Scaffolding Complex Text During Tier 1 Instruction to Develop Strategic Readers

Text Complexity

Directions: Using page 149 of Appendix B in the B.E.S.T. ELA Standards, what differences do you notice for mid and high complexity text based on **qualitative measures**?

Mid Complexity	High Complexity

Directions: Using page 150 of Appendix B in the B.E.S.T. ELA Standards, what differences do you notice for mid and high complexity text based on **student-centered measures**?

Mid Complexity	High Complexity

Core Component: Scaffolded Instruction

Scaffolded instruction is the intentional support provided by a teacher for learners to carry out a task or solve a problem, to achieve a goal that they could not do without support. It is temporary support matched to the current understanding or skill level of learners. The intent is to provide a decreasing level of support until learners are empowered to perform independently.

Contributions to the Desired Outcomes	Accomplished Use	Ineffective Use
Scaffolded instruction contributes toward the quality of a learner's efforts in relating to new or unfamiliar content, concepts and skills that fortify the development of language and literacy skills orally and in written form.	1. Identifies learners who are having difficulty carrying out a task or solving a problem on their own. 2. Provides intentional support matched to the learner's need, such as asking an open-ended question, providing prompts and cues, breaking down the problem into smaller steps, using visual aids, providing an example or offering encouragement. 3. Monitors the learner's response to the scaffold and provides the next level of support needed on a scale from intense to moderate, gradually releasing ownership of learning to the student until they are able to perform the task independently.	1. Overlooks learners having difficulty carrying out a task or solving a problem on their own. 2. Does not provide appropriate support that relates to the needs of the learner. 3. Does not monitor learner response to scaffolding; does not identify next level of requisite support for further learning; does not empower the learner to perform the task independently. 

Instructional Scaffolding to Improve Learning

Similar to the scaffolding used in construction to support workers as they work on a specific task, instructional scaffolds are temporary support structures faculty put in place to assist students in accomplishing new tasks and concepts they could not typically achieve on their own. Once students are able to complete or master the task, the scaffolding is gradually removed or fades away—the responsibility of learning shifts from the instructor to the student.

Why Use Instructional Scaffolding?

One of the main benefits of scaffolded instruction is that it provides for a supportive learning environment. In a scaffolded learning environment, students are free to ask questions, provide feedback and support their peers in learning new material. When you incorporate scaffolding in the classroom, you become more of a mentor and facilitator of knowledge rather than the dominant content expert. This teaching style provides the incentive for students to take a more active role in their own learning. Students share the responsibility of teaching and learning through scaffolds that require them to move beyond their current skill and knowledge levels. Through this interaction, students are able to take ownership of the learning event.

The need to implement a scaffold will occur when you realize a student is not progressing on some aspect of a task or unable to understand a particular concept. Although scaffolding is often carried out between the instructor and one student, scaffolds can successfully be used for an entire class. The points below are excerpted from Ellis and Larkin (1998), as cited in Larkin (2005), and provide a simple structure of scaffolded instruction.

First, the instructor does it

In other words, the instructor models how to perform a new or difficult task, such as how to use a graphic organizer. For example, the instructor may project or hand out a partially completed graphic organizer and ask students to "think aloud" as he or she describes how the graphic organizer illustrates the relationships among the information contained on it.

Second, the class does it

The instructor and students then work together to perform the task. For example, the students may suggest information to be added to the graphic organizer. As the instructor writes the suggestions on the white board, students fill in their own copies of the organizer.

Third, the group does it

At this point, students work with a partner or a small cooperative group to complete the graphic organizer (i.e., either a partially completed or a blank one). More complex content might require a number of scaffolds given at different times to help students master the content.

Fourth, the individual does it

This is the independent practice stage where individual students can demonstrate their task mastery (e.g., successfully completing a graphic organizer to demonstrate appropriate relationships among information) and receive the necessary practice to help them to perform the task automatically and quickly.

Types of Scaffolds

Alibali (2006) suggests that as students progress through a task, faculty can use a variety of scaffolds to accommodate students' different levels of knowledge. More complex content might require a number of scaffolds given at different times to help students master the content. Here are some common scaffolds and ways they could be used in an instructional setting.

- Advance organizers - Tools used to introduce new content and tasks to help students learn about the topic: Venn diagrams to compare and contrast information; flow charts to illustrate processes; organizational charts to illustrate hierarchies; outlines that represent content; mnemonics to assist recall; statements to situate the task or content; rubrics that provide task expectations.
- Cue Cards - Prepared cards given to individual or groups of students to assist in their discussion about a particular topic or content area: Vocabulary words to prepare for exams; content-specific stem sentences to complete; formulae to associate with a problem; concepts to define.
- Concept and mind maps - Maps that show relationships: Partially or completed maps for students to complete; students create their own maps based on their current knowledge of the task or concept.
- Examples - Samples, specimens, illustrations, problems: Real objects; illustrative problems used to represent something.
- Explanations - More detailed information to move students along on a task or in their thinking of a concept: Written instructions for a task; verbal explanation of how a process works.
- Handouts - Prepared handouts that contain task- and content-related information, but with less detail and room for student note taking.
- Hints - Suggestions and clues to move students along: "place your foot in front of the other," "use the escape key," "find the subject of the verb," "add the water first and then the acid."
- Prompts - A physical or verbal cue to remind—to aid in recall of prior or assumed knowledge.
    - Physical: Body movements such as pointing, nodding the head, eye blinking, foot tapping.
    - Verbal: Words, statements and questions such as "Go," "Stop," "It's right there," "Tell me now," "What toolbar menu item would you press to insert an image," "Tell me why the character acted that way."
- Question Cards - Prepared cards with content- and task-specific questions given to individuals or groups of students to ask each other pertinent questions about a particular topic or content area.

- Question Stems - Incomplete sentences which students complete: Encourages deep thinking by using higher order "What if" questions.
- Stories - Stories relate complex and abstract material to situations more familiar with students: Recite stories to inspire and motivate learners.
- Visual Scaffolds - Pointing (call attention to an object); representational gestures (holding curved hands apart to illustrate roundness; moving rigid hands diagonally upward to illustrate steps or process), diagrams such as charts and graphs; methods of highlighting visual information.

Preparing to Use Scaffolding

As with any teaching technique, scaffolds should complement instructional objectives. While we expect all of our students to grasp course content, each of them will not have the necessary knowledge or capability to initially perform as we have intended. Scaffolds can be used to support students when they begin to work on objectives that are more complex or difficult to complete. For example, the instructional objective may be for students to complete a major paper. Instead of assuming all students know how to begin the process, break the task into smaller, more manageable parts.

1. First, the instructor provides an outline of the components of the paper.
2. Then, students would prepare their outline.
3. The instructor then provides a rubric of how each paper criteria will be assessed.
4. Students would then work on those criteria and at the same time and self-evaluate their progress.
5. The pattern would continue until the task is completed (although scaffolds might not be necessary in all parts of the task).

Knowing your subject well will also help you identify the need for scaffolding. Plan to use scaffolds on topics that former students had difficulty with or with material that is especially difficult or abstract. Hogan and Pressley (1997) suggest that you practice scaffold topics and strategies they know well. In other words, begin by providing scaffolded instruction in small steps with content you are most comfortable teaching.

Guidelines for Implementing Scaffolding

The following points can be used as guidelines when implementing instructional scaffolding (adapted from Hogan and Pressley, 1997).

- Select suitable tasks that match curriculum goals, course learning objectives and students' needs.
- Allow students to help create instructional goals (this can increase students' motivation and their commitment to learning).
- Consider students' backgrounds and prior knowledge to assess their progress – material that is too easy will quickly bore students and reduce motivation. On the other hand, material that is too difficult can turn off students' interest levels.
- Use a variety of supports as students progress through a task (e.g., prompts, questions, hints, stories, models, visual scaffolding "including pointing, representational gestures, diagrams, and other methods of highlighting visual information" (Alibali, M, 2006).

- Provide encouragement and praise as well as ask questions and have students explain their progress to help them stay focused on the goal.
- Monitor student progress through feedback (in addition to instructor feedback, have students summarize what they have accomplished so they are aware of their progress and what they have yet to complete).
- Create a welcoming, safe, and supportive learning environment that encourages students to take risks and try alternatives (everyone should feel comfortable expressing their thoughts without fear of negative responses).
- Help students become less dependent on instructional supports as they work on tasks and encourage them to practice the task in different contexts.

Benefits of Instructional Scaffolding

- Challenges students through deep learning and discovery.
- Engages students in meaningful and dynamic discussions in small and large classes.
- Motivates learners to become better students (learning how to learn).
- Increases the likelihood for students to meet instructional objectives.
- Provides individualized instruction (especially in smaller classrooms).
- Affords the opportunity for peer-teaching and learning.
- Scaffolds can be “recycled” for other learning situations.
- Provides a welcoming and caring learning environment.

Challenges of Instructional Scaffolding

- Planning for and implementing scaffolds is time consuming and demanding.
- Selecting appropriate scaffolds that match the diverse learning and communication styles of students.
- Knowing when to remove the scaffold so the student does not rely on the support.
- Not knowing the students well enough (their cognitive and affective abilities) to provide appropriate scaffolds.

Summary

Instructional scaffolds promote learning through dialogue, feedback and shared responsibility. Through the supportive and challenging learning experiences gained from carefully planned scaffolded learning, instructors can help students become lifelong, independent learners.

References

Alibali, M. (2006). *Does visual scaffolding facilitate students' mathematics learning?* Evidence from early algebra. https://ies.ed.gov/funding/grantsearch/details.asp?ID=54

Hogan, K., and Pressley, M. (1997). *Scaffolding student learning: Instructional approaches and issues.* Cambridge, MA: Brookline Books.

Larkin, M. (2002). *Using scaffolded instruction to optimize learning.* https://www.vtaide.com/png/ERIC/Scaffolding.htm

Selected Resources

Dennen, V. P. (2004). Cognitive apprenticeship in educational practice: Research on scaffolding, modeling, mentoring, and coaching as instructional strategies. In D. H. Jonassen (Ed.), *Handbook of Research on Educational Communications and Technology* (2nd ed.), (p. 815). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

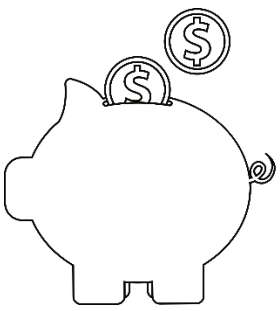
Johnston, S., and Cooper, J. (1997). *Cooperative Learning and College Teaching.* Vol. 9, No. 3 Spring 1997

End of Handout

Jigsaw Organizer

Section	Notes
1. Why Use Instructional Scaffolding?	
2. Types of Scaffolds	
3. Preparing to Use Scaffolding	
4. Guidelines for Implementing Scaffolding	
5. Benefits and Challenges of Instructional Scaffolding	

Bank of Scaffolding Practices

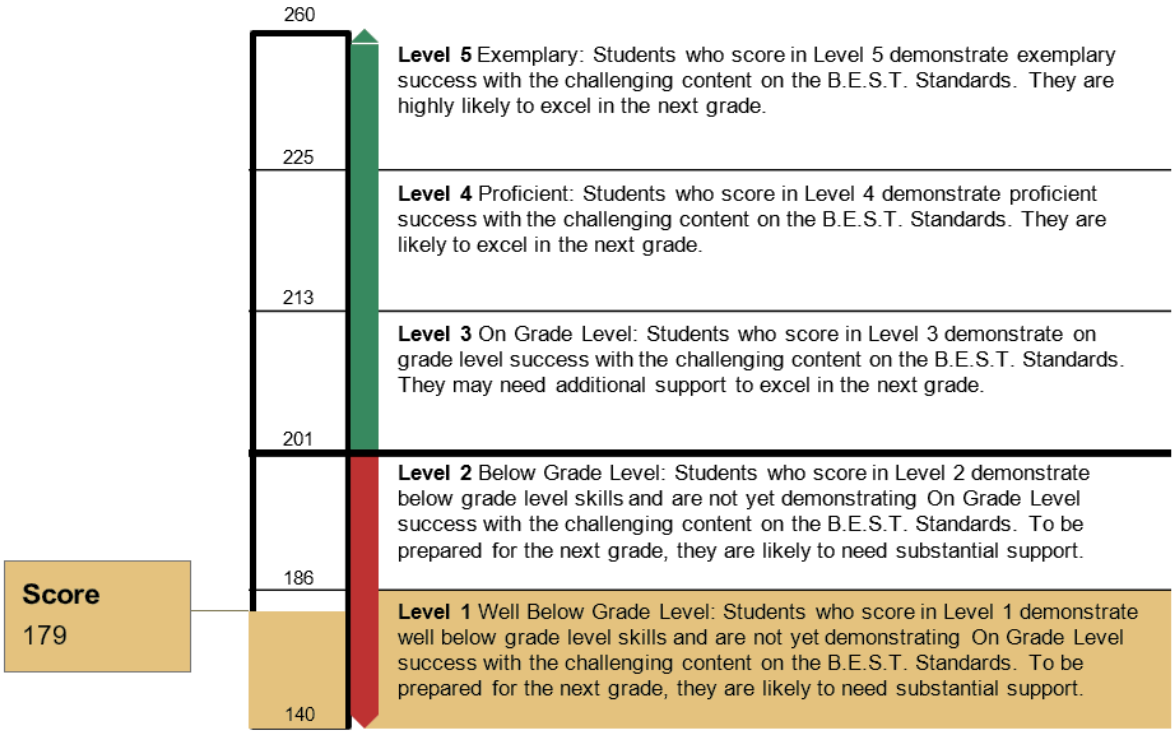


Jones, Jack
Enrolled Grade: 3 Test Reason: PM12024-25

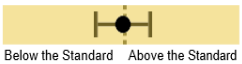
Grade 3 FAST ELA Reading 2024-2025
BEST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Scale Score: 179 **Achievement Level:** Level 1 **Percentile Rank:** 35

How Did Your Student Do on the Test?



The table and the graph below indicate student performance on individual reporting categories. The black dot indicates the student's performance in each reporting category. The lines to the left and right of the dot show the range of likely scores your student would receive if they took the test multiple times within this testing window.

Category	Achievement	Achievement Level	Achievement Level Description
1. Reading Prose and Poetry		At/Near the Standard	**What These Results Mean** For example, your learner may be able to: • Explain how a character thinks, feels, and/or acts in response to a particular event. • Explain some details about the story's theme (message/big idea). • Explain multiple characters' perspectives (thoughts, feelings, and reactions about what is happening) throughout a story. • Identify features from different types of poems (free verse, rhymed verse, haiku, or limerick). **Next Steps** Read and discuss a variety of stories with your learner. For example, have your learner: • Explain how the characters' thoughts, feelings, and/or actions relate to specific events from the story. • Describe, using details from the story, the theme (message/big idea) that was learned. • Explain multiple characters' perspectives (thoughts, feelings, and reactions about what is happening). • Read a variety of poems (free verse, rhymed verse, haiku, and limerick) and identify the specific features of each type (examples of features include rhyme, descriptive imagery, lines, and stanzas).

1. Reading Prose and Poetry			
Question #	**Benchmark Key**	**Benchmark**	**Points Earned/Points Possible**
9	RP|ELA.3.R.1.4	Identify types of poems: free verse, rhymed verse, haiku, and limerick.	0/1
11	RP|ELA.3.R.1.2	Explain a theme and how it develops, using details, in a literary text.	0/1
12	RP|ELA.3.R.1.3	Explain different characters' perspectives in a literary text.	1/1
14	RP|ELA.3.R.1.1	Explain how one or more characters develop throughout the plot in a literary text	1/1
15	RP|ELA.3.R.1.2	Explain a theme and how it develops, using details, in a literary text.	0/1
16	RP|ELA.3.R.1.3	Explain different characters' perspectives in a literary text.	1/1
18	RP|ELA.3.R.1.3	Explain different characters' perspectives in a literary text.	1/1
33	RP|ELA.3.R.1.1	Explain how one or more characters develop throughout the plot in a literary text	0/1
34	RP|ELA.3.R.1.1	Explain how one or more characters develop throughout the plot in a literary text	1/1
35	RP|ELA.3.R.1.2	Explain a theme and how it develops, using details, in a literary text.	0/1
36	RP|ELA.3.R.1.3	Explain different characters' perspectives in a literary text.	1/1
37	RP|ELA.3.R.1.4	Identify types of poems: free verse, rhymed verse, haiku, and limerick.	0/1

Date Profile: Semester 1 **Student:** Jack Jones **Subject:** ELA

Unit 1 Assessment: 47%
Unit 2 Assessment: 43%
Unit 3 Assessment: 51%
Unit 4 Assessment: 46%
Mastery for unit assessments is 70%.

Lowest Skills Scores for Units 1, 2, 3 and 4:
3.R.1.2 (Theme), 3.R.2.2 (Central Idea)

The student is only able to talk about details related to the theme or central idea when both have been provided.

Writing Skills: Jack has limited writing skills. He is currently able to express his thoughts in writing in a few words but unable to develop complete sentences that reflect mastery of grade-level communication skills. He is eager to talk and share his thinking with peers.

Achievement Level Descriptions for ELA.3.R.1.2	
Level 3	**Explains a stated theme and how it develops, using some details, in grade-level mid complexity literary texts.**
Level 2	**Identifies a stated theme and how it develops, using minimal detail, in grade-level low complexity literary texts.**
Level 1	**Students at this level demonstrate that they are well below grade level with respect to the challenging content of the B.E.S.T. ELA Standards.**

Directions:
After reviewing the data, check the box next to the appropriate scaffolding intensity and benchmark focus. In the last box, describe what the student can do.

Part A: **Select the scaffold intensity.**	**Part B:** **Select the focus benchmark.**	**Part C:** **Describe what the student can do based on multiple data points including the focus benchmark.**
☐ Light Support ☐ Moderate Support ☐ Intense Support	☐ ELA.3.R.1.1 ☐ ELA.3.R.1.2 ☐ ELA.3.R.1.3	

Mapping Out Scaffolds

ELA.3.R.1.2	**Explain** a theme and **how it develops, using details,** in a literary text.
ELA.2.R.1.2	Identify and explain a **theme** of a **literary text.**
ELA.1.R.1.2	**Identify and explain the moral of a story.**

Achievement Level Descriptions for ELA.3.R.1.2	
Level 3	**Explains a stated theme and how it develops, using some details, in grade-level mid complexity literary texts.**
Level 2	**Identifies a stated theme and how it develops, using minimal detail, in grade-level low complexity literary texts.**
Level 1	**Students at this level demonstrate that they are well below grade level with respect to the challenging content of the B.E.S.T. ELA Standards.**

Directions: Review Parts A, B, C and D of the planned scaffolds. Is the student better positioned for mastery of 3.R.1.2? Are more scaffolds needed? What aspects of the accomplished use indicators have been addressed?

Part A: Select the scaffold(s).	**Part B:** How will the scaffold(s) be applied?	**Part C:** Explain how the student's response to the scaffold(s) will be monitored.
☒ **Open-ended questions**	Cues will be used to chunk the benchmark skills and ALD progressions for R.1.2 (Theme) using grade-level low complexity text. Examples: The moral of the story is always tell _____. The most important lesson from the story is _____and I know this because _____. The story of "George Washington and the Cherry Tree" teaches us _____. In the beginning of the story George was _____. By the end of the story, George felt _____.	The student's response to the scaffold can be monitored using exit tickets, formative assessments, verbal responses and curriculum assessments.
☒ **Prompts and cues**		
☒ **Chunking the task/skill**		
☐ **Visual aids**		**Part D:** Describe the next level of support. Using grade-level mid complexity text, open-ended questions could be combined with partner discourse to build on the student's eagerness to talk with peers. This could foster stronger writing skills and independence.
☐ **Examples**		
☐ **Encouragement**		

George Washington and the Cherry Tree

Adapted from J. Berg Esenwein and Marietta Stockard

Here is the most famous American story about telling the truth. We should all be like young George.

When George Washington was a little boy, he lived on a farm in Virginia. His father taught him to ride and would take young George about the farm with him so that his son might learn how to take care of the fields and horses and cattle when he grew older.

Mr. Washington had planted an orchard of fine fruit trees. There were trees of apple, peach, pears, plum, and cherry. Once, a particularly fine cherry tree was sent to him from across the ocean. Mr. Washington planted it on the edge of the orchard. Everyone on the farm was to watch it carefully to see that it was not hurt in any way.

It grew well, and one spring it was covered with white blossoms. Mr. Washington was pleased to think he would soon have cherries from the little tree.

Just about this time, George was given a shiny new hatchet. He took it and went about chopping sticks, hacking into the rails of fences, and cutting whatever else he passed. At last, he came to the edge of the orchard, and thinking only how well his hatchet could cut, he chopped into the little cherry tree. The bark was soft, and it cut so easily that George chopped the tree right down, and then went on with his play.

That evening after Mr. Washington came in from inspecting the farm, he decided to walk down to the orchard to look at his cherry tree. He stood in amazement when he saw it. “Who would have dared do such a thing?” he asked everyone, but no one could tell him anything about it.

Just then George passed by.

“George,” his father called in an angry voice, “Do you know who killed my cherry tree?” This was a tough question, and George staggered under it for a moment, but quickly recovered.

“I cannot tell a lie, father,” he said. “I did it with my hatchet.”

Mr. Washington looked at George whose face was white, but who looked straight into his father’s eyes.

“Go into the house, son,” said Mr. Washington sternly—

George went into the library and waited for his father. He had been so foolish and now he felt ashamed. His father was right to be displeased.
Soon, Mr. Washington came into the room. “Come here, my boy,” he said.

George went over to his father. Mr. Washington looked at him long and steadily. “Tell me, son, why did you cut the tree?”

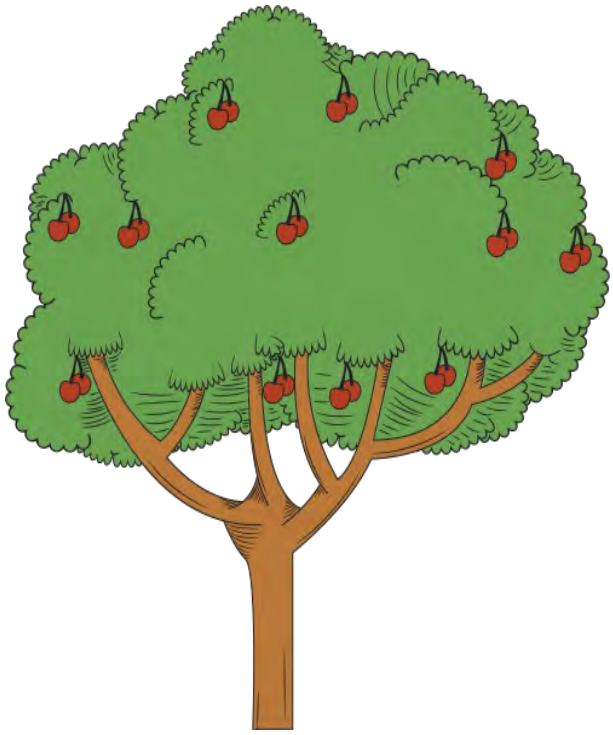
“I was playing, and I did not think ...” he stammered.

“And now the tree is dead. We shall never have any cherries from it. But worse than that, you have failed to take care of the tree when I asked you to do so.”

George’s head was bent, and his cheeks were red from shame. “I am sorry, father,” he said.

Mr. Washington put his hand on the boy’s shoulder. “Look at me,” he said. “I am sorry to have lost the cherry tree, but I am glad that you were brave enough to tell me the truth.”

And to the end of his life, George Washington was just as brave and honorable as when he was young.



Task:
In one or more paragraphs, explain how the perspectives of George and his father change throughout the story. Use text evidence to support your answer.

ELA.3.R.1.3	**Explain** different characters' perspectives in a literary text.
ELA.2.R.1.3	Identify **different characters' perspectives in a literary text.**
ELA.1.R.1.3	Explain **who is telling the story using context clues.**
ELA.K.R.1.3	**Explain the roles of author and illustrator of a story.**

	Achievement Level Descriptions for ELA.3.R.1.3
Level 3	**Explains different characters' perspectives in grade-level mid complexity literary texts.**
Level 2	**Identifies and explains a character's perspective in grade-level low complexity literary texts.**
Level 1	**Students at this level demonstrate that they are well below grade level with respect to challenging content of the B.E.S.T. ELA Standards.**

Sample Data Group Profile

Date Profile: Semester 1 **Subject:** ELA

Unit 1 Assessment: Average Score 27%
Unit 2 Assessment: Average Score 33%
Unit 3 Assessment: Average Score 40%
Unit 4 Assessment: Average Score 47%
Mastery is 70%.

Lowest Skill Scores for Units 1, 2, 3 and 4:
3.R.1.3 (Perspective)
The students in this group are performing at Level 1 based on the ALDs for 3.R.1.3.

Writing Skills: The students in this group have developing writing skills. They can express their ideas in writing after being provided organizational supports. Without organizational supports, they are very hesitant to get started and may not complete the writing tasks.

Section 1:		
Part A: Select the scaffold intensity.	**Part B:** Select the benchmark focus.	**Part C:** Describe what the students can do based on multiple data points including the focus benchmark.
☐ Light Support ☐ Moderate Support ☐ Intense Support	☐ ELA.3.R.1.1 ☐ ELA.3.R.1.2 ☐ ELA.3.R.1.3	

Section 2:		
Part A: Select the scaffold(s).	**Part B:** How will the scaffold(s) be applied?	**Part C:** Explain how the students' response to the scaffold(s) will be monitored.
☐ **Open-ended questions**		
☐ **Prompts and cues**		
☐ **Chunking the task/skill**		
☐ **Visual aids**		**Part D:** Describe the next level of support.
☐ **Examples**		
☐ **Encouragement**		
☐ _____		