ELL Tips for Science Teachers

Part I: Getting Started

Welcoming Students

Welcome students with smiles, friendly greetings, and positive body language. Show respect for students' languages and cultures.

Learning Students' Names

Learn to say and write students' names correctly. Refrain from using nicknames or making comments about students' names.

Students' Interests

Get to know students' interests and look for ways to tie content to those interests, such as sports, baking, the outdoors, or wildlife.

Connecting to Content

ELLs have valuable background knowledge. Find out what ELLs know about key topics through graphic organizers and concept maps.

ELLs' Prior Schooling

Learn about ELLs' prior schooling. Some students may have had consistent schooling, while others may have limited schooling.

Science in the Community

Look for ways to bring science to life beyond the classroom, whether in the community, on field trips, or by bringing in guest speakers.

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Part II: Planning Instruction

Teaching Content

When planning your lesson, identify key concepts; background knowledge you may need to pre-teach; and skills such as reading charts and graphs.

Hands-On Learning

Use hands-on learning through:
- Visuals and realia
- Project and inquiry learning
- Peer learning activities

Science Vocabulary

Teach key vocabulary such as academic words (**lava**), words with multiple meanings (**class** and **desert**), and homophones (**sun/son**).

Students' Languages

Use bilingual glossaries and cognates, which are related words in two languages (e.g., the English-Spanish pair **cause/*causa***).

Sentence Frames

Use sentence frames to model key phrases students need to say or write, such as, "____ is a ____ ." (**Water** is a **liquid**.)

Co-Planning Lessons

Try co-planning a lesson with your ELL colleagues; together, you can identify key language tasks for your lesson, such as writing a lab report.

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