

Module 1

Disciplinary Literacy and Reading

Estimated Time: 1 hour

The goal of this module is to deepen teachers' understanding of and curiosity about the nature of disciplinary literacy and particularly the ways in which reading is used by experts in each field of study. Participants will first be asked to respond to a scenario where all teachers are asked to teach reading and writing. Then they will begin to explore the ways reading differs in the various fields of study and how understanding these differences can help teachers use reading in engaging, authentic ways to help students construct complex, discipline-specific knowledge in every classroom.

Materials You Will Need:

- Chart paper
- Markers
- PowerPoint Slides **1.1-1.9**
- One copy of each of these handouts for each individual participant
 - **Handout 1:** How Experts Read (To be distributed *after* group activity in Segment 4)
 - **Handout 2:** What Should Students Read in Content-Area Classrooms? (To be distributed at the beginning of Segment 5)

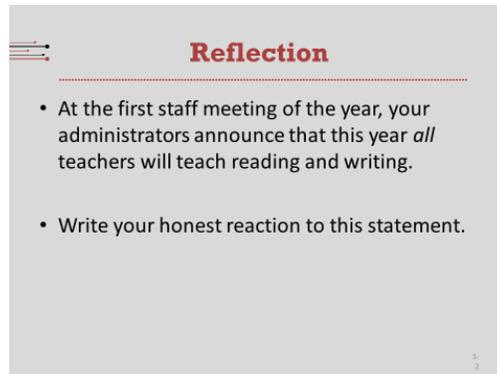
- A piece of chart paper titled *Concerns about Teaching Reading in All Content Areas*
- A piece of chart paper to serve as a model for the group activity in Segment 4. It should be divided into four segments with the segments labeled: *Scientists, Mathematicians, Historians/Social Scientists, Fiction/Nonfiction Readers*.
- Paper and pens/pencils for participants (optional)
- Highlighters for participants (optional)

Overview of the Session: All times are approximate.

- SEGMENT 1: Sharing Concerns (10 minutes)
- SEGMENT 2: Establishing the Purpose of the Session (5 minutes)
- SEGMENT 3: Defining Disciplinary Literacy (10 minutes)
- SEGMENT 4: Reading Like Experts (20 minutes)
- SEGMENT 5: What Do Experts Read? (10 minutes)
- Assignment of Bring It Back Task (5 minutes)

➤ **SEGMENT 1: Approximately 10 minutes**
Sharing Concerns

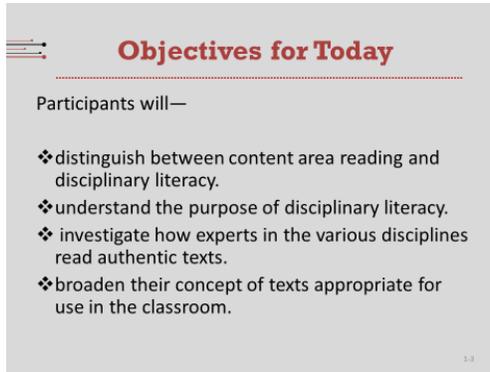
- A.** Project **PowerPoint Slide 1.2** about 5 minutes before the scheduled start time.



- B.** Direct participants to begin jotting down their thoughts as they enter.
- C.** After about 3 minutes, ask participants to wrap up their writing.
- D.** Post the piece of chart paper titled *Concerns about Teaching Reading in All Content Areas*.
- E.** Ask participants to share out their thoughts; jot them down on the chart paper.

➤ SEGMENT 2: Approximately 5 minutes Establishing the Purpose of the Session

A. Project PowerPoint Slide 1.3.



Objectives for Today

Participants will—

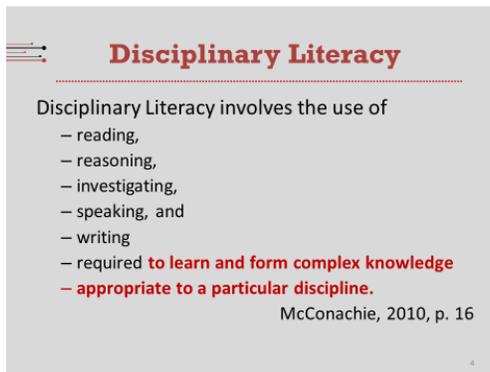
- ❖ distinguish between content area reading and disciplinary literacy.
- ❖ understand the purpose of disciplinary literacy.
- ❖ investigate how experts in the various disciplines read authentic texts.
- ❖ broaden their concept of texts appropriate for use in the classroom.

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- B. Quickly go over the objectives for the day:
- to distinguish between content area reading and disciplinary literacy.
 - to understand the purpose of disciplinary literacy.
 - to investigate how experts in the various disciplines read authentic texts.
 - to broaden their concept of texts appropriate for use in the classroom.

➤ SEGMENT 3: Approximately 10 minutes Defining Disciplinary Literacy

- A. Explain that *disciplinary literacy* is different from what may previously have been presented to them as *content area literacy*. Content area literacy implied asking students to use the reading strategies and writing modes common in English/language arts classrooms in each field of study within a school. Disciplinary literacy asks students to practice the literacy skills of experts in each field of study.
- B. Project PowerPoint Slide 1.4.



Disciplinary Literacy

Disciplinary Literacy involves the use of

- reading,
- reasoning,
- investigating,
- speaking, and
- writing

– required **to learn and form complex knowledge**
– **appropriate to a particular discipline.**

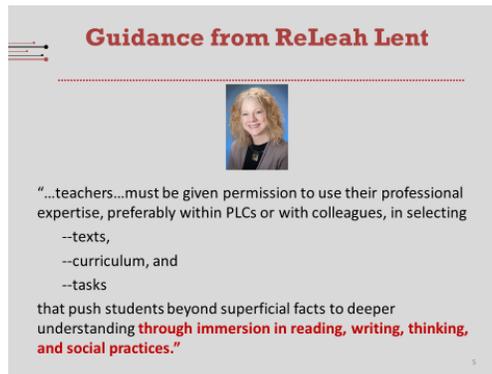
McConachie, 2010, p. 16

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- C. Read through the slide quickly, reading it as one complete sentence.
- D. Draw participants' attention to the first area written in red (*to learn and form complex knowledge*). Stress that the purpose of disciplinary literacy is to help students actually

learn our content deeply and to understand that the knowledge developed in our classrooms and the methods used to develop it are relevant to their lives.

- E. Read through the slide a second time, clearly tying each of the main points to the second phrase written in red (*appropriate to a particular discipline*):
 - reading what experts in that field of study read.
 - applying reasoning skills just as experts in the field would do.
 - investigating areas of interest in that discipline just as experts would do.
 - talking to each other as experts in the field would talk.
- F. Have participants talk 2-3 minutes in their small groups about how this definition helps them conceptualize disciplinary literacy.
- G. Ask volunteers to share out their ideas. When appropriate, refer back to related issues brought forward in the earlier discussion and show participants how this new definition should alleviate some of their anxieties.
- H. Project **PowerPoint Slide 1.5**.



Guidance from ReLeah Lent



"...teachers...must be given permission to use their professional expertise, preferably within PLCs or with colleagues, in selecting

- texts,
- curriculum, and
- tasks

that push students beyond superficial facts to deeper understanding **through immersion in reading, writing, thinking, and social practices.**"

- I. Stress that students must be immersed in **authentic** literacy practices actually employed by experts in the various fields so that they can see how literacy skills are used differently in each discipline, but always with the same goal in mind—to develop complex knowledge.
- J. Ask participants to offer examples of authentic literacy practices, making sure they understand that correctly answering questions from a textbook is not an authentic practice.

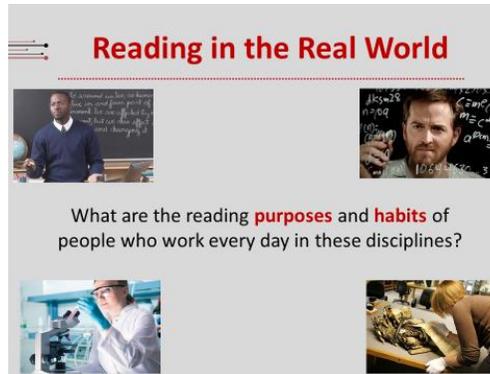
➤ **SEGMENT 4: Approximately 20 minutes**

Reading Like Experts

- A. Explain that we are going to take the time to think about the reading habits of expert practitioners in each disciplinary area.
- B. Have participants arrange themselves in groups of 4. It would be preferable to have them in cross-disciplinary groups, if possible.
- C. Give each group one piece of chart paper and some markers.

D. Post the model of how to divide the chart paper (*Scientists, Historians/Social Scientists, Mathematicians, Fiction/Nonfiction Readers*).

E. Project **Power Point Slide 1.6.**



Reading in the Real World

What are the reading **purposes** and **habits** of people who work every day in these disciplines?

The slide features four images: a scientist in a lab, a mathematician with equations, a person reading a book, and a person working at a desk.

F. Explain to groups that they are going to jot down ideas of how experts in each discipline read. What are their purposes for reading? What reading habits do they develop? In other words, **why** and **how** do they read?

G. Give each group 5-7 minutes to brainstorm the ways the various groups of readers read. What are the reading purposes/stances/habits of people who work every day in these disciplines?

H. After groups have had time to brainstorm, **distribute Handout 1: How Experts Read.**

I. Ask groups to take a few minutes to look at the ideas and compare them to what they've collected.

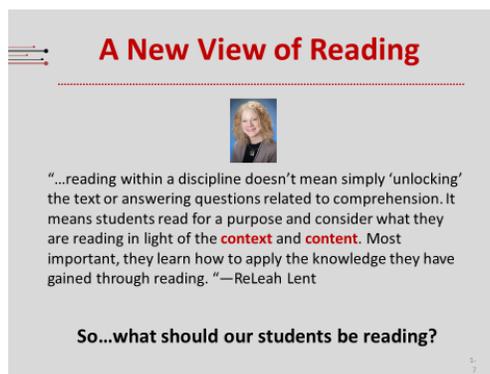
J. Ask volunteers to share any practices they noted that are *not* on the handout and that they think should be included.

K. Ask each group to share one Aha! moment they had from thinking about reading in this way.

➤ **SEGMENT 4: Approximately 10 minutes**

What Do Experts Read?

A. Project **PowerPoint Slide 1.7.**



A New View of Reading

“...reading within a discipline doesn't mean simply 'unlocking' the text or answering questions related to comprehension. It means students read for a purpose and consider what they are reading in light of the **context** and **content**. Most important, they learn how to apply the knowledge they have gained through reading.” —Releah Lent

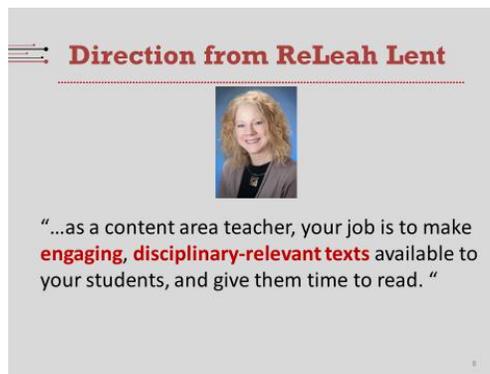
So...what should our students be reading?

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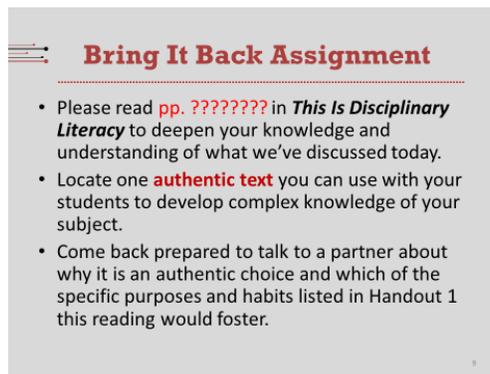
- B. Read the Lent quote to the participants and stress that if our students are going to read for an authentic purpose and use the information gained for authentic purposes, they will need to be reading what the experts read—and experts seldom read textbooks.
- C. Distribute **Handout 2: What Should Students Read in Content-Area Classrooms**. Stress the point that English/language arts *is* a content area.
- D. Give participants 2-3 minutes to look over the list and underline or highlight the types of texts they believe they could use successfully in their classrooms.
- E. In their small groups, have participants share ideas for finding and selecting new types of texts for use in the classroom. Stress choosing texts that are authentic, ones that experts in the field might read.

Bring It Back Task: Approximately 5 minutes

- A. Project **PowerPoint Slide 1.7**.



- B. Stress the idea that the texts teachers use in classrooms should be interesting to the students and mimic the types of texts practitioners of their discipline would actually read. This, of course, would **not** make a textbook the text of choice.
- C. Project **PowerPoint Slide 1.9**



- D. Direct participants to read Chapter 1 and the first half of Chapter 2 (to end of FQA—right before How to Get Students Reading in Every Discipline Every Day).
- E. Participants are to bring with them one authentic text they plan to have students read in their classroom and be prepared to discuss with a partner why it is an authentic choice

and which of the specific purposes and habits listed in Handout 1 this reading would foster. **STRESS that this should be a text they have NOT used before.** The point is to have every participant go through the process of finding an authentic, engaging text.