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BE-IN: Best Innovative Practices for an Inclusive and Emotional Education to face early school leaving in Europe



Scaffolding and mentoring

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How to practice scaffolding through mentoring

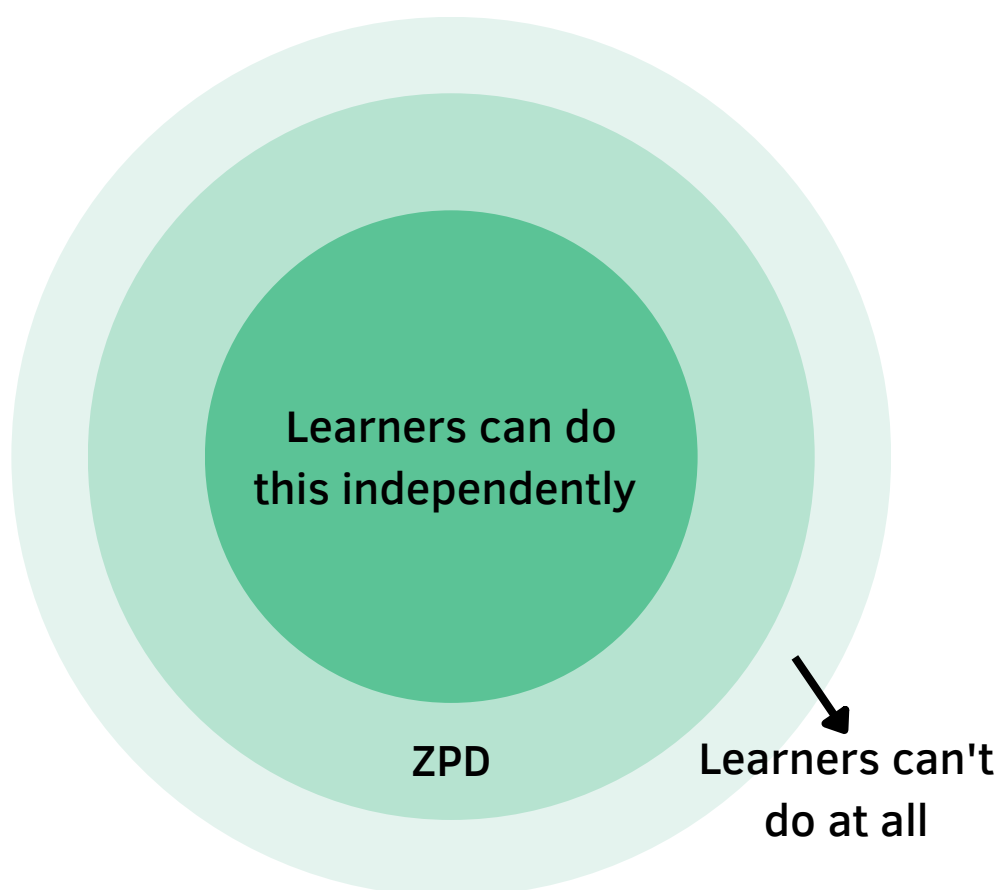
The concept of "scaffolding" by Bruner (1979) and the Proximal Development Zone by Vygotsky (1978) are deeply interlinked. The teacher, having identified the distance between the level of cognitive development of the student and the potential growth they can reach with adequate support, proposes "problems of a higher level than his current skills, but not so difficult to be incomprehensible" (Devescovi et al., 2003). This provides him with tutoring that represents the scaffolding that fills the gap between the skills required and the student's current skills, thanks to which he can operate and gradually improve his cognitive skills.

Learning scaffolding, also known as "Vygotsky scaffolding" or simply "scaffolding," is a teaching method that helps students learn more by working with a more advanced teacher or student to achieve their learning goals. The theory behind educational scaffolding is that compared to independent learning, students learn more when collaborating with others with a broader range of skills and knowledge than the student currently does. These instructors or peers are the "scaffolds" that help the student expand their learning boundaries and learn more than they would be able to do alone. Therefore, scaffolding to the learning processes presupposes a relationship of collaboration and interaction between those who teach (parent, tutor, teacher, peer) and those who learn.



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The second partner in this relationship does not undergo intervention but actively builds knowledge. The latter does not passively and mechanically imitate the observed behavior but rather experiences the interaction, verbal and otherwise, from which knowledge, learning, and culture flow. ZPD is often depicted as a series of concentric circles. The smallest circle is the set of skills a student can learn independently without help. The next is the ZPD, or skill that a student would not be able to do on their own but can do with a teacher or a peer who helps them. In addition, there are skills that the student cannot yet do, even with help.



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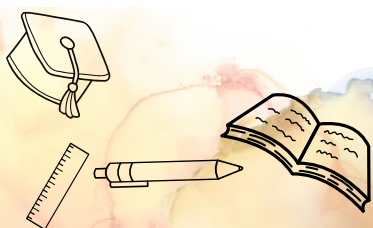
Scaffolding is also defined as collaborative problem-solving between two people.

Devescovi (2003) describes the five stages of scaffolding mentoring:

1. Call: The mentor captures the companion's interest and motivates and spurs him.
2. Reduction of degrees of freedom: The mentor explains the task in a simple way, minimizing the steps that lead to the solution.
3. Encouragement and support: The mentor must maintain high motivation levels so that the peer develops an autonomous interest.
4. Indication of the crucial points: The mentor must help the mentee understand the most important aspects of the task so that the mentee can compare his results with those necessary for the objective.
5. Demonstration (modeling): The mentor shares the strategy for solving the problem, and the mentee, thanks to what he has learned, will be able to repeat the model and adapt it.

When can the mentoring methodology be applied within the UDA in the classroom?

It is possible to create a UDA that includes the mentoring methodology at different times and through various methods. In general, the mentoring intervention can be structured in the various phases of the UDA with this scan:



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- The class is divided into two groups with different materials. The first group (the mentees) works on the standard material proposed in the textbook, and the second group (the mentors) has at their disposal in-depth material other than the book (photocopies, videos, research).
- After the first moment of separate study between two groups, the mentor group supports the mentees' group by taking up the standard text. Students are in pairs or small groups of three.
- Each mentor exposes to their partner or small group the contents previously learned from the in-depth material.
- The teacher identifies and presents the method for returning the work (written/oral presentation, digital presentation, manual product).

With this classroom organization in mind, we can achieve the following objectives:

- Increase collaboration and exchange among peers
- Reduce anxiety in the presentation of a new topic
- Alternate more theoretical and more creative moments within the UDA
- Increase some of the mentors' life skills, such as empathy and self-awareness.
- Support study and learning in students with the most difficulties.



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