What do educators trained in the Literacy Design Collaborative (LDC) say about their experience?

“I don’t deny that LDC is hard work — some of the hardest work I have ever done. But when I completed my first module and saw the work my students did, I could not wait to develop another module and continue to transform my classroom. My first module wasn’t even that good but the work my students produced convinced me to try again, and now I can’t imagine teaching any other way.”

Danielle S., CT teacher, Arkansas

“We have seen teacher ownership grow and student ownership and level of engagement expanding the work on their campus. In addition, each one of them has chosen a “buddy” teacher and will be Bill exemplifies the “collaborative” part of LDC. Because of his leadership, the first semester. At Hope High School in Hope, Arkansas, teachers learned that social studies teacher Bill Hoglund “gets it” and that he is happy to help them with ideas about their module. Bill exemplifies the “collaborative” part of LDC. Because of his leadership, the first teacher/facilitator group has been able to write and launch two modules in one semester. In addition, each one of them has chosen a “buddy” teacher and will be expanding the work on their campus.

Linda M., LDC Trainer, SREB

“We have seen teacher ownership grow and student ownership and level of engagement increase at least 40 percent throughout our campuses. Students are more interested in research processes and learning real-world application of information.”

Marty M., Arkansas Administrator

All LDC tasks require students to:
1. Read, analyze and comprehend texts as specified by rigorous core state standards.
2. Write products as specified by rigorous core state standards (focusing on persuasion, informational/explanatory and narrative texts).
3. Apply rigorous core state literacy standards to content subjects (English/language arts, social studies, science, technical and electives). The framework is designed to ensure that students receive literacy and content instruction through rigorous academic reading and writing tasks that prepare them for success in college and careers by the end of high school.

There are two main components of LDC:
1. Template tasks are the building blocks for formative assignments and classroom-level assessments. The tasks are “fill-in-the-blank” models.
2. Template modules add instruction to a single template task. The module is designed for approximately two to three weeks of instruction using an “instructional ladder” to organize instruction. The instructional ladder details what literacy skills will be addressed, what student products are expected, how each product will be scored, and what instructional strategies will be used.

Each LDC template task includes the following components:
- Template prompt: This is a shell statement that allows teachers to fill in the blanks with content and type of product, and it charges students with a task — what students should do and what product they should produce.
- Scoring rubric: This describes and connects demands and qualities established by the rigorous core state standards with the student product.
- Student work: As teachers begin to collect student responses to a prompt, they can accurately assess not only student performance, but also analyze their work. Schools and districts can use student work to open a dialogue on instruction as well as provide an opportunity to assess student and program performance. Examining student work clarifies expectations and calibrates the larger system.

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SREB Training Helps Teachers Implement the CCSS or Other Rigorous Standards for Literacy

The Literacy Design Collaborative (LDC) is an approach for incorporating rigorous literacy standards into middle grades and high school content areas. LDC provides a system for developing reading, writing and thinking skills within a variety of academic disciplines, not just in English/language arts courses. LDC tools embed the Common Core State Standards or other rigorous standards for literacy into content-area instruction by providing template tasks and fill-in-the-blank shells that give teachers the flexibility to insert the texts to be read, content to be addressed and writing to be produced. This will result in high-quality assignments, and it will provide students with the literacy skills they need to succeed in education and careers. The LDC tools were developed by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.
How is the LDC Literacy Framework Different from Traditional Literacy Instruction?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Approach</th>
<th>Traditional Classroom</th>
<th>LDC Classroom</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sources for reading</strong></td>
<td>Textbook</td>
<td>Complex informational text to include appropriate non-fiction text at or above grade level</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Reading instruction</strong></td>
<td>Limited to assigning test readings</td>
<td>Specific mini-tasks designed to teach the skills of text selection, active reading and note taking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Written products</strong></td>
<td>Short responses</td>
<td>Focused written products that address literacy standards for prescribed types of writing: argumentative, informational, explanatory, and narrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing instruction</strong></td>
<td>Minimal, no content specificity</td>
<td>Specific mini-tasks designed to teach the skills of planning, development, revision, and editing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preparing students for reading and writing tasks</strong></td>
<td>Limited task engagement Assignment presented to students</td>
<td>Specific mini-tasks designed to teach the skills of: Task engagement — generate student interest in reading texts and writing assignment in content-related activity Task analysis — design lessons specifically to teach the skills necessary to successfully accomplish task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Literacy skills instructional format</strong></td>
<td>Minimal or none Individual teacher choice</td>
<td>Specified list of skills provided that every teacher must address during the unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lesson design</strong></td>
<td>School-District-specific format No specific requirement to connect to literacy</td>
<td>Each unit will have a completed “Instructional module” that addresses every literacy skill included in the instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vocabulary development</strong></td>
<td>Content-specific words No specific instruction for learning and using domain-specific vocabulary “Second Tier” vocabulary not addressed</td>
<td>Specific mini-tasks designed to teach the skills of vocabulary with identified student products “Second Tier” vocabulary expected in class discussion and in written tasks</td>
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An LDC instructional module is a structure that allows teachers to address four critical questions for rigorous literacy instruction:

**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 course work and 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. When you complete a teaching task, you “automatically” create alignment to the 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 while 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?**
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 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?**
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 or are not learning, and they feed into the instructional choices teachers make. They also provide an opportunity for teachers to correct or “repair” any misunderstandings or skill weaknesses students may have.

**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 that they have common understandings of expectations. By sharing classroom sets of student work, teachers can have robust professional learning opportunities to examine their own practices and how these practices contribute to student results.

Below are two sample template tasks and an example of how it looks when teachers input their content. The result is a strong combination of using literacy strategies to deepen literacy in the discipline.

**Template Task 1:**
After researching (informative texts) on (content), write an (essay or substitute) that defines and explains (content). Support your discussion with evidence from research. L2 (Level 2) What conclusions or implications can you draw? (Informational/Definitional)

**Example:**
Science (Informational/Definitional): After researching your textbook chapters on Newton’s Laws of Motion, the essay “The Longest Run Home...” and one of the other two articles provided on Newton’s laws and the effects on sports, write an article for Coaching Magazine that defines Newton’s three laws and explains the effects of the laws on sports. Support your discussion with evidence from research. L2. What conclusions or implications can you draw?

**Template Task 2:**
[Insert essential question.] After reading (literature or informational texts), write an (essay or substitute) that addresses the question, and support your position with evidence from the text(s) you read. L2 Be sure to acknowledge competing views. L3 Give examples from past or current events or issues to illustrate and clarify your position. (Argumentative/Analysis L1, L2, L3)

**Example:**
Social Studies (Argumentative/Analysis L1): Should the state raise the minimum wage? After reading informational texts on the minimum wage debate, write an essay that addresses the question, and support your position, pro or con. L2 Be sure to acknowledge competing views.