Ms. Sloss scaffolds students’ abilities to participate in Socratic Seminars through Questioning and Classroom Talk support.

**SCAFFOLDING QUESTIONING**

During the Socratic Seminar, Ms. Sloss facilitates students as they discuss a text or topic. To guide discussion, students create questions to pose during the seminar; however, in order to ask effective questions, students need to be taught effective Questioning techniques. To support her students and teach them to ask effective questions, Ms. Sloss gives her students a critical thinking wheel they can use to generate questions that lead to deeper analysis of the text.

**SCAFFOLDING CLASSROOM TALK**

Just as students need to be taught to ask effective questions, they need to be taught how to interact with and engage one another during a discussion. To support effective Classroom Talk, Ms. Sloss provides students with talking stems to scaffold their practice.

**FOR ADDITIONAL CLASSROOM TALKING STEMS AND OTHER SOCRATIC SEMINAR RESOURCES, CLICK HERE.**
Ms. Contreras uses a process in her class to scaffold vocabulary for students so that they not only learn definitions but also create representations of the words and evaluate their classmates’ understanding of the word.

THE PROCESS

1. Begin with a discussion of each vocabulary word. Students should predict each word’s meaning, and then actual definitions should be provided.

2. In pairs, students identify synonyms for the words using a thesaurus.

3. Each pair is assigned one word. Based on their understanding of the word, they identify a newspaper article that represents the word.

4. Pairs write an explanation of how the article represents the word and post their summary and the article somewhere in the room. Students must provide textual evidence to support their thinking.

5. Students engage in a Gallery Walk to review their classmates’ work and evaluate the connection between the word and the articles. Each pair selects one article from the Gallery Walk that best represents the meaning of the associated word and writes a blog to justify their thinking. Again, students are required to use evidence to justify their answers.

FOR RESOURCES TO FACILITATE A VOCABULARY GALLERY WALK IN YOUR CLASSROOM, CLICK HERE.
Ms. Jones’s go-to Common Instructional Framework strategies include variations on Think-Pair-Share. She uses a Speed Dating variation to teach comma rules. In Speed Dating, students have a brief amount of time to complete a task before partners rotate and address a new task with a new partner. In her comma lesson, partners must correct the punctuation in a sentence on a task card and identify a comma rule for their correction before moving to their next partner.

“We work in groups, several times, to help us learn from one another. It helps us communicate and break the ice with one another.” – S.V., Student
“My reading skills have improved because I am more fluent in my reading. My grades have improved because my reading comprehension has gotten a lot better from the different reading strategies Mrs. Douglas has taught us in class.” -G.J., Student

SCAFFOLDING TEXTS

To help students access a complex text, Ms. Douglas prepares detailed questions with specific references to the text. Her questions also require students to return to the text for textual evidence. Text-based questions Ms. Douglas uses in this lesson include: What is the main idea of paragraph 6? What is the author’s purpose of the passage? What words from the story explain what the Freedom Trail is?

THINK-PAIR-SHARE

Think-Pair-Share helps students to build knowledge with support from a peer. Think time allows them the opportunity for independent thinking followed by an opportunity to find a partner and share ideas. After sharing with a partner, many students feel more comfortable sharing in a whole group setting. Thus, Think-Pair-Share not only scaffolds a student’s understanding of a text but also his or her confidence.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT THINK-PAIR-SHARE AS WELL AS RESOURCES USED DURING THIS LESSON, CLICK HERE.
Graphic organizers provide opportunities to scaffold learning for students. During her expository writing lesson, Ms. Banales provides her students a graphic organizer to guide them through the parts of the essay. Visual clues help students remember the required sections of the essay. [CLICK HERE FOR THE GRAPHIC ORGANIZER MS. BANALES USED IN THIS LESSON.]

JIGSAW
To further support student learning and to provide opportunities for students to learn from one another, Ms. Banales uses a Jigsaw strategy. Each student is responsible for becoming an expert on one section of the graphic organizer. Then, they are responsible for explaining that section in a Jigsaw group. [CLICK HERE FOR THE GRAPHIC ORGANIZER MS. BANALES USED IN THIS LESSON.]
“Students are self-learning and have a sense of empowerment. . . they are more motivated than before. Students have a purpose.”

COLLABORATIVE PICTURE WALK

Using a modified Chalk Talk protocol, students in Ms. Lopez’s class work in collaborative groups to respond in writing to historical images. To scaffold their work, Ms. Lopez provides specific prompts for each image with detailed instructions about required components of student responses. Additionally, she provides supporting questions related to meaning and symbolism as well as the viewer’s response. These questions include:

Meaning and Symbolism
- What objects has the artist included and what do they symbolize or represent?
- How has the artist used formal features to help communicate their message?

Viewer’s Response
- Do you think this is a significant picture? Why?
- What aspects of this painting would you like to use in your own work?

FOR A LIST OF ADDITIONAL MEANING/SYMBOLISM AND VIEWER’S RESPONSE QUESTIONS AS WELL AS IMAGES AND PROMPTS USED IN THIS LESSON, [CLICK HERE](#)!
When assigning the expository essay, Mr. Zepeda first breaks the essay into its component parts including an introduction with hook and thesis; body paragraphs with topic sentence, subordinating sentences and textual evidence; and a conclusion. For each part, students first read and discuss three examples before using the modeled paragraphs to help them independently write their own. Components of the essay are broken down, and students focus on one component of the essay at a time rather than tackling the essay in its entirety from the beginning.

**Peer Review**

After students write their own paragraphs, they work together for peer review. To structure and scaffold the peer review activity, Mr. Zepeda provides students with a proofreading and editing checklist.

“One thing I definitely noticed is the way teachers approach the different types of essays... It helps that they introduce one section at a time instead of introducing the process all at once. ... Before this year I’ve never really had any confidence in my writing, but as the school year is passing I think I’ve really improved with my teacher’s help.” - Student
“Since my 8th grade students seem to struggle with expository text, I decided to make this lesson more engaging by using Common Instructional Framework (CIF) strategies and at the same time targeting 8.10 B TEK. The CIF helped my students by allowing them to collaborate and discuss their ideas, write their thoughts and work in literacy groups.”

**WRITING TO LEARN**

Students start the lesson off with a bubble map to record their thinking as they watch a video about water. To help scaffold their thinking and their understanding of fact vs. opinion, students use a t-chart graphic organizer to organize their thinking and arrange textual evidence into categories of fact and opinion. Finally, students also practice summarizing by writing the gist (a 15 – 20 word summary) of their assigned section.

**LITERACY GROUPS**

To engage students and scaffold the text, Ms. Carranza breaks students into expert groups. Each expert group is responsible for one section of the text. With their group, they use their t-charts to record fact and opinion and to write the gist of the section. After completing their work, they move to jigsaw groups where each student is responsible for teaching their section to the rest of the group.

For an expository text and complete lesson plan, [Click Here](http://example.com).
A Venn diagram graphic organizer provides a structure for students to compare and contrast two items. Ms. Martinez uses the graphic organizer to help her students compare and contrast two pieces of literature and to use their comparisons to answer a Comprehension Purpose Question. After completing the Venn diagram, students must decide whether or not all events have a logical explanation. In a Venn diagram, students use the outside of the circles to record characteristics unique to each individual item while they record similarities in the overlapping sections.

For copies of the stories used in this lesson, click here.
Ms. Lewis’ Jigsaw Graphic Organizer Activity

You can use this activity after reading any story.

1. Students are seated in groups of 4 (Home Group). They number off 1 through 4 in each group.
2. Each student receives a blank graphic organizer which has been labeled with the corresponding numbers and the information to be identified, analyzed and discussed.
3. Students meet in their numbered group (Expert Groups). They discuss and fill out their section of the graphic organizer. They will need to be able to “teach” this to their Home Group members.
4. Students return to Home Groups and teach their section to the group while other group members take notes, ask questions, etc.
5. Teacher calls on different group members to share learning and respond to questions.

“The part I think helps me the most is working together with my group. It helps when we can ask questions and discuss what we are thinking with each other. We learn more when we are together than when we are alone and just quiet.” - M.G., 6th grade student

Click Here for an example of the graphic organizer Ms. Lewis uses with this activity.

Subject: 6th Grade Reading

Topic: Text Analysis

CIF Strategies: Classroom Talk, Literacy Groups, Scaffolding and Questioning
“I feel like [the Common Instructional Framework] helps all the kids feel more comfortable to speak out. . . Students become good listeners and are able to justify and evaluate themselves and their peers.”

**BEFORE READING**

To help students identify with the topic of the story, Ms. Taramelli begins with a journal prompt. Students respond to a quotation related to the text and explain in writing what the quotation means and how it might apply to the real world.

**DURING READING**

Using a Venn diagram, students compare and contrast characters and make predictions about the story’s ending. Students are required to find evidence from the text to support their character analysis.

**AFTER READING**

Using a graphic organizer, students again respond to a quotation related to the story they read. The graphic organizer supports their thinking as they interpret the quotation, connect it to the text they read and identify a real-world application.

FOR GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS TO SUPPORT THESE ACTIVITIES AND OTHER RELATED ACTIVITIES, [CLICK HERE](#).
To help students understand inferences, Ms. Vallejo assembles objects in a brown bag. Pulling out items one at a time, she models how she makes inferences about who the bag belongs to based on the contents of the bag.

Students use a graphic organizer as they read the story “Thank You, Ma’am.” Ms. Vallejo models the graphic organizer for students, and then they complete the graphic organizer as they read. Students engage in think-pair-share for additional support.

“Students are more engaged [with the CIF]. I believe they feel the freedom to express themselves and question others. They are debating... I see them looking for evidence... Sometimes they just didn’t get it when I explained it. But they have repeated opportunities to listen to others’ thinking and are able to make the connections.”

Ms. Vallejo scaffolds student understanding of making inferences using a Mystery Brown Bag activity and Common Instructional Framework (CIF) Strategies.

**MYSTERY BROWN BAG**

To help students understand inferences, Ms. Vallejo assembles objects in a brown bag. Pulling out items one at a time, she models how she makes inferences about who the bag belongs to based on the contents of the bag.

**WRITING TO LEARN AND CLASSROOM TALK**

Students use a graphic organizer as they read the story “Thank You, Ma’am.” Ms. Vallejo models the graphic organizer for students, and then they complete the graphic organizer as they read. Students engage in think-pair-share for additional support.

“I think collaborating is good and it helps because we get to debate and discuss. We learn to see which person’s answer makes more sense and learn more together than by ourselves.” - J. M. 7th Grade

FOR A COMPLETE LESSON PLAN AND GRAPHIC ORGANIZER FOR MAKING INFERENCES, CLICK HERE.
COLLABORATIVE GROUP WORK

To begin an exploration of character analysis, students in Ms. Morrison-Tully’s class engage in a Collaborative Group Work assignment to identify evidence of a literal change in the main character, Gregor. Students work in groups of 3, and each student is assigned a role. Roles include the artist who draws a representation of Gregor half as a human and half as a vermin, the human reporter who identifies textual evidence that shows what Gregor was like as a human, and the vermin reporter who finds textual evidence that shows what Gregor was like as a vermin. Students complete their work on butcher paper.

WRITING TO LEARN

Ms. Morrison-Tully engages her students in a Consensus Census through writing. After exploring literal changes in Gregor, students move next to explore changes on an analytical level. Ms. Morrison-Tully poses the question, “Did Gregor really turn into a cockroach or is he suffering from a mental breakdown? What factors influenced Gregor’s transformation?” Students individually respond in writing using a graphic organizer. Responses must include textual evidence. Once all students respond individually, they work in groups to come to consensus and write a final position to share with classmates. Positions are passed from group to group, and each group responds in writing to their classmates’ positions.

FOR A LESSON PLAN, GRAPHIC ORGANIZER AND DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS OF PROTOCOLS USED IN THIS LESSON, CLICK HERE.
Ms. Gomez uses Classroom Talk strategies to help students develop their critical thinking skills.

**3 ROUNDS PROTOCOL**

To develop critical thinking and test taking strategies, Ms. Gomez uses 3 Rounds. During 3 Rounds, students analyze multiple choice questions to identify 3 types of answers: the worst answer, the distractor answer and the correct answer. In addition to their choices, students must provide justification for each answer. Providing opportunities for students to discuss their decisions allows students to learn from one another.

**AUTHENTIC TEXTS**

When learning about text structure, Ms. Gomez’s students work in pairs to choose and analyze a newspaper article. With their partner, students read the newspaper article and discuss text structure, point of view, author’s purpose, and facts and opinions. Practicing these skills with an authentic text provides opportunities for students to build critical thinking skills.

*With the Common Instructional Framework (CIF), “my students have been able to develop their critical thinking skills as well as a deeper understanding of questions being asked.”*

*With the CIF I realized, “that a text can be used in various ways and not just to answer questions. The same text can be used for various activities, thereby getting quality of work instead of just quantity.”*
TEACHER SPOTLIGHT: DIANA ESPINOSA
PERKINS MIDDLE SCHOOL

“I feel like I have a lot more options when it comes to lesson planning. . . I have created a toolkit with all the variety of strategies. We don’t have the time to search up new strategies. It allows us to do more [with] student engagement.”

CHOICE BOARDS

Ms. Espinosa engages her students in Writing-to-Learn activities by providing variety. In small groups, students use the choice board to select from a variety of options to practice Writing to Learn and to show Ms. Espinosa what they know and understand. Based on their choice, they complete the activity as a group. Activities include using character inference stems to analyze and describe the main character, writing a 2-paragraph summary related to a character for an absent classmate, and using textual evidence from the novel to describe a dystopian society. Providing choice allows students opportunities for authentic engagement and internal motivation.

FOR AN EXAMPLE OF A CHOICE BOARD FOR THE GIVER AND ACCOMPANYING RESOURCES, CLICK HERE.
Ms. Rodriguez supports students as they learn test-taking strategies by allowing students to work in groups and providing them step-by-step questions to scaffold their learning. In their groups, students read a passage and work through related multiple-choice questions. To ensure that all students participate, group members rotate the graphic organizer and take turns leading the group and recording the answers. The questions on the graphic organizer scaffold students’ thinking as they identify what the question is asking them to do, consider and justify a response, and then re-write the sentence.

The activity “has helped me learn from different perspectives. . . like if I got an answer wrong, I will ask [a classmate] why and they’ll explain, so I learn from different people. . . everyone explains differently and everyone thinks differently. So if she did it this way, maybe I can try this for the question next time.”

-Student
With the Common Instructional Framework (CIF), “it has been easier to organize my lessons and be more diverse in what activities to implement. My teaching has evolved drastically with the implementation of cooperative learning strategies. I never thought I would become the teacher who lets the kids learn on their own and ask questions to each other. It feels overwhelming at times, but then what my students mentioned about my class is when we did CIF activities such as Literacy Circles or Gallery Walks.”

**GALLERY WALK**

To begin her unit on *The Giver*, Ms. Ledezma engages her students in a Gallery Walk to activate their thinking and help them learn key vocabulary words. During the Gallery Walk, students view images posted around the room and use an I Know, I Notice, I Wonder graphic organizer to record their thinking about each image. After the Gallery Walk, students consider vocabulary words key to *The Giver* and write about ways the words connect with the images. Through this activity, Ms. Ledezma scaffolds a deep understanding of significant academic vocabulary.

For a copy of the I Know, I Notice, I Wonder graphic organizer and vocabulary activity, [click here](#).
“When I started teaching, I was the teacher who had all students in rows. However, this is my third year doing the group seating, and it has worked out for me two-fold. The way that I sit them is the buddy system, and I purposely sit them with having a peer aid. I notice that discipline problems are non-existent. It allows students to participate and own their learning, and I am still guiding students and helping them when needed.”

**PURPOSEFUL GROUPING**

Mr. Ramirez uses an understanding of students’ strengths and opportunities for growth to purposefully group them for class activities. During STAAR practice, students work together with a graphic organizer to analyze and answer test questions. Because Mr. Ramirez has grouped students intentionally, the students are able to help one another successfully complete the activity.

FOR A GRAPHIC ORGANIZER MR. RAMIREZ USES TO HELP HIS STUDENTS ANALYZE AND ANSWER TEST QUESTIONS AS WELL AS A PRACTICE STAAR PASSAGE, CLICK HERE.
Ms. Torres takes collaboration to a new level with whole class collaboration!

THE PROCESS

Part I
1. Give students three different colored paper strips.
2. Students write a title of a non-fiction book of their choice on one color strip and the title of a fiction book of their choice on another color strip.
3. Individually, students identify a common theme that connects the two literary pieces.
4. Students write the connecting theme on the third color strip and link their individual non-fiction and fiction books with their theme.

Part II
1. Students share their link with a partner.
2. Students read their examples and connections to each other and find a common theme that connects to either their fiction or non-fiction piece.
3. Once they identify the link, they write it down on a separate strip and connect their chains together.
4. Students continue with this process until every student’s theme is linked in one long chain.
“The Common Instructional Framework (CIF) facilitates the learning for the student. It breaks up the learning to make it manageable. CIF strategies keep the kids engaged and actively involved.”

**SCAFFOLDING THE PERSUASIVE ESSAY**

**Step 1 – Writing to Learn:** Ms. Rivera begins with a quick-write response to a journal prompt so that students begin to think individually about their opinion on the topic.

**Step 2 – Classroom Talk and Collaborative Group Work:** Students share their thinking in small groups to prepare for a debate. After working in small groups, the class splits into two sides using opposite walls of the room to engage in a debate.

**Step 3 – Classroom Talk and Writing to Learn:** After the debate, students return to their small groups to discuss pros and cons heard during the debate; develop a thesis sentence, topic sentences, and conclusion; and create a bank of possible examples to support their thesis.

**Step 4 – Writing to Learn:** To ensure students have all the necessary parts to complete their essays, they color-code their planning notes – looking for essential elements of the persuasive essay before writing their final essays.
Students in Ms. Sierra’s class learn to analyze, discuss and compare poetry through a speed dating process. In timed intervals, students individually analyze a poem, present their literal and figurative understanding of the poem to their partner and then work with their partner to develop a comparative thesis statement.

In this activity, students work together in groups to create thesis statements connecting various pieces of literature studied throughout the year. Because each connection can only be made once, students stay engaged to beat other groups. Once connections are made and thesis statements are developed, another competition ensues. Students read the thesis statements developed by the class and identify one to develop into a complete essay. Time is of the essence again, as each thesis statement can only be chosen once.
During a Socratic Seminar, students learn to question one another and a text, think deeply about a text or set of texts, dialogue with one another and provide textual evidence to support their reasoning. For large groups, seminars can be set up using inner and outer circles with different activities for each to engage all students.

**Activities to scaffold a Socratic Seminar**
- Mini-lesson on seminar vs. debate
- Mini-lesson on Level 3 questioning

**Resources to scaffold a Socratic Seminar**
- Characteristic of dialogue vs. characteristics of debate handout
- Follow-up question stems
- Statement stems for agreement and disagreement

**The Common Instructional Framework, “has really made me think about lesson planning. I like it because the end product is more. The biggest thing is that students are able to explore and go deeper in their learning. They are able to go beyond words on a page.”**

**SOCRATIC SEMINARS**

**For Socratic Seminar resources and other materials, [click here.](#)**
Peer reviews allow students to learn from one another and ultimately ensure that students are able to self-edit their own writing. To make peer review successful, the activity needs scaffolding. Ms. Padilla scaffolds Peer Reviews in her classroom with the following activities.

1. Review the rubric with students.
2. Provide students with sample essays. Review the scored essay and sample completed rubric for each.
3. Students work in a group to score a sample essay. Group evaluation forms are provided to guide student thinking.
4. Students complete revisions and edits to improve the score.

“The objective is to have [students] be able to revise and edit their own essays as they work through the writing process. The lesson is a great tool to be used as a group or on an individual basis. Students become more familiar with the revising and editing process.”
“I am an ‘old dog’ per say and thought that I knew everything. I am a true convert. I was afraid to let go and thought I had to be in 100% control and that chaotic noise was not constructive. I WAS WRONG!!! I will never go back to the archaic way of teaching the way I grew up. I have become the facilitator. I let the students lead, and I redirect if they should happen to go off track or are confused. I am a better teacher for having been exposed to Common Instructional Framework protocols.”

**TALKING CHIPS**

Ms. Abete uses Talking Chips to structure classroom talk during group debates. Talking Chips ensure that all students have equal opportunity to voice their opinions. During the group debate, students trade Talking Chips for one minute of speaking time. After the student expresses his or her opinion for one minute, the Talking Chip is placed in the center of the table.
“Using Common Instructional Framework strategies has created risk takers; especially when it comes to reading and analyzing poetry. They have learned that there is no right or wrong way to analyze poetry if they can provide textual evidence to support their claim. I truly believe they enjoy hearing their peers’ interpretations, and they also like hearing and knowing that sometimes their interpretation helped their peer understand the poem analysis.”

I think the strategy that has helped me the most this year is learning to write notes about what I am learning, my point of view or short summaries that I can come back to when I need to review information. I also like it when we get in literacy groups. I feel it helps me a lot because, if we all share, I feel like we would get the question right or come up with a better understanding.” - Student

TP-CASTT

Using a mnemonic device and graphic organizers, Ms. Carinhas scaffolds poetry analysis for her students. TP-CASTT guides students through analysis using the following elements of a poem:

T: Title
P: Paraphrase
C: Connotation
A: Attitude/Tone
S: Shifts
T: Title (re-visit)
T: Theme

FOR TP-CASTT RESOURCES FOR TEACHING “ORANGES” BY GARY SOTO, CLICK HERE.