

Making Science Accessible

Judith Boal

Jordanstown School, Northern Ireland

W5 – my basis for teaching science

Who benefits from what is being taught?

What are the existing strengths and challenges?

When are the opportunities to develop independent thinking?

Where does the lesson link with real life experiences?

Why would my student want/need to know this?

Talk, not chalk

Discuss with your students about what is going to be happening and any specific requirements— important to consider the individual needs of students.

Talk through the procedure rather than only having a hardcopy of any resource materials. Questions can bring better answers.

Address any safety concerns or fears – potential unusual smells and sounds. Is it safe to touch chemicals and apparatus?

Location, Location, Location

Position in the room – I try to think SAS. Consider Safety aspects, Access requirements and Social needs.

Use of mirroring software can give more independence and freedom as to where the student sits.

Accessibility of light sources and power sockets.

Location of resources – consistency and labelling are key.

Sparking their interest - Flames, fire and fingers!

Gas lighters rather than matches or wooden splints

Adjustable lighting to allow flames to be more easily seen.

Use of a wire gauze above the Bunsen Burner

Colour me in

Increasing Contrast – coloured paper/card, edging of tables.

Texture on label of hazardous chemicals.

Adding food colouring to enhance the visibility of the liquid.

Enhance visibility and differentiation of equipment – colours and/or textures.

Use of apps to 'read' colours.

Take it up a notch - Simple modifications of existing apparatus

Notches cut at intervals along the plunger of syringes can provide a tactile indication of specific volumes.

Syringes can be modified with a pop rivet or push pin, or thumb placed at a particular point on the syringe barrel.

Make use of equipment that other staff or departments may have.
New opportunities without added cost.

Some of my favourite go to equipment/apparatus

Wikki sticks

Talking thermometer

Talking balance

Plastic beakers and cylinders

Hotplate

Coloured electrical tape