# Innovation Lab Network Performance Assessment Project
## Quality Criteria for Performance Assessments
### Text Analysis and Character Revelations: Flowers for Algernon

| Quality Criteria | Yes | Yes, with Slight Modifications | No | Rationale/Suggestions |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1. Focus on Deeper Learning** | | | | |
| a. Does the task require the demonstration and/or application of complex skills (e.g., Critical Abilities, DOK Levels 3 and 4, 21st century skills, Key Cognitive Strategies)?* | X | | | Task requires the demonstration of literary analysis skills, (i.e., analyzing how author Keyes reveals aspects of Charlie's character over the course of the short story). Note: The text is the author's original short story "Flowers for Algernon," not his later novel of the same name. |
| b. Can students' responses to this task (what students are asked to produce) provide evidence of important college/career readiness skills and Critical Abilities (e.g., collaboration, research skills, evidence-based communication)?* | X | | | Students' responses can provide evidence of the following Critical Abilities: communication skills (oral and written) and interpersonal interaction/collaboration skills. |
| c. Does the task address key concepts and skills in the discipline that are transferable to other contexts?* | X | | | The ability to analyze how aspects of a character are revealed over the course of a text is a skill that can be transferred to other contexts, as are the skills of writing an essay and collaborating with others. |
| **2. Alignment to Standards** | | | | |
| a. Does the task measure key skills and major claims emphasized by the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and/or NGSS? * | X | | | Task measures Claim #1 (students can read closely and analytically) and Claim #2 (students can produce well-grounded writing). The task module lists numerous CCSS grade 8 standards for language, reading, speaking and listening, and writing that are measured by the task, most but not all of which apply. The task module also points out that the focus of the task is to measure RL.8.3. |
| b. Can students' responses to this task (what students are asked to produce) be scored using CCSS/NGSS aligned rubrics? * | X | | | Students' responses (essays) can be scored using a CCSS- aligned rubric. |
| c. Are the scoring criteria--rubrics, point scoring systems, checklists (if provided)--aligned to key expectations of the CCSS/NGSS? | X | | | Students' written responses are scored using the "LDC Student Work Rubric—Informational or Explanatory," which is aligned to key expectations of the CCSS. |
| d. Is the rigor of the task appropriately matched to the grade-level standards being assessed? | | X | | The module lists specific CCSS language, reading, speaking and listening, and writing standards for grade 8, and the rigor of the task matches most of the listed standards, especially RL.8.3 (the identified focus of the task). The rigor of the task does not seem |

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| | | | | appropriately matched to the grade-level language standards listed. |
| **3. Student Choice and Agency** | | | | |
| a. Does the task allow for a variety of responses and/or solution pathways? * | X | | | Task allows for a variety of student responses in terms of both their explanation (analysis) and the evidence from the text they use to support their explanation. |
| b. Does the task offer opportunities for student ownership and student choice (e.g., selecting a research question or topic; selecting sources; etc.)? | | X | | Task offers students the opportunity to choose how to frame their explanation and the evidence they use to support their explanation, but other than that there is no student choice. |
| c. Does the task require student-initiated planning and management of information/data and ideas (e.g., determining strategies for solving a problem; designing an investigation; deciding how to present findings; etc.)? | | X | | Task requires students to decide how to present their findings, but other than that, there is no student-initiated planning or management of information/data. |
| **4. Relevance and Authenticity** | | | | |
| a. Is task content represented in a way that is appropriately authentic (i.e., not overly hypothetical), relevant (i.e., relatable), and/or meaningful to students and the discipline (e.g., topic connects to students' lives, task simulates authentic purpose and audience)? * | X | | | Task content is authentic in that the task asks students to analyze how an author reveals aspects of a character over the course of a text. The idea of analyzing how lines of dialogue or incidents in a story reveal aspects of a character is meaningful to the discipline. |
| b. Is the task related to real world problems, contexts, and/or purposes? | X | | | Task is related to real world contexts because dialogue and incidents/events can reveal aspects of a person's character. |
| **5. Suitable for Diverse Student Populations** | | | | |
| a. Is the task, at its core, free of bias that might disadvantage specific student populations and free of stereotypes in language, content, and design? * | | X | | At its core, the task is largely free of bias. However, since the focus of the task is on the character's use of language, students who are not well versed in the English language (e.g., English language learners) might be at a disadvantage when reading the text (e.g., recognizing that "dint" means "didn't" or "intristed" means "interested) and completing the task. |
| b. Does the task include, or allow for the use of, a variety of stimuli? | | | X | Task is very focused on the text of the short story "Flowers for Algernon." |
| c. Does the task provide instructional scaffolds to support student learning and skill development toward successful completion of | | X | | Task provides instructional scaffolds that support skill development toward successful completion of the task, but some of the scaffolds are not clearly related to completion of the task. See 6b below for |

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| the task? | | | | more detail. |
| d. Does the task include appropriate recommendations for accommodations and differentiation to provide access for diverse students? | | | X | There are no specific recommendations for accommodations and differentiation to provide access for diverse students. |
| 6. Design of Student Task | | | | |
| a. Is the overall task prompt clear (e.g., clear student directions, unambiguous graphics)? * | | X | | The overall prompt is somewhat clear. The initial question "How does Keyes use Charlie's reflections to expose his persona?" is not clear, though, because the word "persona" can refer to different things (e.g., the mask or façade one wears in social situations, one's public role, one's perceived role), and it is not clear what definition is being used. The rest of the prompt focuses on Charlie's character, which is not the same as his persona. |
| b. Is task information presented in an organized way? | | X | | Task information is presented in an organized way, but the organization of the instructional scaffolds is not always tightly aligned with the focus of the task. That is, some of the scaffolds are not clearly related to completion of the task.  For example, the Product and Prompt section of one instructional scaffold reads, "Focusing on particular lines from the section, determine what these lines reveal about Charlie (characterization), how they propel the action of the story, or how they provoke a decision (character motives)?"  If a student focuses on the middle part—how the lines propel the action of the story—the information will not be helpful in responding to the task prompt. <br> *Recommendation*: Make sure all instructional scaffolds clearly support successful completion of the task. |
| 7. Curriculum-Embedded | | | | |
| a. Is the task feasible for most school/classroom environments (e.g., access to necessary resources)? | X | | | Task is feasible for most school/classroom environments. |
| b. Does the task include opportunities for independent work as well as interaction/collaboration with peers? | X | | | Instructional scaffolding activities include opportunities for independent work and interaction/collaboration with peers. |

| Task Materials | Yes | No | Comments |
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| a. Is the task missing any referenced accompanying materials (resources, handouts, rubrics etc.)? If yes, please indicate which materials are missing. | | X | All referenced materials seem to be included. |
| b. Does this task contain topics/materials/texts that might be sensitive for some students? If yes, please explain. | X | | The main character is developmentally disabled, which might be sensitive for some students (e.g., those who have family members who are developmentally disabled). |

**Comments:** This task is promising. This task prompt is focused, and the task is very text dependent. The task addresses content central to the discipline, and the short story and topic would most likely be of great interest to students.  The task is appropriate for addressing CCSS RL.8.3, which is the identified focus of the task, and most of the other CCSS standards (e.g., reading, language, speaking and listening, and writing standards).  The task needs better organization, however, in terms of the instructional scaffolds. The scaffolds do not always clearly support students in successfully answering the prompt, which is focused on how an author reveals aspects of the main character. Some scaffolds seem much broader in scope or are only tangentially related to answering the prompt, and thus may not be helpful.

Criteria summarized in this document were derived from the following sources:
- *Quality Criteria for Performance Assessments,* SCALE, 2013
- *Criteria for High-Quality Assessment,* SCOPE, CRESST, LSRI, June 2013
- *Quality Performance Assessment:  Harnessing the Power of Teacher and Student Learning,* Brown & Mevs, February 2012
- *ThinkReady Task Review Checklist*, 2013