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Implementing the Science and Engineering Practices in Your Classroom

Rogers 2013-2014

- Defining the Practices
- Asking Questions & Defining Problems
- Developing & Using Models
- Planning & Carrying Out Investigation
- Model Lesson: Make a Rocket
- Implementing Practices in Your Classroom

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A Framework for K-12 Science Education
Three Dimensions of the Framework
(Book p3, PDF p18)

I. **Scientific and Engineering Practices:** Standards of Science Practice

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1. Asking Questions & Defining Problems (54, 69)
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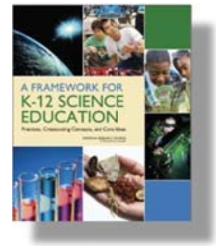
This framework is a multiyear progression that deepens understanding of crosscutting concepts and disciplinary core ideas. All three dimensions need to be integrated into the system of standards, curriculum, instruction, and assessment. There is no single approach on how to integrate these dimensions and examples of how it can be achieved are needed.

Practice 1 Asking Questions and Defining Problems



Questions are the engine that drive science and engineering.
Science asks

- What exists and what happens?
- Why does it happen?
- How does one know?

Engineering asks

- What can be done to address a particular human need or want?
- How can the need be better specified?
- What tools and technologies are available, or could be developed, for addressing this need?

Both science and engineering ask

- How does one communicate about phenomena, evidence, explanations, and design solutions?

Asking questions is essential to developing scientific habits of mind. Even for individuals who do not become scientists or engineers, the ability to ask well defined questions is an important component of science literacy, helping to make them critical consumers of scientific knowledge.

Scientific questions arise in a variety of ways. They can be driven by curiosity about the world (e.g., Why is the sky blue?). They can be inspired by a model's or theory's predictions or by attempts to extend or refine a model or theory (e.g., How does the particle model of matter explain the incompressibility of liquids?). Or they can result from the need to provide better solutions to a problem. For example, the question of why it is impossible to siphon water above a height of 32 feet led Evangelista Torricelli (17th-century inventor of the barometer) to his discoveries about the atmosphere and the identification of a vacuum.

Questions are also important in engineering. Engineers must be able to ask probing questions in order to define an engineering problem. For example, they may ask: What is the need or desire that underlies the problem? What are the criteria (specifications) for a successful solution? What are the constraints? Other questions arise when generating possible solutions: Will this solution meet the design criteria? Can two or more ideas be combined to produce a better solution? What are the possible trade-offs? And more questions arise when testing solutions: Which ideas should be tested? What evidence is needed to show which idea is optimal under the given constraints?

The experience of learning science and engineering should therefore develop students' ability to ask—and indeed, encourage them to ask—well-formulated questions that can be investigated empirically. Students also need to recognize the distinction between questions that can be answered empirically and those that are answerable only in other domains of knowledge or human experience.

GOALS

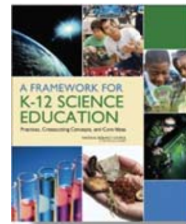
By grade 12, students should be able to

- Ask questions about the natural and human-built worlds—for example: Why are there seasons? What do bees do? Why did that structure collapse? How is electric power generated?
- Distinguish a scientific question (e.g., Why do helium balloons rise?) from a nonscientific question (Which of these colored balloons is the prettiest?).
- Formulate and refine questions that can be answered empirically in a science classroom and use them to design an inquiry or construct a pragmatic solution.
- Ask probing questions that seek to identify the premises of an argument, request further elaboration, refine a research question or engineering problem, or challenge the interpretation of a data set—for example: How do you know? What evidence supports that argument?
- Note features, patterns, or contradictions in observations and ask questions about them.
- For engineering, ask questions about the need or desire to be met in order to define constraints and specifications for a solution.

PROGRESSION

Students at any grade level should be able to ask questions of each other about the texts they read, the features of the phenomena they observe, and the conclusions they draw from their models or scientific investigations. For engineering, they should ask questions to define the problem to be solved and to elicit ideas that lead to the constraints and specifications for its solution. As they progress across the grades, their questions should become more relevant, focused, and sophisticated. Facilitating such evolution will require a classroom culture that respects and values good questions, that offers students opportunities to refine their questions and questioning strategies, and that incorporates the teaching of effective questioning strategies across all grade levels. As a result, students will become increasingly proficient at posing questions that request relevant empirical evidence; that seek to refine a model, an explanation, or an engineering problem; or that challenge the premise of an argument or the suitability of a design.

Practice 2 Developing and Using Models



Scientists construct mental and conceptual models of phenomena. Mental models are internal, personal, idiosyncratic, incomplete, unstable, and essentially functional. They serve the purpose of being a tool for thinking with, making predictions, and making sense of experience. Conceptual models, the focus of this section, are, in contrast, explicit representations that are in some ways analogous to the phenomena they represent. Conceptual models allow scientists and engineers to better visualize and understand a phenomenon under investigation or develop a possible solution to a design problem. Used in science and engineering as either structural, functional, or behavioral analogs, albeit simplified, conceptual models include diagrams, physical replicas, mathematical representations, analogies, and computer simulations. Although they do not correspond exactly to the more complicated entity being modeled, they do bring certain features into focus while minimizing or obscuring others. Because all models contain approximations and assumptions that limit the range of validity of their application and the precision of their predictive power, it is important to recognize their limitations.

Conceptual models are in some senses the external articulation of the mental models that scientists hold and are strongly interrelated with mental models. Building an understanding of models and their role in science helps students to construct and revise mental models of phenomena. Better mental models, in turn, lead to a deeper understanding of science and enhanced scientific reasoning.

Scientists use models (from here on, for the sake of simplicity, we use the term “models” to refer to conceptual models rather than mental models) to represent their current understanding of a system (or parts of a system) under study, to aid in the development of questions and explanations, and to communicate ideas to others [13]. Some of the models used by scientists are mathematical; for example, the ideal gas law is an equation derived from the model of a gas as a set of point masses engaged in perfectly elastic collisions with each other and the walls of the container—which is a simplified model based on the atomic theory of matter. For more complex systems, mathematical representations of physical systems are used to create computer simulations, which enable scientists to predict the behavior of otherwise intractable systems—for example, the effects of increasing atmospheric levels of carbon dioxide on agriculture in different regions of the world. Models can be evaluated and refined through an iterative cycle of comparing their predictions with the real world and then adjusting them, thereby potentially yielding insights into the phenomenon being modeled.

Engineering makes use of models to analyze existing systems; this allows engineers to see where or under what conditions flaws might develop or to test possible solutions to a new problem. Engineers also use models to visualize a design and take it to a higher level of refinement, to communicate a design’s features to others, and as prototypes for testing design performance. Models, particularly modern computer simulations that encode relevant physical laws and properties of materials, can be especially helpful both in realizing and testing designs for structures, such as buildings, bridges, or aircraft, that are expensive to construct and that must survive extreme conditions that occur only on rare occasions. Other types of engineering problems also benefit from use of specialized computer-based simulations in their design and testing phases. But as in science, engineers who use models must be aware of their intrinsic limitations and test them against known situations to ensure that they are reliable.

GOALS

By grade 12, students should be able to

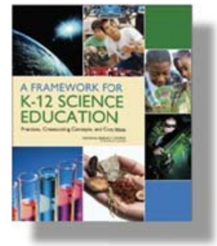
- Construct drawings or diagrams as representations of events or systems—for example, draw a picture of an insect with labeled features, represent what happens to the water in a puddle as it is warmed by the sun, or represent a simple physical model of a real-world object and use it as the basis of an explanation or to make predictions about how the system will behave in specified circumstances.
- Represent and explain phenomena with multiple types of models—for example, represent molecules with 3-D models or with bond diagrams—and move flexibly between model types when different ones are most useful for different purposes.
- Discuss the limitations and precision of a model as the representation of a system, process, or design and suggest ways in which the model might be improved to better fit available evidence or better reflect a design's specifications. Refine a model in light of empirical evidence or criticism to improve its quality and explanatory power.
- Use (provided) computer simulations or simulations developed with simple simulation tools as a tool for understanding and investigating aspects of a system, particularly those not readily visible to the naked eye.
- Make and use a model to test a design, or aspects of a design, and to compare the effectiveness of different design solutions.

PROGRESSION

Modeling can begin in the earliest grades, with students' models progressing from concrete "pictures" and/or physical scale models (e.g., a toy car) to more abstract representations of relevant relationships in later grades, such as a diagram representing forces on a particular object in a system. Students should be asked to use diagrams, maps, and other abstract models as tools that enable them to elaborate on their own ideas or findings and present them to others [15]. Young students should be encouraged to devise pictorial and simple graphical representations of the findings of their investigations and to use these models in developing their explanations of what occurred.

More sophisticated types of models should increasingly be used across the grades, both in instruction and curriculum materials, as students progress through their science education. The quality of a student-developed model will be highly dependent on prior knowledge and skill and also on the student's understanding of the system being modeled, so students should be expected to refine their models as their understanding develops. Curricula will need to stress the role of models explicitly and provide students with modeling tools (e.g., Model-It, agent-based modeling such as NetLogo, spreadsheet models), so that students come to value this core practice and develop a level of facility in constructing and applying appropriate models.

Practice 3 Planning and Carrying Out Investigations



Scientists and engineers investigate and observe the world with essentially two goals: (1) to systematically describe the world and (2) to develop and test theories and explanations of how the world works. In the first, careful observation and description often lead to identification of features that need to be explained or questions that need to be explored.

The second goal requires investigations to test explanatory models of the world and their predictions and whether the inferences suggested by these models are supported by data. Planning and designing such investigations require the ability to design experimental or observational inquiries that are appropriate to answering the question being asked or testing a hypothesis that has been formed. This process begins by identifying the relevant variables and considering how they might be observed, measured, and controlled (constrained by the experimental design to take particular values).

Planning for controls is an important part of the design of an investigation. In laboratory experiments, it is critical to decide which variables are to be treated as results or outputs and thus left to vary at will and which are to be treated as input conditions and hence controlled. In many cases, particularly in the case of field observations, such planning involves deciding what can be controlled and how to collect different samples of data under different conditions, even though not all conditions are under the direct control of the investigator.

Decisions must also be made about what measurements should be taken, the level of accuracy required, and the kinds of instrumentation best suited to making such measurements. As in other forms of inquiry, the key issue is one of precision—the goal is to measure the variable as accurately as possible and reduce sources of error. The investigator must therefore decide what constitutes a sufficient level of precision and what techniques can be used to reduce both random and systematic error.

GOALS

By grade 12, students should be able to

- Formulate a question that can be investigated within the scope of the classroom, school laboratory, or field with available resources and, when appropriate, frame a hypothesis (that is, a possible explanation that predicts a particular and stable outcome) based on a model or theory.
- Decide what data are to be gathered, what tools are needed to do the gathering, and how measurements will be recorded.
- Decide how much data are needed to produce reliable measurements and consider any limitations on the precision of the data.
- Plan experimental or field-research procedures, identifying relevant independent and dependent variables and, when appropriate, the need for controls.
- Consider possible confounding variables or effects and ensure that the investigation's design has controlled for them.

PROGRESSION

Students need opportunities to design investigations so that they can learn the importance of such decisions as what to measure, what to keep constant, and how to select or construct data collection instruments that are appropriate to the needs of an inquiry. They also need experiences that help them recognize that the laboratory is not the sole domain for legitimate scientific inquiry and that, for many scientists (e.g., earth scientists, ethologists, ecologists), the "laboratory" is the natural world where experiments are conducted and data are collected in the field.

In the elementary years, students' experiences should be structured to help them learn to define the features to be investigated, such as patterns that suggest causal relationships (e.g., What features of a ramp affect the speed of a given ball as it leaves the ramp?). The plan of the investigation, what trials to make and how to record information about them, then needs to be refined iteratively as students recognize from their experiences the limitations of their original plan. These investigations can be enriched and extended by linking them to engineering design projects—for example, how can students apply what they have learned about ramps to design a track that makes a ball travel a given distance, go around a loop, or stop on an uphill slope. From the earliest grades, students should have opportunities to carry out careful and systematic investigations, with appropriately supported prior experiences that develop their ability to observe and measure and to record data using appropriate tools and instruments.

Students should have opportunities to plan and carry out several different kinds of investigations during their K-12 years. At all levels, they should engage in investigations that range from those structured by the teacher—in order to expose an issue or question that they would be unlikely to explore on their own (e.g., measuring specific properties of materials)—to those that emerge from students' own questions. As they become more sophisticated, students also should have opportunities not only to identify questions to be researched but also to decide what data are to be gathered, what variables should be controlled, what tools or instruments are needed to gather and record data in an appropriate format, and eventually to consider how to incorporate measurement error in analyzing data. Older students should be asked to develop a hypothesis that predicts a particular and stable outcome and to explain their reasoning and justify their choice. By high school, any hypothesis should be based on a well-developed model or theory. In addition, students should be able to recognize that it is not always possible to control variables and that other methods can be used in such cases—for example, looking for correlations (with the understanding that correlations do not necessarily imply causality).

Science and Engineering Practices	K–2 Condensed Practices	3–5 Condensed Practices	6–8 Condensed Practices	9–12 Condensed Practices
Asking Questions and Defining Problems A practice of science is to ask and refine questions that lead to descriptions and explanations of how the natural and designed world(s) works and which can be empirically tested. Engineering questions clarify problems to determine criteria for successful solutions and identify constraints to solve problems about the designed world. Both scientists and engineers also ask questions to clarify ideas.	Asking questions and defining problems in K–2 builds on prior experiences and progresses to simple descriptive questions that can be tested.	Asking questions and defining problems in 3–5 builds on K–2 experiences and progresses to specifying qualitative relationships.	Asking questions and defining problems in 6–8 builds on K–5 experiences and progresses to specifying relationships between variables, clarify arguments and models.	Asking questions and defining problems in 9–12 builds on K–8 experiences and progresses to formulating, refining, and evaluating empirically testable questions and design problems using models and simulations.
	• Ask questions based on observations to find more information about the natural and/or designed world(s).	• Ask questions about what would happen if a variable is changed.	• Ask questions o that arise from careful observation of phenomena, models, or unexpected results, to clarify and/or seek additional information. o to identify and/or clarify evidence and/or the premise(s) of an argument. o to determine relationships between independent and dependent variables and relationships in models.. o to clarify and/or refine a model, an explanation, or an engineering problem.	• Ask questions o that arise from careful observation of phenomena, or unexpected results, to clarify and/or seek additional information. o that arise from examining models or a theory, to clarify and/or seek additional information and relationships. o to determine relationships, including quantitative relationships, between independent and dependent variables. o to clarify and refine a model, an explanation, or an engineering problem.
	• Ask and/or identify questions that can be answered by an investigation.	• Identify scientific (testable) and non-scientific (non-testable) questions. • Ask questions that can be investigated and predict reasonable outcomes based on patterns such as cause and effect relationships.	• Ask questions that require sufficient and appropriate empirical evidence to answer. • Ask questions that can be investigated within the scope of the classroom, outdoor environment, and museums and other public facilities with available resources and, when appropriate, frame a hypothesis based on observations and scientific principles.	• Evaluate a question to determine if it is testable and relevant. • Ask questions that can be investigated within the scope of the school laboratory, research facilities, or field (e.g., outdoor environment) with available resources and, when appropriate, frame a hypothesis based on a model or theory.
			• Ask questions that challenge the premise(s) of an argument or the interpretation of a data set.	• Ask and/or evaluate questions that challenge the premise(s) of an argument, the interpretation of a data set, or the suitability of a design.

	• Define a simple problem that can be solved through the development of a new or improved object or tool.	• Use prior knowledge to describe problems that can be solved. • Define a simple design problem that can be solved through the development of an object, tool, process, or system and includes several criteria for success and constraints on materials, time, or cost.	• Define a design problem that can be solved through the development of an object, tool, process or system and includes multiple criteria and constraints, including scientific knowledge that may limit possible solutions.	• Define a design problem that involves the development of a process or system with interacting components and criteria and constraints that may include social, technical and/or environmental considerations.

Science and Engineering Practices	K–2 Condensed Practices	3–5 Condensed Practices	6–8 Condensed Practices	9–12 Condensed Practices
Developing and Using Models A practice of both science and engineering is to use and construct models as helpful tools for representing ideas and explanations. These tools include diagrams, drawings, physical replicas, mathematical representations, analogies, and computer simulations. Modeling tools are used to develop questions, predictions and explanations; analyze and identify flaws in systems; and communicate ideas. Models are used to build and revise scientific explanations and proposed engineered systems. Measurements and observations are used to revise models and designs.	Modeling in K–2 builds on prior experiences and progresses to include using and developing models (i.e., diagram, drawing, physical replica, diorama, dramatization, or storyboard) that represent concrete events or design solutions.	Modeling in 3–5 builds on K–2 experiences and progresses to building and revising simple models and using models to represent events and design solutions.	Modeling in 6–8 builds on K–5 experiences and progresses to developing, using, and revising models to describe, test, and predict more abstract phenomena and design systems.	Modeling in 9–12 builds on K–8 experiences and progresses to using, synthesizing, and developing models to predict and show relationships among variables between systems and their components in the natural and designed world(s).
	• Distinguish between a model and the actual object, process, and/or events the model represents. • Compare models to identify common features and differences.	• Identify limitations of models.	• Evaluate limitations of a model for a proposed object or tool.	• Evaluate merits and limitations of two different models of the same proposed tool, process, mechanism, or system in order to select or revise a model that best fits the evidence or design criteria. • Design a test of a model to ascertain its reliability.
	• Develop and/or use a model to represent amounts, relationships, relative scales (bigger, smaller), and/or patterns in the natural and designed world(s).	• Collaboratively develop and/or revise a model based on evidence that shows the relationships among variables for frequent and regular occurring events. • Develop a model using an analogy, example, or abstract representation to describe a scientific principle or design solution. • Develop and/or use models to describe and/or predict phenomena.	• Develop or modify a model—based on evidence – to match what happens if a variable or component of a system is changed. • Use and/or develop a model of simple systems with uncertain and less predictable factors. • Develop and/or revise a model to show the relationships among variables, including those that are not observable but predict observable phenomena. • Develop and/or use a model to predict and/or describe phenomena. • Develop a model to describe unobservable mechanisms.	• Develop, revise, and/or use a model based on evidence to illustrate and/or predict the relationships between systems or between components of a system. • Develop and/or use multiple types of models to provide mechanistic accounts and/or predict phenomena, and move flexibly between model types based on merits and limitations.
	• Develop a simple model based on evidence to represent a proposed object or tool.	• Develop a diagram or simple physical prototype to convey a proposed object, tool, or process. • Use a model to test cause and effect relationships or interactions concerning the functioning of a natural or designed system.	• Develop and/or use a model to generate data to test ideas about phenomena in natural or designed systems, including those representing inputs and outputs, and those at unobservable scales.	• Develop a complex model that allows for manipulation and testing of a proposed process or system. • Develop and/or use a model (including mathematical and computational) to generate data to support explanations, predict phenomena, analyze systems, and/or solve problems.

Science and Engineering Practices	K–2 Condensed Practices	3–5 Condensed Practices	6–8 Condensed Practices	9–12 Condensed Practices
Planning and Carrying Out Investigations Scientists and engineers plan and carry out investigations in the field or laboratory, working collaboratively as well as individually. Their investigations are systematic and require clarifying what counts as data and identifying variables or parameters. Engineering investigations identify the effectiveness, efficiency, and durability of designs under different conditions.	Planning and carrying out investigations to answer questions or test solutions to problems in K–2 builds on prior experiences and progresses to simple investigations, based on fair tests, which provide data to support explanations or design solutions.	Planning and carrying out investigations to answer questions or test solutions to problems in 3–5 builds on K–2 experiences and progresses to include investigations that <u>control variables</u> and provide evidence to support explanations or design solutions.	Planning and carrying out investigations in 6-8 builds on K-5 experiences and progresses to include investigations that use <u>multiple variables</u> and provide evidence to support explanations or solutions.	Planning and carrying out investigations in 9-12 builds on K-8 experiences and progresses to include investigations that provide evidence for and test conceptual, mathematical, physical, and empirical models.
	• With guidance, plan and conduct an investigation in collaboration with peers (for K). • Plan and conduct an investigation collaboratively to produce data to serve as the basis for evidence to answer a question.	• Plan and conduct an investigation collaboratively to produce data to serve as the basis for evidence, using fair tests in which variables are controlled and the number of trials considered.	• Plan an investigation individually and collaboratively, and in the design: identify independent and dependent variables and controls, what tools are needed to do the gathering, how measurements will be recorded, and how many data are needed to support a claim. • Conduct an investigation and/or evaluate and/or revise the experimental design to produce data to serve as the basis for evidence that meet the goals of the investigation.	• Plan an investigation or test a design individually and collaboratively to produce data to serve as the basis for evidence as part of building and revising models, supporting explanations for phenomena, or testing solutions to problems. Consider possible confounding variables or effects and evaluate the investigation's design to ensure variables are controlled. • Plan and conduct an investigation individually and collaboratively to produce data to serve as the basis for evidence, and in the design: decide on types, how much, and accuracy of data needed to produce reliable measurements and consider limitations on the precision of the data (e.g., number of trials, cost, risk, time), and refine the design accordingly. • Plan and conduct an investigation or test a design solution in a safe and ethical manner including considerations of environmental, social, and personal impacts.
	• Evaluate different ways of observing and/or measuring a phenomenon to determine which way can answer a question.	• Evaluate appropriate methods and/or tools for collecting data.	• Evaluate the accuracy of various methods for collecting data.	• Select appropriate tools to collect, record, analyze, and evaluate data.
	• Make observations (firsthand or from media) and/or measurements to collect data that can be used to make comparisons.	• Make observations and/or measurements to produce data to serve as the basis for evidence for an explanation of a phenomenon or test a design solution.	• Collect data to produce data to serve as the basis for evidence to answer scientific questions or test design solutions under a range of conditions.	• Make directional hypotheses that specify what happens to a dependent variable when an independent variable is manipulated.

	• Make observations (firsthand or from media) and/or measurements of a proposed object or tool or solution to determine if it solves a problem or meets a goal. • Make predictions based on prior experiences.	• Make predictions about what would happen if a variable changes. • Test two different models of the same proposed object, tool, or process to determine which better meets criteria for success.	• Collect data about the performance of a proposed object, tool, process, or system under a range of conditions.	• Manipulate variables and collect data about a complex model of a proposed process or system to identify failure points or improve performance relative to criteria for success or other variables.

Science & Engineering Practices Implementation

Rogers Public Schools -- 2013-2104

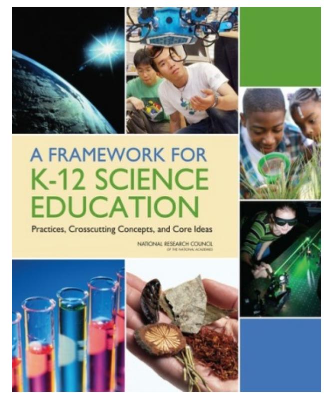
Lesson title:______________________________ **Date:**_______________

School:________________ **Content:** _________________ **Grade:**_______

Name______________________ **Email**____________________________

Science & Engineering Practices: *(check practices used)*

- ❑ 1) Asking questions and defining problems
- ❑ 2) Developing and using models
- ❑ 3) Planning and carrying out investigations
- ❑ 4) Analyzing and interpreting data
- ❑ 5) Using mathematics and computational thinking
- ❑ 6) Constructing explanations and designing solutions
- ❑ 7) Engaging in argument from evidence
- ❑ 8) Obtaining, evaluating, and communicating information



Summary of lesson including how practices were incorporated:

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Reflection: (*What worked well, what would you change if anything, etc.)*

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