

SCIENCE BUDDIES in Action



Teacher

Maureen Guzman
Houston, TX

Summary

As science fair coordinator at her school, Maureen Guzman is in charge of overseeing two annual science fairs: one for 4th- and 5th-graders, and one for the lower grades. When she and her students need help generating ideas, they turn to Science Buddies.



Overview

At Ms. Guzman's elementary school, where most of the students are English language learners, science classes have a dual purpose: to help students understand new concepts and to improve their fluency in English. Each year, students showcase their new science and language skills in a science fair.

As science fair coordinator, Ms. Guzman oversees not one but two science fairs: one for the upper grades, who do group projects; and one for the lower grades, who do whole-class projects. While searching for ways to improve the quality of the students' projects, Ms. Guzman discovered Science Buddies in the National Science Teachers Association magazine *Science and Children*. With the support of the principal and other teachers, Ms. Guzman integrated Science Buddies into the curriculum. Students used the Topic Selection Wizard to help them find ideas for their science projects, and got sources for background research using Science Buddies' resources.

Ms. Guzman reports that in the upper grades' science fair, students improved their ability to quantitatively communicate their findings. "The judges commented on the increase in measurements and graphs," she says. She notes that students produced projects on a wider variety of topics, as well.



Ms. Guzman and her colleagues also noticed significant improvement in the lower grades' science fair, in which students tour other classrooms to hear presentations on the class's science project. "Teachers and students enjoyed the tour experience. One teacher mentioned that the children said it was like going to a museum," she says. "Student participation was greatly increased. It was interesting to listen to the children's understanding of their projects."

Ultimately, Ms. Guzman states that Science Buddies helped her school's science fairs make the grade. "Thank you again for the wonderful resources that Science Buddies provides for our students," she says. "The science fair has taken on a new meaning and a greater interest due to Science Buddies. We are grateful for your support."