

## Scaffolding Visual Information in Strips (Primary)

**Donna Lee Fields, Ph.D.**

*theory behind the scaffold...*



One of the most common go-to words to explain scaffolding is 'chunking'. Chunking is the strategy of breaking down material into digestible proportions in order to avoid cognitive overload. If you accept the studies (and there are a lot of them and they are consistent in this conclusion) that the human mind is able to only process seven new elements at a time, chunking information gives students the emotional and cognitive space to transition more easily into new knowledge. When we add strategies in activities that promote critical thinking, collaboration, negotiation and prediction - all through visual means - we've created a powerful means of presenting new ideas to our students.

This scaffold is embedded with a wide base of learning styles, including categorisation\*. The students work in pairs (or groups of three) to piece together the meaning of an image that has been intentionally divided into parts, verbalise what they see and predict what is not yet visible. The study, negotiation, conversation, and deliberation of this process leads to a deeper understanding of the underlying concept. Students divide tiers of visual information into categories so that they can piece together the 'chunked' image. When text is included in the activity, linguistic categories are added to the complexity of their conversations and predictions.

The strategy of making predictions actively engages students. It helps them to make connections between prior knowledge and the information they see before them. With activities such as this scaffold, students will learn the habit of thinking ahead, refining, revising, and verifying their predictions. Further, embedding opportunities for suppositions in activities is a valuable way to assess student comprehension of subject matter (formative assessments).\*\*

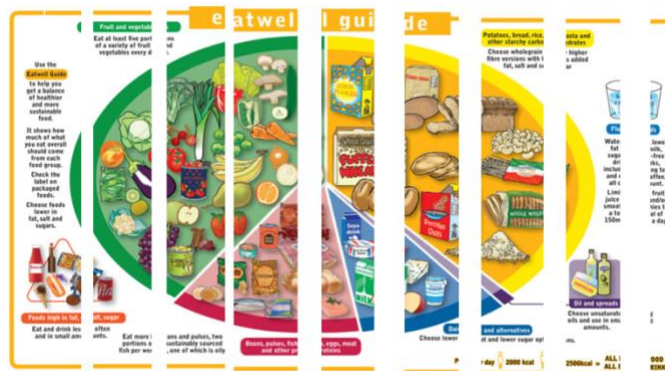
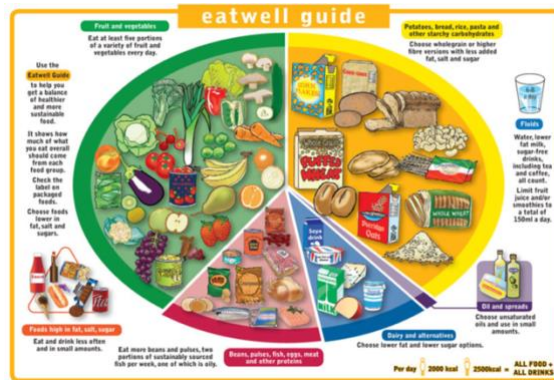
The example given here is from a health lesson, and we use the image of a healthy distribution of a food plate to show how students can interact differently than from simply opening their books, observing the graphic, and responding to questions.

\* *Categorising has been proven to yield educational efficiency and helps the brain process information more fluidly. Depending on the topic, it can help students feel more connected to the world around them, and make sense out of what can feel like chaos at times.*

\*\* *Hunt, Morton (1982). The Universe Within: A new science explores the human mind. Simon and Schuster.*

## Step by Step:

1. Choose an image (with or without text), from the unit you're about to begin and print it onto an A4 piece of paper.
2. Make enough copies for each pair of students (or each group of three (3)).
3. Cut the photocopies into either vertical or horizontal strips with a cutting board.

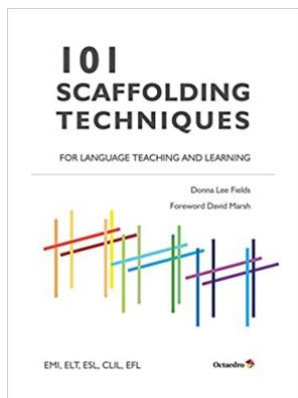


4. Give one set to each pair of students and they each take half of the strips (randomly).
5. Post key academic language visible so that students have the tools to be able to speak about the image more easily.
6. The activity proceeds in the following way:
  - Student 1 puts down one of the strips and verbalizes the images/text seen on that strip.
  - Student 1 makes suppositions/predictions about what is missing on either side of that strip.
  - Student 2 looks through the strips in her/his hand, chooses the one that fits on one side of one of the strips already placed on the table, and confirms if the predictions were correct, and continues verbalizing the new information.
  - This dynamic continues until all the strips have been placed on the table. (Encourage students to take time verbalising and predicting. You can make it clear that speed is not the objective, but rather the use of academic language, discussion, prediction, categorization, negotiation, etc. are the goals for this activity.)

*Example of student conversation:*

- Student 1: *In this strip, I see fruits and vegetables. I see half of a watermelon and half of a tomato. I predict that the strip next to it has the other half of the watermelon and the other half of the tomato. I see an 'e' at the top. I predict the next strip will have the letters 'at' to form the word 'eat'*
  - Student 2: *Yes, your prediction was correct. This strip has half of the watermelon and half of the tomato and the letters 'at' to form the word 'eat. It also has more fruit: a pineapple, a banana, and half of a potato. I predict that the strip next to it has the other half of the potato.*
  - *Etc.*
6. **Formative Assessment:** In pairs, students write a paragraph summarising the information they've interacted with in the activity. (In this case, the students would summarise what a healthy food plate includes.)
7. **Reflection:** In pairs, students share how they felt about the activity and whether it will help them understand the unit in a more engaged manner.

Find more scaffolds here:



*video explanation of the scaffold...*



*Transcript of video explanation...*

Hi! I'm Donna Fields and welcome to CLIL Scaffolding 3. It's a series of webinars designed to give you quick, easy and adaptable scaffolding ideas.

We can say that scaffolding is giving a helping hand to students when they are transitioning from past knowledge to new knowledge.

Today, we're going to go over how to use Scaffolding Technique #6 from my book *101 Scaffolding Techniques for Language Teaching and Learning* that's also been translated into Spanish.

The objective for this session is to show how easy it is to adapt Scaffolding Technique #6 to primary and secondary lessons. Don't forget to post your objectives every day in your classes. It helps students feel more respected and integrated in the learning process.

Scaffolding technique no. 6 is called 'Striptease'. It's a play on words because we're going to be talking about a type of puzzle that uses strips of paper. If you don't know what 'striptease' means, this is a great opportunity for you to look it up and have a laugh!

Let's start with a secondary social science lesson. You've come to the chapter on population pyramids. You know that it's important that your students understand them, but your experience has been that it's difficult to engage them. You can see cognitive overload in their eyes the minute they come to the chapter that introduces them. What can you do?

Take the topic out of the text books, get away from worksheets, don't introduce definitions yet. Present something really different and intriguing that will help them first form their own ideas about representations of the topic before being told what they mean. If students see that their ideas are respected and have a place in lessons, they will be more willing to hear the ideas of other's.

So, scaffolding the images gives students the opportunity to verbalise what they see and lets them predict what the different shapes mean. Verbalise their thought processes is a skill that is known to help students move forward in their learning.

Making the puzzle is simple. We take this page from a chapter on population pyramids, use the graphics, print out one image for each pair of students and then cut them up into preferably an even number of strips.

You need to be conscious of where you cut. The information needs to be divided so as to challenge your students but also to give them enough clues that they can make justifiable predictions. In this case, I've decided to cut the image horizontally, because I want the students to focus on the significance of the graduation of each pyramid.

Next, I'd give a set of strips to each pair of students and each student takes half of the strips. (I mix up the sets before I hand them out so that they don't have one determined half of the image.)

Now, one student in each pair puts one strip down, verbalizes what s/he sees and then makes a prediction about what's missing on either side.

This is followed by the other student in the pair looking at the strips s/he has, putting down the appropriate one to the right or left, and then describing both. That student also makes predictions about what is missing.

To help students be more fluent in their discourse, you can post the beginnings of sentences such as:

In this strip I see...

I see a part of...

Based on what I see so far, I predict that the strip above...

Based on what I see so far, I predict that the strip below...

I'm not sure...however...

It seems to me that...

You were justified in your prediction that...

*Here is an example:*

Student 1: I see three images divided by a yellow bar. I see red and green lines on either side of the numbers. The numbers are divided by four - 20-34, 25-29, 35-39, etc. I don't have enough information from the figure in the middle to predict what is above or below and I don't know what the numbers mean, but based on what I see so far, I predict that the image on the strip below will have numbers 20-24, 15-19, 10-14, and the red and green lines will be longer than in this strip.

Student 2: I see that you were justified in saying that.... Based on what I see, the image in the middle of the strip above the 49% could equal 100% so it could be 25%...

Students can talk specifically about the numbers, but they can also talk about the colours, about the size of the lines, about what they think the images mean - anything that occurs to them. We want them to interact with the material in any way they can, using past knowledge to predict what might complete the puzzle.

The activity continues in this way until all the pieces have been described, predictions have been made, justifications for the predictions are stated, and all the strips have been placed on the table.

Now is when you explain what the graphs really mean and they can work in their textbook to understand it more fully.

Let's go to a primary health class. We need to teach about food plates. It's an opportunity to review vocabulary of food while scaffolding (introducing new concepts gradually) what category the different types of food fall into.

Just as before, we take the image and cut it up into strips.

We give each pair of students a set of the strips and each student takes half. One student in each pair puts down one strip, describes what's in it, predicts what information the strip to the right or left might have, and the other student joins in at the appropriate moment.

At the end, they'll have reviewed important vocabulary, reminded each other of words they may have forgotten, focused on how different types of food are grouped together, and will have seen proportions of these categories. You've encouraged them to think aloud and verbalise their thought processes. Now they're ready to understand the topic more fully and see how their thinking aligns with the rest of the information they'll be exposed to in the chapter.

So that's it, that's technique number 6, another type of puzzle, and all of you SUPER TEACHERS out there thanks so much for joining and I hope to see you soon. Please send me any comments at my [Linkedin.com](#) page or my Facebook page ([GivingaHelpingHandBook](#)) and I look forward to seeing you again soon. Bye!

You can find me at these sites:

<https://scaffoldingmagic.com/>

and

[Pinterest](#)

[Instagram](#)

\*Hunt, Morton (1982). *The Universe Within: A new science explores the human mind*. Simon and Schuster.