

Through Course Task (TCT) Facilitation Guidance

When? For the 2017 TCT Field Test, every KY teacher of science (K-HS) is expected to use one TCT with their students by March 2017 using the collaborative TCT Process. The March date is set to avoid interference with other testing expectations, which vary widely by grade-level, and is not set to meet a completion or submission requirement for KDE. Because authentic engagement with the collaborative TCT process is the desired outcome for all Kentucky teachers of science during this field test, if a teacher team needs additional time to meet this outcome and it does not compromise other school or district objectives, then additional time for completing the TCT process is acceptable.

Requirements to KDE? Each district must be prepared to submit one piece of student work per grade-level to KDE; at the high school level, this will typically be one piece of student work per science course that uses KAS for Science. The reason for collecting student work is not to evaluate districts, schools, teachers, or students. Student work from the field test will be collected to evaluate task quality and general grade-level performance characteristics.

Submission of student work will likely be electronic. Details about student work submission will come through the Office of Assessment and Accountability to District Assessment Coordinators (DACs).

Can TCTs be modified or are they to be used exactly as they are presented in SharePoint? As long as the assessment intent of the task is not compromised, teacher teams are encouraged to modify the presentation of TCTs with students in order to meet the needs of their students; what this specifically looks like will vary widely by grade-level. For example, information may be re-packaged, chunked, or presented differently to different students based on need so all students can effectively access the information. Keep in mind that setting up the task and engaging students with the task is critical to putting students in a position to perform -- demonstrate their sense-making abilities. So, a general rule of thumb for determining how a TCT can be modified and still meet expectations: a TCT can be modified as long as the assessment intent of the task is not compromised. The assessment intent of the task is defined in the TCT Development Annotation provided with each task.

How much can I “help” my students during TCT facilitation? Teachers are encouraged to create a classroom culture that is conducive to authentic engagement with the task in order to get accurate evidence of each student’s ability to use the SEPs and CCCs in some science context. A “testing environment” is not desired, but rather a safe environment for making sense of the phenomenon within the task is desired. Thus, teachers are encouraged to collaboratively plan for facilitation questions and

prompts that stimulate student thinking rather than direct student thinking. Teachers should provide support to facilitate access to the task – if a student cannot access the task then no evidence of student performance is obtained. The goal is to get accurate evidence of each student’s ability to attend to the assessment intent of the task, and some students will need more support than other students. Ideally, teachers will document supports given. It is expected that any teacher’s proficiency with facilitating and collecting accurate evidence of students’ performance (including documentation of supports) will improve over time.

Students should understand that the task is intended to help them both develop and evaluate their ability to use the SEPs and CCCs to make sense of things. While students typically produce a final product with each task, this product is not produced for a grade but rather a formative indication for how each student’s science skills are developing – areas of strength and weakness – and both teachers and students should focus on ways to improve based on information gathered.

Can students work in groups when engaging with a TCT? In general, the decision to work in groups or independently is a teacher decision; as long as the teacher feels that evidence of individual student performance relative to the assessment intent of the task can be gathered in a group setting, then group work is acceptable. Many teachers feel that group engagement is appropriate for part of a task, but individual work is essential to get accurate evidence of each student’s performance relative to the task assessment intent. Some teachers feel that group work is never appropriate. Regardless, this is a decision for each teacher dependent on local circumstances.

Do teachers need to keep all student work from TCTs? As mentioned, KDE will collect up to one piece of student work per grade-level per district for the 2017 TCT field test. Beyond this, teachers are not required to keep student work for the TCT experience; however, teachers may want to keep some or all student work for various purposes. For example, teachers may want to use the task in future years, or teachers might use the student work in follow-up lessons. Student work that is produced during highly engaged experiences has many valuable uses. Some teacher teams who developed the TCTs being used in the 2017 field test found the quality of student work to be quite high, and believe that to be due to high student engagement with the task. When selecting work to submit to KDE and for classroom use, keep in mind that high quality student work does not mean that the work is highly accurate, but that the work provides clear evidence of student process skills, reasoning abilities, and perhaps both content accuracies and inaccuracies.