



DON'T SIMPLIFY THE SCIENCE

Scaffold the language. Preserve the thinking.



THE IDEA

Simplifying content often lowers the thinking.

EAL learners can handle complex science ideas when we scaffold the language, not the cognition.

Keep the science rich.

Build the language that unlocks it.

Challenge thinking.

Build confidence.



IN THE CLASSROOM

- Use the real technical vocabulary.
- Break the language down, not the concept.
- Pre-teach key words and sentence stems.
- Use visuals, models and worked examples.
- Give time to talk, write and think.
- Check understanding with probing questions.
- Gradually release independence.

THE 4 PRINCIPLES IN ACTION

1



SCAFFOLD THE LANGUAGE

Make the language accessible.

- Pre-teach key vocabulary in context.
- Use visuals, gestures and word banks.
- Provide sentence starters and frames.
- Clarify grammar that carries meaning.

Example: Instead of "evaporation occurs", try "The water changes from a liquid to a gas when it gains enough energy."

2



PRESERVE THE THINKING

Keep the ideas complex and connected.

- Teach the full concept, not a watered-down version.
- Highlight cause, effect, sequence and systems.
- Use real data, models and inquiry.
- Ask questions that require explanation and reasoning.

Example: "Why does the rate of evaporation increase when temperature rises?"

3



BUILD ACADEMIC LANGUAGE

Develop the language over time.

- Teach word families and connecting words.
- Practice speaking, writing and discussing.
- Use language in multiple subjects and contexts.
- Celebrate progress and encourage risk-taking.

Example stems: This shows that ... One reason is ... This is similar to ... because ...

4



GRADUALLY RELEASE

From support to independence.

- Model with full scaffolding.
- Guide with partial support.
- Independent use with feedback.
- Extend and challenge.

Example: Move from sentence frames → short answers → full explanations → extended arguments.



WHY IT WORKS

Students engage with real science ideas.
Language grows with understanding.
Thinking deepens. Confidence builds.



EAL UPGRADE

- Create word banks and glossaries.
- Use dual coding and graphic organisers.
- Teach prefixes, suffixes and root words.
- Revisit and recycle key vocabulary.



TRY IT TOMORROW

- Pre-teach 5 key words.
- Use a sentence frame.
- Ask a higher-order question.
- Give students think time.
- Check understanding with a follow-up.



TEACHER LANGUAGE

*"The science is the same. We're building the language."
"You're not just learning words, you're learning ideas."
"Use the language scientists use."*

DUNCAN ROSE

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