

# **Active Engagement in Discussion: Scaffolding for Second-Language Learners**

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## **Abstract**

Active learner participation in the language classroom engages students, adds interest and builds language skills. How, then, can teachers encourage dialogue and open discussion within the language classroom? This paper outlines the use of scaffolding to bolster small-group discussion for second-language learners of English. The notion of scaffolding is based on the work of Vygotsky (1978, 1987). Vygotsky maintained that learning takes place as we engage with peers and more knowledgeable people. In a nutshell, this paper describes pre-planned, designed-in support, leading learners to Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), and it stresses the need for teacher-readiness, or contingent support, both of which are crucial for active learner engagement in the discussion-based classroom. Even reserved students can and will discuss assorted topics and issues if appropriate scaffolding assists them to excel. Although based on work with undergraduate students attending university in Japan, this approach has practical applications for a wide range of language classrooms, especially those second-language classrooms that seek to enhance dialogue and open discussion in the academic context.

*Keywords:* Academic Discussion, Collaborative Dialogue, Scaffolding, ZPD

## **Introduction**

Language educators the world over strive to engage their students and promote classroom environments that are conducive to active learner participation. However, when it comes to the exploration of academic topics in the discussion-based classroom—an environment in which students are often resistant in terms of expressing themselves openly—just how can teachers encourage dialogue and the free-flowing exchange of ideas?

This paper focuses on the use of scaffolding to bolster small-group discussion for second-language (L2) learners of English. It describes the scaffolding of tasks and the support necessary for active learner engagement in the discussion-based L2 classroom.

The tasks outlined below are based on work with undergraduate students, taking general English courses at Japanese universities. However, the suggestions offered

can be modified for a wide range of language classrooms, especially L2 classrooms that seek to enhance dialogue and open discussion in the academic context.

This paper addresses the following issues: what scaffolding is and what it is not; how scaffolding (or the lack thereof) alters classroom environments; why scaffolding is important; and, how scaffolding can be implemented to support productive L2-based academic discussion.

### **Underpinning Theory**

As will be discussed in more detail below, this monograph approaches learning from a sociocultural perspective. Sociocultural theory is based on the work of Vygotsky (1978, 1987). The main components of Vygotsky's learning theory are: (1) learning precedes development, (2) language is the main vehicle (tool) of thought, (3) "mediation" is central to learning, (4) social interaction is the basis of learning and development, and, (5) the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is the primary activity space in which learning occurs. Overall, as reiterated by Walqui (2007), this paper views learning as a process of apprenticeship and internalization—that is, skills and knowledge are transformed from the social into the cognitive plane.

### **A Note on Methodology**

This monograph, perhaps, takes an unconventional approach. Rather than adhering to a defined methodology with clear-cut findings and their implications, the focus here is a little more general: to outline an approach for structuring the L2 classroom environment for the purpose of fostering academic discussion skills.

### **The Literature in Brief**

Any search reveals that there is a body of literature concerned with "scaffolding" and, more generally, "supporting learners." While works such as Gibbons (2015) and Walqui (2007) offer examples of classroom discourse, clearly illustrating how the scaffolding process works, they tend to focus on teacher-to-student interactions and on integrating language teaching with the teaching of content—particularly for younger learners—rather than specifically on facilitating academic discussion in the L2 classroom (led by students). When the higher education situation is examined (see, for example, Wass, Harland & Mercer, 2011), the focus tends to be on helping students attain research competence or develop critical thinking skills. Clearly, studies are lacking on the specific focus for this paper—namely, practical guidelines and suggestions for bolstering academic discussion in the L2 classroom context.

### **What Is Scaffolding?**

The notion of scaffolding as a metaphor for teaching-learning was first proposed by Woods, Bruner, and Ross (1976), being based on the work of Vygotsky (1978, 1987). Vygotsky maintained that learning takes place as we engage with peers and more knowledgeable people. In other words, learning is a social process rather than an individual one.

There is general agreement that Vygotsky was interested not so much in what a learner could do, but in what potential the learner had for development; not what the learner could do alone, but in what the learner could achieve with assistance from others (Vygotsky, 1978).

Scaffolding depends on Vygotsky's conceptualization of the ZPD. The ZPD is "the domain of knowledge or skill where the learner is not yet capable of independent functioning, but can achieve the desired outcome given relevant scaffolded help" (Mitchell & Myers, 2004, p. 196). In other words, the "gap" between a learner's current state and his or her future knowledge is bridged by assistance from others: learning demands social interaction so that the learner can internalise knowledge out of external action. Any new function appears twice: first on the social level, and later on the individual level; first between people (*inter-psychological*) and then inside the person (*intra-psychological*) (Cook, 2016, p. 249).

As Gass (2013, p. 295) puts it, learning results from interpersonal activity, and it is interpersonal activity that forms the basis of individual functioning.

Two important components of the ZPD interact to propel the learner toward further development (Brown, 2014, pp. 295-6): (1) scaffolding is a process of simplifying tasks for learners, of guiding learners in appropriate directions, of marking critical features of language (e.g., form-focused activity), and structuring a task for success; and (2) this process is a "two-way street," accomplished as a collaborative effort between teacher and student (or between student and student), one that neither could accomplish on their own. As Brown and Larson-Hall (2012, p. 156) put it: "Two heads are better than one."

### **Scaffolding: Much More Than Simply "Support"**

Over the years, the term "scaffolding" has been used in many diverse senses (Cook, 2016, p. 250). All too often, scaffolding is used loosely as a synonym for "teaching" or, in many contexts, simply for general "support." However, we must be aware that support alone can create dependency, which can inhibit a student's participation in the practices that formal classrooms reward. Neither is scaffolding merely what Brown and Lee (2015, p. 80) term as "sequencing"—or the ordering tasks from simpler concepts and techniques to more difficult.

Instead, more broadly, scaffolding is the integration of language, subject content,

classroom tasks and thinking skills. It importantly also involves teachers and learners assisting and interacting with each other (Brown & Larson-Hall, 2012, p. 156).

Rather than simplifying tasks—“dumbing down” the curriculum—scaffolding involves challenging students to make leaps forward into their ZPD. That is, intellectual challenge must be high, while explanations must be explicit in terms of what is expected, how to achieve it and why it is important (Wilson & Devereux, 2014, p. A-98).

Hammond and Gibbons (2005) highlight two distinct kinds of scaffolding: “designed-in” and “contingent” support. Designed-in support occurs largely through the planned selection and sequencing of sub-tasks within the context of a major, high-challenge task (which is the main focus of this monograph). Contingent support, on the other hand, involves teachers’ on-the-spot “unplanned” interaction.

To reiterate, in the main this paper describes (pre-planned) designed-in support, leading learners to “collaborative dialogue” (Swain, 2000) and to the ZPD. However, (unplanned) contingent support must not be overlooked. Both types of support require consideration and actuation by experienced educators and discussion facilitators. Both are crucial to achieve active learner engagement in the discussion-based classroom.

#### **Four Kinds of Classroom Environments**

Mariani (1997) describes four general types of formal learning situations. As observed in Figure 1 (below), the four quadrants illustrate each of the four distinct kinds of classroom environments: (1) low support, high challenge (*top right*); (2) low support, low challenge (*bottom right*); (3) high support, low challenge (*bottom left*); and (4) high support, high challenge (*top left*).

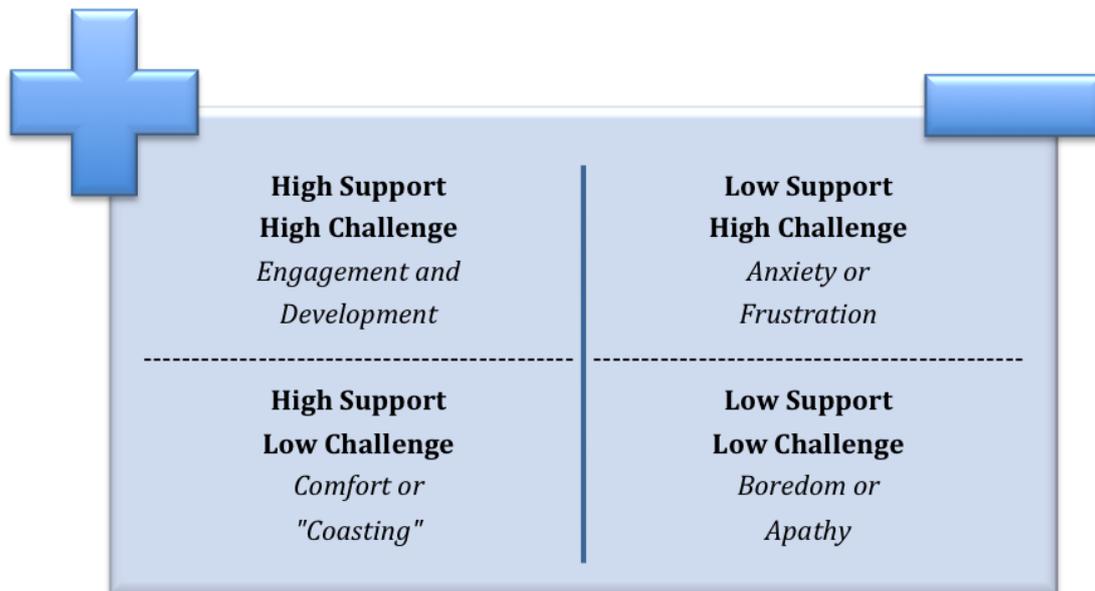


Figure 1. The four classroom environments—derived from Mariani (1997).

Each type of environment has a unique combination of scaffolding (*support*) and task difficulty (*challenge*). The two quadrants on the right-hand side of Figure 1 depict environments that are detrimental to the learning process, and that (may) have negative outcomes for the learners themselves. These kinds of environments are either too challenging with too little help available (leading to students experiencing feelings of *anxiety* or *frustration*), or they are over-simplistic, even too repetitive, in terms of expectations (leading to students experiencing feelings of *boredom* or, worse, *apathy*).

The third quadrant on the bottom-left side of Figure 1 depicts a learning environment that, while being quite supportive of learning in the sense that a substantial amount of assistance with the learning process is available, does not lead to effective learning as students are not challenged enough to excel or cultivate their knowledge in any meaningful way. Instead, here, students relax and, more or less, pleurably pass the time (that is, students are in an environment of *comfort* rather than challenge, and are simply “*coasting*” along—which implies acting without much effort at all on their part).

However, one environment portrayed in Figure 1—that of high support, high challenge (*top left*)—is much more conducive to learning. It is a carefully planned and coordinated learning environment that provides the necessary conditions to both capture student interest and attention (providing for *engagement*), while also pushing students (just) beyond their current ability level(s) (leading to *development*).

While merely a representation, Figure 1 clearly illustrates three types of classroom environments that the approach outlined in this paper desperately seeks to

avoid—namely, that of (1) low support, high challenge (*top right*); (2) low support, low challenge (*bottom right*); and (3) high support, low challenge (*bottom left*). To the contrary, the approach outlined in this paper seeks to (better) achieve a learning environment that is as close as is possible to the ideal—that depicted in (4) high support, high challenge (*top left*). Such a learning environment challenges teachers to maintain high expectations for all students as well as provide adequate scaffolding for tasks to be completed successfully.

### **Why Is Scaffolding Important?**

It can be argued that it is only when teacher support—or scaffolding—is needed that learning will take place. This is the type of environment (one of high support, high challenge) where the learner is likely to be working within his or her ZPD (Gibbons 2009, 2015, p. 16).

In fact, according to Vygotsky (1987, p. 212), instruction is only useful when it moves *ahead of* development. When it does, it impels or awakens a whole series of functions that are in a stage of maturation lying in the ZPD.

It must also be noted that learners can and do greatly assist fellow learners. Of relevance to this paper, Donato (1994), for example, clearly showed that a group of learners, all of relatively equal abilities and all novices, were very much able to collectively scaffold and advance each other's language.

The right kind of support, then, places students in their ZPD—a shared space in which students operate in collaboration with others to tackle tasks. It is here, through discussion and “puzzling through” tasks (Donato, 2000, p. 31) with peers, tutors and lecturers that students build their capacity to eventually undertake similar tasks unaided. Thus, although scaffolding in the ZPD involves shared and supportive activity, its ultimate objective is *independence* and *autonomy* (Wilson & Devereux, 2014, p. A-92).

### **Why Do Students Hesitate?**

Compared to everyday life and what may be termed “ordinary conversation” (see, for example, Markee, 2000), academic contexts and topics are more explicit, more abstract, less personal, and they typically require more subject-specific language. Not unsurprisingly, students frequently feel hesitant to “open up” in the classroom, for innumerable reasons. This is clearly portrayed by a teacher quoted in Scrivener (2012, p. 179): “My students hate speaking. They say almost nothing in class, especially whole-class work. So I end up speaking a lot. It doesn't feel right.”

Based on the author's own anecdotal records and conversations with language instructors over many years, some of the major reasons students hesitate to speak-up

in class, especially in their L2, include (but are not limited to): students are worried about their (low) language level; they feel that they are not knowledgeable (enough) of the topic at hand; they worry about possibly offending someone with their responses; or, they worry about embarrassing themselves by providing surface-level (weak) responses. In addition, in many classes such as large (teacher-centered) lectures, it is frequently “the norm” to *not* actively participate (in terms of the provision of any verbal input into the lesson whatsoever). In fact, in such situations, when called upon to respond to a stimulus provided by the instructor, students may not want to look like a “show off” (either knowledge-wise or language-proficiency-wise) by responding, and therefore they typically do not.

Thus, the language classroom, in particular, can be viewed as atypical in certain respects. It frequently goes against the grain of students’ everyday classroom expectations and experiences by “requiring” them to communicate and verbalize their ideas more often, and by a greater frequency of participants, as compared to other formal classroom situations.

### **Scaffolding for Academic Discussion**

Fundamental support for building active L2-based academic discussion classes is outlined below—divided, for simplicity, into two sections. (1) In terms of the classroom environment itself, what teachers must do from the outset is create an environment that helps alleviate the aforementioned problems and inhibitors to discussion that students wrestle with and, at the very least, not add to them. (2) Following that, interest-generating learning tasks must be implemented in such a way as to heighten challenges for students in a step-wise fashion, whilst placing learners in a social setting conducive to development (i.e., putting them in the ZPD).

**(1) The classroom environment.** This section details the learning environment, which needs careful consideration not only in terms of its physical design and the elements therein (not discussed in this monograph), but also in terms of the overarching classroom “atmosphere” (discussed below). Experienced teachers know that students learn more effectively in an environment that provides emotional support and avoids any type of emotional upset (see, for example, Phillips, 2014; Scrivener, 2012, pp. 179-80; Young, 1999; Zhang, 2000, 2001; among others).

Therefore, in terms of moving towards the goal of generating a lively academic discussion class, teachers must be explicit concerning the nature of the class from the outset so that (a) students know what to expect of the class from the very first lesson (i.e., this class *is* discussion!), (b) students are aware of “the *new* norm,” which is to actively participate, to communicate, to provide input, to seek clarification, and share ideas in each and every class, and (c) students see the teacher more as a discussion

“facilitator,” rather than as a more-knowledgeable other with higher status.

Teachers, as discussion facilitators, must also assure students that (a) participants (including the teacher) will never publicly demean a student for any opinion or idea expressed (after all, an overarching purpose of academic discussion classes such as this is to give students chances to use the L2 to express opinions—granted, even poorly-informed or seemingly immature opinions), (b) our ideas expressed may soon change or evolve (in fact, our ideas may even be different from this very moment forward *because of* the tasks and discussion!), and (c) grammatical mistakes or verbal “errors” are less important than getting our meaning across to fellow participants.

Moreover, teachers must continually encourage and praise student output (and encourage students to praise the efforts of fellow class members) so that all students (a) feel as relaxed and as comfortable as is possible, (b) are increasingly willing to take risks (in terms of participating in the class and producing L2, despite any possible so-called “mistakes”), and (c) experience low(-er) anxiety.

**(2) The tasks.** This section details the designed-in scaffolding of in-class tasks. It highlights the type of tasks that are advisable in order to bolster L2 discussion, the way the tasks ought to be constructed and sequenced, and the ongoing responsibility of teachers to remove support that it is no longer necessary (whilst continually challenging students and encouraging originality). As Oxford (2017, pp. 65-9) reminds us, scaffolding is something that is present when the learner needs it, and removed when no longer necessary to the learner.

Although not explicitly discussed, teachers must be mindful of the need for contingent support, which needs to be implemented on a case-by-case, lesson-by-lesson basis. Much, but *not all*, support can be pre-planned to a degree—designed-in.

**Reading and writing.** The author has come to understand that, at least in the initial stages of laying the foundations of an active L2 discussion class, some kind of “reading and writing” stage is beneficial if not crucial. Reading and writing provides all class participants with a common (baseline) understanding and co-familiarity with the topic. That is, reading and writing removes some of the uncertainties mentioned above surrounding (lack of) topic knowledge or understanding of the issue(s) at hand.

Importantly, reading and writing provides time for students to (a) better comprehend the topic itself, as well as (b) both form *and* formulate personal opinion(s), position(s) and (possible) response(s). That is to say, students are more willing to speak up (especially in their L2) if they have written responses to utilise as a language-generating resource (especially initially).

Not to mention, a reading and writing task-sheet, such as that shown in Appendix 1, provides a “learning product” that the teacher could collect and examine. This can serve as a tool with which the teacher can better reflect upon the effectiveness of a

lesson, and—on another level entirely—task-sheets provide an (additional) incentive for focused learner participation (i.e., students are aware that their output and participation will be monitored to some degree both in terms of their classroom interactions as lessons progress *and* following lesson completion through submitted hardcopy responses and summaries).

***Small groups.*** In terms of building an active discussion-based class, students are typically much more willing to communicate if, at least initially, they do so in front of a limited number of people, especially their peers. The author has found that groups of three members (and no more than four) are most productive (especially in the initial stages, before any large-group consultation or whole-class open discussion is incorporated into the lesson structure). Groups larger than three or four members tend to create a situation of “more talkative (active) members” and “less talkative (passive) listeners.” Students feel less reluctant to speak up in smaller groups. Small groups of three or four give more chances for active participation by *all* members (not just the more extroverted or more proficient members).

***Topics of interest.*** It goes without saying that any class content that is of minimal interest to the participants themselves will be detrimental to learning outcomes and to the purpose of the course as a whole. For best results, the actual issues addressed as each discussion class unfolds must be intrinsically appealing to the participants. Topics need to link directly to the students’ lives in some clear way (e.g., in the case of university students, a topic examining “culture shock” relates to study abroad or working abroad or travel, which university students probably have contemplated or experienced, or will do so). Or, additional stimuli need to be incorporated into lessons that have the potential to capture student interest or appeal to assorted learning styles (e.g., audio-visual materials depicting issues raised in readings and discussion topics, such as showing excerpts of the Australian movie *Rabbit-Proof Fence* (Noyce et al., 2003) in a class where a topic of, say, “language loss” is explored—which, incidentally, is the topic displayed as a sample task-sheet in Appendix 1).

Furthermore, topics must be varied throughout the duration of any discussion course. This is necessary in order to entice students and appeal to the greatest possible number of students (i.e., any discussion course should, over assorted classes, include focal points such as science, personal development, current affairs, and more).

***Setting a routine.*** Students need to be comfortable with the lesson structure itself. As well as knowing what is expected of them (mentioned above), they need to know what to expect in each class. Therefore, each lesson should follow a relatively predictable pattern. It is the author’s advice that students should read and write (with or without additional audio-visual stimuli) *and* discuss in each class. As mentioned, “the *new norm*” must be to actively participate (to talk!) each and every lesson. To

help achieve this goal, worksheet templates and models need to be incorporated into lessons and reused as necessary (e.g., each lesson could use a task-sheet of similar design, such as that displayed in Appendix 1, and guidelines ought to be distributed as pertinent to the topic or student proficiency levels, such as (but not limited to) the Sample Leader's Guide displayed in Appendix 2).

***Increasing learner autonomy.*** Teachers are advised to repeat their set discussion process, however they ought to also gradually remove “predetermined” or “prescribed” elements. For example, task-sheets such as that displayed in Appendix 1 would contain less and less pre-set keywords as successive classes unfold—less chosen by the teacher and more chosen individually by students as they complete pre-discussion reading and writing tasks. Likewise, content checks and discussion-provoking questions composed by the teacher would disappear step by step, being replaced wholly by original questions composed individually by the learners. Generating their own sections of classroom materials (such as discussion questions) challenges students, and they very much enjoy seeking responses to self-made discussion prompts from their peers during the small-group discussion time.

Thus, in the approach outlined in this paper, the teacher has a responsibility to encourage learners' greater and greater originality—that is, each learner progressively tailors more and more of his or her own task-sheet individually, and he or she takes greater and greater liberties with any guide-sheets distributed by the teacher as an aid to discussion. As a case in point, aids such as the Sample Leader's Guide displayed in Appendix 2, which serves to give students an initial framework for holding small-group academic discussions, should be gradually removed as subsequent lessons unfold, or (at least) students should be encouraged to try out original sentences (or discourse markers) which are not pre-composed on the learning document(s).

As students become more and more comfortable with self-determined task-sheets and student-led, student-centered discussions, the teacher is encouraged to increase the challenge and level of expectation further still. This can be done by such means as putting spontaneous (“additional”) discussion questions to the students (e.g., on the whiteboard, or orally), whilst giving little (if any at all) preparation time. The teacher may also gradually invite whole-class responses (even if only briefly at first) to such additional questions or discussion prompts, following small-group discussion time.

Importantly, around the mid-point of the discussion-based course (following, say, the mid-term exam period) students should be encouraged (or required) to make their own materials for upcoming small-group discussions—each student in turn, and following the teacher-made exemplars used up to that point. That is, not only do students individually decide on and compose all elements of the task-sheet for their group, but they also search for and find a suitable text from which to make their own

task-sheets in the first place.

By following the scaffolding suggestions offered above, students arrive at a position where they are confident enough, capable enough and familiar enough with the academic discussion process that they can tackle assorted topics and issues—and do so collaboratively—both through assisting each other *and* through pushing each other beyond current developmental states. In the best-case scenario, certain small groups (and, even, certain whole class groups) will be at a position where open discussion is beginning to be generated rather spontaneously, perhaps relying *only* on a common reading as grounding. Here, students are afforded minimal time for pre-composing any responses whatsoever. Students respond more or less extemporaneously—with a relaxed sense of ease about the process.

### **Limitations**

There is only so much that one teacher and any given class can work through over a restricted period of time. Teachers need to be realistic and set attainable goals and challenges, appropriate for students' proficiency levels.

Scaffolding, as described above, concerns “the process” of development, rather than any set “end point” (Cook, 2016, p. 251). This must be realized.

Based largely on intuition and experience, teachers tend to judge when discussion-based tasks are productive and effective. Challenges remain for educators to more precisely document when students are in the ZPD, knowing who is in an expert (or novice) role and when, and measuring what development occurs and when.

### **Recommendation**

Teachers must modify the framework and suggestions offered above, especially the sample task-sheet (Appendix 1) and example guide-sheet (Appendix 2) (among others not shown), to best match their students' learning environment, educational requirements and ability levels. Please note that, with thought and diligence, the ideas presented above can be refashioned to match any learning situation, level or need.

### **Conclusion**

This monograph has described the scaffolding of tasks and the support necessary for active learner engagement in the discussion-based second-language classroom. It has outlined what scaffolding is, why scaffolding is important, how scaffolding alters classroom environments (for better or for worse), and, finally, how scaffolding may be implemented to support productive, academic second-language discussion.

The approach described has practical applications for a wide range of language classrooms, especially those second-language classrooms that seek to enhance

dialogue and open discussion in the academic context.

Scaffolding sets students up for success, rather than permitting them to fail. As Wilson & Devereux (2014, p. A-93) point out, scaffolding makes a task accessible (rather than simplifying it), emphasises engagement and participation (rather than task completion), allows room for the acceptance of partially correct answers (rather than perfection), and makes a task explicit so as to avoid pitfalls (rather than waiting for students to make mistakes and then correcting them).

For the purposes of this study, productive academic discussion is very much the *journey's end*—arrived at only after all the pre-planning and scaffolding that has been mentioned throughout this paper has been put in place. At times, teachers mistakenly envisage that their students would begin roughly at this point—that is, expressing positions and opinions from the very outset of a discussion-based course. To the contrary, most students (even most classes), especially those in the second-language context, can only arrive at a place of active, open, whole-class discussion following many prior classes of carefully scaffolded practice, support and encouragement.

In sum, scaffolding is support that is valuable to second-language learners because it leads to development, and ultimately, to student autonomy. With respect to academic discussion in the second-language classroom, unreserved output requires the provision of time for students both *to experience* collaborative dialogue and *to learn how* to participate—only possible with attentive guidance, high expectations, and a social space conducive to development through and from one's peers.

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# Appendix 1: Sample Reading and Task-Sheet

## Lost Aboriginal language revived

By Phil Mercer

The sounds of a lost language echo across a packed classroom in suburban Sydney's high school children help to excite an ancient part of Australia's **indigenous culture**.

Dharug was one of the dominant Aboriginal dialects in the Sydney region when British settlers arrived in 1788, but became extinct under the weight of colonisation. Details of its dentists are sketchy but linguists believe the last of the traditional Dharug speakers died in the late 19th Century, and their unique **dialect** only survives because of written records.

In a remarkable comeback, Dharug now breathes again — its **revivalism** helped by the efforts of staff at Chifley College's Shimbved campus in Sydney.

"We've already reclaimed it. That's why there is so much interest. People are already speaking it," said teacher Richard Green, who, like others, has fought passionately to rejuvenate the ways of his ancestors that were lost after European settlement.

"They weren't allowed to speak it. They had to learn English or they were punished," he added.

Language "reviver" When the British ships arrived, they brought with them different Aboriginal languages in a dialect about 60 or 70 are spoken on a day. Of these, roughly half a dozen are strong and are being passed from children, according to John Hobsan University.

"We can regard any language in the world as a pre-linguistic because it has its own unique nature contains information that we might not be able express or find in other languages," he told the press. "These are the first languages of Australia. The suffered incredible attrition at the hands of over years of the invasion of English."

Other indigenous dialects in Australia have been described as "language engineering" — the bor phrases and words or the coming of new words a modern world in ways similar to those which

New Zealand's Maori and the Hawaiians.

"I often compare Aboriginal languages to something someone between Japanese and Latin. That surprises primitive and simplistic which they are definitely not.

"They are an item of cultural pride and are very complex languages," said Dr Hobsan.

**Talking culture**

At Chifley College where around a fifth of the students are Aboriginal, Dharug is taught twice a week with great energy through opinion and song.

"Big language" about the class when asked the word for "language" Dharug, warily and keels are derived from

language courses are open to non-indigenous students, who now have a greater understanding of their rich indigenous history.

Aboriginal students like Steven Dharug, 16, it is all identity and pride.

"I speak it especially for the black table," he said. "You can't speak it out of school."

**Students explore authentic texts (see for example, Wong, King & Tucker, 2011). Students select their own topics of interest and (as per Appendix 2) manage their own discussions.**

per Dharug, 16, was equally enthusiastic. "Aboriginal language because not many people speak it."

included in the college's curriculum to help principal wants to export

"This is a really beautiful language. It's not just for the school but for the Dharug community."

"I've seen that it's going to be such a wonderful thing for the students," she said.

"I've seen that it's going to be such a wonderful thing for the students," she said.

DINHARIC GLOSSARY	
Tellah — warani	Keatipere (family) — muggin
Chifley — warrin	Keatipere (family) — muggin
Possom — warrin	Keatipere (family) — muggin
Kangaroo — bidjagaring	Green — garragaring
White man — mullamulla	White man — mullamulla
Evil spirit — mulla	Evil spirit — mulla

Sample Task-Sheet

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Article Title: **Lost Aboriginal language revived**  
 URL: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/australia-pacific/7925655.stm>  
 Date Retrieved: Sunday, March 18, 2018

Author: **Phil Mercer**

**Key Words (Vocabulary / Part of Speech / Meaning in Context)**

- |               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| 1. revive     | 6. revivalism |
| 2. indigenous | 7. reclaim    |
| 3. dialect    | 8. _____      |
| 4. sketchy    | 9. _____      |
| 5. tongue     | 10. _____     |

**Key Points (Three points, One sentence each)**

- \* Dharug, one of the dominant Australian Aboriginal dialects in the Sydney region when British settlers arrived in 1788, became extinct under the weight of colonisation.
- \* \_\_\_\_\_
- \* \_\_\_\_\_

**Over successive lessons, more and more pre-composed elements are removed in a stepwise fashion. Students take charge of their own task-sheets.**

**Discussion Questions (Your thoughts and ideas. You may use the back of this sheet if necessary)**

1. What do you think about languages becoming extinct?  
 Answer: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Which marginal or non-mainstream language would you like to learn and why?  
 Answer: \_\_\_\_\_
3. What does John Hobsan say about languages in this article? Do you agree with him?  
 Answer: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Answer: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

