Managing a Science Anchor Task

Spend a lot of up-front time explaining the anchor task to your class:
> Go over each task—model games as a class first
> Explain where the tasks will be kept in the room:
> - What materials are needed?
> - Where are the materials?
> - What do the students do with the task when it is done?
> - What will be self-checked, what will be checked for completion, what will be checked for grade?
> - How much will the anchor count in their grade? Will it be classwork points, a quiz grade?
> - How will they keep track of their work? How will you keep track?
> - What are the due dates?
> - When should the students work on the anchor tasks?
> - Which tasks are individual and which ones require a pair or group?

Develop a rubric or scoring tool for any graded task—holistic or more specific

Decide what is optional and what is mandatory for each group or individual student (everyone participates at some level)

Think of ways that "slow finishers" will have time to complete anchor tasks—possibly dedicated time during class

Designate an "expert" for each task as the "go-to" person while you are meeting with individuals or groups

Practice a "run-through" when one group is meeting with you and the rest of the students are working on their anchor—don't let anyone interrupt you!

Implement "The Doctor is In" and "3 before Me" management strategies

Assign a student to check in materials at the end of class

Use some type of contract—tic-tac-toe board, standard student contract, etc.

Have periodic check points to assess student progress

If you do not typically meet with small groups, it will take a while to "train" your students to be independent while you are busy. Stay with it—it is worth it and you'll gain all the time back that you used up-front.