

A Transformational Adult Learning Journey: The Development of a Bespoke Professional Development Program for Educational Assistants

American International International School of Guangzhou

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Research Question

How do Educational Assistants at AISG scaffold learning for multilingual learners?

Synopsis

Our action research aims to explore how EAs scaffold learning, identify Champion EAs and areas for growth, and build an EA PD program

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Timeline

November 2024 Attended MLRC Research Symposium at SSIS

January 2025 Conducted a literature review

March 2025 Facilitated the “Transformative Scaffolding” protocol with EAs to collect data on traditional and transformative scaffolds for learning they are either using or would like to use

April 2025 Developed the Observation Tool

September 2025 Conduct classroom observations using the Observation Tool

November 2025 Analyze and interpret data in order to determine PD needs

December 2025 Create an action plan to launch an EA PD program

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Literature Review

Elley, W. B., & Mangubhai, F. (1983). The Impact of Reading on Second Language Learning. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 19(1), 53–67.

Gass, S. M., Mackey, A., & Pica, T. (1998). The Role of Input and Interaction in Second Language Acquisition: Introduction to the Special Issue. *The Modern Language Journal*, 82(3), 299–307.

Le, H. T. X. (2011). Pre-modified Input in Second Language Learning. *Hawaii Pacific University TESOL Working Paper Series*, 9(1, 2), 27-31.

Loschky, L. (1994). COMPREHENSIBLE INPUT AND SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION: What Is the Relationship? *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 16(3), 303–323.

Moustafa, M. (1987). Comprehensible Input PLUS the Language Experience Approach: A Longterm Perspective. *The Reading Teacher*, 41(3), 276–286.

Wang, S., Chen, Y., & Tseng, W. (2023). Multimodal Instruction and Mentor-Tutoring in an Intensive English Program. *SAGE Open*, October-December 2023, 1–26.

Xu, F. (2010). The Role of Input and Interaction in Second Language Acquisition. *Cross-Cultural Communication*, 6(1), 11-17.

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Literature Review

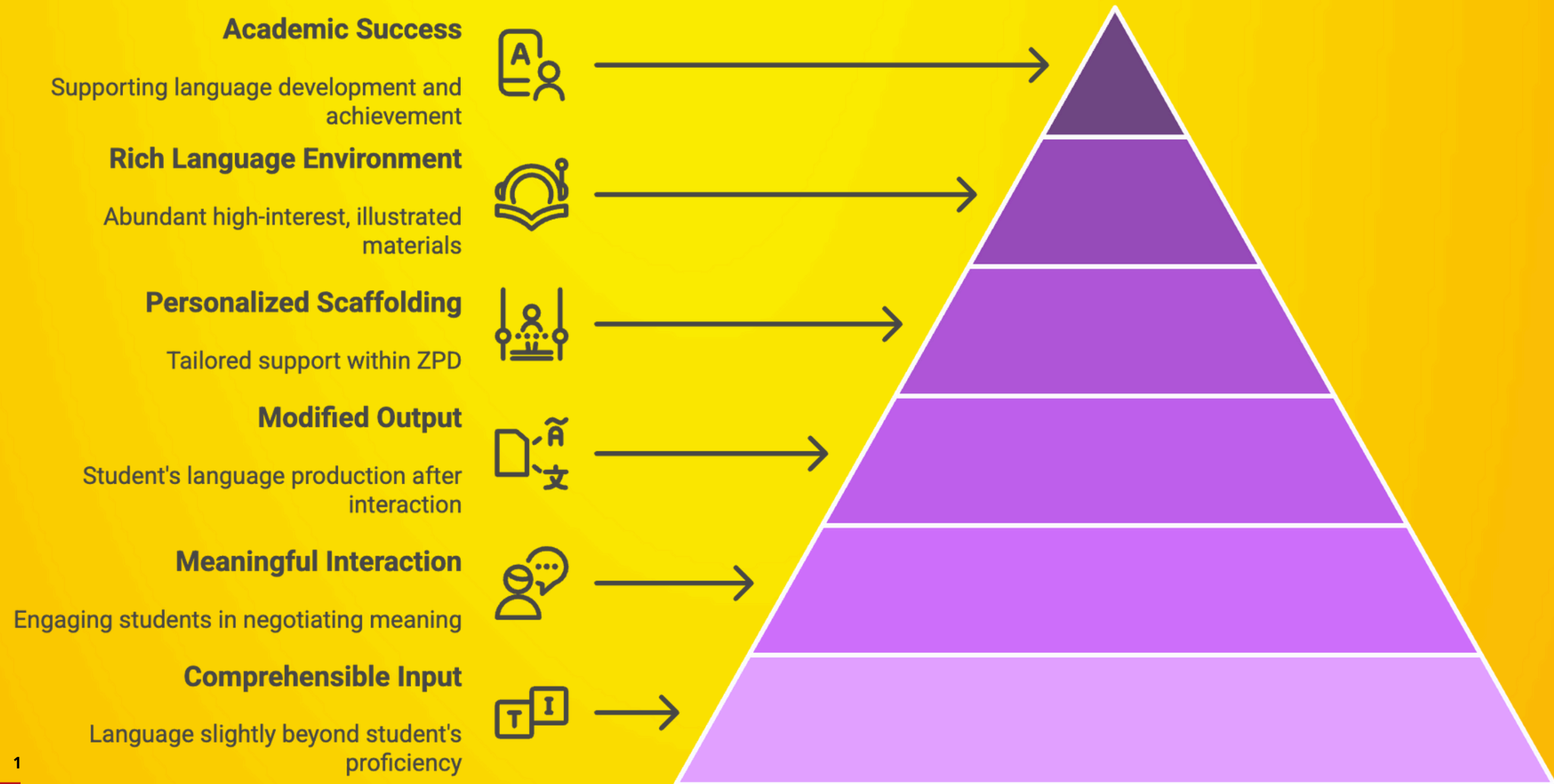
Educational Assistants (EAs) can effectively scaffold learning for multilingual learners by ensuring access to "comprehensible input," which is language slightly beyond a student's current proficiency but made understandable through strategies like pre-modification (e.g., simplification, elaboration) or interactional modifications. Central to this is fostering "meaningful interaction," where EAs engage students in negotiating meaning through clarification and feedback, allowing learners to receive comprehensible input and produce "modified output." Similar to the role of tutors or TAs, EAs can provide personalized "scaffolding" within the Zone of Proximal Development by breaking down tasks and offering tailored support, often incorporating multimodal resources to enhance understanding and engagement. Creating a rich and motivating language environment, for instance through abundant high-interest, illustrated materials (a "book flood"), and using approaches that ensure students understand and experience success, can build confidence and a willingness to continue learning. Ultimately, by focusing on making content accessible and interaction meaningful, EAs play a crucial role in supporting the language development and academic success of multilingual learners.

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Educational Assistant's Role in Multilingual Learning



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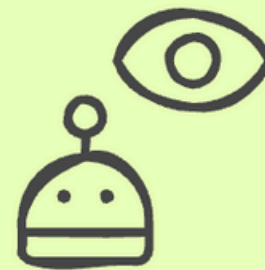
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Methodology: Mixed Method



Qualitative EA PD

Qualitative data
collection using EA
PD.



Qualitative Observational

Qualitative data
collection through
observation
methods.



Quantitative Interpreting



Quantitative data
analysis and
interpretation
techniques.

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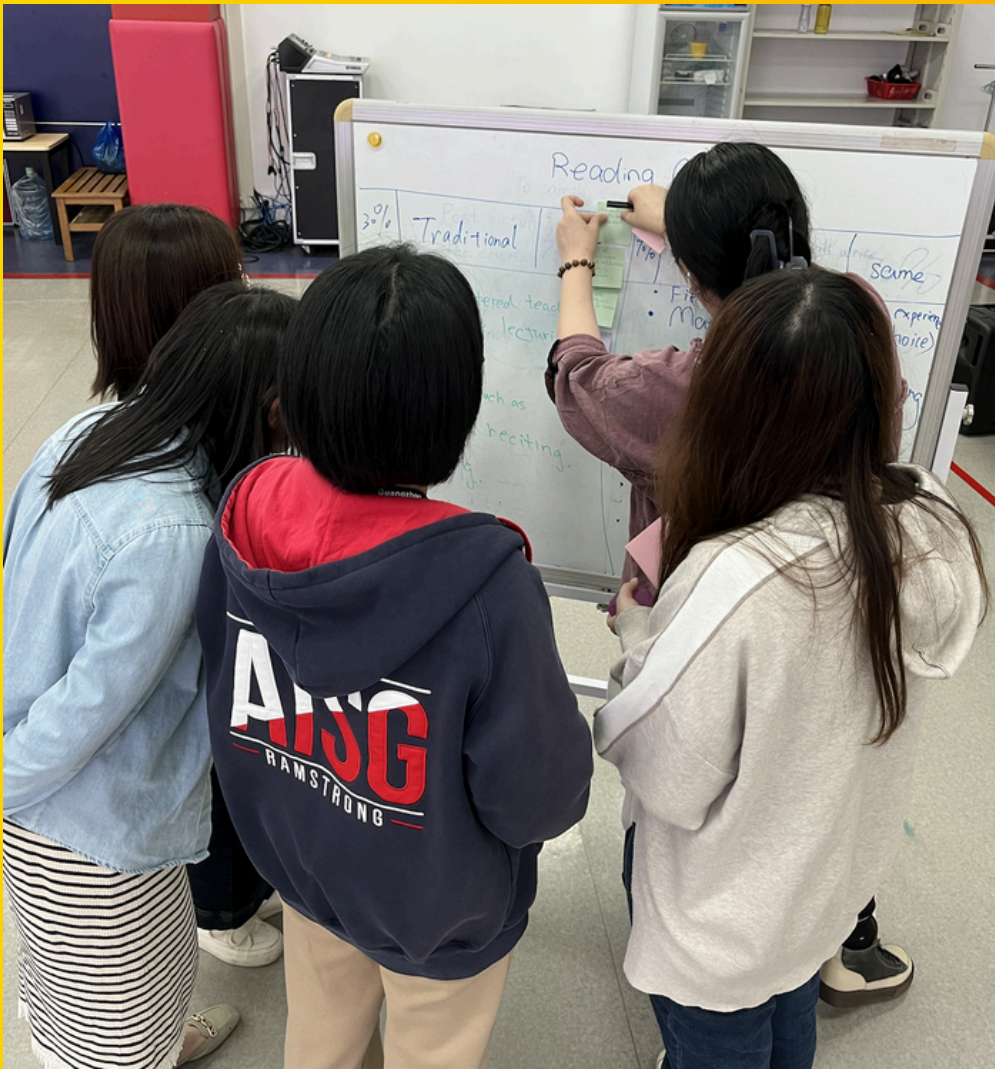
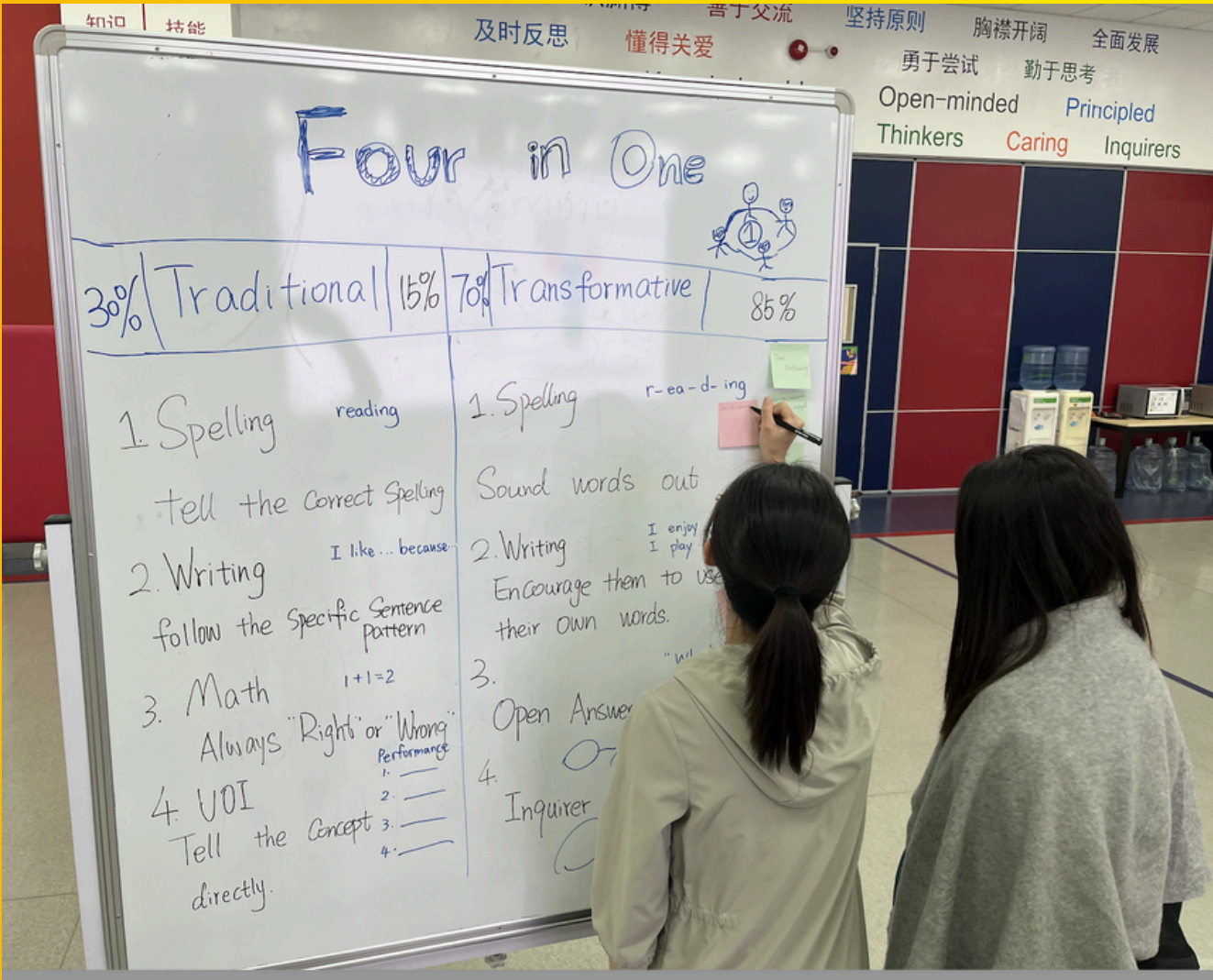


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Transformational Scaffolding PD Session

Team Name					
	Traditional			Transformative	
<p>传统的 </p> <p>list traditional ways of scaffolding being used at AISG</p>			<p>变革性的 </p> <p>list transformative or innovative ways of scaffolding being used or <i>could be</i> used at AISG</p>		

Transformational Scaffolding PD Session



Observation Tool

Pilot the use of an observation tool to gather data about which scaffolds are already being used by EAs

Possibly identify Champion EAs through observations, and they could later lead PD sessions

	Observation Tool for Educational Assistants	
	Educational Assistant's Name:	Observer's Name:
	Scaffolds	Observations
	leverage translanguaging	
	use visual aids to support understanding	
	model tasks or activities (gestures, body language, TPR)	
	check for understanding (asks students to repeat directions, etc.)	
	sentence stems\frames	
	connect to background knowledge	
	collaborative learning techniques (Kagan, turn and talk, etc.)	
	encourage target language output	
	choosing just right text	
	intentional language groupings	
	celebrate diversity (uses culturally relevant and multicultural materials and references)	
	text engineering (embedding visuals, translations, video, and audio to printed or online texts)	
	multilingual substitution tables	
	additional observations and comments	

Next Steps

Beginning September 2025, use the observation tool to conduct observations of Educational Assistants in Grades 1 and 2

Interpret and analyze data from the observations

Identify Champion EAs that could potentially lead professional development sessions for EAs

Identify areas that EAL teachers and consultants could lead professional development sessions for EAs

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