Light Harvester Activity: Photon Capture in Photosynthesis

AP Biology/College Level Teacher Guide

Overview

This guide supports implementation of the Light Harvester Activity: Photon Capture in Photosynthesis using the 5E instructional model.

Learning Objectives

- Students will model light-dependent and light-independent reactions
- Students will trace energy transformation from photons to chemical bonds
- Students will analyze the interdependence of photosynthetic reactions

Standards Alignment

- **ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE 3.1.A.1:** Photosynthesis captures free energy from the environment.
- **ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE 3.1.B.1:** The light-dependent reactions of photosynthesis capture light energy.
- **ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE 3.1.B.2:** Photosystems embedded in the thylakoid membrane absorb light energy.

Prerequisites

- Understanding of ATP and NADPH
- Knowledge of chloroplast structure
- Familiarity with redox reactions

Time Estimate

50 minutes

Materials Needed

- Computer/tablet with internet access
- Student Activity Sheet
- Calculator for stoichiometry

Teaching Tips by Phase

Phase 1: ENGAGE (5-10 minutes)

- Start with the phenomenon or problem presented
- Elicit student predictions and prior knowledge
- Create cognitive dissonance if possible
- Build excitement for investigation

Phase 2: EXPLORE (15-20 minutes)

- Allow students to investigate with minimal guidance
- Circulate and ask probing questions
- Encourage systematic data collection
- Note common discoveries and difficulties

Phase 3: EXPLAIN (10-15 minutes)

- Have students share their findings first
- Build on their observations to introduce concepts
- Address misconceptions directly
- Connect to broader biological principles

Phase 4: ELABORATE (10 minutes)

- Apply knowledge to new scenarios
- Make real-world connections
- Encourage deeper investigation

- Support transfer of learning

Phase 5: EVALUATE (5-10 minutes)

- Use varied assessment strategies
- Focus on conceptual understanding
- Provide immediate feedback
- Plan follow-up based on results

> **Remember:**
>
> The goal is student discovery through guided inquiry. Resist the urge to explain concepts before students have explored them!
