

The Use of Scaffolding Strategies in the Assessment of English Learners

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Overview

- Background on English learners (ELs) and English language proficiency (ELP) assessment in the U.S.
- Project goals
- Sample assessment tasks
- Prototyping study
- Findings
- Implications

Contextual Background: English Learners (ELs) in K-12 Public Schools in the U.S.

- About 5 million students are officially designated as ELs in K-12 schools in the U.S.
- In California, on average, 1 out of 4 students is an EL.
- EL students are lagging behind in their academic achievement due to their lack of English proficiency.
- EL students and their teachers are in dire need of effective tools and strategies to help improve EL students' learning outcomes.

Current Practice of English Language Proficiency (ELP) Assessments for ELs

Two types of mandated, large-scale ELP assessments

Screening ELP assessment

- **Uses:**

- (1) Identifying who are ELs
- (2) Planning about students' instructional programs and types of support

- **Target test takers:** Mainly kindergarten students and new students who first enroll in school

Summative ELP assessment

- **Uses:**

- (1) Tracking annual progress of ELP attainment
- (2) Exiting students from EL status

- **Target test takers:** EL students in Grades K-12

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Challenges of ELP Assessment

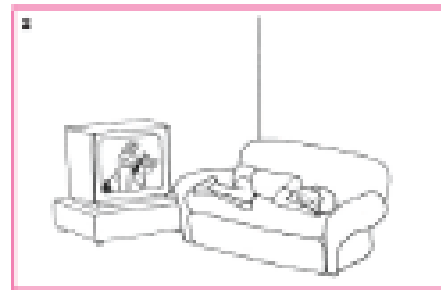
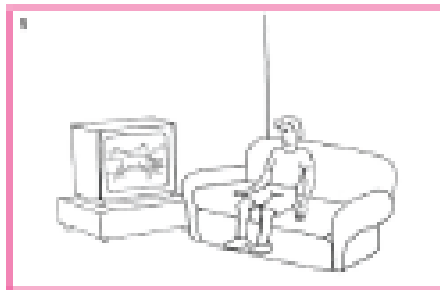
- How to assess target test takers:
mostly young students (e.g., kindergarteners/ages 5-6) and new immigrant students
- How to better measure the construct:
students' communicative language abilities in school settings
- How to provide more meaningful information:
accurate and finer-grained information about students' English language abilities

Speaking Task Example (Gr3-5)

SAY *I am going to show you some pictures that tell a story.*

Pause to give students time to look at the pictures.

SAY *Last night, Alex was very tired when he was watching television. What happened next?*



Overall Goals of the Project

- Improving the accuracy of measuring students' communicative language ability in school contexts
- Increasing student engagement in assessment tasks
- Providing useful information for teachers



One approach: Technology-based, innovative assessment tasks

Task Design Features Using Technology

- Scenario-based tasks
- Integrated language skills
- Interactive/dynamic
- Immediate feedback
- • Scaffolding strategies

Scaffolding in EL Instruction

- Scaffolding: supports that helps students complete a given task.
- Types of scaffolding for ELs (e.g., Gibbons, 2002; Vogt & Short, 2004; Walqui, 2006; Zwiers, 2006)

Scaffolding in EL Instruction

EL Scaffolding Examples (Vogt & Short, 2004)

Types	Technique examples
Verbal Scaffolding (Language-development focused)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• paraphrasing• developing questions
Procedural Scaffolding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• modeling• role-playing
Instructional Scaffolding (tools that support learning)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• graphic organizers• manipulatives

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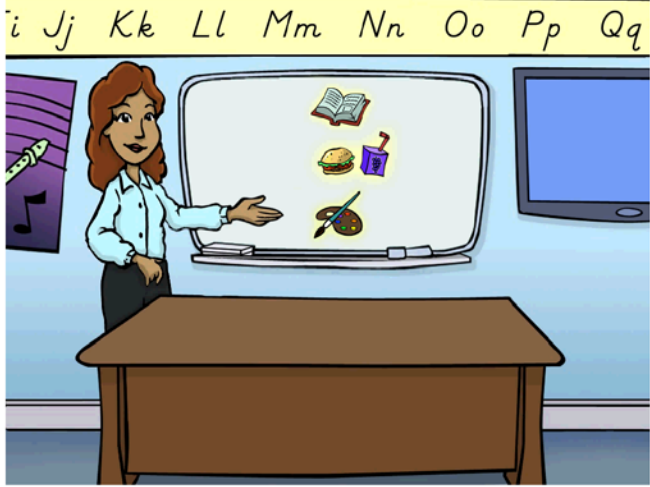
Incorporating Scaffolding Strategies in Assessment

- Explore the use of scaffolding to better measure students' English language proficiency
- Replicate an actual classroom where students have access to support from the teacher when needed
- Provide useful information for learning and teaching
 - the degree of scaffolding needed for individual students
 - the types of scaffolding

Our Sample Scenario-Based Tasks

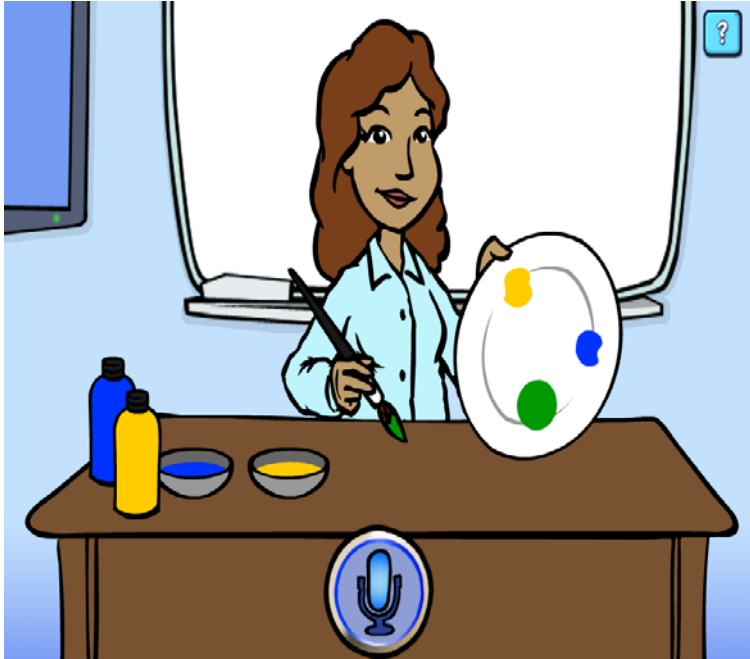
	Receptive listening tasks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Comprehension - Vocabulary 	Productive speaking tasks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Retelling - Describing
Grade K	<input type="checkbox"/> School Day	<input type="checkbox"/> Playground <input type="checkbox"/> Mixing Paint
Grades 1 - 2	<input type="checkbox"/> School Day	<input type="checkbox"/> Playground <input type="checkbox"/> Melting Ice
Grades 3-5	<input type="checkbox"/> School Day	<input type="checkbox"/> Lemon Juice

School Day Scenario

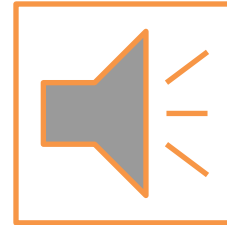


Sample Task 1

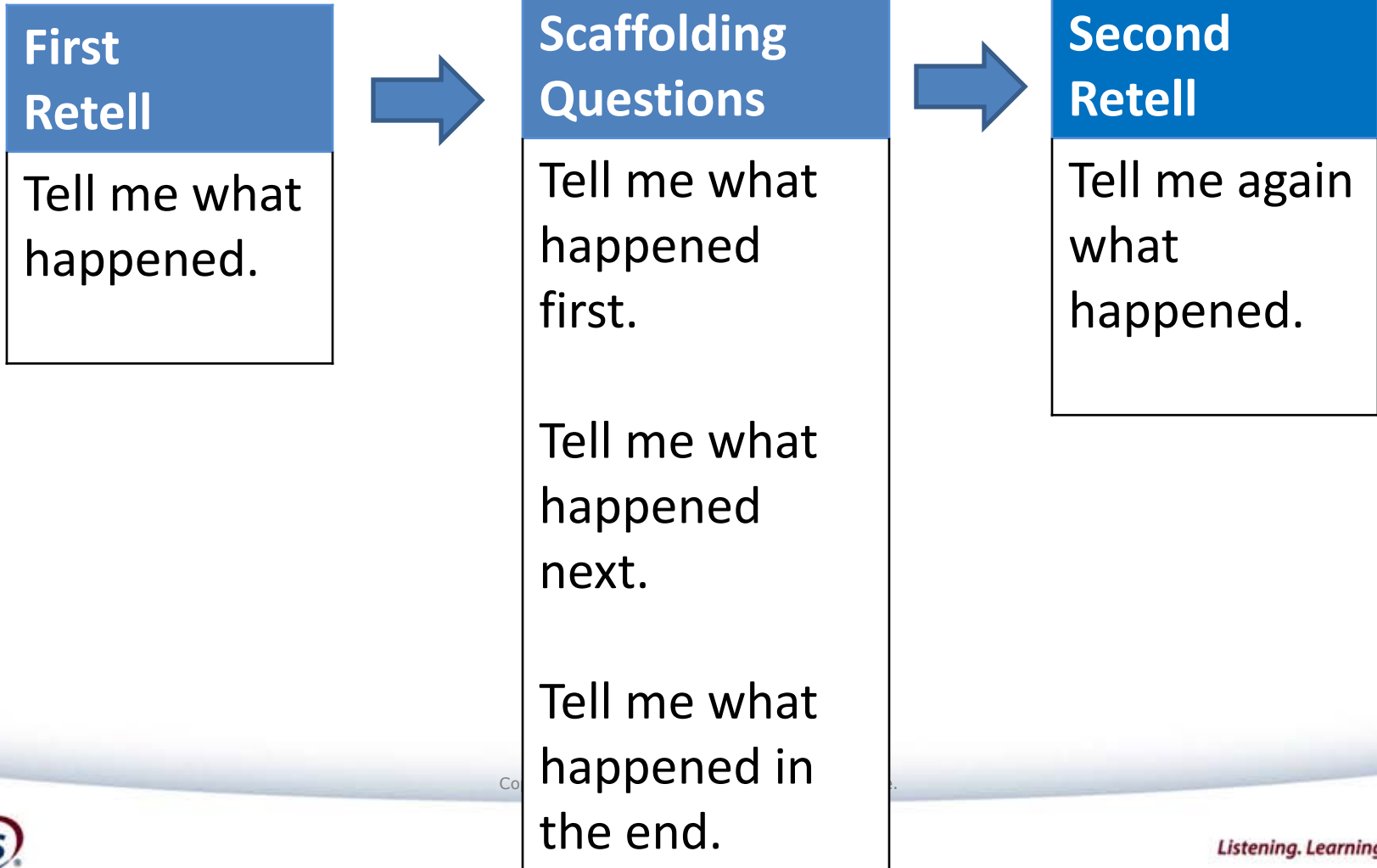
Mixing Paint



- Grade K
- Listen and Speak
- Retell and describe



Mixing Paint



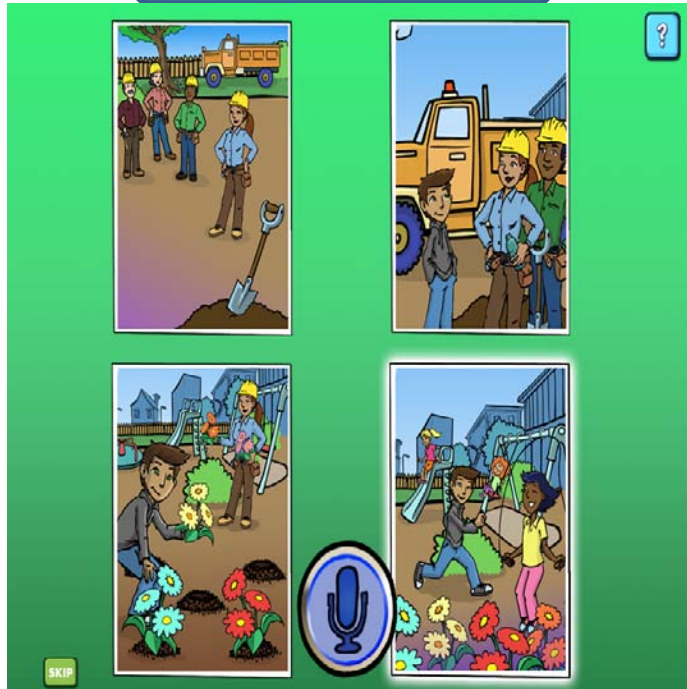
Sample Task 2

Lemon Juice Task, Gr 3-5



Sample Tasks (cont.)

Playground: GrK-2



Melting Ice: Gr 2



- Listen and Speak
- Retell and describe

Prototyping Study

- Purpose: To examine the potential benefits and usability of our design principles
- Four rounds of individual cognitive lab and group-administration data collection in Grades K-12, in 2012-2013
- Qualitative analysis

Participants

Students in Grades K-5 (age: 5 – 11)

Grade	EL	Non-EL	total
K	28	20	48
1	15	7	22
2	6	4	10
3	5	5	10
4	6	4	10
5	5	5	10
TOTAL	65	45	110

Discussion Points about Scaffolding in Assessment

- Eliciting more responses from students
- Helping students retell events
- Using different types of scaffolding
- Enhancing learning and teaching



Elicit More Information

Prompt	Response
First retell: “Tell me everything the teacher did.”	Oh, he was playing with some colors. And we mix it up with green. And that’s it.
Scaffolding questions: S1: “What did the teacher just do?” S2: “What did the teacher just do?” S3: “What did the teacher just do?”	S1: Pick...put... <u>yellow paint</u> on table. S2: Put the <u>blue on a plate</u> . S3: <u>Mix the two different colors and make green.</u>
Second retell: “I was late and missed class. Can you tell me what the teacher did?”	The teacher did the yellow paint . Put it on a plate . And blue put it on a plate. And mix both colors and make green . And that’s it.

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Elicit More Information

Prompt	Response
First retell: “Tell me everything the teacher did.”	[No response]
Scaffolding questions: S1: “What did the teacher just do?” S2: “What did the teacher just do?” S3: “What did the teacher just do?”	S1: She paint right there. S2: Paint S3: Make green
Second retell: “I was late and missed class. Can you tell me what the teacher did?”	Yellow, blue, and green!



Elicit More Information

Prompt	Response
First retell: “Tell me what you did.”	[No response]
Scaffolding: S1: “What did you do?” S2: “What did you do?” S3: “What did you do?”	
Second retell: “I was talking to you today.”	

- More data points
- Better opportunity for students to demonstrate language abilities



Retelling an Event

Prompt	Response
First retell: “Tell me everything the teacher did.”	With the brush, she used to make the, the writing on the paper.
Scaffolding questions: S1: “What do I do first?” S2: “What do I do next?” S3: “What happens then?” S4: “What do I do then?” S5: “Then what happens?”	S1: You squeeze the juice. S2: Dip, write. S3: Um, he waits for the paper to dry. S4: In front of the light. S5: Then in front of the light see what she wrote on the paper.
Second retell: “I was late and missed class. Can you tell me what the teacher did?”	Squeeze the lemon in the bowl and then she got, she picked the brush and put it in the lemon juice and then write in the paper and then put on um the light and it showed the, the word.

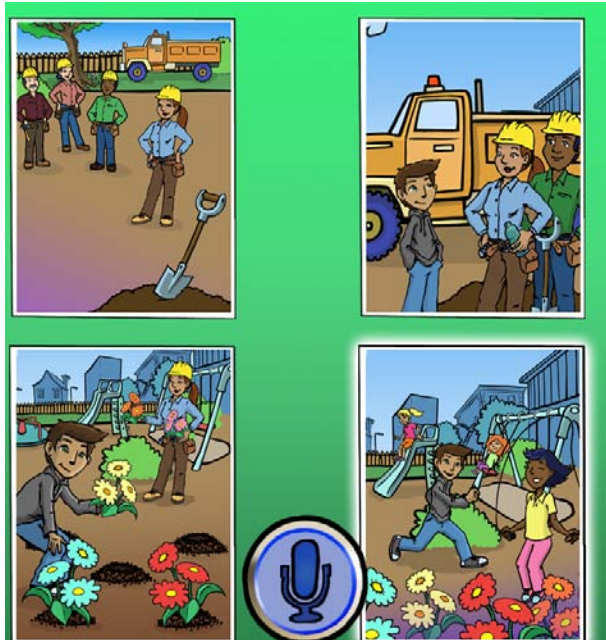
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Retelling an Event

Prompt	Response
First retell: "Tell me teach	With the brush, she used to make the, the writing on
Scaff S1: " S2: " S3: " S4: " S5: "	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The scaffolding questions serve as a model or guide for retelling an event. • Scaffolding helps some students retell the event: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sequencing - Key details - Relevant vocabulary
Seco "I wa Can y teach	

Type of Scaffolding Questions



Prompt	Response
Retell	[No response]
S1: “Look at the first picture. What do you see?”	A truck.
S2: “Look at the second picture. What is Luis doing?”	Talking and a boy.
S3: “Look at the third picture. What is Luis doing now?”	Planting the flower.
S4: “Look at the fourth picture. What is happening here?”	Now they’re playing.

Type of Scaffolding Questions



Prompt	
Retel	
S1: What	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scaffolding questions should elicit the kind of information needed to perform the specific task.
S2: What	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In the case of retelling a story<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Characters, setting- Beginning, middle and end
S3: What	
S4: What	

Suggested Revisions

- Include scaffolding questions that elicit the following information:
 - Who the characters in the story are
 - Where the story takes place (setting)
 - What happened at the beginning
 - What happened next (in the middle)
 - What happened at the end



Enhancing Teaching

Prompt	Response
S1: Tell me what materials we need.	Ice, plate
S2: What do we do first?	S: What's this? T: It's a spoon S: First you get the spoon, then you get the ice, then you put on a plate.
S3: What do we do next?	Then you wait a few seconds.
S4: What happens at the end?	The ice gets like water .
Retell: "I was late and missed class. Can you tell me what the teacher did?"	The teacher put a ice cube on the plate. Then they, they wait for a few second, then the ice will put like water .

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Enhancing Teaching

Prompt	
S1: Tell me what you need.	
S2: What do you know?	men
S3: What do you not know?	
S4: What do you need to learn?	
Retell: "I was told that you told me that you did?"	y, ke

Scaffolding provides useful information to enhance teaching:

- what the student knows
- what the student doesn't know
- what needs to be learned
- what needs to be practiced

Summary

- Scaffolding in ELP assessment has potential to increase the measurement accuracy on what students know and can do.
- Scaffolding in assessment can be used as a means of capturing a wider range of information about student abilities.
- Score reports from an assessment with scaffolding may have more useful information for students and teachers.
- More empirical research is needed to realize the benefits of scaffolding in assessment (e.g., scoring in large-scale assessment settings).

Implications for LOA

- Develop assessment tasks as learning tasks.
Learning tasks:
 - are aligned to instruction
 - are authentic
 - are engaging
 - provide support (scaffolding)
 - provide useful information to students and teachers

Implications for LOA (cont.)

- Provide relevant and timely feedback to students and teachers
 - to promote and support future learning, so students can self-management skills for learning
 - to allow them to engage with it and act upon it to become independent learners
 - to understand the type of support their students need
 - to help their students monitor their progress towards meeting the intended learning goals

Thank you!

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