American students rank 25th in math and 21st in science compared to students in 30 industrialized countries("Statistics on American," 2006). It is a well known fact that in America, many of our schools are underfunded, our educators are undertrained, and our students are underachieving. As a science educator, I am trying to change that. I am setting higher goals for my science students, creating an atmosphere of questioning and inquiry, and increasing interest in not only education, but more specifically, science.

Students learn best from a variety of teaching methods. By identifying and applying their strengths based on multiple intelligences and learning styles, students are set up for success. Students need positive reinforcement, descriptive feedback, and clear expectations of learning goals and targets. Students need to develop and refine skills to help them be successful in the 21st century. Only 40% of teachers said that their students are using computers in school often(Gray, 2010). With the technology available, my goal is to have students using technology at least 2-3 times weekly. By learning to think critically, incorporate technology into their learning, and implement cooperative learning practices, students maximize their potential to not only be successful in the science classroom, but also in their future endeavors. Individually, they must be encouraged to be confident in their responses, incorporate reliable evidence into their opinions, set and achieve high personal and educational goals, and listen to and incorporate constructive criticism for improvement.

As American citizens, students are living in a rapidly evolving society. Given that there is only one Earth, students must learn how to live sustainably and encourage others to do so as well. They will have to make important decisions as voters which will affect not only themselves, but everyone around them. As the population crisis continues, an increasing number of environmental policies are showing up on ballots. President Obama recently allocated $80 billion from the American Recovery Act for use in the development of alternative energy sources("Energy and the," 2010). Students learn about current and alternate energy sources in the science classroom. As citizens and investors in this country, it is imperative that I am educating current students for both current issues and potential issues which may arise in the future.

Students will approach Integrated II Life Science in a manner which relates it to their life. They will focus on their behaviors and traits in order to relate them to the content. Lab activities, webquests, digital media presentations(i.e. Movie Maker videos), collaborative learning, and self and peer evaluations will be used to pique interest and create curiosity about previously foreign ideas. Without life science, students may be living on a planet that they simply do not understand. They are forced to gain knowledge and explanations based on common misconceptions and hearsay rather than factual, scientific evidence.

Because everything that makes up their bodies and the world around them is relative to the course, Integrated II lends itself to the application of content to student’s daily lives. Students will be able to describe how their body works and the delicate balances it takes to maintain stability, explain why they look and act like they do, discuss and provide evidence about how the environment functions, and argue the importance of maintaining a sustainable relationship between humans and the environment.

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