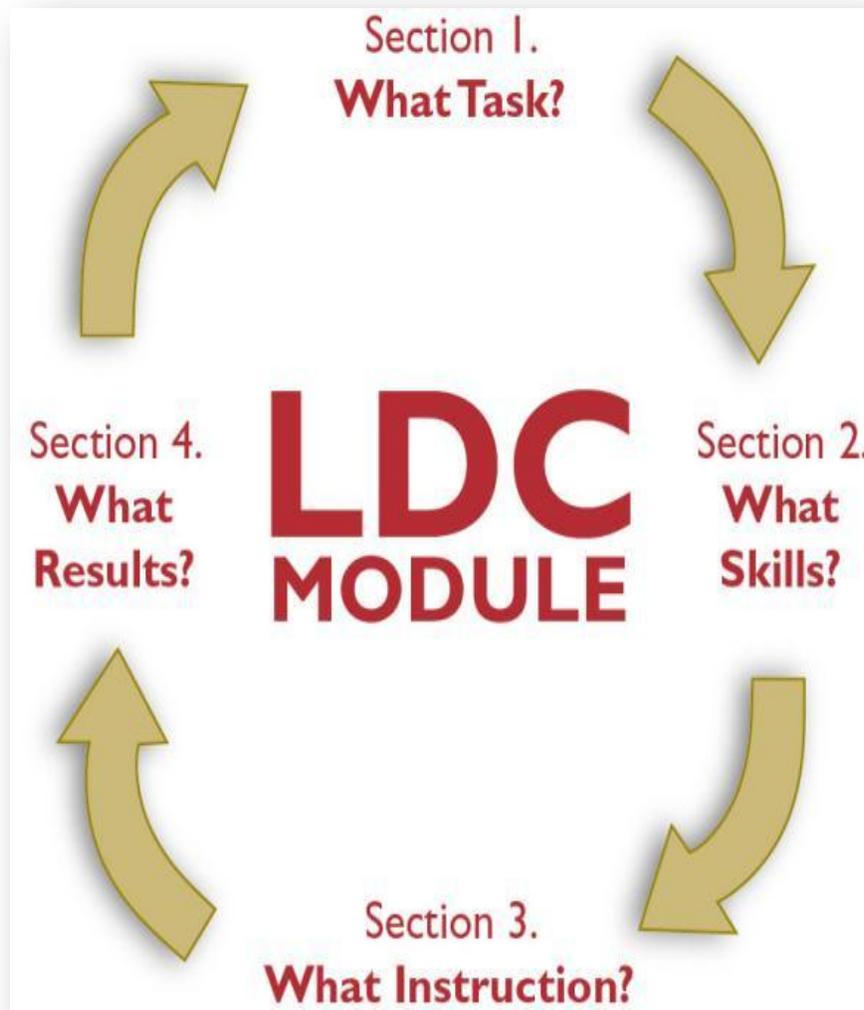


# THE LITERACY DESIGN COLLABORATIVE FRAMEWORK

## Rules of the Road for LDC v 1.0

By

The LDC Design Team



# Introduction

*“We can’t solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them.”*  
Albert Einstein

The LDC Design Team created an instructional system that is now known as “LDC”. This document establishes the technical specifications for this system. We call these specifications “The LDC Framework”. The audience is current LDC project leaders and potential LDC partners interested in designing LDC modules.

Why the need for standardization? Vicki Phillips said it best when she referred to LDC as an approach that gives everyone a common “chassis” to build on. So in the end you have a system, rather than “a thousand flowers blooming”. In that spirit, we also think of LDC as a common “language”—in the broadest sense—useful for capturing and sharing instructional expertise.

Our goal in designing this framework has been to take a minimalist approach, holding the system together with a lean model while being clear enough to give users a framework for building out their own instructional choices. We are ever mindful of areas where we might inadvertently block quality instruction and are constantly on the lookout for any necessary adjustments.

The logic model built into the LDC module system is:

- **Section 1: What task?** *What tasks set clear, rigorous goals for learning?*

A quality teaching task is the beginning point for quality instruction. Teaching tasks set the stage for learning challenging content and literacy skills necessary in academic coursework as well as in the world at large. A quality teaching task is worth teaching because it is relevant to the curriculum or discipline and aligned to learning goals. The LDC Framework has hard-wired a sub-set of literacy standards into the task templates. So, when you complete a teaching task, you “automatically” create alignment to Common Core State Standards learning goals. A quality teaching task is doable in that it is paced for two to three weeks focusing on one or more texts that involve students in addressing an interesting question, issue, or topic as they read and write. Finally, a quality teaching task creates a literate environment for students to engage in critical thinking, employing a range of literacy practices and skills including discussion, speaking, and listening.

**Section 2: What skills?** *What skills do students need to succeed on the teaching task?*

In order for students to be successful on the teaching task, practitioners must be clear on the reading, writing, and other literacy skills students must develop. These skills are identified by “back-mapping” from the requirements of the teaching task. Module developers cluster these skills into groupings that make sense for the teaching task. All LDC modules must involve some form of reading and writing skills within clusters. Different lists of skills that will emerge from various LDC partners will support researchers in identifying areas of agreement on essential skills.

- **Section 3. What Instruction?** *How will you teach students to succeed on the teaching task?*

This section specifies the instructional system teachers employ to teach the skills identified in Section 2 and to assist students in succeeding on the teaching task identified in Section 1. Instruction is organized around teacher-ready “mini-tasks” or short classroom assignments that teach the skills necessary to complete the teaching task. . These mini-tasks are scored and measurable; as such they create a formative engine for monitoring what students are learning—or not—and feed into the instructional choices teachers make as they teach. They also provide opportunity for teachers to correct or “repair” any misunderstandings or skill weaknesses students may have. Instructional strategies and a pacing guide are also noted. All together, these features in the LDC system make up what is called an “instructional ladder.”

- **Section 4-What Results?** *How good is good enough?*

Measuring student results is a hallmark of good instruction. It also provides a way for teachers to calibrate rigor levels so they have common understandings of expectations. By sharing classroom sets of student work, teachers can have robust professional learning opportunities to examine their own practice and how

they contributed to those results. This section prompts the sharing of exemplary student work samples to support scoring rubrics and for calibrating expectations.

The LDC Framework consists of:

**LDC Template Tasks** which provide LDC colleagues with a set of partially-built task templates aligned to the common core;

**LDC Module Specifications** which spell out requirements and options for Literacy Design Collaborative partners to follow when designing LDC Modules and using LDC template tasks;

**LDC Terminology** which spells out the required terms and definitions used by LDC; and

**LDC Jurying System** spells out the system that the collaborative will use to give feedback on the quality of LDC tasks and modules created by teachers and others. This system was under development during the 2011-12 school year. A working system will be shared in January 2012.

Ultimately, the LDC framework is pragmatic in its purpose: literacy skills are so important in the lives of students that they must be intentionally and frequently taught. If students are to acquire and refine their ability to use language as readers, writers, and speakers to achieve their personal and professional goals, literacy instruction must become the staple of all instruction. LDC aims to assist teachers in the core disciplines and beyond by meeting them part way in the effort to deliver quality literacy instruction in classrooms. It is teachers and our partners who bring their expertise to the crafting of a completed teaching task and its module. Accordingly, LDC views you as co-designers in transforming LDC templates into a quality teaching tasks and modules.

## LDC Template Tasks

Currently there is only one collection: *LDC Template Task Collection 1*. **Specifications for using that collection are built into that document, so be sure to use it alongside this document in order to have the full picture of LDC requirements.** Eventually there will be other task collections to choose from, but for now there is just the one.

## LDC Module Specifications

The following chart outlines each required element for a module. This creates the consistency necessary for others to use the module and compare tasks and to allow researchers to study the LDC design. The chart also indicates the choices for practitioners when they build a module and what is fixed and what is flexible. Please note that the text below is written for use by educators as they create LDC modules. The “you” addressed within it is a teacher/designer who is creating and sharing instructional plans around an LDC teaching task.

SECTION	WHAT IS REQUIRED?	WHAT CAN BE CHANGED OR ADDED?
<b>BEGINNING INFORMATION</b>		
Information sheet	Show key information to identify the module: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Title and brief description.</li> <li>▪ Teaching task and template task used to create it.</li> <li>▪ Author and author’s contact information.</li> <li>▪ Discipline, course, and grade level.</li> </ul>	
<b>SECTION I. WHAT TASK?</b>		
Standards	List the exact Common Core State Standards for the template task.  Add appropriate state content standards.  Provide source information for the standards you use.	You can also include appropriate grade-level Common Core State Standards.
Teaching task	Fill in the template task, completing all the blanks but not altering the other template wording.  List the reading texts for the prompt or describe how students will be guided to select appropriate texts.  Provide a background statement that introduces the prompt to students.  If an extension activity is included, provide an activity in which students share or apply what they have learned with a real-world audience or through a hands-on project. (The extension may also be omitted.)  Use the exact rubric for the template task.	You choose which texts students will read, the content they will study, and the writing product they will create. In choosing, consider requirements set by your state, district, or school.  You decide whether to include the Level 2 and Level 3 portions of the template task and whether to include extension sections.
<b>SECTION II. WHAT SKILLS?</b>		
Specific skills	List the skills students need to succeed on the teaching task.	You can create your own list of skills by back-mapping from the template task, or you can use or adapt a model skills chart.
Skills defined	Define each skill listed using the stem “the ability to...”	You choose the definitions.
Skills clusters	Cluster the skills in groupings that make sense and are in a workable order for teaching.	You decide the groupings.

SECTION	WHAT IS REQUIRED?	WHAT CAN BE CHANGED OR ADDED?
<b>SECTION III. WHAT INSTRUCTION?</b>		
Mini-tasks	<p>For each identified skill, provide a prompt asking students to apply an “in-progress” skill or practice.</p> <p>Identify the product students will produce in response to each prompt.</p> <p>Include a short scoring guide for all or most student products.</p>	<p>You can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use a model set of mini-tasks developed by the LDC design team, your state or district, or some other partner.</li> <li>▪ Adapt one of those models to fit your teaching task.</li> <li>▪ Develop your own.</li> </ul>
Instructional strategies	Specify the instructional strategies to be used in teaching students to succeed on each mini-task.	You can decide what instructional strategies to use, within any requirements set by your state, district, or school. You can also use or adapt a model developed by the LDC design team or another group.
Pacing plans	Estimate time requirements for each mini-task.	You decide what time will be needed for each step.
Materials, references, and supports	<p>List the materials, references, and supports students and teachers will need to complete the instruction.</p> <p>Provide internet or other source information for published documents, and use the appendix to provide copies of other materials.</p>	You decide what items will be needed or helpful.
<b>SECTION IV. WHAT RESULTS?</b>		
Student work samples*	Include two student work samples that received scores at each level on the rubric that goes with the template task.	You choose the work samples.
Classroom assessment task	If a classroom assessment is included, use the same template task as the teaching task and include the applicable classroom assessment rubric. (The classroom assessment may also be omitted.)	You can use the “plug and play” aspects of the template task –the academic content, reading texts, and writing expectations – to create a shorter task for students to complete in one or two sittings without coaching.
<b>SUPPORTING INFORMATION</b>		
Teacher thoughts	(This section may be left blank.)	You may include notes that will be helpful to other teachers using this module.
Appendix	Include copies of any materials that are not otherwise easily available.	

*\*Student work samples must eventually be included for an LDC Module to be complete. But LDC partners often share modules without student work, while they are in works in progress.*

## LDC Terminology

Term	Definition
<b>LDC Template Task</b>	A “fill-in-the-blank” sentence “shell” built off of the Common Core State Standards in reading and writing that can be used to create assignments or assessments.
<b>LDC Template Task Collection</b>	A series of template tasks. <i>Template Task Collection 1</i> organized by writing type – argumentation, informational/explanatory and narrative – and text structure (also called “modes of discourse”).
<b>LDC Teaching Task (or plain old “task”):</b>	A “completed” LDC template task in which teachers include the content/issue to be addressed, specify the text they will teach and identify the product to be produced. A full teaching task also includes background information that introduces students to the assignment and an optional “extension” in which the students exhibit or present their product publicly.
<b>Rubric</b>	An explicit set of criteria used for assessing a particular type of work. <i>Template Task Collection 1</i> has one rubric for the Argumentation template tasks, one for the Informational/Explanatory template tasks, and one for the Narrative template tasks.
<b>Student Work</b>	Exemplar student work that is an essential companion to the rubric. Exemplars are being developed locally by LDC partners. Ultimately the exemplars will come from multiple partner agreements and will be informed by emerging assessment systems.
<b>LDC Module</b>	A 2-4 week plan for teaching literacy using an LDC task that is based on the Common Core State Standards, connects reading and writing experiences and addresses a content area theme or issue.
<b>LDC Module Template</b>	A format for an LDC module. Several module templates are already in use, and LDC partners are developing other formats that provide space for the elements required by the LDC Module Specifications.
<b>LDC Skill Lists</b>	The specific skills that students need to have– or need to be taught – in order to successfully address the teaching task.
<b>LDC Skill Clusters</b>	The organization of the skills list into groupings that make sense for how they will be taught.
<b>Mini-tasks</b>	Small, scorable assignments that address each of the skills on the skills list.
<b>Instructional ladder</b>	The “lesson plan” that pulls together skills, mini-tasks, and instructional strategies into a coherent, implementation-ready plan for teachers. The instructional ladder is the “What Instruction?” section of an LDC module.
<b>Classroom Assessment</b>	An option to use the template tasks to create assessments to measure student skills exhibited when asked to do a task independently.

## LDC Jurying System

The LDC jurying system is under development. This system will support designers of tasks and modules in looking at the quality of their task and module design. In addition, of course there will be connections to student work, another way of looking at the quality of tasks and modules. But the advantage of the jurying system is that it will give designers a way to assess quality before they are used in classrooms, rather than after the fact.

We will be filling in this section with a working draft by January 2012. This working draft will then be adjusted, based on user testing and feedback from collaborative partners, by summer 2012.

For now, we are pulling text from the *1.0 Guidebook to LDC*, as it's the only description currently available for guiding your thinking on task and module quality. More to come soon!

### **What makes a great teaching task?**

The Common Core State Standards and the LDC framework “push the envelope” for students, on the premise that with clear goals and strong supports, they can read and write at much higher levels. Consequently, the teaching tasks must be challenging. The LDC Design Team is working with a group of experts to develop a high-quality system for giving feedback on task and module quality.

In the meantime, to help teachers make sure what they are asking students to do is as strong as can be, we offer a simple checklist for a great teaching task. A quality LDC task:

- Addresses content essential to the discipline – informed by local and state standards – inviting students to engage deeply in thinking and literacy practices around that issue.
- Makes effective use of the template task's writing mode (argumentation, informational/explanatory, or narrative).
- Selects reading texts that use and develop academic understanding and vocabulary.
- Designs a writing prompt that requires sustained writing and effective use of ideas and evidence from the reading texts.
- Establishes a teaching task that is both challenging and feasible for students, with a balance of reading demands and writing demands that works well for the intended grade and content. And ...
- Follows the LDC requirements for building a teaching task (as described in the technical specifications for LDC modules in chapter 3). This allows for sharing of work across classrooms, districts and states.

Once the design work is finished, teachers must turn to making sure students develop the skills to complete the task successfully with a product that can be scored. This is the LDC module.

### **How do you know a great module when you write one?**

An LDC module is made up of a series of short assignments identifying literacy practices that lead students toward completion of a teaching task. A great module identifies the most important steps in that process so that students move through the reading and writing short assignments without becoming overwhelmed or underprepared to complete the teaching task.

A great module:

- Follows the LDC requirements for building a module and presents a manageable set of short assignments that identifies important literacy practices in reading, writing, and critical thinking.
- Creates instructional opportunities so that students go deeply into aspects of the teaching task that support their efforts to “meet expectations” or better on the teaching task rubric.
- Is strategic in its demands, asking students to engage in literacy practices that ensure they are addressing the teaching task prompt and are on target toward completion of the teaching task.

- Provides timely feedback to students using a two-point scoring guide for each short assignment so that students can move on with confidence or correct any problems. If applicable, provides helpful feedback on pre- and post-classroom assessments that allow students to see their growth and understand where they need to continue to develop skills.
- Is paced to be completed over two to four weeks for a stand-alone module, longer for a module extended into a unit.
- Sets up opportunities for professional communities to share expertise; build consensus on the meaning of teaching tasks, rubrics, and scoring; and improve skills in teaching literacy practices.

## **Conclusion**

For more information, be sure to see the *1.0 Guidebook to LDC*.