

Teacher Toolkits for FOSS and STC Through LASER

By Sherry Schaaf

As teachers of science, particularly in the elementary grades, we continually seek resources that can truly help us with the curriculum we are teaching. Many elementary teachers do not have adequate training in all the various content areas of science they might be responsible for; kit training can sometimes be erratic or non-existent. Once back in the classroom after training, we sometimes wish for access once again to all the aspects of whatever training we received.

Washington State LASER (Leadership and Assistance for Science Education Reform) has been developing teacher toolkits for FOSS and STC grades K-6 (this is an ongoing process, with more toolkits added as they are completed, and middle school toolkits in the works).

To find the list, go to

<http://www.wastatelaser.org/support/toolkits/index.asp>.

Here is what you will find if you click on the Magnetism and Electricity FOSS kit for 4th grade:

Magnets & Electricity Investigation 2: Making the Connection

Part 1 Lighting a Bulb

Students explore simple electric circuits.

[1. Grade Level Expectations](#)

[2. Concepts](#)

[3. Lesson set up and Management](#)

[4. Teacher Tips](#)

[5. Literacy Support](#)

Grade Level Expectations are the GLE's addressed in that part of the investigation.

Concepts are the big ideas behind that investigation, a snapshot of what the students should be learning during the time of investigating.

Lesson set up and management is a quick and easy-to-read summary of what you should have the kids do, management of students in the context of the investigation, and what you should prepare beforehand, that might not easily be

found in the original teacher's kit. There are many times small pictures to help show different techniques and results that help you understand "Oh, this is what they meant".

Teacher tips are just that...you know whoever wrote these tips has taught the kit more than once, and is aware of the "tricks of the trade" that teachers like to have when doing an investigation or activity for the first (or second!) time.

Literacy support gives tips for integration of reading and writing strategies, notebooking and journaling.

On each page, there is also a box in the upper right which has, among other things, a **Literature Link** and a **Student Preconceptions** link. If you are looking for books to read to your students that connect with the topic, or ones to add to your classroom library, this is the place to go. The student preconceptions link tells you what ideas and misconceptions your students may have about the topic. To understand what kids think they know about a topic is the key to helping them give up those misconceptions and truly learn the concepts that we need them to know.

This website by LASER is a good resource to add to your own teacher toolkit. Check back on the site as more and more toolkits are added to the list!

For more information on LASER contact:
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