## **Learning Support: Responsive Teaching**

## ***A weekly blog that will be emailed, with hard copies available in the HS faculty room; format generally the same***

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## **November 28, 2018 Theme: Scaffolding, ZPD, i+1**

### **Strategies and structures: Scaffolding and comprehensible input**

Activate prior knowledge. Begin with what students CAN do. Pre-teach vocabulary, characters, settings, categories.

Help them achieve success quickly. We like to say that failure helps us learn, but really, it’s recovery from failure & experiencing success that truly works.

Provide graphic organizers and other visual displays/supports. Provide structures: e.g. the writing process itself is a scaffold.

Add clues to guide students to the correct answer (ELLs with lower English language proficiency will still be able to participate in the lesson).

[Ellis & Larkin](http://www.vtaide.com/png/ERIC/Scaffolding.htm): Teacher does it; class does it; group does it; individual does it.

Here is a [good chart for classroom scenarios](https://learningspecialistmaterials.blogspot.com/2016/01/maximize-learning-keeping-students-in.html) with multiple skill levels: scroll down about halfway.

**Finally, provide the right level of readability**. Readings at college-level really aren’t appropriate for most high school students, especially ELLs (*maybe* OK for 12th grade). Run text through Word tools.

To set the tool, click File>Options>Proofing>Show readability statistics.

To use the tool, select text to analyze. Click Spelling & Grammar>go through the full grammar check (click ignore multiple times if you want to speed to the end). A readability stats box will appear. For example, Flesch-Kincaid shows this document is at grade level 8.5. I’ll do a future blog on reading levels.

### **Brain-based corner**

These three thought leaders have significantly important—and widely-regarded—theories about designing learning experiences for optimal success. Remember a time you learned something new, and see how these ideas connect to that learning experience.

[**Lev Vygotsky**](https://learningspecialistmaterials.blogspot.com/2016/01/maximize-learning-keeping-students-in.html)

***Big idea: Zone of Proximal Development***. It’s always best to keep students in the ZPD: the space where learning is not too hard (provokes anxiety and avoidance) and not too easy (yields boredom and frustration). The sweet spot is where a student is challenged enough to maintain attention, and she is able to learn new concepts with guided assistance.

[**Jerome Bruner**](http://esl.fis.edu/teachers/fis/scaffold/page1.htm)

***Big idea:*** [***Scaffolding***](http://esl.fis.edu/teachers/fis/scaffold/page1.htm)***.*** The teacher provides assistance for learning by giving *comprehensible input* (language and inputs the learner can understand that are just slightly above their current level). Too far beyond, and learning will not be possible.

[**Stephen Krashen**](https://www.hotchalkeducationnetwork.com/language-acquisition-theories/)

***Big idea: Language is more acquired than learned.*** This is a HUGE—though seemingly subtle—distinction with many implications. For now, I’m focusing “i+1”: the *Input Hypothesis.* Teachers need to use language input that is just above ELL’s current level of proficiency. Too high or low: the window for new learning closes.

## **Seen and heard: Cool stuff**

Cindy told me about a review for a test that her students initiated and ran. Have you ever played *Two Truths and a Lie* (or some variation)? In small groups, students wrote review questions in the truths/lie format, then played the review as a game. She remarked on how EVERYONE was engaged and reviewed the content, and it was active and ‘owned’ by the students.

This makes me think of the importance of the [affective filter](https://www.collaborativeclassroom.org/blog/lowering-the-affective-filter-for-english-language-learners-facilitates-successful-language-acquisition/), a concept in second language acquisition that I think also applies to native speakers and their learning. The affective filter explains emotional variables related to learning. This activity seemed to lower the affective filter, thus contributing to high levels of engagement.

Simply put: High filter=stress, anxiety, self-consciousness, lack of self-confidence, reluctance to participate.

Low filter=Risk-taking in learning, safety, empowerment, participation