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Please enjoy this complimentary excerpt from *How Scaffolding Works*.

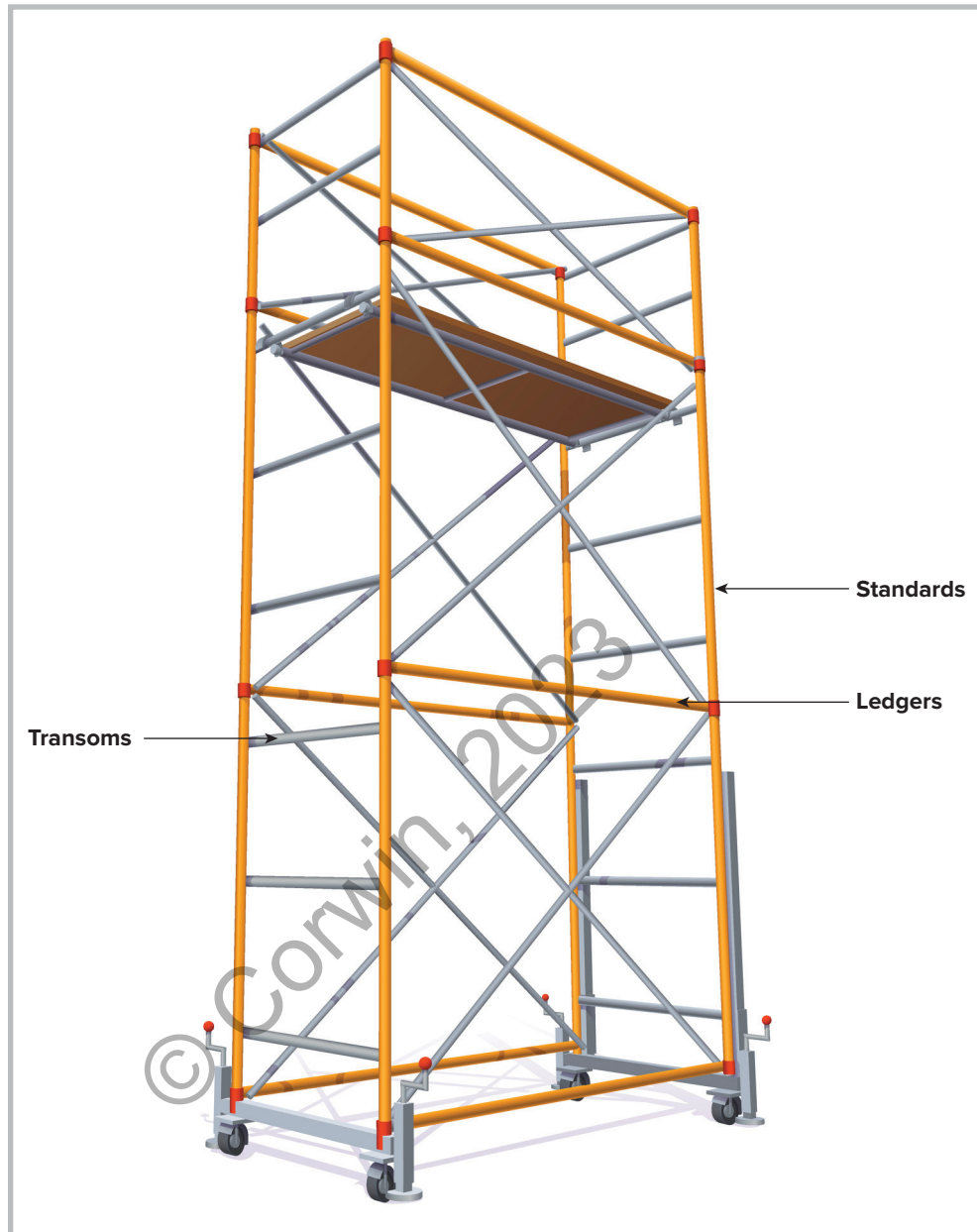
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Introduction

In September 1932, at the height of the Great Depression, a photographer snapped a photograph of 11 ironworkers sharing and enjoying their lunches and cigarettes.



This picture has found its place as one of the most iconic and recognizable photographs in the United States (e.g., *100 Photographs: The Most Influential Images of All Time*; Time, 2016). You likely have seen this photograph and, regardless of the number of times you view this picture, have a reaction to the idea that these men are suspended 70 floors above Manhattan without any support or safety equipment. These men worked daily to build a 587-foot-tall (179 meters) skyscraper, but only with the help of a scaffolding system. Like all scaffoldings, there are three main components: standards, ledgers, and transoms.



Source: Graphic courtesy of iStock.com/Sussenn

What does this have to do with this playbook, a playbook on scaffolding? To answer this question, let's turn our attention to the definition of scaffolding. What exactly is meant by *scaffolding*?

Scaffolding is a support system or structure. This supporting framework is temporary and movable, allowing individuals to move forward in whatever task is at hand. What is important to note here is that there is an essential relationship between the scaffolding and the specific task at hand:

1. Scaffolding is only used when the task at hand is not possible to complete without that support system or structure.

2. Scaffolding is customized (i.e., movable) based on the specific needs of the individuals engaged in the task; there is no one-size-fits-all scaffolding.
3. Scaffolding is used until the support system or structure is no longer needed; scaffolds are temporary and not permanent.

Take a moment and circle, underline, or highlight the term *temporary* in the third statement. You will need this term again very soon.

This is a playbook about the scaffolding of learning in our schools and classrooms. Instead of building skyscrapers, we are building self-regulated learners who take ownership of their learning. Instead of standards, ledgers, and transoms, we offer strategies, interventions, and different approaches. As we begin to uncover how scaffolding works, take a moment and reflect on the three relationships between scaffolding and tasks.

| Relationship Between Scaffolding and Tasks | What does this make me think of in my own school or classroom? |
|--|--|
| Scaffolding is only used when the task at hand is not possible to complete without that support system or structure. | |
| Scaffolding is customized (i.e., movable) based on the specific needs of the individuals engaged in the task; there is no one-size-fits-all scaffolding. | |
| Scaffolding is used until the support system or structure is no longer needed; scaffolds are temporary and not permanent. | |

Scaffolding tasks, whether those tasks are the construction of a skyscraper or tasks in our schools and classrooms, are absolutely essential in the successful completion of the tasks. However, scaffolding is not as easy as connecting standards, ledgers, and transoms. Consider the following questions that must be considered when putting up, moving, and taking down. In the extra space provided, add your own questions about scaffolding. What questions do you have for your own teaching and learning?

- When do I set up the scaffolding?
- How much scaffolding is needed?
- How do I know when and where to move the scaffolding?
- When do I remove the scaffolding?
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-
-
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The questions we provided, along with those questions you added to the list, will serve as our learning goals in this playbook. From time to time, you will be prompted to return to this list and check in with your progress in answering these questions.

Throughout the pages of this playbook, we will look at different examples from primary, elementary, middle school, and high school content, skills, practices, dispositions, and understandings. Scaffolding can and should be a part of teaching and learning in every school and classroom. This requires that we collaborate with our colleagues to generate, gather, and make sense of the evidence about our students' learning. This evidence is what helps us answer the above questions.



COLLABORATE TO SCAFFOLD

Each module offers you an opportunity for learning how scaffolding works, practicing the “putting up, moving, and taking down” of scaffolds with different grade-level and content areas, and, finally, applying the learning to your own school and classroom. We encourage you to engage in this playbook by circling, highlighting, underlining, writing in your own notes and responses, and using sticky notes to mark pages. Most importantly, though, we encourage you to collaborate with your colleagues. Although using this playbook as part of your personal learning is fine, the opportunity to dialogue

about scaffolding and collaborate on how to use scaffolding to accelerate learning is best done collectively with colleagues. We offer three suggestions for collaborating with colleagues:

- ➔ Work with an accountability partner
- ➔ Work with an instructional coach
- ➔ Work with a group of others during your common planning or PLC+ meeting (see Fisher et al., 2020)

Let's start with **accountability partners**. The use of this playbook during common planning or your PLC+ meeting may not be feasible. You may be more comfortable partnering with a colleague across the hall, in another part of the building, or in another school. You and this colleague can move through the modules, engage in the tasks, implement ideas in your own classrooms, and debrief the impact this had on advancing student learning. You and this colleague will serve as accountability partners in increasing your effectiveness at scaffolding learning for your students.

A second way to work collaboratively through this playbook is to work alongside an **instructional coach**. Instructional coaches provide all of us with an outside perspective on the teaching and learning in our classrooms. They can provide us with the right feedback at the right time. In fact, working with an instructional coach may offer the opportunity for the instructional coach to build their capacity by scaffolding to the instructional coaching cycle. After all, we have all needed our own professional learning scaffolded at some point in our careers. Either way, sitting down with an instructional coach, engaging in critical dialogue about supporting learners, developing specific scaffolds for your students, and then working together to evaluate the impact on student learning is an invaluable asset to professional growth.

Finally, this playbook can support your **work with a group of others** in collaborative conversations during your PLC+ meeting (Fisher et al., 2020). The work of this playbook is another tool for the work you do in your PLC+. The use of these five guiding questions of PLC+ will keep the focus relentlessly on the learning of our students:

- ➔ Where are we going?
- ➔ Where are we now?
- ➔ How do we move learning forward?
- ➔ What did we learn today?
- ➔ Who benefited and who did not benefit? (Fisher et al., 2020, p. 8)

In PLC+, teachers identify learning intentions and discuss ideas for instruction. They meet to review student work and figure out if their efforts have been fruitful. They also talk about students who need additional instruction or support for success. This is best done together, during our work as a community of learners.

I.1 HOW THIS PLAYBOOK SUPPORTS THE WORK OF PLC+

| PLC Question | Module |
|--|---|
| Where are we going? | Module 5 focuses on goal setting and notes the value of knowing where we are going. In addition, Module 4 explores mental models of expertise, which are even bigger than the lesson goals we have for students. |
| Where are we now? | Module 7 focuses on front-end scaffolds and the ways in which we plan based on what students already know. In addition, Module 3 offers a model of scaffolding based on what we know about students and their current levels of understanding. |
| How do we move learning forward? | There are several modules that focus on moving learning forward, including Module 6 on deliberate practice to the four modules on scaffolding learning (Modules 7, 8, 9, and 10). |
| What did we learn today? | Having a clear understanding of what we learned today (both us and our learners) requires noticing what learners are saying and doing and communicating with them around their learning. Again Modules 7, 8, 9, and 10 provide evidence of students learning, and Module 11 focuses on fading scaffolds based on what students have learned. |
| Who benefited and who did not benefit? | While every module of this playbook applies to this particular question, the primary issue is around noticing which learners are giving, receiving, and integrating feedback. This is especially important in peer scaffolding, Module 10. If we do not take notice of how learners are engaging with the scaffolds provided, we may not know who benefited and who did not until it is too late. |

Whether you have an accountability partner, access to an instructional coach, or a high-functioning, high-impact PLC+, the benefit of a collaborative approach is the opportunity to engage in critical dialogue around what scaffolding looks like for you and your learners. In fact, the need for a collaborative approach is highlighted by the very picture that started this conversation. There is more to the story in the photograph of the 11 ironworkers.

This photograph was staged. That's right, staged. The photographer did not naturally capture these 11 ironworkers dangling from the sixty-ninth story of the building swapping lunches and cigarettes. Instead, they were staged in a variety of poses to generate a photograph for advertising the building. Furthermore, the sturdy and reliable RCA building was right below them, outside of the view of the camera (Contrera, 2019). Again, staged. One of the challenges we must look out for during our work in this playbook is over-scaffolding. Unlike the photographer of this picture, we want to ensure that our scaffolds do not remove the productive struggle, lack the customization to meet the needs of our learners, or become a permanent fixture. If that happens, even if outside the field of vision of us as a teacher, we can create a complacency and slow down the progress of the learning. Instead, our singular focus must be to keep everything within our field of vision so that we can accelerate student learning.

Let's unpack *how scaffolding works*.