

# SCAFFOLDING: HOW IT WORKS FOR STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

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## **Abstract**

The current educational developments begin to place children with special needs with regular children or children who have not special needs to learn, understand and appreciate each other. As a teacher, teaching diversity is a challenge in itself. In addition, teachers also need to teach the independence of students, especially students with special needs. Children with learning difficulties are one of the categories of children with special needs. Learning difficulties refer to a group of difficulties experienced by children where the difficulty can cause children experience problems in learning. Children with learning difficulties need remedial to help them in the learning situation. The use of various media with various methods and strategies can be used to assist teachers in providing remedial. The problem is how effective remedial methods can be applied. Scaffolding is a way to provide assistance or mentoring to students during the early stages of learning then the student takes over responsibilities gradually increasing as soon as he or she can do so. Assistance can be guidance, warning, encouragement, problem-solving into learning steps, etc. so as to enable students to grow independently. This research is a literature study where the researcher collects data through literature study theory, journal, and research article until conical at a conclusion.

The purpose of this article is to introduce teachers to scaffolding methods that can be an alternative learning in the classroom especially for children with learning disabilities.

**Keywords:** scaffolding, learning difficulties.

## **Introduction**

Education is now beginning to pay attention to the concept of inclusion. Where children with special needs can be admitted to regular schools and join children who do not experience specific needs in one class. This development, on the one hand, shows the humanist side in which children with special needs have equal rights to attend regular schools. But on the other hand, this becomes a challenge for teachers, especially teachers in elementary school level. So teachers need to add insight and knowledge to develop appropriate learning not only for regular children but also for children with special needs.

Children with learning difficulties fall into the category of children with special needs. Chairani (2015) showed that students with low learning ability took the longest time to understand the material than children with medium or high cognitive abilities. Thus they need special assistance so teachers need appropriate strategies to assist in learning. Remedial teaching is one of the most used methods by teachers in helping children with learning difficulties. Through remedial teaching, teachers can help children repeat material that has been previously given. Hopefully, children can master the material by getting a repetition. Masbur (2012) explains that remedial teaching is a teacher's effort to create situations so that students can learn more optimally. But in providing remedial teaching materials, teachers require a method that can support the child as well as motivate in learning. The same remedial teaching method as the previous teaching can make the child feel bored and less motivated because it is only repeating the material.

Scaffolding is a method of learning derived from Vygotsky's theory. This method provides a more adaptive way to the child's ability because this method uses a tiered learning method. Where the materials and questions are given begins with the easiest questions and controlled by the child while accompanied by teachers or colleagues who are more capable of cognitive. Mastery of matter or matter is a marker for obtaining more complicated material or matter.

This study discusses descriptively how the scaffolding method can be used by teachers as an alternative in providing remedial teaching in children with learning difficulties. Hopefully, through the results of this study can increase the knowledge of teachers in helping children who have learning difficulties.

## **Theory**

### **Learning Difficulties**

Learning difficulties can be understood as a condition in a learning process characterized by certain constraints to achieve learning outcomes (Mulyadi, 2010). Learning difficulties have a wide understanding and depth as well as learning disabilities, learning disabilities, learning dysfunction, low achievement, and slow learning. Learning difficulties are visible symptoms in the manifestations of various behaviors, either directly or indirectly and characterized by the barriers to learning.

Learning difficulties are explained as a reflection of unexpected learning problems in the child's apparent abilities. But earlier in 1966, Goldstein explained that the notion of learning difficulties itself is still not standardized. Then in 1987 the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities (NJCLD) describes an understanding of learning difficulties which is a general term with regard to the disturbance in heterogeneous groups experiencing barriers to understanding and using listening, speaking, reading, writing, thinking or mathematics. Based on some understanding which has been submitted, hence can be concluded that learning difficulties itself are the mismatch between learning achievement with the ability of the child in learning and opportunity to learn. Learning difficulties are a condition where students can not learn properly.

Some of the characteristics of learning difficulties (Mulyadi, 2010) are: low learning outcomes, results obtained are not in accordance with the efforts undertaken, showing a less reasonable attitude such as indifferent, showing behavior who has less reasonable as alienated or not cooperate with other colleagues, exhibit less emotional symptoms such as irritability or irritability. Learning difficulties are an instructional or pedagogical problem as well as a psychological problem. This is because learning difficulties are also rooted in aspects of

psychology. As a psychological problem, learning difficulties require psychological solutions and solutions. Then the assistance provided is also given that is therapeutic.

The cause of learning difficulties can be attributed to two factors: internal and external factors. Internal factors are neurological problems while external factors are problematic in learning such as less suitable learning strategy, less motivational learning management until the giving of less matching (Abdurrahman in Mulyadi, 2010). Neurological dysfunction in the form of genetic factors, brain injury due to physical trauma or lack of oxygen, biochemistry, environmental pollution, inadequate nutrition, psychological and social influences that affect child development.

The steps of the problem-solving learning process (Mulyadi, 2010) include: estimating the possibility of assistance, establishing possible ways to cope, and follow-up. Remedial teaching is seen as one of the problems solving that can be done by teachers to help children who have learning difficulties. The purpose of remedial teaching is to improve some or all of the learning difficulties faced by children. These improvements are directed towards achieving optimal learning outcomes that match their abilities. In providing remedial teaching, teachers need to have a strategy that fits and matches the child's difficulty level. So teachers need to have different teaching variations when teaching in the classroom.

### **Vygotsky Theory**

Vygotsky is one of the psychologists who introduced important points about the child's mind. Her ideas on child cognition began to recognize and flourish into the early twentieth century. Some of Vygotsky's ideas point to language and thought, as well as the culture of society. In addition, know the concept of ZPD (Zone Proximal Development) and Scaffolding which is currently widely known.

The proximal development zone (ZPD) is a term used by Vygotsky for tasks that are too difficult for the children to master themselves, but which can be mastered with guidance and assistance from adults or more skilled children (Santrock, 2002). Then in the ZPD also appears the lower limit and upper limit. The lower limit is a level of problem-solving that can be solved alone by the child, while the upper limit is the level of problem-solving that can be solved by the child but with the help of others. ZPD is conceptualized as learning potential. That is, ZPD learning is a social event that combines at least 2 (two) thoughts where one is more trained to produce a learning achievement.

Vygotsky argues that to achieve optimal knowledge, children need to get sufficient help. If left to learn without help at all then the child will be at the level of actual cognitive abilities. Vygotsky explores the concept of scaffolding, which provides a gradual amount of assistance to the students and then reduces aid and provides opportunities for students to take on greater responsibilities (Slavin, 2009). Scaffolding is a term derived from ZPD theory. This method is a process that adults use to help children through their ZPD. The purpose of this theory is that children are given complex and complex tasks. But in the completion of the task, they are assisted by a more mature person or colleague who has more ability in completing the task. The use of scaffolding can motivate and enhance children's learning interests. For children can learn in stages with assistance in accordance with its ability.

## **Methodology**

The type of research used is literature study. Methods in literature study is an activity of library data, reading and taking notes, as well as managing research materials. The main purpose of this method is to find or build a theory or treat the theory and the results of research that

conical to a decision. The results of this study can be used as a basis for conducting more in-depth research.

## **Discussion**

### **Scaffolding for Children Learning Difficulties**

Often in providing learning especially in remedial teaching, teachers distinguish between students who are able to learn with disadvantaged students in learning into specific groups. The hope of teachers will be easier to handle and focus on handling groups who are less able to learn and release the group is able to learn to be more independent. But basically, all the good students who are able to learn or who in dire need of attention and mentoring teacher. It is not impossible if what happens is that students are able to learn to feel neglected while students with learning disabilities increasingly feel inferior because of the focus of attention from teachers. The long-term consequences are class inclusiveness due to the attention gap and jealousy that arise amongst the students themselves. So teachers need appropriate strategies and in accordance with the needs of students so that attention and assistance can be more equitable.

Scaffolding is a method that teachers can use in the remedial teaching process. Several studies at the secondary level indicate that this method gives good results to both students. Through this method, students can learn in stages so that the mastery of learning materials becomes easier. At the primary school level, scaffolding is limited to children with no special learning difficulties. So it is only given to certain materials such as math lessons. Learning difficulties are the inability of children to master certain materials within the time period specified. This difficulty resulted in the difficulties of children in learning other materials so that the child becomes less confident to lazy to learn because they feel less able to catch up the material. Scaffolding is a method by which teachers provide materials in stages with their help or with other children who are more

capable of mastering the material. The use of scaffolding in children with learning difficulties begins with a child-friendly attribute (with teacher or group mentoring). After the child has successfully solved the most easily mastered problem, the teacher gives a slightly more complicated problem. At some stage, the child is asked to try to solve more complex problems.

A number of studies conducted to determine the effect of scaffolding methods. Chairani (2015) discusses this method in Mathematics learning in high school and mentions that this way can be used by teachers as an effort to help students with learning difficulties. In the study explained that the use of scaffolding can use explaining, reviewing, restructuring, and developing conceptual thinking. Several other studies are more directing scaffolding on mathematics learning so there need to step on applying scaffolding at the primary school level.

The important thing in the application of scaffolding is the guidance of teachers gradually given. 3 Vygotsky's main ideas that support scaffolding are: cognitive evolve as new ideas emerge and it is difficult to link the idea to what is known, interaction with others enriches the cognitive power, the teacher's role as a mediator (Chairani, 2015). The use of scaffolding in primary schools, in general, can pay attention to measures tailored to the child's condition as well as taking into account the school situation. Here are some steps that can be used as teacher references:

1. Prepare the tiered material starting from the material that is easiest to master. This is done because the scaffolding approach starts from the easiest material to then tiered into the more complex material. The easiest material can be started with the subject of material basics.
2. In learning, students are combined with groups that are more cognitively capable. This is done so that students are motivated and assisted by students with more capable cognitive abilities.

3. Ask the group to help each other with teacher supervision and assistance. In the group, students are asked to discuss and help other students who have difficulties such as re-explain the material that has been submitted.
4. Providing assistance in solving problems while encouraging students to cultivate their Work. Here students are assisted to solve problems that are difficult to solve while encouraged and motivated to feel more confident and confident to be able to solve problems independently.
5. Students try to solve the problem independently. After through the mentoring of both teachers and other students, students are given the opportunity to try to solve the problem independently. In case of difficulties, it will be done back mentoring.
6. Summarize material done by teachers and groups. Taking conclusions can be done in clusters or classically depending on the ability and situation of class conditions.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the previous discussion supported by the theory and some research results, it can be concluded that scaffolding is a method that can be given as an alternative to providing remedial teaching in children with learning disabilities. Through the method of scaffolding, the child is not only helped master the material gradually but also can foster motivation and confidence. This is possible because every child successfully solves the problem and the material well, then arises a sense of pleasure for the achievement he got. So the child becomes more excited and interested to learn the material and solve more complicated problems. The thing that should be considered by primary school teachers is to make an assessment first to find out how far the ability of children with learning difficulties in the class so that the scaffolding method that is given also in



accordance with the ability of the child. Scaffolding enables children to acquire skills using their capabilities and potential optimally.

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