

Table 7.1 Questions to Ask When Starting Disciplinary Literacy Work

WHAT DO WE ALREADY HAVE AND KNOW?

	Questions individuals might ask	Questions teams might ask
Professional Learning Experiences/ Existing Knowledge	What professional development, professional reading, or other learning experiences have I already had around literacy or disciplinary literacy? What can I build on and not repeat?	What professional development, professional reading, or other learning experiences has this team had (or have most of us had) around literacy or disciplinary literacy? How can we build on existing knowledge?
Needs Assessment	What kinds of assessments have I used lately that let me know where my students stand in terms of their literacy skills in my discipline/a particular discipline?	Has our team conducted a needs assessment recently that we can draw on? What does it tell us about students' literacy skills in our discipline?
Strengths and Weaknesses	What are my strengths and weaknesses related to literacy teaching and learning?	As a team, what are our strengths and weaknesses in terms of literacy teaching and learning?
Outside Factors	Are there choices or factors outside my control (such as a required curriculum that doesn't match student needs and interests, or assessments that don't do what I need) that shape my literacy instruction? Are there ways I can still use or shift these?	Are there school-level or district-level factors outside the team's control (required curriculum or assessments) that shape our literacy instruction? Are there ways that we, as a group, can use or shift these?
Expertise	In which literacy domains (e.g., vocabulary, comprehension, writing) do I have greatest instructional expertise? How might these areas of expertise guide my early classroom experiments?	Are there different levels of expertise among the individuals on our team? Within our larger school/grade level/department? How might we best activate these various sources of expertise?
Shared Focus	If I checked in with other teachers or my students and their families, would they agree on the strengths and weaknesses that I've identified to target in my practice?	Would those beyond our team agree on the strengths and weaknesses that we've identified? What might our students and their families say?
Readiness	What areas of my practice am I most ready to target?	Are the right people on the team? Are they the ones most ready to engage in disciplinary literacy professional learning and instructional change?

WHAT LOGISTICS NEED ATTENTION?

	Questions individuals might ask	Questions teams might ask
Timing	When might I be able to logistically work on this? When can I do the reading, thinking, and planning necessary? How will I carve out time for this individual work?	When will we, as a team, be able to work together and in which formats (e.g., PLCs, collaborative planning/ learning time, teacher leaders, instructional coaching, teacher access to professional materials, with expert consultants, and so on)?
Structures and Scale	What structures can I put into my days so that I am certain to work on this? Where in my practice or curriculum do I want to begin this work (what is the scale at which I'll start)?	Which new professional learning structures and resources might we need to put into place <i>before</i> we begin a large-scale initiative?
Choosing the Right Structures	Given how I teach, the context of my classroom, and the context of my school, what new structures for implementing disciplinary literacy instructional practices will be most effective?	Given the school context, what new structures for learning about and implementing disciplinary literacy instructional practices will be most effective for our team?
Inquiry Experiences	Have I done inquiry work like this before? If so, do I feel comfortable digging right in? If not, what do I need to do (or whom do I need to turn to for support) in order to start this kind of professional learning and instructional change?	What experience do teachers on the team have with inquiry work? Are there structures that might best support this work (new or familiar structures)? Can teacher leaders help to facilitate this work? Is the team familiar with protocols that could help us work together effectively?
Skills for Scaling Up	Are there leadership skills I could hone in order to support the scaling up process? Or literacy skills I could still build to support this process?	Are there skills and knowledge, in the area of literacy or in the area of leadership, that we might need to build, as a team, before scaling up this initiative?

For more guiding questions such as these, please see Dobbs, Ippolito, & Charner-Laird, 2017.