LDC in Action:

October 21, 2015
Tonight’s Hosts

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The Fund for Transforming Education in Kentucky

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*Director of Professional Learning*
The Colorado Education Initiative
Tonight’s Objectives:

• Develop an understanding of the Common Assignment Study (CAS)
• Hear from CAS practitioners in Colorado and Kentucky
• Learn about tools and resources produced as part of CAS
• Understand where CAS is headed in both states
Where CAS Began

The **Common Assignment Study** (CAS) was conceived to facilitate multi-district, multi-state collaboration among teachers within participating districts and states during the transition to new college- and career-readiness standards.
What is CAS?

Unit Design and Use
Explore how to successfully design, revise, and implement high quality units in participating districts and states. Focus on the use of student work on common assignments to inform instructional conversations.

Resources and Support
Identify resources, support and professional learning opportunities educators need to effectively design and implement the units.

Evidence of Student Learning
Determine how evidence of student learning from common assignment units may contribute to more robust teacher evaluation systems, particularly in non-tested grades and subjects.
Why CAS?

**Professional Learning Communities**
Develop common units, embed LDC into curriculum, share instructional strategies, score and analyze student work

**Content Knowledge**
Deepen understanding of the new standards, learn how to integrate disciplinary literacy skills, strengthen ability to use different types of assessment productively

**Student Learning**
Develop more robust ways of documenting student learning, demonstrate teachers’ contributions to improving student achievement and engagement
Year One

• Two districts each in CO and KY
• 6 cross-state teams of 8 teachers each: MS/HS Science, MS/HS US History, MS/HS ELA
• Convenings of each team in the summer of 2013 and the winter of 2014 to create 2 units
• Virtual collaborations between face-to-face convenings
• Implementation of units during the 2013-14 school year
Year Two

• Multiple districts in CO and KY
• 6 cross-state teams: MS/HS Science, MS/HS US History, MS/HS ELA
  – 62 teachers in Kentucky
  – 38 teachers in Colorado
• Revision and implementation of units from year one and implemented them
• Different levels of participation: leader, reviser, or implemener (teachers could choose)
The Big Picture

www.commonassignment.org
What are teachers saying about CAS?

“I have learned to be a better leader and teacher because of this experience. The collaboration is the best part: the ability to look at standards, student work, and presentation styles to effectively give kids what they need to master skills and content.”

“I teach my students that the most important question isn't 'why'; rather it's 'what's next.' Once you know why, what are you going to do with it? I was 10 years into teaching, and I needed a ‘what's next’ moment. CAS was that moment for me.”
What are leaders saying about CAS?

Gary McCormick, Kenton County School District (KY)

Michelle Logan, Thompson School District (CO)
What questions do you have from what you have heard about CAS so far?
What’s it all about?
The “common” in CAS

- Standards
- Big ideas
- Content and skills
- LDC task
- Formative and summative assessments

...TIGHT AND LOOSE
The Units

Words Matter

UNIT OVERVIEW

How is it that words can mean so much more than their dictionary definitions? How can a single word choice or a pattern of word choices impact the meaning of a text?

Students explore these essential questions in this literary analysis unit, which centers on how words carry multiple layers of meaning and how authors purposely choose words to convey deeper meanings. Students develop their textual analysis skills through a gradual release of responsibility, beginning by collaboratively analyzing the impact of word choice on tone and meaning in rich texts such as Pat Mora’s “Same Song,” Robert Hayden’s “Those Winter Sundays,” and Sandra Cisneros’s “Eleven.” After additional small-group practice and instruction on how to develop a focused thesis and structure an explanatory essay on a complex topic, students individually complete a final performance task in which they explain the effect of George Orwell’s diction in his essay, “Shooting an Elephant.”

The unit is designed with the intent for students to transfer the skill of identifying and explaining the intentional word choices authors make to craft a message.

COMMON ASSIGNMENTS

- Pre-Assessment: Multiple choice questions on content and terms
- Constructed Response: Analysis of tone in a text
- LDC Explanatory Essay: Analysis of tone in George Orwell’s “Shooting an Elephant”

LDC TEACHING TASK

Task Template 1619 – Informational or Explanatory

How does Orwell use diction to convey tone? After reading “Shooting an Elephant,” write an essay in which you explain how Orwell’s diction conveys the narrator’s complex attitude toward his surroundings and predicaments, such as the natives, the British, authority figures, or the very act of shooting the elephant. What conclusions or implications can you draw? Support your explanation with evidence from the text.

AUTHORS

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The Units

Current cross-state units:
• 7th grade ELA (2)
• 10th grade ELA (2)
• Middle school science (3)
• High school Biology (2)
• Middle school US History (2)
• High School US History (2)
Unit Quality: External Vetting
Planning Template

## Unit Template

### Stage 1—Identify Desired Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Established Goals/ Standards</th>
<th>(CCSS and relevant state standards)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transfer</strong></td>
<td>Students will be able to independently use their learning to ...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Meaning**                 | **Understandings/Big Ideas**
|                             | Students will understand that ... |
|                             | **Essential Questions**
|                             | Students will keep considering ... |
| **Acquisition**             | **Know (Content)**
|                             | Students will know ... |
|                            | **Do (Skills)**
|                             | Students will be skilled at ... |
|                            | **Discipline Skills** |
|                             | **Literacy Skills**
|                             | (Should include reference to LDC task types—e.g., argumentative, cause-effect, etc.) |
# Unit Quality Rubric

1. **Performance Outcomes**  
   *(Desired Results: What will students know, understand, and be able to do?)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clearly defined and aligned to standards.</th>
<th>Work in Progress</th>
<th>Ready For Use</th>
<th>Exemplary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Performance outcomes:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Are unclear.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Are incoherent across the unit and/or overly broad or narrow in scope for a unit of study.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Are loosely aligned or misaligned to content and skill standards.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Are too difficult or too easy for the range of student ability.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Worthwhile and central to the discipline.</th>
<th>Performance outcomes:</th>
<th>Performance outcomes:</th>
<th>Performance outcomes:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Address ideas or skills with unclear or questionable importance within the discipline(s).</td>
<td>Address key ideas and skills that are central to the discipline and have limited transfer within and/or across the discipline(s).</td>
<td>Address key ideas and skills that are central to the discipline and have broad transferability within and/or across the discipline(s).</td>
<td>Explicitly require application of a wide range of higher-order thinking / 21st-century skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Require application of minimal higher-order thinking / 21st-century skills.</td>
<td>Require application of some higher-order thinking / 21st-century skills.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*This rubric is derived and adapted from the EQuiP rubric, the Colorado Department of Education’s Assessment Review Tool, SCALE’s Performance Task Quality Rubric, and the CAS Criteria for Unit Quality.*
Student Work Analysis Protocol

**EVIDENCE ALIGNMENT TOOL**

**Assignment Title:**

Directions: Review each piece of student work, and decide whether the sample provides evidence of "minimal understanding," "acceptable understanding," or "strong understanding" of any of the standards or learning outcomes. Then, identify evidence from the student work that illustrates that level of understanding by quoting, citing examples, or describing what you observed. Indicate the sample number and the general location of the evidence in the sample (page/paragraph). Repeat for each sample.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standards/Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Evidence of Minimal Understanding</th>
<th>Evidence of Acceptable Understanding</th>
<th>Evidence of Strong Understanding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CCSS ELA 11-12: Writing 1.B: Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience’s knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases.</td>
<td>Sample 3: Last ¶ mentions there are differing opinions on issue, but does not cite a specific counterclaim.</td>
<td>Sample 2: In ¶ 3, mentions counterclaim that social media decreases students’ interest in reading books. Cites the source of the counterclaim. Sample 4: In ¶ 4, cites evidence from article on Wikipedia that supports a counterclaim about social media supporting greater access to most current information.</td>
<td>Sample 1: In ¶ 4, discusses counterclaim that social media supports students’ awareness of social issues, cites author of OpEd in NYT Times, and dismisses counterclaim as limited to opinion and refutes counterclaim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample 5: No mention of a counterclaim.</td>
<td>Sample 6: No mention of a counterclaim.</td>
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Polling
What are we learning?

*Research for Action* conducted qualitative research for the first two years of the project.
Overall Goals

The majority of responding teachers found CAS helpful in achieving instructional goals.

Teacher Ratings of How Helpful Common Assignment has been in Achieving Instructional Goals
Teacher Practice: Influence of CAS

Teachers reported that CAS provided them with new instructional strategies and raised their expectations for student work.
The majority of teachers reported that CAS improved student writing skills and understanding of content.
Teacher Practice: Collaboration

Over 80 percent of teachers responded that CAS collaboration enhanced their capacity to teach CAS units, provide student feedback, use student work and scoring rubrics.
Challenges to CAS Implementation

- Time
  - Tension between in-depth CAS units and covering content
  - Grading student work
  - Fitting into curriculum pacing or school schedules
- Implementation without previous LDC background
- Using the rubric(s)
- Obtaining needed resources
- Version control and access to units
Sustainability

Teachers see the value of the CAS initiative and plan to continue to use the units in the future.
Year Three in Colorado

- Multiple districts in traditional CAS
- 13 content teams, 125 teachers
- Teams implementing existing units and designing new units
- Teachers can choose their level of participation: leader or implementer
- New districts using CAS tools with common LDC modules
- Piloting SLOs connected to CAS units
Year Three in Kentucky

- Creating units + existing units in original districts, 85 teachers
- Ongoing Next Generation Instructional Design network (NGID) 49 new teachers led by 15 original CAS teacher leaders
- Exploring interdisciplinary unit design & module development
- Providing science trainings connecting Next Generation Science Standards and LDC
- Working to embed CAS into larger system of instructional transformation
New Units

Units in Development, Colorado:
- 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade ELA
- More middle school science
- 7<sup>th</sup> grade math
- High school civics

Units in Development, Kentucky:
- Kindergarten-5<sup>th</sup> grade
- 6<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grade ELA
- Elem & HS math
- High school civics
- More HS & MS science
- 1 interdisciplinary
Year Three in CO and KY

- Presenting at Learning Forward in Washington, D.C.
- Creating a cross-state vetting committee comprised of CAS teacher leaders
- Creating a collection on LDC.org
- Working with Achieve to provide student exemplar papers to accompany unit
Thank You for Joining Us!

Questions?
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Renee Boss: renee@thefundky.org

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