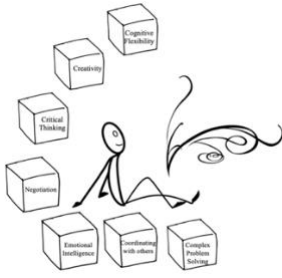# Scaffolding Reported Speech in Context (Secondary)

Donna Lee Fields, Ph.D.

theory behind the scaffold...

An interesting consequence of the digital age is that speech therapists have found their work has multiplied exponentially in the past few years. They attribute this to a generation of students who spend more hours on their phones and computers, sending and reading short texts, rather than connecting verbally.

Scaffolds that offer opportunities for verbal interactions compensate for this lack. They help students to strengthen, build and diversify language as well as to use skills they might not develop by themselves.

This scaffold focuses on reported speech, an essential skill in language mastery, given that it is an integral structure that we use in everyday conversation. Ironically it is also one that is often overlooked in oral activities in the classroom or one that educators find difficult to incorporate in lessons.

As scaffolding work best (as do all lessons in general) when grammar is embedded in a context (a story, a video, a podcast, instructions for an art project, etc.), this activity uses information from whatever source your students are using.

As an added bonus, whenever possible we include images so that students have even more context to process information. The example given in this scaffold is from a book that combines these three factors: verbal, linguistic and visual.

To top of this multi-layered scaffold, students not only change statements into Reported Speech, but they have to simultaneously identify inaccurate words in the statements and adjust them so that the resulting reported statement is accurate as well.

The example used in the template is from a Social Science lesson. The activity asks students to anthropomorphise facts, giving dry information a little life and so being more accessible to students who may not be interested in the subject. During the activity, they also have to pay close attention to their what their partner says so that they can repeat the information in Reported Speech. In all, this activity combines a variety of important skills in a very engaging way.

Step by Step:

Note: These instructions use a unit from a Social Science class; however, you can use whatever video, podcast, laboratory instructions, sports rules, explanations of genres of music, etc., that you are about to study in your lessons.
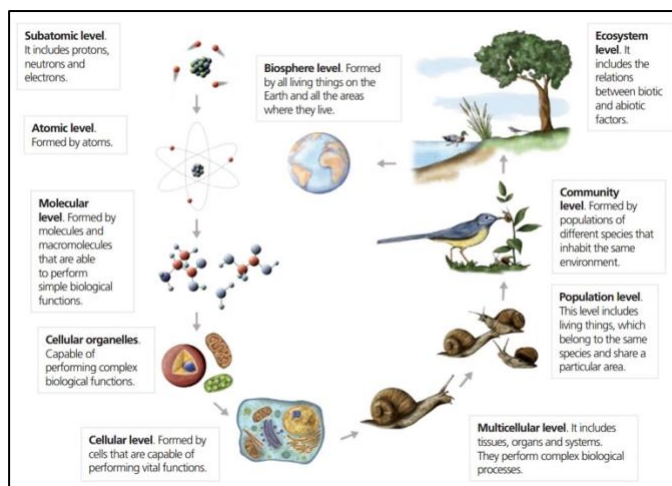
1. Students study the images and captions and write 5-10 dialogues in their charts that anthropomorphise the information. (You'll need to model this for them. Examples below and in the template.)

		Verbalising information
	1.	Cells 'A subatomic level includes protons, neutrons and electrons.'
	2.	Atoms 'An atomic level is formed by atoms.'
	3.	Molecules: 'A molecular level is formed by molecules and macromolecules that are able to perform simple biological functions.
	4.	Etc.

2. In pairs, students read their dialogues to each other. One person reads the dialogue from her/his chart and the other person listens and repeats the information in Reported Speech. *(See example below.)*

Possible dialogue between a pair of students based on this chart:

Student 1: Cells 'A subatomic level includes protons, neutrons and electrons.'
Student 2: The cell said that a subatomic level includes proton, neutrons and electrons. Is that accurate?
Student 1: That's accurate. Your turn.
Student 2: Atoms 'An atomic level is formed by atoms.'

Student 1: The atom said that an atomic level is feared by atoms. Is that accurate?

Student 2: No, that's not accurate. I'll repeat. Atoms 'An atomic level is formed by atoms.'

Student 1: Oh. The atom said that an atomic level is *formed* by atoms. Is that accurate?

Student 2: Yes. Now that's accurate. Your turn.

Etc.

3. *Formative assessment*: Hold up images from the worksheet. Pairs of students negotiate, and one volunteers to verblise the information about that image.
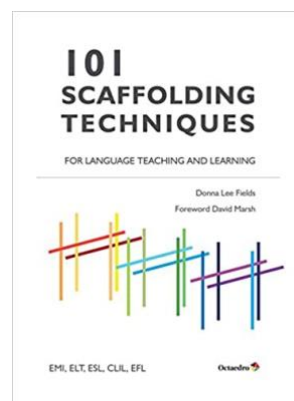
video explanation…

amazon.com

transcript of video explanation…

Hi, I'm Donna Fields and welcome to CLIL Scaffolding 14. It's a series of webinars designed to help give you support for using scaffolding in your lessons. Today we're going to use scaffolding technique #172.

One hundred and one more of these technique can be found in my book: *101 Scaffolding Techniques for Language Teaching and Learning* that has also been translated into Spanish.

The question I'm most asked by teachers is if it's possible to scaffold grammar - in the teaching of any language. I always say 'yes' – that any of the techniques I share in the book and on the scaffoldingmagic.com webpage can be adapted to any information. I have to admit, however, that sometimes it's challenging, so today I've dedicated a scaffold to the grammatical structure of Indirect or Reported Speech.

The material I'm using in both the Primary and Secondary examples are from ESL books, but very well-written ones - most of the information in the units has to do with the same theme and the vocabulary is recycled from one page to the other so there is a continuum. So it's easy to present this scaffold through the CLIL approach - which means that Reported Speech is taught using content.

Let's start with an example from a Secondary class. As I mentioned, the unit is well thought-out, and the theme and language are continuous. What becomes overwhelming for the language learner is not just the academic language, but also the number of names of people and places mentioned plus the facts given in each text. This scaffold helps the students to ease into the information, have some ownership in the stories, and feel as though they have some control over the rapid-fire way they are expected to read and absorb so many different stories.

How do we begin?

We begin, as usual, by making the information visible as much as possible and so we're going to scaffold the scaffold! What I've done is chosen some names from different pages of the unit to help them become more real to the learners. I've placed them, with questions, on a page. These, I give to pairs of students. The questions are phrased so as to give the students freedom to both pull from past knowledge and/or make up stories about the people they are looking at. As long as they can back up their narratives with specifics in the photos, we can give them a wide berth. The idea is to introduce them to names, academic language and concepts before they read the unit, so that when they open their books, they will already be familiar with a good part of what they see.

After the pairs have explored different ideas using the photos and questions, then, you model the activity. Here's an example:

You've pulled information from different texts in the unit and placed identical sentences in the two tables with one intentional mistake in one of them. The students take turns transforming the statements into Reported Speech and then discuss which one has the mistake in it. When they've agreed on the mistake, they put that word in the 'Incorrect word' column.

Afterwards, you give pairs of students the two different tables and they continue working on their own.

You use this same dynamic and structure in any Primary book. You make some of the learning visible, prepare a table with one mistake in each of the identical statements, and facilitate the students in practicing Indirect Speech and becoming familiar with the content of the unit at the same time.

And that's it! Another simple scaffolding technique that I hope you can use in your classes. And you've helped your students to connect language, image and concepts, strengthen their oral communication, and practice skills for working in groups.

So all you SUPER TEACHERS out there, I look forward to seeing you next time and have fun in your classes! Bye!

You can find me at:

https://scaffoldingmagic.com/

and

[Linkedin](#)
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[YouTube](#)

* Richards, Jack C. and Renandya, Willy A. (2002). *Methodology in Language Teaching*, New York, Cambridge University Press.
** Wiliam, Dylan (2011). *Embedded Formative Assessment*. Bloomington, IN. Solution Tree Press.