

Scaffolding with Irony (Secondary)

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theory behind the scaffold...

Adding humour to a lesson is always a recipe for success. Humour changes the dynamic of the class and helps students to see their lessons with a different frame of mind. This scaffold uses irony - the highest form of humour - to help make potentially dry material more inviting and accessible.

The use of humour is engrained in our cultural perspectives. [Edward T. Hall](#), one of the pioneers of cultural studies for the purpose of preparing us for and appreciating the differences in peoples across the globe, elucidates the varying uses of humour in different environments. American humour, for instance, is binary and is either present or absent. In the Far East, on the other hand, one encounters a wide spectrum of subtle degrees of humour that are commonly present.*

In cultivating global citizens, it is important that our students know the differences of humour in different cultures – between irony and simpler forms of humour - so that they can react to it appropriately. It's yet another way of appropriately and knowledgeably interacting with the people around us in this interconnected world.

On a more visceral level, humour brings enthusiasm, positive feelings and optimism to the classroom. Irony generates cognitive activity and changes the vibration of the class. Using humour and irony in conscientious ways will help students to approach their lessons with a different frame of mind - one more relaxed and receptive; once they are more receptive, they can produce more meaningful verbal exchanges about the topic at hand and internalise new information more deeply.

In putting this activity together, you'll have the opportunity to play with language in creative ways. You'll prepare questions from a lesson, unit, or project your students are about to begin. Each question will include multiple choice answers - one that is *most* appropriate, and the rest as absurd as you like them to be. (Remember, we want to cultivate a learning environment in which there are no 'correct' answers, but only those that are more justifiable than others.)

You can begin by explaining to your students that they're going to take a short quiz. Very briefly, accept their groans of disapproval, knowing that they are going to start laughing very soon. As their amusement rises, so will their receptivity of new concepts and language that you surreptitiously present in the *faux* quiz.

*Hall, Edward T. (1973). [The Silent Language](#). New York. Anchor Books

step by step:

1. Write 10-15 questions related to the unit you're about to begin. For each question, offer multiple choice answers - one appropriate and the others written with irony (to the point of being absurd).

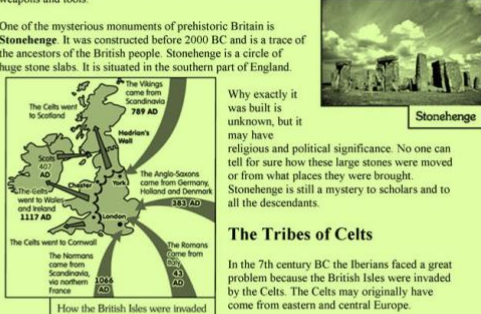
This is a page of the unit your students are about to begin.

This is part of the *faux* quiz you give them to introduce them to key points of the unit

How did English history start?

About three thousand years Before Christ (BC) people came from the north of Spain (the Iberian Peninsula) to many parts of Europe including the British Isles. So, those people who lived on the territory of Great Britain in the earliest times were of the Iberian origin. **The Iberians** used stone weapons and tools.

One of the mysterious monuments of prehistoric Britain is **Stonehenge**. It was constructed before 2000 BC and is a trace of the ancestors of the British people. Stonehenge is a circle of huge stone slabs. It is situated in the southern part of England.



Why exactly it was built is unknown, but it may have religious and political significance. No one can tell for sure how these large stones were moved or from what places they were brought. Stonehenge is still a mystery to scholars and to all the descendants.

The Tribes of Celts

In the 7th century BC the Iberians faced a great problem because the British Isles were invaded by the Celts. The Celts may originally have come from eastern and central Europe.


Celtic people lived in tribes. Each tribe was ruled by its own queen or king who represented a warrior class. The priests, called **druids**, were important members of Celtic tribes. These druids could not read or write but they memorized all the religious teaching, the tribal laws, history, medicine and natural philosophy.

According to the Romans, the Celtic men wore shirts and bridges and striped or checked cloak fastened by a pin. It is possible that the Scottish tartan and dress developed from this type of cloak.

Celtic tribes were represented by **the Picts, the Scots and the Britons**.

The Picts settled in the mountains in the North. Some Picts and several tribes of the Scots settled in Ireland. But later the Scots decided to return from Ireland to the larger island of present-day Great Britain. They chose its northern part. Now this part is called Scotland.

The Britons were the most powerful of all the Celtic tribes and they occupied most of the country including island's southern half. It was named **Britain** after them. The Britons chose land for living along the rivers or near the coasts of the sea. What



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Who were the *druids*?

- a) A sect of people who liked to play chess with the king and queen of each tribe.
- b) Leaders who demanded that the people of the tribes invade Spain.
- c) Religious leaders of Celtic tribes who invaded the British Islands in 7th century B.C.E. (**B**efore the **C**ommon **E**ra)

Great Britain is named after...

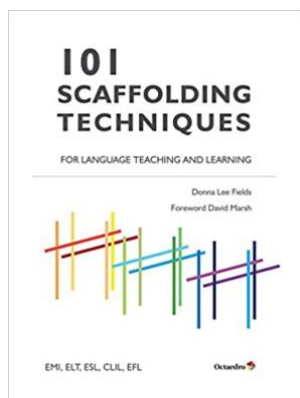
- a) A family of stoneworkers Niatirb who wanted to escape the constant arguments of their neighbours and so reversed their last name when they arrived on the British Isles.
- b) The most powerful of the three Celtic tribes including the Picts and the Scots.
- c) The group of Celts who wore striped cloaks and danced all night.

2. To make the activity communicative in pairs or groups of three (3), students take turns reading the questions aloud along with the multiple-choice answers. The other group members take turns a) identifying the most appropriate answer, and b) explaining why another one cannot be appropriate.
3. The activity continues until all the questions have been asked and answered in the manner outlined above. Those groups who finish before others, read the text in the unit and write their own *faux* questions.
4. Finish by going over the 'quiz' as a class, with each group taking turns asking the questions and the other groups taking turns answering. As each group answers, you ask another group if they agree with the answer or not. (Note: they must give their response in a complete sentence. (Ex. 'Yes, we agree with the answer because the other two options were not a bit absurd!' or 'No, we don't agree with the answer. We believe the answer is ..._____ because it makes more sense.')
5. *Formative Assessment:* In pairs or groups of three, students write the objectives of the unit/lesson/project, based on the *faux* quiz they just took. (This will give you an indication of whether they understood the valid answers and so the core of the subject.)
6. *Reflection:* Answer the following reflection questions. (Note, some questions address methodology and some address the content. Both are essential to foster self-efficacy for our students.)



- | | |
|---------|--|
| Yes/No | Were the questions amusing? |
| Which | Which multiple choice options were the most absurd? |
| When | When did you realise that the 'quiz' was not what you were expecting? |
| Where | Where is Stonehenge located? |
| What | What was Stonehenge designed for? |
| How | How have scientists made conclusions about Stonehenge? |
| Why | Why is it important to study sites such as Stonehenge? |
| What if | What if you had the opportunity to go back in time and work with the builders of Stonehenge? What would you most want to know? |

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video explanation of scaffold...

SCAFFOLDING VIDEO 9

Scaffolding with Humour



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SCAFFOLDING	TECHNIQUE
1. What is it?	1. A scaffold is a structure that supports a learner's learning.
2. How is it used?	2. A scaffold is used to support a learner's learning.
3. What is it?	3. A scaffold is a structure that supports a learner's learning.

transcript of video explanation...

Hi, I'm Donna Fields and welcome to CLIL Scaffolding 9. 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 #60, that you can find in my book: 101 Scaffolding Techniques for Language Teaching and Learning that has also been translated into Spanish.

A lot of you probably know that the mind learns new knowledge on the foundation of older knowledge. Scaffolding is a way to activate this past knowledge to help students to move forward in their learning.

Today's objective is to use humour to scaffold material. I'm going to show you in a primary and secondary lesson, but you can use it with any group you need it for.

Scaffolding technique #60 is called 'Who's on First?' and it refers to a comedy routine that's funny because of its many misunderstandings. We'll use the same technique to pre-present material to students so that they're distracted a bit from the fact that they're learning content in a language that is not their home language.

Are you ready to see how this works in a secondary classroom? Let's try a history lesson.

We turn all the information into multiple-choice questions.

You can give more options if you want to, challenging them even more. In this case, I've only given two.

The first question is: 'What did the Celtic people do for food?'

The first option is: They stole food from their neighbours. The second option is: They raised livestock (sheep, goats and pigs) and also knew a lot about agriculture and metallurgy.

The correct answer is obviously the second. However, the students have to read the first option to know that it's not correct and hopefully they'll find it funny, be surprised, realise that this is not a typical multiple-choice test, and begin to become more involved.

If they insist that the correct answer is Option 1, let them! Probably some Celts did steal from their neighbours. The point is that the students have to justify their answers verbally.

What's more, each question is written deliberately. They both have vocabulary the students will see in the chapter (neighbours, agriculture, metallurgy and livestock, for instance).

You've gone even further because in the textbook the word 'livestock' isn't defined. Here you've defined it for them (sheep, goats, pigs, etc.) so that they have more of a chance of understanding it when they see it later in the chapter.

The next question: Where did the Celtic people live? The first option is: They lived in fortified settlements called *castors*. Their dwellings were circular. Option 2 is: In large boats with wings.

Again, if they pick Option 2, they just need to justify why they believe the Celts lived in winged boats. In any case, the vocabulary (boats, wings, settlements, castors, dwellings, etc.) is from the chapter. We've just mixed them up into humorous sentences.

Question #3: What was one of the differences between the Celtic and Iberian peoples? Option 1 is: The Celts lived in underwater igloos. Option 2: The Iberians lived in rectangular settlements that were walled.

Again, they can argue that Option 1 could be correct, but they have to understand the sentence to be able to justify it verbally and that's important for them as they'll see that vocabulary in other parts of the chapter, just not in this order!

How about if we try it with primary now. Let's try it with a lower primary math class.**

The first question you might ask them is: What is this? Option 1 is: A purple bicycle. Option 2: A yellow square. Obviously, it's a yellow square but they have to read Option 1 to know that it's not correct and it's vocabulary that's useful to them.

Question 2: I'm sure that you can think of even more imaginative options than this, but Option 1 is: A red mountain with no trees. Option 2: A green triangle. Probably they're going to say 'a green triangle', but they might find the first option amusing in any case.

Number 3 is in the same vein: Option 1: A blue hexagon. Option 2: An ice-cream cone with five sides. First of all, it's not an ice-cream cone and it has *six* sides. Once they realise that, some of them will make the connection that a hexagon has six sides. Let them make cognitive connections by themselves if possible.

And that's it! Another simple scaffolding technique that I hope you can use in your classes. I look forward to any comments you have.

You can find me at these sites:

<https://scaffoldingmagic.com/>

and

[Linkedin](#)

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So all you SUPER TEACHERS out there, I look forward to seeing you next. See you soon. Bye!