

Contrasting Groups Study

for the
Washington Comprehensive Assessment of Science

Introduction

The Science Assessment Office will offer training to science educators in the use of Achievement Level Descriptors (ALDs) to complete the Contrasting Groups Study (CGS). The purpose of the CGS is to inform the achievement level setting process for the Washington Comprehensive Assessment of Science (WCAS) premiering in spring 2018.

What are Achievement Level Descriptors (ALDs)?

ALDs are descriptions of the knowledge and skills necessary for students to achieve specific achievement levels on the state assessment.

How are ALDs and CGS Data Used?

ALDs and achievement level setting are critical components of the Washington Comprehensive Assessment Program. Achievement level setting is the method used to determine the “cut scores” on the state assessments that correspond to each achievement level. Teachers who complete the training, and have students in grades 5, 8, and/or 11, will be able to contribute to the achievement level setting process by participating in the Contrasting Groups Study. Data collected from the study will be used by panelists during the Achievement Level Setting meeting in August 2018.

What's the timeline?

The CGS training will be available online on the [Moodle training site](#) from March 1 through April 14, 2018. Educators will learn about the CGS study, about the structure and contents of the ALDs, and how to participate in the study. The training will take approximately 3 hours and can be completed at your own pace. Free clock hours will be available to participants.

- After training, teachers will use the ALDs and observations of student work to make predictions about student achievement on the WCAS. These observations can be completed as part of regular classroom instruction and assessment.
- From March 19 through April 14, 2018 teachers will enter their student predictions into the CGS application in the Education Data System (EDS). This process should take approximately 5 minutes per class of 30 students.
- In fall of 2018, participants can return to the CGS application in EDS and compare their predictions to actual student achievement on the WCAS.

Questions? Please contact: science@k12.wa.us

