Scaffolding Suggestions for Helping Students Read Biography

STUDENTS' NEEDS	POSSIBLE SCAFFOLDS
Connect the biography to the concept of obstacles: Is unable to link the concept of obstacles to events, decisions, and problems a person faced	• Review the meaning of *obstacles* and how obstacles can affect people's lives. • Ask questions to help the student link the concept of obstacles to the biography he read: what events in the person's life were obstacles? Was there a connection between the decisions the person made and the obstacles he or she faced? What people became obstacles? Explain why.
Determine personality traits and how and why these changed over time: Has difficulty knowing what to look for in a text to figure out personality and changes	• Review personality traits and discuss how these differ from physical traits. • Model how you study what the person says and does to figure out personality traits. Then have the student think aloud and show you how he reasons. • Explain that events in a person's life and the people he or she interacts with can change personality traits. Think aloud and model this process again.
Learn about the person from others' point of view: Has trouble understanding how the people surrounding the protagonist can shed light on his or her personality traits	• With the student's help, list the other people in the biography. • Choose one of these people and show how you figure out how that person views the protagonist and what you can infer. • Choose another person, and help the student go through the process just as you did above.
Infer from the person's decisions: Needs support pinpointing decisions and then figuring out what these show about the person	• With the student's help, list key decisions the person made. • Model how you infer what the person is like based on his or her decisions. You can also infer how a decision affected others or an event. • Turn the process over to the student and give support when needed.
Infer from how the person solves problems: Needs supports analyzing how the person deals with problems and what this shows about the person's character	• With the student's help, list problems the person faced. • Model how you infer personality traits by analyzing how and why the person solved a problem. • Discuss the fact that some people avoid solving problems altogether. If you can identify such a situation, discuss it with the student and consider what inferences can be made.