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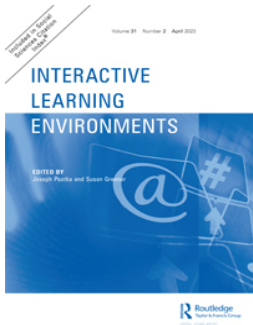
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Online scaffolding behavior for speaking EFL improvement: narrative inquiry issues

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ABSTRACT

Speaking English as a foreign language (EFL) requires the proper instructional techniques and tactics. Since then, other techniques, including online scaffolding or more knowledgeable other in the speaking improvement, have been used. The current research employs scaffolding to teach speaking in comparison to teacher-guided. The goal of this research is to describe the scaffolding techniques a teacher uses while scaffolding four students. In order to do this, the current research investigates how learners describe what they had learned and accomplished via speaking class performances, which acts as a scaffold for them. The outcomes identify the six diamonds of scaffolding behaviors, that is, instructor, contingent, consultant, modeling, motivator, and evaluator. However, the researchers assert that there were only a small number of learners because of the difficulty of the subject. According to the research, peer scaffolding should blend or hybrid while teaching spoken EFL at the college level. The report encourages future ethnographic discussions for more research.

Introduction

The importance of speaking English as a foreign language (EFL) is currently being paid attention to and undeniable to the growth of technology. It is on par with the Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia, which has launched learner exchange programs both nationally and internationally (Press Conference of Minister of Education, Culture, Science, and Technology, 2021). Besides considering its importance, the higher education in *Indonesia*, English language curriculum designs its syllabus from basic to advanced grades. In this vein, a learner could spend at least two years focusing on their speaking skills. This is a fantastic time to develop speaking skills. However, research by Anwar (2019) suggests that despite these curricular efforts, students speak poor English, lack confidence, and are unwilling to engage in discussions in English language.

In the real world, a variety of face-to-face and online teaching and speaking methods, tactics, and techniques have been used at the higher education levels in Indonesia (Fitriati & Rata, 2021; Lee et al., 2019), blended learning (Arifani et al., 2021), full online classroom (Bunga et al., 2021), and even hybrid learning (Fitriyana et al., 2021). These researchers observe that each of their methods helped learners improve their speaking abilities. However, Abugohar et al. (2020) stated that although the target language has achieved success, fluency in spoken language does not develop

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automatically; it must be integrated with other media, aids, and practices. Hence, we mediated speaking skills and performances using scaffolding.

Scaffolding terms in teaching speaking EFL have been introduced and have empirically developed learners' performances more confidently and smoothly. Chen et al. (2021), Li (2012), Newman (2017), and Xu et al. (2022) noted that a teacher and another adult can be paired to teach children to learn language and literacy rather than without peer tutoring. They added that a child's zone of proximal development (ZPD) can be used in transactional activities such as order some foods and drinks. Similar to this, Mahan (2022) scaffolded content-language learning for her students using modeling and strategy-based techniques (content and language integrated learning). She discovered that when students had understood the subject and had time for learner-talk throughout the process, they were able to address difficulties. According to Chang and Sun (2009), a specialized scaffolding and concordance-based website were also helpful in language learning to enhance Taiwan learners' proofreading abilities.

According to Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, peer scaffolding has also been widely accepted for a very long time since it stated that today's children can do better with a scaffolder's help and tomorrow they can do it alone. In this line, children need people with more capable scaffolding to reach out of children's ZPD.

However, the influence of online peer scaffolding on learners' speaking abilities is not well documented in the literature. The present work aims to close this gap and determine how peer assistance improves learners' speaking abilities. While peer scaffolding's insightfulness for the development of writing skills has been extensively proven (Cohen & Williams, 2019; Kim & Cho, 2017; Zakharova et al., 2022), there is a dearth of literature directed toward online peers who have advanced language skills. Interestingly, the backdrop of the present study is based on recommendations from two earlier studies, including those by Bhatti et al. (2020) and Chairinkam and Yawiloeng (2021). It was proposed that the role of peer scaffolding behaviors on the development of other abilities, such as speaking EFL in an Indonesian setting, would be further explored in the subsequent research. This gap is what the present research intends to close. To fulfill the literature of the online scaffolding which is still unwell documented, the current study offers six diamonds online scaffolding behavior for speaking EFL improvement. We claim six diamonds because philosophically, the form of a diamond is not flat, yet up and down, and it needs a scaffolder to fill it. Overall, to the best of our knowledge, the current research investigates how learners describe what they had learned and accomplished via speaking class performances, which acts as a scaffold for them.

Overview of online peer scaffolding behavior

Constructivism, behaviorism, the theory of cognitive development, and social learning theory are all deeply ingrained in the scaffolding of behavior (Bryceson, 2007). When thinking about learning, keep in mind that people build their own view of the world by gathering information and interpreting it in light of prior experiences. Schools of thought that place a strong focus on social contact, interaction, and context are included in social constructivism. According to Vygotsky's social learning theory, social interactions have an impact on intellectual experiences and cognitive growth. The ZPD, or the distance at which the learner can perform something both by himself and alongside more competent individuals, is a hurdle that the learner must cross throughout the cognitive growth process. Knowing his ZPD may have caused the learner to purposefully or accidentally seek assistance. Apprenticeship is a category in the ZPD.

Scaffolding, or what some refer to as the more knowledgeable other (MKO), is the process by which a more talented person attempts to teach information to a less skilled person using the language of shared communication, as defined by Vygotsky and Cole (1978). It examines the numerous forms of assistance provided by instructors to aid students' learning. Scaffolding is more than just a MKO person guiding a less skilled person. That would simply mean, in Vygotskian terminology, that the learner is being controlled or governed by the language of the other. In order to learn, a

person must internalize another's teachings in order to self-regulate. As evidence for the notion of scaffolding, Bruner (1983) noted that the conceptual foundation of adult problem-solving activities is scaffolding.

Scaffolding is conceptually the skill of providing additional assistance while the learner is having trouble and removing assistance when the learner is succeeding. Among the principles are the following: (1) individual learning happens through social interaction with others; (2) language as the utility to develop cognitive ability from thinking to doing; (3) assisting learners to do tasks with more capable people; (4) learning from more knowledgeable people rather than solely; and (5) learners' grow better independently.

In related research, Mahan (2022) divided scaffolding broadly into two categories: strategies and instructional. From a macro level to a micro level, scaffolding techniques work (for instance, curricular design that methodically incorporates language, i.e. interactional scaffolding). Although interactional scaffolding is the ongoing assistance instructors provide their students in the classroom, interactional scaffolding presents a challenge to educators since they are required to assist students who are experiencing unforeseen difficulties at the spur of the moment (Walqui, 2006). Introduction, demonstration, description, summarization, questioning, response, synthesis, elaboration, and providing recommendations are all examples of scaffolding instructions (Gibbons, 2002). Maintaining connections, guided reporting, and encouraging communication are the three aspects of scaffolding behavior.

In essence, scaffolding fosters new knowledge and benefits learners' autonomy. It is crucial to assist learners in being aware of and identifying the methods that they now use or may employ in order to enable them to take more control over their own learning. Teachers may utilize scaffolding in the era of fast technological advancement by using tools like Skype (Ogden, 2015), Facebook, Instagram, YouTube (Szeto & Cheng, 2014), and other social media platforms. It is very difficult and crucial for teachers to play the supportive scaffolding and space-making roles necessary for students to achieve autonomy. But the use of technology allows students to leave the confines of the classroom and bring the outside world inside. While autonomy implies empowering students, the classroom may often be constrictive. Additionally, it is a person who takes pleasure in their job and works autonomously. As Hsiao et al. (2017) stated, to offer learners the opportunity to construct their knowledge through their own experiences, teachers can assist them with scaffolding online or hybrid systems. This system was designed due to the limitation of face-to-face interaction in the classroom.

Research method

Research design and participants

A narrative inquiry was utilized in the study's design, which was in line with its objectives. Narrative inquiry, a kind of qualitative research, originally arose in the field of management science and later developed in the study of knowledge management, a branch of information management (Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The stories of human experience serve as the basis for narrative inquiry. It gives researchers a deep way to look into how people really interact with the fictional worlds they make.

Narrative inquiry uses field texts including stories, autobiographies, diaries, field notes, letters, talks, interviews, family stories, pictures (and other artifacts), and life experiences to investigate and understand how people generate meaning in their lives as narratives (Clegg & Bailey, 2008). For this reason, the current study included four female participants to generate participants' narrative experiences and an in-depth understanding. They belonged to the third semester of the English department. They ranged in age from 20 to 21. Two of them donated more than three hours every day and watched YouTube channels like "The Try Guys" and "The Tonight Show", and they like to practice speaking on their own way. They were selected purposively as volunteers since they scored 450 on the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language, EFL) exam. Accordingly, two of them

categorized as novice (under 450 TOEFL score) and the rest as advance (450 TOEFL score or above). It complied with Indonesia's regulations for college enrollment (national English certification formally). In this case, they participated as volunteers. In light of research ethically, all the identities of participants will be concealed or used as pseudonyms. Prior to meeting with them, researchers first met with the study program's director to get more information on institutional approval and associated ethical issues.

Instruments, gathering and analyzing data

Four learners' life experiences were used in the story research, as specified, and they provided them via an online interview (Salmons, 2014). They phoned each other through WhatsApp to become closer to the participants (Butarbutar et al., 2020; Nur et al., 2022). First, researchers spoke to check their preparation and to schedule their fun moments before performing the online interview. The interview questions were in light of the scaffolder behaviors while learning to speak virtually, and participants' narrations were examined in relation to perceptions, understandings, and personal experiences as Salmons's (2014) recommendation.

In connection with the gathered data, teacher acted as co-host and facilitated participants for one semester or 16 meetings. In this vein, for the first eight meetings, teacher monitored in online zoom and for the second eight meeting, as participants, in order to give an in-depth knowledge. Themes such as context, storytelling, and scaffolding behaviors were examined in relation to scaffolding behaviors. Contextual factors define the discourse or environment where engagement and communication have previously taken place. The category of scaffolding came after the category of narration, which represented the dialog between students and instructors. The ATLAS.ti application was used to upload and evaluate all of the collected data. However, while it does not automate these steps, it helped researchers do many things that are needed for data analysis and interpretation. Furthermore, showing results to the participants to get clarification was employed to achieve the validity or trustworthiness of the results. To shorten its procedures, they can be seen in Table 1.

Findings and discussion

Findings reveal with connection to the present study's intention about scaffolding behaviors' beneficial for speaking abilities development. So far, it shows six roles as follows: (1) instructor or mentor, (2) consultant or collaborator, (3) contingent, (4) modeling, (5) motivator, and (6) evaluator as seen in Figure 1. The learners narrated that they covered six scaffolding behaviors during speaking performances, first as consultant or collaborator. Its role is to determine when, what, and how the learner assisted. If learners had gained a speaking target in this vein, scaffolding would stop gradually (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978).

Figure 1 implies that behaviors of scaffolding cannot be generalized to all learners' proficiency level. To keep in our mind, their proficiency level is a reference to the teacher to design scaffolding appropriately. The current study was framed by teacher scaffolding and used a premium Zoom meeting application to improve learners' speaking EFL with their scaffolders, hence teacher and classmates. In this light, teacher as a MKO has a role as instructor to instruct learning objectives, meanwhile green color signs students with novice or beginner of the English proficiency. Therefore, yellow color indicated students with advance English proficiency. The present study categorized them as novices level and advances level. This category refers to Mariani (1997) and Wilson and Devereux (2014) who design scaffolding in line with high challenges and high supports. In this vein, novice learners and low-scaffolding behaviors are supported by advanced learners.

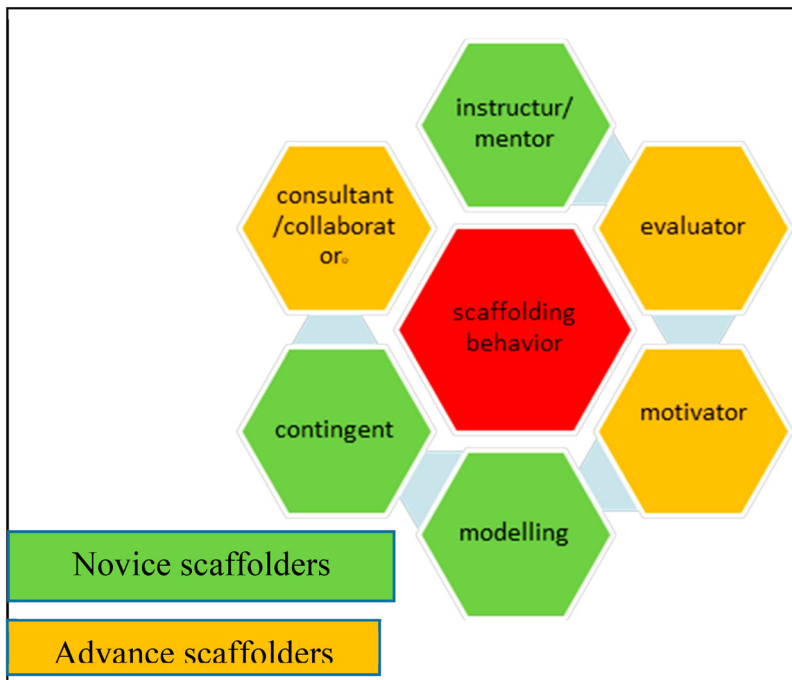Figure 2 shows how the six diamond scaffolders' roles are subdivided into smaller unit roles that aid in speech improvement. For example, learner_1 consulted her speaking ability with her teacher in the zoom room virtually, as seen in the excerpt "Would you like to repeat pronunciation slowly? I cannot get point … ". In response, the instructor advised the student to visit "pronunciation.com." It

Table 1. Scaffolder behavior and MKO intervention.

Contexts	Narration	Scaffolding behaviors
Week 1 In the beginning lecturing in zoom class meeting	Good morning, students. How is life today? Well, to begin the lecturing for this morning, I would like to invite you to give a simple introduction about yourself [… time for learners until the end of class].	Instructor
Week 2 Teacher as MKO assists learners' presentation	The teacher instructs learners to prepare individual presentations in terms of interested topics Let me make a presentation about myself In this vein, the teacher corrected and provided the learner's mistake in language use before asking the learner to continue her presentation	Modeling or facilitator
Week 3 Learners to MKO	The advanced students are invited to present their work, and the rest of the class is asked for feedback or advice. [Hence, the teacher would like to check the learner's pronunciation and grammar rules.] The outcome revealed that none of the students were brave enough to share ideas or make comments.	Modeling, consultant
Week 4 Learners to MKO	Teacher invited novice learner to present her presentation and now change the advance learner chance for reviewing or giving comments and this is well done with correct grammar	Collaborator and modeling
Weeks 5–7 Learners to MKO	After advanced learners tried modeling good pronunciation and correct grammar while giving comments and suggestions, the novice learner tried the same way. Nonetheless, she simply stated, "I agree with, but could you give me another perspective?" [hence, her fluency has increased].	Collaborator and modeling
Week 8 Learners to teacher	In this session, the teacher evaluated the learners' speaking progress by checking pronunciation, accuracy, and fluency	Collaborator and modeling
Weeks 9–15 Learners to MKO	The teacher provides opportunities for students, and MKO assists them in interacting with one another. They freely applied modeling, repeating, reformulating, and criticizing peers in light of topic discussion talks.	Instructor, collaborator, and modeling
Week 16 At then of class	At the end of the class meeting, novice students improved their fluency and critiqued each other's presentations. Their speaking performance was improved, albeit not significantly, in terms of grammar rules, as shown in the following excerpt:	Evaluator
	T: Have you finished your task? S: I have finished the task. I have not finished the task yet … (yeahh I haven't finished yet, sorry mam, I was wrong). [on-the-spot teacher acted as a contingent scaffolder] and corrected the learner's sentence. Learners check their pronunciation by repeating and confirming the meaning of words to make sure they pronounce words correctly [Teacher: Please visit howpronunciation.com to improve your pronunciation. Could you please repeat it?; I'd like to pronounce it slowly; what do you mean?]	Contingent
Closing session	T: alright, I appreciate all right of your insightful presentation, overall presentation insightful for us, good job and thanks for your, participation! Help learners to understand cussed topics, ask and answer learners after presentation and provided further questions to be prepared	Evaluator (teacher provided feedback?)

is a website that you can use to learn pronunciation on your own. Since each person has a different potential for speaking, the learner can use the pronunciation website to repeat the word they just said as often as necessary. It was emphasized that the learner consulted her challenges during the class presentation. In another case, learner_2 was consulted about her complexity in terms of grammar competence. "T: Have you finished your task? S: I have not finished the task yet. T: I have not finished the task yet. (yeahh I haven't finished yet, sorry mam, I was wrong)" (on-the-spot teacher acted as a contingent scaffolder and simultaneously corrected the learner's sentence). When the teacher instructed her four learners to present a short introduction simultaneously, she applied contingency scaffolding. In so doing, she knew, detected, and diagnosed learners' knowledge (Van de Pol et al., 2010). For this reason, she did this in the first week of lecturing.

Our research discovered that in addition to providing contingent scaffolding, teachers also provided grammatical correction for learner phrases (see the appendix for more details). Correct

Figure 1. Six diamonds virtual scaffolding behavior model for speaking EFL.

language use was one of the most challenging things for our participants to do while speaking. Due to shyness and apprehension over using the wrong grammar, they remained mute and were reluctant to converse. Hence, when the teacher was turned on to the more complex grammar examples, simultaneously the teacher acted as consultant, mentor, or instructor as well as corrected students' mistakes and withdrew low scaffolding. It is consistent with the research of Wilson and Devereux (2014) that they proposed. Contrarily, contingent scaffolding includes instructors directly interacting with learners in-person, online, and/or in the classroom, as well as providing feedback on their work (Maybin et al. 1992). Dependent scaffolding can be given to the whole class or to certain students in a group setting to help them build on each other's ideas and get better at evaluating their own learning.

In another class presentation, learner_4 narrated her lack of confidence while presenting a short introduction in front of classmates. She felt nervous, her hands sweaty, and her heart beating so hard that sometimes I had no idea what to say. For this reason, the teacher encouraged her to practice, practice, and practice by herself and her classmates to reduce anxiety. It is important to remember that learners' lack of confidence in speaking performance was not simply cognition and psychology (Pritchard & Woollard, 2013). Besides, the consultant plays a role in shifting topics whilst the learner is stuck, bored, or has no idea. In light of the caregiver's strategies, which were initially used by Cameron (2006), who reported controlling the child's unhappiness during the activity, one strategy may be employed in all learning situations (Wood et al., 1976).

In terms of online scaffolding (more capable classmates), our study shows that learner fluency was increased when their teacher helped them with correcting and evaluating their presentation and conversation. They recognized that there was something new for her to be reached without other more capable people. In so doing, we accepted Poehner's (2012) suggestion of three learning features, that is, orientation, execution, and control. Participants in this study may have delivered her presentation; however, she required teacher scaffolding to evaluate her sentences. This light would influence her speaking performance. She was instructed of four learners through a short

Figure 2. Scaffolder roles in speaking EFL.

presentation, doing practicing with more confidence and crosschecking pronunciation correctly via a free website, as supported by Gonulal and Loewen's (2018) reference. They mentioned scaffolding as a good teaching element that allowed students to work on their ZPD (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978). Our research is also relevant in view of Banse et al. (2017) promotions of scaffolds for repetition, elaboration, and reformulation. Their comparative analysis found that Calendar Math did not provide a backdrop that was helpful for conversations that were conceptual in nature. English language learners do better in math conversations when they use display questions, learner answer elaboration, math for modeling, and teacher self-talk.

To sum up, the present study was on par with van de Pol et al. (2010), who reviewed the effectiveness of scaffolding in teacher–student interaction and activated three pedagogical implications, that is, cognitive, affective, and motivation. It was relevant to the six scaffolding behaviors that learners narrated during scaffolded speaking performances, as our study cultivated and noted.

Conclusion, pedagogical implications, and beyond

Language perspectives

Without scaffolding, it would be difficult for us to learn all of the parts of language. According to current research, learners may enhance their speaking abilities and performance via virtual

scaffolding from professors and peers. As a result, Chairinkam and Yawiloeng (2021) suggested a few steps to help English language learners improve their writing. These steps are agreed and disagreed, elaboration, elicitation, justification, inquiry, request, state, proposal, and acknowledgement.

Academic rigor, high standards, excellent relationships, a language emphasis, and a quality curriculum serve as the foundation for the creation and implementation of effective education for English language learners (Gibbons, 2002). Even if just for brief discussions, speaking EFL is an imperative requirement. Such as, if a youngster is speaking to his mother and she is acting as a scaffolder and has more knowledge and vocabulary than the child has, their communication may be ongoing and their speaking may be more fluid. The more thoroughly and profoundly a learner is acquainted with a word, the more likely they are to be able to identify, spell, define, and use it correctly in verbal and written communication. Generally speaking, a skilled and effective language instructor scaffolds language learning successfully because, according to Gonulal and Loewen's (2018) knowledge assessment, effective scaffolding is a component of excellent teaching. The more freedom learners have to elaborate on assignments, the more accurately they talk.

Knowledge is collaboratively developed by the learner and the educator rather than being simply transferred. To put it another way, knowledge is developed by participation in situations where everyone actively negotiates meaning (Morita, 2004). It is obvious that learners' cooperative participation in scaffolder activities results in the formation of fresh and expanded understandings. This would support the idea that instruction and learning are interrelated processes (Mercer, 1994). This educational viewpoint distinguishes between teacher-directed learning and learner-centered learning by acknowledging that both parties are active participants in a collaborative learning process (Hsieh, 2017). Teaching and learning are described as "a social activity that relies on the current resources of the participants" by Webster et al. (1996). As a result, both the instructor and the pupils are a part of the process.

It is possible to explore ideas and facts, consider other perspectives, and provide defenses, especially in discussion. Through this process, new ways of experiencing and thinking could emerge. These innovative methods are crucial for the progress of opposing ideas and the ongoing generation of information, even if they only represent small modifications. More broadly, this agreement-making process promotes the ongoing expansion of social and cultural worldviews. This would lend credence to the notion that instruction and learning are interrelated processes (Mercer, 1994). This viewpoint on education also differentiates between learner-centered learning and teacher-directed learning by acknowledging teachers and learners actively. Teaching and learning are social activities in which both teachers and students participate (Webster et al., 1996).

Another part of this viewpoint on learning is the idea that language is crucial to learning, as we can see from the example above. According to Vygotsky and Cole (1978), when learners develop their thinking skills, they internalize the external conversations they take part in to the point where external speaking becomes internal thinking. Learners may develop the "thinking" abilities essential for future problem-solving by "talking their way to understanding" an issue. These skills will ultimately become internalized and form the basis of free thought. As a result, how students learn to think about language is influenced by the kinds of dialogs that occur in the classroom. The nature of scaffolding can facilitate learning for those studying language in the classroom (Hammond & Gibbons, 2005). Speaking and teaching will improve when instructors are more aware of what their pupils already know and provide the appropriate scaffolding for them.

Overall, we agree with Shepard's (2005) assertion that scaffolding is an essential part of dynamic language evaluation. When learners still want support, scaffolding is provided, and it is progressively discontinued once the desired ZPD is attained. On the other hand, scaffolding behavior may be described as formative assessment dynamics rather than statics since it would be altered in certain sessions depending on the development of the learners. It is important to note that English language learners' scaffolding requirements extend beyond speaking to include reading, writing, language structures, listening, and language evaluation. This suggests that the EFL curriculum is created using the students' ZPD and instructional, contingent, and strategy scaffolding. So, we

can expect that the different ways people learn will help them succeed in the future (Butarbutar, 2021; Butarbutar et al., 2021).

Scaffolding or MKO suggests that humans need experts other than ourselves. For instance, college learners require lecturers; the organization needs leaders; and even the country needs more qualified individuals who are also strong, economically advanced, and technologically advanced. Scaffolding is permanent, ongoing, and present in the business setting.

The implication is that scaffolding is more appropriate in the social high context culture than in the social low context culture, which views learning as a self-directed endeavor with no outside giver-helps. Learning, or what Merriam (2001) referred to as self-directed learning, is the modification of behavior brought about by one's own efforts, as the Piagetian paradigm stresses. Therefore, we wholeheartedly agree with Verenikina's (2008) assertion. According to her, scaffolding is important to learners as a lifetime learning process and is not just a collection of scaffolding techniques. Although scaffolding may be halted, learning cannot.

Second, learning to do entails learning through engaging in novel and distinctive activities. Through learning, being a problem solver rather than merely a follower or a troublemaker is encouraged. Third, learning to coexist acknowledges that learners are interacting and living in a society that is diverse in terms of background, ideology, views, education, social standing, and other factors. These set apart learning environments, techniques, and orientations.

Last but not least, becoming requires understanding how to become. The learning process is not just academic and cognition-focused but also depends on how to learn in light of one's surroundings, the accomplishments of others, and other factors. As a result, learners could be more independent, imaginative, responsible, and forward-thinking (Butarbutar et al., 2019; Hurd, 2008; Leba et al., 2021).

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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