Innovation Lab Network Performance Assessment Project
Quality Criteria for Performance Assessments
The Power of Language

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 some literary analysis skills, but the complexity of the skills is not clear, in part because it is not clear which texts the students are supposed to analyze in their essay.
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 the effect of a text's structure on its meaning is a skill that can be transferred to other contexts, as is the skill of writing an essay.
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 is intended to measure Claim #1 (students can read closely and analytically), Claim #2 (students can produce well-grounded writing), and Claim #3 (students employ effective speaking and listening skills). The task module lists all of the CCSS anchor standards for reading and writing, but not all apply (e.g., the reading standard and writing standard that refer to arguments especially do not apply). The introduction to the module notes that the module is intended to address the CCSS Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening, but none of these standards is listed.
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 teaching task rubric for informational/explanatory writing, which is aligned to CCSS expectations. Students listening/speaking skills are scored using the LDC/Paideia Speaking and Listening Rubric, which is also aligned to CCSS expectations.
d. Is the rigor of the task appropriately matched			X	No grade-level standards are listed. The rigor of the task does match,

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to the grade-level standards being assessed?				however, to some grade-level CCSS standards, especially RL.7.5. and RL.8.6.
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 responses in terms of which examples students use as evidence to support their explanation. But as there are only two very short texts to choose examples from (a poem and a recipe), there is not likely to be a lot of variety.
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 which examples to use as evidence to support their explanation. *Recommendation*: Consider giving students more choice of texts to compare. They could, for example, choose to compare the structure of a poem and a recipe or the structure of a poem and a short informational article.
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 and relevant in that the task asks students to compare the structures of two types of texts that are familiar to them (poems and recipes). The idea of comparing and contrasting structures of different types of texts is meaningful to the discipline. In addition, asking students to write an essay that compares an aspect (in this case, structure) of two different texts simulates an authentic purpose.
b. Is the task related to real world problems, contexts, and/or purposes?	X			Task is related to real world contexts (e.g., ideas can be presented in different formats). Task is also related to real-world purposes, because it asks students to demonstrate their ability to analyze different parts of a text.
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 free of bias.

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b. Does the task include, or allow for the use of, a variety of stimuli?		X		Task lists 7 poems, 1 song, and several recipes, but they do not all seem to be used in the module activities. Most of the poems do not seem utilized, nor is the song mentioned in any activity.
c. Does the task provide instructional scaffolds to support student learning and skill development toward successful completion of the task?		X		The task provides instructional scaffolds, some of which support skill development toward successful completion of the task, and others less so. For example, the first activity asks students to draw leaves (both tracing them and drawing them as directed), which does not seem tightly aligned with supporting students in developing their responses to the task prompt. This activity also asks students to answer (write a response to) the question that is connected to purpose of structure (i.e., "Would you rather have a recipe or a poem?"), but the activity does not explore the answers to that question. *Recommendation*: Make sure all scaffolding activities clearly support skill development toward successful completion of the task.
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 task prompt at the beginning of the module seems different from the writing task described in the module. The task seems to change from a focus solely on explaining the effects of structure on meaning to a focus that also includes describing the similarities and differences between structures. Also, the prompt lists four specific texts (three poems and one a fig butter recipe), but the writing activity that begins the writing process refers to the pizza recipe, not the fig butter recipe, and it's not clear how the other texts described in the initial prompt are to be referred to in the essay. *Recommendation*: Be sure the task prompt clearly matches the focus of the essay in the writing activities.
b. Is task information presented in an organized way?		X		Some of the task information is presented in an organized way, and some of the task information is not. The task clearly lists the resources to be used, but then these resources are not always referred to in the activities. Also, sometimes the text in the Product and Prompt section does not always seem to match the Instructional Strategies section. *Recommendation*: Make sure that all information in the task is organized in a logical and coherent way.

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7. Curriculum-Embedded				
a. Is the task feasible for most school/classroom environments (e.g., access to necessary resources)?	X			The task itself 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 (especially the Paideia seminar).

Task Materials	Yes	No	Comments
a. Is the task missing any referenced accompanying materials (resources, handouts, rubrics etc.)? If yes, please indicate which materials are missing.	X		The pizza recipe seems to be missing (instead, there are links to two fig butter recipes). Also, a text titled "Circus Dad" is referred to in an activity, but it is not listed or provided in the module.
b. Does this task contain topics/materials/texts that might be sensitive for some students? If yes, please explain.	X		The task prompt lists a poem "Thirteen Ways with Figs" that is probably inappropriate for grades 6-8. The poem is a beautiful poem about different uses for figs, but one stanza describes how to use a fig concoction "to arouse your partner."

Comments: The basic focus of this task—i.e., recognizing that the structure of a text affects its meaning—is strong, but as designed, this task does not require rigorous disciplinary thinking. The task needs improvement in its organization and its focus, especially the focus of the instructional activities as they relate to the task prompt presented at the beginning of the module. As is, the task could be useful in introducing students to the concept of text structure affecting meaning, but much work needs to be done in strengthening the task in order for it measure complex thinking.

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