

FAST FACTS

Participants:

Crystal Ramos, Bilingual Coach, Kennewick School District

José Aparicio, Grade 5 Dual-Language Teacher

Amanda Brown, Grade 4 Dual-Language Teacher

Elida Alvarez, Grade 4 Dual-Language Teacher

Institution Involved:

Kennewick School District
Kennewick, Washington

Challenge: Teachers in dual-language programs need high-quality, comprehensive science education resources in Spanish.

Solution: Use Carolina's Building Blocks of Science™ 3D Spanish program.

Results: Teachers have fully translated resources with which to plan and teach, students enjoy full immersion in Spanish during science experiments, and teachers and students are able to integrate science with other subjects—all in Spanish.

CONTACT:

Carolina Biological Supply Company

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Building Blocks of Science™ 3D Spanish Resources: Advancing Dual-Language Learning with Clarity and Fidelity



Students enjoy hands-on science experiments that also strengthen their Spanish language learning.

Kennewick, a city in southeast Washington State, is part of a thriving multicultural area. Its school system, Kennewick School District, reflects the robustness of the community. The district serves nearly 19,000 preK–grade 12 students at its 32 schools.

Kennewick School District offers its students 26 different learning programs, including a Dual Language Immersion Program for students in grades K–8. The goal of the program is to create bilingual, biliterate, and cross-culturally aware learners by the end of grade 8. The dual-language classes use a 50:50 model in which 50 percent of the instruction is in English and 50 percent is in Spanish. Half

of the students in each classroom speak English at home, and half speak Spanish at home. In grades K–2, students learn to read and write in Spanish and English. In grades 3–5, students begin to use their dual-language skills in math, science, and social studies.

Advancing Immersion

Crystal Ramos, the district's biliteracy coach, leads the effort to identify and integrate Spanish-language science resources into the dual-language classrooms. "A key challenge for grades 3–5, which is when students begin studying science in Spanish, is finding high-quality, comprehensive materials in Spanish," Ramos says. "We found it difficult to find materials that provide all of the components in Spanish, including the teacher's guide." Ramos and the Kennewick teachers appreciate Carolina's Building Blocks of Science™ 3D Spanish materials.

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“It [Building Blocks of Science 3D Spanish] saves time with translations, the readings are great, the experiments are amazing, and teachers have all-Spanish access to many materials.”

— Elida Alvarez, Grade 4 Dual-Language Teacher

Building Blocks Spanish is a comprehensive Spanish language science learning program that strives for 100 percent Spanish use. That means everything from background reading and instructions to labels and assignments are in Spanish. As Ramos explains, “The fidelity of all the materials being in Spanish means our students are truly immersed in the language.”

Ramos and her team found it particularly difficult to find a resource with the teacher’s guides in Spanish. “Carolina took the initiative to prepare the teacher guides in Spanish based on feedback received from us,” she explains. “Now the teachers don’t have to translate that content, so they can focus on teaching and be truly immersed in Spanish along with their students.”

Integrating Subjects

Building Blocks Spanish helps students and teachers integrate science with other subjects—such as reading, writing, and math—all in Spanish. For example, the quantitative data students gather as part of their experiments must be evaluated and tabulated, strengthening their Spanish mathematical literacy.

Having their science reader in Spanish helps students build a deeper Spanish vocabulary that includes scientific terms and



language. The roots of many scientific terms are Latin- or Greek-based in both the Spanish and English words, which helps students make connections and strengthen their Spanish literacy.

Building Blocks Spanish also builds students’ communication skills. José Aparicio, a grade 5 dual-language teacher, says, “I am noticing that most students engage in writing a bit more, while others express their learning through speaking.” Building Blocks Spanish provides ample opportunity for students to learn and practice using both oral and written communication skills.

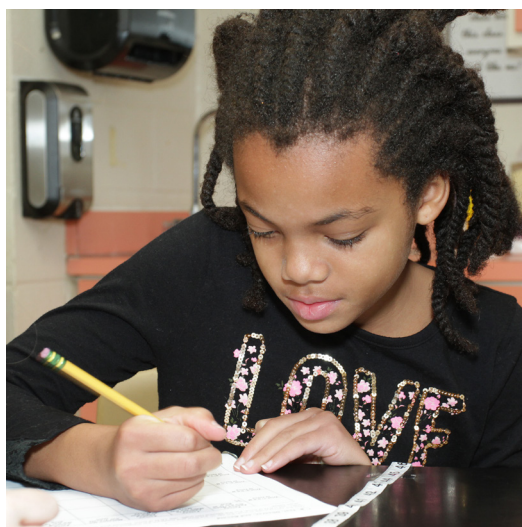
Engaging Students

The Kennewick teachers are pleased to report that their students really enjoy the Building Blocks Spanish science experiments. Elida Alvarez, a grade 4 dual-language teacher, finds her students are more engaged and look forward to science time. “Before [we had this program], it was hard to find materials to engage students, but now

they really like doing the hands-on experiments, especially the dissections,” she says.

Aparicio has similar encouraging results with his students. “The experience that students get to have with the units is great,” he says. “My students enjoy working with all the supplies and applying other subjects, such as math, during our lessons.”

Students also benefit from the online resources that are part of the Building Blocks Spanish program. The online materials



Students benefit from comprehensive Spanish learning materials for dual-language programs.

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can help a student who is having difficulties and allow other students to challenge themselves in the language. Aparicio explains, “It provides an opportunity for students to practice and learn at different levels.”

Supporting Teachers

Teaching science to elementary students in a language that is new to them presents unique challenges for teachers. They need curricula and supporting

materials that are grade appropriate; easy to implement; scientifically sound; engaging for students; and, of course, linguistically accurate. The Kennewick teachers enjoy all these benefits and more with Building Blocks Spanish.

Amanda Brown, a grade 4 dual-language teacher, appreciates that Building Blocks Spanish “supports me as a teacher by helping me meet the NGSS.” And Brown, Alvarez, and Aparicio all find the online resources helpful in their preparation and teaching—no translating required.



Teachers from Kennewick School District practice a hands-on science investigation in preparation for introducing the activity to their students.

Building Blocks Spanish helps teachers be better prepared, so they can provide students with a look ahead and get them excited about doing science. As Alvarez describes it, “The readings are at-level and connect to what we are teaching in class, so it makes it easy for students to build their knowledge.”

The teachers report they

are helped tremendously by having the teacher’s guide in Spanish. Ramos says, “We really appreciate how Carolina took the time to survey us to find out what was needed and then quickly translated the teacher’s guide.”

Alvarez draws a clear picture of the benefits of having Building Blocks Spanish in her classroom: “It saves time with translations, the readings are great, the experiments are amazing, and teachers have all-Spanish access to many materials.”

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(Carolina—here to support teachers and students as they learn and grow!)

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