

VIDEO HANDOUT: SUPPORTING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN OUTDOOR LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Language is best learned in a low-stress situation, by talking, listening, reading, and writing about things that are of interest to the learner. Outdoor science programs, where students get to explore nature and discuss ideas, can be ideal environments for English learners to develop language and speaking skills.

Supporting English Language Learners in Outdoor Learning Environments: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EJubws3HPA>.

The following techniques and strategies help support English Language Learners during outdoor science:

- Take advantage of how language is best learned: by providing rich-context, high-interest learning experiences in a low-stress environment.
- Ask students discussion questions that access their prior knowledge on the topic, and help them connect what they're learning with past experiences and ideas they already have.
- Use structured partner routines to make it comfortable to have discussions, such as Walk & Talk and Turn & Talk.
- Use strategies like hand signals during discussions so students can participate nonverbally.
- Rephrase instructions and questions to give students more chances to understand, and check often for understanding.
- Model scientific talk and use key academic language in appropriate contexts.
- Give concrete examples and/or visual cues, and take advantage of nature realia ("real stuff").
- Use optional sentence starters to support scientific ways of talking.
- Encourage and/or allow use of students' first language in conversation with others.
- Be strategic and repetitive as you introduce and use key academic vocabulary in context, and avoid the single use of hard words. Use new hard words at least seven times, and in both written and spoken forms.
- Engage all students in using language as a meaning-making tool.
- Show students you value other languages they speak as assets, by speaking in those languages at times (if you can).
- If you don't speak the languages of your students, learn and use some key useful words.
- If you have a chaperone who speaks the first language of your English language learners, you might want to ask them to focus on these students, as needed.

Video discussion prompts (discuss any that you find interesting):

- Was there anything in the video that surprised you or that was particularly striking?
- Do you have questions about using strategies shown in the video? What challenges might you face using these with students, and how might you deal with them?
- What could you try out to better support English language learners and be more responsive to your students?
- What are a few key academic hard words you could focus on, both orally and in writing?
- How are opportunities for science discussion beneficial to English language learners?

REFLECTIVE TEACHING DIAGRAM

Research has found that thinking about teaching as a cycle that involves planning for instruction, teaching lessons, collecting evidence, reflecting, and making adjustments with the goal of improving learning, can all help instructors make the subtle shifts to continually improve their practice over time. You can use this diagram to help visualize the steps in a reflective teaching cycle and then think about how to engage in this type of iterative process.

