

Focus Group 1

Focus group No. 1: Data collection

Introduction: General information – 5 min [NOT RECORDED]

- Welcome the participants
- Remind the research objectives
- Remind the participants that they can withdraw at any moment during the research
- Remind the participants that the research data collected during the interviews and involving themselves cannot be disposed of even in the case they withdraw from the study
- Present conversational rules and co-editing rules to be applied in the focus group discussion and collaborative publication (e.g., be friendly)
- Encourage them to ask each other questions or comment on others' comments
- Ask for permission to audio record the focus group

Phase 1: Worm-up questions – 5 min

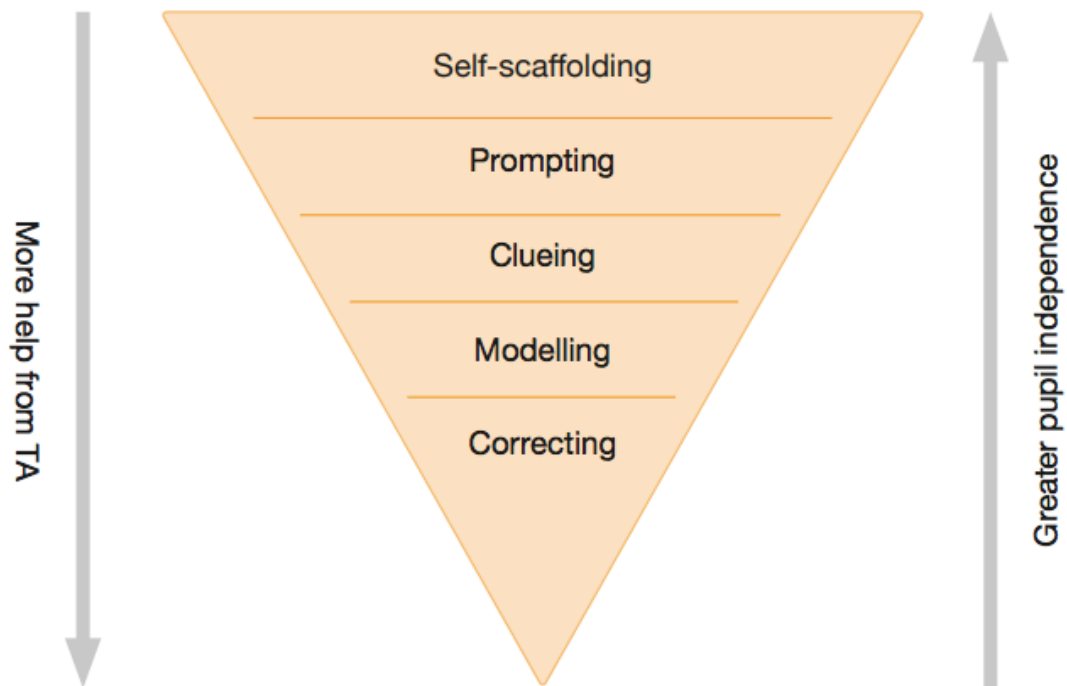
After briefly presenting myself and my research role, I will ask the participants to present themselves and their roles within the schools. The following questions can be used to prompt discussion:

1. Can you tell me your classroom role?
 - How do you support the most?
 - How does your role differ from that of the classroom teacher?

Phase 2: Presentation of and discussion of scaffolding principles – 15 min

Next, I will present Bosanquet et al.'s (2016) framework (see Figure 1).

Figure 1



Note. Adapted from Bosanquet et al. (2016, p. 59)

The framework will be discussed with the participants. Among others, the following questions will inform such discussions:

1. What do you think about the framework?
 - Is it always applicable in your practice?
 - If not, why?
 - Do you think that the framework is a valid tool across different classroom tasks, such as open or closed tasks?

Phase 2: Video elicited discussion – 45 min

I will illustrate three teaching episodes involving a teaching assistant and a child with SEND while completing an open task and a closed task.

Two-partner Open-task-Episode discussion – 15 min

Part 1: Video 1

The episode (Video 1) illustrates a TA and a child with SEND writing sentences describing a picture in the child's textbook. The picture illustrates fire, smoke, firefighters, and bombed houses. The textbook provides some guiding questions to inform the child 'open-answer': What would you smell in this setting?; What would you taste?; What would you feel?

The participating TAs will initially observe the first part of the video, which shows the TA describing the task. Next, the child addresses the task, providing an initial answer, which is rebutted by the TA. This strategy helps the child reshape the content of their answer. Next, he provides further insight into the answer.

The TAs will be invited to think about how and if the observed TA strategies scaffold the child's thinking and learning. They will also be invited to build on the context and provide extra solutions to stimulate the child's thinking and learning. These questions will be used to stimulate the conversation:

1. Can you describe what you see in the video?
 - What is the task about?
 - What does the TA ask from the child with SEND in the extract?
 - What is the response of the child with SEND?
2. What strategies does the TA use to support the child's thinking and learning while completing the task?
 - Does she use prompts, clues, or models of answers?
 - How does the TA interaction affect the child's thinking and learning?
 - Why do you think so?
3. To what extent might you have done things differently/in addition to what the TA does in the video?
 - What choices would you have made in the interactions to promote the child's thinking and learning?
 - What do you think would be the consequences of these other choices?
 - After reminding the participants that they will watch a second part of potential extra support from the TA, I will ask them what strategies they would adopt to further simulate the child's thinking and learning at the end of the video.
 - What do you think would be the consequences of these other choices?

Part 2: Video 1

I will show a second part of Video 1, illustrating the TA providing clues and models of potential answers to promote the child's task completion. Yet, these clues do not seem to stimulate the child's thinking and independent completion of the task, which is ultimately completed by the TA.

These questions will be used to stimulate the conversation:

4. Can you describe what you see in the video?
 - What is the task about?
 - What does the TA ask from the child with SEND in the extract?
 - What is the response of the child with SEND?
5. What strategies does the TA use to support the child's completion of the task?
 - How does the TA interaction affect the child's thinking and learning of the task?
 - Do you think the tactics scaffold the child's thinking and learning?
 - Why do you think so?
 - Would you consider the 'clues' and 'models' of answers used by the TA effective in prompting children's thinking and learning?
 - Why do you think so?
6. Would you use other approaches mentioned in the scaffolding framework, such as modelling?
 - How do these strategies affect the child's thinking and learning of the task?
 - Would they help the child think and effectively complete the task?

Episode 2: Closed task – 57 sec – 10 min

Video 2

In Video 2, a child is addressing a multiple-choice task: finding a mistake in a sentence. Initially, the child selects the wrong answer. Next, a prompt by a TA redirects the child to another wrong answer. To address this, the TA provides clues and models of the answer and, finally, the task answer.

7. Can you describe what you see in the video?
 - What is the task about? What is the goal of the task?
 - What does the TA ask from the child with SEND in the extract?
 - What is the response of the child with SEND?
8. What strategies does the TA use to support the child's thinking and learning while completing the task?
 - How does the TA interaction affect the child's thinking and learning of the task?
 - Do you think the tactics she uses initially, namely prompting, do they scaffold the child's thinking and learning?
 - Why do you think so?
 - What about the strategies adopted later on in the extract, namely, cluing and modelling the task answer, do they scaffold the child's thinking and learning?
 - Why do you think so?
9. To what extent might you have done things differently and/or in addition to what the TA does in the video to further stimulate the child's thinking and learning?
 - What other choices would you have made in the interactions to further promote the child's thinking and learning?

- What do you think would be the consequences of these other choices?

Phase 3: Final discussion – 10 min

In this phase, the thoughts of the session will be gathered.
These questions will be used to stimulate the conversation:

1. Do you see differences in effective strategies across the different videos and classroom tasks?
 - What these would be?
 - If so, why?

This final open question might be raised:

2. Would you add something to this discussion, even if it is not related to the topic of our discussions?

References

Bosanquet, P., Radford, J., & Webster, R. (2016). *The Teaching Assistant's Guide to Effective Interaction: How to Maximise Your Practice*. Abingdon, Oxfordshire | UK: Routledge.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315719832>.