

Secondary Literacy: Perspectives on Content Area Literacy with a focus on Music Education

Dr. Bernice Sanchez

Associate Professor College of Education
Texas A&M International University
5201 University Blvd, Laredo
TX 78041, USA

Daniel G. Castillon, III

College of Education
Texas A&M International University
5201 University Blvd, Laredo
TX 78041, USA

Abstract

Literacy is critical to the overall development and growth of humanity. Literacy is essential to the academic success and future of all students enrolled in educational public and private sectors. The following paper takes on an exploratory approach on the importance of literacy at the secondary level and within content areas with a specific emphasis on music education. Extensive research over the years has focused on literacy at the elementary levels with limited research or pedagogical recommendations focused at the secondary levels. More recent research indicators suggest that secondary educators must participate in the roles and responsibilities involving literacy instruction shifting the focus towards content area literacies. The following presentation 1) explores the many facets of literacy 2) reexamines secondary literacy within content areas 3) and proposes literacy at the secondary level through music education.

Keywords: literacy, content area literacy, professional learning, secondary literacy, music education, English language arts and reading standards

Literacy as a Basic Fundamental

Literacy is a complex process that involves reading, listening, speaking, and communicating through multiple modalities. Literacy is a critical skill that is extremely important to have in this day and age as it allows individuals to function in society. From reading the instructions on a newly purchased desk assembly guide, to writing descriptive patient information when visiting a doctor's office for the first time, literacy is a supportive functional skill needed to meet the demands of everyday life. These are the reasons why literacy is necessary for students in the early stages of primary school. Primary school provides students opportunities to be introduced to the basic fundamental principles of learning how to read and write text through language acquisition development. As students' progress into secondary level of education, they are exposed to more advanced strategies and techniques to help them better understand literacy, not only at a foundational level of comprehension, but going beyond to the next level of application and metacognitive level where they can control and connect the way they process thoughts and ideas (Tompkins, 2017; Wendt, 2013). Overall, literacy is essential to human growth and development and occurs through progressive developmental stages influenced by human and societal interactions through reading, listening, speaking, and communicating.

The following paper takes on an exploratory approach on the importance of literacy at the secondary level and within content areas. Extensive research over the years has focused on literacy at the elementary levels with limited research or pedagogical recommendations at the secondary levels. Recent research suggest that secondary educators must participate in the roles and responsibilities involving content area literacy. Evaluation of different literacy components, examination of varieties of comprehension strategies, researched best practices in the classroom, and opportunities to understand the impact literacy can have on students at the secondary level are all significant pieces. The following highlights the facets of literacy, examines secondary literacy within content areas and specifically focuses on literacy in music education.

1. Literacy through Social Purpose

Historically, literacy has been instructionally taught as a means for students to understand the processes of reading and writing; however, literacy extends beyond the fundamental processes. A study conducted by Theodotou (2017) examined the development of literacy as a social practice within primary grade settings. Theodotou's (2017) premise was to examine literacy as a social practice within the arts vehicle of instruction in children in the early years between ages five and six. While most research in these early grades focuses on the components of literacy (emergent literacy and phonological awareness), this study focused on literacy as a social practice through the intervention of "Play and Learn through the Arts" program for an entire school year. Program outcomes were measured using authentic assessment and a semi-structure interview and findings indicated constructive contributions of the arts in the progressive development of literacy as a social practice in the early years for children (Theodotou, 2017).

According to a study conducted by Fenwick (2010) within the secondary levels, instructors were provided resources to enhance the literacy production in their content-based classes. Through engagement in professional learning, literacy and language techniques, mentoring, and in-depth analysis of student work, educators were able to enact these resources and determined that students found comprehension through literacy to be more obtainable. The different language and literacy courses provided through these content based frameworks encouraged the idea that all writings have a unique social purpose (Fenwick, 2010). The study findings support in theory why different genres of text are taught all throughout different academic grade levels and are scaffold for purposes of providing students the opportunity to learn different values and viewpoints expressed at various levels of literacy instruction through content based frameworks.

Literacy standards at the secondary level allows for educators to assist students in finding social purpose through their engagement through varied scaffold dimensions of literacy. For example in the state of Texas there are Teacher Certification requirements that are inclusive of nine standards that are the guiding framework for teacher knowledge and application. Standard II (*English Language Arts and Reading Grades 8-12 Standards*) provides students the opportunity to apply reading processes in a manner that fosters social interaction with their peers. One example of this can be through the utilization of *Readers Theater* approach. This research based approach supports the social aspect of literacy in that students must be able to communicate the plot, mood, and theme, through dramatic gestures, voice tonalities, voice inflexions, and facial expressions (Tompkins, 2017). This benefits students to develop personality and characteristic traits as seen through the eyes of the character being portrayed. This not only helps students at the secondary level understand the social aspect that literacy has to offer, but it provides students the ability to gain and nurture confidence especially those who may require additional needs and support in the area of literacy and motivation.

There is an undeniable truth when it comes to communication; a very big part of the way that we transmit and receive information is through the utilization of reading information and writing information. Humans use it every day from writing a text message, to reading the text dialogue from an e-mail that was sent from a co-worker. Simply put, we use literacy in order to obtain information, and it is critical that educators understand the importance of the progressive nature and development of literacy from the early grades into the adolescent years and how social practice and purpose play a role in this progressive track. All literacies encompass the ability to use reading, writing, and communicating for a variety of academic and societal functionalities.

1.2 Shift in Literacy Principle from Primary to Secondary Education

Teachers in primary education place such a paramount role in making sure students fundamentally understand the literacy process. Once students' progress to the secondary level, there seems to be a shift in the values of literacy teaching amongst content teachers. There are myriad explanations as to why this might be the case. Many secondary educators are comfortable with high levels of teacher-centered learning through direct instruction and formal tests of isolated content knowledge; whereas, other content educators tend to use student-centered methods such as collaborative learning, discussion, and inquiry, positioning teachers as facilitators (Cantrell, Burns, & Callaway, 2009). This could prove an issue if educators are persistent in their approach and methods to teaching their content course. Some secondary content educators resist teaching content literacy because they do not believe that it is their role or responsibility to teach reading and writing (O'Brien, Stewart, & Moje, 1995), and they also might lack confidence in their own preparation as literacy teachers (Greenleaf, Schoenbach, Cziko, & Mueller 2001). Other reasons for the negative disposition of content literacy may be that educators were never exposed to content literacy within their own secondary education process (Kenyon, 1989), or could be in part to a secondary teacher's displeasure with reading (Powell-Brown, 2003-2004). The phrase, "all teachers are teachers of reading" is a common mantra that is used throughout all levels of academia. For some educators, this holds a negative connotation as these teachers view themselves as content-area experts, not as teachers of phonics, which secondary teachers often view as "teaching reading" (Chauvin & Molina, 2012). The problematic scenario resides with secondary teachers misinterpreting content literacy as a means to replace subject areas with reading instruction (Ruddell, 2001). Because of the difference in ideological beliefs towards content literacy at the secondary level, establishing a content literacy program within schools could potentially be more challenging to achieve.

1.3 Challenges of Literacy at the Secondary Level

An undeniable truth at the secondary level is the fact that, more often than not, literacy is excluded from the classroom, especially those whose content areas are concentrated in the STEM subjects or the Fine Arts. Moje (2008) indicates that secondary instructors who do not teach English Language Arts (ELA) believe "strategies are time consuming, they feel pressured to cover content information and concepts, and even if given more time, the strategies offered by literacy researchers are not efficient for the classes they teach" (pp. 98). Often the case if given the choice, teachers would use the extra time in class to expand on their lessons. There is a cultural difference amongst instructors. Some believe it is necessary that they should be teaching and utilizing literacy strategies throughout the course versus those who do not believe it is their responsibility due to the nature of their specified discipline of course content.

It is a valid statement to affirm that some classes will utilize literacy more than others. An ELA class is based upon literacy; whereas, a mathematics class is based upon numbers. The question becomes, "Is it necessary to integrate literacy into non reading and writing classes?" The answer should be an undeniable "Yes." Literacy is a skill that needs to be consistently practiced in order to expose students to different forms of academic information. They can conceptualize, draw information, and make educated opinions based on the information provided for them. Exposure to literacy techniques at any level can prove beneficial for students to comprehend information. One method any class can utilize to enhance literacy and content production could be the application of *word walls* or *word webs* (Tompkins, 2017). These two different literacy teaching tools can help fortify the vocabulary that is presented in any instructional setting. Different content areas utilize specialized vocabulary words, so it makes sense that a simple incorporation of literacy techniques can help shape comprehension for students.

Within all secondary levels of education, there are going to be consensus and disagreements on what should and should not be part of the instructional curriculum. Every academic school needs to evaluate what they deem important. Literacy is of high importance. Collaboration is key in the curricular decision making process. Integrating literacy instruction in secondary schools is a difficult process that requires an extensive amount of teamwork, compromise, collaboration, and the commitment to significant conceptual, cultural and structural changes (Moje, 2008). Incorporation of literacy at the secondary level is possible if a consensus of agreement can be reached by the collective body importing instruction.

1.4 Technology in the Modern Age of Literacy

Technology has played a paramount role in the development of brand-new thoughts and ideas. Especially at the secondary level, technology has paved the way for new learning opportunities and given a pathway for students to find resources when confronted with unknown academic course topics. Wendt (2013) describes the following,

“electronic books provide read-aloud features, interactive activities, ability to search definitions, and research more in-depth information on specified topics” (pp. 44). Innovative literacy technology is a new trend that requires more research in the field. However, limited studies that have been performed indicate there have been slight increases in achievement performance. Encouragement of electronic usage, whether formal or informal (e-mails, text messages, video games, tweets), should be encouraged by secondary educators as it grants exposure for students to increase the amount of reading and writing they are engaged in (Wendt, 2013). Kennedy and Wexler (2013) examined the mismatches introduced by content demands and instructional approaches in Secondary STEM content. Researchers proposed various evidence-based practices designed to support teachers and students as a means to improve literacy and other academic outcomes in STEM courses. Researchers incorporated instructional technology called Content Acquisition Podcasts (CAPs) as an example of how educators can create multimedia-based materials that support student cognition while concurrently assisting to build literacy skills (Kennedy & Wexler, 2013).

Furthermore, it is encouraged that secondary educators incorporate some form of technology literacies into their classrooms as a means of expanding on the different resources appealing to diverse learner needs. Texas Teacher Certification Standard V (*English Language Arts and Reading Grades 8-12 Standards*) emphasizes designing different activities and implementing technology within the reading and writing processes. A comprehension strategy that secondary level teachers can utilize is the use of *interactive books or websites*. These allow students to expand vocabulary knowledge, develop reading fluency, and practice different literacy strategies related to the actual content subject (Tompkins, 2017). The appeal of *interactive books and websites* allows for students who are classified as English Language Learners to develop literacy skills in the English language. If a student is struggling to pronounce a word or sentence, through technology, they can receive instantaneous feedback in their corresponding language. Technology is certainly an integral part of the future of literacy education. Secondary literacy is unique in that it paves the way for students to obtain a much more profound grasp on the language through reading and writing strategies. There are many reasons why literacy is important and should be taught within all classes at the secondary level. Some argue that literacy is a means for students to build social connections with one another; while others, believe it is a progressive track into a future where students can showcase who they really are in life, beyond school (Wendt, 2013). There is a cultural divide as to whether or not all classes should consider utilizing literacy techniques at the secondary level. If music classes, a subject that is primarily performance based, utilizes literacy techniques to expand on their teachings, then other content classes should consider that exploratory path. Not only does literacy allow for students to read and write in a proficient manner, but it allows for students to explore beyond their own boundaries in a way that will set them up for success in the future.

2. Secondary Education and Content Area Literacy

As students transition from primary education into secondary education, there is a fundamental difference in the method that educational content is delivered. Primary educators focus on one group of students throughout the course of a year, delivering instruction on all the content subject areas; whereas, secondary education teachers focus on various groups of students and classes throughout the course of a year, delivering instruction often on one content subject area. The key difference is the number of students and the nature of instruction delivered by the teacher.

In secondary education, teachers are no longer expected to teach other subjects except the one they specialize in. Social Studies/History teachers are expected to teach historical facts and events. Science teachers are expected to teach scientific experiments and concepts. Math teachers are expected to teach numbers and mathematical equations. The fact of the matter is that content subjects are the most comprehensive organizers and determinant of secondary school curriculum (Alvermann & Moore, 1993) and will continue to be this way because each subject has its own set values, priorities, and power (O'Brien, et al., 1995). For instance, in a ninth grade Geometry class, a teacher will prioritize the learning and conceptualization of the *Pythagorean Theorem* over the long standing effects that the War of 1812 had on the world. Geometry and every other secondary content subject educator prioritizes what they believe is important for their students to succeed in their particular subject content. Being a content subject area expert is important, but it is also important that content subject area experts have foundational knowledge of reading and writing (literacy) because it is these skills that allow for the learner to grasp other subject areas. Literacy is the connecting element for learning in other subject areas.

2.1 Challenges for Educators Implementing Content Literacy

A difference in ideological literacy principals is not the only factor that prevents content literacy from being employed within classroom settings. Due to secondary educators varied beliefs, it is essential to provide support and training on the proper implementation of content literacy (Sturtevant, 1996). The concern that content area educators face is not so much in teaching lessons in their field, rather, they do not believe that they have the sufficient knowledge and preparation to integrate content literacy into content instruction (Greenleaf, et al., 2001). Confidence is key in delivering a lesson and if educators lack the background knowledge to deliver the lesson to the class, they will struggle in providing clear instructions and guidance in the process. In contrast, student understanding would result differently if secondary educators exemplified more confidence, energy, enthusiasm, and good will upon delivering reading lessons (Daisey, 2012). If secondary educators find motivation through positive reading experiences in their content area literacy course, they might be able to affect the attitudes of their future students (Nourie & Lenski, 1998). Understanding content literacy is key and as Daisey (2012) states, “it is important for educators to identify the course pedagogy that will lead to improved instructional use of reading” (pp. 229-230). For secondary teachers who are in the beginning process of implementing content literacy into the curriculum, they might find initial discomfort due to the novelty of the strategies involved (Cantrell, et al., 2009). There are different kinds of methods and techniques that educators utilize when teaching content instruction because of its effectiveness on students. The same applies in content literacy as some methods will work in some content areas when in comparison to others. The way that a secondary educator goes about implementing a particular instructional strategy is heavily dependent on their initial experiences regarding that strategy (Cantrell, et al., 2009). If a secondary educator implements a content literacy technique/strategy and finds success with their students, odds are, they will probably continue the usage as it is deemed to work successfully. Teachers need to teach reading skills in addition to content knowledge (Cantrell, et al., 2009) if students are going to obtain comprehensive literacy at the secondary level.

2.2 Students and Implementation of Content Literacy in Secondary Education

Secondary level instruction provides students opportunities to go beyond foundational knowledge and more metacognitive levels focused on topics regarding specific content areas. Implementing content literacy at the secondary level proves to be challenging as literacy skills are more complex, are connected to content-area material, and students are not as interested nor motivated in reading as they once were in the early grades (Chauvin & Molina, 2012). Extensive research conducted indicates that students who are behind in reading when they enter secondary education struggle towards advancing reading levels and are less likely to catch up unless instruction in the content areas are able to focus on reading and writing skills in the different areas of Mathematics, Science, English, and History (Heller & Greenleaf, 2007; Chauvin & Molina, 2012; Wendt, 2013). To add additional pressure on secondary educators, those that want to infuse literacy into their content areas feel unequipped in doing so, especially when there are students who struggle with reading in their classrooms (Greenleaf, et al., 2001). A significant factor is that if students can read and decode the text, are they truly comprehending the significance of the print material (Cantrell, et al., 2009). Deeper comprehensive understanding and higher level thinking is significant in order to succeed at the secondary level. Content literacy avenues as a means for students to think about different topics in a more introspective manner which can thus lead beyond comprehension and towards levels of advanced critical processing inclusive of diverse viewpoints.

2.3 Holistic View for Implementing Content Literacy

Content literacy is undoubtedly a substantial factor in the academic success for students as it integrates literacy instruction into content area classes in order to improve both literacy and content area learning for adolescents (Anders & Levine, 1990). The implementation of content literacy not only allows for students to grasp different experiences, skills, and abilities, in the classroom, but it paves the way for students to improve their learning of content specific literacies and discourses (Shanahan, 2004). Content literacy also allows for students to support the nation’s social and economic health (Chauvin & Molina, 2012). This plays a huge role in students as they develop their roles and responsibilities within the community.

Teachers help students develop these attributes through content literacy. Students at the secondary level spend most of their academic time with content area educators. Because of this, it highlights the need for content educators to be responsible in providing literacy curriculum for students. Once teachers start the process for implementing content literacy practices into their classroom, they need to plan and coordinate activities in efforts to develop students’ readiness for learning, acquisition of information, and internalization of concepts (Graves, 2001). By

emphasizing the different strategies and key techniques in content literacy, teachers can enhance content knowledge rather than teach reading as an integral component of content area learning (Cantrell, et al., 2009). Researchers highlight the need for implementing literacy, not as the main objective in the lesson, rather, a means for supporting the content subject matter.

There are two key factors in assisting secondary teachers implement a successful content literacy curriculum: education and field experiences. Educating secondary teachers through professional development can help in providing experiences, reflective practices, and model the way that content literacy is showcased within the classroom (Daisey, 2012). The case for professional development on content literacy can also have an impact on school improvement in literacy learning throughout all the different content areas, as well as play a major role in the improvement and success of secondary schools in their work to help all students meet rigorous standards for learning (Cantrell, et al., 2009). By stressing the importance of engaging in field experiences through professional development, educators can have the opportunity to experience different practice techniques, apply them, critique them, and modify them for their own use (Anders & Levine, 1990). If teachers are given extensive, varied, and ongoing opportunities to see instructional strategies succeed in their own classrooms, chances are they are more likely to implement them (Guskey, 1986). This is why education through teacher professional development and field experiences are crucial for the success of secondary content educators. This allows them to garner the knowledge and experience needed in order to find a level of comfort and productivity within the classroom setting.

Through professional development at the secondary level, there needs to be a conversation that occurs with teachers that dictates their roles as content literacy teachers, not necessarily becoming a reading teacher, but to help students access and comprehend the variety of texts used in the content area (Buehl, 2011). At the onset, teachers may find it difficult to infuse content literacy into their subject matter, especially since there is an expectation that educators teach the curriculum based on the assumption that knowledge can be objectified, verified, and disseminated at a high level (O'Brien et al., 1995). The expectations for secondary educators to teach subject area content at a high level could lead many teachers to abandon various traditional pedagogical methods which in turn may lead teachers to feel it is not their responsibility to teach reading (Cantrell, et al., 2009). On the contrary, if education through professional development and field experiences are able to create an impact in secondary educator's classrooms, there could be a shift from teachers seeing themselves as only content educators to seeing themselves as both content area teachers and reading teachers simultaneously (Cantrell, et al., 2009; Kennedy & Wexler, 2013).

Darling-Hammond and Richardson (2009) have conducted extensive research on professional development for teachers and what really matters in teacher learning. Researchers propose a new paradigm for professional development in where opportunities for learning more complex and analytical higher-order thinking skills and performance are needed for the 21st century. Opportunities for practice and reflection on teacher knowledge and how students learn alongside collaboration within school communities and parent participation are all critical for student academic success. Collectively professional development, mentoring, and field experiences aligned with ongoing collaborative meetings with administration and teachers, are all critical components of what is currently described as this new paradigm of *professional learning communities* (Sanchez, 2019). Content literacy has the potential to incur impactful academic change for students and educators. In order for secondary educators be effective through content reading, there will need to be a massive support system in place including professional development as part of professional learning communities. There will be a need to increase the knowledge and skills related to teaching literacy strategies specific to educators' content areas especially when students lack and struggle with the basic fundamentals of literacy understanding (Cantrell, et al., 2009). Effective implementation of content literacy is possible with the collective buy in from all stakeholders including procedural curricular school plans that include professional development, mentoring, field experiences, reflective practice and valued input from all. This kind of infusion could empower secondary students to read analytically across various complex texts and various disciplines, helping them to become critical readers and thinkers (Moje, 2008), but more importantly to provide students an opportunity to analyze and understand the surrounding world around them from a critical standpoint.

3. Secondary Literacy through the Lens of Music Education

Secondary literacy is important to help refine, sharpen, and expand on the teachings of reading and writing. In secondary education, there is an emphasis to incorporate literacy into every classroom as it provides students with resources necessary for their future. Music education is a class that students may take at the secondary level whether it is referred to as band, choir, mariachi, jazz, or orchestra. Often times, educators in this content area neglect applying different literacy techniques to expand on the lessons and the different concepts. Music education is a bit

different than other content areas in that there is a heavy emphasis on the performance aspect and not enough emphasis on the literacy component. There are different ways in which a music educator can effectively implement literacy to not only help students develop their reading and writing skills, but can also help students comprehend the content area of music in and of itself.

3.1 Secondary Literacy and Secondary Music Literacy

When a student looks at a work of music, they often scan the different components of the composition to draw information on what they are going to play and how they are going to play the music. Shuler (2011) explains, “Independent music literacy is the ability to engage in three artistic processes – creating, performing, and responding to music” (p. 8). Creating, performing and responding to music are all cohesive to one another and assist in understanding the art form of music. There is no right or wrong way to perform music; however, there are stylistic interpretations in which a performer can perform music directed by the composers’ intentions.

The way we approach literacy through reading and writing linguistically can be viewed as almost identical to that of music. Texas Teacher Certification Standard III (*English Language Arts and Reading Grades 8-12 Standards*) allows teachers to showcase to students ways on how to apply and refine reading comprehension skills, making inferences, and drawing conclusions when reading various types of nonliterary texts. This is represented through music. One example that can be used to infer information through music is by being able to read and dissect a piece of music, a similar approach occurs when students read a book or portion of a text. The reading process approach as described by Tompkins (2017) is very similar to that of reading or understanding music. The stages of the reading process include prereading, reading, responding, exploring, and applying (Tompkins, 2017, pp. 39-47). Stage 1: Prereading is similar to drawing background information on a piece of music where a band director essentially asks questions to draw the students’ interest. Stage 2: Reading would entail students play through the piece of music either as a whole group, with their partners, or by themselves. Stage 3: Responding allows for students to give their honest opinions and reflections on the piece of music. They are able to share with the class or by writing down likes, dislikes, challenges, or successes in playing the musical notes. Stage 4: Exploring allows for experimentation of variations when working through the music. This can mean that as they go through the music, the director (provides feedback) points out that certain sections that need to be louder than others, or other sections need to faster than others. Stage 5: Applying is the ability to take all that knowledge and information the musicians learned and provides them an opportunity to showcase their knowledge and personal style of the music to an audience.

Through the similarities of linguistic literacy and music literacy, one thing is certain. As a director, the “design in instruction needs to empower students to make musical decisions” (Shuler, 2011, p. 8). This provides students at the secondary level the opportunity to explore boundaries through music all based upon a foundation of a constructive process of creating meaning through literacy.

3.2 Secondary Literacy in Music in Relation to Speech

At birth, musicians obtain a musical instrument: a voice. The voice is a powerful tool as it allows for musicians to audited pitches, internalize them, and sing what they hear. Singing is comprised of different sounds, pitches, segmentation features, and syllables that allow for individuals to sing different pitches, scales, and songs. Comparably, literacy is composed of words that also feature sounds, pitches, and syllables. As Elaine Bernstorf (2008) stated, “Students are exposed to language print and musical notation simultaneously in a way that actually enhances the language reading process while introducing the music reading process” (Bernstorf, 2008, p. 27). The reason why this is true is because there is one factor that is apparent in music: Literacy. The way an individual speaks is similar to the way that an individual sings. Segmentation features are motives that music and language are comparable in that music is segmented into patterns of sound; whereas, language is segmented into patterns of meaningful sound (Bernstorf, 2008). Singing allows for words that already have strong meaning to become even more powerful. This is in part due to the pitch, the rhythm, and the language performance. The basis of singing is all about the ability to read and write as it develops an awareness of the way words are supposed to sound. This is why secondary literacy is crucial in the development of those who take a music class. Texas Teacher Certification Standard VII (*English Language Arts and Reading Grades 8-12 Standards*) gives students the opportunity to identify errors in written and spoken discourse as well as help students learn to identify and correct errors in their own writing and speaking. The fundamental in speech is the phoneme as it is the basic unit of sound. As you combine phonemes and letters together, words are created. Of these words, the syllables are the segmentation building blocks for literacy and music (Bernstorf, 2008). A comprehensive secondary literacy strategy for students is that of learning a foreign language through the utilization of word walls in combination with word sorts. Chorale

groups do not necessarily sing in English, so it is important for students to understand the words found in a written text in a foreign language. Through the implementation of a word wall in conjunction with word sorts, students are able to analyze word morphology, compare words that are similar in diction, those that have similar stressed syllables, and those that require an in-depth analysis of pronunciation structure. Singing and literacy have extensively comparable traits in that there is a global awareness of sound features and conscious segmented patterns in speech and song. As students at the secondary level become acquainted with syllables, speech patterns, diction practice, students will notice an awareness in correction of their own writing and speech patterns.

3.3 Secondary Literacy in Music as it Relates to Writing

Music educators at the secondary level understand that their students may find success in how well they can perform on their instrument, as well as the way in which they read and interpret the music performance. Another facet and often overlooked strategy for musical comprehension is the ability for students to be able to expressively compose musical thoughts and ideas. Essentially, composing is the artistic equivalent of a student writing an academic essay or paper. By recognizing lifelong skills like writing and implementing them in music programs, it could help students achieve overarching educational goals (Major, 2013). If there is an expectation for students to be able to write in grade school, then surely the expectation must remain consistent in the musical arts. In the realm of music, students use their previous knowledge of musical ideas to help influence their composing abilities. Students have the ability to write in a major key, minor key, use accidentals, dynamic markings, and tempo markings just as writers have the ability to write in different forms and styles. By allowing students to express literacy techniques through composition (write), not only do educators give students the opportunity to express their creativity, but it allows them to develop a more profound understanding of the material that they are being shown, synonymously to other content level classes. As Paynter (2002) expresses, “it is quite simply through ‘doing the art’ that not only do we learn about the nature of music itself... but also we use and develop, in many subtle ways, our powers of judgement, the confidence to make decisions, and the courage to stand by those decisions” (p. 224). Although composing music is not the only way to teach music, sometimes, it is the only way that students can truly understand the material.

4. Conclusion

Educators at all levels must acknowledge the growing literacy gap among all age groups. It is critical that collaborative efforts are made to ensure literacy in every subject and that literacy achievement of students is a shared responsibility (Wendt, 2013). Literacy is an expansive complex process that involves reading, listening, speaking, and communicating through multiple modalities. Literacy is a representation of interconnecting with all that cease to exist. From the basic fundamentals of reading and writing symbols, letters, images, words, numbers, dates, and musical notes, towards advancing that basic knowledge into deeper meaning and critical thought through varied lenses. This exploratory representation provided an overview of the many facets of literacy from research in the primary grades (Theodotou, 2017; Tompkins, 2017) to research in secondary literacy within content areas (Fenwick, 2010; Shanahan, 2004). Literacy at the secondary level transforms into content literacy associated with specialized content and language (Math, History, STEM). In addition, literacy and content area Music education is an innovative approach to teaching content literacy and provides an example of how music represents the interconnectedness of literacy on a global scale. It is important that educators become aware of differences between literacy in the primary levels in comparison to literacy at the secondary levels if they are to be effective in educating students. This requires a new paradigm of teacher learning as described by Darling-Hammond and Richardson (2009) inclusive of professional development, mentoring, field experiences, and stakeholders’ participation. The traditional thinking behind literacy instruction must be reexamined as a means of adapting to this new generation of learners and modalities and as a way of keeping up with the changing diverse world. Knowledge on how to implement content area literacy can be powerful and is a means of creating more literate generations of learners who view literacy as more than just learning to read and write.

References

- Alvermann, D. E., & Guthrie, J. T. (1993). Themes and Directions of the National Reading Research Center. *Perspectives in Reading Research* (No. 1).
- Anders, P. L., & Levine, N. S. (1990). Accomplishing change in reading programs. *Reading in the Middle School*, 5(7), 157-179.
- Bernstorf, E. (2008). Music and language: Sound features for teaching literacy. *Kodaly Envoy*, 26-29.
- Buehl, D. (2011). Mentoring students in disciplinary literacy. *Developing readers in the academic disciplines* (pp. 1-30). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Cantrell, S. C., Burns, L. D., & Callaway, P. (2009). Middle- and high-school content area teachers' perceptions about literacy teaching and learning. *Literacy Research and Instruction*, 48(1), 76-94. doi:10.1080/19388070802434899
- Chauvin, R., & Molina, C. (2012, September). TEXAS COMPREHENSIVE CENTER. Retrieved July 31, 2020, from https://sedl.org/txcc/resources/briefs/number_12/index.php
- Daisey, P. (2012). The promise of secondary content area literacy field experiences. *Literacy Research and Instruction*, 51(3), 214-232. doi:10.1080/19388071.2011.556211
- Darling-Hammond, L., & Richardson, N. (2009). Teacher learning, what matters. *Educational Leadership*, 66(5), 45-53.
- English Language Arts and Reading. (Grades 8-12) Standards [PDF]*. (n.d.). Teacher Certification Standards in Texas.
- Fang, Z., & Schleppegrell, M. J. (2010). Disciplinary literacies across content areas: Supporting secondary reading through functional language analysis. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 53(7), 587-597
- Fenwick, L. (2010). Initiating and sustaining learning about literacy and language across the curriculum within secondary schools. *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*, 33(3), 268-278.
- Gallagher, K., & Ntelioglou, B. (2011). Which new literacies? Dialogue and performance in youth writing. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 54(5), 322-330.
- Graves, D. H. (2001). *The energy to teach*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Greenleaf, C., Schoenbach, R., Czikor, C., & Mueller, F. (2001). Apprenticing adolescent readers to academic literacy. *Harvard Educational Review*, 71(1), 79-130. doi:10.17763/haer.71.1.q811712577334038
- Guskey, T. R. (1986). Staff development and the process of teacher change. *Educational Researcher*, 15(5), 5-12. doi:10.3102/0013189x015005005
- Heller, R., & Greenleaf, C. (2007). *Literacy instruction in the content areas: Getting to the core of middle and high school improvement*. Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education. Retrieved from www.all4ed.org/publication_material/reports/literacy_content
- Kelstrom, J. M. (1998). The untapped power of music: Its role in the curriculum and its effect on academic achievement. *NASSP Bulletin*, 82(597), 34-43. doi:10.1177/019263659808259707
- Kennedy, M., Wexler, J. (2013). Helping students succeed within secondary-level STEM content: Using the "T" in STEM to improve literacy skills. *TEACHING Exceptional Children*, 45(4), 26-33.
- Kenyon, R. W. (1989). Writing is problem solving. *Writing to Learn Mathematics and Science*, 73-87.
- Koopman, C. (1996). Why Teach Music at School? *Oxford Review of Education*, 22(4), 483-494. doi:10.1080/0305498960220408
- Major, M. (2013). How they decide: A case study examining the decision-making process keeping or cutting music in a K-12 public school district. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 61(1), 5-25.
- Moje, E. B. (2008). Foregrounding the disciplines in secondary literacy teaching and learning: A call for change. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 52(2), 96-107.
- Music in the School Curriculum. (1965). *Music Educators Journal*, 52(2), 37-39. doi:10.2307/3390578
- Nourie, B. L., & Lenski, S. D. (1998). The (in) effectiveness of content area literacy instruction for secondary preservice teachers. *The Clearing House*, 39(6), 372-378. doi:10.1080/00098659809599595
- O'Brien, D. G., Stewart, R. A., & Moje, E. B. (1995). Why Content Literacy Is Difficult to Infuse into the Secondary School: Complexities of Curriculum, Pedagogy, and School Culture. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 30(3), 442. doi:10.2307/747625
- Paynter, J. (2002). Music in the school curriculum: Why bother? *British Journal of Music Education*, 19(3), 215-226. doi:10.1017/s0265051702000311
- Powell-Brown, A. (2003-2004). Can you be a teacher of literacy if you don't love to read? *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 47(4), 284-288.

- Ruddell, M. R. (2001). *Teaching content reading and writing* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons.
- Sanchez, B. (2019). *Transforming secondary schools into learning schools: Professional learning communities*. Austin, TX. Sentia Publishing.
- Scripp, L., & Gilbert, J. (2016). Music plus music Integration: A model for music education policy reform that reflects the evolution and success of arts integration practices in 21st century American public schools. *Arts Education Policy Review*, 117(4), 186-202. doi:10.1080/10632913.2016.1211923
- Shanahan, C. (2004). *Adolescent Literacy Research and Practice*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Shuler, S. C. (2011). Music education for life: Five guiding principles for music education. *Music Educators Journal*, 97(3), 7-9.
- Sturtevant, E. G. (Ed.). (1996). *Influences on Beginning Teachers' Literacy-Related Instructional Beliefs: A Longitudinal Case-Study Comparison of Five Non-Traditional Math and Science Teachers*. (pp. 1-6, Rep. No. SP036748). New York, NY: Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED397030)
- Theodotou, E. (2017). Literacy as a social practice in the early years and the effects of the arts: A case study. *International Journal of Early Years Education*, 25(2), 143-155, DOI: [10.1080/09669760.2017.1291332](https://doi.org/10.1080/09669760.2017.1291332)
- Tompkins, G. E. (2017). *Literacy for the 21st Century*. [VitalSource Bookshelf]. Retrieved from <https://bookshelf.vitalsource.com/#/books/9780134090290/>
- Wendt, J. L. (2013). Combating the crisis in adolescent literacy: Exploring literacy in the secondary classroom. *American Secondary Education*, 41(2), 38-47.