

appendix B

Are My Students Doing Disciplinary Literacy?

KEY:

N = Not Yet This practice is not yet present.

O = On the Way There is evidence that this practice is in development and partially enacted.

Y = Yes This practice is present and being enacted.

TEXT

N O Y

Are the texts authentic (i.e., reflective of disciplinary language and thinking)?

Do the texts represent the discipline in a way that builds toward or mirrors thinking of professionals within the discipline?

Do the texts provide multiple entry points for students?

Is there variety within and among the texts, while still presenting meaningful, discipline-specific content?

Are texts inclusive and representative?

TASKS

N O Y

- Are students engaging in authentic tasks that build toward or mirror those of particular disciplines?
- Are students given opportunities to act as scientists, think like mathematicians, or reason like historians, as opposed to just learning about how others do this work?
- Are students immersed in the work of the disciplines in an age-appropriate manner?
- Are students experiencing tasks that allow them to identify with the discipline and see it as a potential for postsecondary education or a career?

STUDENTS

N O Y

- Are there opportunities for all students to engage in disciplinary literacy instruction? Are learning experiences differentiated to meet different needs and create multiple entry points?
- Which students' backgrounds and experiences are represented in the materials used to build disciplinary literacy knowledge and skills?
- Are disciplinary literacy learning opportunities designed to engage all students through a variety of learning modalities?
- Is knowledge of students gained from families and community organizations used as a component of the curriculum in order to deepen student engagement?

CULTURE

N O Y

- Are students supported in developing the skills to engage with each other in meaningful ways around discipline-specific skills and content?
- Do the cultures within classrooms and schools make space for all students to feel recognized and included? How is voice shared within classrooms and schools?
- Are there explicit opportunities within the curriculum to build community and connection among students while also teaching them discipline-specific literacies?

EQUITY

N O Y

- Are there opportunities for students to consider gatekeeping in relation to various disciplines?
- Are teachers and students finding ways to question and push back on the established norms of literacy within various disciplines?
- Is the instruction making space for those who are often under-represented in various disciplines to see themselves in and enter into those disciplinary communities?

Though this checklist is not exhaustive, nor is it the only way to answer these questions, it can serve as a starting point for thinking about disciplinary literacy instruction. You might use it yourself, reflecting on your own instruction. A team of teachers might decide to use the checklist as they observe in each other's classrooms. Individuals or teams of teachers might use it while looking at videos of teaching found online. Or individuals, teams, coaches, and leaders might use it as they take learning walks or participate in instructional rounds across a school or district.

We invite you to use this checklist flexibly and to redesign it in ways that work for you. The checklist could easily be turned into a rubric, or each question could be answered along a continuum. As you deepen your own understanding of disciplinary literacy and marry that with what you know about your context, you may want to add questions or adjust those that are here.