

Transcription: Why is it important to scaffold language?

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So, I think, scaffolding language is about providing sufficient context, sufficient context for the new language we are introducing, and the new content. We can all have difficulties, all students have difficulties when engaging with academic content, because it's new, because it's complex, and because they've never encountered it before. So, when we are doing that, through a language that may not be the student's mother tongue, that makes the whole process of understanding and assimilating that new content even more difficult.

Scaffolding, as I see it, should be about providing a very, very rich context, in which a student can more easily access the content that we want them to understand. And, I would say, one of the most important things, when we're scaffolding language, is teachers' awareness of how and when this scaffolding is needed. It's about knowing their students, and being able to identify areas in which they may need a bit of extra support. And, it's about not waiting until their final exam, or their assessment at the end, to tackle these problems, but rather to help students build up to that moment, and help them improve throughout the year.

I'd say the great benefit of scaffolding language alongside content, and providing continuous feedback on the language the students are using, is that students will inevitably become more language aware. So, they will be better able to understand how the language is going to have an impact on their academic results, and eventually will also make them better language users, better language learners, and better learners in general.