Teaching Learning Succeeding

Subject: English Language Arts and Math Learning Support
Grade Level: Elementary School
DI Strategy: Scaffolding

Elementary Learning Support Scaffolding Lesson

As a learning support teacher, it was my goal that all students gain confidence in the classroom and learn to take responsibility for their learning. Scaffolding was a tool that helped support students to achieve these two goals. Whether inside the learning support classroom, or for students included in the general education classroom, scaffolds were used daily to help all learners reach the objective.

In my learning support classroom, I worked with small groups of students for reading instruction. These groups range from kindergarten through 4th grade. During this time, I provided scaffolded instruction to increase comprehension and fluency while reading. The use of graphic organizers were used daily, ranging from webs, t-charts, or Venn Diagrams. At the beginning of the year I provided the graphic organizers; however, I slowly removed this support and by the end of the year students were instructed to make their own before, during, or after they read.

Other strategies that were used as a scaffold were highlighting main ideas, putting "buzz words" on post-it notes, or jotting down notes in the margin. In the beginning of the school year, students would be instructed on which tool to use. However, by the end of the year, they were given the supplies (post-its, highlighters) and independently practiced this skill (which also gave them some choice). It was my hope that they implemented these skills in the general education classroom as well.

Another area in which I provide scaffolds was in the general education classroom. I provided support for all students (learning support students or not). During math instruction, I would "push in" to general education math classes. Many times students were struggling in math and I supported them. Some tools I used when "pushing in" to classrooms were providing word banks, multiplication grids, formula banks, or graphic organizers. I also held a Friday Review Group, pulling students that needed extra review of the week's content. Depending on the class, the students in each review group changed weekly. This depended on who was having trouble understanding the content. Obviously not all students needed these supports; however, some do.

When scaffolds were implemented properly, it allowed for learners to feel successful as well as gain confidence in their academic abilities.