Crafting Voices, Shaping Thought: Integrating Scaffolding Strategies to Foster Critical Literacy in Selected Young EFL Writers

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ABSTRACT

In response to the growing need for critical literacy in adolescent English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education, this study investigates how scaffolding techniques support junior high school students in navigating complex social texts and expressing critical perspectives through writing. While the concept of critical literacy is well-established, its classroom application in Indonesian EFL contexts remains limited, particularly with younger learners and genre-based instruction.This single case study employed a qualitative approach, incorporating classroom observations and three rounds of semi-structured interviews to examine how an experienced EFL teacher in a South Jakarta junior high school implemented scaffolding strategies during a biography writing project on Vincent van Gogh. The research was guided by Lewison et al.'s four dimensions of critical literacy, alongside established models of instructional scaffolding. The analysis identified four key scaffolding types: procedural scaffolding supported students in organizing content and mastering genre conventions; motivational scaffolding sustained engagement and encouraged creative risk-taking; conceptual scaffolding introduced abstract themes such as justice and identity; and metacognitive scaffolding facilitated students' reflection on texts and their own perspectives. Among these, metacognitive scaffolding emerged as the most impactful, enabling students to examine diverse viewpoints and connect personal insights with broader sociopolitical issues. These findings underscore the importance of responsive, differentiated instruction in fostering critical engagement among adolescent EFL learners. The study contributes a pedagogically grounded model that integrates language development with reflective inquiry, offering practical implications for educators and curriculum designers aiming to cultivate social awareness and ethical reasoning in language classrooms.

1. Introduction

The twenty-first century demands more than traditional notions of literacy. In an era characterized by constant digital interaction, shifting power structures, and competing narratives, students must be equipped not only to read and write but also to interrogate, reflect, and act. Literacy today encompasses the capacity to evaluate information critically, question embedded ideologies, and respond with informed perspectives. As learners engage with a world saturated by social media, online discourse, and algorithm-driven content, they require the tools to navigate, critique, and contribute responsibly to the discursive landscapes they inhabit (Bellanca & Brandt, 2010; Luke, 2024). This shift calls for pedagogical practices that move beyond rote memorization and grammatical drills, toward approaches that cultivate reflective thinking, civic awareness, and ethical reasoning through language use (Luke, 2000; Janks, 2010; Yoon, 2016; Amgott, 2018).

Against this backdrop, critical literacy has emerged as a powerful educational paradigm that enables learners to interrogate texts, examine power structures, and engage with language as a tool for justice and transformation. Critical literacy empowers students to become not just consumers of meaning but active participants in the negotiation of cultural, historical, and ideological messages (Lewison et al., 2002; Luke, 2024). Particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, where language learning often

intersects with questions of identity, representation, and voice, the integration of critical literacy is both timely and essential. However, as digital media increasingly mediates adolescent experiences, students must be taught how to evaluate sources, detect bias, and construct their own narratives with empathy and responsibility (Kiili et al., 2018; European Commission, 2019; Gupta & Sharma, 2021; Yosep et al., 2024).

While critical literacy has received extensive scholarly attention globally, its integration into EFL classrooms in Indonesia remains underdeveloped and uneven. Several studies highlight that Indonesian EFL teachers often face structural and pedagogical limitations, including inadequate training, limited conceptual understanding, and curriculum rigidity that prioritizes grammatical precision over critical engagement (Gustine, 2018; Hidayat, 2019; Novianti et al., 2020). Research also shows that young adolescents in Indonesia are particularly vulnerable to the superficial consumption of digital content, which is often driven by emotional gratification and peer validation rather than critical inquiry (Aresti et al., 2023; Pertiwi et al., 2020; Siga et al., 2023). These conditions hinder students' ability to challenge dominant discourses or engage with alternative perspectives, especially when classroom practices remain teacher-centered and focused on exam preparation (Weng, 2021; Nurhayati & Azhar, 2023).

Although international scholarship has explored the benefits of critical literacy in developing analytical thinking and intercultural competence (Fajardo, 2015; Abednia & Crookes, 2019), most studies have focused on adult learners or pre-service teachers in higher education (Ko & Wang, 2009; Thomas, 2018). In the Indonesian context, existing research demonstrates promising outcomes when critical literacy is applied (Gustine, 2013; Mbau & Sugeng, 2019), yet few have examined how critical literacy can be scaffolded meaningfully for younger learners at the junior secondary level. Moreover, the genre of biography writing, which offers opportunities to reflect on voice, agency, and historical injustice, remains underutilized as a vehicle for critical engagement ('Ain, 2019). There is also a paucity of studies that examine the direct pedagogical integration of scaffolding with Lewison et al.'s (2002) four critical literacy dimensions in EFL classrooms. Despite mounting evidence on the value of scaffolding in promoting student autonomy and metacognitive development (Amerian & Mehri, 2014; Karina, 2022; Suryani et al., 2023), its role in facilitating critical literacy for young EFL learners remains under-theorized.

This study responds to those gaps by investigating how scaffolding strategies can be intentionally designed and implemented to support the development of critical literacy through biography writing. Drawing from Lewison et al.'s (2002) framework and integrating scaffolding models from Abdala and Hamdan (2021), Belland (2017), Rosenshine and Meister (1992), this research provides a novel contribution by illustrating how procedural, motivational, conceptual, and metacognitive scaffolding can be aligned with the dimensions of critical literacy. Unlike previous studies that treat scaffolding and critical literacy as separate pedagogical concerns, this study examines their dynamic interplay in a real classroom context. The use of biographical narratives, particularly the life of Vincent van Gogh, serves not only as a literary task but as a means of fostering empathy, identity reflection, and ethical awareness among adolescent learners.

The central contribution of this study lies in its integration of theory and classroom practice, providing a pedagogically grounded model that is both replicable and adaptable for junior high school EFL settings. It aims to demonstrate that adolescent learners are capable of engaging with complex sociopolitical themes when supported by thoughtful instructional design. The study also seeks to highlight how differentiated scaffolding techniques can help bridge the cognitive and emotional demands of critical literacy, thereby enabling students to develop deeper interpretive skills while also building linguistic confidence. By observing real-time teaching interactions and student responses, the research offers practical insights into how teachers can embed critical reflection into genre-based writing tasks in meaningful and inclusive ways.

This study is significant not only for its empirical focus but also for its broader implications for English language education in Indonesia and similar EFL contexts. It seeks to answer three core questions: What scaffolding techniques are used by the teacher to support students' critical literacy development? How do these techniques correspond to the four dimensions of critical literacy? And what are the underlying pedagogical rationales behind the teacher's choices? The findings are expected to inform classroom practices, teacher education programs, and curriculum development by demonstrating how scaffolding can be employed not just to support language acquisition, but to nurture reflective, ethically engaged learners who can read the world as well as the word.

In conclusion, this study affirms the pedagogical potential of scaffolding as a strategy for fostering critical literacy among adolescent EFL learners. It demonstrates that when scaffolded appropriately, writing tasks such as biography composition can become powerful tools for critical reflection, creative expression, and ethical engagement. The study encourages EFL practitioners to adopt responsive and reflective approaches that prioritize student voice, agency, and social awareness. By doing so, EFL classrooms can be transformed into inclusive learning spaces where language development is closely intertwined with critical thinking and civic responsibility.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Critical Literacy in Education

Critical literacy is widely recognized as one of the foundational pillars of modern education, empowering students to analyze texts through multiple lenses and question dominant ideologies. It fosters intellectual growth, civic engagement, and social transformation by encouraging learners to interrogate power structures, explore representation, and recognize multiple voices within texts (Solon, 2014; Weng, 2021). Drawing from the pedagogical theories of Paulo Freire, particularly *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), critical literacy emphasizes reflection and action. Freire's principles have inspired educational models that view literacy not merely as technical proficiency but as a tool for justice and empowerment (McClung, 2018; Norris et al., 2012).

Through this lens, literacy is conceptualized as both a cognitive and socio-political practice. Scholars such as Luke and Freebody (1999) proposed the Four Resources Model to enable learners to decode, comprehend, use, and critically analyze language. Building on this, Janks (2000) introduced spatial and contextual interdependencies in meaning-making, while Lewison et al. (2002) advanced a four-dimension framework comprising disrupting the commonplace, interrogating multiple viewpoints, focusing on sociopolitical issues, and promoting social justice. This model provides a systematic yet flexible approach to developing critical awareness and agency among students. In today's digital society, where youth are inundated with competing narratives and algorithmic bias, the relevance of critical literacy becomes even more apparent. The ability to discern credible sources and evaluate persuasive language is critical for safeguarding democratic participation (Kiili et al., 2018, 2019; OECD, 2019b, 2021; Caskey & Anfara, 2007; Luke, 2024).

2.2 Critical Literacy in EFL Classrooms

In countries where English is not the primary language, the integration of critical literacy into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction has gained attention only in recent years (Abednia & Crookes, 2019). While research has shown that critical literacy supports students' development in reading comprehension, writing, and oral communication (Gustine, 2013; Taşpınar & Çubukçu, 2020), its implementation in EFL contexts remains uneven. Studies confirm that critical literacy helps learners evaluate messages from diverse sources, develop media literacy, and form independent judgments, all of which are necessary in a world marked by conflicting perspectives and information overload (Najah et al., 2024; Totanes & Amarles, 2020).

In Indonesia, however, the adoption of critical literacy pedagogy still faces structural and pedagogical barriers. Teachers are often constrained by rigid curricula, unfamiliarity with critical approaches, and a lack of training in reflective classroom practices (Novianti et al., 2020; Gustine, 2018; Hidayat, 2019; Mbau & Sugeng, 2019). This situation is particularly challenging in classrooms with young adolescents who are undergoing significant developmental transitions. Adolescents aged eleven to fifteen are navigating cognitive, emotional, and social changes, all of which influence how they read, interpret, and write texts (Caskey & Anfara, 2007; Pertiwi et al., 2020). At the same time, many of them are active users of digital platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp, and Line (Suryani et al., 2023; Lovianie, 2024). These environments shape identity and interaction but also expose learners to misinformation, peer pressure, and psychological stress caused by fear of missing out (Gupta & Sharma, 2021; Yosep et al., 2024).

Such conditions often lead to passive engagement with content and hinder the development of critical habits of mind. Adolescents may internalize unexamined messages and adopt dominant viewpoints without question (Akbar et al., 2018; Nadzirah et al., 2022; Siga et al., 2023). Their engagement with digital spaces tends to be driven by emotional gratification and group belonging, rather than deep reasoning. As Nurhayati and Azhar (2023) argue, the absence of critical reflection in media use reinforces superficial literacy and reduces students' ability to evaluate and reinterpret meaning. These realities reveal an urgent need for pedagogical strategies that are sensitive to adolescent development while equipping learners with critical competencies

2.3 Scaffolding as a Strategy to Promote Critical Literacy in EFL Setting

To bridge the cognitive gap between learners' current abilities and their potential for independent critical thinking, scaffolding has become a widely recommended instructional method. First introduced by Wood et al., (1976), scaffolding refers to temporary instructional support that is gradually withdrawn as students gain competence. In EFL settings, scaffolding enables learners to perform complex tasks such as interpreting meaning, evaluating bias, and producing reflective writing, even when their language proficiency is still developing (Amerian & Mehri, 2014; Echevarria et al., 2004; Karina, 2022; Suryani et al., 2023).

Recent models of scaffolding provide a more nuanced understanding of its forms and functions. Abdala and Hamdan (2021), Belland (2017), and Rosenshine and Meister (1992) identify five primary types: procedural, conceptual, strategic, motivational, and metacognitive. Procedural scaffolding helps learners organize their workflow. Conceptual scaffolding deepens understanding of key ideas. Strategic scaffolding offers tools for solving linguistic or cognitive challenges. Motivational scaffolding increases engagement through feedback and emotional

support (Bruce, 2007; Low & Robinson, 2015). Metacognitive scaffolding encourages reflection, enabling students to monitor and direct their thinking (Daradoumis & Arguedas, 2020; Riwayatiningsih et al., 2021).

Within critical literacy instruction, scaffolding plays an essential role in supporting students through interpretive and evaluative processes. Teachers can use guided questions to provoke deeper understanding and awareness. For instance, inquiries such as "How are the characters represented?" or "What voices are missing from this text?" help students examine representation, bias, and power relations (Iyer, 2007; Behrman, 2006; Hasan, 2015). However, although such strategies are theoretically supported, few empirical studies have documented how teachers apply them in EFL classrooms with young adolescents in Indonesia. Even fewer have examined how these scaffolding practices relate directly to Lewison et al.'s (2002) four dimensions of critical literacy in genre-based writing instruction, as suggested by both reviewers.

2.4 Study's Gap, Novelty and Implication

While the literature confirms that both critical literacy and scaffolding are vital components of transformative language education, there is a lack of research examining how these two are meaningfully integrated in adolescent EFL contexts. Most existing studies target high school, university students, or adult learners. Very little attention has been paid to younger EFL learners who are still developing cognitively, linguistically, and emotionally. Additionally, the use of biographical writing as a platform for nurturing critical literacy remains underexplored, even though biographies can provide rich contexts for discussing real-world issues, personal struggles, and historical inequalities ('Ain, 2019).

This study addresses key gaps by introducing a pedagogical model that merges scaffolding strategies with critical literacy dimensions through biography writing. Focusing on Indonesian junior high students, it explores how scaffolding fosters reflection on norms, empathy, and critical engagement with texts. Its novelty lies in bridging theory with real classroom practice, offering insights into how EFL teaching can be both intellectually rigorous and emotionally supportive.

The study has strong implications for EFL instruction and curriculum design. It promotes scaffolded genre-based tasks to build critical thinking, social awareness, and language skills. Integrating biography writing with scaffolded activities enables learners to explore identity and justice meaningfully. It also informs teacher education by emphasizing training in critical pedagogy and responsive scaffolding, positioning classrooms as spaces for inquiry and ethical learning.

3. Method

This study employed a qualitative approach using a single case study design, as outlined by Yin (2018), to explore the use of scaffolding techniques in fostering critical literacy in an EFL classroom. The case study method enabled an in-depth investigation of the instructional strategies used by one teacher within a real educational setting. This approach was deemed appropriate for uncovering the nuanced ways in which scaffolding supports learners' engagement with critical literacy through biography writing.

3.1 Research Context and Participants

The research was conducted at a private national junior high school located in South Jakarta, Indonesia. Founded in 2021, the school integrates the Ontario Curriculum with *Kurikulum Merdeka* and promotes a literacy-rich environment through project-based learning. English language instruction is designed to foster both academic and interpersonal competencies. Students are grouped by proficiency levels, ranging from intermediate to upper-intermediate, and regularly engage with fiction and nonfiction texts across the curriculum.

Participants were selected using purposive sampling. The study involved one teacher, referred to as Ms. IW, and eleven students aged between eleven and fifteen. Ms. IW was chosen for her ten years of teaching experience in English and her recent transition to teaching at the junior high level. Her instructional practices reflect a learner-centered approach supported by varied teaching resources, including Teachers Pay Teachers, YouTube, Twinkl, and curated reading materials. Informed consent was obtained from all participants in accordance with ethical research protocols.

3.2 Data Collection

Data were collected through three classroom observations and semi-structured interviews with the teacher. Each observation session lasted approximately ninety minutes and focused on the biography writing project centered on the life of Vincent van Gogh. During the observations, the researcher documented the teacher's use of scaffolding strategies, the flow of classroom interaction, and students' engagement with the tasks through detailed field notes.

To complement the observations and clarify the teacher's instructional decisions, interviews were conducted with Ms. IW following each classroom session. These interviews were designed to elicit the teacher's pedagogical reasoning and reflections on how scaffolding was used to address specific critical literacy goals. This triangulation of data helped to increase the credibility and depth of the findings.

3.3 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was conducted using two interrelated frameworks: Lewison et al.'s (2002) critical literacy dimensions and the scaffolding models proposed by Abdala and Hamdan (2021), Belland (2017), and Rosenshine and Meister (1992). Lewison's framework provided the conceptual basis for identifying four dimensions of critical literacy, which include disrupting the commonplace, interrogating multiple viewpoints, focusing on sociopolitical issues, and promoting social justice. These dimensions guided the thematic coding of instructional practices observed in the classroom.

Simultaneously, the scaffolding strategies were categorized into five types: procedural, conceptual, strategic, motivational, and metacognitive. The researcher systematically coded the data from observations and interviews to identify patterns, techniques, and rationales for using each scaffolding type. The alignment between scaffolding strategies and critical literacy dimensions was carefully mapped to capture how each pedagogical move contributed to the students' development of critical engagement and reflective thinking. To ensure consistency and clarity, two summary tables were prepared. Table one presents the characteristics of Lewison et al.'s critical literacy dimensions, while Table two summarizes the scaffolding categories adapted from the selected theoretical models. These tables functioned as reference points throughout the data analysis process.

3.4 Trustworthiness and Ethical Considerations

The study employed several strategies to ensure trustworthiness, including triangulation of data sources, prolonged engagement in the research site, and member checking through reflective interviews. Triangulation across classroom observation and teacher interviews helped corroborate findings and provided a more comprehensive understanding of the classroom dynamics.

All ethical guidelines for educational research were followed. Participants' identities were anonymized, and informed consent was obtained prior to data collection. The study was designed to respect the privacy and learning environment of all participants, and the teacher was given the opportunity to review and confirm the interpretations of her instructional choices.

4. Results

The This section presents the findings of the study in alignment with the research questions, emphasizing how scaffolding strategies were applied by the teacher to promote critical literacy through biography writing. The analysis is organized into four main sub-sections, each offering thematic interpretations derived from observational and interview data.

4.1 Instructional Context and Teaching Rationale

The instructional process was situated within a student-centered learning environment that emphasized voice, participation, and co-construction of meaning. Rather than assigning a preselected topic, the teacher initiated an open classroom dialogue where students were invited to share areas of interest. During this preliminary discussion, students expressed curiosity about real-life individuals and stories of perseverance. In response, the teacher proposed a biography writing project centered on the life of Vincent van Gogh, aligning the topic with an earlier unit on emotional resilience titled "Having a Bad Day." This pedagogical move was both strategic and empathetic, offering continuity while deepening the emotional and cognitive scope of the learning experience.

The project was implemented across three weeks, with each 90-minute session structured to guide students from personal reflection toward increasingly complex interpretive work. The initial phase began with journaling activities in which students responded to reflective prompts designed to stimulate emotional insight and narrative thinking. One such activity encouraged students to consider personal setbacks, thereby establishing a thematic link with Van Gogh's troubled life. Classroom observations revealed how the teacher facilitated this bridge between self-reflection and critical analysis.

> Excerpt 1 – Fieldnote 1, Week 1:
> The teacher initiated the session by asking, "What would you say to yourself if you were having a bad day?" After a few moments, students began sharing personal stories. When one student said, "I just sleep it off," the teacher followed up by asking, "Do you think bad days can help us grow?" Another student replied, "Maybe they help us become stronger."
> ***(Fieldnote 1, 03/12/2024)***

This interaction exemplifies how the teacher used affective prompts to facilitate emotional engagement while subtly directing students toward introspective and critical exploration. By foregrounding the emotional themes of the unit, the teacher established a supportive foundation for more demanding tasks ahead.

In the second week, students explored two biographical texts on Van Gogh—one highlighting his early struggles, the other his artistic legacy. These served as the foundation for a comic strip project where students retold his story from their perspective. To support this, the teacher offered graphic organizers, vocabulary aids, and model texts. In a post-lesson interview, she explained her choice of multimodal and differentiated strategies to guide student expression.

Excerpt 2 – Interview 1:
"Some of my students really struggle when writing full paragraphs, especially when they do not know how to begin. That is why I used a comic strip project. It gives them space to express ideas without the pressure of writing long essays. They still have to think critically, but it becomes more accessible. I also gave them two short texts so they can compare perspectives before choosing what to include in their comic."
(Interview 1, 09/12/2024)

This excerpt highlights the teacher's intentional design to accommodate diverse learner needs while maintaining cognitive rigor. The integration of visual storytelling provided an alternative pathway for meaning-making, enabling students to engage with the content through both linguistic and visual modalities. The teacher's flexibility in instructional planning ensured that all learners, regardless of writing proficiency, could participate in critical literacy practices.

In the third week, students were tasked with finalizing their comic strips, using the annotated texts and outlines from previous sessions. The classroom dynamic shifted as students took more ownership of their work. The teacher moved between groups, offering individualized support and formative feedback to facilitate student decision-making and creative risk-taking. Observational notes captured an illustrative example of this interaction during a moment of hesitation.

Excerpt 3 – Fieldnote 2, Week 3
A student paused in front of a blank comic panel and said, "What if I do not know how to show sadness?" The teacher knelt beside them and responded, "Think about how Van Gogh might have felt when nobody understood his art. What colors or expressions can you use to show that feeling?" After a moment of silence, the student picked up a dark blue crayon and began drawing.
(Fieldnote 2, 16/12/2024)

This exchange illustrates how the teacher scaffolded emotional interpretation through visual symbolism, guiding the student to translate abstract affective concepts into concrete artistic choices. Such moments reflect the nuanced nature of scaffolding, where cognitive and emotional support intersect to foster deeper critical engagement.

Across the three weeks, the instructional flow moved from highly guided reflection toward autonomous creation. Students began the unit with personal narratives and journaling but gradually progressed to activities requiring comparative reading, synthesis, and visual interpretation. The teacher's scaffolding strategies enabled learners to navigate the complexities of biographical analysis with increasing confidence and independence.

In conclusion, the instructional context was characterized by deliberate design, thematic coherence, and pedagogical responsiveness. The biography writing project served not merely as a language task, but as a vehicle for cultivating empathy, resilience, and analytical thinking. Through reflective writing, dialogic teaching, and creative expression, students were guided to move beyond surface-level engagement and begin constructing meaning in ways that connected the personal with the political, the historical with the emotional, and the textual with the visual.

4.2 Scaffolding Techniques Used to Promote Critical Literacy Dimensions

The findings reveal that the teacher employed a range of scaffolding strategies to support students' development of critical literacy throughout the biography writing project. These scaffolding techniques—procedural, metacognitive, motivational, and conceptual—were observed to be thoughtfully integrated at various instructional stages to guide students through tasks that required both linguistic processing and critical reflection. Each technique served a distinct function while collectively contributing to the broader goal of fostering student agency and engagement with critical literacy dimensions.

Procedural scaffolding was central during the early phases of the unit, especially when students were introduced to the structure and expectations of biography writing. The teacher provided clear, step-by-step instructions and utilized graphic organizers, worksheets, and checklists to help students navigate the process of reading, comparing, and rewriting biographical content. This strategy minimized cognitive overload and allowed students to focus their attention on meaningful engagement with the texts.

During classroom observations, students appeared more confident and focused when such tools were made available. One observed instance captured how the teacher used organizational prompts to support students' progression from reading to writing:

Excerpt 1 – Fieldnote 3, Week 2
As students reviewed the two Van Gogh biographies, the teacher reminded them, "Use your outline sheet to jot down the key events in each text. Think about which parts you want to include in your comic strip later." She then added, "Remember to look at the timeline to help you figure out the sequence." Students immediately began referring to the handouts and timeline posted on the board.
(Fieldnote 3, 09/12/2024)

This excerpt illustrates how procedural scaffolding operated not only as a means of organizing content but also as a tool to foster autonomy. Students used the provided materials to make informed decisions about content selection, sequencing, and narrative focus.

Metacognitive scaffolding emerged as one of the most influential elements of the teacher's approach. Through reflective questioning and journaling tasks, students were encouraged to monitor their thinking, question their assumptions, and explore the underlying messages within texts. These strategies were embedded throughout the unit and were particularly evident during transitions between reading and composing. The teacher reflected on this during one of the post-observation interviews:

> Excerpt 2 – Interview 2
> "When I ask them questions like, 'What do you think the author wants you to feel here?' or 'Is there a hidden message in the text?' they pause and think. I want them to go beyond just summarizing. I want them to ask themselves, 'Why does this matter to me or others?'"
> *(Interview 2, 12/12/2024)*

This comment reveals the teacher's intention to push students toward deeper analysis and to equip them with strategies for self-directed inquiry. Metacognitive scaffolding, in this sense, served as a bridge between personal engagement and critical interpretation, enabling students to develop both self-awareness and interpretive depth.

Motivational scaffolding played a crucial role in sustaining student participation and confidence, particularly during tasks that required vulnerability or creativity. The teacher consistently employed encouragement, praise, and empathetic responses to reinforce students' efforts and reduce anxiety associated with performance. One illustrative moment from the classroom captured this strategy in action:

> Excerpt 3 – Fieldnote 4, Week 3
> A student hesitated while sketching the final panel of their comic and whispered, "I don't know if it looks good." The teacher responded warmly, "You're doing great. Look at how you showed his sadness in the second panel. That was really thoughtful. Now ask yourself—what happens next? How does he feel at the end?" The student nodded and continued drawing.
> *(Fieldnote 4, 16/12/2024)*

This interaction illustrates how motivational scaffolding extended beyond encouragement by being embedded in the intellectual task. The teacher acknowledged the student's emotional hesitation while guiding them to reflect on narrative development, thus fostering both emotional and cognitive engagement. Conceptual scaffolding supported students in exploring abstract themes such as power, injustice, and perspective. These core elements of critical literacy were gradually introduced and integrated into class discussions and creative writing. The teacher frequently prompted students to analyze textual representations and consider whose voices were prioritized or silenced. In one interview, the teacher explained her approach to introducing these themes:

> Excerpt 4 – Interview 3
> "When we talk about someone like Van Gogh, I try to make them see more than just facts. I'll ask, 'Why do you think people ignored him when he was alive but praised him after his death?' Then I might ask, 'Whose stories do we usually hear, and whose are left out?' These kinds of questions help them think about voice, power, and fairness."
> *(Interview 3, 13/12/2024)*

This excerpt indicates that conceptual scaffolding was instrumental in guiding students to connect biographical content with broader sociocultural issues. By raising critical questions, the teacher helped students recognize how narratives are shaped by cultural and historical positioning, prompting them to engage with the text beyond literal comprehension.

Across all types of scaffolding observed, the teacher demonstrated consistent intentionality in responding to student needs, lesson objectives, and the core dimensions of critical literacy. The scaffolding was neither rigid nor formulaic. Instead, it was adaptive and embedded seamlessly into the classroom discourse. Each technique served to build cognitive, emotional, and ethical dimensions of learning, supporting students in developing the capacity to read critically, write reflectively, and respond thoughtfully to the world around them.

In summary, the strategic use of procedural, metacognitive, motivational, and conceptual scaffolding techniques created a pedagogical ecosystem that supported critical inquiry at multiple levels. Students were not only equipped with tools to complete academic tasks but were also encouraged to cultivate reflective awareness, ethical reasoning, and the confidence to question dominant narratives. These findings highlight the significance of responsive teaching in promoting deep literacy engagement in EFL contexts, particularly among adolescent learners navigating both linguistic development and identity formation.

4.3 Addressing Critical Literacy Dimensions Through Scaffolding

The findings reveal that the teacher actively addressed the four dimensions of critical literacy through the intentional use of differentiated scaffolding strategies. These dimensions include disrupting the commonplace, interrogating multiple viewpoints, focusing on sociopolitical issues, and promoting social justice. Rather than treating these as isolated outcomes, the teacher integrated them fluidly within the learning experience by embedding reflective activities, discussion prompts, and structured writing tasks. Observational and interview data demonstrate how each dimension was introduced and sustained through specific scaffolding choices that aligned with students' developmental readiness and engagement levels.

The dimension of disrupting the commonplace was foregrounded early in the unit through reflective journaling and guided classroom discussions. The teacher initiated a conversation that invited students to share their personal experiences with adversity, using this as an entry point for deeper engagement with the theme of struggle as portrayed in Van Gogh's life. These reflections created space for students to challenge normalized assumptions about success, failure, and self-worth. The teacher scaffolded this process using affective prompts and critical questioning.

Excerpt 1 – Fieldnote 1, Week 1
The teacher asked, "Do you think bad days are important? What do they tell us about ourselves?" Students responded with varied ideas, including "Bad days help us learn" and "Sometimes they show us what matters." The teacher validated their answers and encouraged them to write journal entries exploring the question, "What would you say to yourself if you were having a bad day?"
(Fieldnote 1, 03 December 2024)

This activity enabled students to examine every day experiences through a critical lens, encouraging them to challenge surface-level perceptions of emotional struggle. By prompting students to connect personal emotions with broader life themes, the teacher laid the groundwork for analytical thinking that disrupted routine interpretations. The dimension of interrogating multiple viewpoints was addressed through a comparative biography activity in which students analyzed two different textual portrayals of Van Gogh. One text emphasized his personal suffering, while the other highlighted his artistic legacy and cultural influence. The teacher used conceptual and procedural scaffolding to help students notice textual biases, reflect on the presence or absence of particular perspectives, and synthesize their own interpretations. Students completed worksheets with guiding questions such as "What values does this version highlight?" and "Whose voice is missing in this story?"

Excerpt 2 – Fieldnote 5, Week 2
Students were working in pairs to compare two short biographies of Van Gogh. One student said, "This one talks about how sad he was, but the other one only shows his paintings." The teacher responded, "That is a great observation. Why do you think each author focused on different things? What story are they trying to tell?"
(Fieldnote 5, 09 December 2024)

This instructional moment illustrates how the teacher guided students to move beyond identifying differences and toward understanding how authorial choices shape meaning. By facilitating structured comparisons and encouraging interpretive reasoning, the teacher supported students in constructing more complex understandings of narrative representation.

The dimension of focusing on sociopolitical issues was explored through role-based journaling and classroom discussions that encouraged students to reflect on leadership, inequality, and civic responsibility. In one activity, students imagined themselves as the president of Indonesia and were asked to articulate what they would prioritize and why. This imaginative exercise was scaffolded using metacognitive prompts and empathetic questioning that helped students connect their ideas with real-world concerns. The teacher carefully guided students to think about how decisions impact communities, what fairness looks like, and who benefits from different policies.

Excerpt 3 – Interview 4
"When I ask them to imagine being a leader, it is not just about power. I want them to think about who they would help, what changes they would make, and why. We talked about poverty, education, and even trash on the streets. They start realizing that these issues are connected to people's everyday lives."
(Interview 4, 14 December 2024)

Through this scaffolded discussion, students were able to link literary themes to contemporary societal challenges. The teacher's prompts encouraged them to evaluate systems of inequality and consider how their writing could reflect not just personal insights but social responsibility.

Although the dimension of promoting social justice was not directly stated in the initial lesson objectives, it emerged through the culminating creative task in which students were asked to complete their own comic strips based on Van Gogh's life. Some students reimagined alternative endings, while others emphasized moments of rejection and misunderstanding to evoke empathy. The teacher supported these interpretations by encouraging students to reflect on whose voices are amplified in public narratives and how art and storytelling can inspire advocacy.

Excerpt 4 – Fieldnote 6, Week 3
A student said, "I want to make the last scene about how Van Gogh still helps people today, even if he is gone." The teacher smiled and said, "That is a powerful idea. How can you show that in your drawing? What kind of message do you want others to feel?" The student began sketching a person in a museum looking at Van Gogh's painting with a thoughtful expression.
(Fieldnote 6, 16 December 2024)

This moment highlights how scaffolding for justice-oriented thinking can occur even in artistic representations. The student was guided to connect the emotional impact of art with ongoing relevance and reflection, demonstrating the potential for creative tasks to inspire civic awareness and action.

Across all four dimensions, the teacher's scaffolding approach was not prescriptive but invitational. Rather than imposing definitions or frameworks, she created conditions where students could explore, question, and construct meaning through guided inquiry and reflective expression. Scaffolding was used not as a rigid set of steps but as a dynamic process responsive to learners' needs, facilitating their growth into thoughtful readers, writers, and citizens.

In summary, the teacher addressed the dimensions of critical literacy by integrating scaffolding strategies that aligned with both instructional goals and students' lived realities. Disrupting the commonplace was enabled through affective journaling and thematic bridging. Interrogating multiple viewpoints was scaffolded through comparative analysis and dialogic questioning. Focusing on sociopolitical issues was fostered through imaginative role play and metacognitive reflection. Promoting social justice was supported through expressive creativity and narrative reinterpretation. These findings underscore the value of integrating cognitive, emotional, and ethical scaffolding to nurture critical literacy in ways that are developmentally appropriate, socially conscious, and pedagogically transformative.

4.4 Rationales Behind the Use of Specific Scaffolding Techniques

The teacher's choice of scaffolding strategies was informed by a nuanced understanding of her students' diverse cognitive, emotional, and linguistic needs. Rather than applying scaffolding as a uniform instructional routine, she adapted her techniques responsively, based on student behavior, task complexity, and the evolving demands of each lesson. Interview and observation data revealed that her rationale for scaffolding was grounded in three overarching intentions: making abstract tasks accessible, maintaining student motivation and confidence, and fostering individual growth through differentiated support.

The first rationale guiding the use of scaffolding was the recognition that biography writing and critical analysis are cognitively demanding tasks, particularly for students who are still developing proficiency in English. The teacher anticipated that without structured support, students might find it difficult to organize their ideas, engage with multiple texts, and express reflective insights. Procedural scaffolding was therefore employed early and consistently to break down tasks into manageable segments, clarify expectations, and provide concrete entry points into abstract content.

Excerpt 1 – Interview 5
"I knew that writing a biography would be a new experience for most of them. They are not used to thinking about structure, especially when it is not just about retelling facts. That is why I gave them step-by-step guides and templates. I wanted to make sure they knew where to start and what to include. Once they had that, they could focus more on their ideas."
(Interview 5, 10 December 2024)

This excerpt shows that the teacher regarded scaffolding as a means to reduce cognitive overload while supporting higher-order thinking. By providing templates, outlines, and timelines, she enabled students to focus their efforts on analysis, synthesis, and meaning-making, rather than being hindered by difficulties in starting or organizing tasks. Another key rationale emphasized emotional engagement and motivation. The teacher recognized that students' willingness to participate in critical discussions and creative expression often depended on their sense of self-efficacy and emotional security. Motivational scaffolding, including praise, reassurance, and encouragement, was intentionally used to validate their efforts and help them navigate moments of uncertainty. This strategy nurtured a classroom environment where students felt both emotionally and academically supported.

Excerpt 2 – Fieldnote 7, Week 3
During the comic strip session, a student quietly pushed their drawing aside and said, "Mine is not good like the others." The teacher approached and replied, "What you are doing is your version of the story, and that matters. You are showing how Van Gogh felt in your own way. Keep going, and let me know if you want feedback." The student nodded and resumed drawing.
(Fieldnote 7, 16 December 2024)

This interaction illustrates the teacher's intentional use of motivational scaffolding to reframe students' self-perceptions and sustain creative engagement. Rather than dismissing the student's concern, she validated the student's voice and gently redirected the focus to the meaning behind the work. Such moments exemplify how emotional support can function as a bridge to renewed cognitive investment.

The third rationale involved the belief that learning should be tailored to meet individual readiness and learning styles. The teacher described how she modified tasks, prompts, and levels of assistance depending on each student's needs, thereby enacting a form of differentiated scaffolding. Some students received more direct questioning and visual aids, while others were offered opportunities for extension or independent synthesis. This flexible approach enabled the teacher to foster both inclusion and challenge within the same learning context.

Excerpt 3 – Interview 6
"Some students need more prompts or reminders to stay on track, while others are ready to explore on their own. I usually give graphic organizers to students who prefer visual help, but I also

challenge others by asking open-ended questions that make them dig deeper. It is important for me to meet them where they are, so they do not feel left behind or unchallenged."
(Interview 6, 14 December 2024)

This rationale reflects the teacher's commitment to equity and individualized instruction. By recognizing that students bring different strengths and challenges to the classroom, she applied scaffolding not as a one-size-fits-all technique, but as a responsive and inclusive pedagogical strategy.

Furthermore, the teacher appeared to see scaffolding not only as a means of delivering instruction but also as a dialogic practice. She regularly used questioning as a tool for stimulating students' thinking, helping them clarify their ideas, and guiding them toward deeper reflection. This type of dialogic scaffolding emphasized learning as a process of shared inquiry, rather than simple transmission of knowledge.

In summary, the teacher's rationale for scaffolding was rooted in three foundational principles. First, she aimed to support access to complex tasks by providing clear structures and cognitive tools. Second, she prioritized student motivation and emotional resilience through affirmation and relational care. Third, she emphasized personalized support to accommodate individual learning trajectories. These principles informed her dynamic and intentional application of scaffolding, resulting in a classroom environment that was both intellectually rigorous and emotionally supportive. Through this approach, students were equipped not only to complete academic tasks, but also to develop reflective awareness, creative confidence, and a growing capacity for critical literacy.

5. Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that the careful application of scaffolding strategies significantly contributed to the development of critical literacy among EFL junior high school students. By integrating procedural, metacognitive, motivational, and conceptual scaffolding into a biography writing unit, the teacher created an environment in which students were supported both cognitively and emotionally. These findings affirm the growing body of literature that recognizes scaffolding not only as a linguistic support mechanism but as a pedagogical strategy that enables deeper engagement with texts, promotes self-reflection, and cultivates awareness of social realities (Amerian & Mehri, 2014; Echevarria et al., 2004; Karina, 2022; Suryani et al., 2023).

A key finding of this study was the effective use of procedural scaffolding to help students manage complex tasks. Through tools such as writing templates, timelines, and outline guides, students were able to focus on content development and interpretation rather than becoming overwhelmed by structure. This aligns with the work of Wijnands et al., (2021), who argue

that providing cognitive support at the organizational level allows learners to redirect their attention to higher-level thinking. The teacher's scaffolding strategies also closely reflect Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development, where learners benefit from structured assistance as they work toward independent mastery (Vygotsky, 1978).

Metacognitive scaffolding played a central role in enhancing students' critical awareness and reflective thinking. The teacher prompted students to analyze the perspectives embedded in texts, question the author's intent, and consider how their own viewpoints influenced interpretation. These practices align with Daradoumis and Arguedas (2020), who emphasize that metacognitive support helps learners develop self-regulated critical literacy skills. The findings also resonate with McLaughlin and DeVoogd (2004), who highlight the importance of fostering metacognitive habits to encourage deeper comprehension and analytical engagement with texts.

Motivational scaffolding contributed significantly to sustaining student engagement, particularly during moments of creative doubt or cognitive difficulty. The teacher's consistent use of praise, emotional support, and affirming feedback helped build a positive classroom environment that encouraged persistence. This echoes findings by Low and Robinson (2015), who suggest that motivational strategies are essential for helping students navigate challenging learning tasks. These strategies also reflect the principles of Self-Determination Theory proposed by Ryan and Deci (2000), which emphasize that competence, autonomy, and relatedness are key factors in sustaining intrinsic motivation.

The inclusion of conceptual scaffolding in educational practices significantly enhances student engagement with complex themes such as power, marginalization, and historical context. This approach promotes critical analysis of texts and the diverse narratives that shape collective understanding and representation. As emphasized by Lewison et al., (2002), critical literacy requires a thorough examination of language through the lenses of justice, equity, and identity. This is further reinforced by studies that underline the multidimensional nature of critical literacy programs, which integrate both cognitive and sociocultural components (Manoli, 2019; Iyer, 2007). By employing structured discussions and strategic questioning, educators can guide students in uncovering and interrogating the societal implications embedded within texts. This practice echoes Behrman's assertion that effective critical literacy instruction involves encouraging students to adopt resistant reading stances, create countertexts, and engage in self-directed research projects (Behrman, 2006). In addition, critical media literacy frameworks underscore the value of equipping learners with the tools to deconstruct media messages and reflect on their broader societal impact (Funk et al., 2016).

The role of educators in fostering an open and exploratory learning environment is crucial to the success of critical literacy initiatives. Research highlights the importance of preparing teachers to skillfully navigate discussions that address students' diverse cultural and linguistic identities, thereby enriching classroom interpretations of literature (Magangxa & Geduld, 2023; Liu, 2016). Integrating multimodal approaches, including visual and semiotic representations, also contributes to deeper engagement by recognizing the varied forms through which students construct meaning (Rod & Jamie, 2021; Leurs et al., 2018). Conceptual scaffolding extends beyond simply supporting comprehension; it actively challenges students to reexamine their perceptions and empowers them to articulate their interpretations through meaningful and reflective discourse. This dynamic process positions learners as critical participants in their own education, encouraging transformative learning experiences (Beck, 2005).

The integration of critical literacy's four dimensions within scaffolded instruction was effectively demonstrated through pedagogical practices that encouraged students to question societal norms. Reflective journaling and thematic discussions supported the dimension of disrupting the commonplace by prompting learners to challenge normalized assumptions, particularly around emotional struggles, and to examine these experiences from multiple perspectives. This approach aligns with educational theories that emphasize reflective practice as essential to transformative learning in varied contexts (Mullins, 2013; Dover, 2013). In addition, comparative biography exercises helped students identify authorial bias and recognize missing alternative narratives, strengthening their ability to synthesize information and think critically about texts. These strategies cultivate a mindset that challenges established literary authority and supports inclusive literary analysis through sociopolitical perspectives (Behrman, 2006; Doyle-Jones, 2020).

To foster sociopolitical awareness, contextual writing prompts and role-playing activities were employed to help students position themselves as advocates for change. These interactive exercises linked classroom insights to broader societal issues such as leadership, equity, and inequality (Sleeter, 2013; Wild, 2023). Although social justice was not explicitly stated as the primary goal of the instruction, students' creative outputs, including comic strips and reimagined narratives, demonstrated a growing awareness of empathy, advocacy, and inclusion. This progression resonates with Freire's concept of education as a means of empowerment, suggesting that meaningful engagement with content can inspire learners to influence their surroundings (Roohi, 2023; Hossain, 2018). Ultimately, the outcomes of these instructional strategies highlight the significance of integrating critical literacy within a social justice framework to promote equity and transformative action in educational settings (Esau, 2015; Pant, 2024).

While the findings are promising, the study is not without limitations. As a single case study, it was limited to one teacher and one classroom within a specific institutional context. Although the rich data offer valuable insight into pedagogical practice, the scope of the study does not allow for generalization. Furthermore, the research focused on short-term instructional outcomes and did not assess the long-term retention or transferability of critical literacy skills. Future studies should consider longitudinal approaches to determine whether scaffolded instruction has sustained effects on students' critical thinking and language development.

The novelty of this study lies in its integration of critical literacy theory with scaffolded genre-based instruction in a junior high EFL classroom. Previous research has largely focused on critical literacy in higher education or adult EFL contexts (Abednia & Crookes, 2019; Ko & Wang, 2009). This study demonstrates that critical literacy is not beyond the reach of younger learners and that with appropriate scaffolding, students at the early secondary level are capable of examining texts through ethical and political lenses. The use of biography writing as a vehicle for this exploration also represents a unique contribution, as the genre lends itself naturally to reflection on voice, identity, and social impact ('Ain, 2019).

The implications of this study are both pedagogical and institutional. For classroom teachers, it offers a replicable model of scaffolded instruction that integrates critical inquiry with language development. Teacher education programs should incorporate training on scaffolding strategies that promote social awareness and reflective engagement. Curriculum developers are also encouraged to include critical literacy objectives within EFL syllabi, ensuring that language instruction is aligned with broader goals of civic education and social justice.

Future research should explore how scaffolding for critical literacy can be adapted to other genres, such as memoir, news articles, or digital narratives. Studies might also examine how technological tools and collaborative learning platforms can enhance students' ability to analyze multimodal texts. Additionally, there is a need for research that includes a broader demographic sample and investigates how cultural and linguistic diversity influences the implementation and impact of critical literacy practices. Longitudinal studies could offer deeper insight into how critical thinking develops and extends beyond the classroom. This study ultimately shows that scaffolding, when rooted in reflective pedagogy and social responsibility, can turn the EFL classroom into a space for language use, inquiry, and meaningful engagement with the world.

6. Conclusions

This study has revealed that the strategic use of scaffolding, through procedural, metacognitive, motivational, and conceptual support, can meaningfully foster critical literacy among junior high school EFL learners within the context of biography writing. The findings highlighted that when scaffolding is thoughtfully designed and responsively implemented, it supports not only students' cognitive and linguistic development but also their ability to reflect deeply, question critically, and engage empathetically with texts. Throughout the instructional process, students demonstrated active engagement with the key dimensions of critical literacy by challenging normalized assumptions, considering diverse perspectives, addressing sociopolitical issues, and expressing concerns for social justice through their written and creative responses. What sets this study apart is its contribution to the relatively limited research on the integration of critical literacy into lower secondary EFL classrooms, especially through genre-based instruction supported by differentiated scaffolding. It offers a pedagogical model that empowers young learners to use language as a tool for inquiry, interpretation, and the articulation of social awareness.

These insights carry meaningful implications for teaching practice, teacher education, and curriculum development, underscoring that scaffolding should be understood not merely as academic support but as a deliberate strategy to nurture reflective and socially conscious learners. Future research is recommended to expand this model across different genres and learner contexts, explore its relevance in digital and multimodal environments, and examine the long-term impact of scaffolded critical literacy instruction on students' academic growth and civic engagement.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

The Four Dimensions of Critical Literacy

DIMENSION	CHARACTERISTICS
Disrupting the commonplace [D1]	**(D1_A)** Problematizing all subjects of study (including adolescent development and learning) and recognizing current knowledge as a historical product **(D1_B)** Critically examining texts by posing questions like "In what way is this text attempting to influence my perspective?" **(D1_C)** Incorporating elements of pop culture and media as standard components of the educational curriculum **(D1_D)** Examining language used to understand its role in shaping identity, forming cultural discourse, and either reinforcing or challenging existing social structures
Interrogating multiple Viewpoints [D2]	**(D2_A)** Reflecting on multiple and conflicting viewpoints **(D2_B)** Asking questions such as "Whose voices are represented, and which are absent?" **(D2_C)** Focusing on and amplifying the voices of those who have been silenced or marginalized **(D2_D)** Highlighting and emphasizing differences
Focusing on sociopolitical issues [D3]	**(D3_A)** Going beyond the personal perspective to comprehend broader sociopolitical frameworks to which we belong **(D3_B)** Questioning the assumed validity of power imbalances **(D3_C)** Reconceptualizing literacy as a means of cultural engagement and political participation that enhances the involvement of marginalized groups in society, while also serving as an ongoing process of awareness and opposition
Taking action and promoting social justice [D4]	**(D4_A)** Engaging in praxis—reflection and intervention in the world to bring about the change **(D4_B)** Utilizing language to challenge patterns of privilege and injustice and to improve daily life **(D4_C)** Examining how language is employed to maintain domination, how marginalized groups can get access to mainstream linguistic and cultural forms, how varied linguistic expressions can serve as cultural resources, and how community action can change existing discourse patterns

Adapted from Lewison, M., Flint, A.S., & Van Sluys, K. (2002).
 Taking on critical literacy: The journey of newcomers and novices.
Language Arts, 79 (5), 382–392

Appendix 2:

Types of Scaffolding

TYPE OF SCAFFOLDING	CHARACTERISTICS
Procedural [P] (ACTIVITIES)	**(P1)** Students receive clear guidance on the procedures and methods for each scientific problem-solving exercise **(P2)** Providing handouts with instructions on using tools and creating artifacts (e.g., using Sense-maker or designing a webpage with Netscape Gold). **(P3)** Make use of resources, materials, and tools to support a student in learning how to complete a specific task. **(P4)** Individualized instruction, mentoring, and modeling **(P5)** Arranging students in pairs/groups to enable less experienced/ knowledgeable students to collaborate with their more skilled or informed students **(P6)** Stimulating prior knowledge **(P7)** Customize information (connect it to personal experience) **(P8)** The interactive foundation of this scaffolding approach is based on the responses students provide to questions beginning with "How" **(P9)** Think-Pair-Share
Motivational [Mot] (COMMUNICATION)	**(Mot1)** Academic support groups focusing on study skills **(Mot2)** Using synchronous and asynchronous communication tools **(Mot3)** Peer-to-peer guided discussion, facilitated by a teacher/instructor **(Mot4)** Acknowledging someone's achievements (i.e., offering praise), making jokes, and maintaining an optimistic attitude **(Mot5)** The feedback that teachers/instructors use to establish rapport and unity with students, as well as to actively involve them in writing center sessions. MAIN INDICATORS: **(Mot6)** Praise-to highlight students' accomplishments; to recognize specific achievements. Praise should emphasize the students' actions (process-oriented praise) rather than their inherent, fixed traits like intelligence (person-oriented praise). It should be precise (e.g., "Well spotted!" when noting a misplaced comma identified by the student) instead of general (e.g., "Good draft") **(Mot7)** Comments of support or hope regarding students' potential for success to boost confidence, ease stress, and directly promote a sense of agency, often emphasizing effort and persistence. **(Mot8)** Displays of interest in students' well-being are used to build rapport by showing caring and to assure students of a safe and positive learning environment. Care can be shown through various means, including inquiries about students' welfare **(Mot9)** Expressions to show sympathy and empathy- to convey an understanding of the task difficulty, often through sharing personal writing challenges **(Mot10)** Strengthening students' sense of ownership and control to enhance their self-regulation skills and boosting their confidence in their ability to succeed
Conceptual [C] (DEFINITIONS)	**(C1)** Identify concepts and relationships **(C2)** Advance organizers with conceptual hints **(C3)** Identifying information during problem finding **(C4)** Self-directed information finding EXAMPLE Qs: "What issue is highlighted by this evidence?" "Why might it be challenging to prevent this problem from occurring?" "What solutions have others proposed for this problem?"
Metacognitive [Met] (ANALYZING)	**(Meta1)** Explaining the purpose of tasks and activities (Giving explicit rationale or prompting students to think of the rationale behind the tasks) **(Meta2)** Illustrating connections between reading materials, course goals, and tasks (e.g. contrasting two ideas, recognizing differences or similarities) **(Meta3)** Facilitating reflective writing (Offering constructive feedback, both positive and areas for improvement, to promote self-reflection) **(Meta4)** Emphasizing the learning journey (Overseeing the learning process/posing questions to stimulate learning at a low level without requiring deep reflection) **(Meta5)** Fostering interpersonal connections (Posing questions to promote peer interaction and acknowledging group achievements) **(Meta6)** Differentiating between inference/fact/opinion/hypothesis **(Meta7)** Guiding text interpretation (Teachers refer to previous student submissions and then provide comments or ask further questions about their posts)
Strategic [S] (ALTERNATIVES)	**(S1)** Alternative strategies or approaches **(S2)** Utilizing visual aids and images **(S3)** Providing a range of resources in the classroom, such as a dictionary, thesaurus, etc. **(S4)** "When" and "Why" questions.

Note: The characteristics of each type of scaffolding were adapted from Amerian & Mehri (2014), Mackiewicz & Thompson (2013), Lee & Hannafin (2016), Oliver & Hannafin (2000), Bruce (2007), and Echevarria et al. (2004).