reading, scanning, summarizing, etc. boosts critical thinking skills which, in turn, makes things easier to understand and enables learners to retain information for a longer period of time.

3. *Use cooperation and group work.* The power of peers in extending students' learning and cognition thinking is beyond question: when working in groups, learners have access to new perspectives and approaches to a problem that can result in new ideas and understandings that would have not been reached alone. To extend students' thinking, it is effective to make them work out the solution on their own then discuss their answers and articulate their positions, reconsider them in groups, and finally regroup to come to a more thought-out answer.

4. *Ask questions or assign tasks that demand higher-order thinking.* Questions help learners to learn by activating their brains. Answering different types of questions develops knowledge and

understanding of different topics. In accordance with Bloom’s taxonomy, it is important that all learners are given relevant opportunities to develop their thinking skills. These skills can be developed across a range of contexts including through more practical or applied learning opportunities of lower-order thinking (remembering, understanding, applying) and higher-order thinking (analyzing, evaluating, creating). To reach the goal it is essential to focus on open questions, use colours and terms consistently, promote awareness of thinking levels to learners, and foster metacognition. Higher-order thinking requires some manipulations with facts: they have to be understood, connected to each other, categorized, manipulated, put together in a novel way, and, finally, applied when new solutions to new problems are looked for inside and outside the classroom.

Scaffolding is particularly effective for use with SEN pupils for the following reasons: the competent use of it enables these learners to access the same curriculum content as their peers; it fosters students’ ability to learn independently; it builds confidence and helps to reduce negative emotions and self-perceptions that SEN learners may experience when attempting tasks without the understanding or skills they need for them.

For example, the following types of scaffolding could contribute to SEN learners’ progress:

- *Using writing frames.* While reading a learner is given a working sheet with sections to be filled in and sorts of prompts that enable them to lay their writing out in a particular way and include the basic

facts/ information. However, it is vital to remember learners’ individual reading abilities and be ready to introduce any adjustments (extra visuals, audio resources) or support and assistance. The handouts should be more detailed and contain any cues.

All the learners will benefit from this scaffolding until they are able to recall and use the features of the layout independently and in the subsequent time regular learners may vary the template, while learners with SEN may continue with the template as a pattern for longer. Eventually, it may be placed as a reference on the board or a front wall.

- *Using picture books.* Pie Corbett emphasizes on this as they may help illuminate the meaning, help learners engage at a deeper level and enter the world of a story (Corbett, 2015). He also states that on most occasions picture books must be read without endlessly stopping, however, it might demand re-reading over a number of days so that learners could focus on different aspects of the story. First, show the front cover and ask learners to make predictions about the genre or the plot of the book. While reading, make pauses and ask learners to guess what might happen next. It can be done in various ways (write, tell, draw, perform, etc.): find and discuss all links and connections, ask learners to make a list of questions they are not sure about and let them find answers and solutions, ask children to draw a map of the story and retell it in their own words, introduce a new hero and ask how he can change the key event, when reading, use “freeze-frames” that let you interview each character that appears on it

Table 1

Title:	
1. <i>Exposition</i> (the book’s introduction where characters are introduced, the setting is established, and the primary conflict of the story begins): Character 1 Name Character 2 Name ... Character(s) appearance and personality Setting(s)	Describe using adjectives: patient, confident, intelligent, reliable, sensible, charming, impatient, shy, foolish, unpleasant, dull, easy-going, honest, tolerant, etc. beautiful, pretty, elegant, handsome, gorgeous, ugly, attractive, young, middle-aged, well-built, plump, thin, short, medium-height, tall, etc. countryside, village, urban, rural, castle, cave, hut, isolated, modern, bustling, peaceful, etc.
2. <i>Rising Action</i> (it begins with an inciting incident, or a moment that sets a story into action: there are multiple moments of conflict that escalate and create tension as the story moves toward the climax)	Underline the best option A, B, C or D:
3. <i>Climax</i> (the peak of tension, plot, and character in the story when everything changes, or where the main character is forced to make a life-altering decision)	Circle A,B, C or D:
4. <i>Falling Action</i> (it is where any conflicts that arose as a result of the climax can start being resolved)	Which sentence A, B, C or D best illustrates falling action:
5. <i>Resolution</i> (the end of the story where it is brought to its happy or tragic ending)	Underline the best option A, B, C or D:

or use thought bubbles to monitor the whole class, let children decide on a key scene and explain their choice, use “what if” statements to raise different possibilities in the narrative.

Using “Talk for reading”. Talk for reading is a form of comprehension that can be carried out after reading with a small group or the whole class. It involves open discussion, critical thinking, and deeper understanding. The principles of this form of talk are the following: all ideas are accepted and given consideration; everyone should think, but if a learner has vague ideas – he can build on someone else’s ideas; someone’s ideas can be challenged by putting forward alternative thoughts; everyone should be ready to change their mind, everyone should respectfully listen to each other. It is important that the teacher does not dominate the thinking and talking. This can also become a background for creative writing.

- Cloze Procedure. When carefully planned it can reduce the writing challenge for children with SEN: teachers should always consider the role writing plays in the child’s learning in particular lessons, and whether the learning requires the child to write or it could be evidenced differently. Generally, learners are provided with a handout containing sentences and complete the missing words to direct their attention on comprehension of the text rather than the writing process, for example, if they meet a simile in the text they may be asked to complete the sentence in a dialogue: A: *For his birthday Billy will get a puppy. I hope he would go running around happy as a clam.* – B: *Yes, you are right. He will be absolutely...;* or a sentence: *Harry saw cobwebs and.....in the old house and understood it had been empty for a long time;* or on the basis of “The Rabbit and the Turtle” story, a learner might be asked to cope with the following task: *This story teaches us that to succeed, we must keep up going and not quit, like a ... did.*

The word chosen by the learner will provide a teacher with a good insight into the learner’s understanding of the text, whether at a literal or inferred level. As soon as the learner’s independence, understanding and/or writing competence increases, the scaffolding can be removed and they can begin to write whole sentences independently.

Success for SEN learners requires a focus on individual achievement, progress, and individual learning. This requires specific, directed, individualized, intensive remedial instruction for students who are struggling. Moreover, whenever a teacher has to deal with this category of learners, it seems essential to develop effective personal as well as professional characteristics that will help create an

environment that works well for struggling learners, maintain balance and help them thrive:

- Planning and organization: being taught in an organized environment, learners obtain higher confidence levels. To be organized, it is necessary to keep records so that accurately report students’ accomplishments to school authorities, colleagues and parents, use color-coded folders and notebooks, label various areas of the classroom to minimize confusion, develop a list of duties, responsibilities and rights, etc.

- Patience, empathy and sense of humour: it is essential for the teacher to take time and comprehend each student’s individual needs to avoid any frustrating situations and provide a child with time to complete the tasks. It is also significant to create a positive learning environment that empowers these students to gain success and reduce frustrating situations in the classroom.

- Creativity: since all children have different learning styles, prevailing intelligence and varied abilities, a teacher should be able to adapt lessons that work for the strengths of each child in order to accommodate all of the children’s needs. As disabilities may manifest differently each day, planning must remain flexible as well as a teacher must keep track of the most effective methods.

- Ability to accept learners as they are: regardless of the problems, a teacher must accept all children and interact with dignity and respect. Even if children are unable to communicate properly or function at low developmental levels, especially when a teacher is acting in an uncomfortable/ unfamiliar manner, a sense of value within the classroom should be created so that all children have chances of demonstrating their strengths and gaining success.

- Skills in communication and collaborative listening: these skills enable teachers and students to form meaningful relationships and connections that are built on trust and collaboration and result in positive, productive outcomes. They strengthen bonds, and help to build rapport while demonstrating care and support. Knowing more about a learner’s thought processes provides a teacher with an opportunity to interact and influence them meaningfully.

Other effective teachers’ characteristics include an engaging classroom presence, value in real-world learning, exchange of best practices, and a lifelong love of learning.

Conclusion. Overall, scaffolding is widely considered an essential element of effective teaching. Via scaffolding, or support and guidance, the learner can access the concept or skill and gain experience until they are able to become

fully independent. A variety of different ways of scaffolding new learning for pupils depends upon pupils' age, ability and the concept being taught as well as the teacher's mastery. Scaffolding can be particularly effective for special needs learners because it enables them to access the same curriculum as their peers, boosts confidence and

self-esteem, reduces negative emotion and self-perceptions, promotes independent learning owing to a variety of learning modalities for students to show their understanding. Teachers, in turn, need to have access to high-quality training and information to ensure that workload is managed and that high-needs pupils are appropriately supported.

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