

EFFECTIVE METHODS FOR INCREASING LEARNERS' CONFIDENCE

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Speaking is the most difficult ability for many language learners to master since it demands quick thinking and puts them at risk of making mistakes in front of others. This article looks at scaffolding as a teaching strategy to assist students become more confident while also improving their speaking skills. It examines useful methods like guided practice, demonstration, and the gradual removal of teacher assistance, providing specific tactics for use in the classroom.

Introduction

Speaking is a key component of language instruction since it is the most straightforward form of communication in everyday, professional, and academic settings. However, speaking a foreign language can cause anxiety due to a lack of fluency, a limited vocabulary, or a fear of making a mistake. Based on Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, the scaffolding approach provides a methodical strategy that helps students until they can function independently and with confidence.

The idea of progressively surrendering responsibility is the foundation of the scaffolding process in spoken communication. Through modeling and organized input, the teacher actively guides students in the beginning. As students engage in group and pair projects that promote communication and support among peers, this duty gradually changes. Eventually, the students assume charge and speak the language on their own in real-world

contexts. This strategy strongly relates to the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development, which holds that pupils can succeed with assistance even if they are not yet able to handle activities on their own.

Teachers frequently use techniques that offer both structure and flexibility in order to scaffold oral communication effectively. Modeling is crucial because it exposes children to precise and organic language use in role-plays, think-alouds, and conversations. With the use of sentence starters and frames, students can confidently initiate conversations by using phrases like "In my opinion" or "I would like to add." Learners are equipped with the language skills necessary to participate in discussions in a meaningful way when vocabulary is pre-taught and key words are highlighted. Before transitioning to more open-ended communication, guided practice typically in the form of supervised pair or small group work allows students to experiment with new language in a safe setting.

Teachers can help students become more proficient communicators and less stressed about language by breaking the speaking process down into smaller, more manageable tasks and offering prompt support. In addition to discussing how certain scaffolding strategies might help reluctant speakers become more confident communicators, this article provides guidance on how to incorporate them into everyday teaching activities.

Modeling and demonstration. Modeling is one of the best ways to get started with scaffolding. Teachers provide students a clear model to follow by demonstrating the kind of speech that is expected in role-playing, presentations, and dialogues. These examples make linguistic decisions, speech patterns, and intonation more understandable.

This stage is further enhanced by including real audio or video samples, such as speeches, interviews, or informal chats. In addition to hearing proper forms, learners gain insight into the contextual and cultural quirks that influence communication in everyday situations.

Practice and interaction under guidance. The transition from observation to autonomous performance is facilitated by guided practice. Students can practice speaking in a safe but encouraging setting through exercises including teacher-led Q&A sessions, small-group discussions, and guided pair work.

Here, the teacher maintains fluency without limiting natural expression by using visual clues, prompts, or specific language. Learners can gradually transition into more spontaneous contact by using new language patterns in meaningful contexts through activities like scenario-based talks, collaborative problem-solving, and knowledge gap tasks.

Less assistance with time. The transient nature of scaffolding is one of its distinguishing characteristics. Teachers may provide comprehensive sentence structures, word banks, or guiding questions at the beginning. These aids are decreased as students get more at ease until they are able to talk on their own.

This progressive delegation of accountability cultivates self-reliance, enabling students to generate unique concepts and participate in genuine dialogue. Later on, students can confidently participate in presentations, debates, and unstructured conversations.

Practical suggestions for educators

Teachers can use the following strategies to successfully include scaffolding into speaking lessons:

1. Include a modeling phase in every class to ensure that students are aware of the expectations.
2. Foster a relaxed environment where making mistakes is accepted as a necessary part of learning.
3. Make sure students are prepared for each phase by alternating between controlled and open-ended activities.
4. To improve mutual learning, provide peer review and group feedback.
5. Modify the degree of support in accordance with the needs and progress of each student.

Conclusion

By providing a clear, encouraging structure for speaking skill development, scaffolding helps students go from hesitant attempts to self-assured, independent communication. Teachers can improve linguistic accuracy and lower anxiety at the same time by integrating modeling, directed interaction, and the tactful withdrawal of support.

When used regularly, this method gives students the skills and confidence they need to communicate successfully outside of the classroom. By doing this, it turns speaking from a cause of fear into a source of pride and achievement.

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