



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION
fldoe.org

Module 4

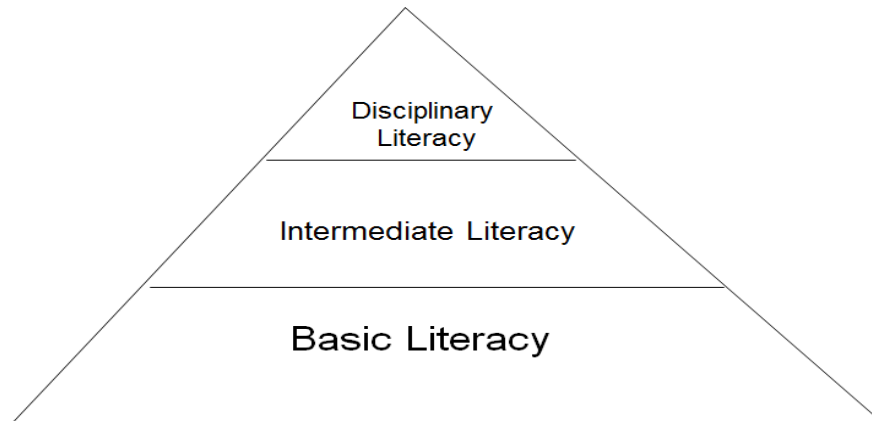
Coaching Content Area Teachers

Disciplinary Specific Literacy



Student Development of Literacy Skills

- **Basic Literacy:** Literacy skills such as decoding and knowledge of high-frequency words that underlie virtually all reading tasks.
- **Intermediate Literacy:** Literacy skills common to many tasks, including generic comprehension strategies, common word meaning and basic fluency.
- **Disciplinary Literacy:** Literacy skills specialized to history, science, mathematics, literature or other subject matter. (Shanahan, 2008).



Why Coach Content Area Teachers in Disciplinary Specific Literacy Strategies?

- The Florida Standards contain disciplinary specific reading and writing standards for science, history and technical subjects.
- Content area teachers have likely received training in generalized strategies that may or may not work with their discipline.
- Content area teachers may be more open to coaching if they know you will help them address their content specifically.
- Discipline-specific strategies can improve student achievement of ALL learners in the classroom including struggling learners AND students who are proficient in intermediate literacy skills.

Comparing Content Area Literacy and Discipline Specific Literacy

	Content Area Reading	Disciplinary Literacy
Source	Reading experts since 1920s	Wider range of experts since 1990s
Nature of skills	Generalizable	Specialized
Focus	Use of reading and writing to study/learn information	How literacy is used to make meaning within a discipline
Students	Remedial	Whole distribution
Texts	Often encourages use of literary text	Only focuses on disciplinary text
Role of graphics	Ignored or taught generally	Specific to the discipline

Shanahan, T. *What It Means to Teach Disciplinary Literacy*, PowerPoint.

Let's Look at Some Text...

- Some groups will examine excerpts from a mathematics text, others will look at a science text and still others will review an excerpt from a history text. In your group, chart the characteristics of your text in regard to:
 - Vocabulary (how technical, specific, archaic and unfamiliar is the vocabulary?)
 - Fluency (at what pace would this text be read?)
 - Comprehension (what strategies could be used to comprehend the text?)
 - Language used as well as punctuation and grammar (what word choices, grammar, structure and style do you note?)



Sharing Out....

- Math Group(s) – Share the information you charted regarding the vocabulary, fluency, comprehension and language of the text you examined and your thoughts regarding the questions you discussed.

Sharing Out....

- Science Group(s) – Share the information you charted regarding the vocabulary, fluency, comprehension and language of the text you examined and your thoughts regarding the questions you discussed.

Sharing Out....

- History Group(s) – Share the information you charted regarding the vocabulary, fluency, comprehension and language of the text you examined and your thoughts regarding the questions you discussed.

Let's Look at Some Text...

- Talk about the following questions:
 - How could teachers facilitate students' comprehension of the text considering the characteristics you noted?
 - What needs to be done to support students with disabilities?
 - What needs to be done to support English Language Learners?

Targeting the needs of Content Area Teachers in Disciplinary-Specific Literacy

- **Lay Some Groundwork** – Teachers may not have an understanding of what disciplinary-specific literacy is or what it looks like. How would you coach this teacher?
- **Consider teacher knowledge** – Teachers bring knowledge of their students and how they learn, teaching pedagogy and instructional methods as well as knowledge of content and processes of the discipline. How would you help this teacher enhance his/her instruction?
- **Be a collaborator, not an expert** – Teachers are the experts in their content; coaches should collaborate to determine how best to support students in disciplinary-specific literacy. How would you coach expert teachers in their field so that ALL students were successful?
- **Focus on Student Learning** – The goal is for students to meet the Florida Standards and become more like professionals in the disciplines. Are the tasks teachers require and the products students develop providing evidence of this? How are the needs of ALL students addressed? How would you coach teachers to develop more rigorous lessons?

In Summary...

- Content area literacy differs from subject area to subject area.
- The intent of disciplinary literacy is to help students read, write, speak/listen and think like someone in the field.
- As coaches, we can combine the expertise of our content area teachers with our literacy expertise to help improve practice and student achievement in literacy in content area classrooms.



Reflect in writing how the information shared, along with the characteristics of specific text presented on the previous slides impact coaching.