DOINGWHATWORKS

Video
FULL DETAILS AND TRANSCRIPT

# A Science-Based Literacy Curriculum

Marshall Elementary School, California • January 2010

## Topic: Increased Learning Time: Beyond the Regular School Day
## Practice: Organize Instruction

### Highlights

- A third-grade classroom in the after-school program at Marshall Elementary School uses a science-based literacy curriculum that aligns with the science focus of the school day.
- The curriculum used is engaging and gets students motivated to build vocabulary and comprehension as well as address science standards in the same format they will see on standardized tests.
- Volunteers work with small groups in the classroom to help build students' independent study skills.

### About the Site

**Marshall Elementary School**
**San Francisco, CA**

**Demographics**
78% Hispanic
7% White
3% Black

2% Asian
90% Free or Reduced-Price Lunch
65% English Language Learners

Marshall Elementary School's after-school program aims to promote students' academic skills and enrichment experiences by using the following strategies:

- A full-time lead teacher aligns planned program activities with the regular school day.
- After-school staff and a parent coordinator maintain regular communication with parents.
- The after-school program uses reading curricula aimed at helping English language learners.
- The after-school program director monitors students' progress and works to tailor the program to their needs.
- After-school teachers receive ongoing coaching and professional development.

## Full Transcript

Student reading aloud: . . . the crumbling or shaking movement of Earth in phases [indistinguishable] in Earth's crust.

Teacher, to student: Great, so that is the definition of the word *earthquake*.

Rebecca Carrillo: This is a third-grade classroom, and they are working on a science-based literacy curriculum with one teacher and three to four volunteers.

The science-based reading curriculum is really important because it helps to align us with the school day. The school is a science focus, so we are always looking for ways that we can connect that to after-school. We chose to use this science-based reading curriculum because it's very engaging. It's really exciting, and it gets the kids motivated to start building the skills that they need to really succeed.

Teacher, to student: Shelby, why don't you read us the next paragraph and the next question.

Student: Earthquakes happen every day. Most earthquakes are very weak. We don't even notice when they happen.

Carrillo: The materials are designed to really build vocabulary, work on comprehension, and also to start addressing those district standards and the state standards for science, but through a really engaging format of question and answer. So the questions that the students are seeing in these booklets that they are going through are the same questions that they are going to be seeing on these standardized tests that prove so challenging for English language learners. So it's starting during the after-school program to set them up for success in the school day.

Student: When do earthquakes happen? (A) Every day. (B) Only at night. (C) Once a week.

Teacher, to student: Mariah, what do you think? Does that paragraph say how often earthquakes happen.

Student: [nods]

Teacher: How often?

Student: Every day.

Teacher: Every day.

Carrillo: We are really lucky to have volunteers that are able to come in to the classrooms, and they are trained by myself and the lead teacher to work with these small groups and also act as floaters within the classroom. We are really trying to build these students' independent study skills. So we are really working towards these volunteers just facilitating the students' own independent completion of this science-based reading curriculum.

We try and provide as much training as we can onsite. A lot of that relies on the help of our lead teacher, who can come in and provide fall and spring trainings. We have two mandatory trainings throughout the year, and then optional activities are for the volunteers to come and actually engage in our professional developments that we do with the coordinators. If there are specific skills that we would like the volunteers to work on, we invite them to come participate in our professional developments.