

# LITERACY DESIGN COLLABORATIVE (LDC)



## THE COLORADO EDUCATION INITIATIVE

“The most encouraging result I saw was the quality of my students’ writing. Even my most challenged writers were able to write multi-paragraph essays rich in content. Eighty nine percent of my fourth-grade students made a year or more growth in writing and 82 percent in reading. Other team members I collaborated with experienced similar growth.”

– Colorado Teacher and Instructional Coach



## ABOUT LDC

Colorado has stepped up expectations for students to articulate their own perspectives and better understand other people’s experiences. Teachers want practical help to keep up with these changes and align instruction to academic standards.

LDC helps elementary, middle, and high school teachers improve how all students read, write, and communicate. It’s a research-based approach to teaching content literacy aligned to the Colorado Academic Standards — science, history, and literary analysis in particular. The goal is to help students become better analyzers and communicators of information.

LDC’s easily customizable framework and tools for teaching and scoring are designed by teachers, for teachers and have been tested by thousands of educators in Colorado and across the country.

Colorado’s use of LDC grew out of the recent Integration Project — a collaborative effort led by 13 Colorado school districts with help from The Colorado Education Initiative (CEI) and Colorado Department of Education to support the implementation of academic standards, assessments, and educator effectiveness.

## HOW LDC HELPS STUDENTS

This approach helps all students get more out of what they’re reading. It also helps them learn to write great essays that are based on textual evidence. Students learn to articulate and discuss key points and boost their project planning, research, and analytical skills.

## HOW LDC HELPS TEACHERS

LDC helps teachers differentiate instruction to meet students’ individual needs. Teachers tap their own creativity and expertise to deliver content through rigorous reading and writing tasks that align with grade-level academic standards. LDC can eliminate fragmented professional development because it encourages teachers to use a common language and customizable tools, collaborate to review and grade student work, and share best practices.

A majority (69 percent) of Colorado teachers trained in LDC say it leads to improved student outcomes — and helps them use data, review student work, collaborate with colleagues, differentiate instruction, emphasize conceptual mastery, and increase rigor.

## WHAT LDC LOOKS LIKE

Imagine middle school students learning about Latin America in their social studies class. A typical culminating writing assignment might ask them to write a report on a Latin American country. Using LDC, a summative task might look like this instead: “After researching informational articles and environmental websites on pollution in Mexico City, write a report that examines the causes of air pollution and explains the effects on citizens’ health and welfare. What conclusions can you draw? Support your discussion with evidence from your research.” Teachers can then use high-leverage strategies in a series of scaffold mini-tasks to support students in successfully completing the task.

## HOW LDC WORKS

LDC’s basic building block is a module — two to four weeks of instruction comprising a teaching task, grade-level academic standards, mini-tasks, and other instructional elements. Teachers use these four steps to complete each module:

1. Select an LDC template and write a student performance task based on grade- and content-level academic standards.
2. Backwards map to identify the skills students need to succeed on the task.
3. Create and implement an instructional plan — targeted student activities and instructional strategies that address those skills — either teacher-created or pre-designed.
4. Determine how student work shows evidence of mastery of the standards using a common rubric, and work with other teachers to calibrate expectations.

## HOW CEI CAN HELP

Interested in learning more or implementing LDC? CEI can connect Colorado schools, districts, or BOCES with trainers; technical assistance, strategic planning, and execution; a menu of professional development; and resources.

## LEARN MORE

Amy Spicer, *Director, Professional Learning, CEI*  
aspicer@coloradoedinitiative.org  
720-502-4707

## ABOUT THE COLORADO EDUCATION INITIATIVE

CEI is an independent nonprofit working in partnership with the Colorado Department of Education to unlock the unique potential of every student by incubating innovation, shining a spotlight on success, and investing in sustainable change that improves outcomes for all students. CEI envisions that every student in Colorado is prepared and unafraid to succeed in school, work, and life, and ready to take on the challenges of today, tomorrow, and beyond.

