



Facilitator comments: (2 minutes)

- Welcome to this session on disciplinary literacy. Once students enter sixth grade, there are discipline-specific standards, and that is what we will be exploring during this session.
- We will be examining how Common Core Learning Standards progress, from when students are in elementary school, to the time they get to middle and high school in what they demand of students' ability to read complex **disciplinary** texts.
- There are also separate literacy standards for science and technical subjects, but today we are focusing on history.
- As part of this year's CIE, and in the transition to next year, this workshop will be an opportunity to reflect on the work you've done on disciplinary literacy, and plan how to build on it next year.

Defining Disciplinary Literacy

Make some notes on a post-it and discuss with a partner:

- What is disciplinary literacy?
- How is it different than content area literacy?

Facilitator Comments:

Jot down a few notes on a post-it that define disciplinary literacy and distinguish it from content area literacy. Share your ideas with the person sitting next to you.
(10 minutes)

Here are some thoughts you might expect to hear, or that you want to engage participants in when you have a whole-group discussion after they read the article:

CONTENT AREA LITERACY

Generalized approach to develop better readers to understand the content

Cross-discipline

Focus is on reading from a text—any text

Strategies tend to work with younger and lower level readers

More aimed at how we teach (general reading strategies)

DISCIPLINARY LITERACY

Specialized approach to show how experts in a particular field read and write

Discipline-specific

Aim is to learn disciplinary content; idea is that **you need these particular literacy skills** to do so

More aimed at what we teach (content)

Article Excerpt: Questions for Discussion

- What is disciplinary literacy?
- What are the differences between content area reading and discipline-specific reading?
- How can you begin conversations with your teachers around disciplinary literacy?



3

Facilitator Comments: (1 minute)

You are going to be reading an excerpt (**8 minutes**) from an article written by Tim Shanahan, a well-known researcher in disciplinary literacy.

On the slide, and on your copy of the article are questions for you to consider as you read, and then to discuss in small groups (**12 minutes**). We'll come together after you've had a chance to talk to a few colleagues, and talk as a whole group (**10 minutes**).

Here are some points you might facilitate that people make during your whole-group conversation :

CONTENT AREA LITERACY

Generalized approach to develop better readers to understand the content

Cross-discipline

Focus is on reading from a text—any text

Strategies tend to work with younger and lower level readers

More aimed at how we teach (general reading strategies)

DISCIPLINARY LITERACY

Specialized approach to show how experts in a particular field read and write

Discipline-specific

Aim is to learn disciplinary content; idea is that **you need these particular literacy skills** to do so

More aimed at what we teach (content)

Trajectory of the Common Core Learning Standards: Questions for discussion

- What do you notice?
- What changes across grades/grade bands?
- What would enactment of these standards look like in a classroom?

Facilitator Comments: (3 minute)

Here are questions to consider as you **closely** examine the standards for the progression of disciplinary reading skills. You are looking for how grade 4 prepares students for what is expected of them in sixth grade– the year when disciplinary literacy standards begin. Then you are examining the standards for how the skills and expectations progress from sixth grade to the high school grade band.

When you examine the standards, pay attention to the idea behind the standards, but also at the word level. Some standards change subtly, but importantly.

When you discuss the questions, consider this year’s CIE and its focus on professional collaboration. How can teachers collaborate to enact these standards in their classrooms?

Also in terms of the CIE, disciplinary literacy allows teachers to know their students in a new way. Because they will be teaching them literacy skills, they will have a deep understanding of how students make sense of learning content.

Disciplinary Literacy

Big Idea: Every academic discipline has its own set of *characteristic literacy practices*.

(Alliance for Excellence in Education, *Literacy Instruction in the Content Areas*, 2007)

Our challenge:

How can we **best equip students** to read and comprehend **discipline specific texts** in a way that will **promote literacy growth** and that recognizes the **unique characteristics of the different disciplines**?

Facilitator comments

- Take one minute to read this slide and consider how it relates to this year's CIE focus on knowing your students **(1 minute)**.

Grades K-5...

What foundations and learning experiences do students in elementary grades need to be prepared for the expectations and demands of grades 6-12 disciplinary texts/literacy?

Facilitator comments:

- Today we have been looking at expectations between elementary and secondary grades
- As participants read this slide, ask : **what do you think are the foundations and learning experiences in the elementary grades that will put students in good position to read texts that are discipline-specific?"**
- (Discussion can take up to **5 minutes**)

For Grades K-5

Understand the relationship between knowledge and reading

- “Knowledge is necessary for reading and reading is an important tool to build knowledge.”*
- Make a commitment to teaching content well, authentically and with quality and varied resources.

* Pinkham, Kaefer, Neuman. *Knowledge Development in Early Childhood*. Guilford Press, 2012



Facilitator comments: (2 minutes)

- One of the ways the Common Core suggests gaining content knowledge is through text– through the act of reading
- Teaching content well means using varied and authentic resources. In K-5, resources are often mediated or written specifically for young students.
- In 6-12, students are expected to grow increasingly comfortable reading texts by experts in the discipline

Grades 6-12...

What learning experiences are necessary for students to read/approach discipline specific texts in the way that historians, biologists, mathematicians, and literary critics would?

-Giving kids the *insider's* view/knowledge

-Letting students know what reading, writing, making and speaking look like within a specific discipline (Shanahan)

-Literacy as an essential part of each discipline's practice and values as opposed to importing a set of tools (generic reading/writing strategies) and applying them to discipline-specific texts

Question to consider: What do students need to do in disciplinary classrooms to learn how to read the texts in the same way an expert would?

Facilitator Comments:

- Take a minute to read this slide **(1 minute)**
- Ask: **what do students need to do in disciplinary classrooms to learn how to read the texts in the same way an expert would?**
- Discussion can last **6 minutes**

TO CONCLUDE

- Thank you for coming. Hopefully, today increased your knowledge of both disciplinary literacy and the CCLS. I hope it sparked some ideas and questions for you as leaders, and to take back to your teachers.
- There will be PD this year that addresses the disciplines, so you should be on the lookout for that.