Structure of an LDC Mini-Task

An LDC mini-task has the following essential components:

1. An enduring literacy skill which will be explicitly taught
2. A named product
3. A student-facing prompt
4. A scoring guide or rubric
5. Instructional strategies
6. Pacing

Here is some information about each of these components.

Enduring Literacy Skills

LDC skills read like lasting skills (not like concrete assignments) and thus always begin with “ability to.” These skills are abilities that students can apply years later in college or career, such as the “ability to identify credible sources” and the “ability to identify and define key terminology.” In other words, these skills should add to students’ repertoires as readers, writers, and thinkers, to later be used independently as needed.

In contrast, “ability to read Chapter One” or “ability to define three terms assigned by the teacher” are not considered LDC skills because they are short-term skills rather than important enduring skills students will need in their future work.

A Named Product

Students must produce something in an LDC mini-task. This is often a written product that can pass from the student’s hand to the teacher’s, such as a quick write, list, notes, organizer, or outline. This can also be an oral product such as the results of a partner discussion or a think-pair-share. The purpose of this product is that you as the teacher will use it to assess how well your students are practicing or using the skill you are trying to teach. You need to be able to look at a product in order to assess their progress.

A Student-Facing Prompt

In order for your students to know what they need to do during the mini-task, you need a prompt that gives students directions for developing the product. Good examples might say “take notes” or “fill in the outline” or “create a bibliography,” possibly followed by some further words about how to do that work. Starting with those imperative verbs shows that students themselves are being prompted to do the active learning.

A Scoring Guide or Rubric

Since you’re going to teach a skill and you’re going to assess how well your students demonstrated this skill in a product, your scoring guide or rubric will let your students know exactly how their work will be assessed, and will remind you of the criteria against which you will do that assessing.

Scoring guides and rubrics should identify elements to look for in the student product, things that will provide evidence that students are developing the targeted skill. When you check for those features, you can tell if you need to adjust the plan for the whole class and/or give added coaching to a few students who may need additional support.

LDC mini-tasks thus provide you with regular opportunities to formatively assess your students’ literacy skill development. Whether you use a mini-task on its own or within a larger LDC unit (called an LDC module), it can help you see if and how you need to adjust future instruction for your class, and/or differentiate your strategies for individual students.

Instructional Strategies

This is the actual plan for the instruction you will provide during this lesson. This space is intended to outline what you as the teacher will do to explicitly teach the enduring literacy skill to your students. This section may be the most customized because it will reflect your teaching methods, style, and needs. You can really differentiate here. Lay out your instructional moves, include instructional strategies that meet students’ individual goals or IEP goals, address the needs of English Language Learners or other specific groups of students in need of differentiation. This section allows you to flesh out your instructional plan.

Pacing

An LDC mini-task includes pacing information that indicates how long the lesson will last. Whether you expect the lesson to take 20, 30, or 40 minutes or to last a day or two, pacing is included in the mini-task.