

Two–Minute Tips

This Week's Topic: Scaffolding

Scaffolding means providing young people the right level of support in the face of challenges. Scaffolding is monitoring the challenges and providing individualized supports to help participants complete an activity. Scaffolding can look like modeling, breaking down tasks, or asking open-ended questions. Persistence is developed in the face of a challenge, but if an activity is too challenging, participants tend to give up. Monitoring the challenge level helps you ensure that activities offer a stimulating amount of challenge. As a facilitator, it's difficult sometimes to determine the correct level of challenge, especially as we individualize for each participant. As participants explore new activities it's important to watch for visible signs of struggle and provide the appropriate level of support.¹ Scaffolding will help each participant persist, so they learn, grow, and progress to the next level appropriate for them.

Practice Tips

Here are a few quick tips to integrate scaffolding into your activities.

What does this participant currently know? What can they already do? What new knowledge or skill is this activity designed to help them develop? What scaffolds will help them bridge this gap, but keep the learning challenging?

Tap Into or Build Background Knowledge

Provide a short introduction to the skill or activity, and link it to prior knowledge, experience, or background.

Model

Show how to do the skill or complete the activity, or better yet, have another participant model it.

Guide: I Do/You Do

If you see a participant struggling, walk through the steps, then have them repeat the steps on their own.

Use Visual Supports or Step-by-Step Instruction

Offer pictures of each step of the activity, show a video, or provide written step-by-step instructions.

Brainstorm Strategies

In large group, small group, or peer discussions, brainstorm strategies they can use to develop the skills needed to complete the activity.

Tips in Action!

[Watch](#) staff at Coyote Central scaffold participants in safely cutting an avocado.

Want more two-minute tips?

Check out:

<https://depts.washington.edu/cqel/expanded-learning-opportunities/>

There you will find the latest tip, an archive of past tips, and a discussion board to connect with peers!

¹ Hillaker, B., Akiva, T., Jones, M., Sutter, A., Wallace, L., McGovern, G., Harris, J., Peck, S., & Smith, C. (2017). *Program quality assessment handbook: Social emotional learning version*. Washington, DC: The Forum for Youth Investment.