

How to Build Capacity for Disciplinary Literacy

Here are some other ways that schools have found to build capacity, specifically in sustaining a disciplinary literacy approach:

1. Provide ongoing, embedded literacy professional learning for the entire staff, with support and follow-up by a coach or consultant. Beware of reducing this learning to “strategy” acquisition in place of literacy learning that can be adapted to various disciplines.
2. Form a literacy leadership team made up of members of various departments. (See Figure 9.3 for tips regarding how to create a literacy leadership team.)
3. Make sure professional learning communities or disciplinary literacy cohorts are grounded in continuous disciplinary literacy leaning and collaborative inquiry. This may require the help of a literacy consultant, coach, book study, or even professional learning off site. (See Figure 9.4 for more information about how to create an effective book study.)
4. Provide the resources, especially time and space, so teachers will have the capacity to grow.
5. Ensure that teachers, especially those in cohorts or teams, experience encouragement, support, and opportunities to stretch their skills and knowledge. Remember that individual and collective efficacy are the most important components for increased student learning—as well as for building capacity.
6. Encourage cross-curricular or cross-team collaboration to encourage stronger relationships and deeper understandings across contents.
7. Foster leadership in all areas and look for leaders who shine in nontraditional ways (see Chapter 8).
8. Utilize summer as a time for reflection, learning, and planning collaboratively.
9. Find opportunities for co-teaching and peer coaching within disciplines.