

Connecting Diversity In Learning



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The Development Support (DS) and Learning Support (LS) is an early detection and intervention programme using an integrated community-based approach. The programme also aims to build capability and capacity within the early childhood landscape to support children with mild developmental needs.

The Learning Support Educators (LSEds) in the programme are likened to resource teachers. They work very closely with preschool educators, as well as caregivers, through collaborative problem-solving to better support children with developmental needs in the classrooms. This booklet documents easy-to-use, tested strategies and ideas implemented in the early years and preschool classrooms. The content was shared and facilitated at the ECDA's Early Childhood Conference workshop in 2018.

Bringing the workshop content to print - a collaborative effort of the PAP Community Foundation, Preschool Management Division - Inclusive Education Team (PMD-IET) and KKH Department of Child Development (DCD) Consultancy Team for DS LS, appointed by the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) - aims to celebrate and continue to spread the good work of the preschool educators, the LSEds and many other professionals who work hand in hand to create a more conducive and inclusive learning environment for children with developmental needs in the early years and preschools.

December 2019

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Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Strategies to Scaffold Learning	2
1. Differentiated Instruction	3
2. Teaching Stages with Levelled Prompts.....	8
References	12

Introduction

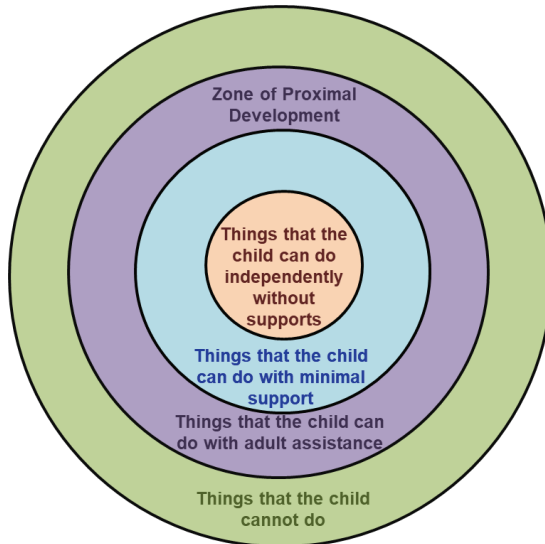
Diversity in the classroom exists because of the varied learning styles, backgrounds, interests, personalities, needs, abilities, prior knowledge and experiences amongst the young learners. Teachers play a key role in recognising individual learning differences and making the necessary accommodations and adaptations to the classroom structure, planned activities and teaching instruction.

The content in this booklet aims to remind teachers to scaffold learning through differentiated instruction and use of levelled prompts.

We hope that this booklet will provide useful and practical strategies for early childhood educators in promoting children's access to learning and participation in the classroom routines and activities.

Strategies to Scaffold Learning

Planning scaffolded instructions before and during teaching helps you and the children accomplish learning goals step-by-step to the level of mastery and independence.



1. Provide instructional support to help your children complete tasks or activities.
2. The amount and level of assistance or scaffolds is dependent on the children's prior knowledge and skills.
3. The task or activities must be at the appropriate level within the **zone of proximal development** (ZPD) for scaffolding to be successful.
4. Gradually withdraw instructional support as your children complete the task or activities independently.

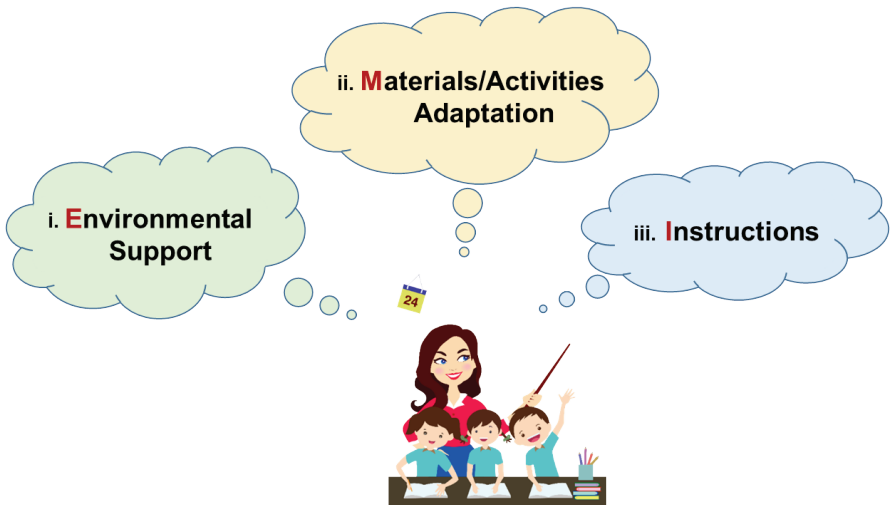
Strategies to Scaffold Learning

Here are one of the 2 main ways to illustrate how you can plan for scaffolded instruction before and during teaching to help your children acquire the learning skills or concepts:

1. DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

- Defined as *“the process of planning and teaching in ways which give all children opportunities to show what they know, understand and can do.”* (Tomlinson, 1999)
- You can advocate *active planning for learner differences* in the classroom by making practical modifications and adaptations to your classroom structure, teaching activities and instructions.

You can modify the following 3 key elements accordingly to the children's readiness, interests and learning profiles:



i. ENVIRONMENTAL SUPPORT

(How to modify to maximise children's learning and participation?)

- ❑ Provide a foot stool for smaller-sized children to let them rest their legs so that their bodies are better supported for handwriting work.
- ❑ Sit the children facing the whiteboard so that it encourages them to sit up 'tall' and reduces the need to turn their bodies to refer to the board.
- ❑ Label materials and visual displays clearly and keep them accessible and organised to minimise clutter.
- ❑ Provide predictable schedules, rules and transitions that are visible and posted at children's eye-level.
- ❑ Use visual prompts to facilitate where the children are supposed to be sitting during large group teaching e.g. tape the confined areas on the floor.

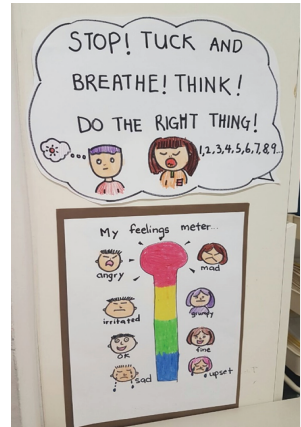


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ii. MATERIALS / ACTIVITIES ADAPTATION

(How to ensure meaningful access to the classroom activities/ skills/concepts?)

- ❑ Simplify the activity or task into clearly delineated steps e.g. child uses letter cues to spell a word, child uses cue cards to retell events in story.
- ❑ Integrate children's preferences and choices e.g. allow child to hold a favourite toy or object during nap time.
- ❑ Provide rock crayons or thick-sized coloured pencils or pencils for children with weak pencil grip.
- ❑ Provide bigger print or fonts on activity sheets and whiteboard to increase visibility.



iii. INSTRUCTIONS DIFFERENTIATED / SIMPLIFIED

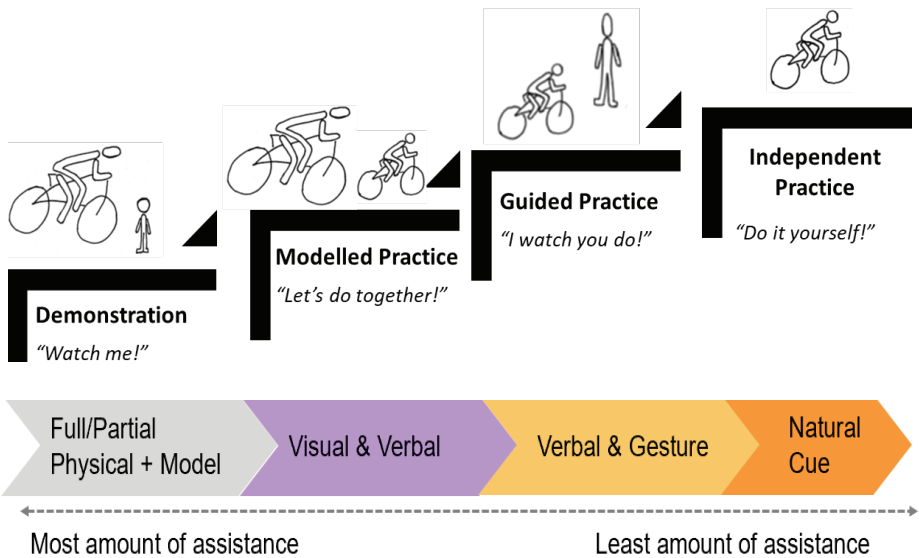
(How to vary the learning activities and strategies?)

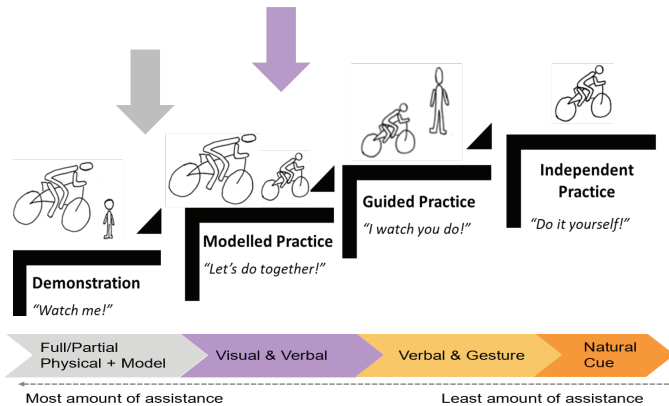
- ❑ Give positive, direct and simple instructions one at a time e.g. “Walk quietly.”, “Sit in the front row.”
- ❑ Give specific labelled praise e.g. “John, I like how you keep the toys in the box.”
- ❑ Offer choices for the child’s preference to participate in the activity e.g. “You can draw a house or build it with the LEGO”.
- ❑ Model or scaffold to expand the child’s language and responses
e.g. Child: *“The boy is playing.”*
Adult: *“Yes, the boy is playing on the slide.”*



Strategies to Scaffold Learning

2. TEACHING STAGES WITH LEVELLED PROMPTS





Demonstration and Modelled Practice

- When teaching a new skill or concept to your children, use *direct explanations and thinking aloud* to demonstrate and talk through the teaching strategy with the aid of relevant *visuals and resources*.
- This gives children the opportunity to listen and see how the skills are being taught.

e.g. Adult demonstrates how to write the letter 'f' and verbalises the "think-aloud":

*"This is how we write the letter 'f'.
Start from the top, curve down and across."*

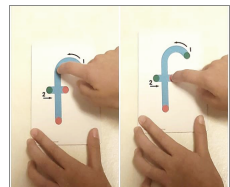
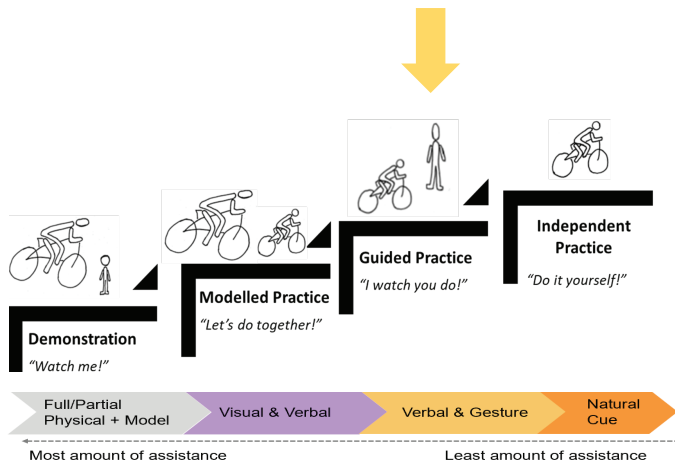
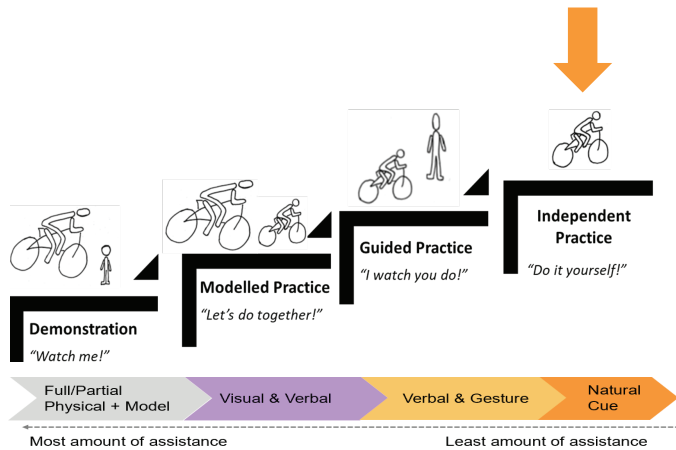


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Guided Practice

- After the children have learnt the newly taught skills or concept, provide opportunities for them to demonstrate and practice different examples of the same task.
- Provide guided support through a series of scaffolded instruction such as *gestural cues, verbal prompts and open-ended questions*.
- This helps the children acquire an increasing understanding of the relevant knowledge and skills to practice with fluency and accuracy.



Independent Practice

- As the children generalise the learnt skills or concepts across the routines or activities with fluency, accuracy and consistency, gradually withdraw the instructional support.
- This helps the children achieve mastery and level of success in the acquired skills and knowledge.

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