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Reading the song: diverse perspectives on music and literacy integration

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Dissertation

READING THE SONG:
DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES ON
MUSIC AND LITERACY INTEGRATION

by

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this work to my loving husband, Rocky, and my beautiful daughters, Paula and Anna. You have endured so many days without a wife and mom because I was busy “doing homework.” You are my world. Thank you for your unwavering love, support, and patience.
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Halford E. Luccock, a prominent American minister and professor once said, “No one can whistle a symphony. It takes a whole orchestra to play it.” There were several persons involved in the “orchestration” of this work. Their help and support were essential to the completion of this dissertation.

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Mom, dad, and sister, I thank you for believing in me, offering words of encouragement, and keeping me in your daily prayers. Your love means everything to me.
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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study was designed to ascertain the perceptions of music educators, curriculum specialists and principals regarding music and literacy integration in the music classroom. Six elementary music teachers from a diversity of school districts and representative of varied socio-economic school backgrounds were interviewed in-depth. Three school principals and three curriculum specialists were also interviewed with similar questions in order to enrich the understanding of their own perceptions of the inclusion of music and literacy integration in the music classroom.

To ensure quality and validity of interview questions and that they accurately reflected the meaning and purpose of the research questions, only those questions that were positively rated by a pilot group were included in the interview protocol. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews. Using the computer software HyperRESEARCH, the interview data was inventoried, organized and coded.

All participants reflected on the functionality of music education to further the development or reinforcement of literacy skills. In addition, participants mentioned a
diversity of activities occurring in the music classroom that facilitate music and literacy integration such as reading music-related literature, performing speech pieces, song composition, and visually tracking iconic representations. Music teachers expressed that approaches such as Kodály, which emphasizes sound before symbol, and Orff, with an emphasis on speech and rhythmic activities, align with the integration of music and literacy. Most teachers reported feeling quite confident with this strategy. According to participants’ perceptions, schools lack specific music and literacy integration professional development.

Additional research is certainly needed regarding the commonalities between music and literacy. Also, additional research regarding music and literacy integration professional development for educators should be performed in order to purposefully design and plan these opportunities. In addition to training, music teachers, classroom teachers and curriculum specialists should combine their areas of expertise in collaboration in order to research, plan and design effective music and literacy integration activities that they all can use in their respective classrooms. Not only they will be able to customize this strategy to their campus’ needs, but also this collaboration can potentially improve the climate of the school as everybody’s knowledge is appreciated and taken into consideration.
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Chapter I

Introduction

I teach in a diverse and transient school district. Students from all over the world enroll in my school. It is common for me to have students who do not speak, read, or write English. A couple of years ago I had little Anna in my second-grade class. Having just arrived from Norway, Anna did not speak a word of English, but she absolutely loved music class. She was always 100% engaged in class, wanting to listen and participate.

My music lessons always included the reading or singing of a musical book as well as songs. At first Anna could not join her class in reading or singing. I remember her little classmates excusing her: “Oh, she can’t speak English!” Of course, I always chose to dismiss their explanation and invited her to sing with the class. Her classroom teacher told me how happy and motivated Anna always seemed after every music class.

One day we were singing an antiphonal song (we call it a question and answer song in second grade), consisting of my students singing prompted words they read from a big book. As I encouraged Anna to respond, her classmates began to worry that she was not going to be able to complete the task because “She can’t speak English!” To everyone’s surprise, Anna was able to respond very clearly in English. Her friends were amazed to the point of clapping for Anna! A smiling second grade boy was euphoric, “Mrs. Marrero, not only can you teach music, but you can teach English too!”

When I shared what happened with Anna’s homeroom teacher, a lengthy conversation ensued about the connections between music and specifically phonemic
awareness. My school’s English and Language Arts curriculum specialist was nearby, and I invited her to join in the conversation. I was surprised and excited to hear about the many things I did in my music classroom that could be reinforcing my students’ literacy skills. This dissertation continued that conversation.

In January 8, 2002, the U.S. government enacted the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). Through this act, state governments must develop standardized assessments of basic skills for all students in specific grades as a condition of receiving federal funding. Because reading was one of the skills in which students demonstrated the greatest deficiency, educators undertook efforts to revitalize literacy standards in schools.

Many strategies have emerged in the search for a solution to the reported literacy-skills shortcomings in public schools. One of the most widely accepted strategies, promoted by many academic leaders across the United States, has been “Reading Across the Curriculum.” Through this strategy, educators in all content areas integrate reading into their lessons (Chapman, 1993; Gerrity, 2004; Gerber & Gerrity, 2007; Kassner, 2002; O’Brien & Stewart, 1990; Wilson, 1995). The need to find new ways to address state and federal mandates to improve literacy and other areas of student achievement has prompted renewed interest in interdisciplinary instruction in U.S. schools (Wood, 2010).

Petrie (1992) used the term interdisciplinary to describe a merger of disciplines. Beane (1995, 1997) argued that although interdisciplinary studies imply enhancement of discipline-based knowledge, these are not equivalent to integrated instruction. Wood (2010) asserted that integrated instruction merges one subject with others. Sylvester
(1994) added that integrated instruction allows students to make connections and see relationships between what was taught and their personal experiences. Further, Gavelek, Raphael, Biondo, and Wang (2000) narrowed the definition of integrated instruction to “alternatives to current instructional practices within the language arts, as well as between language arts and school subjects” (p. 590). The Gavelek et al. definition seems most suitable for the present study due to its focus on English-language literacy.

Currently, integrated instruction is commonly incorporated into education-curriculum design. Curriculum integration comprises four major aspects: integration of experiences, social integration, integration of knowledge, and integration as a curriculum design (Beane, 1997). The integration of experiences allows people to incorporate new experiences into interpretations of meaning and combine them with past experiences, serving as a guide in new situations (Beane, 1997). In contrast, social integration focuses on curriculum that promotes universal values or a “common good” (Beane, 1997; Childs & Dewey, 1933; Smith, 1927). Although people use knowledge integration in the framework of current problems and issues, integration as a curriculum design involves (a) developing the curriculum around authentic problems and issues of personal and social repercussion, (b) providing learning experiences where the integration of knowledge weaves around a central theme, (c) applying knowledge to a central theme, not a test, (d) concentrating on projects that involve authentic application of knowledge to enhance opportunities for integration into schemes of meaning and experience, as well as genuine problem solving, and (e) including students in the curriculum planning (Beane, 1997; Wood, 2005). In curriculum integration, students gain knowledge through questions and
activities centered on a conceptual theme or “big idea” such as relationships, nutrition, leadership, and pollution (Beane, 1997). Exploring and developing these broader themes allows students to comprehensively enhance knowledge and skills through a diversity of educational structures and tools (Beane, 1997, p. 45).

Integrated instruction is complex and multi-faceted, and teachers confront numerous and difficult considerations in formulating an integrated curriculum that best serve the needs of students (Beane, 1997; Smith, 2002; Wood, 2005). Integrated instruction is challenging collaborative work and teachers may be reluctant to try it in their classrooms (Beane, 1997). Teachers who use this type of instruction must be skilled planners (Wood, 2005), competent in their disciplines, and able to comprehensively communicate the essence of their disciplines to others (Smith, 2002). Documented evidence of integrated-instruction success is lacking, as is information from practical applications (Wood, 2005). Thus, teachers may be reluctant to incorporate integrative curricula in the classroom. For teachers to successfully deliver instruction by integrating diverse content in their classrooms, they must be prepared. Many pre-service and experienced teachers did not receive proper training on integration (Gerber & Gerrity, 2007). Furthermore, administrators encourage or require teachers to integrate knowledge in their classrooms without offering the knowledge necessary to understand this practice.

While I am aware that “integration across the curriculum” has multiple meanings, the focus of this study was on music and literacy integration in the music classroom. Despite challenges teachers may encounter when implementing music and literacy in the music classroom, many music educators incorporate this strategy as the elementary music
education curriculum content and activities facilitate integrated instruction. Activities such as singing, listening, performing, moving, creating, and reading music notation and music-related literature are at the core of elementary general music education. These music education activities may be favorable to the development and reinforcement of literacy skills. This study will delineate the perceptions of music teachers who integrate English-language literacy skills learning in their classrooms about why and how they do so. Questions arise as to the personal values and feelings of these teachers and how these characteristics allow them to address the challenges they face. Knowing that school principals and curriculum specialists often play an important role in instructional design, this study investigates administrators’ perspectives about why they value the strategy of music and literacy integration in the music classroom.

The opening story at the beginning of this chapter is one of the multiple experiences I have had in my music classroom concerning the integration of music and English-language literacy skills. When my second grade student exclaimed, “Mrs. Marrero, not only can you teach music, but you can teach English too,” and my subsequent conversation with my colleague, I came to realize the potential importance of literacy skills in my music classroom. This personal experience ignited my interest in the present inquiry.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the diverse perspectives of music teachers, school principals, and curriculum specialists regarding music and literacy integration in the elementary music classroom.
Research Questions

The specific questions addressed in this study follow:

1. What compels elementary music teachers to integrate music and literacy in their classrooms?
2. What affective issues do elementary music teachers express regarding music and literacy integration in their classrooms?
3. What challenges do elementary music teachers face when integrating music and literacy in their classrooms?
4. What is the confidence level of elementary music teachers when practicing music and literacy integration in their classrooms?
5. What professional-development activities best support elementary music teachers in their attempts to integrate music and literacy in their classrooms?
6. How do elementary school principals and curriculum specialists value music and literacy integration?
7. What professional development activities do school principals or curriculum specialists offer or sponsor to support music and literacy integration?
8. To what extent do music teachers, principals, and curriculum specialists consider current music and literacy integration research before implementing this practice?

Rationale for the Study

When administrators expect music educators to integrate music and literacy, the threat of losing their jobs forces teachers to support and implement a curriculum for which they may be unprepared. Gerber and Garrity (2007) asserted that “current trends in
education require that all teachers, regardless of content specialty, accept a larger role in reading instruction” (p. 72). However, instead of fully delivering both subjects, teachers are likely to abridge one of the subjects, thereby compromising student education. Teachers more commonly subserviate the arts as a backdrop to academic subjects, rather than presenting coequal integration, where both topics are equally presented and studied (Bressler, 1995).

Some music teachers may integrate subjects because they seek recognition and respect from their regular-classroom colleagues as direct contributors to the success of students in standardized testing. Other music teachers may believe they must supplement the knowledge of their students in their classroom, as mandated by their innate teacher vocation and principles. In a multisite case study, music teachers considered themselves active collaborators and supporters of literacy instruction (Holmberg, 2010). Some teachers integrate subjects not from conviction or fear, but because they follow the popular educational trend. In a report by the U.S. Department of Education for the school year 2009–2010, 62% of public elementary school music specialists reported they consult other teachers to integrate another subject into a music lesson or unit of study (Parsad, Spiegelman, & Coopersmith, 2012). Locke (2009) found that music teachers chose to integrate music and literacy to better understand relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts in relation to history and culture.

Many content standards implemented at state or district levels suggest the need for integrated studies (Wood, 2005). As a response to these integrative-studies requirements, some states, including New York State, mandate interdisciplinary projects
to be conducted in certain grades. Likewise, Washington D.C. Public Schools’ “Catalyst Project” aimed to “engage all students … develop educators [and] enhance communities” through theme-based curriculum design (http://www.dc.gov/DCPS) and several schools in this program offered arts-integration programs where the arts are “woven into instruction in all subjects.”

When students can learn concepts and develop skills in all content areas through integration they are able to retrieve information, solve problems, and transfer concepts more efficiently (Spiro, Vispoek, Schmitz, Samarapungavan, & Boerger, 1987). Similarly, students learn through arts activities while employing the integrated sensory, attentional, cognitive, emotional, and motor skills that are essential to other learning (Jensen, 2005). Engagement in arts activities can improve literacy skills because students read, write, speak, and listen as they participate in the arts, fostering new types of literacy to surface (Armstrong, 2003). Integration could aid learning transfer across music and language arts, developing positive attitudes about music and reading and expanding students’ knowledge of these content areas (Hanshumaker, McDonald, & Sullivan, 1979). Thus, several scholars support arts integration and its apparent benefits to learning in other content areas.

A study by Gerber and Garrity (2007) was designed to learn about Ohio music teachers’ attitudes regarding integration in the music classroom. Although 78.6% of participants reported they integrate reading and music in their classrooms, and many have positive attitudes toward integration, music teachers indicated their major criticism is the lack of appropriate integration training. Only 33.9% of respondents indicated their
school districts provide reading-integration professional development (Gerber & Gerrity, 2007).

Extant literature exposes several aspects pertaining to the implementation of music and literacy integration that warrant further investigation; one of these aspects is motivation. Educators would benefit from learning what compels a music educator to pursue this instructional strategy. Questions arise as to teachers’ genuine conviction of this strategy’s efficacy, and whether other motivators affect music educators’ decision to integrate. Another aspect of integration worthy of investigation is the challenges music educators face in implementation. Teachers want to know exactly what integrated instruction truly entails (Wood, 2005). Thus, although educators must be aware of the benefits of this strategy, they must also know what challenges to anticipate when integrating. Teachers require training and self-confidence when implementing integration in their classrooms. Researchers offer value by investigating how teachers prepare to deliver music and literacy integration, to what extent, how confident they feel in conveying this strategy effectively, and what attitudes they have about the role of integration in their classrooms. Without administrative support, teachers may find it taxing to implement innovative strategies in the classrooms.

Administrators, such as school principals and curriculum coordinators, often facilitate professional-development opportunities on strategy implementation. Knowledge about how school principals and curriculum coordinators view music and literacy integration in the music classroom would add to educators’ understanding of this
strategy. Consequently, music educators will be better informed when deciding whether and how to integrate music and literacy in their classrooms.

**Methodology**

The purpose of this study was to investigate diverse perspectives from music teachers, school principals, and curriculum specialists regarding music and literacy integration in the music classroom. To conduct an in-depth investigation of these individuals’ perceptions of music and literacy integration and discover and interpret their meaning, I conducted a qualitative study, as Merriam (2009, p. 22) defined it.

Following a maximum-variation purposeful sampling strategy, where diverse experiences are valued to investigate commonalities and collective dimensions of an event or situation (Merriam, 2009), I interviewed six elementary music teachers from different school districts, representative of various socioeconomic school backgrounds. I also interviewed three school principals and three curriculum specialists with similar questions to enrich understanding of their perceptions of the integration of music and literacy in the music classroom.

Using semi-structured interviews, the interview guide included specific questions about participants’ perceptions, and questions pertaining to each individual’s specific situation. Questions were flexible to allow respondents to give as much pertinent information as possible. I recorded interviews digitally to allow for an accurate transcription of the interview data.

Using the computer program HyperRESEARCH, I inventoried, organized, and coded the interview data to construct categories. Next, I named categories and organized
the data under each. This formulation of categories and data organization allowed me to identify similar relationships, thereby allowing more categories to emerge (Creswell, 2007). When no new categories emerged and a point of saturation was reached, I formulated findings through deduction.

**Delimitations**

This study was delimited to elementary public school music educators, school administrators, and curriculum specialists with at least five years experience in their field who currently practice or supervise or have practiced or supervised music and literacy integration in the music classroom. I excluded teachers and administrators who met all other qualifications but did not practice in a public school environment from the study. The study was delimited to participants’ perceptions regarding music and literacy integration in the music classroom. I did not consider perceptions of the integration of other subjects. I investigated participants’ perceptions through interviews using interview protocols specifically designed for this study. To ensure quality and validity of interview questions and to assure they accurately reflected the meaning and purpose of the research questions, I included only those questions that were positively rated by a pilot group in the interview protocol.

**Importance of the Study**

Extant literature posits that an integrated music and literacy curriculum positively affects student achievement in the area of reading. To support this notion, several scholars pointed out that integration could aid learning transfer across music and language arts, developing positive attitudes about music and reading and expanding
student knowledge of these content areas (Gromko, 2005; Kelley, 1981; Lloyd, 1978; Morrow, 1996). Therefore, integration could be a viable alternative to improve student learning. These findings can be appealing to school administrators as one means of improving standardized test scores in reading. Integration may also be appealing as a cost-effective use of time and monetary resources. Furthermore, because many content standards implemented at state or district levels suggest the need for integrated studies, content integration could be the route chosen by some school districts. Music educators must be informed about this alternative form of delivery of instruction because it may be mandatory in their school districts.

Because of the parallels between music and literacy, administrators already encourage or require music teachers to alter their music curriculum and integrate language-reading strategies in their music classrooms (Gerber & Garrity, 2007). Hence, if music and literacy integration take place in the general elementary music classroom, it is necessary to investigate what compels music teachers to adopt this strategy, discerning their feelings about this practice. Also of relevance are the challenges music teachers face who practice integration and how confident are they when imparting this instructional strategy. Further, concerning student learning, education researchers must explore how teachers prepare to impart this type of instruction. This information will better inform music teachers who are considering the implementation of music and literacy integration in their classrooms.

This study also considers school principals’ and curriculum specialists’ viewpoints and experiences regarding music and literacy integration, because these
individuals are at the helm of program implementation in the schools. Knowing how principals and curriculum specialists value and train teachers for this type of instruction and where they consider the existent research before implementation will allow for an enhanced understanding of perceptions of this practice not only for music educators, but also for school administrators. It is hoped that as a consequence schools will gain the advantageous position of making sound instructional decisions that will positively impact student learning.
Chapter II

Literature Review

The present study focused on the quest for diverse perspectives regarding music and literacy integration in the music classroom. This focus facilitated exploration of previous research pertaining to music and literacy, music and literacy integration, as well as music-teacher professional development related to music and literacy integration. Thus, the following literature review includes three categories: music and literacy, music and literacy integration, and professional development in music and literacy integration. The first section includes literature regarding music and literacy, subdivided into the subtopics of music and phonemic awareness, music and reading acquisition, and music in reading instruction. The second section centers on music and literacy integration, subdivided into the subtopics of music and literacy integration in the reading classroom, music and literacy integration in the music classroom, and music teachers’ beliefs about music and literacy integration. A third and final section pertaining to professional development and music and literacy integration addresses pre-service and in-service professional development related to music and literacy integration.

Music and Literacy

The often-cited natural parallels between music and literacy-skills achievement (Gromko, 2005; Kelley, 1981; Lloyd, 1978; Morrow, 1996), allowed communities to consider music education a feasible content area through which students can be taught literacy skills. Music and reading employ notation that is read from left to right (Kelley, 1981; Lloyd, 1978); both require similar eye–motor coordination as well as similar
visual and auditory discrimination (Lloyd, 1978); each component of their respective written codes represents a specific sound (Kelley, 1981); and active music-making and the association of sound with symbols that are developmentally appropriate may enhance cognitive processes comparable to those considered necessary for segmentation of a spoken word into its phonemes (Gromko, 2005). This last relationship preceded several scholars’ examinations of the relationship of music and phonemic awareness (Gromko, 2005; see, for example, Rubinson, 2010; Tsang & Conrad, 2011).

**Music and Phonemic Awareness**

The following parallels exist between music and literacy “code breaking” skills (Hansen, Bernstorf, & Stuber, 2004):

1. Phonological awareness: Sensitivity to all units of sound (generating and recognizing rhyme, syllables, beginning and ending sounds, etc.) as compared to sensitivity to all elements of musical sound (recognizing repeated or imitated sound patterns, sequences, stylistic nuances, etc.);

2. Phonemic awareness: Identifying and manipulating the smallest sound units in written symbols (e.g. individual letters in “stop”) as compared to emphasizing the smallest units of musical sound through musical notation (e.g. individual pitches within a musical phrase);

3. Fluency: Ability to express ideas clearly, verbally or in writing as compared to the ability to perform music smoothly, easily, and readily. (pp. 8–9)

To further explore these parallels, Gromko (2005) conducted a quasi-experimental study to determine whether music instruction had any relation to significant gains in
young children’s phonemic awareness, specifically in the area of phoneme segmentation. Four intact classrooms of kindergarten children \((n = 43)\) from one elementary school learned music by an advanced music-methods student from a local university for four months. Kindergarten children \((n = 60)\) at another elementary school served as the control group. The data analysis demonstrated that the experimental group, which received four months of music instruction, exhibited significantly greater gains in development of their phoneme segmentation than the control group. Thus, active music making and the association of sound with symbols may aid in the development of cognitive processes parallel to those needed for phonemic segmentation (Gromko, 2005). However, the differences in the development of phoneme segmentation fluency could be attributed to differences in reading-instruction teachers or strategies, because the experimental and control groups were at different schools. Also, the experimental group scored low on pretests, which may increase the chance for greater improvement the second time they take the test.

With a different approach, Rubinson (2010) conducted a study to investigate the relationships between music aptitude and the emergent reading achievement of 62 kindergarten students. The researcher used the tonal and rhythmic subtests of the Primary Measures of Music Audiation (Gordon, 1986) as the assessment tool for music aptitude. Rubinson measured reading achievement with four individually administered subtests of the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills. Results indicated that moderate to strong correlations exist between tonal rhythmic and overall music aptitude and early literacy skills, including alphabet knowledge and phonemic awareness. Music aptitude
reliably and strongly associates with phonological awareness and early reading
development of kindergarten children (Rubinson, 2010). However, correlation does not
imply causality; therefore, this study cannot support the idea that reading achievement
affects music aptitude, nor that music aptitude affects reading achievement.

Selway (2004) conducted a quasi-experimental study to investigate an early
reading intervention program on phonemic awareness and reading achievement in
kindergarten. The researcher offered 26 kindergarten students in a Title 1 elementary
school a music and movement-centered phonemic-awareness intervention throughout the
entire school year; 24 kindergarten students in the same school did not experience the
intervention. Selway assessed all students with a pretest at the beginning of the school
year and a posttest at the end of the school year. A phonemic-awareness inventory was
used as the test and results were compared. The researcher also conducted a reading test
for students in kindergarten and again in first grade. Results were also compared. No
significant differences in the two study groups emerged for either test (Selway, 2004).
The phonemic awareness intervention offered in Selway’s study involved music and
movement. Educators do not typically consider this kinesthetic component in studies on
music and phonemic awareness. Thus, I focus the remainder of this exploration of the
literature exclusively on the effects of music on phonemic awareness.

Lucas and Gromko (2007) conducted a quasi-experimental study to examine the
relationship of phoneme segmentation in language to pattern perception in music. They
tested 27 students for phonemic awareness using two subtests of the Dynamic Indicators
of Basic Literacy Skills. They also tested children on phoneme-segmentation fluency,
using an aural test requiring letter recognition and sound production. To test musical-pattern discrimination, the authors tested children using two subtests of the Primary Measures of Music Audiation. Results indicated that phoneme segmentation scores significantly correlated with tonal Primary Measures of Music Audiation scores. Lucas and Gromko interpreted these results as a relationship between children’s ability to segment a short word into its discrete phonemes and their ability to judge tonal and rhythmic patterns for similarity. The researchers identified the possibility that reading ability has a strong aural component and that the music instruction that helps children hear the sounds that distinguish musical patterns may also help them hear the sounds that distinguish words.

The problem with Lucas’ and Gromko’s (2007) assertion is that they assumed musical-pattern distinction is comparable to phoneme distinction and that training for one will transfer to the other. This assumption should be carefully considered and additional research should be undertaken that encompasses neurological functions involving audition. Considering Gardner’s (1983) theory of multiple intelligences, the musical-rhythmic domain is separate from the verbal-linguistic domain. Also, perhaps the amount of music instruction necessary to effectively deliver auditory training is far more than the less frequent music instruction usually offered in public and private schools. Even instrumental private lessons typically do not take place on a daily basis.

Whereas Hansen et al. (2004) found parallels between music and fundamental skills for literacy, Gromko (2005), Rubinson (2010), and Lucas and Gromko (2007) found a positive relationship between music instruction and phonemic awareness. In
contrast, Selway (2004) found no relationship between these two variables. Researchers who found a positive relationship between music instruction and phonemic awareness only found a positive correlation between the two variables. Therefore, developing aural skills for musical discrimination, as some researchers suggested, may not necessarily aid in the development of aural skills for reading.

**Music and Reading Acquisition**

Although multiple studies investigated the effect of music instruction on academic achievement; however, few were as comprehensive as Huber’s (2010). Huber’s investigation included a wider range of participant ages and variables, examining responses on a descriptive questionnaire from 267 students in Grades 6, 7, and 8. Huber compared the duration of and participation in music instruction, types of musical instruments learned, and experiences in musical ensembles to scores from the state English-language-arts assessment. Findings suggested a significant positive relationship between music instruction and reading development in middle school students. Huber found a similar positive relationship between music instruction and reading development in middle school students when, for a period of at least two years, the researcher compared test scores to music instruction and examined active participation in a band and chorus. Although results might seem encouraging for music advocates, if they are considered objectively, a positive relationship between music instruction and reading development does not necessarily imply that one affects the other. Other viable explanations for this positive relationship exist, such as a predisposition of the musical brain for reading development or high-achieving demographics.
Jones (2008) conducted a non-experimental correlational design to investigate if participation in a music program would lead to a more significant increase in academic achievement, measured by the Virginia Standards of Learning scores in reading and mathematics, than that experienced by students who did not participate in the music program. The Virginia Standards of Learning testing data for the 2004–2007 school years provided data for examination and analysis. Reading and mathematics test scores from ninth through 12th grades served as samples to determine the control for the existing differences in the music program. Jones found significant differences in tests scores between those who participated in the music program and those who did not. Students participating in music programs seemed to have higher academic achievement. However, these results do not necessarily imply that music affects academic achievement (Jones, 2008). Instead, students who are higher academic achievers may tend to enroll in music programs. Because participants lived within the boundaries of a single school district, demographics may have a slight effect on these results.

Similarly, Leguizamon (2010) studied the reading fluency and overall reading achievement of 109 students with tests designed to measure the impact of Kodály-based music instruction on reading fluency, potential gains in reading fluency resulting from Kodály-based music instruction, and the extent and direction of causality between Kodály-based music instruction and overall reading achievement. The researcher used a nonequivalent (pretest and posttest) control-group design and found statistical significance at the standard level ($\alpha = .05$). Results supported the idea that Kodály-based music instruction relates to reading-fluency achievement. Leguizamon found reading
fluency gains in the 50th and 75th percentiles of the experimental group. Kodály-based music instruction appeared to have enhanced student performance, moving students from below-average to average ratings and average to above-average ratings, according to Gray Oral Reading Tests-4 guidelines. Regardless of the differences between groups in posttest scores of overall reading achievement, the researchers did not find the impact of music instruction on overall reading achievement to be statistically significant.

These results reflected the brevity of the intervention in this study, implemented for only four weeks, two times each week, in the middle of the school year. Perhaps a longer period of intervention, starting at the beginning of the school year, would have yielded different results. The Kodály approach is only one of several general-music-education approaches. Leguizamon’s (2010) failure to find a statistically significant effect over reading achievement does not imply that other approaches to music instruction are ineffective in developing literacy skills.

LaCour (2010) conducted a quantitative correlational study to investigate the relationship between student performance on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills test in reading, science, and mathematics and the availability of a music program in elementary schools. The researcher compared the total test scores of students in 25 elementary schools with music programs and students in 25 elementary schools without music programs. Gathering data for the academic school year 2007–2008, the researcher analyzed results using ANOVA. Findings indicated that students in schools with music programs did not achieve higher scores on standardized tests in reading, science, or mathematics than students in schools without music programs. These results must be
interpreted cautiously for at least two reasons. First, the elementary schools included in this research were situated in a region of the State of Texas, which negatively affects the generalizability of the results. Second, the data gathered were only for a single academic year. Researchers require data from multiple academic years to produce accurate and reliable achievement patterns.

Jones (2008), Leguizamon (2010), LaCour (2010), and Huber (2010) attempted to find correlations between music study and reading achievement. Except for Huber (2010), all researchers cited found similar results: There is no significant correlation between music study and reading. Several reasons may explain why they found no significant correlation; I propose two. First, most elementary music programs in public schools take place once a week for a 30- to 50-minute lesson. An adequate reading intervention should be delivered more often than once a week and perhaps for a longer period of time. Second, the length of music instruction seems to be a factor in reading achievement. Many studies are brief in duration, thus not providing a complete picture of the impact of music instruction. Factors such as quality of lesson plans, instruction, materials, and classroom management may impact outcomes of research.

Nevertheless, the present study investigated perceptions of music and literacy integration and not the effect that one discipline may have on the other. Rather than determining and quantifying cause and effect, this study aimed to delve more deeply into the experience of this instructional practice and to offer an authentic, firsthand, viewpoint on its implementation.
Music in Reading Instruction

Nolan (2009) hypothesized that reading integration could benefit students’ musical skills, and conversely, music instruction could enhance literacy achievement. Nolan was not alone in asserting this hypothesis, as this premise forms the foundation for a number of studies investigating the relationship between music and reading. For example, Register, Darrow, Standley, and Swedberg (2007) conducted a quasi-experimental study to determine the efficacy of using music as a remedied strategy to enhance the reading skills of second-grade students and students identified as having a specific learning disability in reading. Register et al. designed an intensive short-term music curriculum to target reading comprehension and vocabulary skills at the second-grade level. Teachers implemented the curriculum in classrooms at two public schools. The researchers examined students’ reading skills through a pretest and posttest using the vocabulary and reading comprehension subtests of the Gates MacGinitie Reading Test for second grade. Data indicated that students from the experimental group improved significantly from pre to posttest on all three subtests: word decoding, word knowledge, reading comprehension, and test total. For second-grade students, the treatment and control groups of intact classes showed significant improvement on word-decoding and word-knowledge tests as well as the test total. Students exhibited no significant improvement on the reading-comprehension test. Register et al. acknowledged that the intervention period, while intensive, could have generated different results, had it been extended. Also, variables such as student and teacher attendance may have impacted student learning and study results.
Standley (2008) conducted a meta-analysis of 30 studies using a variety of music interventions to impact reading skills. Results indicated a moderately strong, significant, overall effect size of $d = .32$ ($d$ indicates the strength of relationship between dependent and independent variables). Benefits were large when music activities incorporating specific reading skills matched the needs of identified children ($d = .44$) or contingent music reinforced reading behavior ($d = .66$). Those music activities that put together alphabet recognition with phonetic patterns, included word segmentation and sound blending skills, and encouraged rapid decoding skills, proved to be effective in enhancing reading instruction (Standley, 2008). The benefits were greater when the teacher added special music-reading activities to an existing music-education curriculum than when replacing it. All schedules of intervention were equally effective, regardless of whether periodic intervention took place intensely daily, in the short-term, or weekly across the school year.

Most studies cited indicated a positive relationship between music and reading, supporting Hanshumaker, McDonald, and Sullivan’s (1979) view that integration could aid learning transfer across music and language arts, developing positive attitudes about music and reading and expanding students’ knowledge of these content areas.

**Music and Literacy Integration**

Musical knowledge is, by nature, integrated knowledge. “A truly comprehensive music program is already interdisciplinary in nature because musical understanding draws upon many forms of knowing and understanding.” (Barret, McCoy & Veblen, 1997, p. 20). Many music advocates would agree; however, stakeholders require
evidence of the veracity of this assertion.

Shuck (2005) conducted a qualitative case study examining the levels and frequency of music integration implemented at a public elementary school in central Florida. Shuck examined what issues affect the successful implementation of effective music integration, and if music integration has an influence on academic achievement. The study was focused on 14 elementary school teachers practicing music integration at one public elementary school. Surveys, observations, lesson plans, interviews, and student-achievement documents were tools used for data collection. The researcher found that music integration occurred at several levels: teaching-tool connections (use of music to memorize information), conceptual connections (common concepts across disciplines), and process connections (the process in one discipline facilitates the understanding of another process). Awareness and training were the most important issues affecting realization of music integration. When educators informed and properly trained teachers, music integration occurred smoothly. Another finding was that educators do perceive music integration to be beneficial to students academically, behaviorally, and emotionally.

The distinction between Shuck’s (2005) study and the current study is that the latter will entail a deeper investigation of music teachers’ perceptions. Beyond the inquiry of levels and frequency of music-integration implementation, this study sought to probe the influences on music educators to include this type of instruction in their classroom. Because teachers’ self-confidence directly affects instruction, in this investigation I queried music educators about their perceived confidence when
integrating music and literacy. To better understand their self-confidence, I inquired about professional-development opportunities in music and literacy integration that were available to music educators in this study. The present study also included multiple perspectives of decision makers and practitioners that allow a broader understanding of how music and literacy are viewed outside the idealism of paper and inside the reality of the classroom. Another focus of the present study was to look closely at educators’ and administrators’ consideration of the available literature on music and literacy integration.

**Music and Literacy Integration in the Reading Classroom**

Andrews (1997) conducted research with two intact groups of fifth-grade students. One group ($N = 29$) received integrated reading and music instruction during biweekly reading classes, whereas a second group ($N = 29$) did not receive integrated instruction. Andrews measured participants’ music backgrounds prior to treatment. The researcher collected data on participants’ pretreatment and posttreatment reading achievement, reading attitude, music achievement, and music attitude through the Vocabulary and Reading Comprehension subtests of the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (1993), Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (McKenna & Kear, 1990), Silver Burdett Music Competency Tests, Book 5 (Colwell, 1979), and Music Attitudes Profile (Yoder-White, 1993). Andrews (1997) found a significant ($p = .003$) effect of instructional approach on participants’ reading achievement, reading attitude, music achievement, and music attitude. The integrated subjects reading attitude ($p = .025$) and music attitude ($p = .001$) were significantly higher than those of nonintegrated subjects. The study also showed that gender significantly affected reading and music achievements and attitudes.
(p = .041). The reading attitude (p = .026) and music achievement (p = .016) were most significantly differentiated by gender. Females scored significantly higher on reading attitude while males scored significantly higher on music achievement. Results showed no significant effects of music background or of interactions among independent variables on the dependent variables (p > .05). Andrews concluded that integrated instruction positively affected the music attitudes of fifth-grade students and helped maintain a more positive reading attitude than nonintegrated instruction.

The treatment group received more exposure to music and the researcher than the control group. Therefore, the positive attitude of the treatment group could have been a product of the “Hawthorne effect,” where participants enjoy special attention, rather than truly responding to treatment. Andrews (1997) focused this study on the benefits of integrated instruction toward music and reading attitudes. In contrast, the present research focused on the actual experience of music and literacy integration from the perspective of music educators, administrators, and curriculum specialists.

Lyons (2008) investigated the effect of an integrated music curriculum on human learning, concentrating on reading achievement. Using an empirical approach, the researcher measured growth rate in reading skills, delivering the integrated music curriculum to 49 second-grade students by recorded DVD lessons. Although one class received the music and reading integrated lessons, the other was a “wait-list control group,” which received the same lessons during the second half of the semester. This design permitted all students to receive the music and reading integrated lessons and allowed for a larger sample size (N = 56). The researcher administered the Predictive
Assessment of Reading, a nationally-normed standardized reading achievement test, before and after each delivery of the curriculum. When comparing pretest–posttest gain scores, students receiving integrated lessons, on average, scored significantly higher on all six subtests of the posttest. Also, the researcher identified a statistically significant difference between the control group and the combined intervention groups on the gain scores of one subtest. According to Lyons (2008), “bringing music into the classroom enabled students to connect ideas being introduced in the music lessons, with concepts taught in their other classes” (p. iv). Lyons asserted that this holistic music intervention incorporated many of the elements of brain-compatible learning, and had a positive effect on resulting reading-achievement scores.

Although it seems an integrated approach benefited the experimental group in this study, the concept of music and reading integrated lessons recorded on a DVD limits the authenticity of the music classroom experience. Thus, this was an unrealistic intervention to implement in the general music classroom, as it confines student active participation. Lyons (2008) recognized that this was a concern, which was raised by the teachers in the study.

Unlike Lyons (2008), who used DVD music and reading-integrated lessons, Eaton (2006) used typical elementary classroom activities to implement integrated lessons. Using a quasiexperimental approach to determine whether integrated reading and music instruction increased or decreased reading and music achievement, two randomly selected classes of fourth grade students in a suburban Maryland elementary school comprised the experimental and control groups. A total of 37 participants took part in this
study. The experimental group received integrated reading and music instruction for 12 weeks during the final 30 minutes of regularly scheduled reading instruction. The control group only received music instruction during their final 30 minutes of their scheduled reading instruction. Lyons assessed reading and music achievement pre- and posttreatment through the Scholastic Reading Inventory and assessments from the music textbook series, *Spotlight on Music Pretest*. Results indicated that an integrated approach had a positive effect on fourth-grade students' reading and music achievement. Lyons’s investigation took place in a single suburban school, thereby limiting the generalizability of the results. Demographics and other demographic-related factors, such as exposure to music and parental involvement, could have affected positive reading and music achievement of the students in this study.

**Music and Literacy Integration in the Music Classroom**

The studies reported in the previous subsection investigated music and literacy integration in the reading classroom. Because the present study concerned music teachers’ perceptions of music and literacy integration, the following studies were examined to more closely assess the music and literacy integration practice in the music classroom. Williams (2001) examined the integration of music with language arts lessons to enhance reading comprehension. After developing a music-education program, Williams studied middle school chorus students. The program encompassed a nine-week curriculum taught during regular scheduled chorus classes. Williams identified participants for this study by a pretest designed to measure reading-comprehension skills, using only chorus students who scored below 80% for this study. The researcher
randomly assigned students to experimental and control groups. Students in the experimental group received language-arts lessons and song lyrics, and teachers trained them to decode messages in song lyrics, reinforcing the lessons with additional information about the song composers. Participants in the control group only received language-arts lessons and song lyrics. Students in both groups met three times a week for 1.5 hours for nine weeks. Students in the experimental group completed the language-arts lessons during class. As part of the choral experience, both groups sang and listened to the song lyrics. Data revealed significant gains in reading comprehension with the use of music with language-arts lessons.

It seems that Williams (2001), rather than fully integrating music with language arts, simply focused on the language-arts aspect of the song, and musical performance was secondary. Bressler (1995) labeled this type of integration “subservient,” because the arts serve only as a backdrop to the academic subject. Thus, the gains in reading comprehension cannot realistically be interpreted as affected by music instruction, but by a language-arts intervention through the choral experience.

Darrow et al. (2009) conducted five related studies that investigated the effects of a short-term intensive music curriculum designed to enhance reading skills of second-grade students. Conducted in different locations throughout the United States using the Register Music/Reading Curriculum, this curriculum targeted reading-comprehension and vocabulary skills at the second-grade level. Findings indicated that total test gain scores of students who received the music-reading curriculum were higher than those who did not receive it in four of the five studies, but not significantly. The value of this project
was to demonstrate the benefits of music as a feasible approach for reading instruction and concurrently promote enjoyment in an essential academic subject.

In contrast to Williams (2001), who used a subservient style of integration where the academic subject was predominant and music served as a background to the intervention, Darrow et al. (2009) used a music curriculum designed to target reading instruction. This seems a step closer to efficient music and literacy integration. The strength of the Darrow et al. project relied on the variety of researchers, sites, participants, and study designs, while maintaining a common denominator: an integrated music and reading curriculum.

Findings from the Williams (2001) and Darrow et al. (2009) studies generally supported the positive effects of music and literacy integration on student’s reading achievement. Music and literacy integration, however, must be carefully studied and designed after thorough research. Meaningful integration has purpose, balance, and relationship among disciplines (Barret, McCoy, & Veblen, 1997). These tenets add a quality to an integration program that improves students’ learning through performance, description, and creation of music, rather than singing songs to memorize facts or making a “fun” group activity (Barret et al., 1997).

**Music Teachers’ Beliefs about Music and Literacy Integration**

Kelley-McHale (2011) conducted a qualitative collective case study to examine ways an elementary general music teacher’s curricular beliefs and practices influence the expression of music in identity for second-generation (born in the United States from emigrant parents) students. The study concluded that the role of the teacher’s view of the
self as musician and educator, together with instructional-approach choices, produced a music classroom environment that effectively met the teacher-led goals through sequenced instruction. Thus, to have a marked impact on student achievement, teachers must have absolute confidence in the programs they choose to implement. If teachers believe they are making the best instructional choices, they will be motivated to seek training and preparation to implement the selected strategy.

Barr (2006) conducted a qualitative case study examining collaborative teaching practices of five elementary fine arts specialists, including a music teacher. Conducting in-depth interviews and classroom observations to obtain a deeper understanding of specialists' collaborative teaching practice, Barr identified factors that promote or impede fine arts teachers’ collaboration with classroom teachers, and identified the necessary preparation and support these specialists need to deliver arts-integration instruction. Findings from the interviews and observations indicated that (a) specialists have a true conviction about the benefit from interdisciplinary lessons and are eager to face the challenges to ensure natural connections are made among the arts and academic disciplines, (b) specialists are in the best position to initiate the planning of integrated lessons with classroom teachers, (c) specialists need school leaders to establish a school culture that supports collaborative efforts, and (d) all teachers need training to understand how to teach an integrated curriculum and work collaboratively.

The Barr (2006) study is somewhat similar to the present study in its attempt to understand the perceptions of music teachers and other educators regarding the integration experience. It differs in that, whereas Barr’s study sought to understand
collaborative transactions among teachers to produce integrated instruction, the present investigation sought to obtain a better understanding of music teachers, administrators’, and curricular instructors’ experiences with the inquiry, planning, implementation, and practice of this type of instruction in the music classroom.

Nolan (2009) offered another perspective when investigating current instructional methods, goals, resources, and content standards taught by music teachers nationally. Nolan found that 82.24% of participants regularly integrate music with other academic subjects during their lessons. “On average, elementary music teachers integrated between three and four different subjects with music. Among the prominent areas reinforced through music were language arts (77.31%), mathematics (66.03%), social studies (55.77%), science (39.87%), and history (33.21%)” (Nolan, 2009, p. 15). The researcher also reported that nearly three-fourths of the geographic regions investigated indicated they regularly integrated music with other content areas.

Nolan (2009) posited that many music teachers choose to integrate music with other academic subjects. Possible reasons why they make this choice could include (a) the belief that it is a viable instructional tool, (b) the belief that they would have a better support and appreciation by their peers and administrators if they choose to integrate, or (c) their administrators believe is a sound strategy and encourage them to practice integration in their classroom. Thus, the present study sought to understand why do they chose to integrate and to discern their perceptions about this practice.

Similarly, Gerber and Garrity (2007) designed a study to learn about Ohio music teachers’ attitudes regarding integration in the music classroom. Although 78.6% of
participants reported they integrate reading and music in their classrooms and many have a positive attitude about integration, interviewed music teachers indicated their major complaint is the lack of appropriate integration training. Only 33.9% of respondents indicated their school districts provide reading-integration professional development (Gerber and Gerrity, 2007).

These studies seem to indicate that, overall, music teachers have a favorable perception of music and literacy integration. Moreover, most participants appear to be implementing this strategy in their classrooms already, even when they overtly describe the lack of professional development on this topic. This need for training along with the need for support from administrators and peers in the areas of recognition and collaboration seem to be the most pressing challenges that music teachers face when attempting to practice music and literacy integration.

**Professional Development and Music and Literacy Integration**

Reported abuses to the welfare of children during the Industrial Revolution and public concerns about inconsistent teacher quality furthered the need for teacher training during the mid-1800s (Charland, 2006). By 1904 the National Society for the Study of Education published its first yearbook focusing on the matter of professional development (Charland, 2006). For more than a century, professional development has been an integral part of education. Professional development is a “consciously designed effort to bring about positive change and improvement” (Guskey, 2000, p. 17). This effort is an intricate one and entails the collective and individual cognitive and emotional involvement of teachers. Teachers must be willing to assess their values and principles
and take the necessary steps for improvement (Avalos, 2011).

Although music teachers have available opportunities for growth and improvement, the same opportunities in arts integration, specifically in the area of music and literacy integration, are still scarce (Barr, 2006; Gerber & Garrity, 2007; Nolan, 2009). The following review of literature describes professional development in general education, professional development in music education, professional development in arts integration, and professional development in music and literacy integration.

Teachers want to know exactly what integrated instruction is and what it involves (Woods, 2005). Attempting to implement an uncharted strategy can be intimidating. Training provided to teachers must include long-range research-based strategies (Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001). School districts require a deeper investigation of professional-development practices to determine whether they are adequately preparing music educators to meet the expectation to incorporate reading instruction into their curriculum (Gerber & Gerrity, 2007).

Preservice Professional Development

Moore (2011) conducted a case study through portraiture methods to explore the experiences of preservice teachers who participated in a music-integrated literacy-methods course during their first semester in an elementary teacher-preparation program. The researcher indicated that this study was a response to previous researchers’ findings that arts-integrated university courses have a greater impact on the teaching practices of preservice teachers when included early in their college education and that preservice teachers are more hesitant about music integration than the integration of other art forms.
The data collected in one semester included course assignments, reflective journals, a survey designed to measure teacher attitudes toward the use of the arts in teaching, observations of teaching practices in the field, audiorecorded debriefing sessions after each teaching observation, and audiorecorded semistructured interviews. Participants included six preservice teachers, observed in their field placements and interviews with six preservice teachers; two participants were included in the observation and the interview groups. Data analysis included the use of *in vivo* and axial coding as well as Impressionistic Records. Four major themes emerged from preservice teachers’ experiences in a music-integrated literacy-methods course: (a) preservice teachers’ thinking as learners in a music-integrated literacy-methods course did not transfer to their teaching practices, (b) previous training in music influences how preservice teachers visualize their future arts-integrated teaching, (c) preservice teachers’ actual practice does not represent the practice they envisioned, and (d) preservice teachers aspire for more support in the field that allows freedom of arts integration and emphasizes testing mandates less. Preservice teachers who have experienced a music-integrated literacy-methods course view music as a sound tool for teaching literacy concepts to their students (Moore, 2011). Although these preservice teachers were not music teachers, classroom teachers remarkably viewed music as a viable tool for teaching literacy.

**In-service Professional Development**

Although opportunities for in-service music and literacy-integration professional development across the nation are prolific, research is surprisingly scarce. Of the few available studies on music and literacy integration, most focus on classroom-teacher
learning and inclusion of music to the language-arts subject. Studies regarding music and literacy professional development for music teachers are almost nonexistent.

Burnaford (2009) examined the impact of network-based professional development on arts specialists, including music teachers, and their schools. The researcher closely considered professional-development activities in 59 schools. Burnaford’s case study focused on six schools representing the geographic and demographic range of the district. The researcher collected data from focus groups, interviews, school walk-throughs, process documentation of curriculum, student work, teacher lesson outlines, and online documentation templates for a period of three years. The study included 702 participants who attended voluntary paid professional-development sessions on 15 topics during the school calendar months. The professional development emphasized the building of new curriculum that crosses interdisciplinary lines by using the “Big Idea and Big Understandings” approach, in which educators design curriculum around a big idea that teachers want students to understand. Arts specialists developed curriculum that worked with multiple grades, ages, and abilities, based on key, big ideas. The study used arts integration as a venue for teaching literacy. Arts specialists received literacy training and literacy concepts, introduced and reinforced through the arts. They learned through monthly professional-development sessions and they, in turn, taught their schools’ nonarts teacher peers. This gave arts specialists new recognition and value from their nonarts peers. Nonarts teachers became open and willing to engage in interdisciplinary collaboration.

Although relationships strengthened through this collaboration, Burnaford (2009)
could not provide results on the impact of this program to the quality of teaching and learning at these schools. Although schools are working collaboratively to effectively integrate and engage in productive professional development, student learning should be the ultimate goal of such endeavors. Although this program could serve as a model for other schools to implement in-service music and literacy professional development, student-learning outcomes should be carefully examined before realizing such a program.

**Summary**

Often-cited natural parallels between music and literacy-skills achievement (see, for example, Gromko, 2005; Kelley, 1981; Lloyd, 1978; Morrow, 1996), has included music education as a feasible content area through which students might learn literacy skills. Although Hansen et al. (2004) found parallels between music and fundamental skills for literacy, Gromko (2005), Rubinson (2010), and Lucas and Gromko (2007) found a positive relationship between music instruction and phonemic awareness. In contrast, Selway (2004) found no relationship between these two variables. Researchers who found a positive relationship between music instruction and phonemic awareness only found a positive correlation between the two variables. Therefore developing aural skills for music, as some suggested, may not necessarily aid in the development of aural skills for reading.

Jones (2008), Leguizamon (2010), and LaCour (2010) found no significant correlation between music study and reading; several reasons could explain why they found no significant correlation between these two subjects. Most elementary music programs in public schools are limited to a once a week, 30- to 50-minute lessons. An
adequate reading intervention should probably be delivered more often than once a week and perhaps for a longer period of time. Another reason for the lack of significant correlation between music study and reading demonstrated in these studies could be that music study must be longitudinal before an individual can reap benefits in reading achievement. Many of these studies were brief in duration and thus did not provide a complete picture of the impact of music study. Factors such as quality of lesson plans, instruction, materials, and classroom management, among others, are variables that can easily affect the outcome of research. Although Huber (2010) did find a positive relationship between music study and reading development, this relationship is not indicative of causality. Thus, music study may simply not be an effective intervention for reading development.

Nevertheless, Nolan (2009), Register, Darrow, Standley and Swedberg (2007), and Standley (2008) found a positive relationship between music and reading through their studies, thereby supporting Hanshumaker, McDonald, and Sullivan’s (1979) view that integration could aid learning transfer across music and language arts, developing positive attitudes about music and reading, and expand knowledge in these content areas. If integration is a plausible alternative to the transfer of learning across the music and language-arts disciplines, then a study on the pertinence of the subject of music and literacy integration has value. This information will be fundamental to an informed development of the methodology for the current study.

Andrews (1997), Lyons (2008), and Eaton (2006) found similar results through their studies and agreed that music and literacy integration in the regular classroom is an
effective tool for academic achievement. Additionally, findings by Williams (2001) and Darrow et al. (2009) generally supported the positive effects of music and literacy integration on students’ reading achievement. This type of integration may be beneficial to students; however, assuming that any quality of music and literacy integration is advantageous is flawed. This type of instruction must be carefully studied and designed after thorough research. According to Barret, McCoy, and Veblen (1997), meaningful integration has purpose, balance, and relationship among disciplines.

Through their study findings, Barr (2006), Nolan (2009), and Gerber and Garrity (2007) concurred that music teachers believe music and literacy integration could be beneficial for student achievement in reading, but teachers need quality professional development to implement it. Surprisingly, studies regarding music and literacy professional development for preservice and in-service teachers are scarce. What little can be found seems to indicate that professional development in music and literacy integration could strengthen collaboration between music teachers and classroom teachers and that both types of teachers are open to this implementation, given adequate training. Although the research regarding professional development in music and literacy integration is limited, schools and districts do not seem to deter implementation of this type of instruction. The research questions in the present study focused on administrators’ and educators’ acknowledgement and interpretation of the available research on this topic.

This review of the literature pointed to two important premises. First, music and literacy integration may be a viable tool for increased student achievement. Second, more
research is needed regarding music and literacy professional development for music educators. The present study directly addressed these premises through a qualitative study by interviewing music teachers, school administrators, and curriculum specialists, and inquiring about their perceptions regarding music and literacy integration in the music classroom.
Chapter III

Methodology

Qualitative research is the quest to understand “how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world” (Merriam, 2009, p. 13). Qualitative research enables researchers to satisfy intellectual curiosity beyond numbers, statistics, or quantification. A qualitative inquiry allows deeper and holistic insight into the human experience. This insight was fundamental in seeking the answers to the research questions guiding this study.

There are several types of qualitative methodologies that might have been appropriate in examining music and literacy integration. Narrative research, for example, can facilitate a rich description of the participant’s experiences through their distinct stories. An ethnography could have allowed deep descriptions and interpretation of shared patterns of culture within this group of education professionals (Cresswell, 2007). A case study, however, offers a detailed description of a small number of participants, beliefs, attitudes, and feelings towards this study of music and literacy integration. Case study is primarily concerned with the unit of analysis (Merriam, 2009). The units of analysis, or cases, in this particular research are the music teachers, school principals and curriculum specialists making this a multicase qualitative inquiry. Accordingly, this qualitative multicase study is focused on music teachers’ and school administrators’ interpretation of their experiences and the world in which they live, and the meaning they derive from their engagement with their world, in this case the world of literacy and
music integration. The goal of this chapter is to outline, in detail, methodological procedures used in this study to ensure the voices of music teachers and school administrators are heard and understood concerning music and literacy integration.

Participants

Selection

The strategy to select participants for this study was purposeful sampling. Individuals and sites are selected through this strategy “because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study” (Creswell, 2007, p. 125). A purposeful sampling is “based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore, must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (Merriam, 2009, p. 77). Thus, the purpose of this study and the specified research questions guided the criteria for participant selection.

Several types of purposeful-sampling strategies exist (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 2009). Among them are typical, criterion, and convenience sampling. In typical sampling, participants represent the average person in a similar phenomenon. In criterion sampling, participants meet specific criteria predetermined by the researcher to ensure they all have experienced the phenomenon. Convenience sampling allows the researcher to select participants who are readily available to them. These three types of sampling represented the best combination of procedures for the present study.

Based on the purpose of the study and the research questions, participants in this study were six elementary public school music teachers, three elementary public school
principals, and three public school curriculum specialists from a major city in Texas. To gain broader insight into the music and literacy integration experience, as it takes place in distinct demographic settings, half of the participants work in inner-city schools and the other half practice in suburban schools. Because it is relevant to gain insights regarding participants’ rich experiences, the selected individuals had a minimum of five years of teaching or administrative experience. Participants recently experienced some level of music and literacy integration in their classrooms, in their schools, or in their districts.

**Recruitment**

I purchased an e-mail database from the Texas Music Educators Association (TMEA). TMEA is the largest music educators’ organization in the state. At the time of this writing, the association had approximately 11,000 active members. TMEA allows the use of its e-mail list for doctoral students to collect research data. For this research, I requested only the elementary music e-mail list. This list included approximately 2,000 members. Once purchased, I sent a recruitment e-mail to the members on this list. The e-mail prompted prospective participants to contact me if they wished to participate; 13 music teachers replied to the recruitment e-mail expressing interest in participating in the study and requesting more information. After receiving more specific information, six music teachers replied that they wished to be a part of the present study; three of them offered to act as “gatekeepers” and asked school principals and curriculum specialists they knew personally if they wished to participate in the study. As a result of this contact, I contacted three school administrators and three curriculum specialists by e-mail and they all assented to participate. One of the curriculum specialists contacted was a music
curriculum specialist for her district. Upon verbal agreement, I mailed a Consent-to-Participate Form (see Appendix A) to formalize this participation agreement. I arranged meeting dates for interviews through e-mail, following completion of the formal agreements.

**Data Collection**

Interviews were the chosen technique for data collection in the present study. A person-to-person interview facilitated the gathering of participants’ thoughts, feelings, and perspectives regarding their experience with music and literacy integration. This technique must be employed when behavior, feelings, or people’s interpretation of the world that surrounds them cannot be observed and when researchers investigate past events and experiences (Merriam, 2009). Participants in this study may not necessarily be implementing music and literacy integration currently, but may have implemented it or helped implemented it before.

To ensure that the questions were valid and relevant, the interview protocols of studies similar in nature were models for the development of the interview protocols for the present study. One of these models was the protocol included in Casale’s (2011) study. This was a sequential explanatory study investigating teachers’ perceptions of professional development and its benefit to their knowledge, skills, and student learning. Similar to the present study, Casale included teachers and administrators as participants in the investigation. Casale developed an interview protocol from emergent themes from an initial survey and the literature. The researcher divided questions into six categories: opening question, introductory question, transition questions, key questions, and ending
questions. The key questions contained follow-up probing questions, which encouraged participants to offer greater detail about their experiences. All questions in the protocol, although focused on different aspects of their professional-development experience, were open-ended, allowing respondents to expound on their answers. Casale also provided an opportunity for interviewees to express their feelings and emotions regarding their experiences.

Holmberg (2010) developed an interview protocol also used as a model for the present study’s interview protocol. Holmberg’s qualitative research examined first-grade general music teachers’ perceptions of the role of music education in the acquisition of early literacy. Interview questions related directly to the study’s research questions. Similar to Casale’s (2011) interview questions, Holmberg’s were open-ended, encouraging interviewees to provide more experience details. Holmberg included specific probing phrases under each question to motivate deeper reflection.

Shuck (2005) provided the third and final interview protocol chosen as a model to guide the development of the interview questions in the present study. Similar to the current investigation, Shuck’s qualitative case study investigated music integration. Specifically, Shuck (2005) studied levels and frequency of music integration implemented at a single public elementary school, key issues affecting the successful implementation of music integration, and the influence of this practice on academic achievement. Shuck designed interview questions that, like Holmberg’s (2010) and Casale’s (2011), were open-ended. To gain a better perspective of the participants, the researcher included more specific and personal questions.
Thus, based on the questioning models of Casale (2011), Holmberg (2010), and Shuck (2005), and the research questions stated in Chapter 1, I devised the following interview protocol containing semistructured questions:

Music Teacher Interview Questions:

1. Please describe your position and what led you to this career choice.
2. What is the first thing that comes to mind when you hear the phrase “music and literacy integration?”
3. What are your beliefs regarding music and literacy integration?
4. How did you become aware of music integration?
5. What compels you to integrate music and literacy in your classroom?
6. What aspects of your personality and attitudes contribute to shape your feelings about music and literacy integration?
7. To what degree does this instructional strategy complement your teaching philosophy?
8. To what degree do you deem music and literacy integration helpful to your students’ academic achievement?
9. What evidence can you provide to support your statement?
10. What challenges do you face when integrating music and literacy?
11. Please share any frustrations you have experienced when integrating music and literacy in your classroom. (How did you deal with or overcome these frustrations?)
12. What is your level of confidence when integrating music and literacy integration?
13. Please share any successes you have experienced when integrating music and literacy in your classroom.

14. What professional-development opportunities regarding music and literacy integration are available to you in your area?

15. How have these professional-development opportunities helped you in implementing music and literacy integration in your classroom?

16. How have these opportunities helped you achieve your professional goals?

17. How does your school principal value music and literacy integration?

18. How does your curriculum specialist value music and literacy integration?

19. In an ideal situation, how should music and literacy integration be valued?

20. What professional-development opportunities regarding music and literacy integration does your school principal or curriculum specialist provide?

21. How have these professional-development opportunities helped you in implementing music and literacy integration in your classroom?

22. What role does the available research regarding music and literacy integration play in the implementation of music and literacy integration in your school?

23. What advice would you offer to a music teacher trying to implement music and literacy integration in the classroom?

24. Any other remarks you wish to convey regarding this experience?
School Principal Interview Questions:

1. Please describe your position and what led you to this career choice.

2. What is the first thing that comes to mind when you hear the phrase “music and literacy integration?”

3. What are your beliefs regarding music and literacy integration?

4. How did you become aware of music integration?

5. What compels you and your music teacher to support and practice music and literacy integration in your school?

6. What aspects of your personality and attitudes contribute to shaping your feelings about music and literacy integration?

7. How does this practice complement your educational philosophy?

8. To what degree do you deem music and literacy integration helpful to your students’ academic achievement?

9. What evidence can you provide to support your statement?

10. What challenges does your music teacher face when integrating music and literacy?

11. Please share any frustrations you and your music teacher have experienced when integrating music and literacy in your school. (How did you overcome these frustrations?)

12. What is your music teacher’s level of confidence when integrating music and literacy integration?
13. Please share any successes you and your music teacher have experienced when integrating music and literacy in your school.

14. What professional-development opportunities regarding music and literacy integration are available in your area?

15. How have these professional-development opportunities helped you and your music teacher in implementing music and literacy integration practice in your school?

16. How have these opportunities helped you achieve your campus goals?

17. How do you value music and literacy integration?

18. How does your curriculum specialist value music and literacy integration?

19. In an ideal situation, how should music and literacy integration be valued?

20. What professional-development opportunities regarding music and literacy integration do you facilitate for your music teacher?

21. How have these professional-development opportunities helped your music teacher in implementing music and literacy integration in your school?

22. What role does the available research regarding music and literacy integration play in the implementation of music and literacy integration in your school?

23. What advice would you offer others who are trying to implement music and literacy integration in their classroom/school/district?

24. Any other remarks you wish to convey regarding this experience?
Curriculum-Specialist Interview Questions:

1. Please describe your position and what led you to this career choice.

2. What is the first thing that comes to mind when you hear the phrase “music and literacy integration?”

3. What are your beliefs regarding music and literacy integration?

4. How did you become aware of music integration?

5. What compels your music teacher(s) to integrate music and literacy in your school/district?

6. What aspects of your personality and attitudes contribute to shape your feelings about music and literacy integration?

7. How does this practice complement your educational philosophy?

8. Do you consider music and literacy integration helpful to your students’ academic achievement?

9. What evidence can you provide to support your statement?

10. What challenges does your music teacher(s) face when integrating music and literacy?

11. Please share any frustrations you and your music teacher have experienced when integrating music and literacy in your school/district. (How did you overcome these frustrations?)

12. What is your music teacher’s level of confidence when integrating music and literacy integration?
13. Please share any successes you and your music teacher(s) have experienced when integrating music and literacy in your school/district.

14. What professional-development opportunities regarding music and literacy integration are available in your area?

15. How have these professional-development opportunities helped you and your music teacher(s) in implementing music and literacy integration in your school/district?

16. How do you value music and literacy integration?

17. How have these opportunities helped you achieve your educational goals?

18. How do school principals value music and literacy integration?

19. In an ideal situation, how should music and literacy integration be valued?

20. What professional-development opportunities regarding music and literacy integration do you facilitate for your music teacher(s)?

21. How have these professional-development opportunities helped your music teacher(s) implement music and literacy integration in your school/district?

22. What role does the available research regarding music and literacy integration play in the implementation of music and literacy integration in your school?

23. What advice would you offer to others trying to implement music and literacy integration in their classroom/school/district?

24. Any other remarks you wish to convey regarding this experience?

For accuracy and fidelity of transcripts all interviews were digitally recorded, using Sony ICD-UX512RED Digital Flash Voice Recorder, and saved in a computer...
audio file protected with a password. This process allowed me to revisit the recordings as many times as necessary to ensure precision. Three years after study completion, the digital recordings will be destroyed using SDelete v1.51, a program that permanently destroys files on computers.

**Pilot Study**

I conducted a pilot study with three participants to refine the procedures, determine ways to improve the planned interview questions, and offer opportunities for me as the interviewer to practice interviewing. Participants in the pilot study were a three-member panel comprised of a music teacher, a principal, and a curriculum specialist, all employed in close proximity to my work site. I encouraged the panel to assist in improving the wording of the interview questions and any other aspect of the interview that might need clarification. Most importantly, I asked the panel to evaluate and rate the extent to which the questions accurately reflected the meaning and purpose of the research questions.

Overall, the panel agreed that all the questions properly reflected the meaning and purpose of the research questions. The music teacher commented that the questions regarding professional development seemed to be redundant, especially if the participant has not had opportunities for music and literacy integration professional development. Although it was a reasonable thought, I decided to leave the professional-development questions intact, as participants’ experiences with music and literacy integration professional development are distinct. A variety of questions allow for richer and more complete descriptions of participants’ experiences.
Data Analysis

Prior to any data collection or analysis, I ensured participants of confidentiality by assigning an alphanumeric code to each one. Their corresponding data connected to them only through their assigned code. When participants presented data identifying them, such as school names or school district, names were removed. I stored all data securely.

I analyzed data as soon as they were collected, as this procedure informed me of the need for other data-collection activities (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003). To identify constructs, themes, or patterns, I undertook a constant-comparative method of data analysis based on grounded theory (Creswell, 2008). According to Litchman (2010), “the constant-comparative method is a method closely associated with grounded theory. Its steps involve open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. Codes are developed and subsequently organized around concepts. Categories are developed from the concepts” (p. 190). To aid in this analysis, I typed handwritten notes into an electronic file, and then inputted them into the computer software, HyperRESEARCH, which assisted in deconstructing the text into meaning or analysis units. Through the software, an electronic “study” file stored all the sources and “case” files, with a case file for each type of participant (music teachers, school administrators, and curriculum specialists). Each case file contained all the interview transcripts as well as the recorded interviews of each participant.

After loading each transcript and digital recording into each electronic case file, I revisited each segment of its content; then employed the constant-comparative method. I compared participant interviews, leading to the emergence of codes. This first step was
labeled as open coding (Creswell, 2007; Litchman, 2010; Merriam, 2009). I saved all the codes in the “code book” (a collection of all the created codes) of the study file. Next, I organized the codes under more general categories or themes. This second step is labeled axial coding (Creswell, 2007; Litchman, 2010; Merriam, 2009). According to Saldaña (2013), axial coding “describes a category’s properties and dimensions and explores how the categories and subcategories relate to each other” (p. 209). Finally, I derived a working theory from the themes. This final step is labeled selective coding (Creswell, 2007; Litchman, 2010; Merriam, 2009).

To ensure the internal validity of this study, I employed triangulation using multiple sources of data. This strategy allows for comparison or verification of interview data from people with distinctive viewpoints (Merriam, 2009). Interviewing music teachers, school administrators, and curriculum specialists illuminated music and literacy integration issues from distinct backgrounds and points of views.

Another strategy employed to ensure the internal validity of this study was member checks or respondent validation. Through this strategy, I submitted a preliminary analysis of the data to all participants to obtain their feedback on whether my interpretation seemed accurate (Merriam, 2009). I sought this feedback to ascertain the degree to which I accurately interpreted interview data.

The ultimate goal of this data analysis was to accurately interpret the collected information. The researcher holds the responsibility to accurately and honestly convey the findings of an investigation to the reader. I took all suitable measures to pursue this goal, including a conscious effort to remove all biases and report truth. When revealing
the findings, I carefully described and explained each emergent theme, including interview excerpts in the text. An in-depth discussion of findings follows, addressing research questions based on these findings. Confidently, the reader will find this report enlightening and relevant, when considering the implementation of music and literacy integration in the music classroom, and will aid in deciding whether this is a helpful strategy.
Chapter IV

Data Analysis

This qualitative study ascertained the perceptions of music educators, curriculum specialists, and principals regarding music and literacy integration in the elementary music classroom. I interviewed six elementary music teachers, three school principals, and three curriculum specialists from different school districts representative of varied socioeconomic school backgrounds, with similar questions to enrich understanding of their perceptions of the inclusion of music and literacy integration in the music classroom. I collected data through semistructured interviews. Using the computer software HyperRESEARCH, I inventoried, organized, and coded the interview data. To ensure quality and validity of interview questions and that they accurately reflected the meaning and purpose of the research questions, I included in the interview protocol only those questions that were positively rated by a pilot group.

Results

The findings from this study appear in the following section of this chapter. I discerned these results from the data collected from the interviews of the 12 study participants. I describe interactions with each participant in the first subsection, whereas codes, categories, and relevant additional data emerging from these conversations appear in the second subsection of this chapter.

Creswell (2008) advised, “the lives and experiences of participants should be told, but the individuals from which the research was gleaned must be concealed” (p. 240).
Thus, pseudonyms were used to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of all of the participants in this study. Along with the omission of school and district names, this measure will assure participants that their identity will remain unknown.

**Interviews**

**Music Teacher 1: Ms. Smith**

It was 8:30 pm and Ms. Smith’s street was so dark, I almost drove by and missed her house. We had agreed to meet at that time and place at her convenience. Because this was my first formal study interview, I was excited by the opportunity and gladly accommodated her request. I walked up to her door and rang the bell of a nice red-brick family home. A tall Ms. Smith opened the door and with a soft and welcoming voice, invited me in. Ms. Smith is a White woman in her mid- to late thirties. Her short brown hair was parted in the middle and she wore black-framed prescription eyeglasses. She had a smart look about her.

There were family pictures galore as I entered the living room. Family is obviously an essential part of her life. We sat at the dining room table where I was able to put my voice recorder, take notes, and eventually look at some Orff magazines she brought for me to see. Her voice was naturally soft, but this night was particularly softer as her two children had already gone to bed and she did not want to interrupt their sleep.

When I inquired about her career choice, Ms. Smith divulged that she wanted to become a music teacher since childhood. Her involvement in church music and other choral activities, as well as the influence of her mother, who was a music director at church, primed her passion and encouraged her to set the goal of becoming a choral
director. After college, however, she was only able to find a job as an elementary music teacher. This opportunity, with the aid of a good mentor teacher and Orff trainings, propelled her love for elementary general music. Through our conversation it became evident that Ms. Smith had dedicated a good amount of her professional-development time attending Orff training.

Her philosophy of music education was a practical one as she wants students to be able to move, create, and perform. She considers herself a “purist” in the sense that she wishes to teach music for music’s sake. So when asked about music and literacy integration she was somehow resistant to the idea of using music instruction to teach language arts. Rather, she prefers to reinforce students’ literacy skills with the curriculum she is already presenting. She stated that her biggest belief is that in the music classroom we need to be teaching music for music’s sake:

That’s the number one thing. I need to be teaching music for music’s sake and when the kids come to my classroom they need to experience music, and quality music. But then under that umbrella if there is anything I can do to improve their literacy with quality music and things I’m already doing then that is a really wonderful thing I can do for the kids.

Through our conversation and exploration of the activities she conducts in her classroom, we realized that, in fact, she reinforces many language-arts skills through her lessons. These skills are specifically reinforced through the use of the Orff approach of music education with speech activities, poetry, children’s literature, and nursery rhymes.
One of these activities is the use of children’s literature to explore, improvise, or perform using Orff instrumentation.

Ms. Smith showed me a picture she had taken on her phone so I could see the children’s literature library in the classroom, holding at least 150 books in the collection. Yet, frustration seeped through her voice as she admitted she could not use the literature as much as she wanted, due to the limited amount of time she had with students: “you know, just the once a week for 50 minutes doesn’t go very far. The curriculum is big and there is not a lot of time.” She feels she could be supporting students more with their literacy if she had more time with them. As an elementary music teacher, I can relate to this lack-of-time complaint. Less than an hour, once a week, it is not enough time.

Being in a Title I, bilingual school, Ms. Smith recognizes that she can more effectively impact her students if her role extends beyond music. She added: “anything that I can do to reinforce [literacy], well I am meeting them where they live.” Nevertheless, she feels that it is unnecessary to neglect the music curriculum to accomplish this goal. In her view many musical concepts and skills could reinforce literacy skills at the same time. The challenge she perceives for herself and her colleague music teachers is a lack of professional development available to music teachers that can explicate these music and literacy connections clearly and deeply. As a consequence, music teachers are likely to be unaware if they are impacting literacy skills while delivering music instruction. Ms. Smith expressed,

You go to a workshop, and it is children’s literature in the music classroom. And there are all these books and activities that you can do, but the actual literacy
concept may or may not be there. It’s just using literature in your classroom. Or is poetry, using poetry in the music classroom … but where is the actual link? Like where is the concrete something or other that is the link? That is, I think the piece that is missing and that is the piece that I would like the training on.

In her judgment, the area has few available sources for professional development specifically dealing with music and literacy integration. Although some Orff training indirectly provides resources for this type of integration, according to Ms. Smith, no opportunities in the area precisely address this topic. However, the small opportunities for professional development in music and literacy integration that she has had have helped promote awareness and provide tools and strategies for implementation as well as to achieve her professional goal of becoming a better music educator.

This teacher is obviously eager to be a resource for her students in any way possible. She believes that helping them improve their literacy skills will, in turn, help her deliver lessons more effectively. Language represents a barrier in the classroom because the students lack fluency. Ms. Smith feels “they are working twice as hard” as they have to first decode the meaning of her words in English and then understand them in the context of the music. She sees evidence of this struggle, especially when working on programs such as concerts or musicals. In her experience, students lacking literacy skills encounter considerable challenges when learning songs with multiple verses. “At the beginning it seems an insurmountable task to learn this song that has three verses.” Nonetheless, because students practice these lyrics over an extended period of time, it helps them enrich their fluency as well as establish connections with what they learn in
the music classroom and what they learn in the language-arts classroom. Ms. Smith celebrated, “at the end they can sing the song really well. And think how many words they didn’t know that were in that song.” Her account made me realize that the learning and reinforcement of literacy skills may be happening without intent through the normal music lesson.

Ms. Smith asserted that students focusing on processing vocabulary detracts from accurately matching pitch. In addition, she admits with disappointment that her skills to address students’ language barrier are limited. She believes music teachers lack training, particularly in bilingual schools, on how to work with this population. English as a second language (ESL) training seems to be geared largely to classroom teachers. Training seems to be the prevailing challenge that prevents Ms. Smith from fully implementing music and literacy integration in the classroom, a process she labeled “accidental integration.” She claimed that “it’s happening and there’s some planning going into it, but … I feel like I don’t have the resources or the training to be doing a lot.” From her accounts, it seemed integration is more than “accidental”; later she agreed that, rather than accidental, it is merely at a basic level.

In addition to the challenge of training, Ms. Smith also faces the challenge of communication. On many occasions, because of the lack of time and, on uncommon occasions, the lack of motivation, not enough communication ensues between classroom teachers and music teachers. Music teachers are often unaware of their students’ performance in other academic areas. Even if teachers create a strong music and literacy integration plan, it would not be fully beneficial if the music teacher is unaware of the
strengths and needs of the students. In contrast, she sadly recognized that this might be an impossible task because of the number of students elementary music teachers teach. Ms. Smith added disappointedly,

"You know, but I find when there’s ten sections of fourth grade … everything is such a huge scope. Is that the enormity of the task, it’s sometimes overwhelming I just don’t even bother. That sounds pretty sad, but it’s kind of realistic.

Adding to the feeling of isolation, Ms. Smith feels that her principal already has such a tremendous task being at the helm of the school, that music and literacy integration is “not even on her radar.” She does think that if her principal were aware of the benefits to the students, she would probably fully support such endeavors. However, she feels her curriculum specialist would highly value this instructional strategy. Ms. Smith is not certain that she has the proper awareness regarding music and literacy integration. Unfortunately, this is not an isolated case. Because of the high stakes of standardized testing, many school principals and curriculum specialists are most concerned with students “passing the test.” Also, because music and literacy integration is not necessarily a widely recognized strategy, schools lack broad awareness.

When asked about how she overcomes her challenges and frustrations, she expressed that rather than waiting for opportunities to emerge, she takes a proactive role and initiates communication with colleagues as well as seeking professional-development opportunities on her own. She admits that although she continually participates in professional development, even at out-of-state venues that she finances on her own, she
feels overwhelmed by the size and needs of her current school, and her ventures to initiate communication with her colleagues have been kept to a minimum.

Ideally, Ms. Smith thinks that this approach could go both ways: “Where classroom teachers could be using music to help teach literacy and we could be using literacy to help teach music.” With the proper training, classroom teachers and music teacher can work collaboratively to benefit the students’ literacy growth. She also thinks that research is relevant, and she is constantly enriching herself with practical applications for the classroom rooted in research. Although she personally does not enjoy reading a research paper, she appreciates when authors dissect these papers and extract practical applications, creating a reader-friendly article.

Ms. Smith offered advice to teachers trying to implement music and literacy integration in their classroom: Music teachers should initiate contact with classroom teachers and curriculum specialists as well as seek professional development on the topic. She added that this process should be approached gradually, as it can prove to be an overwhelming task. However, through our conversation she realized she has been integrating music and literacy more than she has planned. Sometimes integrating these two subjects occurred inadvertently in the classroom, complementing her “music for music’s sake” philosophy of music education. Thus, based on Ms. Smith’s experiences, although teachers should conduct research and seek knowledge on this topic, it would also be valuable to review and evaluate current lessons for any music and literacy integration that might already be taking place in the music classroom.
Music Teacher 2: Ms. Xu

As I walked into the school, a few dozen tiny preschool children, in perfectly straight rows, escorted by teachers, advanced to the main entrance to wait for the bus that would take them home. The main hall of this prekindergarten school was open and airy, providing ample room for many little bodies to sit and almost-patiently wait for their ride home. Many students looked at me, smiled, and waved in a warm and hospitable manner, almost as if they knew who I was. I entered the spacious front office, introduced myself, and asked for Ms. Xu. The friendly receptionist called her on the phone and told me she would come to meet me soon.

A few minutes later, a young woman in her early thirties entered the front office, stretched her greeting hand toward me and, with a big and perfect-white-teeth smile, her face framed by shiny straight shoulder-length black hair, said “Hi!” I immediately greeted her back and let her lead me to her classroom. As we talked about the traffic on my drive to the school, she sat by her desk. Typical of a busy teacher, her desk was full of papers, books, notebooks, and other ancillary material for class. She proudly showed me her spacious classroom as well as all her colorful musical instruments such as drums and bells and resources that the previous music teacher had acquired through grant funds. Even though Ms. Xu is a young teacher, her classroom set up and planning provided evidence of her maturity as a professional educator.

Ms. Xu shared that she has played the piano and the violin from a young age. She grew up in China and came to the United States as a high school exchange student. At the time she entered college she was undecided about what major to choose. Her love for
music and working with children became the deciding factor in becoming a music educator.

When asked about her perceptions toward the practice of music and literacy integration, Ms. Xu stated without hesitation that reading music and the reading of text are linked, specifically, through the process of decoding. Her experience as a graduate music-education student has led her to these beliefs. She deemed the practice of music and literacy integration relevant, especially at the early stage of preschool, as children’s brains are still developing. Ms. Xu readily expressed her conviction that skills such as pitch recognition aid students when they listen to a book being read to them. I could see this belief materialized around her room where I could see books, flashcards, and other reading aids.

Ms. Xu explained that her interest in the practice of music and literacy integration was prompted by a class assignment in graduate school. She recalled,

I read from, I think, [ABC Music & Me (Kindermusik, 2010], I think it’s one of the products that are being offered for the young children and they had a lot of good research in their articles that, how literacy is closely connected to music. I started to dig into it, and I did some test run with my students, and they enjoyed it, and they were catching on quick.

When I inquired more about ABC Music & Me, she showed me this and other class materials including manipulatives. One of the materials was an oversized flashcard with four consecutive images. The first image was a bear, the second image was the same bear, the third image was two smaller bears and the fourth image was the same bear as
the first and second image. As she pointed to each image on a steady beat she would say to the students: “Bear, Bear, teddy, Bear.” She then proceeded to ask students how many sounds they heard on each word (bear = 1 sound, ted-dy = 2 sounds). The underlying goal was to aid children to visualize syllables and rhythm, preempts reading skills in language and music. She then linked this small phrase to the song “Teddy Bear” along with instrument exploration. Later in the year, she advanced it into Kodály rhythmic syllables:

\[
\text{ta ta ti-ti ta}
\]

\[
\text{♩ ♩ ♩ ♩}
\]

I could see the pride in her eyes when she shared with me that homeroom teachers have borrowed these strips from her so that they could practice prereading skills in their classrooms. Teachers are aware that she uses this resource because in this school, teachers they come with the children to music class and witness Ms. Xu’s instructional strategies first hand.

When I inquired about what factors compelled her to integrate music and literacy Ms. Xu firmly based her response on one major factor: her duty as an educator. As an educator she is aware of the need for students to have an early foundation in reading skills. Thus, she believes

We have to start now, in here, and anything that I could do to help children to really engage in learning because if they engage in learning, learning math or literacy, everything else will just come on. I want them to enjoy learning. At this
level, I’m not really trying to help my students to become a concert pianist or professional musician. I’m trying to pull the connection.

Whole-child development is at the core of her philosophy as an educator. And at this early-childhood level, she believes many connections can be drawn between songs and stories, especially literacy connections. She is aware that when students move to the upper grades, their exposure to this instructional strategy becomes scarce. This may be one of the few opportunities students will have to purposefully integrate music and literacy. Also, Ms. Xu is convinced that integrating literacy in her music lessons will help students be engaged and, in her own words, “connected to a bigger perspective.” Keenly she added that her love for books and reading also aids in shaping her feelings about music and literacy integration.

As for challenges when attempting to implement this strategy, Ms. Xu shared that teachers need to be informed to be able to successfully integrate music and literacy in their classrooms. She believes it takes motivation and effort to find the information and apply it. Unfortunately, she was disappointed to find colleges shared little information on this topic and that few offerings accrue at the professional level specifically focused on music and literacy integration. Nonetheless, she is grateful that at least she has been able to attend professional development on literacy under the sponsorship of her school, in partnership with a major local university. Although she was the only music educator in attendance, she was able to benefit from this opportunity and obtain helpful information. This increased her awareness and facilitated the incorporation of this strategy in her music classroom.
She also mentioned other staff-development opportunities that, although not specific to music and literacy integration, could be conducive to the development of activities reinforcing this type of integration, such as Kodály and Orff workshops. Being Kodály certified, she believes this approach has “a lot of folk songs and tales that help teachers to … use literacy components.” According to her experience, although few opportunities for professional development exist specifically geared to the integration of music and literacy, other opportunities, when taken in conjunction, can aid music educators to integrate music and literacy in their classrooms. I was impressed by her determination to consolidate various aspects in her music classroom.

“I’m the one who always have to go out,” expressed Ms. Xu with frustration as she shared that if she wants collaboration to take place between her and the classroom teachers, she has to initiate it. Collaboration with classroom teachers is a challenge for her. Classroom teachers share no motivation to create a partnership, perhaps due to misconceptions of some classroom teachers regarding the instruction and learning that occurs in the music classroom.

Regardless of her challenges, Ms. Xu still feels her self-confidence when practicing music and literacy integration in her classroom is moderate. She keeps motivated by small successes such as this:

One of the classroom teachers shared that, for some reason, the children … were having a hard time and they haven’t got [to] the level they should read at a certain point [in] time. But when I did this, they were catching up quickly.
She added that the teacher went on to try her strategy in the regular classroom. Some teachers even borrowed instruments to help the students compose songs to advance their literacy skills.

Ms. Xu proudly described the support and appreciation she receives from the principal. She said the principal often expresses admiration for what Ms. Xu does in the classroom; unfortunately, not every music educator is fortunate to have admiration and support. Furthermore, she enjoys the support and collaboration of the reading-curriculum specialist at the school. According to Ms. Xu, the curriculum specialist is quite knowledgeable and willing to share expertise in literacy. They visit regularly to work on music and literacy integration ideas. This support and collaborative system motivates her to continue implementing music and literacy integration in her classroom.

When asked how music and literacy integration should be valued in the classroom, Ms. Xu resolutely expressed that every teacher, music and classroom teachers, need to be trained from preservice in this strategy to fully develop an appreciation and understanding. Also, in her view, classroom teachers “need to be exposed to more music.” She affirmed that she knows some classroom teachers who are “afraid [of] even being in a music environment because they never had exposure [to music].” Further, she postulated that if they would have had musical opportunities from at least the college level, they would not be intimidated to try music and literacy integration strategies that would require music making.

In her graduate studies, she found many qualitative studies supporting the benefits of music and literacy integration. She feels, however, a need for quantitative research in a
number-driven setting such as public schools. Quantitative research could help administrators understand and quantify the value of this strategy.

As our conversation came to an end, Ms. Xu wished to leave two pieces of advice for those trying to implement music and literacy integration in their music classroom. First, “start with a song.” By that she meant teachers should initiate the integration venture through small steps, such as having a collection of songbooks available to children and allowing them to read, sing, and act the song for each other. Second, networking is key, especially for music teachers like her who have no colleagues in the same building teaching music. Sadly she admits that she would like to share ideas, but lacks networking opportunities. Although, due to the distinct student population in each school, the integration experience can differ, networking and slow, gradual action can greatly help lay a strong foundation for this strategy.

**Music Teacher 3: Ms. Johnson**

As I walked from the parking lot toward the brand new elementary school, I saw some students, escorted by teachers, waiting to be picked up by their parents. It was already dismissal time. Observing this group of children, I could gather that the ethnic background of this school is mostly Hispanic. I passed them with a smile and they looked at me a little puzzled. Perhaps they wondered why this person smiled at them? I showed my identification at the front office and asked for Ms. Johnson. The kind receptionist called her on the phone, and told me she was on her way to meet me.

A few minutes later, Ms. Johnson came to the reception area and greeted me. Ms. Johnson is a woman in her late forties to early fifties. Her short reddish-brown hair favors
her with a younger appearance and her eyeglasses grant her a smart look. We went upstairs to the second floor of the spacious building, and she guided me to music room. While not as spacious as other music classrooms, the room provided sufficient room for 30 keyboards. I silently noted little space for group movement. This was not a concern for Ms. Johnson, however, because in this school two music teachers, a general music teacher and, herself, a piano laboratory teacher, share responsibilities; this classroom focused on piano skills and singing.

Ms. Johnson shared that the previous year, this school was divided into two levels: a primary school with grades prekindergarten, kindergarten, and first grade and an elementary school hosting second, third, fourth, and fifth grades. Currently, she works at two campuses teaching general music to children in the primary school and piano to the elementary children. Having worked at two campuses simultaneously before, I understand her situation is not ideal.

A singer-songwriter with her own band, Ms. Johnson found music education a feasible full-time career path after her children were older. Her songwriting background provided an interesting framework for her viewpoint on music and literacy integration. When asked what came to mind when she heard the phrase music and literacy integration, she responded that it made sense to her “because when we are learning language the first way we learn language is by hearing and then by speaking.” She added, There is no doubt for me that my students who are English as a second language [learners] learn the phrasing, the vocabulary of English through chants and songs that we do in elementary music education. That’s what comes to mind for me.
Ms. Johnson explained that in her view, music and literacy are already integrated: “there is no way we can separate out the learning of language from teaching vocal music.” She believes that songs and rhymes help students recall information and ultimately acquire knowledge more effectively. In her opinion, school districts “could do a better job of recognizing the value of music, in particularly early childhood learning” and teachers “could do a better job of integrating [music and literacy] in a more formal or more … intentional way.” She is an enthusiastic advocate for integration.

She attributed her awareness of music and literacy integration to a discussion with her school’s specialists team the previous year; the group contemplated ways in which the art, computer graphic design, dance, music, and drama teachers could help students learn more English. Ms. Johnson and her music colleague realized they were already incorporating much vocabulary in the songs and chants they were teaching in music classrooms. They would initiate contact with the language-arts teachers and inquire what keywords students needed to learn.

This realization encouraged Ms. Johnson to take responsibility for innovation; she developed a piano curriculum that incorporated original songs and folk songs that included the target vocabulary prescribed by language-arts colleagues. The folk songs added a third integration component of social studies. To this teacher, who encounters such high numbers of ESL students in her teaching situation, it was important the children learned about the culture of the country where they now live. I was quite impressed by her creativity and drive to undertake this project.
When asked about what compels her to integrate music and literacy in her music classroom, Ms. Johnson replied.

Because I care about the children and I care about their future. … I believe that if the kids stay in the United States that have moved here from elsewhere, that knowing both languages is crucial learning. … But we also see kids who just have come from backgrounds where they’re not ESL, but their language is low, like maybe their families don’t talk much or maybe their families are not educated. So the number of words that are spoken in the house is just not that many or maybe the grammar is not correct. It doesn’t have to be English as a second language exactly but I believe that being able to speak, and speak well, helps not only individual children, but our society as a whole. How can these kids go and read great literature and understand the newspaper and make discerning judgments about whether people out there are telling the truth or not about the world?

Education to me is the way that we have a better society. … It is just because I want to help them and why am I [a] teacher? I don’t do it for the bucks. I don’t do it for the prestige. It’s about caring about kids and their future and the future society.

It is obvious that she perceives her duty as an educator is one of great impact to society. Her personality and attitudes may contribute to this perception. Ms. Johnson grew up in a family that held high esteem for the arts, and she continues to develop that same love in her own family and students.
As a singer songwriter, Ms. Johnson views her songs as a tool of communication. Her work could be an effective example of the product of music and literacy integration. Through language and music, she reflects on society and expresses ideas and opinions. In her pursuit to enhance student music and literacy learning, she teaches students to do the same. At the elementary level she begins to lay the foundation through strategies such as changing a small part of a verse in a song:

When you are teaching songs there’s a lot of repetition of verses, but the verses will have a lot of the same words, but you change one little thing. So the second verse will be very similar to the first verse but you change some of the words. So, you can get kids to make recommendations. … That allows them to use their thinking not just repeating what you’re saying. … Then they are thinking and creating their own language, which, of course, is the most important part of the language. … You have to be able to articulate something you want to say.

Ms. Johnson admitted that, although she believes music and literacy integration is a positive instructional tool in the classroom, she has no empirical evidence to support her belief. She offers anecdotes or observations. One of these observations is that students who learn English at a faster pace are the students who are more likely to sing in her class. However, her one-on-one instruction is limited, which is one of the challenges she faces in her position. Frustration is palpable in her tone as she divulged that her class sizes are larger than she would want. It makes it difficult for every child to have an opportunity to participate independently. She feels that if there were fewer students in her class she would be able to do more for each child. It was hard for me to see that the
talents and passion of this creative music educator, as well as the benefits to students were being limited.

Another frustration Ms. Johnson voiced during our conversation was that she sees her classes for 45 minutes daily, but only for 4-week or 5-week periods at a time, then she sees a new group of students. Over the school year, she works with a total of 1,200 to 1,300 students. The combination of large numbers of students per class and the small amount of time per class is overwhelming. In her view, having fewer students per class would make things much more manageable, as she could offer more individual instruction. Disappointedly, she acknowledged that this challenge drains her creative flow:

If I had smaller groups and a little bit more planning time, I feel like I could do a better job of integrating what the rest of the school wants the kids to learn into music. There’s no doubt about that.

Yet, she feels quite confident regarding the delivery of music and literacy integration because music and language arts are her strength. Also, regardless of the challenges, Ms. Johnson celebrates small successes such as seeing students who did not speak English singing full songs in English and the joy of her students when they participate in music activities.

As for professional-development opportunities on music and literacy integration, Ms. Johnson described certain opportunities available to her through which she could derive music and literacy integration activities and strategies that were not specifically developed for the practice of music and literacy integration in the classroom. Among
these opportunities were Kodály training, a local university offering a course on vocabulary acquisition through music, another local university offering a course on literacy through theater, and the local opera company offering a summer program through which the participants create an original opera. Ms. Johnson was an assistant in the opera program from which she took ideas on how to guide students to create their own scripts and songs.

Ms. Johnson believes that although professional development has enriched her bank of ideas and strategies, she could benefit from more opportunities. In her own words: “one of the actually really greatest things on education is that you’re never done … There’s no end.” For continued enrichment, she reads books on arts and literacy that have shaped the way she developed lessons. Although she has not read scholarly articles, the literature she has read is based on research. It is admirable that the scarcity of professional development on music and literacy integration did not hinder Ms. Johnson’s determination to implement it in her classroom, and even further, create her own curriculum.

Regarding the support of the principal, she feels that even though the administrator values the arts in general, they do not have a clear understanding of the music program and what goes on in the music classroom. Therefore, she is uncertain to what extent her principal values music and literacy integration or if she is even aware of this instructional strategy. It is Ms. Johnson’s perception that although the school principal supports the arts in a general sense, the principal places great emphasis on the core subjects and measurable outcomes. Professional development in music and literacy
integration is not a priority for the principal, but if approached, she thinks the administrator would support efforts to pursue it, though not financially. Similarly, she feels that curriculum specialists (also called instructional coordinators) have a different perspective on what is important for a child’s education, does not have a complete picture of the value of music and music and literacy integration or do not hold it at the forefront of their thoughts. However, she is confident that if she had a conversation with them “they would be reasonable and understand.” Ms. Johnson added, “I think having an understanding about it and reading about it and really knowing the value, they might make slightly different choices. They really might.”

When asked to share her opinion on how music and literacy integration should be valued, Ms. Johnson asserted that, in her view, classroom teachers should be made aware so they could value it as well, and a collaborative partnership should exist between fine arts teachers and classroom teachers. She advises teachers who are trying to implement music and literacy integration in their classroom to “just do it, it’s just natural.” It is her belief that “if principals understood that that would be more of a feather in our cap because of the focus on academic core subjects. I think that we might be more valued in that way.”

Music Teacher 4: Ms. Nelson

The smell of fresh brewed coffee drew me in as I walked into the coffee shop in a bookstore where Ms. Nelson and I agreed to meet for our interview. After getting my delicious beverage, I chose a cozy spot to sit and set up my sound recorder, notebook, and briefcase. As I took my first sip, I heard my name called by the barista. Surprised that
they were calling my name, I went up to the counter. The barista informed me that Ms. Nelson had called, apologizing that she was caught in traffic and would be late to our meeting. I thought it was so nice of her to let me know. I decided to browse around the store looking at books.

About 10 minutes later, as I was finishing my coffee at the table, a beautiful woman with silver hair, big eyes, and red lips approached me and asked, “Are you Eunice?” We proceeded to introduce ourselves and slowly walked to the coffee shop counter where I treated her to a coffee.

Ms. Nelson is an experienced music educator in her sixties. Throughout our conversation that afternoon it was obvious that she was a knowledgeable, smart, and passionate musician and educator. She had a wealth of interesting and relevant anecdotes that could fill a book with ease. She had written a book, not about her experiences, but about music, art, and conservation. It was a collection of songs about conservation in the state where she lived and worked at the time. The book included a foreword by Robert Redford.

At this first meeting, Ms. Nelson eagerly shared her experiences and insights on music and literacy integration and her career overall; our conversation lasted more than two hours. Though I was not able to ask her any interview questions at this time, her stories were so interesting that I did not want to interrupt. Having other personal engagements to attend, I had to conclude our meeting and reschedule a second meeting for a later time.
A month later, we met in the same bookstore coffee shop. We were both more refreshed as the school year had ended and it was summer. We ordered coffee and began our interview once again. When I inquired about what led her to a music-education career path, Ms. Nelson disclosed an interesting musical background. This experienced educator started out originally as an opera singer, performing in Europe as a concert singer. While living abroad she substitute-taught at an American school and very much enjoyed teaching. When she came back to the United States, she began writing a songbook on conservation. Through her writing process, she met and collaborated with many teachers. Even when her operatic career was a priority, she found herself coming back to teaching, continuing to substitute or work with children on other projects. When her performance career did not prosper, she decided to become a music teacher. “Honestly, I came in through the back door because I wanted to be famous. I wanted to be a performer, an opera singer.” By her passion and expertise in music education I would not have guessed this career was her second choice.

Nevertheless, music teaching grew in her and she became passionate about it. It became a way for her to reach out to children. She said, “music was as much a ministry and a reach out to children for hope as much as it was teaching technique and it was feeding their souls.” An orphan at a young age, Ms. Nelson, felt it was her duty to help other children that, like her, needed love and comfort. In her view, being an educator is also “being like a social worker, and being a role model, and being an encourager.” She has been teaching for 40 years at all levels from prekindergarten to college. She admitted her favorite educational level is elementary students.
When asked about her perceptions of music and literacy integration Ms. Nelson affirmed, “it naturally occurs.” To support her claim, she mentioned that throughout history some musical works such as those by Schumann, Schubert, and Grieg have been inspired by literature. She also recalled an experience where she taught “The Messiah” in English to Spanish-speaking singers at a university in a Spanish-speaking country. Ms. Nelson was confident that not only had she taught these singers the music and the performance aspect of this piece, but she also taught them English.

Music is literacy, because we use the same areas of our brain learning how to read notes as we do in how to read words. … We need, the same stimuli occur, the same thought processes occur. You’re using both our left and your right side of your brain and your corpus callosum, that middle vein is being fired.

In contrast, she resented when music and literacy integration is misconstrued as less time to teach music fundamentals and more time spent teaching a prescribed list of songs or activities in an attempt to build literacy skills. According to Ms. Nelson, time is already too limited. In her case, she only sees students four-and-a-half times a month. She is concerned that the time she has with students is insufficient to teach her content and properly integrate with another subject. However, she believes that because music lends itself to literacy, it is unnecessary to have a separate lesson to identify commonalities between the two; instead, teachers could identify literacy concepts as they teach the music lesson.

Ms. Nelson recalls the time she wrote the conservation songbook as the point in her career when she became aware of music and literacy integration. While writing this
book she realized how music could be a vehicle for learning. Then, years later, she worked at a Title I school with children in “extremely rough circumstances.” This drove her to ensure that her music lessons bore relevance for her students. Using sources such as textbooks and elementary song magazines, she incorporated songs and lessons that integrated literacy. At the same time, she ensured these were engaging materials that students would positively accept. In addition to literacy, she integrates music lessons with history, telling students the life stories of composers or the historical backgrounds of songs. To her, this is relevant as “music is not in a vacuum, it’s never composed in a vacuum. It’s an oral expression of what’s going on.”

This experienced music teacher asserted that her attempt to implement a holistic approach compels her to integrate music and literacy in the classroom. In her view, “there is no separation between the core curriculum and music”; she dislikes the idea of compartmentalizing subject labels. Her passion for music and reading are aspects of her personality that contribute to shaping her feelings about music and literacy integration. She sees an unbreakable link between the two. As an example, she recalled how, in order to properly teach a song to her students, especially those who are labeled English-language learners, she needs to take time to work on their phonetic awareness. This holistic approach intrigued me: music relates directly to other disciplines, and at times teachers must teach the other subject to teach music properly.

One aspect that has kept the excitement of teaching alive in her, after 40 years, is her philosophy of education. She believes her philosophy continues to evolve as she continues to grow: “You need to keep growing as a teacher. That’s what keeps you
excited; you don’t get into a rut if you keep growing, exploring, and keep open to new ideas.”

Ms. Nelson believes that music and literacy integration reinforces the instruction that occurs in the classroom and that “it also sometimes goes beyond what the teacher is doing in the classroom.” She explained that, at times, the lyrics in some songs extend beyond their immediate comprehension and become one of the layers to build on for future understanding. She added that, in her experience, other songs lend themselves for the exploration of new vocabulary. Although she does not have empirical evidence to confirm academic achievement promoted by music and literacy integration, she can cite several occasions when music programs encouraged some students to research, create, and share projects related to a specific work or composer.

“The different levels of competency in speaking English” is one of the challenges Ms. Nelson faces when integrating music and literacy. She finds language challenges to be detrimental, not only to the teacher who is attempting to convey information in English, but to the students who do not receive enough support, especially at home, to understand English and succeed. She added that the school is finally recovering from not meeting adequate yearly progress for two consecutive years due to the great population of children coming from homes with uneducated families. However, the aspect that causes most of her frustration is the lack of commitment from parents. I could see the frustration in her wide eyes and hear it in her soft, but firm assertion:

What’s frustrating to me is that I’m finding more and more parents have no concept of commitment. That their child commits to something and if the child
wants to quit, they let them quit. … It’s not relevant to them, they do not care, or they are so overwhelmed with what they are going through that they don’t think about it or they came from [different] backgrounds, and I’m not just talking about lower income, I’m talking across the board. … It used to be that you could pretty well tell, ‘if they’re from that side of the track you’re going to have trouble with them,’ not anymore, because of this attitude of entitlement, that’s my frustration.

She attributes a lack of understanding to this uncommitted attitude from some parents. In her view, many parents did not grow up in a situation similar to their children’s. They might not ever have had music instruction. However, some of her greatest support has come from parents “who are in wonder at what education can do, because they never saw it."

Her years of experience as a music educator gave Ms. Nelson the assurance to highly rate her level of confidence when integrating music and literacy in her classroom. “I’ve done it forever and I’ve done it consciously.” She considers herself a pioneer of this practice as she wrote the conservation songbook that went to every school in the state where she lived almost 30 years ago.

She finds very few opportunities for professional development on music and literacy integration. The few opportunities she has had, she created for herself and others in her school and district. She found no innovative trainings on this subject. Disappointedly she stated, “I’m very frustrated when I go, because I’m basically hearing the same thing.” Ms. Nelson was asked to attend a training that same summer we met and was dreading having to go because she knew there was nothing new she would be able to
take from it. She expressed frustration as she appraised these types of district-sponsored professional development:

I’ll just say this. The reason why a lot of districts do that is having to justify keeping music in their program because of the test scores, because everything is run by [money] and driven by the test scores. See that’s the thing, when [the conservation songbook] was done, it was not driven by a test score. … That’s a whole different subject, but please write this down: there is a huge difference between integrating core subjects into music or using music to integrate [them]. Music [should be] integrated into the core subjects because you want to do it rather than because you’re forced to do it.

Wondering about the school principal’s position regarding music and literacy integration, I asked Ms. Nelson how she thought her supervisor valued music and literacy integration. In response, she articulated, “he doesn’t think about it.” She described a recent event where she was recognized for the hard work and long hours she put into the program in front of the school faculty and how she and her colleagues were so surprised because, “that never happens, never happens.” She didn’t think he had ever looked at her lesson plans. She recognized that the principal loves the children and is passionate about the work but did not think her work was valued.

In contrast, she thinks the curriculum specialist values the integration of music and literacy highly, as a specialist and as a parent. The curriculum specialist’s daughter is a student of Ms. Nelson and can fully appreciate what Ms. Nelson does in the classroom. The 40-year-old-veteran, Ms. Nelson, thinks that building a strong music program would
raise awareness and respect for music and literacy integration. According to Ms. Nelson, “if you have a good music program it’s going to be valued, because the more they see the children sing with understanding.”

As to research, Ms. Nelson keeps updated on the most recent educational trends and development through the *Phi Delta Kappan* magazine, reading online and networking. She recommends teachers who try to implement music and literacy in their classrooms network. Find a teacher “who knows what they’re doing because it can be very overwhelming and just try one thing at a time.” Her eyes lit with excitement as she recalled a successful music and literacy lesson in her classroom:

Music lends itself to literacy but again, as I said, the last time, instead of singling out these categories just identify it as you’re teaching the music lesson. “Okay, boys and girls, what are the vocabulary words you learned in this song?” One of the things I did was I took the xylophones with the eight keys and I had classes and it was really interesting, even [in] the kindergarten and first grade classes, all the way up to third grade. They came up with a list of about 30 words off of those eight keys. Then what happened is, after we came up with these words, they played the words, and they composed songs out of the words. I would say, “Okay, take five of these words, and write your song now.” They wrote songs off of the words. That was really fun, to do that, and I mean, they came up with words. I was like, “Yes, yes that’s right.” I wrote a list, and I do that every year where the kids name the letters, take the letters, and turn them into words and then they’re playing all the different words on the xylophones.
I thought this was an effective example of how music and literacy integration activities can be simple, yet meaningful to students.

Music Teacher 5: Ms. Baker

Knowing that Ms. Baker loves flavored coffee, I offered to bring her one of her favorites. Aside from my stuffed black backpack, my purse, and my phone, I entered the bright and ample elementary school building with two coffees, one for Ms. Baker and one for me. The entrance to this building is about 30 feet high, surrounded by big, immaculately clean windowpanes. The sunlight coming through illuminated this grand entry as parents began to trickle in. Second-grade students were having an assembly and parents were invited to join.

The busy receptionist called Ms. Baker for me after handing me my visitor badge. She said Ms. Baker was just finishing with her last class of the morning and would come and meet me soon. I nodded appreciatively and sipped on my coffee as I waited. This waiting time allowed me the opportunity to observe the school environment. Judging from the location of the school and the parents arriving for the second-grade program, this was a very diverse suburban school. Parents from many ethnic backgrounds were attending the program. As one would expect in a suburban school, there were many parents in attendance.

About 10 minutes later, a petite woman approached me with a smile. She was wearing a school polo, jeans, and tennis shoes. Her light, softly curled brown hair was pulled back in a ponytail and she wore glasses. Her demeanor was quite friendly. We immediately engaged in conversation as if we were old acquaintances. Ms. Baker was
very happy that I kept my promise and got her an extra-large cup of flavored coffee. She guided me to her spacious music classroom where I met her teaching partner, who happened to be a doctoral student as well. After a quick chat, her teaching partner left the room and we began our interview.

After my first question, I clearly understood why this teacher was so personable. Ms. Baker had a theater major in college; however, through the process of obtaining her degree in theater education, she discovered her personality was ill suited for junior high or high school students, preferring to work with younger students. Few public or private elementary schools have theater teaching positions. Her mother-in-law, who was an elementary teacher encouraged her to apply for an open elementary music teacher in her school. Although she had to adapt to understand her new role, Ms. Baker “ended up loving it.” Now in her 15th year of music teaching, she professes her love for music education.

When asked about her initial thoughts regarding music and literacy integration she stated,

I think that is a natural integration, because I think music is literacy. Music is literature. When I start trying to teach, reading the stuff to children, I just tell them, “You’re learning another language and it’s the language of music.” It’s code and just like language, written language is coded. Music is coded, written, you’re just making sounds, pitches instead of verbalizing what you’re reading. I think the two are almost the same thing. I think they engage in the same part of your brain. A lot of times I’ll have trouble teaching children who have trouble
reading. I’ll have some trouble teaching them music, and so, it seems like, it’s like at the same part of the brain.

With great conviction she asserted that music and literacy integration happens so seamlessly that teachers do not realize it is taking place. Ms. Baker furthered that this seamless integration relies on the similarities between the processes and skills necessary to read written language and music notation. Like written language, music notation is read from left to right and symbols must be decoded. With certainty, she added, “anybody who teaches music teaches literacy.” To support her statement, she offered that many songs have text that must be read and the process of lyric writing involves literacy skills directly. I found great similarity between the ideas she shared and the information I had previously found in extant literature on music and literacy integration (Hansen et al., 2004; Kelley, 1981; Lloyd, 1978).

Her initial awareness of music and literacy integration occurred while taking classes to obtain her elementary-education certificate. She was able to obtain this certificate with a secondary component of elementary music. With a proud smile, Ms. Baker shared that it is rare to see an elementary-education certificate with this secondary music component. Knowing she was a music teacher, various professors helped her seek ways music could be integrated with different subjects. Ms. Baker realized, “the children will benefit if I connect it to everything.” Thus, in the classroom, she talks about the science of the barred instruments, the mathematics of beat subdivision, and the literacy in reading left to right notation.
Part of her motivation to integrate music and literacy is that “it helps the children to cue in on what they already know. It helps them learn faster if they can make that connection to what they already know.” Her openness to new ideas contributed to shaping her thoughts about music and literacy integration. At a state convention, a clinician talked about using children’s books with text repetition and making those lines a musical idea like a chorus. Ms. Baker incorporated this activity into the classroom as it appealed to her creative theatrical background and reinforced literacy skills. Because her philosophy of education is “to meet the children where they are,” meaning, she wants to be able to differentiate instruction, integrated music and literacy experiences allow her to accommodate different learning levels. As she articulated her philosophy, I was impressed by her passion and dedication.

Convinced of her point of view, Ms. Baker stated that simply reviewing note names (A, B, C, etc.) allows some students to make connections that “they don’t even realize they’re taking back to reading literature.” She recalled instances when students made similar improvement in *Recorder Karate* (Philipak, 2002), a recorder-performance program, and in academic scores. She firmly believes the reinforcement she offers connects the music classroom and students’ performance in the regular classroom. From her personal experience with some students, she believes that the pride of success students obtain in music classroom translates to a desire to be successful in other subjects.

Almost in an embarrassed tone, Ms. Baker admitted that about 10 years ago her greatest challenge when integrating music and literacy was her inexperience. She felt she
was not quite able to “break it down into its basic form for the children.” Attending reading workshops and observing other teachers teach reading helped her overcome the challenge. Ms. Baker now feels quite confident about integrating music and literacy integration. Her 15 years of experience have allowed her to discern between “what’s important and what’s not” and to collect meaningful resources from prominent music educators such as Almeida, Kleiner, and Feierabend. She has found technology resources such as SmartBoard (www.smarttech.com) lessons that can help with tactile activities such as tracking the beat, which can easily be transferable to reading text. Also, she has been a resource for her district, providing music and literacy integration in-service trainings for regular-education teachers. In this workshop she modeled and expounded on the benefits of using puppetry and music in literacy instruction.

In addition to integrating music and literacy in lessons, Ms. Baker also integrates the process of teaching music and the process of teaching literacy as an educator. In that regard she added, “they’ve taught so much about teaching kids to read, why not, you know, use all that smart information and apply it to other things too.” I agree educators should consider that approach.

Ms. Baker vehemently conveyed that her major frustration is the lack of time. She feels that her time with students is insufficient to teach all her students need to learn. That length of time is a significant improvement from the past, when she taught classes of 50 students without a music partner, to her present schedule of teaching music twice a week for 45 minutes with a partner. She conveyed it is still not enough time to develop the necessary musical skills in students, even less to integrate music and literacy. For this
passionate music educator, music cannot just be a “topping, and if you don’t get it, then it’s okay!” Music instruction must be consistent because “music is who we are as a people. Show me a culture that hasn’t developed music. Show me a car that doesn’t have a way to play music.”

Professional development dealing with music and literacy integration is not easily attainable in Ms. Baker’s area. Although some music-educator clinicians, such as Almeida or Kodály instructors, are invited by the educational region, they may not necessarily address the topic of music and literacy integration directly; however, one can derive some strategies and ideas from their clinics. From her perspective, “usually there is some kind of reading component to every music workshop or in-service.” With a positive attitude and passion for what she does, Ms. Baker obtains useful strategies and resources to implement music and literacy in her classroom. Sometimes she can find inspiration and reassurance that what she does as a music educator is meaningful; that “there are people out there trying to do what I’m doing and are being successful.” I increasingly enjoyed Ms. Baker’s positive outlook on things. Although she cannot receive the professional development she desires, she is able to find information useful to her and her integration endeavor in other trainings.

Her positive attitude has also allowed her to point the young principal at her school to the benefits of music education for students. Slowly, the principal has come to understand and support her program, mostly from a financial perspective. However, neither the principal nor the school’s curriculum specialist seem concerned with offering professional development on music and literacy integration.
Ms. Baker feels that all teachers should integrate music and literacy instruction in their teaching. In her view, classroom teachers “should be listening to music teachers and see how our kids learn to read and using some of that in their classrooms.” She clearly conveyed the difference between “singing the topic” and truly integrating music and literacy skills. Firmly, Ms. Baker expressed,

That is two different things and most of the time, [classroom teachers] don’t get it on that deep of a level that this is. … I can integrate [their] idea into what I’m supposed to be teaching, but I’m not supposed to teach your subject matter by singing it up with a song. They don’t understand the difference.

Although she is aware of research regarding children with musical training and how it affects their academic achievement, and that children who are literate are more successful, she is not aware of evidence of the connection between the two. Ms. Baker pointed out that, from her perspective, most music teachers are uninterested in integration because they feel it hinders their music-instruction time. Lacking the information necessary to make an informed decision, in my experience, many music teachers refuse to attempt this strategy in their classrooms.

Ms. Baker’s advice to those trying to implement music and literacy integration is that “if they listen close enough and dig deep enough, they’re going to find a wealth of information about how they can do that integration.” She believes that kindergarten teachers can be a wealth of information regarding literacy-instructional strategies and may inspire others to incorporate those into music instruction. With pride and satisfaction, she told me about “David,” a third grade student who struggles academically
but is able to find success in music class. He does not know it, but Ms. Baker is reinforcing left to right eye movement as well as handwriting with her symbol writing worksheet:

They're reading from left to right and they have to know what each symbol means. But this is third grade and they're like making that connection back, and so, you know, poor David, you can kind of tell by his handwriting that he has ... a little bit of trouble in class but, you know, he’s doing this and feeling successful so he can take that success back with him. “I know how to do this left to right, read the symbol thing.”

**Music Teacher 6: Ms. Campbell**

Ms. Campbell’s school is located near a busy commercial inner-city avenue. It took me a little while to find it. Nestled behind houses, shops, parks, and a bus barn, this building seemed to have been built close to 15 years ago. The school is a performing-arts magnet school where children attend art, music, theater, and dance classes as well as academic classes and physical education. Parents can opt to send their children here even if they do not live in the assigned zone. Because of the number of students from low-income homes, this school benefits from Title I financial assistance.

I waited in the main office for Ms. Campbell to finish her lessons for the day. Shortly afterward, she came to the office, greeted me, and kindly offered to take me to her classroom where we would conduct the interview. We began to talk a bit about her school and she proudly showed me around. We stopped at the art room where she introduced me to her colleague art teacher. The room was an explosion of color, shapes,
and textures. Every inch of counter space was covered with children’s art work. Our next stop was the dance room, equipped with mirrors and bars, nothing short of a professional dance studio. Then we arrived at her room. The space was a bit smaller compared to the other rooms but she obviously uses every inch of it purposefully. She had Orff instruments, books, and resources strategically placed for her and students’ easy access.

Ms. Campbell is of average height, in her 50s, although she looks much younger. She dresses quite simply, with her black and gray hair tied back in a ponytail, eyeglasses, and no makeup. She has a very calm demeanor and speaks clearly and intelligently. My first impression was that she was very serious, but as we conversed, her wit became evident.

Music has been part of Ms. Campbell’s life since she was a child. Growing up, her mother was a soprano soloist at church. In high school, her choir director influenced her. She recalled being in the music room and the band hall constantly. After graduating from high school she went to a small university to pursue a music-education career, just as her older brother had done. At the time of this interview, Ms. Campbell had been a music educator for 34 years. She asserted that some teachers at the school where she presently works used to be her students when they were children.

When asked about the first thing that came to mind when she heard the phrase music and literacy integration, she responded,

The lyrics of the songs. It’s just the work is integrated into the rhythm of the language, is merged with beautiful notes. And I have a very strong background in church music and participating in worship services. It really exemplifies what
music and word and the connection. Uplifts who we are as human beings. Closest thing to God there is; closest thing to speaking in that beautiful language.

In her view, music and literacy are already integrated. She believes music “accelerates learning” and if it is connected with musical notation, it will be retained longer. Ms. Campbell asserted that teaching songs in another language allows the learner to “wrap themselves around the words to feel what the beat is in that language.” Songs can be useful to teach the rhythm of the language and is essential in teaching literacy. She based her belief on her training as a vocalist. Performing songs in another language allowed her to understand the inflections of that particular language. When attempting to translate the song into another language, much of the meaning is lost: “the language affects the music and the music affects the language.”

Ms. Campbell’s awareness of music and literacy integration began when she was a performer in college and her teachers would encourage her to think about the meaning of the words she was singing and how they would affect her performance. Later in her career, she was handpicked to collaborate in the development of her school’s curriculum. She helped create two separate curriculums for classroom teachers to integrate the four arts (art, music, dance, and theater) into their instruction. Ms. Campbell conveyed with sadness that, unfortunately, “both of those curriculums are [kept] binders that are now just stored in the closet. It’s been very difficult to continue it.” However, this has not hindered her desire to integrate in her classroom. In her experience, students make faster and longer lasting connections when they read or hear stories captured in song.
Having Irlen syndrome, where the reader perceives the letters as moving on the page, Ms. Campbell found that the reading part of literacy is challenging for her. However, the speaking and listening part of literacy is highly enjoyable, and she feels it is mostly connected with music. In her view, speaking and listening to language closely parallels singing and listening to music.

Her philosophy of music education is that, at this elementary level, students’ singing voices should be shaped to be light and in tune; however the language barrier can be a challenge for some students to assimilate the instruction. Ms. Campbell feels it is her duty as an educator to help students grow as English speakers so they can achieve their fullest potential. She believes the Kodály approach is most beneficial to accomplish this goal. She added,

It’s so great because it’s focused on folk song. It allows the child to join in when there’s a repeated phrase. Have that pleasure and feeling of language acquisition right away. They only have maybe one or two or three little words they have to fit in. They’re participating right along with everybody. Learning new words and what they mean. Learning old words. Learning words they know but in another context, because the music historically can come from different places. …

Stopping the lesson sometimes and understanding. Coming up with a definition, coming up with words that make sense. One of the boys told me a few weeks ago, “Ms. Campbell, you teach so much more than music. You teach history, you teach math, you teach language arts. You teach everything in music class!”
Even though she firmly believes that the integration she provides in her classroom has a true impact in her students’ academic achievement, she admits that is not easy to confirm. However, she has seen firsthand students who typically struggle academically finding success in the music classroom or stage. She has seen students who would not “lift a pencil for a classroom teacher, [but] come [to her classroom] and complete [their] rhythm assignment.” Hispanic children, who are a majority in the school, are able to practice English in a large group setting in her classroom. Although these examples may not be a direct reflection of music and literacy, she believes they show that music can be a venue for student success. In a district where graduation rates are low, 100% of students involved in performing arts graduate. Ms. Campbell is certain this proves the benefit of the arts, and specifically music, in the lives of her students.

Regarding challenges she faces when integrating music and literacy, Ms. Campbell feels her limited knowledge of the Spanish language may sometimes hinder her ability to incorporate Spanish literature in her lessons. She believes if she were more fluent, she could better serve the vast group of Hispanic students she teaches.

Another challenge she faces is the lack of administrative support to implement the integrated curriculum that she and other pioneer teachers of this fine-arts magnet school created. From her perspective, this implementation needs to be pushed "from the top" and must occur in every classroom, not only the fine-arts classrooms. The frustration and disappointment was evident when she expressed,

We have an amazing curriculum that we've developed that follows from the 15th century to the present in all the arts. There's a project for each one. We did it for a
year and a half at this school. The district said, “no, you have to write your lesson plans like this.” Then the administrator at that time said, “Pack it up. Put it away.” … I just think we're so focused on numbers.

When prompted to share any frustrations regarding her implementation of music and literacy integration in the classroom, Ms. Campbell shared that students lack the ability to generate "school-friendly" ideas when improvising or composing (two strategies she uses to integrate music and literacy): Some classes that are unable to go "that extra mile." She overcomes this frustration with good classroom-management skills: "You set your boundaries of what's acceptable when it's time to go that way."

Ms. Campbell deems her self-confidence to be quite high. She feels she can easily tell a story and weave that story through songs. In her view, her "thinking outside the box has never been stifled." Because of her confidence and experience, this veteran teacher has had several successes when implementing music and literacy in her classroom. Among them, she recalls a time when she collaborated with a third-grade bilingual teacher on a lesson centered on the book Harvesting Hope, about the life of César Chávez. Through this collaboration, she spent time in the teacher's classroom working with the children on the creation of a musical. The students rewrote the story, created their own script, and performed their product at a state fine-arts summit. After this performance Ms. Campbell and the colleague offered a clinic for teachers attending the summit on how to create an original musical using children's literature. Not only her ability to share her knowledge and experience with other fine arts educators was a success for her, but also that those students had a life-impacting learning experience. She
recalled students returning as fourth-grade students and recalling the lessons learned from the story they performed. She later used the same strategy with a kindergarten class. Ms. Campbell treasures these partnering experiences highly, making her "happy!" despite the challenges.

As a seasoned music educator for more than 30 years, Ms. Campbell affirmed that the available professional-development opportunities on music and literacy integration are the sessions she teaches. In collaboration with other master teachers, she offers Kodály-certification courses to music educators in the urban and suburban areas surrounding a major city. She also offers workshops on how to incorporate children’s literature in the music classroom, as well as improvisation, which she deems to be a facet of language development different from musical development.

Workshops available to music educators “translate exactly as music and literacy.” Workshops centered on the topic of music and children’s literature, composition, and improvisation using language in chants or song lyrics, align perfectly with music and literacy integration. However, most of these professional-development opportunities are not labeled as music and literacy integration trainings. Although the teachers receive information on this strategy, because it is not labeled as such, they may not be aware they are receiving this training.

Offering and receiving music and literacy integration trainings have helped Ms. Campbell stay aware of many available resources to help implement integration in the classroom and manipulate and adapt materials to her teaching situation. Resources allow a constant flow of fresh ideas she can use in the classroom; these ideas sometimes come
from her research and workshop design, but also from the teachers she trains: “The fun part for me is [that] I teach level three Kodály. I have all these lessons and lesson segments that my students, adult students, present. I have all these great ideas I get from them every single summer.”

Ms. Campbell is proud of her career. In addition to teaching students, she is now teaching teachers. She is quite excited to have this opportunity; all these years teaching students and performing have prepared her for this final stage of being a teacher of teachers. The professional development she has obtained through the years facilitates her ultimate goal of being a master music educator for other educators. She feels rewarded by being able to help other educators. This opportunity allows her to have a broader impact on education as she impacts students directly and indirectly through teacher training.

The curriculum specialist and other teachers on campus respect and appreciate the arts program at this magnet school. Ms. Campbell feels supported and valued by these teachers in implementing music and literacy integration. However, she has mixed feelings regarding the principal. Although the principal respects what goes on in the music classroom, visits to the classroom are quite limited and do not result in feedback. In three years, she has not received a formal observation. To add to her disappointment, she has only obtained end-of-the-year evaluations and this year’s evaluation was significantly lower than the past year. She attributes this lower evaluation to a single complaint a teacher had regarding an artist-residency program she hosted at the school. This single complaint could not measure up to the overwhelming amount of positive feedback regarding the program by other teachers in the school.
Another aspect that minimizes administrator support of her music and literacy integration efforts is a focus on standardized tests results. According to Ms. Campbell, “He is a real black and white numbers person.” She wonders if she should talk to the principal about the lack of support, but then she rethinks,

I shouldn’t have. It should be, at a Performing Arts Magnet School, it should be a given. That’s why I said on the onset, “at a performing arts magnet school, it takes a very special administrator to be part of it and it makes it or breaks the program.”

She does see support from classroom teachers who are willing to collaborate or are at least eager to be an audience for their students’ final products after music class. Although classroom teachers could do more in their classroom with music and literacy integration, she feels she does have the support she would want from colleagues.

However, faculty turnover is high in the school and it becomes challenging to create and maintain a supportive environment. In an ideal situation, Ms. Campbell believes that administrators should work harder to recruit and retain teachers that commit to arts integration. She also thinks that the principal could offer more financial support to her program. Although the principal allows her to take days off for professional development and not count them against her days, Ms. Campbell’s principal does not allocate any funds to pay for the actual training. Nevertheless, these professional-development opportunities have allowed this experienced music educator to network with other educators and obtain new ideas.

Although this experienced teacher has not researched scholarly works extensively, she has attended workshops led by Prof. Timothy Rasinski, a known literacy researcher.
One of Rasinski’s works details the influence of poetry and music and how they affect language fluency. “If a child can memorize poetry, if a child can memorize songs, manipulate the songs, change the words, change this or that and keep it going, that helps the reading fluency.” Rasinski visited Ms. Campbell’s district several times and offered trainings to classroom teachers and arts teachers. Disappointedly, Ms. Campbell added no one has come to the classroom asking for CDs with songs or other elementary music resources, perhaps because no one is really interested in implementing Rasinski’s ideas. Ms. Campbell advised to “take the time to connect as teachers with other teachers and then try to unify the language so that you’re saying it the same way for the children.” Collaboration is the key to effective music and literacy integration.

Curriculum Specialist 1: Ms. Harris

With a big smile on her face, Ms. Harris, a young teacher in her early thirties with black curly hair, welcomed me to the classroom; more than a classroom, one could call it a multipurpose room. In this room she sits at tables with chairs to work with students one-on-one, collections of book-resource kits serve her and classroom teachers’ use, file cabinets, manipulatives, pictures, and big books appear throughout; everything one can imagine an curriculum specialist could use to help struggling students.

Ms. Harris obviously loves her job. She smiled almost through the whole interview and passionately described what she does for students. Her position is titled Response to Intervention specialist, modeled on coordinating instruction, services, monitoring, and data collection from struggling students to improve their academic success. She described herself as a “catch-all” because she is the Early Intervention Team
Coordinator, the Dyslexia Skill Specialist and the Title I coordinator for 504 (students with disabilities) and low-income students. She works primarily with students who struggle with reading from kindergarten through fourth grade. She came to this position because of her reputation of doing well with struggling students when she was a classroom teacher.

This young curriculum specialist’s background is rooted in the arts. Her mother was a classical Indonesian dancer who traveled the world as an ambassador, promoting a newly independent Indonesia. Her travels opened the opportunity to move her family to the United States, settling in New York. There, Ms. Harris grew up as a dancer as well and attended a performing-arts high school. During her senior year at college she decided to become a teacher. Because it would have been a financial challenge to change majors, she decided to complete her studies and worked in the corporate world for 7 years. Eventually, she pursued her desire to become a teacher and obtained an alternative teaching certification. She started as a third-grade teacher. Helping struggling students in her classroom, she discovered her passion for being a facilitator for this type of student.

When asked about her first thoughts about music and literacy integration, her response was that, coming from an arts background, Ms. Harris appreciates how natural the integration of the two can be, especially in the classroom. She is unintimidated by using music elements such as songs in teaching. However, from a classroom-teacher perspective, she can understand how some classroom teachers may feel anxious by the mere word “music.” The workload is already so strenuous for classroom teachers that some might perceive this strategy as “one more thing to do” and not even consider the
possibility of implementing it in their classrooms. However, in her personal experience “it’s easy to do and especially with the kids I work, with the ESL kids, the struggling readers, it lends itself to their improvement in reading.” Ms. Harris’ personal belief is that If you add the musical component with the reading … it kind of makes it more personal and more relatable and it makes it more accessible to a student who might not be able to read as well, because I usually see it through the lens of the struggling students.

With an infectious smile, she adds that her first experience with music and literacy integration was when she was in prekindergarten. She vividly recalls singing songs in her music class. Then her teacher would show her the words to the songs and teach her to read them.

She has a high esteem for the music teacher presently in the school. Among other accolades, the music teacher has been a district teacher of the year and in Ms. Harris’ view “she just loves sharing her knowledge with people.” Supporting this claim, she added that the music teacher offers workshops for other teachers, new and experienced alike, and shares music and literacy integration ideas with the curriculum specialist. She believes that the music teacher’s ultimate goal is to make music accessible for everyone.

Ms. Harris is certain that her music teacher’s self-confidence when integrating music and literacy in her classroom is high. She asserted,

[The music teacher] is a very prominent figure on the campus when it comes to literacy and learning. So it’s not just, “I’m here just to do music,” but it’s everything: grant earnings, getting books, getting slides. She is very known to be
the “I will do anything for you all” … And so I would say she is a highly respected person on our campus. But sometimes she just kind of gets slipped under the rug, when it comes to certain things. So she tries to be as vocal as possible.

Unfortunately, she thinks that the music teacher does not have the complete trust of classroom teachers or administrators. They doubt that music and literacy integration strategies and opportunities for collaboration are effective. Classroom teachers generally think it is just “one more thing to do,” and administrators do not dub it a priority. From Ms. Harris’s perspective, they do not realize that music lends itself to the using both [sides] of the brain and getting them to work harder. … It’s just pushed aside, because it’s seen as something extra, as something additional and not something that’s easily incorporated. So I think that’s the hardest thing, is to get people to buy it in.

Ms. Harris asserted that her “bubbly” personality directly contributes to her view of music and literacy integration. She said, “I’m just loud and animated and I don’t like attention” (her facial expression meaning the opposite). Therefore she welcomes musical elements in her teaching, because she is not afraid to “perform” for students. Her educational philosophy is that to meet the needs of struggling students she must employ effective interventions. She has found that,

When adding the musical component to it with poetry, with lyrics, it makes it shorter and it makes it more, like I said, it’s more accessible for them to read. They just have to read five words in a line, they can figure out rhymes and the
patterns in the words and when they can read something small and short they feel successful. And the more successful they feel the more confidence they build and more they will try to do something else.

From Ms. Harris’s perspective, music facilitates students’ reading achievement because it allows the compartmentalization of some reading skills. For example, it helps students recognize word patterns through rhyme, recognize syllables through rhythm, themes, main ideas, and details through song lyrics, among other aids. She added that in previous years she used songs to help students memorize facts. This year she was using music to “actually read and build their fluency.” She firmly believes that students were making double the progress they typically made in years past.

One music and literacy integration strategy Ms. Harris uses with students that proved effective is snapping to the beat while students point at a portion of the word she wants to focus on (vowel sounds, consonant clusters, and so forth). Sometimes she incorporates a melody into the exercise and turns it into a song while they snap to the beat. Another successful strategy is guiding children to write song lyrics. In collaboration with a third-grade teacher, she once encouraged students to create new verses for a song about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. To complete a performance, they created movements to accompany the song. Student engagement was high and Ms. Harris attributes higher test scores to opportunities like this.

In contrast, planning, she admitted, is a challenge. Deciding when and where to incorporate this strategy is the hardest part for her. She said this is due to how “heavily scripted” interventions are. However, while it is scripted, the interventionist decides how
to present it. It is that freedom that allows her to decide how to incorporate an intervention. Nevertheless, she wants to use it purposefully and efficiently; not merely to incorporate music and literacy integration.

Ms. Harris’s major frustration is that a few very vocal and negative colleagues in the school refuse to be open to the idea of integration. They do not accept the innovation and they widely share their negative perspectives to persuade others to also refuse to use this strategy in their classrooms. Ms. Harris explained,

And it's not from everyone, but our vocal negative people are very vocal. Because ... we were reading this book for next year, it's called Soup and it was talking about the ratio between actively engaged and actively disengaged people. And if your ratio is 8:1 you are awesome; we're 6:1. So like, hey we're really good, but that one is really, really loud, really hates life and really wants to share it with other people. So I was talking to like tame her down.

Another frustration Ms. Harris conveyed was that although administrators encourage integration in the arts classrooms (music, art, dance, and theater), they make no clear attempts to expand this integration into the regular classroom.

And also one of the frustrations that I see here and I've talked to [the music teacher] about it too, is they kind of have it backwards here, I love [the principal], but it's backwards, they want the art teachers to integrate TEKS [Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills], classroom instruction into the arts. Yeah, you can put adding with dance steps, but wouldn’t that be way easier to link a dance performance with social studies? Yeah, it would be. So their focus is on how can
we get the classroom integration into the arts when it should be, how do we get the arts into the classroom? And then have that communication between each other.

The root of this negative response to music and literacy integration seems to be, according to Ms. Harris, a lack of what she calls, “open communication.” If classroom teachers and specialists were able to plan together, they would share a better attitude toward music and literacy integration.

And that really needs to be from top down to make it the most effective. But if your top really is the one that’s making it go the wrong way, in my opinion, then how do you make it seem—you’re trying to make it a seamless transition don’t move it in, but they’re trying to do it the other way, it makes it hard.

Ms. Harris feels she helps alleviate the challenge, acting as a mediator between the classroom teachers, administrators, and fine-arts teachers. Being an artist at heart and an academics teacher, she understands both rationales. She explained, “I’m a classroom teacher, but I’m an artist at heart. So I can show you both sides. And it’s not there yet, but I think we’re starting to work on getting there.”

When asked about available professional-development opportunities on music and literacy integration, her answer was: “zero.” Although great emphasis exists on professional development for reading, and “reader’s theater” (where reading is integrated with dramatic play) has become a popular strategy, no other music and literacy integration opportunities exist. Ms. Harris does believe the music teacher has the knowledge and expertise to offer this type of professional development. Although the
music teacher does offer workshops on this topic, the audience is almost entirely music educators. Her reach does not extend beyond fine-arts educators.

Because of the absence of professional development on music and literacy integration, what Ms. Harris is able to implement in the classroom comes from her own creativity, as she pulls ideas from different resources. She acknowledged some integration materials were created for her performing-arts magnet school, but that no one uses them. She hopes that as a campus, the schools shifts focus and that teachers begin incorporating some of those materials in their daily teaching. This dedicated curriculum specialist firmly believes in the potential of music and literacy integration as a sound strategy. In her own words: “I value it because I know it works. I know it works, I have seen it work and it makes my life more fun.” As an interventionist, this strategy has allowed her to motivate and engage students effectively. She has witnessed students’ joy for learning and success because of her integration of music and literacy. In addition to engaging students, music allows her to focus on basic skills such as syllables and cadences.

The school principal appreciates the value of music and literacy integration and the natural connection between music and literacy: “I think he knows that connection, but I think the execution is off.” In her view, the principal needs to foment collaboration among classroom teachers and performing-arts teachers to garner an effective plan for integration. Nevertheless, the principal does offer financial support to the music teacher and efforts to integrate. Because no measurable outcomes emerge from the experiences the music teacher plans and offers, it is hard for the principal to show full support. Also,
the added stress of meeting district standards such as adequate yearly progress can defuse focus on the arts.

Ideally, Ms. Harris sees music and literacy integration as a natural way of teaching:

It is natural because if you want to do fluency, the best way to do fluency is to have good prosody and [the] only way to have good prosody and read it like you’re talking is to read like you’re talking. And sometimes you have to over exaggerate it in order to bring it back down. So the best way … is to do it in songs so that’s the exaggerated version of speaking. And if you aggregate it and then you bring it back down, by the time you brought it to that simple level now you are reading like you’re talking.

Although she has not researched music and literacy strategies directly, she was certain that the resources she uses are research-based resources offered by the district. The district is careful to select research-based resources.

Ms. Harris advises those trying to implement music and literacy integration in their classrooms, schools, or districts to “just give it a try or just start with something simple,” such as starting with a nursery rhyme or a poem. Then increase the challenge by incorporating songs, then thematic songs, and last, original songs created by the students. Teachers should begin with smaller simple steps to lay a solid foundation.

**Curriculum Specialist 2: Ms. Brown**

I had to wait in the main office for a few minutes until Ms. Brown arrived. I was told she was just finishing working with a student. Ms. Brown is always “on the go,”
helping students constantly. She has little time to sit in her office and talk to a researcher, and yet, she kindly made time for me. A few minutes later, a petite woman came to greet me. Although Ms. Brown looks like she is in her early forties, it turns out she is of retiring age and this was her final year as an educator. With her welcoming smile, she guided me to her office. It is a cozy office revealing a busy tenant. I sat at a table, separate from her desk. Both surfaces were covered with books, materials, resources, and everything one can imagine a busy curriculum specialist could have readily available for use.

She services a prekindergarten school in the district. The children attend this school for only one year and then move to a kindergarten through fifth-grade elementary school. This school follows the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (IB), focused on transdisciplinary instruction. When asked about her position and career choice, Ms. Brown stated she came to the career late, after her own children had gone to college. She decided to obtain a degree in education in addition to a degree she already had in psychology. She went into teaching and discovered a passion for reading education. Thus, she obtained a master’s degree in reading. When the reading-skills-specialist position became available, she knew that was the career she wanted to pursue.

Without hesitation, when asked what came to mind when she heard the phrase music and literacy integration, she answered: “success!” Children are naturally drawn to music and it can facilitate the acquisition of literacy skills:

If you can just get kids motivated and interested in the music, the words will come and vice versa. If you get them to the words, they’ll want to sing them. Some
words come off like songs off your mouth. When you say “frizee” or “delicious” or “humongous.” That to me is a song.

In Ms. Brown’s opinion, words have rhythm and she can easily make that connection with students by asking them to feel, perform, and even write the rhythm of the words. This allows students to increase phonetic and syllabic awareness, especially at the preschool age.

Her awareness of music and literacy integration occurred in a particular manner. During a field trip with students to the local museum of fine arts, she attended a special exhibit by an artist who built pieces out of scrap metal to tell stories. Among the artist’s stories were stories of slavery, the fight for freedom, and 9/11. At the exhibit, the artist’s work was introduced with music, triggering Ms. Brown’s inspiration; she had students create stories and express them through another artistic expression: music.

When asked what compels her to integrate music and literacy she responded enthusiastically,

It’s just that kids are so motivated by it. It’s just a common language. It’s something familiar, it’s nothing foreign and it’s always fresh. It’s always new. It’s never “I’ve heard that song before.” I’ve never heard a kid say, “I don’t want to sing that. I’ve sung it before. I don’t want to sing that.” I guess it’s just a combination of … the coming together of the words and the melodies, just motivates kids. It grabs them. As teachers, if you can grab a student, you’ve got them. You can teach them anything. You can put your alphabets to song. You can put your poem to song. When they get excited, I’m more excited. When they love
it, I just I want to keep on going with it. … I just think that authenticity of the real world captures them. That’s how I think it is with music.

Ms. Brown’s expressive personality contributes to shaping her feelings about music and literacy integration. She strongly believes children should have freedom of expression when reading and should not feel intimidated to let their emotions be heard. She added that each expression is personal and individual. When teachers reaffirm that there are “no wrong ways” and instead each expression is authentic and individual, students are willing to take more risks.

Ms. Brown adamantly believes music and literacy integration benefits students’ academic achievement. In her view, the music component may offer a venue for them to be successful and, consequently, that success helps students build higher self-esteem and a desire to be successful in other academic realms.

The lack of songs or resources available for music and literacy integration is the most recurrent challenge for Ms. Brown and the music teacher in the school to implement music and literacy integration. The school has a high percentage of bilingual students. Because the songs and other materials are completely in English, the message is often lost. Ms. Brown disappointedly reported that classroom teachers do not completely trust or have faith in the music teacher’s ability to implement music and literacy integration in her class. In their opinion, the material the music teacher presents to the prekindergarten students are “over their heads.” This frustrates Ms. Brown, because she knows the music teacher quite well and knows of the music teacher’s professionalism and competency to implement this strategy. Additionally, Ms. Brown and the music teacher collaborate
about ways to improve integration and make it more efficient. “That frustrates me, when teachers are complaining. Just let her do her job. She knows what he’s doing. She’s the expert, you’re not.”

When asked about the music teacher’s self-confidence when implementing music and literacy integration, Ms. Brown expressed certainty that the music teacher is much more confident than in the past due to Ms. Brown’s close collaboration with her. To ensure the music teacher has all the necessary resources for its implementation, this curriculum specialist furnishes the music teacher with sources such as the classroom instructional scope and sequence, books, online tools, experiences, as well as ideas and tips to integrate music and literacy. Ms. Brown also makes certain that the music teacher is aware of the literacy curriculum for the regular classroom. Ms. Brown sees literacy instructional strategies occurring in the music classroom such as iconic representations of songs that students can use to recall melodies to sing. These iconic representations serve as cues to decode written words. This simple strategy can be practiced in the homeroom and the music classroom, allowing consistency and transferability of instruction for preschool students, enhancing their prereading skills as well as their musical skills. Ms. Brown thinks this gives students pride and confidence in themselves. Most students enter the school speaking only Spanish. At the end of the year, they speak, sing, play games, and recite nursery rhymes in English. Students communicate with others who do not speak Spanish and become friends with them.

Ms. Brown admits she is unaware of any music and literacy integration professional-development opportunities in her area; if there are any, they are not well
advertised. She does think that at a reading convention held at a major city in her current state something similar may be available because they usually hold workshops on reading and arts integration. She recalled attending one in which the presenter demonstrated how to integrate singing with writing and rhyming. This workshop contributed to her already present desire to integrate music and literacy at the school. This curriculum specialist is convinced that music and literacy are both “rhythm, they are both feeling, they are both expression.” That is where the fundamental link lies.

She accomplishes her educator goals through music and literacy integration because through this strategy she is educating the child as a whole. The school principal shares the same vision and values this strategy greatly as well. At a time when administrators had to cut staff, the principal cut other programs, but not music. Especially because of the preschool age of its students, music is an important component of this school’s instructional plan.

In an ideal situation, this curriculum specialist would arrange the schedule so students could attend music weekly rather than the present once in every five weeks. Also, she would “knock down the walls” by incorporating music in every literacy lesson. For example, having students create a story, then adding music, maybe of their own composition, as they retell or act it out. She shares this idea with classroom teachers when she offers professional-development opportunities to them. Although not necessarily a full integration of music and literacy, Ms. Brown encourages the use of music in a more subservient manner, such as a trigger for inspiration when writing.
Research of available literature takes place at this school for writing grants. Ms. Brown thinks grant writers may have kept some information to use in practice, but she has no evidence of this. Ms. Brown recommends to those attempting to implement music and literacy integration in their classrooms to “not be afraid to try it. It’s not going to be perfect the first time you try it, but it will get better. You will become more comfortable as the students … as you become more comfortable, they will become more comfortable.”

**Curriculum Specialist 3: Ms. Williams**

We happened to be attending the same fine arts conference and agreed to meet at the lobby of the hotel where it was being held. I found a comfortable chair and table where I could set up the necessary recording and note-taking devices and waited a few minutes for Ms. Williams. Being the fine arts curriculum specialist from a nearby district and having a very friendly personality, I knew she would have to greet many people on her way to our meeting.

A few minutes later I heard my name called and a woman in her late forties, with curly short brown hair and dressed very professionally waved and smiled at me as she walked toward our table. In her customary amicable demeanor she greeted me and we proceeded with the interview.

Ms. Williams was a music teacher for 23 years. She taught all levels from elementary to high school. Specifically, her elementary music experience prompted her interest in curriculum. The opportunity to have knowledgeable school administrators in the area of curriculum inspired her to seek more acquaintances and experience in this
capacity. She volunteered to be a part of elementary music curriculum writing teams and to lead some musical events in the district. To answer the need for an expert elementary music helping hand, the director of fine arts, whose area of expertise is secondary band, hired Ms. Williams.

When asked about her first impression regarding music and literacy integration, she explained that what comes to mind is the integration of language arts, the process of teaching reading combined with the process of teaching music. In her view, the two processes are quite similar. Moreover, she believes that what is taught in the regular literacy classroom can be reinforced in the music classroom. A skill such as left-to-right eye movement is constantly reinforced in the music classroom as students learn to read music. Beginning with iconic representations at the lower level and continuing with notation at the upper levels, students strengthen their left-to-right tracking. Ms. Williams added that the music classroom adds another dimension to this eye movement when teachers introduce staff notation: students not only read left to right, but they also have to track up and down as notes move across the lines and spaces.

Although she seems convinced of the parallels between music and literacy, Ms. Williams admitted that, early in her career, she thought music integration was superficial. During her Kodály training, she gained a different perspective. The “sound before symbol” teaching approach and the focus on music literacy of Kodály changed her view.

I was asked to do a session on integrating language arts with music. I worked with the language arts curriculum specialist in our district. That was probably the most enlightening for me because I went into classrooms: kindergarten, first
grade, second grade and we went up to third grade and we got teams together of music teachers and of language arts teachers and we observed in both the classrooms and then talked about some crossover. It wasn’t until that point where I watched some real proficient teachers teaching reading to young students where I realized the process the way they teach reading and also the way they teach writing composition, how to compose, was so incredibly similar … to how we would teach composition in music. Create this piece, create these phrases, start with the beginning and put an ending here, put a middle. We could use so much. … As a teacher, I was always teaching in my classroom. I never was able to go into the language arts classroom and observe those processes. I was able to see it. More of that needs to take place and not enough of that does. We may go into another music teacher’s classroom but we don’t go into another core academic area classroom.

This experience convinced her that for music teachers to be compelled to integrate music and literacy in their classrooms, ideally they would observe language-arts teachers and plan with them. However, most school daily schedules do not allow for this type of collaboration. Also, administrators have to share the vision and appreciation for this type of integration and plan for it, thereby allowing it to take place. Perhaps after-school opportunities exist for demonstrations of music and literacy instruction and collaboration, to integrate these topics.

Ms. Williams asserted that her preference for English and structured learning is an aspect of her personality that contributes to her perception of music and literacy
integration. In school she naturally gravitated toward English and was most successful in those classes. Also, she preferred to understand and interpret symbols in music rather than learning by rote.

It is Ms. Williams’s philosophy that all children should be exposed to music learning, specifically to music literacy. If music literacy could be linked to and facilitate language learning, students will gain greater benefit. In this sense, music and literacy integration is complimentary to her teaching philosophy. Students can be impacted through a different medium when integrating music and literacy instruction. In Ms. Williams’s view,

They may relate to something in music and it may be an “aha” moment of something the language arts teacher was trying to teach them. … The more we can connect subjects, vocabulary, processes of how we learn, the better it is for the students.

In the past, she has had teachers, specifically a first-grade teacher, who shared with her that students refer back to something they have learned in their music class. This reassures Ms. Williams that the learning occurring in the music classroom can reinforce the learning that occurs in the regular classroom.

With a concerned expression, Ms. Williams pointed out two major challenges music teachers face when trying to integrate music and literacy. First, many music teachers are unaware of the English and language-arts curriculum. In her view, that is the biggest challenge. Second, even if music teachers are aware of English and language-arts curriculum, they do not have time to talk with classroom teachers to plan together. This
creates a disconnection between the two subjects. In a frustrated tone, Ms. Williams expressed the assumed expectation from classroom teachers that “the music teachers were the ones that were going to have to become familiar with the language arts text and it wasn’t going to go the other way around because music was out of the other people’s realm.” Integration does not apply in both directions.

Referring to the self-confidence of music teachers on music and literacy integration, Ms. Williams feels it is at a high level. However, the time to see and teach students music is so limited that even if it is happening, teachers have no time to even recognize the dual learning that is occurring. Also, according to Ms. Williams, music teachers feel that this limited amount of time must be solely invested in music instruction and nothing else. Most might not be aware that they are integrating, and therefore, do not make it conscious to their students, although she knows of a few music educators in the district who are fully aware of the potential of music and literacy integration and incorporate such strategy in their classroom.

Talking about specific successes she as a music curriculum specialist or any of the music teachers in the district experienced when integrating music and literacy, she recalled,

The best success I have seen in a classroom was after we went and did … observations. We … video-taped lessons and then [the teachers] watched the video-taped lessons and then sat around the table and discussed how they could integrate. And the most successful thing that I watched was a teacher in one of our elementary campuses, they did a second grade lesson and she … put the chart
paper up with exact process of how they’re going to write … a story. And they wrote a piece just like that so that the students were, “Oh yeah, this is your beginning, this is your ending, this is your middle.” Then she related it to the music form … “this is how the story would go [and] this is how the music composition would go,” and the light bulbs just went off. I have a videotape of that. … This is more of a writing project than a reading project, I will say. They certainly needed to be able to read and they read patterns and they talked about what patterns they would use and what form they would use and how that related to the exact process. She felt really good because one of the things music teachers have a hard time doing is teaching composition, teaching kids to make a composition and to make it make sense and when they related it to their written compositions in the classroom they got it right away.

Ms. Williams indicated this was a rare occasion in which music teachers and classroom teachers were able to collaborate. Her major concern was lack of collaboration. Not necessarily indicative of indifference, this lack of collaboration may be caused by lack of time and resources to pair music teachers with language-arts teachers. Also, the number of language-arts teachers greatly surpasses the number of music teachers, which complicates matters even more in coordinating the logistics of such collaboration.

Scarce opportunities for professional development intensify the challenge for music and literacy integration. Ms. Williams admitted that these opportunities are “not probably what they need to be.” Although administrators have made effort to provide integration professional development, it shifts focus every year with state test scores.
During the past two years, writing scores have been at their lowest; thus, the school now focuses on writing. According to this music-curriculum specialist, some teachers implement a few integration strategies in classrooms, including orchestra teachers. In her view, a critical part is missing: classroom teachers. She believes classroom teachers and music educators should be able to collaborate, encompassing all benefits for the students. Ms. Williams does recall a year where professional development was offered to language arts, science, mathematics, and social studies teachers regarding the incorporation of fine-arts processes into their daily teaching, but this was geared toward teaching strategies rather than skill development for students.

Nevertheless, the few professional-development opportunities available promoted teacher collaboration. In her view, music teachers, after professional-development sessions, are eager to share with their colleagues those strategies that were productive and useful in classrooms. However,

It’s an ongoing process. There is a lot more, I think, in education in general. We pay a whole lot of lip service to integration and we don’t really do it. I think the reason, especially in [this state], that we don’t do it is because we are so test driven and they are afraid if they take time away in integration that they are going to lose something in that one subject area. I think it is disappointing how far we have not come in integration.

Ms. Williams did not hide her disappointment when asked about her perception of school principals’ value of music and literacy integration. Poignantly she asserted,
I unfortunately have a little bit of a negative attitude about that. I don’t think that principals value integration as much for the reasons I just said before. Testing is the bottom line and they are too worried about that and so they don’t want to give up anytime so that teachers can get together and plan or observe each other because they are too afraid of taking that time away. I think ... it would take a real, real out of the box administrator to really get integration going on their campus.

In an ideal situation, for music and literacy integration to take place, Ms. Williams would ensure that school treat the arts, specifically music, as core academic subjects instead as just “enrichment.” Even when the fine arts are considered core academic subjects, that is still not the popular view; Ms. Williams would like to change that perception. Another suggestion she believes is needed to advance music and literacy integration is creating a position dedicated to the education and promotion of integration on each campus, an “integration specialist.” These are ideal suggestions with the understanding that financial support would have to be present, which may be a challenge in many districts. Ms. Williams promotes integration as much as she can in her district.

Ms. Williams consistently studies state standards in other subjects and sees how feasible it is to integrate them with music. Whenever possible these standards in other subjects are integrated with music objectives so that music educators in the district can implement them in classrooms. Despite her efforts, integration is far from complete. Through observation, she sees only “pockets” of integration rather than a full consistent measure of it. She admitted that research has not been a major part of the implementation
of music and literacy integration and the strategies currently used in the district may not be research-based. However, educators do work to find what is available and how could it be implemented.

Her advice for a teacher trying to implement music and literacy integration in a school or district is to start small. Begin with a single class or a small group; perhaps a small group of teachers in a professional-learning community could treat it as a project and collaborate among themselves. Starting small will allow integration to claim greater focus and conscientious effort.

**School Principal 1: Ms. Davis**

Ms. Davis was just hired to open a brand new elementary school. Her schedule is overflowing with meetings, pending paperwork, and phone calls. There was a slim chance our schedules would coordinate to set a personal interview. Nevertheless, being an advocate for arts integration, she was still quite interested in participating in this study and asked if it would be possible to have a phone interview, to which I acceded.

As we started talking, this veteran school principal shared that she wanted to be in education since she was six years old. She enjoyed reading for pleasure and teaching others to read and write. Her desire to impact a larger group of children helped in her decision to become a school principal. In her own words, “As a principal, I felt my duty and my responsibility to be able to provide and support for more children and make sure that the largest number of children were being served with good education and best practices.”
When pondering music and literacy integration “how teachers use music to help children learn how to read and write and enjoy learning together” comes to mind. In her view, literacy pertains to all content areas: social studies, science, mathematics, and “everything that they are doing academically; even in their own social environment.” Ms. Davis spoke of two sides of the brain: artistic and academic. From her perspective educators should be able to bring both sides of the brain to “let information flow from one side to the other.” She supports music and literacy integration not only in the music classroom, but in the regular classroom.

Her support of integration comes from her own experience at the school she previously directed. She described her experience:

About 12 years ago, my school applied for a grant from [a local] foundation and it was a Fine Arts grant on how to integrate fine arts into the curriculum and improve academic learning, student test scores. We did a lot of research. There was a person that we hired as well as a teacher's committee. We worked with the middle school, we worked with the elementary school across the street and drafted a proposal. … During that time, all of the research supported the integration of fine arts into academic learning environment of children. Just, you know, from then on I’ve been reading articles that supports the connection between the two and just have continue to support it with my classroom teachers … talking to different groups, working with side agencies, things like that.

It was a small school where the music teacher also served as the art and classroom teacher. The special-education teacher was also the drama teacher and the librarian. It
was feasible for these teachers to integrate much of the academic knowledge with fine arts, especially for the music teacher. According to Ms. Davis, the students “saw that the teacher was teaching different content, but they were all related.”

This seasoned school principal believes her visionary persona contributes to shape her feelings on music and literacy integration: “It’s the quality of being able to look into the future and see what’s down the road for our children.” She infuses this visionary spirit into her philosophy of education as well. She believes educators must willingly change to meet the needs of the ever-changing educational system. She also shared a personal experience that added to her confidence in using music as a tool for learning:

I'll give you a perfect example. My child had to take a ridiculous social studies test last week in fifth grade at her school, and then something that they had learned back in third grade, so I don't know why they were revisiting her grade level, but she had to write down all of the state capitals of all the states. Well she put them on flashcards. She had an app on iPad where she had to mix and match them, but she did not [understand] that.

When ... one of the parents brought a video of a song that someone had created and put visuals ... that's when she learned it. I can just imagine [my daughter] taking her social studies test on Friday, and she was probably singing the whole thing as she memorized the capitals of states and their capitals.

She was able to do it through a musical function rather than just a rote memory or a memorization. It was interesting because she got it. I mean we studied for days, and then two days before, the parent brought in the video off of
YouTube, and she practiced that song for two days and she had them all memorized. It had nothing to do with the studying that we had done.

From a school-principal perspective, Ms. Davis saw two major challenges for the music teacher when integrating music and literacy: research awareness and application. Ms. Davis believes that, initially, the music teacher was not sufficiently aware of the available research regarding integration and its implications in the classroom. Lacking full understanding, the teacher did not easily welcome integration. Her perspective is that many music teachers are passionate about their subject and want to dedicate their time with students solely to music instruction. Yet, as educators, teachers need to be flexible and willing to teach other subjects.

Lack of instructional time was a major frustration experienced by the music teacher when integrating music and literacy. Typically, the only time available for collaboration and planning was after school when teachers were tired and petulant. Ms. Davis was able to overcome this frustration by “putting the money where her mouth was” and providing planning and collaboration time during the instructional day, paying for substitute teachers every six weeks. All fine arts teachers were able to meet with classroom teachers and outside fine-arts organizations to work on an integration plan. Nevertheless, Ms. Davis regrets not providing time for reflection. After the plans were put into action, the school needed to assess their effectiveness, an action that did not take place formally; rather, teachers reflected briefly at the next planning meeting. She believed this needed to be rectified.
When questioned about teachers’ levels of confidence on music and literacy integration, Ms. Davis indicated that, at the beginning, it was nonexistent:

Oh, they weren't confident at all. They didn't think that they understood the curriculum that was being taught and how it would integrate with either the piano classes that we had, or the vocal music classes that we had. There was a lot of discomfort at the beginning about, well how am I supposed to teach literacy?

The turning point occurred when the music teacher had the opportunity to meet with classroom teachers. Through that interaction, the music teacher was able to describe all the commonalities the two subjects shared. It then became easier, “but at the beginning they were very overwhelmed and didn’t think that that was a possibility.”

This collaboration resulted in better communication between fine arts teachers and classroom teachers. Moreover, perceptions about each other and what they did in their classrooms changed, leading to greater mutual respect, improving staff culture. In addition to success at the staff level, the school achieved success at the student level, affording students an outlet to express themselves through the arts. A large number of performances and exhibits ensued, showcasing student learning. Integration positively impacted behavior and student self-esteem.

Ms. Davis and staff were able to find several professional development opportunities at the local level through fine-arts institutions. Although several professional development opportunities related to fine arts and literacy integration, none specifically addressed music and literacy integration. Trainings included literacy through art, music and social studies, and fine arts integrated in the classroom. The concept of
integration is clearly addressed in these local professional-development opportunities, according to Ms. Davis. Eventually, specific music and literacy integration trainings will be offered. However, the trainings teachers were able to attend helped “move the school forward academically.” The curriculum specialists at the school shared the principal’s vision and facilitated collaborative professional development between the fine-arts department and classroom teachers. They were essential in coordinating opportunities between the staff and local fine arts institutions.

Music, from this principal’s viewpoint, is not an enrichment opportunity; instead she believes music is suitable as another venue to teach children a diversity of subjects:

Well, I don't want to say enrichment, because when people say that, they think it's an add-on, and it really wasn't an add-on. It was part of our instructional vision. It was like, if I have a strategy for teaching children how to do multiplication, the strategy might be that they … use the lattice model, which is something new for most children, and for most teachers. The other way then is teaching them how to do it through music, or how do they have a beat to how they multiply. It's part of the instructional program. When people think of it as enrichment, they think that it's add-ons and it's not. It's just another way of teaching children how to learn something new, and keep it in their long-term memory as opposed to their short-term memory.

Surprisingly, Ms. Davis admits that she is not personally inclined toward fine arts. She never had the opportunity to participate in music, art, or dance. She considers herself creative in the sense that she has a vision for students to learn in innovative ways. She
firmly believes the fine arts are an essential part of any learning environment. Ms. Davis felt that the inclusion of the fine-arts teachers in determining campus academic goals allowed fine-arts teachers, especially the music teacher, to feel they were part of the team and were accountable for children’s success. Although testing, in this school principal’s opinion, is not everything, it created a sense of responsibility for the academic growth of the students.

Research was an essential part for the implementation of integration on campus. It helped create awareness of the importance of fine arts in children’s development, providing research-based evidence when applying for grants to implement integration strategies into the school. Ms. Davis advised that those trying to implement music and literacy integration in their schools or district first alert people to the benefits of this strategy through research-based evidence. A small cadre of people should be encouraged to participate in the research and discuss how the implementation would take place in their setting. They should then seek the help and expertise of local fine-arts organizations. Typically, these organizations have many resources, including federal-grant funds, to help implement integration in the school. Also, the fine-arts teachers already in the school can be a wealth of resources and knowledge to accomplish this task.

**School Principal 2: Mr. Lopez**

Mr. Lopez’s neighborhood school is a well-maintained but older school. The 1970s architectural style revealed its four decades of existence. I walked to the front office where I was invited to wait for Mr. Lopez, the school principal, while he was in a meeting with a parent. During my wait, several parents, all Spanish speaking, came in
with different inquiries. The Spanish-speaking secretary answered their questions politely whereas the English-speaking secretary made school-business phone calls. Mr. Lopez finished his meeting and politely invited me into his office.

Mr. Lopez is a younger Hispanic man in his late 30s. As we began our conversation, he shared that he came to this position with a desire to “do more” and have a broader impact on students. After leaving the classroom, he managed a parent-literacy program where parents were trained to teach their children to read at home. Then, Mr. Lopez moved on to a fine arts magnet middle school as a principal. After two years at that middle school he decided to go back to early childhood education and was hired as the principal at the fine-arts magnet early childhood center where he currently works. This school was originally a single elementary school, prekindergarten to fifth grade, and then was split into an early childhood center serving prekindergarten to first grade and an intermediate campus serving second through fifth grades.

When queried for thoughts on music and literacy integration, his initial notion was one where music had a subservient role. In his view, music integration implied background music as students read a book. He believed that music encourages calmness and concentration. When he was a teacher he used to play music while students engaged in passive activities such as test taking. His viewpoint was founded on personal experience. Growing up, he remembered his mother playing classical music in the background while he read or studied, which he enjoyed. As our conversation continued, he conveyed an alternative perspective regarding music and literacy integration. He described his strategy as one where music instructional strategies and literacy
instructional strategies are merged to teach literacy. He then mentioned a third perspective: Literacy integration implied “exposing our kids in different ways into music through literacy.” He saw this mostly taking place in the music classroom.

His main motivation to implement music and literacy integration in his school is his desire for early childhood students to experience all fine arts, including music. Mr. Lopez believes that this will enrich students’ experience in school. Music instruction is important to him as a source to contribute to the academic advancement of students. Mr. Lopez mentioned that the music teacher reads musician biographies and other music-related literature to students. He added that literacy is involved in the music they learn to read and the songs they learn to sing. In his view, that is the extent of music and literacy integration on campus.

Growing up in Mexico where, according to Mr. Lopez, fine arts are valued and essential to education, it became natural for him to want students to be involved in fine arts. His philosophy as an educator was to educate students through fine arts and about fine arts. However, he was unable to explain how academic instruction would be delivered through the fine arts, specifically literacy delivered through music. It was his goal to obtain more information through research and professional development to effectively implement this strategy in the school. He believes that providing professional development to teachers will equip them to facilitate this integration.

Finding an effective curriculum has been the prevailing challenge for this school principal and the music teacher:

I think it is the lack of training, professional development. We do need to find
a good curriculum. Trust me I have tried to look for it. I have found some
good articles to support this type of integration of fine arts and literacy. Like
I said if I’m going to be doing something I want to make sure that we have
resources. I don’t think I have found a good curriculum where I say “this
should be the one.” You come in to my campus and you walk into my teacher’s
classroom I want you to say, “Okay this, this is happening here.” We’re not
there yet. It’s just a work in progress.

He shared his frustration in having to share his fine arts teachers, including his
music teacher, with the upper grades of this split school. The fine arts teachers serve the
early childhood center in the morning and the intermediate grades in the afternoon.
Therefore, they are not in the school for the full day. This schedule makes any efforts to
train, plan, and implement integration a challenging task.

That’s one of the biggest frustrations I have. I’m requiring a professional to split
their time into two campuses with two different expectations, with two different
philosophies and I would not want that. I told anyone that works with me that I’m
not going to do something that I’m not comfortable doing it and I’m not going to
ask you to do it. We will try to meet with them. We have met with them and
trying to solve this problem and make it easier or more effective for everybody.
Again, you know what this year we’re probably going to have to go the way we’re
doing right now but ... we’ll have to figure something else so we could have all
the teachers and not to have them go over there.
Mr. Lopez conveyed he felt he could better accomplish his vision for integration on campus because as a primary campus, he did not have the added pressure of standardized testing as did the intermediate campus. His main focus was that students have the best possible foundation to move to the next campus. The viewpoint raised the question of whether all campuses should have the same focus for their students.

When the split occurred, the music teacher was skeptical about effectively working with prekindergarten and kindergarten. However, Mr. Lopez indicated the students could learn and be motivated by her lessons. He knew music is an important part of children’s development and they are naturally drawn to it. He was certain that what they learned in the music classroom positively impacted their literacy learning. Disappointedly, Mr. Lopez added that this music teacher accepted a position at another school; he hoped the teacher’s desire to leave was not due to the strenuous condition of teaching at two schools and the lack of time available to dedicate to the students because of the travel.

Regarding music and literacy integration professional development in this area, Mr. Lopez indicated that, to his knowledge, there is the music educators association state convention and a state center for fine-arts education. He will be sponsoring attendance of the fine arts teachers at these conventions, bringing their experiences back to the school. He is unsure he will gain the support of the principal at the intermediate school, as the other principal was not forthcoming. Mr. Lopez believes the other principal does not hold this professional development as a priority in which he is willing to financially invest. Mr. Lopez hopes he can bring experts to the school to offer professional development in
music and literacy integration to the whole staff: “We could definitely achieve a lot with the integration of music and literacy.”

The curriculum specialist shares his vision, and Mr. Lopez feels the specialist would support a school-wide effort of music and literacy integration if Mr. Lopez chose to move forward with its implementation. He asserted, “She understands that the music and the fine arts are excellent way of introducing a lot of subjects to our kids.” According to this school principal, most teachers on campus have the same understanding, but do not have in-depth knowledge of why music and literacy integration is important or how to accomplish it.

Mr. Lopez is a doctoral student himself, so has an appreciation for the importance of research and research-based strategies. He knows that if he wants the district and teachers to appreciate, understand, and implement music and literacy integration, he needs to find the research to support it, an effort he diligently pursues. He believes that once he proposes an effective integration program, he would be in a position to tell other principals about it and have the school serve as a model.

School Principal 3: Mr. Martin

Mr. Martin assiduously made rounds through the school as I walked into the main office for our appointment. I waited patiently, as I knew this to be an important duty for a school principal. This was a quiet morning, not as busy as one would imagine in a fine-arts-magnet elementary school. A few staff members walked in and out, offering a friendly grin. A few minutes later, Mr. Martin walked into the main office and invited me into his office. Rather than sitting at his desk, he decided to sit on the guest chair.
alongside mine. Mr. Martin is in his mid-40s. He has a serious demeanor and while very cooperative, he is definitely “a man of few words.” Through our interview he showed little expressiveness or sense of humor. Every word was carefully considered and selected.

An educator for 20 years, Mr. Martin’s interest in the teaching field was supported by his father who had taught for 37 years. Once he became a teacher and taught third and fourth grades for six years, he decided to become a principal. For the rest of his career he has been an administrator: 11 years as an assistant principal at a middle school, and for the past three years at this fine arts magnet elementary school.

When asked about music and literacy integration, his initial notion of this strategy was that it could be beneficial to the children.

If done correctly, it would be done in the music classroom, but also in the core area classrooms. There would be a flow of ideas, back and forth from the rotation class to the core curriculum classes. This sharing of ideas, the way in which we communicate to pool our resources would help ensure that we are truly and authentically integrated.

He added that music and literacy both address similar objectives: understanding a point of view, emotion, setting, and fact and opinion. Both involve sequencing. Thus, in his perspective, they have overlapping themes and objectives. His awareness of this overlap and of music and literacy integration in general was prompted by reading research articles on brain research. This led to conversations with fine-arts teachers at the previous school about how they could relate their subjects to academic subjects. This research and
follow-up experience were the main factors that impelled his support of music and literacy integration:

I think it comes down to understanding brain research. I think that after reading Carol Dweck and reading Eric Jensen and other individuals who talk about brain research, you need to look at what it is that will help our kids, not only learn, but then be better able to retain knowledge over the long run. It's an association, a connection between the right and left hemispheres and how do we create that connection, how do we appeal both hemispheres. What can we do to get the concrete and sequential side of the brain connected to the creative side? That central idea is what has shaped my desire to see this integration occur.

His passion to see students succeed based on their distinct abilities contribute to shape his feelings toward music and literacy integration. Also, his personal experience of having a severely autistic son whose main interest is music has raised his interest and awareness on the topic.

Although he desires this integration to take place in the school, he disappointedly admitted it has not occurred on campus on a “meaningful level.” From his perspective, a disconnection exists between academics and fine arts. It is his focus, however, to encourage teachers in both areas to create that connection. He certainly valued this type of integration, as he explains,

I value it very highly. On a scale of one to ten, ten being the highest, I would say the importance of complete authentic integration between music and literacy is probably a ten. Because of what brain based research tells us. Because of what
we've learned about singing songs and how songs rhyme and how songs are repetitive and how singing the same song over and over again does in fact increase fluency. With that comes comprehension. Not perhaps at the same rate as fluency, but comprehension does come as a result of increased fluency.

Mr. Martin vehemently believes that lack of time is only an excuse and not a legitimate reason for the neglect of this integration. In his view, the true reason for not fully achieving this integration is a lack of commitment on the part of academic teachers and fine-arts teachers. He asserted that they are unwilling to sacrifice time before or after school to collaborate and plan music and literacy integration. With a frustrated and almost cynical tone of voice, he averred that even if he offered funds for curriculum writing, too few people would willingly give up summer hours to work on creating “cohesive units.”

From what I could observe, the dynamics between this principal and the music teacher are particular. Mr. Martin recognizes the music teacher’s knowledge and expertise, yet feels the music teacher is not integrating subjects enough in the classroom. When asked about the music teacher’s self-confidence when integrating music and literacy, Mr. Martin rated it “very high.” When asked about any successes he may have witnessed as a result of this integration, with lack of enthusiasm he recalled one occasion when the music teacher used an authentic piece of literature that was set to a melody and asked questions aligned with state objectives. From his recollection, students were not as successful as he would have liked, but the teaching of the lesson was sufficient.
He was, first, unaware of any professional-development opportunities focusing on music and literacy integration, and then recalled the state music-educators conference and a presenter who had been retained by the school district. This presenter offered professional development on literacy, primarily, and the importance of songs to improve fluency and comprehension. In his view, these opportunities have raised awareness of this strategy on campus, but did not help teachers accomplish this type of integration in the school.

Mr. Martin is willing to bring professional development to campus to promote campus-wide implementation. His major area of concern is teachers’ fear or lack of confidence “to let themselves go a little bit” and be more expressive and read with prosody for the kids. The same issue prevents singing a song for the class.

His best advice for those trying to implement music and literacy integration is to share its importance, but also create the necessary attitude by ensuring new hires commit to this strategy, “Because it's important that the people that we're hiring now understand that they will be the ones responsible for the creation of this dynamic.”

When asked if he had any additional remarks, his concern for test scores was evident as he asserted,

We also understand that our time is very limited here and that funding issues are very much a current issue. The district eliminated eight magnet programs the year I came to this building. We narrowly escaped last year. I don't know how much longer they'll allow us to do this if we can't show with some definitive proof that the kids are benefiting from what we do. If our test scores were substantially
better, I think we could use that as a reasonable argument, but they are not. Our ranking was in the middle and our test scores put us in the bottom 20%.

I humbly appreciate the remarkable opportunity these professionals kindly granted me by allowing access to their workplaces, their thoughts, and personal feelings on music and literacy integration. These conversations contributed greatly to an accurate perception of this strategy and its implementation in authentic school and classroom situations. I did not expect to find so many parallels between the thoughts, feelings, and experiences of individuals in such diverse educational situations. The following analysis of codes, categories, and additional data helps highlight these parallels.

**Codes, Categories, and Additional Data**

A discussion of codes, categories, and relevant additional data pertinent to the research questions found through data analysis will be discussed in the following subsection. Each research question will be discussed while considering the thoughts and feelings shared by participants. The codes and categories that emerged from their interviews also will be included. To enhance understanding, I organized the information on tables offering a graphic and clearer interpretation of the data.

**Research Question 1: What compels elementary music teachers to integrate music and literacy in their classroom?**

I designed Interview Questions 3 to 7 (see Appendix C) to answer the first research question. These interview questions prompted participants to disclose their beliefs about this strategy and what would motivate them to implement or support its implementation in the music classroom. In analyzing the data obtained through
participants’ responses, three categories emerged: benefits of integration, connections between music and literacy, and philosophy of education. Under the category of benefits of integration, all participants reflected on the functionality of music education to further the development or reinforcement of literacy skills. In the words of one curriculum specialist, Ms. Brown,

You have all these kids together and you can’t have them talking all the time and you have to have them listening to the teacher and learning something and then taking it and doing something with it. But in music they get to speak, speak, speak, speak through music, through singing almost the whole classroom the whole time. I think that that benefits that piece of language development.

A music teacher, Ms. Xu, expressed that integrating music and literacy is beneficial because “if they develop pitch awareness it’s going to help them to read better, to become better readers.” According to these participants, music class is a venue that can support literacy skills through singing, chanting, and the reading of notes and lyrics.

Gromko (2005), Hansen et al. (2004), Kelley (1981), Lloyd (1978), and Rubinson (2010), previously cited in Chapter 2, found evidence of the parallels between music making and cognitive processes necessary for phonemic and phonological awareness, as well as fluency. Thus, these participants’ beliefs are supported by the findings of several studies.

It is relevant to note that curriculum specialists and school principals referred to the practicality of musical elements for the development and reinforcement of literacy skills as a tool. Music teachers seemed to be motivated to integrate, believing it was their duty as an educator, not necessarily as a music educator. All music teachers, as well as
the other participants, however, appeared to have an internal conviction that music education, in one way or another, contributed to students’ literacy growth (see Table 4.1).

**Table 4.1: Benefits of Integration Category**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Ms. Harris</th>
<th>Ms. Brown</th>
<th>Ms. Williams</th>
<th>Ms. Smith</th>
<th>Ms. Xu</th>
<th>Ms. Johnson</th>
<th>Ms. Nelson</th>
<th>Ms. Baker</th>
<th>Ms. Campbell</th>
<th>Ms. Davis</th>
<th>Mr. Lopez</th>
<th>Mr. Martin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Category and Codes</strong></td>
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<tr>
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</table>

When inquiring about the underlying motivation to integrate music and literacy, the theme of connections between music and literacy became evident. One school principal, Mr. Martin, shared that both music and literacy address many of the same objectives. I think that music and literature deal with the process of understanding point of view, they deal with emotion, they deal with setting, they deal with fact and opinion. There’s typically sequencing involved.
They both have many overlapping, what I would call themes, but the state would call TEKS.

All participants alluded to various relationships between music and literacy. Among the connections mentioned were rhythm (prosody), rhyme, note-reading and lyric-reading (left-to-right eye movement), symbol-decoding, syllables, cadences, phrases, and language. In the words of a curriculum specialist, Ms. Harris,

I think [music and literacy integration] should be seen as something that’s just a natural way of teaching. It’s natural because if you want to do fluency, the best way to do fluency is to have good prosody and the only way to have good prosody and read it like you’re talking is to read like you’re talking. And sometimes you have to over-exaggerate it in order to bring it back down. So the best way to do it is to do it in songs so that’s the exaggerated version of speaking.

Participants also mentioned a diversity of activities occurring in the music classroom that facilitate music and literacy integration such as reading music-related literature, performing speech pieces, song composition, and visually tracking iconic representations. Music teachers expressed that approaches such as Kodály, which emphasizes sound before symbol, and Orff, with an emphasis on speech and rhythmic activities, align with the integration of music and literacy (see Table 4.2). Although the study by Selway (2004) concluded that even music and movement, geared as phonemic-awareness interventions, had no significant effect on participants in the investigation, Lucas and Gromko (2007) found a significant correlation between music-pattern
perceptions and phoneme segmentation. The latter study supports the view of participants in the present investigation.

Table 4.2: Connections Category

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<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Ms. Harris</td>
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<td>Ms. Brown</td>
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<td>Ms. Williams</td>
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<td>Ms. Smith</td>
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<td>Ms. Xu</td>
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<td>Ms. Johnson</td>
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<td>Ms. Nelson</td>
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<td>Ms. Baker</td>
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<td>Ms. Campbell</td>
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<td>Ms. Davis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Lopez</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Martin</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Category and Codes</th>
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<tr>
<td>Classroom-Music Connection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music Activities Supporting Literacy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music and Literacy Link</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prompted to share their perceptions regarding their choice to favor music and literacy integration, all participants articulated their philosophy of education. Most expressed the conviction that they should be concerned with the development of the whole child, and thereby the importance to integrate in the music classroom, even when English-language literacy was not a fundamental component of the elementary music curriculum. Almost all interviewed music teachers expressed feeling responsible not only for the musical growth of their students, but for their academic success (see Table 4.3). “It’s just because I want to help them and why am I teacher? I don’t do it for the bucks. I don’t do it for the prestige. It’s about caring about kids and their future and the future society” (Ms. Johnson).

Table 4.3: Philosophy of Music-Education Category
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Category and Codes</th>
<th>Ms. Harris</th>
<th>Ms. Brown</th>
<th>Ms. Williams</th>
<th>Ms. Smith</th>
<th>Ms. Xu</th>
<th>Ms. Johnson</th>
<th>Ms. Nelson</th>
<th>Ms. Baker</th>
<th>Ms. Davis</th>
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</tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Music as Part of Life</td>
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</table>

Research Question 2: What affective issues do elementary music teachers express regarding music and literacy integration in their classrooms?

Although all the questions could prompt the disclosure of any affective issues shaping music teachers’ experiences with music and literacy integration, Questions 6 and 11 (see Appendix C) directly encouraged participants to provide answers to this research question. I asked participants about aspects of their personality and attitudes that influenced their perceptions of music and literacy integration, as well as frustrations they experienced when attempting to implement this strategy.
Of twelve participants, eight mentioned affective issues during the interviews. Predominant emotions were frustration and feeling undervalued. In Ms. Campbell’s words, “That’s the most frustrating thing. I do so many extra things besides just a music class [and I’m] not being appreciated for all the effort and the work.” Ms. Harris, a curriculum specialist, was the only other professional to support music teachers’ perception of being undervalued. Also worth noting, although frustrated, almost all music teachers made no mention of any resentment toward their colleagues, administrators, schools, or districts.

Music teachers’ frustrations reflected different levels of intensity for diverse reasons. Feeling undervalued or unsupported was one major cause for this frustration expressed by four of six teachers (see Table 4.4). Overall, music teachers believed that administrators or classroom teachers did not deem music teachers’ subject, knowledge, or expertise, to be important. Exacerbating this assessment was exclusion from meetings, staff development, and discussions geared to improve student learning. Music teachers sensed a lack of awareness of what music education entails and its potential benefits to students. Although administrators and staff appreciated and encouraged music performances, many saw the music programs as a performance and entertainment program, with no other educational value. Music teachers also mentioned exhaustion, pessimism, and resentment. However, their frustrations linked closely to the daily challenges faced when attempting to integrate music and literacy. I will address some of these challenges in answer to the next research question.

Table 4.4: Feelings Category
Research Question 3: What challenges do elementary music teachers face when integrating music and literacy in their classrooms?

Interview Question 10 (see Appendix C) specifically addressed this research question. Data analysis yielded the category of Challenges of Integration. A considerable list of codes emerged from this category, as most music teachers expressed complex feelings about this strategy. By far, time was the most frequent code in this category. Music teachers expressed that having insufficient time to train, collaborate, plan, and deliver this strategy was their main factor in feeling challenged. For example, Ms. Nelson expressed, “more and more of our time is being taken away from us, in teaching basics of music because we have to teach this song or this lesson. I resent that.” Ms. Baker explained, “I guess my biggest frustration is I always feel like I don’t have enough time. … Unfortunately, a lot of music teachers, they aren’t interested in integration because they feel like it cuts into their music time.” These music teachers are very dedicated to
their careers and consistently search for ways to grow professionally as well as to benefit students and strengthen music programs. Thus, time management is not an issue for them. The challenge becomes how to provide time for music educators so that they can implement this strategy (see Table 4.5). Alternatively, I wonder if music and literacy integration actually takes more time. The previously reviewed research literature as well as the participants’ experiences explored so far seem to indicate that elementary music education activities that are already taking place in the music classroom reinforce literacy skills. Thus, perhaps music and literacy are being integrated through the course of the existing elementary general music lesson. Possibly, the reported lack of time to integrate could be a perception rather than a reality.

Nonetheless, other factors presented a challenge when implementing this strategy. “Lack of training” and “disconnect between arts and academics” are two challenges these educators, curriculum specialists, and school principals face.
Table 4.5: Challenges of Integration Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Ms. Harris</th>
<th>Ms. Brown</th>
<th>Ms. Williams</th>
<th>Ms. Smith</th>
<th>Ms. Xu</th>
<th>Ms. Johnson</th>
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<th>Ms. Campbell</th>
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<th>Mr. Martin</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misconception of Music and Literacy Integration</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for Music and Literacy Integration curriculum</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pessimism</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resentment</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect for the Arts</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-economics</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students pulled for intervention</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Question 4: What is the confidence level of elementary music teachers when practicing music and literacy integration in their classrooms?

I designed Interview Question 11 (see Appendix C) to address this research question. Most teachers reported feeling quite confident with this strategy. Ms. Smith self-assessed at a beginner level of confidence. She even labeled the strategy “accidental integration.” Ms. Xu admitted she needed to grow. The curriculum specialists and school principals largely agreed that music teachers in schools and districts are confident in the delivery of this strategy.

Ms. Davis indicated that the music teacher was uncertain she could accomplish music and literacy integration in the classroom when the idea was first presented to her:

But it wasn't until they sat down with the grade level [teachers] and started talking about how much the two things went together. … There was so much that the music teachers were able to integrate into their lessons. … It became easier, but at the beginning they were very overwhelmed and didn't think that that was a possibility.

Mr. Lopez indicated that during his administration the music teacher did not have an opportunity to truly integrate, due to the demanding schedule of his school. His school is the primary-level campus of an elementary school that was separated into two buildings. The music teacher had to travel between schools to service the primary and intermediate populations. This travel time took away from instruction, collaboration, and teaching basic music skills.
Table 4.6 shows music teachers’ confidence levels, as reported by curriculum specialists, school principals, and themselves.

Table 4.6: Reported Confidence Level with Music and Literacy Integration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Reported Confidence Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Harris</td>
<td>“Right Up there”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Specialist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Brown</td>
<td>“Better this year”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Specialist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Williams</td>
<td>“Higher than we think”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Specialist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Smith</td>
<td>“Beginning level; accidental integration”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music Teacher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Xu</td>
<td>“Halfway there; room to grow”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music Teacher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Johnson</td>
<td>“It’s my thing”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music Teacher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Nelson</td>
<td>“I was a pioneer of it”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music Teacher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Baker</td>
<td>“Pretty confident about it”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music Teacher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Campbell</td>
<td>“Very confident”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music Teacher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Davis</td>
<td>“Overwhelmed at the beginning”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Principal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Lopez</td>
<td>“The music teacher did not have a chance to integrate a lot”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Principal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Martin</td>
<td>“Very high”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Principal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Question 5: What professional-development activities best support elementary music teachers in their attempts to integrate music and literacy in their classrooms?

Interview Questions 15, 16, and 21 (see Appendix C) addressed this question. According to participants’ perceptions, schools lack specific music and literacy
integration professional development, especially at the local level (school, district, and region). When I inquired about available professional-development opportunities specifically geared to music and literacy integration, very few participants could name such opportunities. However, several local sources, including colleges, professional-educator associations, and fine-arts institutions offer professional development on the topic of integration. Although not necessarily music and literacy, the concept of integrating fine arts and academic subjects seems to be a topic of interest. Table 4.7 shows local available professional-development opportunities reported by the participants:
Table 4.7: Available Music and Literacy Integration Professional Development Reported by Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Available Professional Development Opportunities</th>
<th>Music and Literacy Integration Specific</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Harris</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Brown</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Williams</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Smith</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Xu</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Johnson</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Nelson</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Baker</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Campbell</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Davis</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Lopez</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Martin</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Specific opportunities for music and literacy integration opportunities are random. Besides a few presenters hired by districts or some participants themselves, no groups or institutions offer this kind of training to educators; participants in the present study do not confront this issue in isolation. As cited in Chapter 2, Gerber and Garrity (2007) found that 78.6% of participants in their study integrate music and reading, but their major complaint is the lack of training on the subject.

Also, the Kodály and Orff approaches support integrating music and literacy. Ms. Campbell, who teaches Kodály courses to teachers pursuing their certification, asserted,

The Kodály [approach] is so based in connecting the songs … through literacy. Either the topic of the song, or this phrase of words matches this phrase of words, or this connects with this or that. There are so many connections there that that’s the beauty of the lessons. … They maybe don’t translate exactly as music and literacy. However, music and manipulating language like that is literacy. It’s just defining it from what it truly is.

Ms. Smith, an experienced music teacher whose instructional foundation is the Orff approach, added,

The biggest thing, especially in Orff-Schulwerk, we use a lot of speech. Everything comes to speech, lots of speech activities, lots of poetry, lots of great emphasis in incorporating children’s literature, nursery rhymes. And when you fall under that umbrella of, you know, all those things, well then a lot of those literacy concepts come popping up, ready or not. You know, here they come.
Research Question 6: How do elementary school principals and curriculum specialists’ value music and literacy integration?

I designed Interview Questions 17 and 18 (see Appendix C) to address this question. School principals and curriculum specialists highly valued music and literacy integration. They all recognized it as a helpful strategy to invigorate the learning of the students they serve. Nevertheless, music teachers seem to have a different perception of school principals and curriculum specialists’ appreciation for music and literacy integration. Table 4.8 shows the answers provided by participants when asked how school principals and curriculum specialists value music and literacy integration:
Table 4.8: How School Principals and Curriculum Specialists Value Music and Literacy Integration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>How School Principals and Curriculum Specialist Value Music and Literacy Integration According to Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Ms. Harris        | Herself: “I value it because I know it works.”  
                  | School Principal: “I know it's kind of hard, because he is a very hard bird to understand. I think he appreciates it. I think he knows logically that music and integration works because that's why he is stresses for performing arts teachers to bring curriculum into their classrooms. I think he knows that connection, but I think the execution is off.” |
| Ms. Brown         | Herself: “To me, to get them to sing those songs and then to focus on that language is so powerful.”  
                  | School Principal: “I think she values it greatly” |
| Ms. Williams       | Herself: “I value it because it helps students. Because it makes students learn better.”  
                  | School Principals: “I don’t think that principals value integration as much for the reasons I just said before. Testing is the bottom line and they are too worried about that and so they don’t want to give up anytime so that teachers can get together and plan or observe each other because they are too afraid of taking that time away.” |
| Ms. Smith         | School Principal: “I think that my school principal is so overwhelmed with the enormity of her task that that is not even on her radar. I think that she would be open to anything that she thought would help her. And I think if she thought that this was something beneficial, then she would be all about it and would find the resources or the time or whatever it took to make it happen, because I think that she is open to anything that works for kids.”  
                  | Curriculum Specialist: “Now [my curriculum specialist], I think, would value it a lot. I don’t know if that person [she] knows anything about this, but I know that [she], um, I think would value that.” |
| Ms. Xu            | School Principal: “She does value it”  
                  | Curriculum Specialist: “We get along very well and I shared my concern because she has had presented at IRA Conference several times, International Reading Association. I went to her house during the spring break so we could work on some ideas of how we can integrate music and literacy.” |
| Ms. Johnson       | School Principal: “I don’t think that the principals that we have right now probably, while I do think they value the arts in a general sense and really do like having all of these involved in the school and the programs that we put on, I think that things kind of get separated, sort of boundaries between the things. So, we’re where they go to learn music and I don’t think that there has been an understanding fully of what might actually be happening there.”  
                  | Curriculum Specialist: “I think that there could be some more learning about how the value of music and they’re coming from a different background and while I think you could sit down and have a conversation and they would be very reasonable and understand all of this in a way. It’s not like at the forefront of their thinking.” |
| Ms. Nelson  | School Principal: “But it was really interesting because he valued what I had done, [but] I don’t think he’s ever looked at any of my lesson plans. He has valued my efforts and he’s valued my time with the kids because he does love our children.”  
Curriculum Specialist: “Oh, very much. Very much” |
| Ms. Baker   | School Principal: “I think it’s been a big learning curve for my principal and she only spent three years in the classroom and one year as an assistant principal. She was a really young principal. So the last seven years, we’ve been at this campus together. I noticed her embracing more and more the idea that our children are showing success through music, and that translates to the classroom.”  
(No curriculum specialist in her school) |
| Ms. Campbell| School Principal: “He respects what’s going on in the music room. [But] he doesn’t come to see my classes.”  
Curriculum Specialist: “We have three of them. The one I was going to have you work with, she is a professional dancer. She already has a connection with the arts. As a very positive, positive reflection of what respect for what I do with the children and work with the kids. The other teachers, they really know that what we’re doing in here makes a difference in these kids life. How whether it’s measurable or not or how measurable it is. That’s the hard part. The respect and the appreciation for what’s happening in the arts here is very deep and very fine.” |
| Ms. Davis   | Herself: “Well, for me, I don't think you can teach children without it. I think that it has to be an essential part of any learning environment”  
Curriculum Specialist: “They saw the importance of integration so that the children were making the connection between what they were doing in the fine arts classrooms as well as what they were doing in the regular classroom.” |
| Mr. Lopez   | Himself: “I think it is extremely important to have music be integrated into literacy. It should be valued highly.”  
Curriculum Specialist: “They saw the importance of integration so that the children were making the connection between what they were doing in the fine arts classrooms as well as what they were doing in the regular classroom.” |
| Mr. Martin  | Himself: “I value it very highly. On a scale of one to ten, ten being the highest. I would say the importance of complete authentic integration between music and literacy, probably a ten.”  
Curriculum Specialist: “I think they understand the importance, but are restricted by time.” |
Research Question 7: What professional-development activities are offered or sponsored by school principals or curriculum specialists to support music and literacy integration?

Question 20 (see Appendix C) addressed this research question. Analysis of the data helped to bring forward two pieces of information. Initially, I was able to obtain direct answers to the question and identify music and literacy integration professional-development activities offered or sponsored by school principals or curriculum specialists. Overall, school principals and curriculum specialists offered support, whether financial or with resources, for music teachers to strengthen their skills in music and literacy integration (see Table 4.9).
Table 4.9: Music and Literacy Integration Professional Development Offered by School Principals and Curriculum Specialists

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Music and Literacy Professional Development Opportunities Offered By School Principals or Curriculum Specialists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Harris</td>
<td>▪ None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Brown</td>
<td>▪ Arts integration, not necessarily specific Music and Literacy Integration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Ms. Williams | ▪ Workshop once at a state fine arts summit  
▪ Few music and literacy integration activities at district music teachers’ workshops |
| Ms. Smith    | ▪ Principal provides substitute days                                                                            |
| Ms. Xu       | ▪ Principal provides financial and resource support  
▪ Curriculum Specialist provides resources and instructional support                                           |
| Ms. Johnson  | ▪ Principal encourages professional development, but offers no financial support.                               |
| Ms. Nelson   | ▪ None                                                                                                         |
| Ms. Baker    | ▪ None                                                                                                         |
| Ms. Campbell | ▪ Principal provides substitute days                                                                            |
| Ms. Davis    | ▪ Collaboration with the local museum of fine arts  
▪ Collaboration with the local opera  
▪ Collaboration with the local ballet  
▪ Provided substitutes to allow for teacher planning and collaboration |
| Mr. Lopez    | ▪ Financial support                                                                                             |
| Mr. Martin   | ▪ Financial support                                                                                             |
A secondary piece of information obtained from the analysis of the data was the emergence of two main themes: support and challenges. The codes in the theme of support reflected what participants believed administrators in the school and district do regarding music and literacy professional development. All participants addressed the topic of administrative support. Some teachers believed they have the full support of their administrators; administrators believed they offer sufficient support to teachers. For example, Ms. Xu expressed that the school principal “is very supportive. When she comes here to sit in the classroom to watch what children are learning and doing, she just loves that I am integrating a lot of other areas that’s connected to children’s lives.” In contrast, Ms. Smith asserted that her principal is A real black and white numbers person. Not everything is about black and white always. It crosses that line of do you feel supported or not. He walked out of the Christmas program and has yet to watch any of the programs all the way through that we do the musical sets that we do here at the school. He’ll show up maybe the last song.

Administrators are probably the most important source of support. Whether teachers obtain adequate professional development or none at all directly depends on administrators’ attitudes and perceptions of music and literacy integration. Professional-development decisions, such as financial support or providing time and resources for collaboration, are the responsibility of administrators (see Table 4.10). In the words of Ms. Williams, a curriculum specialist, “If the administration at that campus doesn’t allow it to happen, it’s never ever going to happen.”
Table 4.10: Support Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Ms. Harris</th>
<th>Ms. Brown</th>
<th>Ms. Williams</th>
<th>Ms. Smith</th>
<th>Ms. Xu</th>
<th>Ms. Johnson</th>
<th>Ms. Nelson</th>
<th>Ms. Baker</th>
<th>Ms. Davis</th>
<th>Mr. Lopez</th>
<th>Mr. Martin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Support</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Administrative support</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Specialist Support</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Support</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The theme of challenges, among other codes discussed in answer to research Question 3, mostly referred to “training.” Participants’ reflections shaping this code addressed lack of proper and specific music and literacy integration training or an absolute need for training. As in the discussion of data analysis for Research Question 5, the most specific music and literacy integration professional-development opportunities come from particular authors and presenters who are experts on the field. It also includes participants who, taking a leadership role, developed their own presentations for other music teachers.
Table 4.11: Challenges of Integration Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Ms. Harris</th>
<th>Ms. Brown</th>
<th>Ms. Williams</th>
<th>Ms. Smith</th>
<th>Ms. Xu</th>
<th>Ms. Johnson</th>
<th>Ms. Nelson</th>
<th>Ms. Baker</th>
<th>Ms. Campbell</th>
<th>Ms. Davis</th>
<th>Mr. Lopez</th>
<th>Mr. Martin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Challenges of Integration</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Training</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measurable Outcomes</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for Music and Literacy Integration curriculum</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Question 8: To what extent do music teachers, principals, and curriculum specialists consider current music and literacy integration research before implementing this practice?

I created Interview Question 22 (see Appendix C) specifically to seek answers to this research question. Data analysis exposed a divide in consideration of available research. Although most participants appreciate the value of research, some do not consider research when implementing a strategy. Factors that influence that decision are the need for time to research and the lack of access to scholarly research. Some participants—Ms. Harris, Ms. Brown, Ms. Xu, Ms. Davis, Mr. Lopez, and Mr. Martin—have found research from scholarly and peer-reviewed sources. Other participants—Ms. Smith, Ms. Johnson, and Ms. Nelson—rely on secondary sources, like books and materials that cite scholarly research. However, all participants hold high regard for
research and believe that an ideal implementation of music and literacy integration strategy should be research based. Moreover, school districts where these participants serve place great emphasis on research-based implementation of strategies, which contributes to their understanding of the need for scholar research (see Table 4.12).

**Table 4.12: Participants’ Research Sources**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Research Sources</th>
<th>Scholarly Research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Ms. Harris  | - Research that district provides  
|             | - Books           | Yes                |
| Ms. Brown   | - Scholarly articles  
|             | - Books           | Yes                |
| Ms. Williams| - None            | Yes                |
| Ms. Smith   | - Professional journals | Yes |
| Ms. Xu      | - Scholarly articles | Yes    |
| Ms. Johnson | - Books           | Yes                |
| Ms. Nelson  | - Professional Journals  
|             | - Online           | Yes    |
|             | - Teacher network   | Yes    |
| Ms. Baker   | - None             |                    |
| Ms. Campbell| - None             |                    |
| Ms. Davis   | - Scholarly articles | Yes    |
| Mr. Lopez   | - Scholarly articles | Yes    |
| Mr. Martin  | - Scholarly articles | Yes    |
The codes, categories, and additional data facilitated a deeper understanding of these participants’ notions regarding music and literacy integration. My personal perspective of this strategy was enriched. Prepared with this insight and with hopes to offer a fresh perspective, I share my conclusions and recommendations in the next chapter.
Chapter V

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

This chapter includes a summary of the study, as well as a discussion of the results and implications of the findings. The chapter delineates conclusions and recommendations for practice and further research.

Summary

This qualitative study ascertained the perceptions of music educators, curriculum specialists and principals regarding music and literacy integration in the elementary music classroom.

The specific questions addressed in this study were:

1. What compels elementary music teachers to integrate music and literacy in their classrooms?

2. What affective issues do elementary music teachers express regarding music and literacy integration in their classrooms?

3. What challenges do elementary music teachers face when integrating music and literacy in their classrooms?

4. What is the confidence level of elementary music teachers when practicing music and literacy integration in their classrooms?

5. What professional-development activities best support elementary music teachers in their attempts to integrate music and literacy in their classrooms?
6. How do elementary school principals and curriculum specialists value music and literacy integration?

7. What professional-development activities are offered or sponsored by school principals or curriculum specialists to support music and literacy integration?

8. To what extent do music teachers, principals, and curriculum specialists consider current music and literacy integration research before implementing this practice?

Six elementary music teachers from different school districts and representative of varied socioeconomic school backgrounds participated in interviews. Three school principals and three curriculum specialists also engaged in interviews with similar questions to enrich understanding of the inclusion of music and literacy integration in the music classroom.

I collected data through semistructured interviews. Using the computer program HyperRESEARCH. I then inventoried, organized, and coded the interview data. To ensure quality and validity of interview questions and that they accurately reflected the meaning and purpose of the research questions, I included only those questions that a pilot group positively rated in the interview protocol.

Attending to the first research question, the data collected pointed to the premise that elementary music teachers value music instruction for its own sake and, in general, reject the idea that music has a utilitarian purpose to academic subjects. All music teachers interviewed expressed their ultimate desire to instill a love and appreciation for music in students. Furthermore, their stories revealed a strong sense of duty as educators.
This sense of duty compels them to go beyond their job descriptions. If music can help students improve their literacy skills, they are willing to include music and literacy integration in their classrooms. Thus, a strong sense of duty as educators is the primary factor that compels elementary music teachers to integrate music and literacy in their classrooms.

A second factor that compels elementary music teachers to integrate music and literacy in their classrooms, according to the data obtained, are the parallels between music, specifically material containing lyrics such as songs, poems, and chants, and literacy instruction. Because many daily elementary general music activities involve learning songs, chants, and poems, it is feasible for music teachers to reinforce literacy skills such as phonemic awareness, left-to-right eye movement, and fluency. Previous researchers supported this notion, finding comparable cognitive processes between music activities and phonemic and phonological awareness, among other basic processes for language acquisition (Gromko, 2005; Hansen et al., 2004; Kelley, 1981; Lloyd, 1978; Rubinson, 2010). Interestingly, some participants took time to realize they were reinforcing these skills in classrooms, indicating that only a few may have had knowledge of extant research. Yet, results suggested that whereas they were apprehensive about giving up music-instruction time, music teachers were willing to include music and literacy integration strategies in their classrooms if they were seamless and if they benefited the student population.

When discussing music and literacy integration strategies in their classroom, music teachers exposed two major affective issues: frustration and feeling undervalued.
This dialogue addressed the second research question. The causes for frustration were diverse such as feeling undervalued, lacking administrative support, and being challenged daily in instruction and integration. Among those challenges are large class numbers, disparate English proficiency of students, and classroom-management issues.

A strong affective issue for four of six interviewed music teachers was feeling undervalued. Even when they expressed that administrators in some way supported their programs and their professional development, they felt administrators did not hold a thorough understanding of their program and believed that obtaining measurable outcomes, mostly through standardized testing, took precedence over their music program. Similarly, Barr (2006) concluded that specialist teachers (art, music, theater, and dance), who were in the best disposition to act as a team and integrate, need school administrators to establish a school culture that supports collaborative efforts. Perhaps creating a work environment in which administrators equally appreciate all subjects and encourage and support teachers to join endeavors could reverse the affective issue of feeling undervalued.

Attending to the third research question, elementary music teachers voiced several challenges when integrating music and literacy integration in classrooms. The most pressing challenges seemed to be time and lack of training. In general, music teachers teach daily lessons with little time for research, collaboration, and planning. Before- and after-school hours are often devoted to rehearsals such as choir, Orff ensembles, recorders, musicals, and to clerical work. These professionals reported a lack of time to
research and plan for music and literacy integration strategies as well as to collaborate with classroom teachers to ensure the instructional soundness of these strategies.

But even if they had time available, most participants in this study admitted they need dedicated music and literacy integration training. Although several opportunities exist for professional development on integration, minimal or no offerings specifically address music and literacy integration. A majority of music-teacher participants in the study by Gerber and Garrity (2007) indicated similar concerns. Although most teachers integrate music and reading in classrooms and have a positive attitude toward this strategy, they indicated they lack appropriate integration training. Thus, lack of training seems to be a broad concern of music teachers.

Most teachers have a good sense of the parallels between music and literacy instruction; thus, they can design some opportunities in classrooms to reinforce literacy skills. Overall they agree, however, that research-based strategies produced and guided by close collaboration between music and reading experts would be ideal strategies to impart to students.

Regrettably, this collaboration might be hindered by another challenge disclosed by some participants: a disconnection between the arts and academics. According to some participants, the arts are still viewed as an extra or enrichment, thus possibly leading to the perception by general-education teachers and administrators, that the arts and arts education are unnecessary. If the arts are unnecessary, then music is unnecessary. If music is not deemed necessary then classroom teachers would not feel compelled to
collaborate with music teachers to research, plan, or design music and literacy integration.

Closely related to this issue, is the challenge of measurable outcomes. Even when teachers plan and deliver sound strategies through collaboration, administrators find it difficult to measure the outcomes of music and literacy integration because this certainly would not be the only strategy employed to develop students’ literacy. Proving its efficacy would be a challenge. Administrators have a primary focus on standardized testing and the implementation of music and literacy integration is not a priority for them. Thus, they feel no urgency to support it.

In reference to Research Question 4, eight of twelve participants expressed that either they or music teachers in their school have self-confidence when practicing music and literacy integration in classrooms, despite lacking training in music and literacy integration. Music teachers’ confidence when practicing music and literacy integration relied on two major aspects: their self-confidence as a music educator, and the literacy components in music materials and activities that are used daily in the music classroom.

All interviewed music teachers seemed to be experienced and confident in their work. They appeared certain about their understanding of best practices and contributions to student achievement. Despite a prevalent need for music and literacy integration training, most music teachers sought information through articles, books, the Internet, workshops, conferences, and meetings. Even when they could gain greater insight about this strategy, they were not intimidated to implement it in their classrooms. The study by Kelley-McHale (2011), cited in the literature review, concluded that music teachers’ view
of themselves as educators and musicians directly impacts the effectiveness of instruction and the classroom environment. Classroom experiences shared by music teachers in the present study supported Kelley-McHale’s conclusion. Overall, interviewed participants shared considerable successes while integrating music and literacy in their classroom. This self-confidence as musicians and educators may have played an important role in their success.

Instinctive parallels between some music activities and literacy instruction constituted yet another aspect that seemed to contribute to music teachers’ confidence when practicing music and literacy integration. These were activities such as reading, singing, adding instrumentation to books, chants, rhyming songs, and composition, among others, take place consistently in the music classroom and easily reinforce literacy skills. Therefore, it seems teachers require little integration training to implement this strategy in the music classroom. For an experienced and competent music educator, gaining confidence in implementing music and literacy integration should be practically effortless.

Although teachers need specific music and literacy integration professional development, most participants mentioned some trainings they felt helped support their attempts to integrate music and literacy in their classrooms. These disclosures helped address the fifth research question. Locally, several opportunities exist for training on integration that might provide fundamental knowledge on the integration of music and literacy. Among these training opportunities are district-hired presenters, local workshops, local fine-arts institutions, state conferences, national conventions, and
teacher networks. Some interviewed participants emphasized that the only training opportunities available to them those they create for their district or area. District-hired presenters and the music teachers as presenters were the two most effective trainings because they were most specific to music and literacy integration. Other opportunities did not necessarily address music and literacy integration specifically.

Teacher collaboration is also a professional development opportunity that seems to support music teachers when implementing music and literacy integration. Despite being the most challenging professional development, due to time constraints, when it occurs, it raises awareness of this strategy and its implementation. Participants who experienced collaboration between music teachers, curriculum specialists, and classroom teachers believe this to be a worthy experience, as the group works in partnership to research and identify commonalities among subjects. The process of discovering, discerning, and sharing information among peers is more meaningful for teachers than listening and taking notes from others. The challenge this type of collaboration presents is finding time for it to occur. One school principal, Ms. Davis, sponsored a teacher network at the school. She recalled having to plan financially for this collaboration, as she had to hire substitutes to cover teachers’ classes while they met. Unfortunately, not all principals have her vision and would be unwilling to plan similar actions. Yet, Barr (2006) concluded that administrators providing a school culture that supports collaborative effort is one indispensable factor to facilitate fine-arts collaboration with classroom teachers. Actions such as Ms. Davis’ financial planning to hire substitutes are fundamental to the
creation of a school culture where collaboration is an integral part of teachers’ daily interactions.

In reference to Research Question 6, overall, school principals and curriculum specialists reported they held high value for music and literacy integration. They believe it is a sound strategy to gaining and reinforce literacy skills. Nonetheless, music teachers in general seemed to have a different assessment of how school principals and curriculum specialists value music and literacy integration. All but one music teacher indicated school principals have little or no awareness of this strategy. Some added that principals’ focus is so geared to standardized testing integrated learning may be at the bottom of their list of considerations.

This assessment by music teachers aligns markedly with their perception of feeling undervalued. School principals, even when they value music and literacy integration and the music programs at their schools, are unsuccessful at making it evident to their staff. Perhaps the pressure that standardized tests reflect on their administration or their concern for student achievement detracts from their ability to express esteem for music and literacy integration and the music program in their schools.

Regarding Research Question 7, results from this study seem to indicate that most curriculum specialists are willing to offer or sponsor professional-development activities supporting music and literacy integration. Two of the three curriculum specialists interviewed offered or sponsored such activities for music teachers and campuses. The curriculum specialist that has not yet offered professional development, Ms. Harris, implements this strategy in her daily instructional-intervention groups and has
collaborated in the past with other teachers. It seems she would support integration, offering or sponsoring such professional-development activities. One curriculum specialist, Ms. Williams, is the music-curriculum specialist for the district and she has been able to lead workshops in this regard, including one at a state fine-arts conference.

School principals seem eager to support music teachers and other members of the staff financially enabling them to attend professional development activities on the topic of music and literacy integration. The demands of being a principal prevents them from offering the training themselves; however, they are willing to find and fund experts to come to campus to offer training to staff. A feasible arrangement could be that curriculum specialists offer small, in-school training opportunities and one-on-one guidance on this topic, while school principals finance schoolwide professional development as well as state and national conferences for music teachers.

Last, addressing the final research question, results suggested that music teachers, principals, and curriculum specialists have high esteem for research-based strategies even though only a few are able to truly consider current music and literacy integration research before implementing this practice. Factors such as lack of time and accessibility to scholarly research are two pressing challenges impeding consideration of music and literacy integration research.

Most interviewed teachers can access professional journals, books, and online articles that are not necessary scholarly or peer-reviewed. Those without a daily class, such as school principals and the curriculum specialists, had greater access to scholarly resources. Thus, it might be realistic for school principals and curriculum specialists to
perform research before implementing music and literacy integration and share their findings with music and classroom teachers.

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to investigate the diverse perspectives of music teachers, school principals, and curriculum specialists regarding music and literacy integration in the elementary music classroom. Overall, participants had a positive perspective on this strategy. Some have already implemented integration in their schools. Others are willing to learn more about it and attempt it in their classrooms. Contributing to a noteworthy array of perceptions, each group of interviewees presented a distinct viewpoint about the training, implementation, and delivery of this strategy and how their present school and district environment affected their actions.

Music Teachers

The results indicated that music teachers held a common belief that music and literacy have natural parallels due to the presence of lyrics in songs, chants, phonetics, and left-to-right eye movement. They also believed multiple activities taking place in the music classroom reinforce literacy such as reading, singing, performing instruments, books, rhyming songs, and composition. Some expressed that in many instances, music allows an easier retrieval of information. From their perceptions, it seems that music instruction, specifically at the elementary level, has the potential to be an effective venue to gain and reinforce literacy skills.

Understandably, most music educators were skeptical about teaching a subject that is not their specialty. In their opinion, the limited time students have in the
elementary general music classroom should be spent learning about music. However, the possibility seems likely that focusing on music objectives reinforces literacy. The reviewed literature, as well as the participants perceptions’ already presented indicate that the activities included in music teachers’ daily lesson plans already integrate music and literacy, and thereby reinforce students’ literacy skills.

Although experienced and competent music educators feel confident about their music and literacy integration skills, they expressed a need for professional-development opportunities regarding music and literacy integration. Moreover, they voiced their need for more time and resources to research and better inform themselves about this strategy. Another aspect of professional development was the issue of preservice training. No participants received any training on music and literacy integration in their college years. To their knowledge no colleges make this offering a part of their preservice training program. Therefore, at least in the geographic area where the current investigation took place, teachers need research-based professional development on music and literacy integration at all levels of teaching, including preservice.

Concerning the implementation of this strategy, music teachers in general suggested that music and literacy should be integrated gradually. They recommended teachers start with a small activity and, perhaps, one class at a time. Some teachers also recommended that this strategy is also implemented in the regular classroom to offer consistency and reinforce student learning. This tactic implies that collaboration would occur among classroom and music teachers. The latter expressed their frustration that if they wish to collaborate with classroom teachers, they must initiate the collaboration for
it to occur. This absence of collaborative efforts between music teachers and classroom teachers was a major concern expressed by participants, especially music teachers. Collaborative music and literacy integration must occur in the music classroom and the general classroom. A collaborative vision that originates from and is consistently supported by the school principal is essential.

**School Principals**

School principals overall seemed supportive of any strategies that benefit students, including music and literacy integration. They voiced willingness to support their staff financially as well as with extra time. Nevertheless, it seemed that the pressure of standardized testing and the administrative job in general deters them from verbalizing their support and acknowledging music teachers’ contribution to student achievement. As a result, music teachers felt lack of support and value, causing frustration among them. School principals must find ways to recognize music teachers and their programs for their contribution to the holistic growth of students even when, superficially, they do not seem to have a direct or measurable impact on standardized testing.

School principals appeared to find scholarly research-based strategies relevant. They expressed willingness to examine present and future research pertaining to music and literacy integration. In addition to perusing research as the foundation for this strategy, they believe successful implementation relies on teachers having a positive attitude toward this strategy. All three school principals suggested they search and promote this positive attitude at the hiring of teachers. Two points shared by school principals are of great relevance in the creation of a school culture where collaboration
and integration are fundamental: First, administrators must consider extant research on music and literacy integration. They should share their findings with staff, providing viable ways and opportunities to implement this strategy. Second, when hiring new teachers, school principals must strongly consider candidates whose philosophy of education favors collaboration and integration. These actions are a sound start toward a collaboratively and integrative school climate.

**Curriculum Specialists**

Curriculum specialists in general understood and appreciated music and literacy integration. They saw parallels between music and literacy and are aware of the benefits of this strategy for students. They willingly support music teachers and staff to provide a positive music and literacy integration experience to students. The interviewed curriculum specialists assumed a mediator role between music teachers and school principals. Because they have been in the classroom and still work directly with the students, they appreciated the teachers’ perspective. Their proximity to administrators and their involvement in the standardized-test process, however, allows them to understand the demands school principals face.

Research-based strategies are important for these specialists. Most are interventionists who wish students to be successful in the area they are lacking. They view music and literacy integration as an engaging strategy worth trying. Curriculum specialists, then, could serve as liaisons between administrators and music teachers to help promote implementation of music and literacy integration, as they consider the available research and share it on campus.
The Problem with Insufficiency

The concept of numbers seemed to be recurring during the interviews, usually raised during discussion of challenges. One challenge mentioned was the large number of students in the classroom. Another challenge participants expressed was the small number of minutes a week students get music class. According to another participant, students also get few music lessons in the year. Some expressed that test scores, also numbers, represent a challenge directly affecting the implementation of music and literacy integration.

Music teachers expressed that having too many students in their classroom hinders their ability to address students’ needs. Even when they are able to integrate music and literacy, with so many students, they are unable to properly assess whether their teaching was effective. Also, only seeing their students once a week for 45 minutes restricts their ability to impact their learning. Although they would be able to reinforce literacy skills, they are not certain this number of minutes once a week can make a significant contribution to students’ achievement.

Due to federal funding attached to successful standardized-test scores, administrators focus on students’ success on these assessments. Music and literacy integration, for many, is not high on their priorities. Although the integration of music and literacy may help students be successful, administrators find insufficient empirical data to persuade them to implement this strategy in schools. Although most school principals would support the implementation of this strategy, they would need to be aware of it and need the research to support it.
The problem of insufficiency is perhaps the most challenging of all problems voiced by participants because at the root of these issues lays the bureaucracy of school districts and state and federal governments. The solutions to alleviate these issues are limited at the campus level. The school staff, however, can make a concerted effort to test the implementation of music and literacy integration and customize schedules and approaches to diminish the challenges of excessive numbers of students in the music classroom, limited music-class time, and standardized testing.

The International Baccalaureate (IB) Programme

Two interviewed music teachers worked at schools offering the IB programme. Overall, the IB programme focuses curriculum on appreciation of cultural differences and transdisciplinary instruction. Transdisciplinary instruction allows students to become aware of and study the commonalities among disciplines. For example, students may study the concept of rhythm and its meaning in poetry, music, art, and science. Music and literacy integration seems to be suitable to the cultural and transdisciplinary parameters of this curriculum.

Although administrative support at schools appeared to be mostly positive, the music teachers at this school had similar concerns to those of music teachers who did not work at an IB programme school. If music teachers in the IB programme have similar concerns that their programs are not considered as valuable as other subjects, then the issue could extend beyond school doors. This perceived underappreciation of music education in the schools could be a greater issue and one that it is engrained in the culture of society.
**English as Second Language**

With the exception of one participant, interviewees worked at schools with a high number of ESL students. Especially the music teachers and curriculum specialists found that music and literacy integration was helpful to these students. Apparently, integration facilitated fluency and comprehension of the English language. According to some experiences shared by participants, for students who initially did not speak English when they came to the music classroom, music and literacy integration strategies provided help with fluency. Music and literacy integration may be a suitable strategy to be applied to ESL instruction.

**Orff and Kodály**

Music teachers often mentioned Orff and Kodály approaches as sources for music and literacy integration activities. The Orff approach, among other activities, involves the use of chants, poems, books, and stories with the addition of singing and instrumental performance. This inclusion of literature allows for the seamless integration of music and literacy. However, the focus of the Orff approach is music-skill development, not literacy skill. Collaboration with reading specialists could help identify what literacy skills teachers can target during these activities.

The Kodály approach focuses on folk songs and the development of children’s music literacy. This focus on song and on music reading could aid in improving aural skills and left-to-right eye movement. Again, collaboration with reading specialists could help identify literacy skills that would be aided by Kodály activities.
Recommendations

The review of the literature in Chapter 2 pointed to two important premises. First, music and literacy integration has the possibility to be a viable tool for increased student achievement. Second, more research is needed regarding music and literacy professional development for music educators. Departing from these premises and considering the diverse perspectives of the participants in this study, I offer the following recommendations to the music-education profession and the education profession in general, as well as researchers.

To Music Educators, General Educators, and School Administrators

The perspectives presented by the music teachers, school principals, and curriculum specialists in this study underscored both of the abovementioned premises. It appeared that all participants concurred that music and literacy integration has the potential to help students gain and reinforce literacy skills. However, none of the music teachers in this study conveyed they could obtain preservice or in-service training regarding music and literacy integration in their colleges. To their knowledge no universities offer this type of preparation. Without training, it is challenging for educators to implement this strategy consistently and effectively in classrooms. Therefore, colleges and universities must consider including at least a course in music and literacy integration in the academic load of preservice teachers. These educational institutions are fundamental to a civil and educated society. Research, creativity, innovation, and knowledge are at the core of our colleges and universities. An innovative and promising strategy such as music and literacy integration must be explored, developed, and
presented in higher education institutions in the form of courses for pre-service educators as well as university-sponsored professional development made available to inservice teachers.

In addition, school administrators and music administrators must provide professional-development opportunities regarding the integration of music and literacy to their music teachers. Aside from training, music teachers, classroom teachers, and curriculum specialists must combine their areas of expertise in collaboration to research, plan, and design effective music and literacy integration activities they all can use in their respective classrooms. School principals must support this effort by offering the necessary time to collaborate and any funds, if necessary. Not only will teachers be able to customize this strategy to their campus’ needs, but this collaboration also may improve the climate of the school as everybody’s knowledge is appreciated and considered. Because school boards approve most budgets, it is essential that the benefits of this strategy are shared with these entities so they have the necessary knowledge and information to allocate any needed funds.

Results from this study made evident that, although school principals valued music and literacy integration and music programs, most music teachers did not feel appreciated. This perceived lack of appreciation prompted frustration and may affect school climate. Music teachers positively interact with the entire elementary school community. Such music teachers impact every student on campus while closely collaborating with faculty and parents in producing the multiple music programs that are expected throughout the school-year. Furthermore, according to the music teachers in this
study the content of the elementary music classroom reinforces student literacy. It is imperative that school principals make their support of music and literacy integration and music teachers and their programs more evident, perhaps through verbal recognition, financial support for professional-development endeavors, or inclusion in collaborative partnerships with classroom teachers.

To Researchers

Based on the findings of this study, it is important that future researchers explore the subject of music and literacy integration through a quantitative approach. This approach would present another useful perspective about this strategy, allowing educators to make comprehensive and informed decisions in their practice. Researchers should also consider replicating this study in a different part of the country. Because this study took place in a major city with a large population of ESL students, it would be interesting to consider the results from a study conducted with educators and administrators in a different demographic setting.

The literature and participants in this study communicated the need for professional development specifically targeted to the integration of music and literacy. There is a prominent lack of research regarding music and literacy integration professional development. Additional research on music and literacy integration professional development for educators must be performed to purposefully design and plan these opportunities. An in-depth investigation of music and literacy integration professional development would broaden understanding of this topic, how it is approached, how frequently trainings are offered, and how music educators benefit from
these opportunities. These professional-development opportunities should be widely accessible so that, regardless of their location, teachers can acquire this training.

In addition, research must discern what is already being done through transdisciplinary instruction at the IB programme as well as the Orff and Kodály approaches. Participants in this study mentioned these music-education and general-education approaches on several occasions, as means to integrate music and literacy. It would be helpful to know the possibilities that these approaches offer to facilitate the integration of these two subjects in the music classroom.

Finally, researchers must identify the specific benefits of music and literacy integration to ESL students. This information would help educators develop sound and effective music and literacy integration strategies that can be confidently implemented in the music classroom and, perhaps, in the regular classroom as well. If the strategies have a strong research foundation, music teachers, school principals, and curriculum specialists can make informed decisions about the implementation of this strategy in their schools and districts.

This study of selected music teachers, school principals and curriculum specialists offers a compelling case supporting the parallels between music and literacy. Elementary music and English-language literacy are intrinsically related and should not be isolated. Music teachers, school principals, curriculum specialists, and classroom teachers are urged to embrace music and literacy integration which often naturally occurs on a daily basis in the elementary music classroom. We all bear the responsibility to collaborate and
plan for the optimal benefit of our students. School principals must take the lead by supporting music and literacy integration.

Two equally important and enduring goals have been addressed: music literacy and language literacy. Although some favor and value one more than the other, they are certainly not in contention. Music and literacy are social actions. Both are equally relevant and can work in synergy to help develop well-rounded human beings. Music educators can benefit from the parallels between these two subjects and purposely fuse them to enhance student learning and teacher instruction. In a world that grows more competitive each day, merging these goals and working toward them in the music classroom will benefit students, which in turn, will benefit schools, communities, and society.
Bibliography


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Appendices

Appendix A: Participant Recruitment Email

Participant Recruitment Email

Dear Colleague,

I am a doctoral student in the Music Education program at Boston University, and I am conducting a study as part of my dissertation requirement. The study concerns music teachers, school principals and curriculum specialists’ perceptions regarding music and literacy integration in the music classroom, and involves a 30 to 45-minute interview. I am looking for elementary public school music educators, school administrators and curriculum specialists with at least five years of experience in their field, who currently practice or supervise or have practiced or supervised music and literacy integration in the music classroom. I would be very grateful if you would be willing to take part in my study.

If you are interested, please contact me by phone (281.796.2229) or email (mli.study.2013@gmail.com). If you do so, you will have the chance to find out more about the study before coming to any decision. You would be under no obligation to take part.

My study is supervised by Dr. Manny Brand and he can be contacted at mannyinbali@gmail.com.

Thank you for considering this research opportunity.

Sincerely,

Eunice Marrero
Doctoral Candidate
Boston University
Appendix B: Consent-to-Participate Form

Music and Literacy Integration in the Music Classroom: Diverse Perspectives from Music Teachers, School Principals and Curriculum Specialists

Principal Investigator: Eunice Marrero

Introduction

Please read this form carefully. The purpose of this form is to provide you with important information about taking part in a research study. This form may contain words that you do not understand. Please ask the study staff to explain any words that you do not understand.

If you have any questions about the research or any portion of this form, please ask us.

Taking part in this research study is up to you. If you decide to take part in this research study we will ask you to sign this form. We will give you a copy of the signed form.

The people in charge of this study are Eunice Marrero and Dr. Manny Brand. Eunice Marrero can be reached at (281) 796-2229 or at mli.study.2013@gmail.com. Dr. Manny Brand can be reached at mannyinbali@gmail.com. We will refer to this person as the “researcher” throughout this form.

Why is this study being done?

The purpose of this study is to investigate Music Teachers, School Principals and Curriculum Specialists perception regarding music and literacy integration in the music classroom.

We are asking you to take part in this study because you are a music teacher who practices music and literacy integration in your classroom/a school principal of a music
teacher who practices music and literacy integration in their classroom/a curriculum specialist in a district where music and literacy integration is practiced.

About 14 participants will take part in this research study at Boston University.

How long will I take part in this research study?

We expect that you will be in this research study for 7 months. During this time, we will visit you in one occasion for a 45 to 60-minute interview and on another time for an approximately 30-minute meeting to share the findings with you and obtain your feedback.

What will happen if I take part in this research study?

If you agree to take part in this study, we will ask you to sign the consent form before we do any study procedures.

Study Visit 1

Visit 1 will take about 45 to 60 minutes to complete. At this visit, we will ask you to do the following procedures:

• Interview you about your experiences with music and literacy integration in the music classroom.

Study Visit 2

Visit 2 will take about 30 minutes to complete. At this visit, we will ask you to do the following procedures:

• Share the findings of the study and obtain your feedback.
Audiotaping

We would like to digitally audiotape you during this study. If you are audiotaped it will not be possible to identify you. We will store the digital recordings in a computer secured with a password and only the researcher will be able to listen to the tapes. We will label the recordings with a letter instead of your name. The key to the code connects your name to your audio recording. The researcher will keep the key to the code also in a password-protected computer. The audio recordings will be stored for 7 months and then destroyed.

Do you agree to let us audio/videotape you during this study?

_____ YES  _____ NO  _______ INITIALS

How Will You Keep My Study Records Confidential?

We will keep the records of this study confidential by assigning a letter to you and identifying your audio recordings with that letter. The recordings will be saved in a password protected computer that will be stored in a locked cabinet. The key to the code that connects the letter to our audio will also be kept in a password-protected computer. We will make every effort to keep your records confidential. However, there are times when federal or state law requires the disclosure of your records.

Reporting child/elder abuse, if applicable: If, during your participation in this study, we have reasonable cause to believe that child/elder abuse is occurring, she must report this to authorities as required by law. The researcher will make every reasonable effort to protect the confidentiality of your research information. However, it might be possible
that a civil or criminal court might demand the release of identifiable research information.

**Reporting Suicidal Risk:** If, during your participation of this study, we have reason to believe that you are at risk for being suicidal or otherwise harming yourself, we are required to take the necessary actions. This may include notifying your doctor, your therapist, or other individuals. If this were to occur, we would not be able to assure confidentiality.

The following people or groups may review your study records for purposes such as quality control or safety:

- The Researcher and any member of her research team
- The Institutional Review Board at Boston University. The Institutional Review Board is a group of people who review human research studies for safety and protection of people who take part in the studies.
- Federal and state agencies that oversee or review research

The study data will be stored in a password-protected computer. We will store your data for 7 months.

The results of this research study may be published or used for teaching. We will not put identifiable information on data that are used for these purposes.

**Study Participation and Early Withdrawal**

Taking part in this study is your choice. You are free not to take part or to withdraw at any time for any reason. No matter what you decide, there will be no penalty or loss of
benefit to which you are entitled. If you decide to withdraw from this study, the information that you have already provided will be kept confidential.

Also, the researcher may take you out of this study without your permission. This may happen because:

- The researcher thinks it is in your best interest
- You can’t make the required study meetings
- Other administrative reasons

Future Contact

We may like to contact you in the future either to follow-up to this study or to see if you are interested in other studies taking place at Boston University.

Do you agree to let us contact you in the future?

______YES  ______NO  ______INITIALS

What are the risks of taking part in this research study?

Questionnaire/Survey Risks

You may feel emotional or upset when answering some of the questions. Tell the interviewer at any time if you want to take a break or stop the interview.

You may be uncomfortable with some of the questions and topics we will ask about.

You do not have to answer any questions that make you feel uncomfortable.
Loss of Confidentiality

The main risk of allowing us to use and store your information for research is a potential loss of privacy. Assuming you express negative feelings about your work environment, potential consequences for breach of confidentiality could entail embarrassment or administrative actions against you. We will protect your privacy by labeling your information with a code and keeping the key to the code in a password-protected computer.

Are there any benefits from being in this research study?

Others may benefit in the future from the information that is learned in this study regarding music and literacy integration. It can help them to better understand this strategy if attempting to implement it in their schools.

What alternatives are available?

You may choose not to take part in this research study.

Will I get paid for taking part in this research study?

We will not pay you for taking part in this study.

What will it cost me to take part in this research study?

There are no costs to you for taking part in this research study.

What happens if I am injured as a result of participating in this research study?

If you are injured as a result of taking part in this research study, we will assist you in getting medical treatment. However, your insurance company will be responsible for the cost. Boston University does not provide any other form of compensation for injury.

If I have any questions or concerns about this research study, who can I talk to?
You can call us with any concerns or questions. Our telephone numbers are listed below:

Eunice Marrero               Dr. Manny Brand

281.796.2229               mannyinbali@gmail.com

mli.study.2013@gmail.com

If you have questions about your rights as a research subject or want to speak with someone independent of the research team, you may contact the Boston University IRB directly at 617-358-6115.

Statement of Consent

I have read the information in this consent form including risks and possible benefits. I have been given the chance to ask questions. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in the study. I have been given a copy of this form.

SIGNATURE

______________________________________
Name of Subject

______________________________________   ______________________
Signature of Subject        Date
I have explained the research to the subject and answered all his/her questions. I will give a copy of the signed consent form to the subject.

________________________________________________________________________

Name of Person Obtaining Consent

________________________________________________________________________

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent    Date
Appendix C: Interview Protocol for Music Teachers

Interview Protocol for Music Teachers: Music and Literacy Integration Practice

Time of Interview:
Date:
Place:
Interviewer:
Interviewee:
Position of interviewee:

(Describe the project to interviewee)

Questions:

1. Please describe your position and what led you to this career choice.
2. What is the first thing that comes to mind when you hear the phrase “music and literacy integration”
3. What are your beliefs regarding music and literacy integration?
4. How did you become aware of music integration?
5. What compels you to integrate music and literacy in your classroom?
6. What aspects of your personality and attitudes contribute to shape your feelings about music and literacy integration?
7. To what degree does this instructional strategy complement your teaching philosophy?
8. To what degree do you deem music and literacy integration helpful to your students’ academic achievement?
9. What evidence can you provide to support your statement?

10. What challenges do you face when integrating music and literacy?

11. Please share any frustrations you have experienced when integrating music and literacy in your classroom. (How did you deal with or overcome these frustrations?)

12. What is your level of confidence when integrating music and literacy integration?

13. Please share any successes you have experienced when integrating music and literacy in your classroom.

14. What professional development opportunities regarding music and literacy integration are available to you in your area?

15. How have these professional development opportunities helped you in implementing music and literacy integration in your classroom?

16. How have these opportunities helped you achieve your professional goals?

17. How does your school principal value music and literacy integration?

18. How does your curriculum specialist value music and literacy integration?

19. In an ideal situation, how should music and literacy integration be valued?

20. What professional development opportunities regarding music and literacy integration does your school principal and/or curriculum specialist provide?

21. How have these professional development opportunities helped you in implementing music and literacy integration in your classroom?
22. What role does the available research regarding music and literacy integration played in the implementation of music and literacy integration in your school?

23. What advice would you offer to a music teacher trying to implement music and literacy integration in their classroom?

24. Any other remarks you wish to convey regarding this experience?

(Thank the interviewee)

(Adapted from Creswell, 2007)
Appendix D: Interview Protocol for School Principals

Interview Protocol for School Principals: Music and Literacy Integration Practice

Time of Interview:
Date:
Place:
Interviewer:
Interviewee:
Position of interviewee:

(Describe the project to interviewee)

Questions:

1. Please describe your position and what led you to this career choice.
2. What is the first thing that comes to mind when you hear the phrase “music and literacy integration”
3. What are your beliefs regarding music and literacy integration?
4. How did you become aware of music integration?
5. What compels you and your music teacher to support and practice music and literacy integration in your school?
6. What aspects of your personality and attitudes contribute to shape your feelings about music and literacy integration?
7. How does this practice complement your educational philosophy?
8. To what degree do you deem music and literacy integration helpful to your students’ academic achievement?
9. What evidence can you provide to support your statement?

10. What challenges does your music teacher face when integrating music and literacy?

11. Please share any frustrations you and your music teacher have experienced when integrating music and literacy in your school. (How did you overcome these frustrations?)

12. What is your music teacher’s level of confidence when integrating music and literacy integration?

13. Please share any successes you and your music teacher have experienced when integrating music and literacy in your school.

14. What professional development opportunities regarding music and literacy integration are available in your area?

15. How have these professional development opportunities helped you and your music teacher in implementing music and literacy integration practice in your school?

16. How have these opportunities helped you achieve your campus goals?

17. How do you value music and literacy integration?

18. How does your curriculum specialist value music and literacy integration?

19. In an ideal situation, how should music and literacy integration be valued?

20. What professional development opportunities regarding music and literacy integration do you facilitate for your music teacher?
21. How have these professional development opportunities helped your music teacher in implementing music and literacy integration in your school?

22. What role does the available research regarding music and literacy integration played in the implementation of music and literacy integration in your school?

23. What advice would you offer to others trying to implement music and literacy integration in their classroom/school/district?

24. Any other remarks you wish to convey regarding this experience?

(Thank the interviewee)

(Adapted from Creswell, 2007)
Appendix E: Interview Protocol for Curriculum Specialists

Interview Protocol for Curriculum Specialists: Music and Literacy Integration Practice

Time of Interview:
Date:
Place:
Interviewer:
Interviewee:
Position of interviewee:

(Describe the project to interviewee)

Questions:

1. Please describe your position and what led you to this career choice.
2. What is the first thing that comes to mind when you hear the phrase “music and literacy integration”
3. What are your beliefs regarding music and literacy integration?
4. How did you become aware of music integration?
5. What compels your music teacher(s) to integrate music and literacy in your school/district?
6. What aspects of your personality and attitudes contribute to shape your feelings about music and literacy integration?
7. How does this practice complement your educational philosophy?
8. Do you consider music and literacy integration helpful to your students’ academic achievement?

9. What evidence can you provide to support your statement?

10. What challenges does your music teacher(s) face when integrating music and literacy?

11. Please share any frustrations you and your music teacher have experienced when integrating music and literacy in your school/district. (How did you overcome these frustrations?)

12. What is your music teacher’s level of confidence when integrating music and literacy integration?

13. Please share any successes you and your music teacher(s) have experienced when integrating music and literacy in your school/district.

14. What professional development opportunities regarding music and literacy integration are available in your area?

15. How have these professional development opportunities helped you and your music teacher(s) in implementing music and literacy integration in your school/district?

16. How do you value music and literacy integration?

17. How have these opportunities helped you achieve your educational goals?

18. How do school principals value music and literacy integration?

19. In an ideal situation, how should music and literacy integration be valued?
20. What professional development opportunities regarding music and literacy integration do you facilitate for your music teacher(s)?

21. How have these professional development opportunities helped your music teacher(s) in implementing music and literacy integration in your school/district?

22. What role does the available research regarding music and literacy integration played in the implementation of music and literacy integration in your school?

23. What advice would you offer to others trying to implement music and literacy integration in their classroom/school/district?

24. Any other remarks you wish to convey regarding this experience?

(Thank the interviewee)

(Adapted from Creswell, 2007)
Appendix F: Interview Transcripts

Mrs. Smith

R: Can you please describe your position and what led you to this career choice?

Smith: I teach K through 5 elementary music and I have wanted to be a music teacher ever since I was a little kid. I like to sing and I was always making my little brother do my homework. I mean, making up homework for him to do! And I was the teacher and I always wanted to be an elementary teacher and in high school I decided to be a choir teacher. I wanted to be a choir teacher ‘cause I love to sing. And I went all the way through college thinking I would come up being a choir teacher and I could get a choir job. And I got an elementary job and I thought, “oh, now what do I do?!” And I went to a couple of Orff workshops and I had a great mentor teacher and I’ve been doing elementary music ever since.

R: So do you think your experience with music, did you have any experiences with music as far as ensembles and…um…music ensembles or performances, when you were in school that might have inspired you to be a music teacher? Why a music teacher?

Smith: Definitely, I was very involved in church music as a child. And my mom was always directing the musicals for the adults and for the kids and I got involved with that at a very young age. I was, you know, directing musicals and assisting directors when I was like in late elementary and junior high and in high school, and then lots of um, I grew up oversees so I did not have a chance for ensembles whenever I was in elementary and
in junior high. But I did a lot of private lesson work. And then when I came back to the
states then I was involved in lots of choral. Lots of choral activities. Lots of choral music.
R: So, talking about music, when you hear the phrase music and literacy integration, what
is the first thing that comes to your mind?
Smith: (Thinks about it and smiles). Um, I would say, helping children learn. Helping
children learn literacy. Helping them learn to read using a different, a different avenue.
Versus just the way that they learn in their regular classroom.
R: So using music, you would say, using an alternative….
Smith: An alternative way of learning something.
R: So what are your beliefs about literacy and music integration?
Smith: I guess that my biggest belief is that in the music classroom, we need to be
teaching music for music’s sake. That’s the number one thing. I need to be teaching
music for music’s sake and when the kids come to my classroom they need to experience
music and quality music. But then under that umbrella if there is anything that I can do to
improve their literacy with quality music and things I’m already doing then that is a
really wonderful thing I can do for kids. [3:30]
R: So do you think that what you are already doing somehow supports literacy? Or do
you think you have to do something aside from what you are doing, still with music, but
you have to, like, do it separately in order to support literacy?
Smith: I think what I’m already doing supports literacy. Especially things like, I don’t
know if you want to get specific…
R: Yes!
Smith: …things like supporting fluency in everything we are doing with language and meter, is, you know, working towards their fluency, that is the thing that comes to mind immediately. Especially with like English language learners or whatever they call them in this day and age, who are learning English, ‘cause I teach at a bilingual school. And, you know, I am NOT bilingual! (laughs) It would be nice if I was! But everything that I can do with music just really helps with their fluency. It helps their English skills, it helps their fluency with reading. That’s the number one thing that I think. I think that, now, If I really wanted to be incorporating literacy or helping their literacy, I think I would need to do more concretely than what I am actually doing now. But I do think that what, what we do in general, I think it helps them.

R: It gets the job done…

Smith: I think is definitely beneficial to them.

R: How did you become aware of music integration?

Smith: I think that the biggest thing, especially in Orff-Schulwerk, we use a lot of speech. Everything comes from speech, lots of speech activities, lots of poetry, lots of great emphasis in incorporating children’s literature, nursery rhymes. And when you fall under that umbrella of, you know, all those things, well then a lot of those literacy concepts come popping up, ready or not. You know, here they come. And, um, that’s kind’a how I became aware. Is uh going to workshops, under those topics, you know like using poetry in the music classroom or children’s literature, and I brought some stuff for if you want to take a look.
R; Yeah, definitely I want to take a look at what you have, ‘cause um, I think is great to see what you have and sometimes, you take a second look at things and you go…

Smith: Oh yeah, I was looking back at some of these things and I went “Oh, yeah, what a great idea!” “What am I not doing that?!?” “I heard about this 5 years ago!” “Oh, rats!”

R: It might be a little factor called “time”….

Smith: Well but yeah, you go back and you’re like “oh, yeah, that’s a really good idea” And I think that the time is the biggest thing, cause, you know I took a picture to show you all the children’s books that I have in my classroom like is ridiculous how many books I have purchased for my classroom. I just took a picture to entertain you! Those are all the books (shows a picture with lots of books)…

R: Oh my gosh!

Smith: Just the kids, children’s literature and poetry …

R; WOW!

Smith: That’s, You know, you have the same classroom as me. It’s just that much. And yet, the time, I might get to three or four of those books per grade level, if I’m lucky!

R: If you’re lucky. Aha.

Smith: Just because, if I want to do it well. You know if I want to really…

R: Yeah, If you don’t want to spend…you could spend a whole…

Smith: Not if I want to just read it and just move on. If I want to actually do something with it. Then I’m going to need a lot of time. And so, a lot of them, now that I only see my kids once a week. You know, a lot of it I don’t…I feel like I’m not as able to do what I could do, like, you know, say if you saw them twice a week. You know, just the once a
week for 50 minutes doesn’t go very far. The curriculum is big and there is not a lot of time.

R: Yeah. You end up picking and choosing. Almost…with the time constraint. That’s, that’s, I know. But, what would compel you, let’s say you have the time to do it, what compels you or what would compel you to use music and literacy integration in your classroom?

Smith: Um, I think, just the benefit that I would see for the students. Especially, um, right now, teaching at a Title 1 school. And um, maybe don’t put this in there but our test scores are not the greatest. They’re not., Our test scores could use some improving. I think that anything that I can do in my classroom that would help them, especially in the early years that would help provide them a better foundation, would be a really good thing. You know, I don’t think I am at the point of having to fight for my job by saying look what I am doing in the classroom to help support literacy in the classroom, I don’t think I’m anywhere in that position. However I think, you know, I think I should do whatever I can just for the sake of the students. You know, they can really use it.

R: Um, so what aspects of your personality and your attitudes you think contribute to shape your feelings about music and literacy integration?

Smith: I think that I am a purist in that, you know, back to how I feel about how I want music for music’s sake, I want quality music, I want to spend time learning musical concepts, I think that’s the thing that makes me shy away from it some. You know what I mean. I think that’s the thing that I think, ooh, you know, I need to be spending time, you know, teaching quality music here. However, the practical side of me comes in says, “ok,
how can you make this real to their lives?” You know like, whenever you read a book to students in the kindergarten and first grade and they [inaudible] “That’s a rhyming book!” “This is a rhyming book!” ”Aaah, I know it’s a rhyming book!” But that’s the kind of thing, you know, this is where they live. They are living with rhymes. This is what they are learning. And so anything that I can do…

R: Especially at that early age.

Smith: Yes, so anything that I can do that reinforces that, well I am meeting them where they live.

R: Yes, exactly.

Smith: So, that’s perfect. And they’re going to be right there in my hand if am meeting them where they are.

R: And especially, you know, I don’t know, you know, when you see them connect with something that they already know or they’ve already heard. You know it’s…

Smith: It’s a big deal!

R: It’s a big deal for them. Yea.

Smith: So this year they’ve been raising their hands and they’ve been saying: “Mrs. ______, I have a connection to make.” “Okay, go for it!” You know they’re so perfect and proper. You can tell they’ve been really working on that ‘cause they’ve been saying “I have a connection” “Alright!” “What is it?” It’s very sweet.

R: It is cool. I’ve had Kindergarteners and they go like this, they have a little signal. A connection, a connection. But is great, like you said, it’s, you know, you see their little lightbulbs, you know turn on: “hey wait a minute, I’ve heard that before and I have a
connection” And that’s important if we can provide that connection, I think.

Smith: Definitely.

R: Um, so, you’ve mentioned that you’re a purist and that you prefer to do, you know, music for music’s sake. Um, but, do you think this instructional strategy complements your teaching philosophy in some way?

Smith: Definitely.

R: Okay. How?

Smith: So I think that, well, this may go with a different question, but I think that if we had a little bit of training as music teachers for here are some strategies to help boost literacy that you can, you know, dovetail right into what you are doing. And I have never been to a workshop that I felt was that. Maybe that’s going to be your workshop! Yay! I’ll come! Because you go to a workshop, I have tons of notes to show you, you go to a workshop, and it is children’s literature in the music classroom. And there are all these books and activities that you can do, but the actual literacy concept may or may not be there. It’s just using literature in your classroom. Or is poetry, using poetry in the music classroom. Okay, so now you are using poetry, but where is the actual link? Like where is the concrete something or other that is the link. That is, I think the piece that, is missing and that is the piece that I would like the training on. Because, you know, you’ll go to a training, like if you go with classroom teachers, and they are working on all their literacy strategies. Well, you might be able to gleam something from that if you work really hard at it. But it’s so hard, I think, to get through past all the stuff that they are talking about first grade reading whatever. It’s so hard to get through that to get to the strategies that
you think you can use in the music classroom. So, if somebody, maybe a music person who is working with a literacy person and could connect some of that. I think we are probably doing a lot of it though we don’t even realize what we are doing. You know, we had that, when we emailed originally, I was like I don’t know, and you were like I think so. So ask me your question again and I’ll come back to it.

R: Well, how, to what degree this instructional strategy, music and literacy integration, would complement your teaching philosophy.

Smith: Okay, so my philosophy is that kids need to be actively engaged in music making. That’s what I want them to be. I don’t want them to be passive about it. I want them to be up and active and creating and moving and making music all the time. That’s kind of what I want them to be doing, okay. So I would say the literacy component comes in, um, and I keep coming back to that, but to the poetry and speech and, um, especially in Orff Schulwerk, before we get to the singing a lot of times we do a lot of speech. Speech first and then the singing because that’s just very natural for kids because that is how we talk all the time, is very natural. So coming back to speech and lots of nursery rhymes and doing things in meter of two and meter or three and things in 6/8 and lots of moving around in those different meters and moving around with speech and poetry and stories and, um, not really sure if I’m answering your question.

R: Well I think you are because you, you know, you mentioned that for you is important that they are doing. you know, and these, um, you know, these speeches, these reading activities that you are mentioning, are activities they are performing they are working on it, they are moving on it. They are probably seeing the literacy from another perspective.
You know, as they are not seating down with a book, instead they are moving to it, uh…

Smith: Right or they’re playing…

R: They are playing…

Smith: Or they are playing instruments to the rhythm of a poem. So there is your text piece again. Or you know, you read a poem and you figure out what meter it’s in so you know how to move. You know, are you in duple meter, are you triple meter. Man, I was thinking when I was in high school and we were analyzing all this poetry, and you know whatever the Shakespeare I was [crosstalk]. You know what I mean, all that and now it’s like well that goes with music so well. Now I know, after I’ve gotten involved with Orff Schulwerk and all this stuff with speech. We’re analyzing speech and meter all the time. And I’m thinking I wish I would have known that when I was in high school. It would have helped out.

R: See and that’s why I think when we are, um, kids are in a reading class and they’re reading a book there is a purpose for that book reading that that teacher has. You know she is not giving them a book just because. There is some kind, there is a purpose behind. So I wonder, in music, you know, going back to what you said, that link that we are missing, I wonder if it could be, you know that we are probably working on that same skill that that kid is seating down when he is reading a book. Perhaps we are working on that same skill when that kid is moving to the piece or performing on an instrument along with it or saying that speech to the rhythm…

Smith: Yea, like right now we are doing a poem in third grade and first, you know, we just read it and we read the poem and it, you know, you can read poetry lots of ways so I
had to teach them the way in the meter that I thought I wanted to do as a class, you know what I mean, and then, we got up and we were walking to the beat while we were saying the poem and we were walking the rhythm and then we were playing it on hand drums and we were learning by the strong beats and weak beats and hand drum technique. And, you know, at the end, they had this beautiful poem that works as a poem and it works as a canon, imagine that. And it works as a movement activity and they have their hand drum technique and it all comes back to the poem. You know, I don’t know what concept in literacy was I really working on. Now you definitely can talk about fluency, because today I taught it to a bilingual class and let me tell you, it was not easy. Because we come from two totally different perspectives and it was difficult where tomorrow, I will not have a bilingual class and it will be much smoother. You know it will be much easier because they have to go through that language barrier the whole time I am speaking to them. You know and the whole time they are learning, you know, they are working twice as hard.

R: So I wonder if you were working on whatever that skill was and we just need to label it you know.

Smith: Yea, I think.

R: But then you didn’t have to divert from your music teaching.

Smith: No, I didn’t. But I would if I was able to better label what I was doing, think how happy my principal would be. My principal would be super happy. If I was better able to label that. Good thing you’re doing this research. I feel like XXX ISD workshop.
R: Interesting. So, you were talking, in your class, you know, you were working with these non-English speakers or bilingual?

Smith: Yeah.

R: So, um, so how do you think, for example, to them how do you think, uh, and you’ve mentioned this already but, I just want you to maybe explore it a little bit more, how do you think this integrating music and literacy will help them achieve academically? How do you think, you know, if you integrate, which sounds like you are doing it, um, how do you think this would help them, um, succeed?

Smith: I think the fluency is the big, the big,…

R: The big issue…

Smith: The big thing that music can help, um, you know either English Language Learners or Bilingual students or um, students, who are struggling. I think that the fluency is the biggest thing. Getting them, getting them up and going through you know not “the…cat…sat…on…the..” you know, but, getting them, okay “the cat sat on the mat!” You know, get it going, I don’t know what all the words are to describe that, but I think that that’s the biggest help I can provide them, and then basic stuff, like next week in first grade we are doing an activity where they are singing this little song and they have these, those little tippy toes puppets…those little finger puppets? And then they have to sing it by what their puppet is doing and [21:47] the end of the song it has to rhyme with an “ee” sound so with “me,” “tree,” “see,” “bee.” So before we do the activity, especially with this English as a second language learners, un, you know, we make this big list of every word we could possibly think of that rhymes with “me.” And
leave it up on the board so they like have some words, so they have some words to practice with. And then we need to go around and make sure they can label all of their “tippy-toe” friends, ‘cause they might not know what is the word for this, you know this is “seal” or weird ones “walrus,” or I’m like “I don’t know, make it up, let’s pretend, I don’t know what that is, let’s pretend it’s a walrus, I don’t know!” You know we are first labeling that so we are helping them with vocabulary and then we are working on the phonemes, or whatever those are, and rhyming words and you know. So I think, I think, just basic things, I can help them with. And just very basically just reinforcing things they are already hearing in their classroom. But maybe exploring it in a way that maybe is not more fun, but is different, and fun and engaging and they don’t realize that they are …their rhyming words. You know, they are singing about their “tippy-toe” friends. You know, is fun.

R: Um, so, I think you, my next question was going to be what evidence can you provide to support your statement, do you, but it seems like you know, they are, you know, at least having fun. Would you say that, you think you’ve noticed maybe some improvement in some of them with their language skills?

Smith: Sure, I would say, especially like, uh, when we’re working on maybe one song for a longer period of time, like, when we are working on like a concert that is coming up and, um, especially if it is a song that has a lot of words, I notice that those students are the students that struggle. And at the beginning it seems like an insurmountable task to learn this song that has three verses. You know, it’s a lot of words and it’s really tough going [23:59] at the beginning, but with lots of practice and movement and clapping and
speech, anything I can think of to spice it up and change it up so it doesn’t seem like
drudgery, you know, I think it really increases their vocabulary because their looking at
that word and say “what is that?” you know. So we are talking about what this words
mean and then, we are working on that fluency again. Or just we are getting it all out. At
the end they can sing the song really well. And think how many words they didn’t know
that were in that song.

R: So you see from, like, barely singing the song to completely singing the song.

Smith: Right. And I find with those English, English learners that a lot of them, that they
don’t match pitch at all when they do not, when they’re struggling with uh vocabulary,
and the words. They, they don’t match. They’re way under and they are just “urrrrrrr”
because their so many steps that they’re trying to process: comprehension, vocabulary,
you know, enunciation, like how do you, do you say all those words, you know, fluency,
meter, how do you get them out at the right time. Well, no wonder they’re not matching
pitch?!

R: Yes, that’s the least of their focus. They’re not, they’re not…

Smith: There’s no way. But, you know, over time and, you know, lots and lots and lots of
repetition, you know, pretty soon, there they are, they are matching pitch, they just took a
little longer to ‘cause they had to go through all of those steps to get there. But how much
more fun is it, and fun is not even the way to approach it, but how much more rewarding
is it to learn that vocabulary and those skills through music than seating reading a book
and practicing reading. I don’t know, to me it just seems a lot more rewarding. And at the
end you have this product that you can perform, that you can sing and that you can keep
with you. Because you know, those songs that we work on so much they’re going to remember those…

R: Forever.

Smith: Those aren’t going away. You know, whatever language they’re gonna go and speak the rest of their lives, you know, that will always be with them. So I, I think it’s a, I think it’s a um, a perseverance issue on their part and mine. You know?

R: Both ways.

Smith: Both ways! And that’s another thing that I keep asking for training on is how can we, can we get some training on how, those of us that teach and especially bilingual schools, how can we do better with our bilingual students. Because most of us don’t have any training and we don’t have specials skills to, to help aid them. We just don’t, we just drop in there and then…“Oh, ok.” You know? And especially the way our bilingual program is, is structured, where, where you’re supposed to be moving out of it, you know? Where you are supposed to be gaining in the English that you’re put in [27:05] to the regular…that’s kind of the point of it which I didn’t realize for a couple of years, but I guess that’s the point of it. It’s that you are learning English and then you’re…

R: Ready to go…

Smith: Yeah, by 5th grade. You know, you’re ready to go. So especially for those students that need all the help they can get before they get to 6th grade. You know, some, training would be good.
R: Training on bilingual...bilingual training. You know, that is something that you don’t think much about. But, but, ‘cause the, I guess that the focus is for the classroom teachers with the ESOL training and all of that, you know, but we see these kids.

Smith: Yeah. And even people who don’t teach in a bilingual school, being where we are, we all have students that are bilingual and that are English second learners. We have lots of those students. We live in such a diverse community here in __________, that um, you know, we have so many languages spoken in our schools, it’s amazing.

R: Yeah, and Spanish is not the only language.

Smith: No, we have tons of all kinds of languages from Asia at my school. There’s ton of them. So you know, lots of and I don’t know about your school, but in my school they’re kind of grouped together and so classes come to me and they’ll be very heavily ESL populations. Because, I think it’s because it’s easy to provide services to them.

R: Together, yeah.

Smith: If they’re together. You know interventionist or whoever can pull them in groups of 5 and 6 and…

R: Yeah

Smith: …It’s not so disruptive for the classrooms in general.

R: Uhum, yeah…Interesting. Um, so, I think you’ve mentioned some already, you’ve mentioned time and training, but what challenges do you face when integrating music and literacy?

Smith: Um, Yeah, I think the training of knowing the labels of the training, knowing the strategies, you know, I might think I have a great way to, you know, present this song and
talk about rhyming words. But, um, I’m sure if I had some concrete, more concrete
training that I might be able to do it more succinctly? You know what I mean? Instead of
going all the way around it. I might be able to get at the heart of the matter better. Or if I
had, if I had more training. I think that’s one thing. Um, challenges are student behavior.
Um, I currently work in a situation where I, I spend a lot of time, um reinforcing good
quality student behavior and that takes away a lot of time from when I could be teaching
any other concept. You know, it’s a lot of character education, just trying to teach kids
how they need to act, to survive, in an organized society. You know, that’s a big, that’s a
big challenge…
R: That’s a big challenge.
Smith: …For me is behavior modification.
R: Especially when you see them for such a short period. Because, you know, classroom
teachers see them the whole day.
Smith: Oh yeah, they know all about them, they know their families, and they know lots
about them and the number of students. So the limited time is a factor and when you only
see them for, you know, fifty minutes once a week, um and you have all these things you
need to teach, well you may or may not um hit upon anything that may or may not have
anything to do with literacy in that day, or even in that three week block. You may or
may not, you know. Hopefully they’ll be something that overlaps, but there may or may
not be. [31:06] And then I think, just the, um, there so many avenues as music teachers
that we can focus on. You know, there are, there are so many things and I go in waves of
things I’m really excited about, things I’m passionate about, things I’m really excited
about and I kind of go on that wave for a while and then I come and go on this wave for a while. You know what I...you know when you go and hear someone inspirational…”oh wow, that’s, that’s really that’s cool!” You know and sometimes I get on a movement kick and we really do a lot of movement. And then other times, you know, so I think, I think that’s a good thing for kids, but I think sometimes that, that’s a challenge because you’re moving in different directions. You know, and then, sometimes you go on, like really, right now, I’m really focusing on part singing with a bunch of my grade levels, just ‘cause it’s the end of the year and they’ve done lots of singing and now I can do it, you know. It’s like “yeah, we can do this!” But, um, you know, we can’t do it all, all the time. And the other challenge I think is finding out where are these kids at with like their classroom teacher? Where are they at with learning how to read and where are they at with that? And you know within one classroom of learners you might have a huge range, you know, because I know one of my classes I had today, I had 3 or 4 GT kids. So they are – pshhh! - way out here and then I have several autistic children. You know I have, and I have several other special Ed students in one room. And then I have, you know, my general population, you know, it’s all in one class. So I think finding out where they are it’s a challenge. And I think too, I, I struggle with you and try to find out from like the classroom teachers. Like, what are you working on right now? Like, ok I know you are in the first grade, but, you know, right now, what are you working on? And if I really wanted to investigate that and really keep up with that, that’s times 6! Cause we have 6 grade levels. And right now, might just be my school, I don’t really find that we have an avenue for easy communication of that information. I find that we have really good,
seems like we have really good vertical teams. Like the science vertical team will meet
and someone from every grade level is in on that science meeting and I have no idea what
they are talking about, but while they are in there talking, I’m providing cover so they can
be in that meeting. Well then I have no idea what they are learning about in science! And
maybe they don’t talk about that in that meeting, I don’t know. But if they were talking
about what they are talking about in science and wouldn’t that be beneficial for the art
and the music teacher to sit down at that meeting too and just get some clue as to what
they are talking about? And maybe no body’s thought about that and so we never been
invited. But if they did invite us, then they wouldn’t have coverage for one of them so
then they’d also have a problem. You know, they couldn’t have their meetings. So that’s
a problem but that is, I find that, and when I taught in smaller schools in __________, it
was not as big of a problem. Because there might be two second grade teachers or three
second grade teachers. And I would see them in passing and I would be like “hey what
you’re doing in science right now?” or “ what are you working on right now in your uh
literacy block?” and they would say “oh we are working on this and that” and then I’d go
and make sure I made a connection. You know, but I find when there’s ten sections of
fourth grade it’s everything is such a huge scope. Is that the enormity of the task, it’s
sometimes overwhelming I just don’t even bother. That sounds pretty sad, but it’s kind of
the realistic.

R: So, would you say, you know that collaboration, you know, not in a negative way, not
that you or the homeroom teacher s or the specialists…

Smith: There’s not really an opportunity…
R: There’s not an opportunity to collaborate…

Smith: …for. There is not an opportunity being handed to me. Like if I want an opportunity, I have to go and make it happen. And then it’s on me whether I want it to happen. I don’t feel like there is an easy avenue for me to find out that information. I don’t know, I don’t have the solution, but…

R: Yeah. It’s a challenge.

Smith: It’s a challenge.

R: It’s a challenge. So have you had any frustrations when trying to integrate music and literacy in your classroom. And if you have, how have you overcome that frustration?

Smith: I think that the best thing as far as overcoming it’s just going and talking to these teachers, who are, you know, their whole, that’s what they do all day long. It’s teaching kids how to read all day long. You know, they’re totally, and just sit down and talking to them and say “hey what are you working on?” and “hey, what’s your favorite strategy that you are using right now?” I think that’s what’s helped me the most. And I’ll be honest, I have not had a chance or taken a chance to do that since I work here in ___________. But when I worked in smaller schools in ____________, we did that all the time, you know, because there was one literacy specialist in the building. Well now in my building, how many are there? Ten? [36:33] I don’t know. We have like thirty-some interventionists, I think.

R: Really?
Smith: Ok, maybe not thirty. Maybe that’s intervention and special ed. I don’t know, it’s, it’s a big group. It’s a big group, ‘cause it’s a very large school and it’s a Title I school. So lots of…

R: A lot of individual…

Smith: A lot of people, plus your classroom teachers. You know, we’re talking sixty classroom teachers. So, um, but I think that’s the best thing you can do, is to get in there and talk to somebody. The other thing that I like to do, I, you know, I go to a lot of workshops, I go to a lot of conferences, specially AOSA national conferences. I go almost every year, and, um, there’s, there’s so many sessions. That deal with literacy, maybe directly, maybe indirectly, but there’s so many sessions. And to go and hear and, you know, and there’s very little, um, especially at Orff workshops, there’s very little talking at you, it’s all, it’s up and active and you’re up and you’re doing whatever they’re teaching you, you know, you’re up and you do it so you may do fewer activities, but you’re up and I’ve been looking back into my binders from like 7, 8, 10 years ago and I remember when I open it up. And why do I remember? Because I got up and did it. Not because I sat on a chair and somebody talked to me about it. You know ‘cause [not intelligible], “Oh yeah, remember this?" "I’ve done it, but I don’t remember!" And it’s inspirational to hear someone talking about it. You know, get ideas from other people. So that’s I guess the second part of your question. [38:07] you know. How do you…how do you overcome that, I think that’s…So it sounds like what I’m saying is a lot of interpersonal, working with other teachers. I think if you’re just by yourself working in a vacuum in your classroom it’s easy to get overwhelmed. And lose sight of the big picture.
You just see your little slice of the pie, you know…

R: Your little end of the world…by yourself…

Smith: Yea, so I think that’s what’s provided the most inspiration for me to integrate anything. And I, did you see that email last week from ___________.? About the conference. That arts partnership?

R: Yes

Smith: And he was saying…he said in that email, you know, you would rock or something if it was like you and a classroom teacher that got together and present something, you know what I mean? And I was like, “oh that would be so cool!” And then I was like “who would I present with? “ And I was like “and what would we present?” You’re supposed to have like a video of like what you’ve already done in your classroom and I’m like “oh, I’m already supposed to have done this!” “Oh, I haven’t done anything!” Ahh, you know it sounds really cool, you know and…

R: It sounds great…I actually went to that conference though last September

Smith: Did you?

R: And it was great, um. I did not know how much is happening in this area with that and so many, uh, you know, uh, groups like __________’s Grand Opera and Museum of Fine Arts and you know all these people are already working with the schools and into developing these partnerships and collaborations. Uh, but yeah, you know, they were ready, they knew what they were doing…(laughs)

Smith: So obviously I won’t be presenting at that conference in September….But I did look into it…
R: Maybe next year!

Smith: Yeah, maybe, well you almost need a year to think what do you want to do and who are you going to collaborate with and get your [ ] off the ground and do it and say “this is what we did.” But before you’ve done anything it’s kind of like, no I can’t, it’s a little late for that.

R: All of the sudden say.. “It’s May, let’s collaborate and do something now”….No.

Smith: No, it’s not, that’s not going to happen..

R: It’s a short, short time….

Smith: But I was, I did think, I did think that that sounded, it sounded very cool.

R: But it’s fun, it made me laugh, ‘cause I felt exactly the same way! I felt like “this would be great, but maybe next year” ‘cause it’s too short notice. You know it’d be great if someone is already doing it, you know, and, you know they can get up and present, but…

Smith: Yea. To just to dream something up. Yea, because we had, um, the ________’s Grand Opera lady, what is her name? I can’t remember. How did you, have they ever come to your school?

R: Um…

Smith: Did the Storybook Opera?

R: I’ve done, yes, yes, I can not remember her name, though.

Smith: I can ‘t either…

R: But it’s like the group of four that have the whole, um, they have the whole scenery and they…
Smith: No, it’s not that. It’s just one lady and she comes out and she reads a children’s story…

R: No, I have not have that…

Smith: But she reads and she sings. She is a singer with the Grand opera and she comes and she sings and she does a little presentation and she has the power point of the book so that everybody can see the illustrations and they’re, they’re, they’re musical books but it’s, it’s a story that relates to music in a way that has some opera in it. And she reads and she sings, and talk about inspirational. [41:47]. Those kids, you know, they, they’ve just heard this book and it’s you know, a nice piece of children’s literature and they heard her sing and she talks about what’s like to be in the opera. It’s really cool. It’s a good, it’s a little, little, literacy connection there. It cool! It’s geared for K through 2 and they have a bilingual presentation.

R; They do a lot. ___________ Grand Opera, they do a lot with, you know, going into schools and you know doing that kind of stuff. That’s, that’s really, you know…

Smith: Ok sorry that…

R: Oh no, that’s a good resource and actually I’m going to be asking you about that, so remember that. Um, so, so, I think you’ve already said this, but can you expand a little bit more on what is your level of confidence when integrating music and literacy integration.

Smith: I would say, I would be at, I don’t know what the criteria is, but probably a beginning level of, like, let’s call it accidental integration.

R: {laughs} Integration by chance…
Smith: It’s happening and there’s some planning going into it, but I would say that there’s not… I would say that I’m not… I feel like I don’t have the resources or the training to be doing a lot. And I would say that I’m doing integration at a very basic level. I think everything I’ve described to you, is at a very basic level. I think if you describe to me some of the things teachers have talked to you about, that you’ve read about on your research it would be a lot more, it might be a lot more intense.

R: You would be surprised…

Smith: Or maybe not

R: You’d be surprised…

Smith: So I would say that, um, maybe accidental it’s a little too, not quite enough, but at a pretty basic level.

R: Yea, yea. Basic, I like that label, basic…

Smith: And I would say what I’m doing it’s good, its beneficial to the students. I would say it’s beneficial to me and my music classroom and the study of music, but, but how much am I really helping them as far as their literacy goes…. I don’t know. I think its beneficial, but I think it could be more. Do I think I could go over the top and make it too much, yes, but I think I got a long way to go.

R: We got to go to more trainings together and see.

Smith: Yes.

R: So, um, you’ve mentioned this already with your students that you’ve noticed that, when you are working with a program, for example, if they are English as a Second Language, you notice, you know that they, you know, start by not being able to even
match pitch to the end where they are able to sing the whole song, in pitch, confidently, yes. Are there any other successes like that that you would say you can attribute to music and literacy, um, in your classroom?

Smith: Um, I would say it’s little things like when those students pop up and are like “I heard a rhyming word!” You know, I would say it’s little things you know, when we are doing, um, nursery rhymes and they’re like “oh, we learned that in my classroom” or they learn it with me first and then two months later they learn it in their classroom, and they come back and they say…

R: They’re making that connection between your class and what’s happening in their classrooms….

Smith: Yes, making connections with the, especially nursery rhymes. With, like Kindergarten, although I’m not sure if my kindergarteners now, how many nursery rhymes they’re learning outside of my classroom. I’m not sure. But on some other places I’ve taught their, they learn a lot of nursery rhymes and those connections where pretty cool when they came with “oh yea, we learned about that in my classroom,” you know. Um, other things I was thinking about are like when we use children’s literature like predicting, um we talk about, you know, beginning, middle, end, you know, what do you think its going to happen next, “ok, what do you think about this?” You know, “Where are we in the story?” You know “Is this the end?” You know, I think, um, little thinks like, I think is little things so I can, I can support and I see connections, it’s I think the best word. Yea.
R: That they make connections, ok. Um, so what professional development opportunities regarding music and literacy integration are available to you in your area? Because you’ve mentioned…

Smith: Null…Orff…That’s true, now in our area we do have the Orff, there’s a __________ Orff association. They give three workshops a year and some of those workshops, well anytime, anytime, that the Orff processes it’s a big part of the workshop, you’re going to run into some of these concepts. Especially, use of the speech, sometimes using children’s literature, you know, fluency, meter, you’re going to run into a lot of that stuff at the Orff workshops. But specifically, like, arts integration, I mean, I haven’t seen anything, I mean I probably don’t have a really have a pulse on what’s being offered in the community outside of the Orff and the Kodály workshops, you know, or the __MEA Region Workshops. But like, specifically arts integration? Not very much. And I think I’ve mentioned this before. When I go to these national conferences, you know, there might be, you know you have to sign up, it’s not like __MEA where you just go wherever you feel like. You have to sign up for your sessions ahead of time, like register for them, because you get four workshops a day and you have to sign up for them and you know there might be 75 workshops and you’re picking 12. You know and then, and then, I, am I going to pick the integration one? Maybe, maybe not, it all depends on who the presenter is a lot of times. You know, so locally I would say, you have a great opening here.
R: {laughs}. Like I said, you know, like these, uh, now I recently learned of these, um, you know, like ________ Grand Opera, and um, as far as music I think they’re the only ones…

Smith: Yeah, how do you even …

R: Um, but yea, I think that it’s not really…I think it’s more to the, you know, inner city, inner city schools, a lot, they reach a lot of the inner city schools and I don’t know how, you know, they’re now with this ________ Arts Partners, partnership, they’re a little bit, they’re advertising it a little bit more. Although, like I said, I just don’t know how much of a training it is, as much as just offering collaboration. Yeah, let’s do a project together…

Smith: Right. Not how can we provide you with strategies.

R: Yes, exactly.

Smith: And I think, I think you’re right, ‘cause when I like whenever I taught outside of ____________, um, ____________ was a small enough city that with the ____________ Symphony, we had like a real partnership with them and they would provide us workshops. How you can teach this music and they would come out into our schools and the conductor would come into our schools because it was a small enough area. And I think that in this huge metro area, to have the actual opportunities for actual meaningful integration, for them to come out to our schools…they have so many schools that might be interested in their program. It’s almost like, you know, how do you have the opportunity. It would make more sense if they’re more involved with the schools that are closer to them.
R: Closer to them, yeah. ‘Cause there are so many.

Smith: We’re kind of out here in the ‘burbs.

R: Yea, yeah.

Smith: And some of us that our schools have the resources to go to them. And sometimes

{...}

R: But I think if they’d advertise at least more, I think, cause (cross talk)

Smith: Yea, ‘cause how do we know about these stuff? Like “Storybook Opera!” I don’t

think that a lot of people even know about it. (crosstalk). When my teaching partner and I

we’re looking for something we could bring in to our kids that wouldn’t cost a lot of

money. So we would just do a Google search, that’s how we found it. “Cause it only

costs like a hundred dollars.

R: So you know it’s something like if they would have sent a brochure probably on the

mail, or even an email, you could have probably found out about it, you know and, and,

know about it. I did not know. I only knew about the “Opera To Go.” That’s the one.

Smith: We haven’t had that just because it costs like seven hundred dollars. A hundred

bucks, what’s just….

R: Yea, a hundred bucks… So yeah, I think they need to be a little bit more about

advertising and letting people know, because like I said, I did not know anything until

you know, I went to that, um, conference on last September. And uh, __________

University also has uh, they have a, school of literacy and culture, is it a school, no, a

college, no, anyway, they have like a project, oh school literacy and culture project. And

it’s a division from, you know, its from __________ University and they kind’a deal with
that. Um, you know they have teachers and they do some things. Exactly what it is, you
know, I don’t know. But they kind’o work on, you know, that interchange of skills
between you know the different, you know the fine arts and literacy. Um, but like I said,
you don’t hear about them a whole lot. Um, again I hear about them in this conference
last September. So, you know.
Ok, so um, how do you think the professional development opportunities that you’ve
gone to, not the local ones that are barely available, but the ones that you’ve had, how do
you think they have helped you in actually implementing the music and literacy
integration that you actually do in the classroom.
Smith: I think that the first thing was awareness. To help with just awareness of “here are
something’s you can do,” “here are the strategies,” “here’s how it would benefit our
students,” and um, especially at a lot of these Orff workshops, because you get up and do
it most things are very practical. So I feel like I can come home and I can I can do it.
Probably all of these activities that I mentioned tonight, a lot of them have come from
these various workshops that I’ve gone to. Not a lot of creativity. [laughs] Not a lot of
ideas coming out of here [laughs]. But you know you see somebody do something and
you think “oh yeah, I can do that.” So I think that’s, I think pretty much, everything that
I would that I would file under arts integration or literacy integration in the music
classroom that I am doing has come from a professional development opportunity that I
have had for myself.
R: So you think it has helped you achieve your professional goals?
Smith: Definitely. Definitely. You know planting the seed. Helping with strategies for how, how are you going to do this, you know, and just, providing information so that you know that, so you even know that you are doing it. That’s number one, you know, are you doing this? Oh yeah, yeah I’m doing this….

R: Um, how do you think you’re school principal, and be honest, [laughs], how do you think you’re school principal values music and literacy integration?

Smith: Um, I think that my school principal is so overwhelmed with the enormity of her task that that is not even on her radar. I think she is new. She is only been in the position for a year. And there are many, many, many challenges to be met with students, with teachers, with parents, um, with the community, um financial. That I don’t even think this is on her radar. I don’t, I mean, I think she’s been in my classroom one time in twelve months, or fifteen months. I just think that, I think that the job is so huge that that’s not even, that’s not even, and she has not been my, she has not been, she is new as a principal and at the building and she has not been my, what do you call that, evaluator…

R: Eh, appraiser?

Smith: Appraiser. So she has not had the opportunity to see this in action. So, I’m not sure if she was a classroom teacher herself. So I’m not sure what her experience might be as far as, um, that kind of integration when she was a classroom teacher. But as like the principal looking down, I think that’s probably not on her radar. I think it’s just not. She is probably not a good person to interview [laugh]. But it would be interesting to ask her to see what her opinions are. I think that she would be open to anything that she thought would help her. And I think if she thought that this was something beneficial, then she
would be all about it and would find the resources or the time or whatever it took to make it happen, because I think that she is open to anything that works for kids.

R: So she is open, it’s just that (crosstalk) she is not aware. If you present to her, hey look…

Smith: Yea, she is not aware… She would be extremely supportive. I think she would go for it.

R: um, and how do you think you’re Curriculum Specialist, now you mentioned you have like several, do you have like a language arts instructional coach?

Smith: Yes, we do.

R: Ok. How do you think that person would value music and literacy integration?

Smith: Now that person, I think, would value it a lot. I don’t know if that person knows anything about this, but I know that that person, um, I think would value that. And I know she send me several emails. She is new too, but, um, she sent me…anytime she sees anything out and about her training or wherever she, is on the internet or wherever she sends me emails of things that she thinks are appropriate or that relates to the arts. I know today she sent me an email with the ________ conference or [crosstalk]. Today that email came across her desk and she sent it to us right away. So I think that person would be extremely supportive and that’s probably the person in our district who if you really wanted to get something going and you really wanted to find out, you know what are these teachers working on (crosstalk) she is probably the person at the top of the pyramid that could help connect us and help make those connections.

R: Okay. At the district level?
Smith: No, like at the building level. At the building level. I think she would be the one
to, if the music teacher talked to that coach who knows what is going on at the classroom
level vs. trying to corner a classroom teacher all the time. But then again, I think their job
also is very overwhelming and I think that if I said, hey can we sit down to talk about,
you know, music and literacy integration. I think they’ll be like “are you kidding me?”

[58:50] “Do you see what I have to do?”

R: “I just have like three RTI’s and uhm five…[crosstalk]

Smith: But wouldn’t that be interesting? And maybe as you talk to some of them, maybe,
I don’t know, I think that’ll be really interesting.

R: They would probably be very willing, you know

Smith: Yeah I think, willing.

R; I think you’ve touched on a very important word and I think it’s you know
overarching everything. Uh, awareness.

Smith: Awareness.

R: Awareness from music teachers, from you know the principals, from I think from
everybody. If you know, if we would be a little bit more aware of what is it, what is it,
what it entails. Probably, I don’t know, maybe something would happen.

Smith: I think so.

R: So in your um, in an ideal situation. Where everything is perfect and everybody is
aware, how do you think that music and literacy integration should be valued? Ideally.

Smith: Ideally. Well, ideally, I think it could go both ways. Where classroom teachers
could be using music to help teach literacy and we could be using literacy to help teach
music. And music to help teach literacy in our classrooms. I think it could go both ways. And I think we could work collaboratively and find out where those kids are and those students are and work together and I think it could be very valuable for students. I think it could just be amazing. If we all knew what to do.

R: So in a perfect world.

Smith: I think we would. Even in a less than perfect world, I think, especially, those of us that teach in title one schools, bilingual schools, and very diverse communities, where there’s a lot of poverty, I think that um, anything that we could do to promote literacy would be so valuable for our students.

R: um, so are these professional development opportunities that you take. How many of these are supported or provided like financially, you know, supported, by your school principal or your curriculum specialists? Is there any of these professional opportunities that they…

Smith: Well they provide sub the sub days. My principal would provide the subdays. So this year I took five days of professional development or four and a half and all those days were granted to me, but I didn’t get any money for any of them.

R: But you get the subs

Smith: But I have the subs. Yes, I didn’t have to take a personal day. So that’s a kind of a mixed bag. So there’s support for if you want to go do this training, go for it. You could be gone, no problem. But you’re on your own dollar.

R: You have to pay for your own.
Smith: I pay for my own, yeah. But it’s pretty much been that way my whole career. I’m just happy if I can get the days off.

R: Yea

Smith: If I can get the okay to go. Unfortunately then you gotta pay the airfare and the lodging.

R: It adds on.

Smith: Yea, my husband doesn’t really like that part of it.

R: [laughs] Too bad, professional growth

Smith: That’s right

R: We all have to grow. And um, what role do you think that [1:02:04] the available research, and again we are probably gonna, we’re going back to that awareness part. How do you think that the available research, uh, or what role, does it play in the implementation of music and literacy integration in your classroom.

R: I would say the research for me, like, I haven’t done any research for this. But I would say research for me, the best, research, like, look my “Orff Echo,” look “Multidisciplinary Instruction,” well “ding, ding, ding!” I mean, there it is, and this is from what, this is from this Fall and this, like when I get a journal and la, la, la, but this is not the most scholarly journal yet. That’s one of their big things is that they’re trying to make their journal more scholarly. But anyway, um, you know, this I can do. This I can read, these articles are relatively short. They’re, many of them are rooted in research. They still have practical applications. So you’re not just reading research with no application. You know what I mean, I don’t, personally enjoy just reading the research. I
want to know like, okay, what does this mean, what is it, how can I do this? Um, this is, [crosstalk]

R: So these have probably done the research for you, right?

Smith: Yes, and this is part of their project like you’re doing your dissertation..

R: They have compiled information and then given you practical use…

Smith: Yes, and that to me is the most useful thing because then I can take this information and go from there. But I would say, um, I am not aware of like how much research there is or what kind of research there is on the topic and if any of it would be beneficial. This is like one little small way I can gain some of that knowledge.

R: That’s smart, you know. ‘Cause, you know, you, reading the product of that research, and what you can actually take into your classroom.

Smith: Right, and that’s kind of hopefully the point of everybody doing all this research. Is that okay, tell me what I really need to know. You know all the details. Help me get the highlights so I know what to [crosstalk]

R: Okay, so what advice would you offer to a music teacher that’s trying to implement music and literacy integration in their classroom.

Smith: I would say try to find some training. Is number one. I would say, talk to your, now I’m on this instructional coach kick, good idea. Talk to your instructional coach. Talk to your teachers. Find out where are the kids what are they working on. What are the goals they’re working on right now. And I would say maybe pick one grade level for me its first grade, you know. Where they really learning how to read, well it’s first grade.

Okay so maybe pick one grade level to start. Find out, that’s what I did when I was a new
teacher. I picked one grade level to start with. I started talking to the teachers you know “what are you doing,’ “what are you working on” and gained a lot of knowledge from that person. And uh, go from there. Talk to other music teachers find out what they’re doing. How are they’re integrating. Um, just, gain as much information from other people. Start locally maybe in your school, in your school district, you know maybe like at TMEA thing, you know, go to a state conference. See what you can find, yeah.

R: You’ve mentioned and I did not ask you before, but you mentioned, keep mentioning, you had the opportunity in the past in that other school because it was smaller. You had more communication and you know you had more opportunity to communicate with you know the teachers. um, so do you think, would you say that you were, you were able to integrate better or more often in that situation than now that your current situation?

Smith: Yes, I would.

R: ok

Smith: I think um. more opportunities, to collaborate, more opportunities just to visit for lack of a better word. To touch base and find out um,

R: Was that a Title I school too or no?

Smith: No, I think that’s the other big thing. Um, no those. This is the first Title I school I worked and the Title I maybe is not the issue, but, dealing with um, I think children in poverty and low income students, the behavior is the thing, you know, there’s so much time spent on the behavior that you know, I feel like some days, is about fifty fifty. It’s about 50% me teaching and 50% me working on behavior. You know well that doesn’t leave a lot of time to integrate anything. When you only got 50% of your 50 minutes. Is
not a lot. You know and not all days are like that. But there are days that can be trying.
Yea I think that’s and those are the kids that need it the most.
R: Yea, they’re probably your first target. You know when you wan to do this.
Smith: Yes. Right and you know right now we have always kids who fail the STARR test. And so they’re being pulled out for that, right now, they’re being pulled for intense intervention like 12 days before they have to retest. You know because they fail the first test and they have to take a second test. And I’m thinking, okay if I knew more, what could I be doing and maybe not necessarily on those twelve days cause I’m going to see them maybe twice in those twelve days so that’s probably not going to work for me, but what could I have been doing all year long that would have helped them be better prepared when it actually came time to take that test. I don’t really know cause I don’t’ really know what’s on the test and what they’re learning, I’m not sure, but um I mean surely there’s something that we are doing that would support what they’re doing. I’m sure there is. I just don’t really know what it is. Awareness.
R: Awareness. That’s the big word. So any other remarks that you wish to convey regarding music and literacy integration?
Smith: Um, well I definitely think you definitely peak my interest in the topic, I think anytime you sit down and really think about it, um anyway for me, my interest is heightened. And I’m thinking you know what what can I do what am I already doing that falls under this category. I don’t know how to label it, you know what strategies could I use. What vocabulary am I using in my classroom just in general with my students that is helping them or what vocabulary could I acquire in a hurry and use that would help them.
So I think just um. I think we need more awareness, we need more training. I think we could do it. The one hurdle I think to get over are those other challenges we talked about is how do you integrate without loosing your focus on music for music’s sake and get away from you know you don’t want to get away from moving and singing and playing and dancing, You don’t want to get away from that, You just need to find ways to integrate a little bit so that s not you’re not simply sitting down.

R: Hopefully kill two birds with one stone.

Smith!: Yea.

R: You know that stone being your focus, you know, being what you’re trying to teach.

Smith; Yea and I think that um the whole speech whatever you calling, Dealing with speech so much on Orff Schulwerk, I think that’s lot of traditionally trained teachers and a lot of um Kodály trained teacher s that don’t have a lot of experience with that and um I think if they did have more experience with speech and poetry and children’s literature I think it will be a really beneficial thing. You know and even, you know not necessarily within the parameters of Orff Schulwerk, but you know just using a lot of speech I think that’s not something that traditionally music teachers have been trained to do and I think if they were using a lot of speech I think that’s a really natural way to integrate reading right there, You know I think that would be a really good thing for more elementary music teacher s to learn about and explore.

R: Thank you very much!
Mrs. Xu

R: All right, Eun Sung, can you please describe your position and what let you to this career choice?

Xu: Okay. I’ll say my name again. My name is Eun Sung Kim and I’m currently a Music Specialist at Kujawa EC/Pre-K Center. Basically, we have about 700 pre-K students at our school, and I see them weekly basis. We have rotations. They come to me from Monday through Friday. I see them 40 minutes per day, so it’s 200 minutes for them that I’m giving instruction in music.

   In our school, we have what is called IB Program, International Baccalaureate. We do a lot of inter-cultural and we try to provide integrated learning with music, literacy, social studies, and math and sciences, anything that you can think of. We try to make as much connections as we can, so it can click in our student’s mind as they learn, so that they can be more engaged in learning. What’s that another part of question?

Speaker 1: What led you to your career choice? What made you decide … a music educator?

Xu: Oh, what let me to become music a music educator? My mom was a piano teacher.

R: Do you play piano?

Xu: I do, yeah. Piano has been my primary instrument. I play the violin as my secondary. When I was in college, I was interested in a lot of other things. I think I probably changed my major, four or five times just trying to see from journalism to nursing. I finally came back to music education and that’s what I started with. My mom always told me that she
knew I’ll be a teacher one day because I love being with children and there’s just so many possibilities. Music has been a great part of me since I was young. I always accompanied choirs, at church and played the piano for the services.

R: In your schools that you attended, did you have a music, a regular music class and ensembles?

Xu: Yes and it’s kind of limited because I was … I grew up in Korea and I came here when I was 17 as a high school exchange student. Up until then it was very minimal, but in Korea, there’s a lot of private academies, that’s where I went to learn the instruments mostly. When I came here as exchange student, I was exposed to band program, and a lot of ensembles, and that’s when I knew, “Oh, I could do the music for the fun,” because when I stayed in Korea, I probably went to the conservatory to be a concert pianist, but I was very under the pressure and stress that you have to always compete with one another. When I came here, you really get to enjoy and have fun while playing music. You travel and play marching band.

R: Were you in marching band too?

Xu: Yes. I was a mallet player.

R: Oh, all right, percussionist too.

Xu: Yes. I wanted to share my passion and love of music with children and that’s what let me to become a music educator.

R: Very good. What is the first thing that comes to mind when you hear the phrase, “Music and literacy integration?”
Xu: The first thing that comes to mind, I think music and literacy is so well connected because in order to read music, there are lots of notation just like music alphabet. You got to decode, you’ve got to learn and a lot of thing is interconnected. For example, there are a lot of syllables in music, like, “Ta, ta, ti-ti, ta.” The children, they have to follow it with their fingers. They’re basically reading it, the same thing as reading.

The pitch awareness, like language. Here’s intonation, “Hello” Or “Hello.” In music it’s all about pitch you hear like, “Do, re, mi, fa, so, la, ti, do.” Language and music it’s very interconnected.

R: You would say that maybe there are music skills and language skills that are similar?
Xu: Definitely, yes.

R: What are your personal beliefs regarding music and literacy integration?
Xu: I think starting at … especially this young age is very important because that’s when children start to develop their brain and they learn their alphabet. I think I can find some resources, but there has been research that I have read that pitch awareness, it really greatly helps children to … if they develop pitch awareness it’s going to help them to read better, to become a better reader.

R: Audiating or hearing will help them … this feel of hearing will enhance the reading?
Xu: Yes, because in music we talk about a lot of high and low sound. When children are exposed to the concept like that, it’s going to help them as they read or listen to their book, they will see.

R: That’s when they make awareness?
Xu: Exactly, yes.
R: How did you become aware of music integration?

Xu: Part of it was because I wanted to … it all started with a class assignment that I had to find a topic that I’m interested in and then for my study as well. I read from I think, Music A-B-C, I think it’s one of the product that is being offered for the young children and they had a lot of good research in their articles that, how literacy is closely connected to music. I started to dig into it, and I did some test run with my students, and they enjoyed it, and they were catching on quick.

R: Was this a compilation of activities or lessons? What exactly is this?

Xu: For example, for the reading activities that we do … for the quarter notes, and two eighths, and things like that, we just started with the picture, they know, I mean the picture that I'm holding, this is bear. The children learned to read like, “Bear, bear, teddy bear.” And then they change that to, “Bear is how many sounds?”

And they’ll tell me, “One sound.” But there’s a one sound rhythm called, “Ta” because we use the Kodály method in our district.

They changed this to ice cream stick basically, but they regarded it as, “Ta, ta,” and then they are making, “Ti, ti, ta.” In the beginning of the year...

R: I want to take a picture as you talk.

Xu: Yes, that's fine. In the beginning of the year, they start with, “Bear, bear, teddy bear.” Of course they love to sing, “Teddy bear, teddy bear, turn around.” It's all connected and they like to tell me about, “I have pink teddy bear or brown teddy tears.” It’s part of them, “Oh, Ms. Kim, that’s bear, bear, teddy bear,” and then as the year progresses they’re changing this to, “Ta, ta, ti-ti, ta,” and then they are playing that on the drums.
Basically they're listening, they’re counting and they are playing, performing it, it's just part of them.

R: They're feeling it.

Xu: Exactly, yes. We have lots of different set. I have the Soda Pop, "Soda pop, pop, pop," and it’s not just ended here. They do the composition. There’s a several card, and they’ll make a phrase, and they’ll play it.

R: They use those as composition too because they’re like rhythm strips, but in pictures.

Xu: Right, exactly.

R: That is very neat.

Xu: It’s a good introduction tool. Later they will just use this to make their composition.

R: They’re thinking as they see the pictures helping also ... they’re thinking about the syllables in the words.

Xu: Exactly, yes. It helps them to be aware. Actually classroom teachers ask me if I could make them some copies of this, so they can point, and they can practice their reading in their classroom.

R: You have teachers in here that are interested in your research?

Xu: Exactly because when they come to the music class at this level, the teacher comes with them, so they see what I do in the classroom all the time. Another thing with the letter recognition, I think the teachers appreciate this. “Hot cross bun, hot cross bun.” It’s a very simple melody and we play games finding these alphabets while they’re singing.

We have a boom records. They hunt for the … this is for the exposure activity. They get to explore, “Oh, where is the letter E? Can you find?” and they will dig in, “Oh, here’s E,
and here’s D,” and three people, they will play the hot cross bun. I have my melody board here. As I point, they will play.

R: They will follow the letters. You have the letter recognition enters into that.

Xu: Exactly, and they love that song so much, “E-D-C.” I have the motion song that goes along so they can see the … even when they go to restroom during the class, I can hear, “E-D-C.” They’re singing their hearts out, it's just so sweet.

R: That’s very sweet. That’s a great resource.

Xu: Yeah, they have so many. Even the bell, “E-D-C.” Even my four year students, they can play the song all by themselves.

R: They’re just following that motion, that following those letters, eventually then will help them into the reading.

Xu: Right. Before the school year ends, they will be able to read the music.

R: To read that?

Xu: Yes. That’s my goal.

R: Fantastic.

Xu: They will be playing an ensemble, “E-D-C, E-D-C,” on the Orff because that is … letters are all engraved in this Orff.

R: Yes, and they can see it in there too.

Xu: Exactly, they love finding them. I’m kind of scaffolding a little bit.

R: Fantastic. That is great. They’re here until what grade?

Xu: They only come here for ten months, for one year. We are preparing for the graduation in the beginning of June, and then they'll be going to the feeder schools.
R: Okay. What age level is the oldest here? Is it all four years old?

Xu: It's four/five, and they turn five here.

R: Okay. This is kind of like their first …

Xu: Yes, first ever schooling.

R: Mm-hmm, and their first experience with music and literacy.


R: You’re starting them off. This is good.

Xu: I’m trying, yes.

R: That is very interesting. I think we’ve talked about this already, but I want you to expand a little bit more on what compels you to integrate music and literacy in the classroom.

Xu: There’s a lot of research that’s coming out and especially the statistics from the, I think, the government level. The reading level at the third or … whenever there's a start … Let's see. Okay, here. The America Reads Challenge, it reported a nearly 40% of the nation’s fourth grade students are assessed reading at or below. I think that’s really alarming and I’m so grateful that I’m in the first place to really have an impact on our students.

I think we have to start now, in here, and anything that I could do to help children to really engage in learning because if they engage in learning, learning math or literacy, everything else will just come on. I want them to enjoy learning. At this level, I’m not really trying to help my students to become a concert pianist or professional musician.
I’m trying to pull the connection and we have the literacy lab with a literacy teacher and I am working with her as well. A lot of thing that she does is also connected here.

R: You get to collaborate.

Sang Kim: Exactly, that helps.

R: That's fantastic, when you get to have that opportunity to be one-on-one working with the people in your building.

Xu: Right.

R: What aspects of your personality and your personal attitude do you think contribute to shape your feelings about music and literacy integration?

Xu: I love books. I love reading and I love writing. I think it’s sad that nowadays the children, they are introduced to TVs or other medias before they get to enjoy the really hard copy books, because there’s so much wealth from there. I have a lot of music and literacy book selection there. They’re just everywhere. When they come, they explore. The farming, they have Old McDonald. Their favorite is Bingo, B-I-N-G-O. I don’t know. They just get that song so quickly and in that song, they do, “B-I-N-G-O.” That’s their first five letters they get, no matter what, everybody. There’s no exception.

R: Don’t worry about learning your, A-B-C’s. It’s B-I-N-G-O first.

Xu: They get that first, yeah. The first five letters.

R: It’s “B-I-N-G-O.”

Xu: Mm-hmm, and “If you’re happy and you know it and …” As I introduce those books to them, they enjoyed listening to the song as well as following the story. That’s another way that I’m integrating literacy.
R: Integrating that literacy.

Xu: Yes.

R: To what degree you think that this strategy, the music and literacy integration, complements your teaching philosophy, what you believe as a teacher?

Xu: Can you elaborate a little bit more?

R: Yeah. Especially, being yourself a graduate student, you know that they asked us to develop our teaching philosophy, what is that you believe should happen in your instruction and your students should gain from your instruction. How does music and literacy integration compliment your philosophy, what you believe in?

Xu: I think the best part is probably it’s geared toward developing the whole child. I’m not here to just pass down the knowledge. The song and story, there’s a lot of good lessons that you can give it to a child instead of just having the child to listen to a song, “Okay, tell me how you feel, or what’s the melody, or how is the rhythm or dynamics used?” If you integrate more literacy in there, it’s helping them to be more engaged and connected to the bigger perspective.

R: That bigger picture.

Xu: Yes, and the bigger picture.

R: Good. How do you think that music and literacy integration is helpful to their academic achievement? When they move on from here and go to their bigger schools, how do you think this experience here helps them succeed?

Xu: I think first of all they are more … how should I say? It’s more relevant for them that what they have learned in here is not just finished in here. When they go to the upper
level and we of course we have the district curriculum guide that’s with the Kodály Method, it’s varied throughout the curriculum levels.

R: They will most likely see and hear the same strategies, or similar at least, in whatever they go?

Xu: For the most part. I’m not sure about the literacy integration teachers, because as you go to upper level, there’s more of music side of instruction that takes in. Especially at this level it’s really highly recommended that we should start and then let them integrate that.

R: Have you heard or do you have any evidence that maybe one of your students, one or several, I don’t know, have you heard of any students of yours after finishing their year in here and going into another school? Have you heard of their successes and maybe you think it could be that their success to be attributed to what you do in here? Have you heard or if you have anything specific?

Xu: I’ve been teaching music for eight years. The ones that I taught when they were kindergarten or first grade, now they are in high school and …

R: And that’s scary.

Xu: Yes I mean, I guess I’m aging. The good thing about is I still see them in music program. They are engaged learner and when I go to other schools to help with UIL’s or stuff like that, I still see them. They’re still around. When I go to district honor choir, they really have a competitive group because there are so many students that are selected one. I can see a few of my students in there and that excite me that they are still … they were in my choir when they were little. So, I can see the continuation.

R: They have taken what you’ve done in here and succeed later on.
Xu: I guess there’ll be other music teacher on the way. I want to believe, sure I …

R: You started them. You gave them that start.

Xu: Well, yeah. Learning is fun. I wanted to make sure they know that.

R: They were learning.

Xu: Yes.

R: Do you feel that you have any challenges … you face any challenges when you are integrating music and literacy integration?

Xu: First of all, it takes learning for the teacher part. Unfortunately, when I was in I guess as a music education student in college, I didn’t learn much about integration and especially with language.

R: Teaching at the college level, there’s no …?

Xu: There’s not much. There’s a course probably about curriculums but there’s not much mentioned of … it’s more of how to develop musician’s skills but not with the other stuff that matters. The staff development, it’s mostly on my own because it’s very hard for music teacher to go to like literacy step development unless the school is willing to send. Which my school is supporting, which I’m grateful because last time I was able to attend the _________ University, the literacy step development for four weeks. That was very helpful to get the perspectives of.

R: What university you said again?

Xu: _______ University. They have a literacy initiative at the school.

R: The school literacy and culture?

Xu: Project, yes.
R: With Ms. ________.
Xu: Yes. In our school, we have partnerships. Every year, at least ten teachers, we go there being trained.
R: Did you meet any other music teachers while you were there, or were you the only music teacher?
Xu: I think I was the only music teacher. The other were mostly classroom teachers.
R: I wonder what schools also send their music teachers, because I know classroom teachers, they will probably be there for sure.
Xu: Yeah. They take the priority and even in my school when the classroom teacher ... For my case, the classroom teachers who were signed up, they dropped off because there were some conflicts. I was lucky enough to be a part of it. It’s like expensive training, like $800.
R: Oh, really? Wow, yeah. That’s a lot of money. Is it for a whole week?
Xu: For a whole week, Monday through Friday.
R: During the summer?
Xu: Yes. It was a helpful training and they give you this big line with all the research and a lot of good information. I think I have it ... not here. That’s one of the challenges. I wish there’s more staff development opportunity that’s available for music educator that could integrate literacy in other areas. I have a bilingual in ESL and regular kids come to my class. One of the challenges I faced was, at this level of bilinguals, they don’t say, “E-D-C.” For them it will be “Eh-de-se.” If I say, “E-D-C” for hot cross bun it will confuse them.
In the beginning I hadn’t had much knowledge of and my Spanish skills are not as great. The teachers tell me, “Hey, that’s confusing to the kids, but can you please do it this way, instead of?” But I think communication and collaboration would solve the problems like that

R: Would solve that, because that was going to be my next question. How do you deal with … how do you overcome these limits, these challenges? You think with the collaboration that you have with your …?

Xu: Yes. I go talk to the skills specialist at our school. I collaborate with the literacy teacher and the literacy specialist, which is the librarian. We have tons of resources, and the teachers of course.

R: The classroom teachers. You would say you have that advantage of being able to collaborate with them?

Xu: Right, but everything is you really have to go outside of your box, unless you’re willing to really go outside of your comfort zone.

R: You probably initiate that contact, maybe, right?

Xu: Yes. I’m the one who always have to go out.

R: Once you ask, they’ll come, right, but you’ll have to go and ask?

Xu: Right.

R: How do you feel right now? What is your level of confidence when integrating music and literacy integration? How confident do you feel?

Xu: Is it by scale or what?

R: However you want to express it.
Xu: If one to ten scale, I’ll probably say, five or six. I think I’m maybe halfway there but I still have more rooms to grow. I’m hoping to look into some brain research that can confirm. It’s hard in this young age level, but I’m sure we’ll look for it. I believe as a music educator, it really helps my child because that’s how I … we need to experience this. I’m hoping for somebody to do the researching and confirm it.

R: Just waiting for someone to write it.

Xu: Yes. When you sent me the email, I’m like “Oh, she might be the one.”

R: I’m working on it. Can you share any successes you have lived here in your classroom when integrating music and literacy integration?

Xu: I think one of the classroom teachers share that, for some reason, the children, they were having hard time and they haven’t got the level they should read at certain point of time. But when I did this, they were catching up quickly, so she get the idea, “Oh maybe.” When she goes back to her classroom, that’s the method that she will do to try to get them started at least.

R: Seeing a classroom teacher recognize that what you’re doing here is useful in her class

Xu: Some of them, they are making their own composition in their classroom using, “Ta, ta, ti-ti, ta” which is even a better version than I’m doing. They asked me if they could borrow some instruments so they can do their own, like show whatever we have. The teachers share out and things like that.

R: Do you think that they have gained that knowledge, for example, “Ta, ta, ti-ti, ta” being able to speak that rhythm from you, coming here and seeing you?
Xu: Every morning I’m in the meet area where I greet every students to the school and instead of saying, “Hello, Ms. Xu.” They will say, “Hello everyone.” I have taught them, “Ta, ta, ti-ti, ta” too, so they would say, “Ta, ta, ti-ti, ta.” They will sing, “Rain, rain go away,” because that’s another song that they’ve been learning to, “Rain, rain go away.” It’s just part of their lives. I hear them singing throughout the school a lot. I think that’s R: That is definitely a success.

Xu: They like it.

R: You mentioned one already about the school literacy and culture projects, do you think there are any other professional development opportunities regarding music and literacy integration in this area?

Xu: In this area? I wish I could name just …

R: Yeah, of course.

Xu: There were some articles that I just printed up from researching web. Let’s see. These were some of the research that I based my instruction upon and the music collaboration with all the Charlotte teacher in music and all in literacy. This is one of my favorite, this is Susan Holmberg’s dissertation and I printed it off.

R: What’s it called?

Xu: Music Teacher Perception. They’re all music education in all over the years.

R: Yes, I think I’ve read that one. I’m going to write it anyway, Holmberg in what year?

Xu: Here.

R: Okay, so this is 2010.
Xu: I used this to do my qualitative research analysis and I found a lot of good information there. It’s very informative.

R: You think that, probably, opportunities of professional development in this area are scarce, maybe?

Xu: Very, yeah.

R: You have to do your own?

Xu: Yes, exactly. Last year really enrolled and pushed too.

R: Yes.

Xu: Yes, it’s hard.

R: That’s true, yeah, when you’re in a graduate program, yeah.

Xu: Right.

R: You’re pushed to go and make that dissertation for a grade.

Xu: Right.

R: How do you think that whatever you’ve been able to get, for example that school and literacy project that you attended to, how do you think it helped you and implement music and literacy integration in your classroom? Have you used the knowledge you’ve gained from that?

Xu: Sure. First is just raising awareness is probably what’s most important, because … there are a lot of music teachers in my district. They do a fabulous job and really to tell their … I wouldn’t say forced, but they are more encouraged to teach the music skills only, really. Unless they are really convinced that it would work because there’s another buy-in process. You have to convince teachers.
I think I would say the Kodály method, thankfully, a lot of folk songs and tales that helped teachers to already use the literacy components.

R: Do you use Orff also or you are more focus on Kodály?

Xu: I am Kodály certified. I have just level one, but still I haven’t had that chance to be certified in all training. Another thing I wanted to mention, Orff and Kodály, they do integrate the literacy quite a bit and my teacher is offering this during the summer.

R: That’s probably a professional development class?

Xu: Yes, that’s available.

R: How about your professional goals? You think that these professional development have helped you increase your professional goals or reach, I’m sorry, your professional goals?

Xu: In some way, yes. I think it helps to. Whether that’s a professional or from the child singing, you’ll learn constantly. It’s just part of doing jigsaw puzzle. I’m completing the teacher …

R: You’re growing up, yeah.

Xu: Yeah. One person at a time. It might not big, but I’m trying to …

R: Place it in.

Xu: Yes, in and out.

R: You’ve mentioned that your school principal is supportive of your professional development. How do you think she or he, I don’t know.

Xu: She, yeah.

R: She would value music and literacy integration?
Xu: She is very supportive. When she comes here to sit in the classroom to watch what children are learning and doing, she just loves that I am integrating a lot of other areas that’s connected to children’s lives.

R: She values, she respects what you do?

Xu: Yeah. She does value.

R: Do you have a curriculum specialist?

Xu: We do.

R: Okay. How about …

Xu: We get along very well and I shared my concern because she has has presented at IRA Conference several times, International Reading Association, and she actually asked me if I want to go with her to the one in Chicago. Well, the time it didn’t work out but we couldn’t go. I went to her house during the spring break so we could work on some ideas of how we can integrate music and literacy.

R: You’re really working with her hand in hand?

Xu: Oh yes.

R: That is fantastic. In an ideal situation, where everything is pretty in pink, how do you think music and literacy integration should be valued, everybody should value it?

Xu: I think it should start with the teacher training at college level, so that the prospective teachers, they have an idea. Music, although making a beautiful tone or being a good performers is important, it’s also connected and in order to reach our child at a deeper level, to really help them to be successful, reaching for their full potential, because reading and those skills, 20% your skills, we really, really help, need to focus on. Music
and literacy, it’s just a perfect combination in my opinion. From teacher training to … I mean the teachers who’s been already teaching for a long time, maybe we can encourage them during the staff development.

R: In your ideal situation, every teacher, or just music teachers, or every teacher?

Xu: I think even every teacher needs to.

R: Should have an awareness?

Xu: Yeah. They need to be exposed to more music. I have some classroom teachers that’s afraid even being in a music environment because they never had exposure. I think it’s good to really start them from there, because if they were exposed before when they were student then they wouldn’t be.

R: From college. In college you’re younger, you tend to try more things.

Xu: Learning an instrument, that’s just … you get to have fun with and making beautiful sound, it’s just so rewarding experience for anybody too.

R: Great. My next question, you’ve mentioned, but if you have anything else, just let me know. What opportunities, what professional development opportunities does your school principal and/or curriculum specialist provide? You’ve mentioned that they support you going to these places and you worked in collaboration with your curriculum specialist.

Are there any other opportunity that you think maybe in school? Is there any off chance where a staff meeting that you…?

Xu: Yeah. There’s a lot of literacy staff development throughout the year. Whatever I get from there, I try to connect with music and because in in our school, we do a lot of cultural, to raise the cultural awareness because we have diverse student background.
Those things helped. My students these days, they are learning a song from Africa. It’s called Funga Alafia. It’s a welcoming song. It’s on the fifth grade syllabus, but it doesn’t matter. They love it.

[Singing Funga Alafia]

Xu: Then they have the kids version online. They were, “Welcome doggie, come and play.” And they do, “Woof, woof, woof, woof, woof.” That’s “Ta, ta, ti-ti, ta” again, so I’m like, “Yeah.”

R: Yeah, there you go.

Xu: They love singing. We have a lot of West Africa, drumming and percussion instruments.

R: These literacy professional developments that you have here in school, you’ve been able to implement in the classroom?

Xu: Yes.

R: Has that helped you expand your music and literacy integration strategies and repertoire?

Xu: Yes. It helped me to become more aware of what’s going on inside the classroom that I can connect to, and I have the six weeks or nine weeks, the goals and objective that I use with my lessons. I’m making sure that I have some of that.

R: That you’re using that. I know that you’re a graduate student yourself and I see you have all these research and you’re familiar with research. What role do you think this research that you’ve made has played into the implementation of music and literacy integration in your classroom?
Xu: Just learning about more research and that I am … this is like my action research field basically because I see them and it’s being effective to children. They are learning faster. I think if more research could confirm that music in early childhood, the benefits of it then more music teachers should be placed from the early childhood education level.

R: Yeah. Yes. Do you think that probably from your research you’ve maybe of a notice that there’s probably more needed, is that what you would say that it’s…?

Xu: I think there’s a lot of research that’s saying the music helps children to learn to do this and that, but I’m not sure about the quantitative value, how music in early childhood in long run how …

R: Yeah, how measurable it is, and the integration of both. How does that really …. What advice would you offer to a music teacher trying to implement music and literacy integration? What would you say to them?

Xu: I would say to start with a song, the song book that … when I went to Rice University training, I learned about making a story basket. Basically there’s a little basket if you’re doing the Goldilocks there, you put three bears in there with a little girl and the book there. As children, they follow, they do the characters and they tell the story. I said, “Why not a song basket?” You put the songbook there with Old McDonald, a lot of animal masks. Even little girls, they are telling the story while they’re singing and they are … so that’s a good way to start.

R: So start, you would say, just start?

Xu: Yeah, song book.

R: Song book and take it from there?
Xu: Yes.

R: Any other remarks you wish to convey regarding music and literacy integration?

Xu: I think it will be good if the more music teachers, like early childhood music educator, there’s the opportunity for them to network so they can share the ideas because I feel like, I believe this will be effective. I want to share, but I’m not sure because there’s not much opportunity that we’ll meet unless there’s all the staff development and then that’s it.

R: That sounds you want …

Xu: More networking opportunity will be helpful.

R: Networking and staff development, definitely. I wanted to ask you one more thing. Do you think that being in an IB school it has probably helped you shape your perspective regarding music and literacy integration since the primary year program where it’s focused on inter-disciplinary connections? Do you think that has helped you into integrating more?

Xu: I think so. When I first came here, this was my first IB school and I was just so amazed with all these resources because most music classrooms, they are not equipped with this many resources.

R: No, this is beautiful.

Xu: The music teacher who were before, he wrote a lot of grant and we were able to secure these resources and can make connection with the people in Ghana using this. They use their language as whatever they play, it’s part of the language.

R: It’s part of the language. It’s the rhythm. It’s their way of communication.
Xu: Exactly. Just little things like that, and I can show you around my school, and you can see a lot of connections that’s being made with IB themes as well as the …

R: You think that’s probably has enhanced your perspective?

Xu: Yes. It helped me to … it gave me more opportunity to go further.

R: Okay. Thank you so, so very much.

Xu: No problem.

R: It’s been fantastic.
Mrs. Johnson

R: All right. My first question is, please describe your position and what led you to this career choice?

Johnson: My position is at an elementary school. It has been five years at an elementary school but last year they split the school in two with a primary school, a pre-K, K and first and then elementary school second, third, fourth and fifth. I’ve been working for the same school but in the same grade levels but at two different schools now. It’s an elementary music position. For second through fifth grade I have always taught piano in a piano lab and for pre-K through first, I’ve always taught general music. General music includes rhythm, using high and low voice, singing or playing an instrument. We would also learn about using different types of songs from different cultures so that it there is some social studies kinds of things. Also, there’s the development of playing which they’re singing music which we’re going to talk about later.

I came to this career choice because I have always been a musician. I’m a professional musician although I don’t make much money on it on the side. I am a singer-songwriter and I have my own band. When I was looking for full time work after my children were a little bit older, I was thinking that elementary music education would be a good fit for me.

R: I got you. You’re a singer-songwriter. Okay, that’s very cool. What is the first thing that comes to mind when you hear the phrase music and literacy integration? What’s the first thing that comes to your mind?
Johnson: The first thing that comes to my mind is yes, of course because when we are learning language the first way we learn language is by hearing and then by speaking. When you hear and speak, you can hear music words are … I mean we’re talking about vocal music where words are part of it. Children are attracted to rhythm. They might have chants or rhymes and windows are connected with music. It seems like there’s something about the brain that remembers them better, both the rhyming and the music associated with it. Also, hand movements. So when you put together an elementary music hand movements, language and music, the memory seems to just kick-in in human beings for reasons that I can’t speak to because I don’t know but it just seems to be true.

There is no doubt for me that my students who are English as a second language learn the phrasing, the vocabulary of English through chants and songs that we do in elementary music education. That’s what comes to mind for me.

R: All right. With that answer you seemed to advocate … you would be an advocate for music and literacy integration. Then what are you beliefs regarding music and literacy integration. You kind of just said a little bit. Can you expand a little bit more on what your beliefs are regarding music and literacy integration?

Johnson: Well, I guess when you call them music and literacy integration, there’s kind of an assumption that you mean that they’re not always integrated. I would say two things for that. Number one, they already are integrated. There is no way we can separate out the learning of language from teaching vocal music. It is that that just is.

Now, in terms of the way that we have education as a whole and there are divisions between those who teach Science and those who teach Language Arts and those who
teach Math and those who teach other subjects, the Social Studies, those things overlap but sometimes we separate them out in order to have certain times of the day and certain teachers who are experts in order to teach those things. I do think that … I mean when talking about belief … I do believe that that school districts and education in general could do a better job of recognizing the value of music in particularly early childhood learning but I would say across the board from pre-K to adults.

I happen to know … I mean there’s such a thing as a mnemonic device, right? So when you have language that either rhymes or spells something out or is in a song, kids learn it better. They will remember it longer. I believe that it’s already integrated and that we could probably do a better job of integrating it in a more formal or more kind of intentional way.

R: Do it intentionally, yeah. How did you become aware of music integration in the way we see it in the education world like you said you see music and literacy being already integrated. But in the way we see it in the education where music and literacy integration were two subjects are purposely or intentionally integrated in the classroom. How did you become aware of it?

Johnson: Well, I’ve been teaching for six years and there have been times that our principal or some instructional coordinators … because of the particular goals of the school in that school year might be … one year we might focus more on Science because maybe the Science scores need a little help. We have written songs about Science or we have done things that we are trying to help kids remember certain things and we might have songs about those things.
Part of the curriculum that I develop as a piano teacher was including aspects of different cultures in the piano curriculum by creating songs or finding folk songs from those traditions and bringing them over and those have different language, so they will learn this to talk about triple integration. So you’ve got music. You’ve got language and you’ve culture, social studies. Those are all integrated through that.

But now you’re asking me a question about how within the education system I became aware of this idea of integrating language. There was a year where we talked more, less about Social Studies and less about Science and more about ESL, English as a Second Language. How can we help kids learn more English?

We talked about that in some of our team conversations. We call ourselves ancillary or specialists so the Art, a computer graphic design, dance, another music teacher and drama. Drama is a wonderful way to learn language. All these things we’re talking about how can we do this more?

For music it was like, “Well, we are already doing that.” We would ask the teachers, what things do you want them to learn? What is the vocabulary? We try to be aware of the vocabulary so that we can either find folk songs that talk about those things or create songs or chants that use that vocabulary to help them in those particular vocabulary that Language Arts teachers have said these are keywords for the kids need to know.

Not just for a test. I think the test has a life of its own but not just for the test but because somebody has said, “These are important words for kids to know at this level in
knowing about American history or in knowing about the world or in knowing about Science.” We have tried to do that over time.

R: I heard you said that … when you said we are already doing these things. Practically what you did was just mainly focus.

Johnson: Shift it.

R: Shift that focus on what you were already doing but …

Johnson: Because as a music teacher I did not first choose songs to do with kids because I was aware of what vocabulary they needed to learn. I chose songs to do with kids that “worked” and what I mean by that is once that engaged children regularly, that they enjoy them, that they stayed focused, that they would be with me as a big group because I get big groups of kids. There are certain songs where you just lose them. They’re just like … there are some in the back and they’re not paying attention, other songs you do it and 99% of the kids are doing the song.

For me engagement was the most important maybe without me really thinking it through fully but engagement is really important because if you lose them, they’re not learning the language anyway.

R: Anyway, exactly.

Johnson: Those are the ways … and they weren’t just songs I knew because I had song books that I was going with. Of course I gravitated first towards that ones that I already knew, that I grew up with or that were part of our culture in general. I also feel like with ESL students coming and learning and being part of the culture that they have moved into is really important. So if they don’t know certain songs that the other people who grew up
here know, then there’s more of a divide and I think it either keeps them behind. It could keep them behind or just kind of ignorant of the culture or it also could kind of create a divide between people and between cultures and we need to share those things.

R: Fantastic. You mentioned just now when you were talking about how you became aware. For example your principal bringing it up because of scores, etc. etc. Can you expand a little bit more than on what compels you as a music educator to integrate music and literacy in your classroom? What compels you to make that decision, that conscious decision to integrate?

Johnson: Because I care about the children and I care about their future. Their future does happen fore front of it a series of steps in order to get to a good job or college or a career that will serve them or perhaps aiding other family members who don’t speak English as well, basically helping their whole family, their whole community. I believe that if the kids stay in the United States that have moved here from elsewhere that knowing both languages is crucial learning that. But we also see kids who just have come from backgrounds where they’re not ESL but their language is low like maybe their families don’t talk much or maybe their families are not educated.

So the number of words that are spoken in the house is just not that many or maybe the grammar is not correct. It doesn’t have to be English as a second language exactly but I believe that being able to speak and speak well helps not only individual children but our society as a whole. How can these kids go and read great literature and understand the newspaper and make discerning judgments about whether people out there are telling the truth or not about the world.
Education to me is the way that we have a better society. These are the kids that are in our society. These are the kids that are in my school. These are the kids that are in my class right here with me and I want them to know as much as they need to know. Because I am not an expert in Language Arts I would just take what those Language Arts teachers tell me or what the district says about what the vocabulary that they need to learn. Then you try to have some of that vocabulary in my songs.

It’s just because I want to help them and why am I teacher? I don’t do it for the bucks. I don’t do it for the prestige. It’s about caring about kids and their future and the future society.

R: Definitely …

Johnson: I don’t know what answer you can have other than that and have any … I don’t know if it make it any sense.

R: What aspects of your personality and attitudes contribute to shape your feelings about music and literacy integration?

Johnson: I grew up in a family that really believed in the arts. When my daughter recently said that she was trying to decide … she’s going to be a senior … whether she should take this … she wants to take two Science classes and an extra Math classes that she didn’t need to take but she was thinking, “Well, do I need it for college?” I was saying, “Well, are you still taking Art? Take Art before you take Pre-Cal and this is with my husband who is a Math teacher.

I believe the world would not be very interesting or worthwhile without Art, Drama, Music, Literature. These are the aspirations of a whole side this sort of
blossoming. Otherwise we would just be planting plants without any flowers, right? I think sometimes in Education a lot of people forget how those things are part of what run the world and make the world worth living. Make our lives worth living. Important part of communication, important part of just style in how you feel in a room that these things affect us at a level that we don’t even know or may or may not be able to articulate. That is definitely part of my personality plus having grown up in a musical family and learns to sing very early and writing my own music, it’s a huge, passion of mind. It’s a place where I get a lot of kudos. I sometimes sit and talk to these piano kids and I say, “This is your opportunity to learn a musical instrument and I can tell you that for me this has been a wonderful part of my life.” Something you can share with family members, at holidays and parties and just for fun and just in your own room with no one else there because it brings joy.

R: As a musician, as a singer-songwriter I’m thinking you are the ultimate music and literacy integration example because you’re using that language when you write your songs.

Johnson: Oh, yes to communicate something. Right!

R: You’re using the language of music and the English language when you write the lyrics of your songs.

Johnson: Right, right. Very few times have I written in any other language besides English? I usually have to get help. Yeah, exactly because it is a communication, usually like a lot of the reflection on society, things, ideas that I have or opinions that I have, the reflection on society or some way to connect with the world or the natural world or
something like that. Yes.

R: To what degree do you think this instructional strategy complement your teaching philosophy? Now as an educator … we’re talking about as a person, now as an educator, how do you think this strategy complements your philosophy as a teacher?

Johnson: See, if I haven’t anything else to say about that because … let me just think for a second.

R: Yes, sure.

Johnson: Okay. Young children learn by hearing language and then speaking language and then reading and then writing. Now, those go back and forth and whatever but because once you learned to write that doesn’t mean you don’t need to hear language again. It doesn’t mean you don’t need to speak language again. There’s bunches of circles and spirals going on there.

But we have the opportunity in music to have people the whole group be saying the same thing at the same time through music, through singing these songs. There aren’t a lot of opportunities in the education classroom for people to be speaking all the time and speaking is necessary for developing language. A lot of times since there are so many students in a classroom, you can’t have students talking all the time.

I love the development of the pair share where you turn and you talk to a neighbor. Of course we want teachers to call on people in order to respond to questions that we might have and we want them to speak up in the classroom but the amount of time that in a given one child has to speak during the school day is actually low. Now part of that is our education system in all its greatness and weakness. You have all these
kids together and you can’t have them talking all the time and you have to have them listening to the teacher and learning something and then taking it and doing something with it. But in music they get to speak, speak, speak, speak through music, through singing almost the whole classroom the whole time. I think that that benefits that piece of language development.

I don’t know if I fully answered that. So the question was again education philosophy …

R: Well, you’re teaching philosophy and you think you believe that your philosophy as a teacher is that in order for them to develop language. Talking about language, they need to speak and they need to practice it.

Johnson: Yes and there’s another strategy that we use and I actually went to training on this. When you are teaching songs there’s a lot of repetition of verses but the verses will have a lot of the same words but you change one little thing. So the second verse they’ll be very similar to the first verse but you change some of the words. So, you can get kids to make recommendations. If we made up a verse, what would go in that verse? That allows them to use their thinking not just repeating what you’re saying. Not just saying the same words over and over again although they need to do that too. What could be in this verse? Then they are thinking and creating their own language which of course is the most important part of language is you have to be able to articulate something you want to say.

R: Yes. In music class we’re giving them a chance to put it in practice, to use it, to think about it.

Johnson: Yes.
R: You have a good point because I’ve seen classrooms, you go and it’s silent. They’re reading a book or they’re writing.

Johnson: I can tell you I understand why the teacher is doing that.

R: Oh, absolutely.

Johnson: It is the system.

R: Yes. To what degree do you deem music and literacy integration helpful to your student’s academic achievement?

Johnson: Honestly I don’t know because all of the kids get a little bit of music, so there’s no way to compare and contrast those kids who get it to those who don’t. What I would be able to tell you is not data at all. It’s more anecdotal or just a belief that I can’t see how they could be in there and not learning language. I do notice that the kids who are better at picking up at on language are the ones who are more likely to sing it more and with more expression and more often at louder. That kid over there who probably isn’t as good as language sits there and listens longer before he or she begins to sing.

If I had a smaller group, I would probably be able to go to that child who wasn’t speaking and make sure they’re speaking more. I think the way we have it set up is limited in terms of helping those kids along who are less likely to speak up. But what I do too is I notice when a kid is not singing and I encourage them to sing with us. I keep watching and say, “Even if you don’t know the words...” and then if I noticed there are very many, I will have them repeat after me rather than just singing along with me so that I’m trying to get as many as possible actually singing or speaking the chant.

I don’t really know but I do believe it. I just can’t imagine that … because if I
were trying to learn Spanish, I know that if I were trying to form a sentence and I knew a bunch of rhymes or if I’d memorized a poem or memorized a story, that that would help me with conjugating the verb, that would help me with vocabulary memory, that would help me with knowing how to phrase something. I just can’t imagine that it doesn’t even though I have no proof.

R: Yeah, I understand because that song could be your template and you draw from it to create you room.

Johnson: Yes.

R: Absolutely. My next question is going to be what evidence can you provide … there’s no evidence but there is…?

Johnson: There is no evidence other than as we go through the weeks that I spend with them, they are able to sing the songs better and they memorized. That indicates to me that at least where they may not … they didn’t know those songs before they know them now. They are able to sing or speak something they didn’t know before but that’s pretty much the only evidence I have. It would be fascinating to do a study like that.

R: To do a study like that.

Johnson: Yeah. Maybe at Boston University they’ll suggest that to someone who is working on their PhD later.

R: Ding.

Johnson: Ding, really.

R: What challenges do you face when integrating in music and literacy? What do you think are your challenges?
Johnson: Well, some I’ve sort of mentioned obliquely. We have a lot of students in every class and so it is difficult for example for every child to have the opportunity to maybe create their idea for a verse. It is hard for me to have kids sing individually. There are little games we play where they’re required to sing within the game. The challenges, it mostly has to do with numbers because if I only have eight kids at a time or 10, what I feel like I could do to really make sure …

R: How long do you see your classes?

Johnson: Forty-five minutes.

R: Forty-five minutes.

Johnson: But only four to five weeks each and then I get a whole another group. At these two schools I see 1200 to 1300 students a year. But they do have another music class, so they rotate through mine as well as another one. They also have drama. They also have computer. So all of those things are I believe aiding in literacy. Dance maybe not so much although they do learn dance, names of dances and they also … some of the time … well, they are hearing songs and dancing to them and some of them simple songs where they do learn the lyrics.

PE, they learn vocabulary in PE. Library, so they hear books. I think it is nice to have these better layered on top of each other because they’re little but I wish they could have music more in here. I really think that that’s the one. In fact when there were some of our ancillary teachers, we don’t always love working with pre-K. There’s a reason why long ago they started with kindergarten. They’re maybe not quite ready for this whole group thing. There was some of us that were saying, “Oh, you know, wish we just had
more time with our kindergarten through fifth graders and didn’t have to …

R: To pre-K.

Johnson: Yeah, but I said, “Oh, but music, pre-K needs music.

R: They definitely need.

Johnson: It definitely as much as I had the same issues with them maybe not being ready
to be in a group like the older kids, it’s like I have to admit early.

R: They need it.

Johnson: I mean in the room, right?

R: The earlier is the better this little thing, those connections.

Johnson: Similar to reading stories to kids and you know how the kids want the same
story read over and over again. The kids love the same music over and over because then
they know it. They know it and it’s part of them and then that’s part of their repertoire of
language.

R: Absolutely. So you would say then the numbers if you will change something to make
it the experience of integration better we will be having less.

Johnson: Fewer students in a group. Yeah, I’m sure that would make a huge difference
because they could speak more individually. Then the classroom management would not
be so dependent on using more group lessons to get everybody on the same page all of
the same time because you just wouldn’t … when you have fewer students in the
classroom, your classroom management strategies can be different and you can be a little
loser. I think within that you could have more opportunity for different kids to speak
individually or sing individually or offer up ideas for songs and that within that context
they could each learn more.

R: Have more freedom have more flexibility.

Johnson: Yes.

R: Have you had any frustrations? Do you have experience when integrating music and literacy you’re trying to integrating and something that you’ve done or something that happens every time is just frustrating?

Johnson: Not really. I mean I’m a word person. I’m a music person. They go together. The frustrations I have are more about numbers of students, kids that may or may not really be good in a group at all. For various reasons they just need more individual attention. Not knowing the names of all my kids because I’ve too many but none of those have to do with integration of words and music at all. Well, I would say I might … having this conversation with you makes me realize that I have not used just many of those vocabulary words that I could because I’m aware of what they are have list of them. My day is so full and takes all my energy because I teach seven 45 minutes classes every day. So that’s 35 classes a week.

Because of that my creative flow energy that I have left over to try to be creative about integrating more of those words is not as much as I could. If I had smaller groups in a little bit more planning time, I feel like I could do a better job of integrating what the rest of the school wants the kids to learn into music. There’s no doubt about that. If my principal or whoever my leader was of the group was reminding me regularly. This is more of the most important things for our kids this year or these five years we are really focusing on. Then that would keep reminding me that that’s what I need to spend my
planning time doing. Do you know what I mean?

R: Yes, it’s like this is what I need to be doing focusing on this.

Johnson: Exactly, the focus.

R: I think you’ve mentioned it already and being a singer-songwriter I think you’re very good at this but let me ask you, can you expand a little bit more on your level of confidence when integrating music and literacy?

Johnson: It’s my thing. It’s absolutely my thing. The people, my team when there’s writing to do for the Web site or for the program or whatever, I’m the one who gets asked to do it because I enjoy writing. The songs that are in the curriculum that I created for the piano, I wrote those little simple songs because there were not enough songs that had only a few notes in them and I needed a bunch of them. So the kids don’t get tired of one. They can go onto the next one and the next one and the next one and then they can feel like they learned a bunch of songs and that gets them excited and them wanting to learn more.

It is my thing I could imagine that there are teachers out there that that is not so much their thing. Although people who really know music and maybe had some encouragement and a little bit of training from someone who does this, it is a talent and so not everybody maybe has it but like most talents. If you have somebody who is musical and can learn songs seems to me that that person would be in lined for the kind of talent that you could learn more, that you could build on, you could build on.

R: Yes.
Johnson: But I don’t have challenges in it because it’s what I love doing more than pretty much anything else is writing music. It’s just a joy for me.

R: You enjoy it.

Johnson: Yes.

R: You don’t have to force it. It comes naturally.

Johnson: That’s right. We have a thing here called rise and shine which is a kind of get started on the right foot, pro school, pro happy education kind of thing that they do in the morning when the kids get here. They needed a song that sort of was all about Neff and I wrote it and so they’re singing that song. It’s just what I do.

R: Who wants to write a song? I do. That’s fantastic. Can you have any successes or one or many that you have experienced when integrating music and literacy integration? You were saying that you’ve had students that probably at first were not able to sing a song fully because of the language and then later on …

Johnson: Right. I would think that would be the main one.

R: That you’ve seen?

Johnson: Yes, because of just kind of … nobody has come to me except maybe that one year and said music is all about literacy. I would say that’s really the main way that I can see success is that these kids learn this music. The kids who are Spanish speaking first, it’s not as much a part of Spanish speaking culture as it is about African-American culture and to some degree English speaking culture in America to just start singing when someone is singing. If someone is singing and they say sing, it’s a little bit of a cultural thing that people don’t just necessarily sing. They hear performers. A lot of music is
going on but they might not just sing along. So you have to encourage that but also that language barrier.

There needs to be a lot of encouragement. Say the words. Say the words. We’ll be playing a game. Engine, engine number nine going down the railroad line. If the train falls off the track, do you want your money back? Well, the kids will all say that and we’re playing this game and you’re supposed to say it over and over and over again. Every time someone gets out of the train, you say it again.

I have to constantly encourage them to say the words because I know that they need to say them, not just hear them. Then they will more by the end because more of the kids really know it. I use visuals to help them know what the words mean. There’s not always a visual with every word but maybe a couple of the general themes, we’ll have a visual there. That’s a nice addition to the language learning as having the visual.

I think at the beginning they don’t know it and then they do. That would be the most success that I … and the joy. I think joy is a success. It doesn’t have to be … because for most of us having a happy life and not just having a happy life later but now, today, right now, why can’t we be happy? Joy is found in music and sing with them.

R: I think it’s a reflection of success. You feel comfortable. You feel like you can do it.

Johnson: Yes, confident. I did it. I know this.

R: Exactly. Definitely I think it’s a reflection of success. What professional development opportunities regarding music and literacy integration are available to you in your area?

Johnson: University of _________ has Kodály stuff. Are you familiar with it?

R: Yes.
Johnson: I went to one that was about learning more vocabulary through music and that was within this last year at University of __________. The district sometimes has trainings that they offer. I don’t remember seeing one about this but it certainly could be offered by another music teacher who says, “Here, come and do this.” If it’s offered by another music teacher it might even be done for free because the district would either pay for that person’s one hour or hours of preparation or whatever.

Other places that I have had trainings besides the University of __________ and I’ve had trainings through the Kodály, I believe it was _______ State University came down here and did some Kodály training in the summer and that was over at _______. High School. I think that was through the district. No, it wasn’t. It wasn’t through the district.

R: How about the __________, the __________ University?

Johnson: Center for Education.

R: Do they offer anything on music and literacy integration?

Johnson: No, but I think they probably would be interested in doing that. Right now they do drama. I mean one of the things that … _________ University Center for Education has a sub group that’s called …

R: Yeah, I think it’s the literacy in culture project, something like that.

Johnson: Yes. That one, one of their main trainings is to train pre-K, kindergarten, first grade teachers in this pre-reading drama. So they have the kids tell a personal story and then that story is written up on a paper and then that child chooses people to play the characters in this story. Then those children learn their lines and begin to act out the story
and it is a hugely successful. All of the people who’ve been involved in it see the value in how these kids learn vocabulary through this drama and through this storytelling.

I bet they could do something like that with the music. I’m not sure we could figure out some way to do that with that exact thing with music.

R: Translate them into music.

Johnson: Another thing is ________ Grand Opera has a summer program that has created an opera and it’s through their ________ Grand Opera children. I actually was an assistant a year before last in the summer. There’s a woman ___________? I think I might have that a little bit wrong but she works for them and she is really great at telling … she’ll read a story to the kids and then she says, “We can change that a little. But most of what we’re going to do is have the same story but we’re going to create an opera that tells the story.”

As you remember at the beginning of the story, the character so and so has to explain to the character so and so something. Then how would you say that? How would you sing that? She has a little tape recorder and she has them sing into the tape recorder and then she says, “What if we had it go up on the end?” Actually she use most of these kids’ stuff but they were articulate kids. The kids who go to this thing in the summer were mostly pretty articulate. The kids that I would work with especially ESL, you would probably need to help them phrase it.

Anyway, you can put that and help them phrase it or you can just take directly what they said and how they sing it or you could help them, “How about this? Do you like this? Do you like this way?” She had these big papers and she wrote it out and then
she had it recorded. After the kids went home she wrote out the music that they have
created.

Now, I have the skills to write out the melody of what they created but she also
wrote the piano part. I could write some chords but she was just amazing. She’s such a
huge … so then they learned the whole thing. Then they chose characters. They created
costumes. They painted the backdrop because it was all day long for three weeks. No, it
wasn’t. It was only two weeks. But anyway … and then at the time they created this up
and then they performed it for their parents.

R: How cool is that.

Johnson: So that’s a really wonderful literacy because you hear the story but then you
have to tell it not only in your own words but from the perspective of the character. What
would this character say?

R: That’s absolutely fantastic.

Johnson: That’s amazing. Check that out. I think it happens every summer.

R: That’ is fantastic.

Johnson: I don’t know if you would get the opportunity to be a fly on the wall. I’m sure
they would let you.

R: Yeah, I love to be a big fly on the wall.

Johnson: Oh, just watch her one day when she’s having them create that stuff.

R: You let me just hear. That will be fantastic.

Johnson: __________. I believe that’s her name but you can find out from the people at
________ Center or __________ Grand Opera.
R: Okay, that’s fantastic. How do you think this professional development that you have taken had helped you integrate or implement music and literacy integration?

Johnson: I think especially the one where they said get the kids to suggest verses because I hadn’t thought of that. But mostly it just already is. Do you know what I’m saying? I didn’t have to create it because it was already integrated.

R: Yes. It just probably made you more aware of what you’re already doing with the right fit.

Johnson: Exactly. Right, but I do believe that this particular kind of ways of these little ideas, there was a little, like a little ditty song about buying something at the market. Then she had this idea of passing out and I haven’t used this but passing out. It was a copy of the newspaper where there were some things for sale like lettuce and vegetable oil or whatever. She says, “I have the kids pick something on here and then we put that in the song for buying it at the market.” They’re reading. They’re choosing. For kids who may not be able to just think out of something out of their head, there’s already something here to choose from.

R: A menu to choose.

Johnson: Exactly. You could use those kinds of ideas. I do think that there’s a great benefit from taking the ideas of other people and right now those Kodály people at University of ___________ I think have … I think it was called something like literacy and music or something like that. I thought that’s really interesting. I want to go to that and find out more.
R: What’s in it? Yes. Do you think that your professional goals have been attained when you take these opportunities?

Johnson: I do but that’s one of the actually really greatest things on education is that you’re never done. You never like. What I mean is even after you finish with school, there is never an end, just like there’s never going to be into arts and there’s never going to be into music. There’s no end. There might be a point at which you feel like I found this balance. Well, not that but I found this balance of what works with the particular population I have and until I get bored with it. This works and it is working. But I think fresh ideas and the ideas of other people who have created things I just think you shouldn’t stop.

R: Absolutely. It’s ever evolving I think.

Johnson: Yeah, a continuing education. Something that could be fun or that could engage the kids more or could have them learn a whole different vocabulary that you hadn’t thought of that idea of the groceries and a little song. Then hearing that little song might think you, “Oh, we could also write a little song about this other thing and have it a completely different list.”

R: You can expand it. Exactly! You’ve been there to make it your own. How do you think your school principal value music and literacy integration?

Johnson: I don’t think that the principals that we have right now probably while I do think they value the arts in a general sense and really do like having all of these involved in the school and the programs that we put on. I think that things kind of get separated, sort of boundaries between the things. So, we’re where they go to learn music and I don’t
think that there has been an understanding fully of what might actually be happening there.

I think to be honest that Arts teachers are a little bit protective of their time to not say, “Okay, we’re now going to teach Science through the Arts or whatever.” Social Studies fits so perfectly and too many degrees Literacy and Language Arts but because we have a lot of principals that we have to teach also like if I only teach literacy they’re not going to learn how to play the piano.

Since my goal is that they learn simple songs in the piano, they learn a scale, they learn how to read some music, if I have too many other things on my plates since I only see them for a few weeks, I’m not going to go knocking on the principal’s door and say, “I want to teach Science;” because there’s a limit to how much you can kind of have the attention of children, so you have to be little bit careful.

But I do think that principal’s understanding of not pulling kids from ancillary or that this is really an important part of their language development if they really understood that fully. I don’t know these two principals are new. I had the same principal for five years and then she moved to a different district and these two principals are brand new principals. They’ve never been principals before this year. I don’t know them really well because now I have two. I can’t say what they know. I really can’t. I don’t know. I really don’t know. I do know they both really love having the arts.

R: They’re supportive of the arts at least.

Johnson: In a general sense, however, there’s a lot of pressure for the core subjects. Those do get first and they will say things like … which is interesting they speak exactly
to it … they will say things like that these third grade students are … we have a handful of third grade students that aren’t even reading at a second grade level. We have to keep them more. We have to get them the special tutors in small groups. We have to get it. So they’re not going to be in your class.

But I think it could be argued that the Art class and maybe piano and maybe PE, even though they need all of those things of course are not directly fitting into their learning to read. But if they had a music class where they’re singing, a drama class where they’re speaking, those could be maybe even better than more of the same learning to read. I think picking carefully which ones are more likely to help with literacy is key and making sure that they don’t get pulled from those.

There are so many hours in a day nobody is a big bad person. Nobody is the evil, everybody just trying to do what’s right for kids. That understanding is crucial to making choices for how kids spend eight hours in a day.

R: They’re also challenged with measurable outcomes.

Johnson: Right and these are not always special.

R: So they need to unfortunately proof that they have learned whatever skills they’re lacking. Unfortunately in the specialties we have really now way to prove.

Johnson: It’s such a little individual basis like you could see a kid who’s maybe English as a second language. At the beginning of their drama piece they didn’t even know what all these words meant. Then they learn this little speech or they learn this little part and then by the end not only are they speaking the words more where you can understand them but they know more words because they were in this and they wanted to be in it and
they worked over and over. They said it over and over and over again. They got coaching from the drama teacher that you don’t say this way. You say this way. It’s really clear for that one individual child but you might not be able to argue for the whole group.

R: Absolutely. Would you say that your curriculum specialist or do you call it that way?

Johnson: Specialist is what we call him here.

R: Would you say that this person would also value music and literacy integration in the same way as your school principal?

Johnson: You mean our team?

R: No, we call it curriculum specialist.

Johnson: Oh yes, okay, we call them … I do know but I can’t figure it right now.

R: They are also called sometimes instructional coaches.

Johnson: Coordinators, instructional coordinators. I think that there could be some more learning about how the value of music and they’re coming from a different background and while I think you could sit down and have a conversation and they would be very reasonable and understand all of this in a way. It’s not like at the forefront of their thinking. Again, within the system that we are in and the way that we have to show progress and the way that schools are graded and the way that teachers are graded and everything, the choices that are made again is not at the top. But I think having an understanding about it and reading about it and really knowing the value, they might make slightly different choices. They really might.

R: That they have an awareness.
Johnson: Especially if it’s kept in the forefront of their thinking because so many things can crowd in.

R: Yes. They have a lot in their plates too.

Johnson: Oh, yes more than me. They have the whole thing.

R: Yeah, the big picture. So in an ideal situation where everything is pink and beautiful, how should music and literacy integration be valued across the board starting with your school principal all the way down to…?

Johnson: I actually think that it might be helpful to have the regular teachers especially those for ESL and bilingual education and early childhood where language is being developed the most, where there are those little sponges that just soak up everything they hear, that using music more in every classroom. That could be taught by music teachers or by someone else outside. I actually think it might be helpful for those teachers to learn from someone who is not a musician. You do not have to sing perfectly.

R: So you don’t feel intimidated.

Johnson: Yes. I actually had that training as part of one of the trainings that I had through my church was that you do not have to be a beautiful singer in order to sing with children or with anybody really. Learning those little games, those little songs I think they could use them all day especially kindergarten, pre-K, first grade, sub-degree second grade, they could kind of use them all day. That would be better because I don’t think they’re ever going to have enough of the music teacher. I don’t think that’s going to happen in my life time.

Or if you hired people, if there was a focus on hiring people who understood the
Arts as well as teaching, then the choices they’ll make within the classroom might include that more. I think it’s more likely if you did the training. Or have worked together like let’s create a lesson together. That could be good. You set up the Arts teachers in special training or workshops where you have the Arts teachers work with a team of first grade teachers. What would you do if you were trying to teach this? Because then you have that different brain…

R: So collaboration.

Johnson: Absolutely, yes.

R: One-on-one collaboration.

Johnson: Or even an Arts teacher with a team.

R: Yes, like going one person to the first grade.

Johnson: To help the whole grade level team.

R: Is your school principal supportive of music and literacy integration professional development?

Johnson: Well, the way that our professional development works now is that we get to choose most of our professional development. It depends on what you choose to do. Now these teachers might not choose to do that because again it’s not in their forefront of their mind. I guess it would probably … you’d have to have a good argument to make it where it would be worth to use the little bit of time that we have as a whole campus. It would be hard to get him or her to use that time because there are so many high priority things and so little time.

We have once a month on a Wednesday from September through March, once a
month on a Wednesday afternoon. Then anything else is going to be after school or before school. I can’t say that they would make that choice and even me being who I am. If I were in that position I’m not sure I could make a choice. But you could send articles and have a little conversation about it that the grade level teams meet every week. You might have someone like __________ or somebody come in and say, “We’re going to meet with the grade level and do a little training there.” Yes, that might help and I can imagine our principal supporting that.

R: Supporting that.

Johnson: It has to work with the schedule.

R: Okay, and supporting you individually as music teacher to get professional development in music and literacy integration.

Johnson: Oh. absolutely. I get to make those choices. If that was something that he felt would support kids learning things that were in the core curriculum, absolutely.

R: You would go for it.

Johnson: Oh, yeah.

R: Okay, perfect.

Johnson: I already have. That one I took it at U of ___.

R: If it’s available and he knows that…

Johnson: Yeah, I took it on a Saturday. Will they pay for it? No. I don’t think most of them get paid for. I don’t know, maybe core teachers do get their continuing education paid for but we don’t.

R: But at least…
Johnson: It may less inexpensive. My first career was in Social Work and we paid for all of our continuing education. So for me it doesn’t feel weird.

R: It hasn’t changed.

Johnson: Well, when they used to offer more at the schools they were all free and the ones that we go to on Wednesday afternoons, of course they’re free. But the specialty ones that are really for my own professional development, I don’t mind.

R: You don’t mind of course.

Johnson: Just like you’re going getting your PhD.

R: Yes and I have to pay the big bucks. Yeah, nobody is paying for that.

Johnson: Right.

R: What role does the available research regarding music and literacy integration have played in your implementation of this strategy in your school?

Johnson: I have read a few books about the Arts and Literacy. I actually meant to bring them. I have them at the other room to show you what I have, one on Art, one on drama because I had an interest in it a few years ago and I bought a few books. I read those books most of all of them. I do think that they have played a general role and the way that I developed lessons, and things like that. I haven’t used all of those little ideas but I think in a general way of understanding the connection between literacy and music, that research was in a lot of those books, not only ideas, like direct ideas for teachers but also the research. But I have it done a lot of research on it recently.

R: But they’d help you with the understanding of what is that you’re doing in music and literacy workshop?
Johnson: I think so but probably can always do more.

R: We can always do more, everybody?

Johnson: Right. I’m not an expert on it, not by any stretch.

R: What advice would you offer to any music teacher trying to implement music and literacy in their classrooms?

Johnson: Just do it, it’s just natural. I actually think that if principals understood that that would be more of a feather in our cap because of the focus on academic core subjects, I think that we might be more valued in that way. It could be a way that you could advocate for yourself by saying, “Hey, I really would like to have those lists of vocabulary that kids will need to learn so I can choose some songs that use the vocabulary.” They’re be like, “Oh, that’s a great idea.”

Then maybe, “Well, can you teach that to some of the other teachers?” That you’re more of a resource and you’re more valued within the community and even though I don’t mean that sort of politically, I mean doesn’t everybody want to be more valued in their community and at their work? Don’t you actually want to contribute to what the main goals of the organization or so? That sounded a little political but I don’t really mean it that way.

R: Yes. Well, in the end like you said at the beginning your focus, you goal is to help the child.

Johnson: Yeah, you want them to have a good life.

R: Yeah, exactly. Any other remarks you wish to convey?
Johnson: I really appreciate you asking me these questions and it just makes me think in ways that I haven’t thought and so I think that while I may have helped you because you have this interview, you have helped me just by asking these questions.

R: Oh, good.

Johnson: So I appreciate it.

R: Thank you. Thank you so much for giving your time and your knowledge and your wisdom and your experience. I mean it’s really, really great to have that insight.

Johnson: Thank you.
Mrs. Nelson

R: These are the questions. Yes, let me … I’m going to go ahead and ask them to you and then you tell me whatever you want. Please Describe your position and what led you to this career choice?

Nelson: Okay. I am elementary, music specialist for ______ ISD at ________ Elementary. I started out originally in performance. I was an opera singer, I performed in Europe and was a concert singer and was all set to do performance.

When I was living in Europe, I substitute taught at the ________ School of London and really enjoyed it and then I came back and started writing my book. ________ Conservation Melodies and started dealing with a lot of teachers. I still kept performing and performing but I kept going back to the classroom. I would substitute or I would work with children and honestly, I came in through the backdoor because I wanted to be famous. I wanted to be a performer, an opera singer.

I really got into the teaching, I was so passionate about it because I saw how it changed children’s lives and also because I was orphaned essentially when I was young. Teachers made all the difference in my world and I would see children going through some more experiences that I’d gone through.

For me, the music was as much a ministry and a reach out to children for hope as much as it was teaching technique and it was feeding their souls. Because most of the children in education; and I’ve taught 40 years, from pre-K up through College University, most of the children though, elementary children who I’ve taught had been in
Title I schools. These children, some of them are living in desperate situations and it’s the one place where I see them smile, in the school.

I play lots of children’s singing games in pre-K well I don’t teach pre-K, but in kindergarten and one and even two. I’ll do the circle games and I’ll do lots of fun singing games and, because I want to them to know that singing is fun that’s how you hook them. Then you can take them in deeper but you got to hook them first. Bait and hook them, and I’ve seen lives change. As a matter of fact, I had a woman come up to me recently at an event and I had taught her, maybe 16 or 17 years ago and she said, “Do you remember me?” I honestly didn’t because she changed so much and she said, “I was in your third grade class at ________ Elementary.” She said, “You’re the reason why I’ve gone into music.” She said, “I am now studying to be a music teacher and you’re the reason why.”

R: Wow!

Nelson: That was really just like, “Wow! That was awesome.” Because you don’t have any idea and just this past week, I’ve had parents that say, “Oh, my son talks about you all of the time.” This one person, who said that his son is, Mensa, he’s in Mensa. Brilliant, whenever I had a computer problem, I called Pavan, “Get _______.” All the teachers did, very cerebral, he wanted to be a surgeon and he will, he’ll be the valedictorian of his class.

R: Yes.

Nelson: It was ________’s mother who said, “OH, _________ talks about you all of the time.” I’m like, “Really?” Because he’s very quiet and reserved. You never know the
impact that you’re going to have on children. It’s basically, because of what music teachers did for me and basically, I thank God, God did not cause, but God can take any bad situation if you give all things work together for good to those who love the Lord, to those who are called according to his purpose.

If you give God a lump of coal; he’ll turn it into a diamond. I had a lot of tragedy, but God took those experiences, now it’s helped me to help other children. For me, I mean music is not only just teaching notes and techniques, but it’s being like a social worker and being a role model and being an encourager. What’s really cool is, about 40% of the fifth grade, this year are going on into music.

R: Wow!

Nelson: In the junior high, it went up, I’ve been there two and a half years and they rezoned so we lost a lot of our kids and two years ago, two and a half years ago, there may be seven or eight children who joined choir. Last year, there were 26 girls who joined the junior high choir out of 50 something girls of whatever.

Seventy, so they were about a third, and so you never know, and I talk to them all about, I talked to them about opportunities, I’ve talked to them about how you don’t have to be music major to get scholarships to college.

How the … This is so good for your soul and this is a lifetime skill that you can keep doing until you die. Basically, that’s how I was led into it. I never thought I would become …My mother made me get an elementary education degree. She said, “You’re going to need a bread and butter.”

I thought, “I’ll never use it.” Because I was so convinced I was going to make it
as an opera star and life intervened and I reluctantly went into it at first and then I got hooked.

Because I’ve taught other levels since I started elementary. I’ve taught junior high, I did that one year and promised God if he, “Got me through that year, I’d never do it again.”

Because of the hormones, I just couldn’t deal with it, and, I’ve taught high school and as much as I love this high school kids, it’s the elementary that I keep coming back to. I keep coming back to those, because so many of those babies leave home without getting a hug and without getting any TLC.

They’re at the age, if you can catch them in kindergarten, and bring them up then they might not be quite as cynical when they hit the fifth grade because some of them are seeing intolerably, terrible things at home. But I kept, I just keep coming back to elementary, I love those children, I love them.

R: What is the first thing that comes to mind when you hear the phrase, “Music and literacy integration?”

Nelson: It naturally occurs. It’s a natural. Throughout history, music has been written, literature has driven music not only say Schumann and Schubert, but also the instrumental. Because so many, if you look at Grieg, Peer Gynt and you look at the fact that, almost as much instrumental music has been driven by literature and literacy as well as the actual words.

Okay, having said that, and getting more technical as far as literacy, I taught when I was in Mexico, I taught at the University of __________, I did some couple of
seminars and basically I was teaching literacy, teaching them English through music and teaching them how to teach English through music.

Because when I was there, I conducted, when I was in Monterrey, Mexico, I conducted the first performance with the Messiah ever sung in English.

R: Wow!

Nelson: When you hear the tape then, this was 31, 30 years ago. When you hear the tape, because I went to Mexico right after I finished the book. You can’t tell these girls are from Mexico. The English … They learnt it phonetically and I went over every word. We did not perform the entire Messiah, we performed the Christmas portion basically of it, with an amateur choir and I did have some professional orchestral people but not many. To me, music is literacy, because we use the same areas of our brain learning how to read notes as we do in how to read words. We use the same … We are biologically setup to be literate. You know, children, they found even within 10 or 15 minutes after they’ve been born that when they hear a sound, their head will turn to it.

If it’s dissonant, it will turn away and if it’s pleasant, it will turn towards and then of course culture sets in, and all of that sets in and what might be consonant to us is dissonant to them and so forth.

But, basically, biologically, literacy, music is literacy. We use the same areas of the brain, the same areas of the brain light up. We need, the same stimuli occur, the same thought processes occur. You’re using both your left and your right side of your brain and your corpus callosum, that middle vein is being fired.
I mean, so biologically, we are programmed to be literate. It has to be taught, but we’re programmed to be literate. In saying that, when you consider that the entire Old Testament was sung, it was never spoken. It was sung, and so, to me, this is conundrum in that, I totally support music facilitating the learning of literacy meaning. Because I think reading, music is literacy, and you’re learning math and English and all of that. I totally support it but on the other hand, more and more of our time is being taken away from us, in teaching basics of music because we have to teach this song or this lesson. I resent that.

If I saw the children every day, I wouldn’t but I don’t see them every day, I see them four and a half times a month if I’m lucky. That, I don’t like, if somebody forces it on me. Now there are a lot of songs within the repertoire, musical repertoire folk songs in particular where you can teach the science lesson, you can teach, I mean the traditional music does offer …You can teach any kind of curriculum through a song. You can teach any kind.

But I don’t want to have to take up my class time explaining the scientific principles behind the song, one or two sentences. Great. But when you see the children four and a half hours a month, no. I just finished my second grade; I had sixth plays in a competition in the last two weeks. Four of those plays where individual second grade plays where parents came in and we sang “The Very Best Pet Show” and we learned, they did learn, they learned literacy, vocabulary, they learned science, they learned social conscience, they learned about the SPCA.
I mean it was all there in the package. It was all there in the package and I had some classes which were three quarters were ELL. They had to learn, a lot of these children had to learn it phonetically, and I had to breakdown every single word for them, which is why it took eight and a half months to teach it. Because, some of the parents of these children, some of the homes of these children comes from, the parents do not speak in complete sentences themselves.

They were singing "The Cat Came Back." The play was programed, Denise Gagne, K through Two. Two is the top grade; I still had children who couldn’t sing some of the words. I mean, yes, I think music is literacy.

Music lends itself to literacy but again, as I said, the last time, instead of singling out these categories just identify it as you’re teaching the music lesson. “Okay, boys and girls, what are the vocabulary words you learned in this song?” One of the things I did was I took the xylophones with the eight keys and I had classes and it was really interesting, even the kindergarten in first grade classes, all the way up to third grade. They came up with a list of about 30 words off of those eight keys.

Then what happened is, after we came up with these words, they played the words, and they composed songs out of the words. I would say, “Okay, take five of these words, and write your song now.” They wrote songs off of the words. That was really fun, to do that, and I mean, they came up with words. I was like, “Yes, yes that’s right.” I wrote a list, and I do that every year where the kids name the letters, take the letters, and turn them into words and then they’re playing all the different words on the xylophones. R: That’s very cool. That’s a great idea.
Nelson: That was fun, I mean you can’t sing a song well unless you understand what it means, and not just surface wise but you’ve got to know what the song means. You’ve got to know the syntax that it was written in. I mean literacy to me implies not only syntax and sentence structure, it implies the history, implies the era, the time that was written and events that drove it. The people who wrote it, what was going on in their lives and I always, whenever I teach a song, I always give the children a snapshot of when the song was written and what was happening.

R: I think you have described this already, because my next question is, what are your beliefs regarding music and literacy integration?

Nelson: I think I’ve answered that pretty much.

R: Yes, I think you said that.

Nelson: It’s a natural, it just naturally occurs.

R: It’s natural it just happens.

Nelson: I don’t think, I mean actually, I think when it gets to be foreign as it were; uncomfortable is when we walk into this, when we walk into the core classroom rather than them coming into our classroom. Because they use a whole different vocabulary than we do in those classroom.

R: Yes.

Nelson: I mean even how they teach math and how they … And you have children so you know some of the terms. That’s when I get a little uncomfortable because I’ll ask the children like I was dealing with crescendo–decrescendo, I said, “These are greater than, lesser than science and math, right?”
Yes, and then I would be teaching pairs, and they’d say, “Oh, those are integer, integers or whatever.” I mean they have different labels for it and I said, “You’ve covered this?” “Yes Miss Sellers, we’ve covered this.” Some of what I ask is okay, “How does this compared to what you all are doing in your classroom?” “We’re kind of doing the same thing.” That the students know, we are, we really are.

I keep telling them, because from some cultures it’s not macho to sing in a choir. It’s not macho. I’ll just say, “You know, if you stick with it, your vocabulary, your math skills, your reading skills are going to be so much better than if you go another route.” I’m always talking about that. Every single class, even my kindergarteners, “You’re going to be so much better readers if you do this, and this, and this, and this, and this.” They’re always hearing that from me. They’re always hearing it from me. My philosophy is, I don’t think there’s a difference between music and literacy. Its literacy, music is literacy.

R: So how did you become aware of music integration? Was there a point in your, you know, career where you...?


R: Okay.

Nelson: The book, when I was asked to write, I mean I had, you know, I had come from the performance era where I researched every song and every composer and every conductor and I’d gone into this history, and I’ve worked with Robert Gay at University.
He actually sang in the first televised opera in American History at the Met. He was in Carmen, and he was a stickler on, if you’re going to sing a part, you have to know what shoes they were wearing, what they were eating, how they slept, where they slept. I mean, we had to go really deep.

R: Live the part.

Nelson: If you came to class unprepared, he’d give it to somebody else, crucify you.

Basically, I was into that aspect already but as far as taking it into the public classroom, there were two things that drove me, relevance, relevancy. Because when I started working with my Title 1 children in 1994 here in __________, I worked with very … Children from extremely rough circumstances.

I had to make it relevant, and, so I began and about that time, Silver Burdett came out with a new series, where the whole series was integrating literature into the lessons that we’ve adopted the series in 1995 in _______. It was taught for 10 years and then in 2005 or so, they adopted the Macmillan/McGraw Hill that we use now which frankly I don’t like as much as the Silver Burdett because we’re not all that integrated, you know you have to … Anyway.

Basically, relevancy, because I would, I … The literature that I was presented with to teach the children some of these boys wouldn’t touch, they wouldn’t touch it, they wouldn’t even sing.

I had fifth graders who should have been in eighth grade, who’s been held back … Who are about 12, 13, 14 because they either started school at the age of nine because
of their circumstance or whatever. They were not interesting in singing some of the songs that you would traditionally sing.

Music K–8 magazine helped me a lot with that. Because they started … They were one of the first magazines to have some kind of hip arrangements.

R: Yes.

Nelson: Basically you have to hook them and reel them in before you can get too deep with them. My first two years at ____________ Elementary, I did this fun bubble gum, what I call bubble gum songs/plays, just fun. But, by my third year, but I'd always participated in the district chorale festival and that's for serious music.

I was a conductor at the last one in April, and this was two part, this is for fifth grade and this is two part harmony and some of it was not easy and, and that’s where I really got in to the integration with those girls because like when we sang Shenandoah song. “Do you know anything about this song?” “No,” I explained the whole background. Civil war, everything and their eyes were wide. And I said, "In journey, Lean on Me. "Do you know where that came from? Civil rights movement. I mean, I just went in to all that.

In ‘94 when I started teaching again in the classroom, because, I actually work as an administrative assistant at a seminary for a while when I came up out of Mexico because there were no jobs. I was going to start a doctorate at ____, and then I met my husband. But, I really began seeing that unless you, you have a former relationship with the children first before you can teach them. That you know, rigor relationship relevant, is relevant rigor, relationship. But, and they’re having RRR conferences at the Berry center
on Tuesday, where they have national speakers come in, so I’ll take notes and get
literature if you want me to pick it up for you.

R: Yes, that’ll be great.

Nelson: But anyway, basically, you get a relationship going, it’s got to be relevant and
like Beethoven. I had a little boy, who was in the adaptive behavior unit, I’m sure he's in
prison now; I mean he was very dangerous. He had come up out of it a horrible series of
foster homes and was very angry and dangerous. He would come in with an aide; he
didn’t want to be in music, didn’t want to be there, would not open his mouth and would
not sing. I mean, he was a hardened criminal at the age of 11. He’d been in jail … well
Juvie jail, the whole nine yards, his mother just said, "Forget it. "He’d been taken away
actually from abusive parents. Anyway, he was just a stone faced little kid until I started
talking about Beethoven.

I said, "You know." I said, “You know, Beethoven's father was an alcoholic and
used to beat him regularly, every night.” I said, “He’d get him out of bed when he was
five and he put him on a harpsichord bench.” I said, “If he played a bad note and he
would box him very hard in the ears which is part, not the whole reason, but part of the
reason, he sustained nerve damaged.” I said, “At night, when he would hear his father
coming, he learned to climb out of his window and scale the house and run away from the
house.”

When I put that music on, after I’d said that. The boy’s face was totally different.

He was, we’d connected for that brief moment.

R: Yes.
Nelson: His face was open as he was listening to it. I said, “As you listen to this music.” I said, “He was beaten, he was abandoned. He had to live with a brother who would beat him and abandoned him. He ran away at the age of 12. He was on his own, he was basically on the street by the age of 12 because he’s older brother was just as mean as his father had been. When his mother died, he went to live with his brother, and then the brother turned out to be as turned out to be as mean as his father.” I said, “Listen to his music. Listen to it.” I said, “That’s’ where he got some of the passions from.” I said, “He back then, he was the equivalent of Led Zeppelin, he was on the edge.”

They were just, their eyes were wide especially when I talk about the alcoholism. I even had a mother recently, a couple of years ago, we had Beethoven, and she said, “Don’t talk about that.” She said, “My husband died of alcoholism, and my little boy is sensitive.” I said “Thank you so much for telling me, I will not talk about that aspect again.” But it did play a key role in Beethoven, because Beethoven I think was an alcohol, like a functioning alcoholic. Of course, they’ve discovered I’m sure you’ve read, have you read, what is the book? "Finding Beethoven" where they discovered that mainly, oh you haven’t read that?

R: No.

Nelson: No, no, no you are kidding me.

R: Okay, what’s its name?

Nelson: It’s called Beethoven’s Hair.

R: Beethoven’s Hair, okay.
Nelson: Basically what they found is, if you have time for me to tell you this, I’ll tell you because it’s very fascinating. When Beethoven died, it was the tradition for people to, they would pack the body in ice and they would circle the coffin and very special people, who he had, before, given permission before, could snip lockets of his hair. Chunks of his hair.

By the time he was buried, he was almost bald because people had been snipping and they would put it in these lockets, they would braid. Well, who is he? You would recognize his name. A very famous composer, conductor Schuwalker, not Schuler, but he was a very good friend of Beethoven. The name had slipped me; I used to be really good at that.

R: Yes, I’m terrible with names. I recognize them.

Nelson: Fredrick somebody. Anyway, and he wasn’t a Beethoven but he was pretty good in his own right. Well, he brought his grandson with him and they circled the coffin and he got the grandson, the grandson snipped the hair. When, Frederick, whatever his name is, died, he passed that on to this grandson.

His grandson, very, very old, passed it on to his grandson and now we’re getting into the Holocaust years, World War II. Okay, this composer was Jewish so his whole family was Jewish. They’d passed this locket of hair in this death brooch that they would wear and it was framed under glass, an air tight glass and some, like about 60 years or 70 years or whatever that they, there was a Jewish family who had this, and you’re going to die when you hear who it is.
Who have this locket hair and they had to escape. Okay, and they lived in Berlin and they were in the theatre and opera, the brother was an opera singer, the mother was opera singer, the brother was an actor kind of musical opera singer and the brother was an actor. There are like two or three people but they were very, very well known in the artistic circles in Berlin.

Well, they didn’t escape until the last minute. They kept hanging on and holding on and holding on and the mother and father did die in concentration camps. The brother who was the opera musical, like Sound of Music type singer committed suicide back in that 1958, ‘56 or so. But the other brother came to America and if you’ve ever seen Sabrina with Audrey Hepburn and William Holden, he’s the French Chef.

R: No.

Nelson: He’s the one who's had Beethoven's hair.

R: No.

Nelson: Yes. I nearly died when I read that.

R: Oh my gosh. Wow.

Nelson: Well, anyway, what happened is, he had the hair, the locket. But, it got lost because when he didn’t have, I mean his family had it, but when he came to America after the war, it was gone. His members of his family were fleeing through Norway. There was his family that would hide Jews since they were fleeing, and it was a doctor and his wife.

Well, they left some of their possessions with the doctor and wife and they never came back. They assumed that they were killed. They died. They never came back. Well,
in about 1965, ‘64/65, the doctor died of cancer and the wife was liquidating the state and came upon this locket. She had been told it was Beethoven’s hair that it was like, “Well really?” She sent it off to be verified and they had, of course in museums, they had locks of his hair and they didn’t have DNA testing back then but the tested it and said, “Yes, this is Beethoven’s hair.”

She took it to Christies in London, no Sotheby’s in London and she wanted to auction it and there was a, there were two doctors, one from Arizona and one from California who had always been fascinated with Beethoven. It came on the market and the doctor in Arizona said, “I’m going to buy it.” The doctor in California said, “Well, I’ll split it with you.” They bought it.

They took it to the … Now this is now in the 90’s by then. I mean it had been around. It’s in the … It had passed through hand; it’s in the 90’s, well now they have DNA testing. The doctors were fascinated how did Beethoven really died? How did he really died?

They conducted extensive DNA testing and found out that he had lead poisoning. That, either the containers that he’d been drinking the wine from.

R: Which is possible?

Nelson: Then they went through, and they reread the case histories of his, he was in horrible agony the last three weeks of his life. I mean, horrible agony and he would not stop composing. He composed up until the day he died practically. All of the symptoms that, horrible, horrible, I don’t want to go into it, but it’s in the book, but they said, “This
is led poisoning. This is full blown led poisoning. ”He’d begun losing his spine remember how he was super possessive with his nephew, Carl.

Remember that? How he drove Carl basically to commit suicide, I mean Carl, well, they think that Beethoven basically …His mind was going because of the led poisoning. Anyway, they said, “Yes, that he may have sustained nerve damage around the ears, but the main reason was lead poisoning. ”Then somebody said to me, “Well, why didn’t everybody in Europe die of lead poisoning?” Well, first of all he drank extensive amount of wine, I mean, what you read.

R: Yes.

Nelson: You would say he was pretty much in his cusp, it was pretty much.

R: Yes.

Nelson: Especially as his condition grew worst.

R: Yes.

Nelson: But the other thing is it had to have been and they talk about this, the containers and maybe the vessels that he had it in. He was not a hygienic man.

R: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Nelson: You know that, I mean he was totally unhygienic.

R: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Nelson: He could have been drinking from the same cup for 25-years.

R: Yes.

Nelson: We don’t know.

R: Yes, yes.
Nelson: Anyway I explain those sorts of things to my kids, and kids who want to be doctors their eyes are this wide. That’s another way I hooked them into music.

R: Yes.

Nelson: It's always, I would come out stories like this, and they’re just going, “Really!” Yes, because I said, “Music is not in a vacuum, it’s never composed in a vacuum. It’s an oral expression of what’s going on.”

R: A reflection of what’s going on.

Nelson: Yes, basically that’s how I got into it through relationship. I wanted things to be relevant to the children but the other thing was that so many of my children were struggling in their classes and this was before there was this super big push for integration into the music classroom.

Although a lady and I helped to pioneer that in this district in ’95 or ’96, we were kind of the two pioneers to that. But it was always as a facilitator not taking over, and basically it was to help the children want to study their core subjects that was my main thing. My main thing was you know I don’t have time to teach them their science or math, but if I can hook them on a cute song or fun song about it or something that’s going to help them remember and then they’re going to want … They’re going to experience a little bit of success. Then they are going to want to go back to that subject.

R: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Nelson: Study them again, and then won’t have this..

R: Would you say this is what? This is what compels you to use music and to introduce integration into your classroom trying to … Hook the kids?
Nelson: No, no, not really. For me it’s a holistic approach.

R: Okay.

Nelson: It’s holistic, I mean to me music is holistic. To me there’s no separation, see that’s why I don’t like labels very much it’s to me there’s no separation between the core curriculum and music, it’s holistic. I keep saying this, “That if you label what you’re doing it’s holistic.” Yes, I would be glad to take you know teacher’s suggestions for a curriculum and worked it in. I always do but I would do it anyway.

R: Yes, it happens.

Nelson: It happens, it’s holistic. Now, if we say, “Oh, we’re studying about mammals could you think a song about mammal?” Sure, and I had a cute songs about mammals, I can teach them and that it’s about the Jazzy Song, I’ll say, “This is Jazz blah, blah, blah.”

R: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Nelson: I actually don’t introduce it as a core curricular song. I just introduce it and, “Let’s do this song and are you guys talking about this? Or have ever heard about this before?” “Yes.”’ “Oh, okay.” Because I want them to know it's holistic.

R: To realize this.

Nelson: I don’t want this to be music here and science and history and math and language and art here. Because that’s how I grew up everything is in compartments.

R: Yes.

Nelson: With today’s world in particular, it’s impossible.

R: Everything seems degraded.
Nelson: Well, there was a composer who came to my class the other day. He’s the father of a student and he is now earning big bucks’ full-time composing music for software companies. He brought his program, he was never music major, he played, and he got started in elementary music and then played instruments in junior high and high school and college.

He did something totally different for me … Well he's young, he’s like 33 or 34 but for the first part out of college. But he started into this and he has started experimenting with sounds and now he’s working … He charges by the minute, and he is working full-time composing music for software.

R: Yes.

Nelson: You know, I told the children I said, “You don’t have to be music major to be good at music and to love it.”

R: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Nelson: Don’t let people label you that way.

R: You should just do it.

Nelson: Yes, I rarely talk about it. I don’t … I don’t ever. I rarely talk about my performance. I just talk about music and talk about, “See, this is what you can do, this is what you can do, this is what you can do.” I’m trying to make it natural for them.

R: Yes.

Nelson: That they’re not thinking, “Oh, I’m not a musician, blah, blah, blah” You know, I’ll say, “You are a musician, you’re training to be a musician but you don’t have to perfect to be a musician. If you love music, you’re a musician.”
R: Yes.

Nelson: I mean it’s a very broad definition. If you sing, you’re using your instrument. If you play percussion; you’re using your instrument. Musicians … And then I’ll tell them that the first recorded example of music is in the bible in the Old Testament, with David. He didn’t have masters in music.

Nelson: Exactly.

R: Where the masters in the music.

Nelson: Exactly, so anyway.

R: What aspects of your personality and or attitudes contribute to shaping your feelings about music and literacy integration.

Nelson: Well, I’m a voracious reader and a lot of the books that I read refer to music and they’re not music books per-say as a matter of fact, I work about 60 hours a week, 60 to 65 hours a week and because I write my own curriculum. I’m just … When I see something work, I’ll go, “I’m going to throw that out and do this and this.” Then I rehearse before and after school with children. I don’t even get to my preps not until 5:30. Even though, I have turned my lesson plans in, if I see something working I’m going to go, “No this is better, I’m going to do this.” I’m never been formulaic in my teaching.

As part of my personality it’s … I think … I try not … You know it’s really easy to teach to your prejudices than to your strengths and so interestingly enough and I’ve had to catch myself with this. I teach actually more instrumental than I do vocal and I’m a
vocalist. The part of that is it’s harder to teach the vocal and I’ve had vocal fatigue this spring for the first time. I mean I really bad vocal fatigue.

I haven’t been able to really do that with my singing with my kids because of the fatigue. It’s a percentage really that it happened really badly ever. I’ve got to examine why. But as far as my personality, I’m just passionate about it. Again it’s rooted into music’s my life, music is life. Music is, I mean the first part of your brain that develops is the hippocampus, that’s where you store your music. Your memory and things are all here but the music is back there.

The heartbeat goes and hippocampus starts growing. For me again it’s not separated. I mean, I would walk into the classroom they walk in and I’m going I just get started. If you’re passionate about what you’re doing they’re going to get excited. It was real funny I conducted a little program the other day and my principal walked up and he said, “Miss Summers, you’re going to have to work on being less passionate when you conduct.” He was kidding me and I said, “So is that a PDAS goal?”

He just started laughing. But I think basically if you’re excited about what you’re doing, the children are going to be excited about it. But to me the other thing is, in terms of literacy again, I just can’t separate the two. I know what you’re saying teaching spelling, teaching, is that what you’re talking about?

R: Yes. It can be language or skills in general. It can be anything.

Nelson: That’s learning a song.

R: Yes.

Nelson: That’s learning exactly.
R: If you teach it for … To me language art is history it’s … History relationship, it’s vocabulary, it’s syntax, it’s relevancy and it’s all there. So that is everything Phonetics.

R: Everything, everything.

Nelson: Especially phonetics with my ELL children. Some of those babies still couldn’t get some of the words, because I have quite a few children from the Middle East. There’s some letters they just cannot pronounce, “Its okay. It’s alright.” You know, but it helps them.

   It does help facilitate their language because again it’s the same part of the brain that is used in developing language. Music is our first language not words, music is our first language. I think we should do a whole more with music frankly at this level than we do.

   I think frankly they should have they should have kindergarten have music first thing in the morning. I have them in the last hour of the day, and they’re exhausted and they’re tired. First thing in the morning that would prepare their brains to do so well for the rest of the day. But people don’t get it.

R: Yes, now, you’ve said this already so if you could just say it again for me. To what degree of instructional strategy compliment your teaching philosophy?

Nelson: My teaching philosophy is always evolving, because I’m always seeking new ways to teach. I’m very eclectic, if I see and idea … I don’t throw out the baby to use the bath water, I use things that have worked for me for years. If I see something that’s going to work, I’m going to try it. In terms of my teaching going along with who I am and my philosophy is that what you’re saying?
R: Yes.

Nelson: My philosophy is you need to keep growing as a teacher. That’s what keeps you excited; you don’t get into a rut. If you keep growing, exploring, and keep open to new ideas and ask the children. Oh, my gosh, I used the children a lot. “What do you guys … Can you help me with this? What do you think about this? Blah, blah, blah.” To get their ideas.

They’re your best, and actually, this fall I’m going to do a survey with my fifth grade kids. I’m going to say, “What would you like to see happen in music this year?” I’ve never done that before. I have done it with high school and junior high. But I’m just going to see, “Tell me the groups you listen? ”I’m going to have them fill out a survey. Just fifth grade only.

R: Yes.

Nelson: Say, “What would you like to happen? What would you like not to happen?” A lot them don’t like having to learn the theory part of it, the notes, what that signals to me is that I have to make it more fun, and make it more applicable to where they're at.

R: They’re still learning.

Nelson: They’re still learning but...

R: But they’ll know it?

Nelson: Yes, yes, you put the M&M in the medicine…

R: Yes.
Nelson: But basically, I think if I stop growing, I can’t teach anymore. I think if I stop growing. I’m going to stop teaching when I don’t want to grow anymore or don’t have the physical energy to do it.

R: Music and literacy integration is being something.

Nelson: Well first of all …

R: Not new really but...

Nelson: Well, the other thing, the other aspect to that … No it’s not new.

R: But it’s a concept …

Nelson: But it’s being called something different.

R: Yes.

Nelson: Okay, it’s been around, it’s always been around, but it’s first of all being look at more closely. Because I think, people are beginning to get the fact, “Oh, gee, this has to go hand in hand.” Because music is literacy as I’ve said. But the other thing is … One of the things I do is I read children’s literature. I’ll go into the like here; some of the teenage like “The Hunger Game.” You know some of those books sometimes I think are better than the books that are written for adults.

I’ll go, “Okay where are they coming from?” I’m very worried actually about the direction that I see some of the literature take. I’m not talking from a revisionist standpoint or anything like that I’m talking from a moral character standpoint. Even it’s going into our schools, I mean I looked at some of the books at the book fair and I’m going, “Really?” Out of all the books you choose this book for them to buy. But
it’s coming out the Beavis and Butthead generation, because they’re the people now beginning to make the decisions. But unfortunately, that’s what we’re dealing with.

R: Yes. That’s what we’re dealing with.

Nelson: That’s what we’re dealing with and I know as a parent, I’m sure that you’ve come across that and you guys are having to redirect. I mean I have to redirect myself. Because you come home, you’re tired, you turn the TV on and you’re kind of in a coma and then I’ll go, “Why am I watching that? I’m not going to watch this.” We only have one little tiny TV in our house and the only thing we watch is news and sports basically, or we’ll put a movie on.

But there’s nothing on the TV I really want to watch anymore. We go back to 40 years to the neat TV that had Mary Tyler Moore.

R: Yes.

Nelson: Because that was a good writing.

R: Yes.

Nelson: But as far as … There are things on the TV now that were R Rated and X Rated when I was growing up. The other day in class it was unreal, it was the day before the kids left and so I had kindergarten all my furniture’s had been taken away, everything was bare, I put on Animusic, do you know Animusic?

R: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Nelson: I put it on and I said, “Let’s just dance a little bit.” This little boy grabbed his crotch and started dancing like Michael Jackson. I said, “No, Sir. That is not appropriate
in this classroom, it is not appropriate period. “But that’s what he sees at home and that’s what his parents allow him to see. He was just doing what he sees.

R: Yes, no one tells him that’s not …

Nelson: That’s what he sees.

R: He had no clue.

Nelson: He had no clue, that’s why I play the children’s singing games, so that they can see that there are funs ways of singing this things and not have to … But they know all of the language. By kindergarten, they know all of the language.

R: Yes.

Nelson: To me that’s another thing I’m going to say, I think the elementary music teacher is the last frontier for our children, for decency in music and literature. I think in morals. I think we’re the last frontier, I really do. Because music, if you could put something in music it’s going to go way beyond your mind. That’s the premise of this book was, if you can sing it, you’re going to live it. Particularly urban conservation there’s a check on urban pollution, city, streets, water, drinking supplies. If you can get them hooked on that and get it into their little heads, it’s going to be subconscious as well as conscious. Music is really like saline solution.

R: Yes, yes, now what …

Nelson: It’s the carrier.

R: To what degree do you think that music and literacy integration has helpful to grow student’s academic achievements?
Nelson: I think it reinforces what the teacher is doing in the classroom. It also sometimes goes beyond what the teacher is doing in the classroom. Even though the children may not totally understand the syntax of what they’re singing about, it’s that layering that we studied about where you talk about something 25 times in 25 different ways and that ingrained in your brain is really deep. To me it’s reinforcing what the teachers in the classroom are doing. Music is the great reinforcer. Music actually to me is the foundation of all learning.

R: Yes, is there any evidence something that has happened in your classroom that you’ve said a particular case of a kid or a class, where you’ve seen actually what you’ve done has helped them in the classroom?

Nelson: Sure with my second grade play. Because we studied science and last year particularly in my second grade play, I had a very, very bright second grade, you have those classes come along once in a while. They were basically a GT, second graded basically GT last year with and exception of the few children. Oh my gosh, my two seven-year-old girls created my PowerPoint for the program.

R: Wow.

Nelson: It was animated and everything that the teachers said, “Here …

R: They wrote the whole thing.

Nelson: They wrote it. They wrote it, they illustrated it, everything.

R: Wow.

Nelson: And that …

R: That’s your literacy right there.
Nelson: The literacy was right there and I said, because this little girl came up … Well actually I came up with the idea and I was talking to my AP and I said, “You know I really want my programs to be children driven as much as possible.” I said,” I’m going to have the second graders design something.” Well, this little girl, her father's a physician. Chinese, they come from a very academic, rigorous background.

R: Background, yes.

Nelson: She organized the class. There was that three or four of them, actually well three. They were more that started it up. But about two or three including her, who did this beautiful PowerPoint and it was flashing the whole time the kids were singing. When they would sing a song there would be all this visuals that would come up, that Ellie came up with.

R: Wow.

Nelson: I said, “Okay, let’s use original art work.” We did scan original artwork and then she put it into the PowerPoint, you had original artwork that the children had created as well as pictures that she’d pulled off the internet.

R: Wow.

Nelson: It was fantastic; and that was very, very much an example of literacy, second grader, a seven year old did that.

R: Wow, wow.

Nelson: That was awesome. As far as other examples, this book, about 10 years or a decade worth of pre-k through to university using the book teaching principles. Especially in Boy Scout or Girl Scout, Four H, this books was used a lot in teaching
concepts. But as far and …Once in a while I would have a child say to me, I’ll be talking about something about a song and they’ll go, “Oh, it really means this, this and this,” I’ll go, “I didn’t even think of that vocabulary thank you for telling me that.” I’ve had that happened recently.

R: Yes.

Nelson: I’m so tired right now. I’m not probably very coherent. But we’re …

R: We’re also in that same boat--

Nelson: But anyway, basically, yes, I’ve seen it quite a bit.

R: In your...?

Nelson: Oh, yes, quite a bit along with the BAG, with the xylophones, with the PowerPoint, I’ve talked about fractions of course, you know, we all do that.

R: Yes.

Nelson: But as far as specifically helping? Yes, I’ll tell you another, and I had no idea that this was coming because the girl, two instances, this girl’s very quiet, I mean I had no idea. I was teaching at a private school, now this is a much more privileged venue. These children had access to lots of resources and she would participate in class, but she wasn’t …She never exerted herself. She never would come forward, she would do what I asked her to do and she would stand and sing, and she was in the choir but she wasn’t particularly, what am I trying to say? “Forward”.

R: Yes.

Nelson: You know.

R: Yes.
Nelson: They had literacy oh, you’ll love this too. They had literacy festival in the library, and her whole report was on Ella Fitzgerald. I mean we’re talking huge presentation boards, going in and listening to the music. She had never told me she was doing that.

R: Wow.

Nelson: It was just amazing, but I always talked about people. Her mother said, “Look what she did.” Are you kidding? Then the other thing that was fun, two other things. This past like two weeks ago there’s this little girl, from the very shall we say dysfunctional, her mother’s in rehab, but not poverty.

R: Yes.

Nelson: Well, the principal actually kicked her out of his office. She’d come up so many times and he said, “Get out. I don’t want to talk to you anymore”

R: Wow.

Nelson: He got away with it. But anyway, she’s nuts, you had to be really careful around this little girl because waiting to sue you; she tried to sue a really good friend of mine last spring. This friend is really wonderful and accomplished and a police officer was waiting for her in the hall.

We walked in the building and this officer was standing there and he was kind of grinning because he knew it was kind of a farce. But she was fine, but she told me, “Be careful.” I kind of treat this girl with kit gloves as it were.

But the reason why I’m saying that is that she does answer questions in class. But she’s walking down the hall, they each had to do this big project and hers was on Elvis Presley.
She opened up her board and I went, “Really, Elvis Presley, wow, that’s awesome.” I said, “I’d really love for you to share with the class what.” Of course, it was at the end of school. ”What you’ve learned.”

But there was …That’s cool, but the other neat thing that you might want to think about doing it at your school it’s so much fun. I haven’t thought about this in a long time but I might do that for literacy and music, around Halloween is our at school we used to have the kids take pumpkins. They would carve composer head.

R: Oh.

Nelson: Carve different letters, so that you would have. Who was it? Oh, my gosh, I’m so tired. Berlioz.

R: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

Nelson: Symphonie Fantastique, you know he had that really big head. It’s a big bubble pumpkin head of Berlioz. But the library, which is really cool, and it was a contest and you could tell that some of the parents had do it, there’s no way a kid could have done that pumpkin.

R: Yes, yes.

Nelson: There’s no way, but they would bring these pumpkins in and sometimes they would be musical characters. I think that would be fun to do at school to say, “Okay, in this class we’re going to have a pumpkin contest and I want you to carve your favorite musical, whether it’s going to be a note or composer.” I might really do that in the fall.

R: Then even write a little something about it.

Nelson: Write something about it and then we could have it on display on the library.
R: Yes, that’s a great idea.

Nelson: That should be fun.

R: Yes.

Nelson: Yes, there are all sorts of ways that you can …The one thing that I would love to do, I don’t know if this would fly. But I would love to do an art music program, I think I have talked to you about this before where I find out what the teacher is studying in art and then I would teach music to go along with it.

Then have a program where the kids would sing maybe five songs and then they could go see their art exhibit. Which, I’m going to talk to her about it; I don’t know if it’ll fly. But I’ve done it before and it’s, “Oh, my gosh” I had these huge baroque frames that were built by my parents and painted gold, and kids would come in and out of these frames in period costumes.

R: Oh, wow.

Nelson: It was so much fun.

R: Beautiful.

Nelson: Yes, it was really cool.

R: That would be a good idea.

Nelson: Yes, it was fun.

R: Now, what challenges do you face when integrating music and literacy, if any? If you face any challenges when you try to integrate?

Nelson: The different levels of competency in speaking English, I would have 42 kids, children in my classroom and they’ll be 15 or 16 that are the different levels. Where, for
me the challenge is this kids bored and this kid doesn’t understand it and this kid’s in the middle.

R: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Nelson: I’m going, because I did teach on the college level; I had to really watch not talking too much, because I lectured. That is the constant challenge for me, to shut-up and let the kids experience the music. Basically that’s my greatest challenge is I had, I just completed Music Memory. There were 37 schools that competed at the Berry Center, and the children learned eight composers. My kids go from January until the middle of May two mornings a week and it’s a GT class, and we won a gold trophy third year in a row.

R: Wow.

Nelson: We were one of the 13 schools out of 37 to win it, which was fun. I’d go … You talked about going deep into literacy, oh my, it’s a mini college music appreciation course. They do artwork and we play thinking games, and they draw listening maps. They present a little report.

I mean, you talk about literacy now here’s the thing, because I know that you are from a Spanish speaking background. Here’s the thing I don’t like about it. Rarely does a child from an ELL Spanish speaking home make it. You have to … You can only take seven children with you to the Berry Center. You would have to give a series of tests to weed out the ones.

It used to be 20 years ago when I was here before that you could take everybody. Because we only had 26 school and we took five kids. Everybody could crown in and it was at the church. Held at a church and it was great, now we have 54 schools so there’s
no way. There’s this one little girl and I swear to Hanna. She’s a fourth grader her names is ____________, precious little girl. She did struggle with her grades, but that’s because of her ELL, it’s not because she’s not smart, she’s just smart as a whip. But she comes from a home that doesn’t speak good Spanish. They don’t speak a good native syntax, her parents are very sweet with her, and they’re not educated. She’s coming from that to ________, and you know in ________ you have to take the … I’ve forgotten the name of it, but there’s a Spanish test you have to take before you can take the STAAR test.

You know what I’m saying. Anyway to make a long story short. I’m not going to tell my district music supervisor because it might just set her off and I love her dearly. It’s very hard for children from ELL backgrounds to make it that far, because the facts are basically taken out of music appreciation book, they’re maybe simplified a little bit. But if you were none a music major and you were a freshman in college some of those facts sheets would almost be applicable to your level.

I thought about not going and just doing our own school wide Music Memory contest, although the kids get really excited because they get a plaque. The trophy from the district, they get a medal. But every child who competes gets a medal and a certificate. They all get the same medals and certificates but it’s the trophy that those kids are after, so to get back to your question.

On my Music Memory team I had one little girl who has been straight A student three years in a row, who’s on the swim team who’s brilliant. She’s clown and she looks like she’s not studying at all but I think she’s probably a little bored because, then I have
Juan and Ashley over here who are barely making it to take the test. It doesn’t mean that they’re not trying it’s that; and heartbreakingly because I’m meeting two mornings a week with choir and two mornings a week with Music Memory, I don’t have time to meet with them one on one.

R: Individually.

Nelson: I wish I did. Although I told them, I said, “If you guys ever want to meet after school let me know.” But they don’t have the transportation and I can’t take them home, it’s illegal. I am going to talk to __________, but I’m going to kind of soft shoe it. I’ll pedal in, “You know, is there any way that we could because our particular clientele and our population at our school, maybe other schools don’t, but ours do. Because most of our Hispanic children are from very poor backgrounds. Lovely parents, lovely people and they’re passionate their children, some to succeed, by the way only one school in ______ made AYP this year, elementary school.

R: Wow

Nelson: Only one school this year, In __________ elementary made its AYP this year.

R: Wow

Nelson: Next year it’s …It was 50% percent this year and next year it’s 100%.

R: Wow

Nelson: Our principal announced that and we all sat there, but the good news is with our school is …And I’m going to tell you this because I saw this at Horne, and I’m going to tell you the stronger your music program is the stronger your test scores are out there. We
went from the bottom of the district, because we didn’t …this was our second year in a row not making in AYP.

There are 54 schools right now in nine months we’re up to 27th in the district in nine months.

R: Wow.

Nelson: The schools who didn’t, which didn’t make AYP went from way up here and dropped not only down to where we are but below us, and I had this dear, dear woman, you would love __________, her name is. She is an example of someone who has pulled herself up by the bootstraps. She’s Hispanic, she’s brilliant, she’s beautiful, she’s a principal at the school, very fine administrator and I ran …She was my AP at __________, and ran into her recently and I said, “You know we’re in our second year.” She said, “Well, we’re probably going to be following you.”

Because she said, “We’re in our first year and now they are in their second year.” Now, we’re in our third year, but the good news for us is the district sees that we’ve come from here all the way this way.

R: There is progress.

Nelson: We’re moving this way.

R: Yes, yes.

Nelson: Other schools have moved this way. Mister O said, “We’re no longer at the bottom folks. We’re 27 out of 54.” Everybody just cheered.

R: Yes.

Nelson: Because it’s been blood, sweat and tears getting them.
R: Oh, I bet.

Nelson: Because we have some of the roughest clientele, and we are adding 200 students and they’re from the other half of the trailer court. We’re not getting any students from homes that are educated, we’re getting trailer court.

R: Would you consider that can be...?

Nelson: But I love those kids.

R: Oh I bet, no, but would you consider that, because that’s my next question and I’m thinking would you consider that a frustration in...?

Nelson: Yes.

R: In what you do?

Nelson: Yes it is. Well, yes it is in the terms of I’ll tell you how it’s a frustration, in that, I haven’t had very many kids quit my organization but, because our parents sign contracts stating … Because I just have choir for one semester and then I do Music Memory because with STAAR tests second semester it’s impossible.

R: If you do before and after school?

Nelson: They’re going to be totally …They put 59, fifth graders out of 125 first semester, and then it went up to 70, second semester, so I can’t do grade level programs with them. I mean because the kids would be embarrassed, who don’t know that. Our district insist that every child be in a program whether they were there or not, I’m not going to do that. I’m not going to do it,

It creates a lot more work for me but I’m not going to do it. My principal is okay with that because I’m hitting the lower levels, two years in a row I’ve had second grade
so that means those children will have been in a grade wide program by the time they graduate from ____________.

But to get back to your question, it’s not so much …It’s not the literacy part, because I gave them CDs that they listen to and I break everything down in choir and with some we’d do the same music in the class.

I reinforce that it I double it in choir, and class because, why not? You can teach the same principles, have them sing twice in a day rather than once in, or four and half times more a month.

R: Yes

Nelson: What’s frustrating to me is that I’m finding more and more parents have no concept of commitment. That their child commits to something and if the child wants to quit, they let them quit. I will give you, and also flaunting the rules, and I’ll give you another example.

I was so mad, I had to walk away, there’s a girl from a very, extremely well educated, two girls from an extremely well educated wealthy families. Parents traveled all over the world, they take the girls with them, they’ve had every advantage and they can be very …Well one little girl in particular. They can be …This one little girl can be very, very sweet, but she’s extremely spoiled.

She thinks she’s a 30-year-old sister and she’s in 5th grade, go figure, she’s a baby, she’s very, very spoilt. The reason why I’m saying that is that on … I had handed out, here’s my frustration, I had handed out lots of letters, legal documents and I said,
“Okay, we are driving from _________ to the ________ Center. We have to be in our seats at 4:30.”

There were over 350 children to register and only two or three people registering. I had written this in several letters; do not stop on way to get a snack. Have the snack in the car with your child; you know, I said, “A substantial snack because they’re going to be there from 4:30 until, well for Music Memory, 4:30 until 7:00 almost 7:00.” The choral festival and this happened at choral festival from 4:30 until about 8:00 o’clock or so. I mean, well this mother stopped off with the girl anyway she didn’t care.

Here’s my frustration, my frustration is that if you can’t get the parents on board then, because there are some parents who don’t care for kids read or not, they don’t care. It’s not relevant to them, they do not care or they are so overwhelmed with what they are through that they don’t think about it or they came from backgrounds, and I’m just talking about lower income, I’m talking across the board.

I’m finding more and more with the generation X parents that they can…you know I’ve taught 40 years and it use to be that you could pretty well tell, “If they’re from that side of the track you’re going to have trouble with them, not anymore.” Because of this attitude of entitlement, that’s my frustration.

It’s the entitlement issue, I had one little girl who join the Choral festival as an alternate because there was one little who was on the edge of having to drop out because of grades. I told her, I said, I told both of them and I said, “Now, you need to know there maybe a chance you’re not going to sing. But there’s a good chance you might sing but it’s up to you whether you want to do it, well they both said, “Yes, okay.”
This one little girl just said, “I don’t want to do it anymore. I quit.” Well she’d signed a contract with her mom, and her mom backed her up and then I had two key boys at Christmas, quit my choir the week before and I pulled them in I said, “What are you doing? It’s the week before, why are you doing this?”

“I don’t want to do it anymore.” I said, “Your parents signed a contract. I’ve spent my own money on you guys. I’ve spent a hundred, many hours of my own time with you.” “Don’t want to do it.” The parents didn’t back them up, didn’t back me up, that’s my frustration.

The entitlement issue and the reason why I said that’s, okay, let’s hook that up to literacy, because that’s the general. Literacy meaning that many parents think that reading your i-Pod is literacy, reading the internet, Yahoo, whatever account, to them that’s literacy. It’s not literacy. They may be reading but to me literacy implies learning something new.

R: It’s more focused, it has more depth.

Nelson: It got again, vocabulary syntax, phonics, but it also got history, meaning, you know, it’s so more than …

R: Comprehension --

Nelson: Than getting on the Yahoo and reading about Madonna’s latest wardrobe.

R: Exactly

Nelson: You know what we’ve raised the whole generation in the last, since 2000, and that’s what they read, and now this people are becoming parents. I have some lovely young parents, lovely, lovely young parents but I am losing some very key students next
year. They’re not coming back to ______________, because they got the letter that these other kids are coming and they’re pulling their kids.

Basically here’s the deal; you have to educate the parents before the kids are going to be educated. We’ve offered parenting classes, I mean our counselor is great, she’s really great but you can’t push the parents to come to the class or to come to the meeting. You can’t force them to do that which is one of the reasons why I all in my, well, all of my programs with the exception of the Christmas program has been choral integration because I keep thinking if I can introduce that, excuse me.

R: That’s all right.

Nelson: To the parents within a program, “Hey, science can be fun.” My second program at __________ in 2011 was a really fun, it was an intracurricular; it was my first program, intracurricular program where each section did a different core. A, did science, B, did literature, C, did math, and D did art and so forth and they had songs and then the whole grade level got together and sang a song.

Actually I did that excuse me I did that at __________, and so we studied literature, I mean all of the subjects are covered for the parents to see. They could see that the kids were having fun with it. Back to the second grade program, my principal flipped out over it, he was so excited about it. 257 people came to my classroom in two weeks; some of whom I’ve never been in and that the siblings have been allowed to come but there is no room. It would have been well; it would have been at least as much if not more people who come at night.
They got to see their children up close and I have all of this special education students performing, rocking out who would never have done that on the cafeteria stage in front of all those people. I had one little girl who’s Down Syndrome who, the first time she did it and she curled up in a ball on the floor, but her parents were there and they baby her.

I said, “Let’s give it another try.” She performed with another group and was out in the front row just singing and dancing, having a great time.

R: Would you say that putting up this integrated programs and perhaps and then doing it in your classroom where there’s no …

Nelson: The kids, the children made the posters.

R: Do you think that would be a way to overcome that frustration of lack of support or lack of understanding what was going on?

Nelson: Yes, I think it’s not lack of support so much, it’s lack of understanding. I think once they understand what a cool thing it is, you’re going to have a lot of support, it’s just they don’t know because they didn’t grow up in a situations like this. Either they never had music ever, in their lives or …

R: Do you think the …There’s lack of understanding, would you say that they don’t …

Nelson: It’s not deliberate.

R: No, would you say that they don’t see that there is …That music and literacy integration go hand in hand?

Nelson: They don’t think of it that way, and if you talk to them that way you turn them off. You give it to them and remember the M&M in the middle of medicine? I mean, you
can mention it but you don’t present it that way, when parents came into the classroom I said, “I’m so glad you’re here. This year we have learned about science, we’ve learned about math, we’ve learned vocabulary.”

We’ve learned, I listed all the things, but for 60 seconds that was it and then they perform and the parents figured it out. What’s so very touching and moving, I mean I almost cried. There is this little girl, which is why people should never stereotype ever stereotype.

Because there is this little girl who was in desperate situation, she’s a straight A student, her father has no teeth. I don’t think he finished eighth grade but he’s so excited and she’s getting educated. He said, “Miss Summers, I’m doing my best.” Evidently her mother is not in the picture. I said, “You’re doing a magnificent job.”

Some of my greatest support has come from parents who are in wonder at what education can do because they never saw it.

R: They never had the opportunity.

Nelson: Because they grew in a world that stereotyped, and our world still does stereotype. It’s getting better but it’s still not there, by long shot and to see the excitement on their face, you’re educating them as well as the children. There’s this one group there was this one parent who stayed and stayed and stayed after the play was over and sat in my classroom and just watched me with the children.

We had popsicles afterwards, and they just sat there. They wanted to stay there, and because; and this is something that I learned a long time ago in one of the workshop
actually, is that one of the reasons why you don’t have support sometimes is because the parents had negative experiences in school themselves.

Again you hook them, you give every child every opportunity to succeed. I had 64 speaking parts between the four classes instead of eight, one liners, but those kids got … I had one second grade teacher broke down in tears because of this little boy who is a twin and he’s special- Ed and his twin is not and they’re identical looking. Emmanuel got up there and he got about four words out and she just broke into tears and she said, “Thank you for that.” Because she said, “He tries so hard.”

R: The opportunities that …

Nelson: It presents the opportunities and one on one, and part of it, you know I’m thinking, okay if do, I’m going to have a third grade choir, and then I’m going to have a fourth and fifth grade choir next year and this year we sang the same music kind of, no, we’re not going to do that.

My fourth and fifth graders are going to sing different music than the third graders, because my third class EG, this second grade class is low, it’s low. But I guess what I’m saying is you built up your support so when I say, “Oh who wants to belong to third grade choir?” You’re going to have some of those parents coming back going, “What can I do to help you with such and such?”

I’m going to do Broadway, I’m going to do Hakuna Matata and I’m going to do, I do that once in a while, I usually create my own programs and I’ll write the one liners.

R: The dialogue.
Nelson: But I thought, I want to hook them and that’s part of the survey is the first week of school or first two weeks because it takes two weeks before you see all of the kids. I’m going to say, “What kind of music would you like to sing in a choir? You know, what kind of music would you like me to?” But sometimes it’s a dangerous question but, say, if you had anyone piece of music that you could chose for us to sing in a choir what would it be?

R: What would it be? Oh, at least you give them an opportunity.

Nelson: I give them an opportunity and …

R: I have my next question for you. I think I know the answer but I am going to let you tell me.

Nelson: Okay.

R: What is your level of confidence when integrating music and literacy integration in your classroom?

Nelson: High. I’ve done it forever and I’ve done it consciously. I mean I keep saying that music is literacy but I’ve also again I was this …I was the pioneer of it, I mean not within the classroom but within conservation. Which went into the classrooms of every school in Missouri had this book. I kind of invented that wheel.

R: You did it?

Nelson: Yes.

R: I think you shared this but if you can mention any other successes that you have experienced when integrating music and literacy in your classrooms.
Nelson: Understand, well, introducing children to books that they never heard of like for instance Charlotte’s Web, there’s some songs. I would read parts of, little snippets of Charlotte’s Web and then we would sing songs to go with that, some of the kids had never heard of that and this is really cute DVD, that Scholastic puts out that has the, “There was an old lady that swallowed a fly.” Do you have that DVD?

R: I have it and I love it.

Nelson: I love it.

R: I love all of the other stories too, it’s fantastic.

Nelson: I do too, and when they came on …When it came on, this is the first year I’ve used it, when it came on you know how they open up the credits? “Oh, that’s so and so and that’s so.” They could recognize all of these characters walking across. You know when you walk in and saw the Giraffe, I brought that book here and I read them the book and then I played it on the DVD. I always have books with my K1 and even my 2, now well I don’t know, I’ll do another program.

Anyway, but with my K-1, I always read them stories and then we do songs to go with the story. At Christmas I do the Nutcracker and we do all sorts of activities, I do it every other year with Tchaikovsky, or I’ll do something with the book at Christmas and then we would do music to go with that book.

R: To go with that? Now, what’s, and this and I’m very intrigued by this because I’ve heard different …Well, not different actually, I think I heard a common perception. What professional development opportunities regarding music and literacy integration are available to you in your area.
Nelson: Very few, very few, if there are any I’m going to be the one creating it. Very, very few and it really depends on your administrator. When I was at Horne, 20 years ago, my administrator was a visionary. When she … It took a couple of years for her to trust me because I’ve been out of education; I mean elementary education so long.

I’d been in the classroom but I’d been out. It took her a couple of years to kind of size me, she loved my programs but she would be the one coming in to observe me. After two years, she said, “Okay you can stop writing books every weekend for your lesson plans. I now know you can do it.” She gave me carte blanche and she allowed me to give workshops to the faculty at the school. It was phenomenal.

R: Fantastic, How … Like what, what did you do?

Nelson: This integration of literacy and the Silver Burdett books had just come out so I could hand them a text book and I could say, “Look.” Basically it was, “This is what I got for you here at school. Please use me.” Then we would do some activities with it, and it had all, everything, the curriculum as they were studying in the classroom and the principal let me do it.

Then I started doing it with a friend on a district wide level, and then we were sent to a conference some people came, it was a ______________ conference and some people came out of Rhode Island and we were sent to that.

This friend of mine, and she did the pre-K through 2 and I did 3 through 5, and it was awesome, and I was really gung-ho and then we moved and I moved to a district where they were 50 years behind. I’m serious, I’m not kidding, and it was like, “What?” I was regarded with suspicion. Are you kidding me?
R: Would you say that the professional opportunities that you again it’s, you have created basically?

Nelson: I basically have and I’m very frustrated when I go, because I’m basically hearing the same thing.

R: Yes.

Nelson: I’m hearing the same thing. I may be introduced to new materials and new websites, but anybody can go on the web and here’s something that gets me about that with this book. This was all created, we didn’t go to the web and steal somebody’s ideas, and you know there are lot of websites that you can go on to they say, “Use us, or you can pay $15 a month of whatever.”

This was original work, it’s not from students, I mean I just filled in the gaps, this is from teachers, students, I mean it was the whole State of ____________, not just a school but anybody, original work. They had to put a lot of thought into it and there was no other music around like it. Now, I’m having to one this summer; I don’t want to go, because I know what I’m going to hear.

R: Yes.

Nelson: I know what I’m going to hear and it’s going to be, “Well you can do this, and this, and this, and because school didn’t make AYP, we’re going to have to be very cognizant at this.” While I’m going, “Really?” You know unless you offer something new to me, been there, done that, and I’m sure that I’ll learn some new sources which will be fine. This person is not married, this person lives music, teaching is her life, she’s
obsessed with it, so she spends probably 30 to 40 hours a week the computer surfing it, while the rest of us don’t have time to do that because we got family and so forth.

R: Yes.

Nelson: I’m sure she’s going to have some really good information but I’m going to be sitting there getting really mad too, I’m sorry because there are other things we doing.

R: Yes.

Nelson: I’ll just say this, the reason why a lot of districts do that is having to justify keeping music in their program because of the test scores because everything is run by this and driven by the test scores. See that’s the thing, when this was done, it was not driven by a test score. Theirs, okay, that’s a whole different subject but please write this down, there is a huge difference between integrating core subjects into music or using music to integrate …Music integrated into the core subjects because you want to do it rather than because you’re force to do it.

This book was not test-driven; this book is a labor of love by hundreds of people. Hundred, in other words they took ownership of this. Now let me tell you something, when the core curriculum has to enter the classroom because the district tells, and I have to spent a week on a science unit, a week, two weeks, well, no a week. Well, two class periods for two weeks, so basically two weeks.

I had taught a lot of it already but there is not real joy for me in doing that. It was; they sent us everything. We had to do their PowerPoint, we had to do their materials, we had to do their activities and we had to do it all and I was going, “Really? Come on.”
There’s a huge difference between this being test driven because basically in the back of your mind and in the back of your administrator’s mind they’re thinking, “Numbers, numbers, and numbers, results, results, results.”

That’s not why we teach music. I hope that’s not why we teach music although there are some people who have begun teaching, the younger teachers coming up, that’s the other thing I worry about.

R: How to justify...?

Nelson: No, they’ve been taught to teach this way. I know one teacher in particular who is losing her skills on our instrument because she’s teaching so much of this that she’s not playing her instrument anymore. The bottom line is, this is a facilitator to help children learn but please don’t take music away from them as a result of it. Please don’t take it away.

R: Leading into that, how do you think that your school principal, values music and literacy integration?

Nelson: I don’t think it’s ... 

R: Do you think its core driven too not even...?

Nelson: No, he doesn’t think about it. For the first time and I’m telling you this just to answer the question. I wouldn’t say anything but for the first time in the history of the school or ever since he’s been there, he’s been there eight years, nine, eight or nine years. Two weeks ago we had a faculty meeting to announce that we’re getting 200 more new students and he said, “Mrs. ________ would you come up to the front?” “What? Okay.” Because, I’m never recognized ever, even in a faculty meeting. He said, “Mrs. ________”
He gave me some flowers and he said, “She’s here at 7:00 in the morning until 5:30 or 6:00 at night working with students. She ...” He just started listening to things.

R: Out of the blue?

Nelson: Out of the blue, and I was just … I got back to the table and the PE woman went, “That never happens, never happens.” The art teacher wouldn’t even bring it up with me, she was not happy. She wasn’t very happy and she talked to me all day but, didn’t even refer to it and then nitpicked at me for a couple of days, which is sad, it’s kind of sad, isn’t it?

But it was really interesting because he valued what I had done, I don’t think he’s ever looked at any of my lesson plans. I don’t think he has ever looked at my lesson plans. When I got there I wrote very detailed lesson plans, I switched my format each year because I’m experimenting. I never do the same lessons. I never do the same lesson plans each year, I mean I’m always reinventing the wheel, always, which is why I’m always working 60 hours.

R: Yes.

Nelson: Because I know teachers who use their same lesson plans over and over, they just switch, they switch the song out and they switch the activity but it’s the same lesson plan.

R: The same lesson plan.

Nelson: No, I don’t ever do that because I get bored and then the kids would get bored, but he’s never looked at them.

R: So, he values your efforts.
Nelson: He has valued my efforts and he’s valued my time with the kids because he does love our children. He’s great with the kids, he’s passionate about that and I respect him a great deal for that but he is not the kind of man. He cannot write sentence in correct English.

R: Yes?

Nelson: The emails we get English the grammar is incorrect a lot of the time. Although in his defense he had brain cancer so it could be the result of that. But the people who said that they knew him before, said that, “No, that this is the way it’s always been.” He has … I want to give him some kudos, because for the past … Up until the last few months he’s been very difficult to work with.

But he basically brought in two specialists and said that, “You better start doing this, this, and this.” We have 17 people who are leaving our campus this year. Yes, and some of them because it’s excess list, some of them because of husbands, some of them because they were tired of being beaten to a pulp.

We lost some huge people, I’ve lost two teaching partners in PE they were phenomenal, phenomenal and I mean I almost cried Thursday because I thought, “What am I going to do without them? ”Because they were phenomenal.

R: Yes.

Nelson: Now they’re down to one PE teacher because they’re going to spend the money on two, she’s going to have an aide, and she has never taught PE in her life. God bless her especially with the 200 students coming in. Because I know that’s one of the reasons why she applied to our school because it was a small campus. Now it’s, “Guess what honey
you’re going to have 1,000 students. 1,000 close to 1,000.

R: You have a …

Nelson: To put it, it’s not that he’s anti.

R: Yes.

Nelson: It just that he doesn’t think about it and he does not like me coming in and talking to him. He does not welcome, he does not welcome dialogue at all. I’ve worked with principals who I’ll say. “I have a great idea blah, blah, blah.”

In my summative, I became rather brave and I say that because my husband’s been out of work for about two and a half years, I want him to like me so that I could get good reviews. Because we haven’t had a steady paycheck coming in.

R: Yes.

Nelson: I just find I said to her…She gave me my scores and she said, “Do you have anything that you’d like to share?” I said, “Yes.” I said, “Does anybody really understand what I do here?” She kind of went like that, I said, “Does anybody really realize that I’ve spent …”

R: Was this with your AP?

Nelson: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Nelson: Who evaluated me? I said, “I have spent so many hours on my own time, doing programs, rehearsing programs before and after school, so that none of the classrooms schedules would be disrupted. I haven’t got one word of thanks from anybody, including my own team members.”
Because it’s used to be that, you’d miss a full week of PE because you had kids on the stage. I’ve talked to other PE teachers and they said, “That’s huge to have two or three weeks a year saved of PE is huge.”

I’ve done it for two years and nobody said, well this last year, nobody said one word of thanks to me for any of it. I think that’s one of the reason why he called me up. Because, she was standing there and he said, “Do you want to do this?” She said, “No, you do it.” I think she’s the one who put the bad...

R: Just with the…

Nelson: We started laughing and I said, “I don’t want people to toss roses at me as I walk down the hall.” But I said, “If people would just kind of acknowledge what I do.”

R: Acknowledge it.

Nelson: What I’m doing once in a while. Then I talked to her about my team dynamics I said, “They haven’t been all that hot this year.” When this two people left, I almost cried because of the art teacher. She can be …She’s gotten warmer to me.

It’s very difficult to do your job well if you don’t have a lot of cooperation from your team. That is the dynamics that does affect your performance and this year I was on my own for everything. Which is another reason why I worked close to 60 hours a week because …

R: You didn’t have any …

Nelson: I had no help whatsoever, with anything, nothing. One day when this PE teacher helped me lined up the kids from tall to small and she wrote it. I said, “Could you write that out for me?” She wrote out this detailed how would you do it. It was very good and I
thought, “Great.” I mean I have that and that’s not my forte and plus when you teach college you don’t have to do that.

R: Yes.

Nelson: But, except for that one-day and you know if I had technical questions her son who is a tremendous young man, wonderful person would come across and help me with technical questions, he was great about that.

Or because he was the only man back there and we had some rough boys occasionally. He’d say, “Let me keep him, we’re going to have a little recreation.” He’d make them run around the track 10 times. I’m surprised he didn’t get into trouble for that. But he did, he’d make them do it, or he’d make them do pushups. I may do that next time I may say, “Drop and give me five pushups.”

R: Yes, give me five pushups.

Nelson: Yes, and so anyway I had no help. I had no help I had some tremendous help from parents they came through. Some parents came through tremendously but they’re leaving. They’re leaving but I had some tremendous support from parents and I had a teacher who was very sweet and helped me do a couple of things too. I didn’t ask her, but she volunteered and that was awesome. But I had help from my team.

R: Do you have curriculum specialist or do you have....

Nelson: I have an IS.

R: An IS, okay, and how do you think this person values using music and literacy?

Nelson: Oh, very much. Very much, as a matter of fact she stood up in a faculty meeting because the PE teachers who just left did a phenomenal job integrating core curriculum
into their PE program. As a matter of fact their PE program was known throughout the
district. I mean, Julie she’s just outstanding, she’s awesome. The IS stood up and she
said, “The large groups has been tremendous about integrating her curriculum into their
classroom and I’m really appreciative.” Our mouths just … Because we’re never
recognized, it was amazing. Yes, she is very …
R: She would value it.

Nelson: Oh, totally and her daughter is going to be in the fifth grade next year, and I sing
the Mammal song with her daughter. She said, ”She loves the Mammal Song.” Her
daughter was in choir, and her daughter is into professional cheerleading.
R: Does she also sees it from a parent’s perspective?
Nelson: Yes as well, oh yes, absolutely. Now, my Christmas program was called Lighten
Up, I think I told you before, it was based just on fun songs and jokes because of the
AYP, everybody was so sad, I thought, “Let’s just kind of get some light in here.”
Then I did Music Memory and Choral Festival at the same time and then did the second
grade programs. Then my girls were chosen out of the district to …My 11 girls to sing at
the War Memorial service at ________ Park on May 27th. They did a wonderful job, they
didn’t have a mic for them though and it was outdoor pavilion, with the big trucks rolling
down and I thought, “Are you kidding me?”
R: Yes, who’s going to hear them?
Nelson: Exactly, I told the girls, I said, “Do not shout, just use your pretty voices.” I went
up to the man and he said, “Well if I put the mic up it’s going to pick-up the wind.” I just
said, “Okay.” Because it was very windy that day, but they really, honestly I didn’t have
the strength to get my choir back together again. I just didn’t have the strength to do it.

R: With so many things going on?

Nelson: Well, and these kids were testing, and they were tested out. They weren’t going to meet before school.

R: Yes, yes.

Nelson: But these girls I worked them to death. They sang for two pep-rallies, Choral Festival and the Memorial and the VIP lunch. They’re using me. I mean you know, and that’s nice and I trained a little kindergarten and a first grade girl. I wrote some words to a thank you song and they sang that for the lunch and the principal cried. I think in their own way they value what I’m doing. I don’t think that they don’t really understand what I’m really doing with this.

R: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Nelson: I submit the materials out to them. Now, when they do walk-thrus, I’m on plan too, because I don’t have a formal. They just pop in unannounced. One day, you would be interested in it.

One day I was working with not only an ELL group but a group that was very low. You well know through your research, I’m talking to a doctoral student here. That when you grew up in poverty you have the same special-Ed issues as if you were born, because of the brain, the development of the brain, the malnutrition and all of that.

R: Yes.

Nelson: Well, __________ came in and there was this song they couldn’t get it, I thought, “Okay, maybe I should drop it. But then they loved this song. It was The Cat Came Back.
We only did three verses, we couldn’t do the whole song but they loved the song. I said, “Okay. ” We had worked and worked and finally I said, “Get your xylophones out.” What I did is I broke it down and I went through three steps.

I tapped it on the cogs, and I said, and “Repeat after me.” I had a little girl with laser beam on the smart board highlighting the words. I would take a phrase, I would click it rhythmically and speak it, and they would take their xylophones and mallets and rhythmically speak it and play it on C.

Then I would say, “You’re going to do that again and you’re going to play it on your xylophone without my clicking it, without my playing it.” They did that then I said, “Now, I’m just going to play it rhythmically, and you sing inside of your head.” I just like played it rhythmically without any words and they played it rhythmically on the xylophone and then the fourth step was do it by yourself. They did it by themselves and then they sang it.

R: Exactly.

Nelson: That was truly a breakdown, it was first looking at it, describing the words and then hearing me, I read it to them. That’s the other thing about literacy, please you cannot forget that this is a story, most of the songs you’re signing is a story.

R: It’s a story.

Nelson: They’re stories, right. We talked about, why do you suppose this man wanted to get rid of the cat? We went through all of that.

R: Yes, yes.
Nelson: Then as they were learning it, this is another class period. I had them act out the verses and the words. They went to their own space and they became the cat or they became the man and they acted out the whole song. They dramatized it.

But that day after I have read it to them and they talked about it a little bit then I went through the steps and repeat after me. Actually, they had repeated after me the first time and the second time pick up you mallets. Now repeat after me and do the exact same thing but play it on their xylophone. The third time, now just imitate my rhythm which they did. Fourth time say the words and hit it. Fifth time internalize it and just play it on the xylophone, that’s the way I did it. They nailed it, and she was in there writing the whole time. She said, “That was awesome.” I said, “Actually reading should be taught that way.”

R: Yes?

Nelson: It’s a total, total holistic...

R: Whole way of comprehension?

Nelson: Everything.

R: Yes.

Nelson: Everything.

R: Fantastic. Now in an ideal situation where everything’s pink and pretty, how should music and literacy integration be valued by everybody, from the Superintendent to the kids and the parents?

Nelson: I think the answer to that question is, if you have a good music program it’s going to be valued, because the more they see the children sing with understanding. You
cannot interpret a song unless you understand the song. When they see the children start singing the songs more cognitively not thinking but where they’re really into the song or they’re not really been thinking about any of the mechanics of it, they’re expressing the words. You’ve gone through all those steps we just talked about.

R: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

Nelson: Then I think there are two answers, one in the performance end of it they’re going to appreciate it because they’re going to see, “Wow, my child learned that song, they understand what they’re singing about and it’s just moved me.”

Within the classroom context, when I was at Horne, my visionary principal we had an extremely strong team. A phenomenal art teacher who is very positive and did do things with me. The two PE teachers bought into it as well. In the five years that we were there, a couple of teachers left after two years but basically the same team, the art teacher and I and one other person. Our TAKS scores went up to 60%.

R: Wow.

Nelson: Our principal recognized that we had a lot to do with that. Now, we saw our kids five times a month for an hour. Until the Texas legislature took away our time because of PE, which was stupid, because all they do on Monday, is they run around the track. Anyway the bottom line is that … I also would sometimes take my materials into the classrooms. Once in a while I could get a sub and I could go into the classroom and say, “What are you studying?” Then we’d sing the song about what they were studying right after they would study it right in the classroom. You see that is the most effective way. Is to put it in the context, but here’s the thing; some schools have done this, where you
have one music teacher who just does that. Who just does the music and the literacy and the math and the science, they take their cart and they would go from room to room and that’s all they do.

Then you have another teacher who teaches the musical performance, plays, notes and so forth. There’s some schools that do that, not here. In __________, this was 16 years ago, but they’re scores crashed to the bottom. They had one of the highest dropout rates outside of the Indian Reservation. It was about a 96% to 97%, 95% to 97% dropout rate on Native American Reservations out of high school.

R: Oh, my gosh

Nelson: Oh, yeah, well because of the alcoholism. Because generally one parent is dead by then the other is strung out and then the kids – the older kids have to stay at home and take care of the younger ones while their parents are strung out. Steve and I, that’s where we came from. We were in __________ and we worked with Native Americans, not the whole time but some of the time and that’s what we found.

R: Yes.

Nelson: It takes them 14 years to trust a white person. I mean like a decade to trust a white person. Well how could you blame, after what we’ve done to them it’s horrible. I mean I don’t blame them.

R: Yes.

Nelson: But anyway, what was I saying? Help me.

R: Native Americans.
Nelson: Oh, yes, yes. I’m sorry, so what happened is the dropout rate in ______. When we went to this PDK conference they said, ”We have no more money.” Even 16 years ago they had run out of money for the arts and we had to prove that the arts could help improve cognitive learning.

They said that our programs are on the line, totally. They hired these teachers with carts that went from classroom to classroom to classroom. They wrote a grant and the teacher were able to … Because they had to have planning periods right. They wrote the script so that the teachers, the regular teachers could have their planning periods. But they integrated the curriculum in such a way that say Monday science was taught at the school on Monday, all day.

The music teacher would go into each classroom and she would teach songs specific to that science lesson. Tuesday would be language and art. Wednesday would be social studies. Thursday would be math. Friday would be whatever. Within one year, this wasn’t all across the Rhode Island just one school. It was a pilot program the score rose by 50%.

R: Wow, wow. That’s amazing.

Nelson: __________ and I have talked about, __________ the music district supervisor and I go way back. I said, “I would love to be at the school and experiment it.” She said, “I would love to have the courage, to give one school carte blanche to do something like that and I would love to do it and then let’s see how it works. ”Write a grant and the teachers can have their planning or somebody can … I don’t know so they don’t have to work during the planning or whatever.
R: Yes and then implement something like that, it’s amazing.

Nelson: It is amazing that’s the ideal situation.

R: Yes, that’s the ideal …

Nelson: That’s the ideal scenario, but for me I would like to have another music teacher there teaching the children music. You’d have one person doing this and you’d have another person doing …

R: Focusing on the music.

Nelson: Focusing on the music, so that they would do the performance that might … With this book you have literature, you have language. You have poetry. You have original Photography, you have artwork, you have it all.

R: Yes.

Nelson: It’s not off the net. The bottom-line is I started this short Jazz unit but didn’t have time to finish it where we studied about Jazz and then I put on some Jazz tracks and the kids were improvising their own continuoes. They were just having a great time switching instruments and I said, “Okay.” I told them about the 12 bar blues and all of that, and I said, “So what topics would you like to tackle?” Well they wanted the cafeteria and I said, “Well you can do that and you can’t be too negative because we have a class member, you have a classmate this is fifth grade, whose mother is in charge of the cafeteria.

We don’t want to say any negative mean thing. We can do funny but we can’t do negative mean things, and they came up with a whole list of things that they really wanted to set to Jazz and we ran out of time, we had to move on.
They get to have ownership, the opportunity to get to have ownership all of them.

R: My next question is about professional development opportunities but you mentioned that there are none provided.

Nelson: Very few, I’m not going to say none.

R: Yes, but basically.

Nelson: Well, the district is doing one on June 20th.

R: This is nothing that you’re school principal or you teaching specialists provided.

Nelson: No.

R: This is something from the district?

Nelson: The district, this one person who [inaudible 01:50:58].

R: Okay, okay.

Nelson: Okay, she’s really nice, I’m sure she’ll do a great job but nobody really wants to go.

R: Yes, because of this, okay, the same thing.

Nelson: I mean there’ll be a new materials, it’s still the same thing.

R: Yes, so what role does the available research regarding music and literacy integration has played in the implementation of music and literacy integration in your classroom? Have you been able to pull out some leads or research?

Nelson: Oh yes, sure, I do all the time, Phi Delta Kappa magazine, I go on the net and read, I talk to people.

R: You mentioned before that you’re a reader …

Nelson: Yes, I mean I’m reading all the time, I read all of the time and what I read I use.
R: Yes.

Nelson: It would be interesting like after you get your doctorate, if you couldn’t, maybe teach a course, a college course in this integration of curriculum into music but you know how music departments are. There is so little time to teach what they’re supposed to, you know most music majors go four and a half or five years as it is, because they have to do all of their other liberal arts.

Unless you go to a conservatory, but most colleges it takes almost five years, it really does almost take five years unless you take 21 hours or go to summer school, if you’re student teaching.

R: They go to the summer school.

Nelson: Because you got to do all of that and takes a whole semester and then you have to do your senior recital on top of that.

R: It’s a lot.

Nelson: It’s a lot, I think basically for you to do that; you would have to do it within a state like __________.

R: Yes.

Nelson: That is test driven, but I’ll tell you after you know, __________ has changed some of that with the EOYs is that from 15 to 5 but they didn’t touch the elementary school.

R: There’s a road.

Nelson: What I’m saying is you’d have to be in a test, a state almost where it’s test driven to have the school to offer that. I don’t think colleges that are in state that are not test-
driven would do that honestly. The music department as you well know is not interested in statistics like that, they’re interested in their own statistics.

R: Yes.

Nelson: But as far educational statistics, except for the person who is head of music education, no.

R: Probably not.

Nelson: No, they’re not. Even if they are known for their music, education program which includes professors across the board my experience has been that outside of music-Ed, talking to music people, they’ll nod politely and go, “That’s fine.” They don’t have a clue or care what are you’re talking about.

R: Going into that …

Nelson: Isolation, isolation is what I’m saying.

R: Going into that and talking about experience and you know, new music teachers, what advice would you offer to a music teacher that’s trying to implement music and literacy in their classroom.

Nelson: I would, first of all send her to somebody who knows what they’re doing because it can be very overwhelming and just try one thing at a time. Don’t try to eat the whole elephant, just take one bite out of the elephant. Try this six-week period, try this song because the new teacher particularly, the curriculum is overwhelming and there, as you well know there are schools that are stronger than others in music education. You’ll have some students coming out of … There’s this one precious young lady that a school has hired here and she did her student teaching, did a great job, but she didn’t pass her exit
exam her music exit exam.

R: What?

Nelson: She’s having to retake it and if she didn’t pass it, in June, she’ll probably lose the job because she can’t retake it till August when school starts and they can’t hire her. She can’t be in a contract unless she’s passed test, she didn’t pass it.

R: Oh my gosh.

Nelson: __________ State University

R: Oh my gosh.

Nelson: But she’s a terrific, she’s terrific with kids and so forth but what happen there? I guess my thing about that if you could be the advocate because, when I went to __________ and the teacher who had taught there was leaving, she looked at me and she rarely talked about departmental matters or anything.

She said, “Our chair doesn’t care about music-Ed. He doesn’t care.” She said, “He told me, he cared when I interviewed.” But she said, “He doesn’t care.”

I think basically what, honestly, you know I think for this to work it’s got to start from the colleges and work its way down. It’s not going to start on my level. It’s not going to start curricular level. They’re dealing with state statistics. They’re dealing with the music schools have got to buy into this and your chair has to buy into it. Your, not only the departmental chair, I mean I’m talking the Dean of the school music has to buy into it; the departmental chairs have to buy into it.

R: It’s a whole …

Nelson: It’s holistic, and I’m going to tell you, I talked to the guy who wrote the Silver
Burdett books, right? He was at ____________; I went back after I wrote this book, really quite excited that maybe I could do a doctorate on this. He would have nothing to do with it. He would have … __________; he would have nothing to do with it. I was stunned because I had won national award with this book he said …

R: Isn’t he the one the wrote the...

Nelson: The ________ Philosophy, he would not touch this he said, “I don’t agree with this.” I mean he was almost rude about, I was like, and I was a graduate of __________ and I thought, he said, “I’d love to have you as a master student, I’d take you in a New York minute, but you will not do this with me.”

I said, “Thank you very much.” He never heard from me again. I was stunned; I was stunned, rude, just abrupt. The bottom line is that there’s advocacy on your level that needs to be done, but when you have, you know you witness this, you have __________ have ____________, a choral power house, international power choral power house, do you think anything was going to interfere with his choir program? No!

You know this; you know that the performing egos, and the teachers and the studios and all of this, you know that. Do you think they’re going to have anything interfere with their performance majors, for them having to take an extra course that’s going to take away from their practice? No sir.

R: No way, no.

Nelson: Unless the school says, now, when I left __________ they were moving towards a four and a half year program, we talked a lot about the cost because that costs about $36,000 a year.
R: I’m going to have to interrupt you for a moment.

Nelson: What time is it? Are you okay?

R: I really need to go to the restroom.

Nelson: In the corner.

R: Where is it? I’m going to pause this, I am so sorry but that coffee.

Nelson: What time is it?

R: I have no clue.

Nelson: It’s 1:26 because …

R: Yes

Nelson: Because I think honestly, I’ll speak to you candidly, you know a lot of schools education is considered second class in the music departments, I was telling you it is. Boston University was the first university in the country to offer music you well know that, a degree in music. But until that’s addressed between those two fractions. I’ve tried the big colleges and universities, there’s an add in one time full time.

Its people that are great influences, for example, you know Reynard. you know they have their philosophy and they probably have influenced …Oh. they’ve influenced 1,000s and 1,000s.

R: How do you break through that?

Nelson: You break through that, they die off, I’m sorry but they die off and there are some people now, the new Silver Burdett series again was integrated, that’s what cracked me up. When I saw the 95, I went to talk a man in ’83. In ’95, it was all integrated, and I thought, “Well, he had to either die or retire, in order for to it happen.”
I think that’s the thing, they pay lip service, that I’m going to tell you here’s the other thing, it’s hard to hear but the students do the same thing. If you’re in performance, full time, you are more or less subconsciously and consciously groomed to think that education is second best, being a Music Ed major you probably were never a particularly good performer so you had to become a teacher.

I’m sorry that attitude still prevails, the bottom line is until that changes on that level, I mean I certainly saw it at ___________. If you were one of ________’s students, you were like a demi god on that campus. If you’re an education major and you sang with ________ great, but if you did not sing with ________ even though there was some other phenomenal coral director there. If you, or if you didn’t play in the top orchestra or didn’t sing with a top choir director, there is just a little attitude that was like it was a hierarchy and it was just …

R: What’s the word? Elitist.

Nelson: Yes elitist exactly. It was, and every college I’ve been at it’s been that way, now there are some schools …Now __________ is known for its choir program. There’s some schools I’ve taught at and been to, __________ was snobbish like that super snobbish like that.

When I was performance major, I never hang out with the music-Ed people, I was an opera major, I was part of the elite, you know type of thing and that’s sad, but our professors encouraged it. My professor used to talk about it; he used to make jokes about it.

Okay, so the bottom line is, until you had a Dean of the school of fine arts not the
department chair but the Dean that says, “Hey folks we’re meeting.” When I was the
music coordinator, music education coordinator for ____________, there were some
students you should never ever have been recommended for teaching. But they’d been
recommended by that faculty. You know they scored them one to five or whatever.

There’s this is one young man who, I pray to God he’s not teaching, and they would sign
off on the sheet and have it go around the department, and I said, “Good God, they have
been in a class for so many years, they don’t every know what they’re talking about.” The
place this person was teaching at, it was a private school, he didn’t even have a
disciplinary issues he would have had he been in a regular city school or even country
school.

I went to talk to the education coordinator and she just looked at me, we were
kind of friends, she said Nelson, “This happens all the time with your department.” She
said they, she said look, she opened up the folder, she said, ”He was signed off by
________, he got top rating, what are we supposed to do?” I said, “Nothing. I don’t
know.” I said, “What can you do?”

The bottom line is because they’re …Because people wanted to keep their jobs
and if the head honcho is as a matter of fact __________ was getting a bad reputation for
its student teachers because __________’s students left right at four o’clock when the
school day was over, because they had to be back for rehearsal.

This one supervising teacher at high school really lambasted into me, not me but
he said, “You know what I don’t think I’m going to take any more __________
students.” He said, “I’m glad of the work habits before and after schools.” He said, “You
know they get here at 7:45 or 7:30 and they leave right at four because they have to be at choir rehearsal.” He said, “Are you kidding?” He said, “I’ve got quartet instrumental rehearsals, choral rehearsals and they have to leave because of __________.” He said, “I don’t think we’re going to use __________ very much anymore.”

I said, “Would you please tell the chair that?” Every time and I had several supervising teachers, I said, “Tell the chair that. Please tell the chair that. Tell the chair that.”

R: Yes.

Nelson: But see, I was under a tenure system so I could say that, but the woman I worked with was tenured, but when she was going for tenure do you think she could say that? It’s all political.

R: Yes.

Nelson: A lot of its driven by politics unfortunately a lot of it is driven by ego, a lot of it is driven by the fact that many of the professors that the education majors have never take advantage education course in their life or they’re been involve in public education, even though they’re teaching music education courses.

They never student taught, they never taught in a classroom, they never written …

I remember one time I taught with an AP, she is really an outstanding choir director but she looks at me, she said, “I’ve never written lesson plan in my life.”

R: Wow.

Nelson: “I’ve never written one lesson.”

R: She’s a music teacher.

Nelson: No, she was a choir teacher.
R: She’s a choir teacher.

Nelson: Yes, she retired but she said, “I’ve never written …” But she was head of the music education for that district. She said, “I’ve never written a lesson plan in my life.” She’s kind of bragging, I’m like, “I spend 12 hours on weekend writing mine 10 to 12.” She just said, “Why?” I said, “Are you kidding? Your discipline is directly linked to how tight your plans are.

Back to the college, you have generations of teachers being formed right now by who A, haven’t been or who may have taught 20 years ago. I think anybody who teaches in a college, in music education in particular, or who teaches music=Ed class should be required at least once every three or four year.

R: To be in a classroom?

Nelson: For six months.

R: I agree.

Nelson: Not to be a guest, I mean they have to be in the classroom for six months, no help from anybody, let’s see how they’re going to survive that.

R: Because to teaching college is …

Nelson: I think the Dean of the school of music, if you required that you’d lose a lot of people. They’ll be a lot of people who would say, “No I’m not going to do that. I’m going to go someplace else. I’m not going to do that.” I’m sorry but a lot of it’s with ego, time, money, but basically philosophy.

I hate to tell you this, but even some people who I thought would be better about it once they got tenure, they just really split into the flock. They didn’t really try to make
any, they were nice, they were nicer and less egotistical, but they didn’t try to make any real change even though they had tenure. Because of the game, tenure is a whole another subject.

I think the formation, all of this, I did this in my own, I don’t have anybody egging me on or encouraging me. This wasn’t talked about 33 years ago. Wasn’t even talked about, we had little pamphlets that you got in camp grounds, campsites, Girls Scouts where they would take copyrighted songs and put other words to them. There’s no concept of this from what you’re doing. It wasn’t around, and I think it’s more accepted but only because of the classroom results, or the test results. It’s not being, and so that’s the thing that bothers me, it’s being driven by the love of music; you see it’s driven by test scores. There is such a big difference doing the same thing on the other side of coin. It’s a huge difference.

R: That is true. Any other remarks that you wish to convey?

Nelson: That if you get your doctorate, I hope you can maybe make a difference.

R: I hope so too. I really do.

Nelson: That you can maybe … You have to know that if you stay in public education all driven by the state and these people are like, I call them Philistines, they don’t care about the arts per say.

I mean people in __MEA do but state people they don’t care; they just want those test scores because they get the money. It’s a very cold heartless, that they can sit and tell you it’s not but if that’s the case why are they spending $5 million a year having these tests printed in England? Why haven’t they stopped it? The dropout rate is even higher
now than when we started the tests, it’s gone up instead of down.

I already know the kids are going to drop out of school already from my fifth grade class, they haven’t seen one minute of recess this whole year and we had 19 kids fail the retest, which means they have to go to summer school now. If they don’t pass at that time then they either have to talk about retaining them, which rarely happens, because the hormones start popping and they don’t want them around the smaller kids. Or when they go to Truett, they are not allowed to any electives what so ever, they just see academics all day. Well, by the time they’re 16 they can say, “I’m out of here.” Because you can drop out at 16, “I’m out of here, see you.”

I can tell you the names of the kids who are going to do it right now, because they were stripped of their right, they were stripped rights to the arts. I guess my departing remarks are …Well, I believe in all of this, I pioneered it, I don’t want this to take the place of music. I don’t want them to take the place of the joy of just creating music not having …What’s the word, not having a reason behind doing music, okay we’re doing the music related to science.

R: No

Nelson: No, no, no and the kids can pick up on it right away, they just turn off, but if you introduce it in a really fun way, ”Hey this is dah, dah, di dah.” Then it’ll be okay. If you teach it from a musical standpoint rather than a curricular standpoint.

You can do the same thing, you can teach the curriculum from a musical standpoint, you can slip all of these facts in. They’re going to say, “Oh she’s saying that because she wants us to know about why we’re singing this song this way.” Or let’s have
fun let’s do some fun things.

R: But like you said, let the music take its natural course.

Nelson: Exactly.

R: It’s going to happen naturally anyway, then don’t fool with it.

Nelson: Don’t fool with it, why reinvent the wheel?

R: Don’t force it.

Nelson: Music is literacy, it’s literacy you can’t teach a song without teaching literacy. You can’t, but it becomes formulated then it’s dead in the water and it’s neither core curriculum and it’s neither music. It’s nothing, it’s meaningless and that’s what I guess, when you become in charge of this or have a chance that’s what you need to watch for with your teachers and with the curriculum. Is that they’re not just going to the motions, or they’re doing it because they know you believe in that, because they’re going to do that because they want to please you.

R: Yes.

Nelson: It’s got to be music driven not curriculum even though, yes, you are facilitating absolutely and even if you gotten lesson … I have a folder what second does during the year what they learn, that’s awesome. Knowing that is great but if you’re going to do that then hire two people that they have music with a music teacher and that’s you know pure music and then let them have music with this curriculum specialist.

R: Yes.

Nelson: Who doesn’t necessarily have to be the music teacher by the way, they don’t have to and that’s where you’re grant money comes in. You can hire somebody who, you
can give the materials to and say, “Can you teach this?” “Sure.” They have a little, if they were in choir and have a little bit of the musical background or there are lots of programs is out there, “Sure, I’ll teach it.” Then you have the music going on here. But I think again if you really do your job well and you’re doing it anyway.

R: It’s going to happen anyway.

Nelson: It’s going to happen anyway just stop labeling it.

R: Nelson thank you so much.

Nelson: Oh, you’re welcome.
Mrs. Baker

R: All right. Can you please describe your position and what led you to these career choice?

Baker: My current career choice is music teacher. It was kind of an accident. (laughs) I was a theater major in college. I have my BSA in theater studies, and I went through my coursework, I had to do some student teaching with high school students, which is where theater teachers go, primarily, junior high and high school. I realize that it wasn't the age group for me. I've always been a toddler to elementary school kind of person, like I was a babysitter. I love preschool children. It was the age group that suited me and my style of teaching much better. I ended up not getting my high school theater certification because I realized ... I'm doing an interview. They need something.

Baker: Anyway, so when I got out of college, I was kind of like who do I teach elementary school theater to. That's not really an option. My mother-in-law taught as an elementary school and she was like, we really need a music teacher, and I was like, I'm not a music person, you know, I'm a theater person. She was like, you sand and dance and acted and, you know, you've done this in your whole life. I went ahead and accept the job, and at first, it was a very huge learning curve because I wasn't music certified and I had not had any like teaching children music classes. But I went to TMEA and I listened to a lot of the people who were experienced in the district and I ended up loving it, so I'm glad that that's the path.
Baker: It wasn't necessarily the best path, but I think they got me where I needed to be.

R: They got you where you want to be?

Baker: Yeah.

R: You're happy where you're at?

Baker: Yes and ...

R: That's very cool.

Baker: ... I love my job.

R: Cool. How long you've been a music teacher?

Baker: This is my 15th year.

R: Wow!

Baker: Yeah.

R: Wow.

Baker: It was 2000 ... No, it was in the 90s, '95 I got married, '96 I graduated, '97 was the year where I started teaching.

R: Where you started. Wow!

Baker: I know.

R: That's fantastic, you know?

Baker: Yeah.

R: It's meant to be.

Baker: It was, it was.
R: What was the first thing that comes to mind when you hear the phrase, music and literacy integration?

Baker: I think that is a natural integration, because I think music is literacy. Music is literature. When I start trying to teach, reading the stuff to children, I just tell them, "You're learning another language and it's the language of music." It's code and just like language, written languages coded. Music is coded, written, you're just making sounds, pitches instead of verbalizing what you're reading. I think the two are almost the same thing. I think they engage in the same part of your brain. A lot of times I'll have trouble teaching children who have trouble reading. I'll have some trouble teaching them music, and so, it seems like ... it's like at the same part of the brain.

R: What are your beliefs regarding music and literacy integration?

Baker: I think that it happened so seamlessly that we don't even realize that it's happening. It's organized in such the same way, you know, whether it was institutional in the ... back when it was when music notation was indented, whether it was an intentional copy of written language and you read it left to right. It's symbols that you're reading. Anytime we try to get the kids reading anything, it's reading and literacy is about reading, so to me, anytime. A lot of times we're looking at texts on a page to read the words to the song. All the time we talk about the poetry of music, writing lyrics is literacy. I think that anybody who teaches music teaches literacy.

R: That's decoding process you're mentioning.

Baker: It's decoding process.

R: They're similar.
Baker: Yes, very similar.

R: How did you become aware of music integration?

Baker: Actually, I did an emergency certification so I didn't have my certification. I ended up deciding to go back and doing elementary school, because, you know, of the choices that I made about I didn't want to teach high school. Music certification is usually all-level certification, so for some reason, I lost my music job due to, whatever cutbacks and stuff like that, funding whatever. I knew that I would rather go into an elementary school classroom position instead of move up, so I went ahead and went elementary ED. I have this weird degree from U of __. Everybody looks at me like I'm crazy and I'm like, look at my certification. It's an elementary Ed and then I have a second component on my certification that I'm elementary Ed music certified.

R: That is great (laughs).

Baker: I know, and they're like, "How did you do that?"

R: How did you do that (laughs)?

Baker: I'm like, I don't know, I went to the classes and told me to do, and that's what my certificate says. Yeah, so I actually have an elementary music on my certification, but I can also teach any elementary classroom that I went to.

R: So did you take language art?

Baker: I did.

R: ... courses?

Baker: I had to take these really great reading classes. I think through those, like I took this really amazing social studies class. It was great social studies, you know, professor
who taught social studies through English and I think it was really through that class that he and I talked a lot about integration, because, you know, he knew I taught music but I still had to take social studies class. He and I talked a lot about, "Okay, how could I take social studies and put it in a music classroom?" It came out that, you know, from that one three-hour class is like music is social study. It really is. I mean, when you think about the lyrics and how they're about history, and events. I mean, so I always am able to pull in a lot with social studies, too, because I want them to know the purpose behind the song, or where it came from, or why somebody would sing that, so he really got me thinking about integrating subject matter.

Baker: Then I had this great science teacher something like, music is science, and I had this great math teacher and it was like, music is math (laughs). Music is everything, it's literacy and math and so I always taking up my strange route to music through elementary ad. It really made me say, "The children will benefit if I connect it to everything," so we talked about the science of the bard instruments, "Why did they do this thing?" Well, it's because it's how the world works. Why do we divide, why do we subdivide beats? It's math, that's how the world works, and why we read, because that's ...

R: That's how.

Baker: Yeah, that's how the world works. We read from left to right. Now, of course, not every language do read from left to right.

R: But in here (laughs)?

Baker: Yeah. Here? Most of the languages that come through this building read left to right and, you know, it's decoding. It's another language, so...
R: It's all, it's all...

Baker: It's all.

R:... integrated.

Baker: Exactly!

R: I think you've mentioned already this, but can you expand a little bit more on what compels you to integrate music and literacy in your classroom, because you just said, you know, you saw that it is already integrated, so.

Baker: I see the benefit to the children, like in second grade, we start trying to really push reading music. It came first, we do a lot of introductory stuff, you know, these are beats. This is the rhythm and the beat. These are pitches on the beat and we've kind of have all these little pieces, and then, in second grade, we start to try to put all the pieces together into a staff and notes on the staff. It's something, you know, the reading aspect is something that every child has experienced on whatever level, by second grade. It helps the children to cue in on what they already know. It helps them learn faster if they can make that connection to what they already know.

R: Good. Now, what aspects of your personality and your attitudes you think contribute to shape your feelings about music and literacy integration?

Baker: One of the things about me is I'm always open to new ideas, so when I go to MEA, I look for things that I haven't seen before and a lot of the times, I end up in the lectures that nobody else is in because nobody is singing and dancing and playing with puppets. I mean, the people are like lecturing like you are at college, and those are some of the ones that I find are the most, you know, idea-broadening ones. Part of it, for me
too, is my first year at _MEA, I saw this lady, I don't even remember what her name is. She basically ... her thing was how to find a musical book, and so, she talked about sitting on the floor at Barnes & Noble in the Children's Section and pulling out books and trying to find a musical element in them. She had a list of books that she thought were good examples of this, but she also taught you how to go find your own. Fifteen years later, I'm still going to the book fair and I'm like...

R: Holding out?

Baker: Yeah, I'm like, mm, this is a kid story, but oh. Like at _MEA, this year I found ... and I didn't pass it too, it's like theatrical I think.

R: love it.

Baker: Owl Babies. So somebody might just look at this at, about a story about owls. But when I see it, this one keeps saying, "I want my mommy."

R: And you have that repetition?

Baker: And so, I want my mommy, and so, what we can do is we can make that into some kind of like chorus, okay? We have this poetry going, but then, here is a chorus so we can turn that with instruments and singing voices into some kind of musical ideas. So that was one of the ways she said, you know, obviously, books with rhymes are really great to turn them into musical idea, but this is kind of ... so that really helped shape me too. It's like I had no thought to how picture story books could be used in the music room. We already have so much great literature, why would I use a picture story book?

But then, over the years, I've seen lots of people use picture story books and they’re fun literacy. It helped the children create music too, along with the poetry.
R: Good, because maybe in other books, the music, it's already set in there. Someone else thought of it, and here, either you or your students can be the creators, be composers.

Baker: Right. In fact, we just finished up our second grade program and I don't know if you ever seen Seussical the Musical.

R: Love it.

Baker: We took little bits, and you know, obviously be full musical is not even a possibility, so we just took some of the easier songs and even cut the songs down to like two minutes. But, the kids love the tunes and what they really love is they were Dr. Seuss' stories like come to life, they got to sing, you know, [song]. They just loved it, I mean, everybody loves Dr. Seuss' creativity, but taking it that extra step to turn it in to a musical idea, they loved it, so dancing Dr. Seuss...

R: And engages them.

Baker: Yeah. They loved it, so.

R: Cool. So, to what degree you think this instructional strategy complements your teaching philosophy?

Baker: Integration, all integration or integrating literacy?

R: Music and literacy in particular. How do you think it fits into your teaching philosophy?

Baker: My teaching philosophy is to ... it's to meet, the children, where they are so part of being a music teacher is that I have in one classroom so many different levels of musician, even in my kindergarten. I have emergent learners, all the way to verily proficient musicians depending on what they got from preschool like kinder music,
jamboree. I mean, some of the kids get so many amazing musical experiences from older siblings, from parents, and some children get nothing. And so, they come in and it's a lot like reading in kindergarten. Some kids come in and they barely know their ABCs, and some kids come in and they're already reading. So I have that in the music room and what's really hard is like, I'll have kids for five years that are at this really great level of musicianship and then we'll have a new kid move in and they got nothing and they'll even tell me, "My teacher never did anything like that," and I'm like, "Welcome to the real world. Come on in and watch more." And it's really awarding watching the other children and brace that this child is behind and let's all get them to where they need...

R: To where they need to be.

Baker: ... they need to be. So, we do the same called Recorder Karate and, you know, for me, that's music literacy. I tell them, "I want you to become an independent reader." Just like in first grade, when they call them independent readers. I said, "I want you to read on your own. I don't want to have to share ... hold your hand and show you every note on your instrument. I want you to look at the page and understand what's going on." And that's how you are an adult for me, so you could be playing the bassoon for all I care. It's not about the recorder. It's about you being a literate person. So we have this fourth graders come in and never looked at a note before and suddenly, you know, we just put this new instrument. And so, it reminds me of the process of the poor kindergarten had to go through to get to illiterate and they have do it like in a month (laughs).

R: Yes.
Baker: It's so hard (laughing). I feel so sorry, so then, I'm like, "Baby, I wish you could have been here since kindergarten," but here we go.

R: Here we go. Come with us (laughs).

Baker: Yeah, come on, let's go.

R: But also you made me think, you know, like when you said meet them where they are. When you pull, for example books like this, and create music and do music with this books, with this literature. Hopefully, they seem both before and maybe that's a way to ...Right, it is.

Baker: Right, it is.

R:... to, you know, pull them in.

Baker: I know and the other thing I love about the principal and I have even thought, some of the children who are really behind in reading, but they come in here and they start getting really successful and reading music, and then, they can actually take that connection back to their own literacy in the regular classroom. I think it's because the second grade, we're doing the kindergarten stuff again, "Look at this. What is this? It's an A. Yehey, it's A!" and it's like that back to almost preschool simplicity, and then, they start I think making connections that they don't even realize they're taking back to reading literature. We've seen some kids really grow from Recorder Karate and then their DRA scores are going up, because it's that simplifying it, taking it back to the beginning again that they really need. They can't get in the classroom because we have to keep pushing them forward, because they can get left behind.

R: Yeah (laughs).
Baker: Like really behind, okay? Yeah, you're leaving them behind. I know you don't mean to, but you still are.

R: I am gladly you, I mean, you went directly to my next question which is to what degree do you deem music and literacy integration is helpful to your students' academic achievement, and you just said, you know, you can see that.

Baker: Like this is something third grade we're doing. So Feierabend Conversational Solfege, I think that he in a nutshell pretty much is like, music is language. How do you do acquire language as a child? Why can't we acquire music that way? And I think that's like the heart of any kind of learning. You know, you have to be immersed in it, and then, you can start replicating it. And I think, sometimes, the teachers just get the immersion part.

R: Yeah.

Baker: Do you know what I'm saying?

R: Yeah.

Baker: I want to go straight to the, I'm a professional musician, and they skip that meaning to experience it and listen to it and feel it before you can make it yourself. So anyway, this is third grade was doing some writing. Just very simple. But, sometimes I find that we try to make it too complicated too fast, and sometimes, I even find that I make it more complicated but then I'd go back to the beginning again, and say, remember this part, remember that part? Like fourth grade, I was doing steady beat with them because they'd left that part slip. They're coming up and they're playing Old
McDonald had a farm, [song]. I'm like, "Excuse me, we're missing something here." Can we have a beat, please?

R: Yeah (laughs).

Baker: Yeah. I mean, and we're almost like, [song].

R: Yeah (laughs).

Baker: Hello. See? Just because we do a little dots at the bottom doesn't mean you could skip the top now. So this is Feierabend worksheet, but, you know, they're reading from left to right and they have to know what each symbol mean. But this is third grade and they're like making that connection back, and so, you know, poor Andrei, he can kind of tell by his handwriting that he has ...

R: It's working on it.

Baker: He has a little bit of trouble in class but get, you know, he’s doing this and feeling successful so he can take that success back with him. I know how to do this left to right, read the symbol thing. So, I have another student, he has a heart of gold and poor baby, he came to us in third grade and he just didn’t have the right kind of attention I guess at his last school. He was so far behind, but he has really caught up. And part of it, I swear, is every morning I let kids come in the music room from 7:30 to 7:55 and they get to play the recorder if they’re fourth graders.

R: So they get to come and practice. Cool.

Baker: And you knows, the other music teacher and I are … they come up and ask for help, but if they’re in this room, they’re supposed to have a recorder and a book open in front of them, and they’re supposed to be reading and playing their music. So, he does
that, it’s like extra tutoring. He comes every morning. He goes and gets his breakfast and he comes in here and he immediately comes up to me and wants to know the next thing, “Show me something.” And I swear, it helped him acquire other things in other subjects too. So just that constant…

R: You’ve seen that influence in other…

Baker: Mm-hmm, (affirmative).

R:... areas?

Baker: Yes.

R: So, you know my questions because my next question was, what evidence can you provide to support your statement, and there you go. You have [crosstalk 00:23:20] that example of that, you know, kid.

Baker: Yes. I have lots of kids that I feel like are feeling successful in their homeroom, but can come in here and look at it a different way and start to shine. And then they take that, you know, the other kids take notice. You know, I have another student, fourth grader, almost the same exact story. They retained him two years.

R: Wow.

Baker: And he just have the worst attitude because he knew he was two years older than everybody, and I think it embarrassed him. He just decided he was dumb and he would shut down, but you should hear the boy playing the piano.

R: Oh, wow.

Baker: No lessons, his parents just bought him a keyboard because he wanted one, and he can come in here and improvise and he just hears things on the radio full chords.
R: Oh, wow.

Baker: I know. Like the first time I heard him play, I was like, “Are you kidding me?” I mean, literally, the other recorder … I let him play the piano on Fridays because otherwise he drowns everybody else (laughing). I’m like, you’re supposed to have a recorder.

R: Yeah (laughs).

Baker: And the other kids are like, “Please let Markham play please, please, please. We wanna hear him,” and I know that that confidence has translated. So he is willing to try more in the classroom because he’s good at something and I don’t think anybody ever thought he was good at anything before he came to the school. I tried to let kids be who they want to be and I accept them at their own level, and everybody can learn, especially with singing. “I can’t sing,” like …

R: What?


R: You can sing (laughs).

Baker: “But maybe not so good, but I can teach you to get better if you’ll listen to me and try,” so, anyway.

R: That is very cool. Now, what challenges do you face, you feel you face when you’re integrating music and literacy integration?

Baker: If you’d ask me ten years ago.
R: That’s okay, ten years ago is good, [crosstalk 00:26:05] because that means that hopefully …

Baker: Kind of have like stick down. You know, when I first started, it’s one of those things like riding a bicycle and trying to teach somebody to ride a bicycle. You really have to break down the components and understand what you’re doing so you can teach somebody else. I’ve been literate since before I can remember, so, “Why aren’t you literate? You know, do it because I said so,” really finding the ways to break it down to its most simple basic forms so that you can get the children to say, “Look at this right here. That’s what you’re doing … this is why the bike keeps falling over, okay? You need to go, you need to pedal faster so you can get momentum so it’ll hold you up.”

So, me figuring out what I do to make music so then I can break it down into its basic form for the children. I feel like I’ve gotten pretty good at that and I can tell the difference in my students from, you know, when they first started. Their teacher was a moron so they sounded really bad. (Laughing) I know, I was …

R: Inexperience, inexperience (laughs).

Baker: I know. It’s the experience, yeah. I feel bad for them. I’m like, “I’m so sorry.” I know, you know, I was a goofy funny person so you liked me but I can teach music very well. I’ll tell the kids all the time, I’m like, “Um, I know that you wanna do whatever you want on that recorder, but I’ve done that before and trust me it sounds really bad, and that’s my fault that it sounds bad.” So, I think it was really, and part of it too is watching like how kindergarten teacher teach kids to read and I, you know, because I have to go to workshops for all these other different things, math and literacy and science.
Baker: So, instead of just nodding off or texting somebody, I actually listen and pay attention and say, “Now, how can I apply that to my classroom?” And so, you know, I tell the kids too like in second grade, I’m like, we’re going back to kindergarten today. All right. A, B, C, and I really think, okay, they make them write. I think a lot of music teachers forget that writing is part of the literacy step. If you can write it, then you can say it, and so I think a lot of people forget the pencil and paper portion of the literacy. That’s another reason why I like Feierabend, because he says, “You need to do this. You need to do that. You need to do this. You need to do that.”

R: A process.

Baker: So it’s a process.

R: So you think you’ve not only included integration for your students, but it seems also like you are integrating also the process of teaching music and teaching literacy for yourself as a teacher.

Baker: Right, yeah. I mean because, you know, they’ve taught so much about teaching kids to read, why not, you know, use all of that smart information and apply it to other things to. So, yeah, and I think that’s kind of what Feierabend did because he talked about, you know, acquiring a new language. If you go to French class, what do you learn? Bonjour, everybody say it, bonjour, you know. So, just like he’s applied to another language, I thought about how children gain their mother tongue language.

R: Yeah, cool. Now, have you shared, can you share any frustrations that you have experienced when you’re integrating like frustrations, like you’re … you had it (laughs), and how have you’ve overcome if, you know, if you have any?
Baker: I guess my biggest frustration is I always feel like I don’t have enough time. I mean, I hear people saying, “Oh, they’re coming down to the end of the school year,” and I’m like, “I’m not ready yet. I have 800 more things that I need to share with them.” So, I mean it’s like … I know our [state objectives] don’t look that long, but I’m just like getting them to perform, getting them literate, getting them, you know? It’s just like all of these little pieces and see, I know the other music teacher sees them 45 minutes a week as well, and I know that really helps them. Because, for a while, it was just me and it was really frustrating then that I’m like, “These kids aren’t getting enough.” It’s not enough. I know what it’s supposed to be like and they’re not getting it because there’s not enough time.

R: The time is our concern.

Baker: I know, so I know that I’m living in this very tail end where the children actually get two 45-minute class times every week, and as soon as we got a fine arts coordinator, I grab them by both shoulders and rattle their head, you know, and I’m like, “We cannot teach with two classrooms in here at a time.” It was ridiculous. I have 50 kindergarteners at once.

R: Oh, my gosh!

Baker: I know. It was like babysitting torture and I was the one being tortured.

R: (Laughs) Yeah.

Baker: And I always feel sorry for the kids who wanted to participate, and I had to say, “There’s not enough time. Get out.” I can only have half the class participate.” “Next week, maybe we can play the game,” where you know, and playing one game a month
because I only saw them once a week and they had to go one quarter of the classroom at a time, and it was like aaaaah!

R: Yeah.

Baker: I know. Luckily, our class sizes are what I consider normal and they get two in a week, and so …

R: It’s fantastic, two times a week.

Baker: It is.

R: Yes.

Baker: It is, but I’m so greedy. I’m like, it’s still not enough.

R: You want more, you want every day.

Baker: I want more, I do. I do, I want to see the kids. It’s so unreasonable, and I know it. And part of what I had to do is go start giving private lessons, and that really helped me be like … Okay, now, this is teaching. It’s only 30 minutes once a week, but I can tell their parents what they’re supposed to practice at home. I can watch this one child grow from week to week to week, and so …

R: It’s more rewarding?

Baker: It is, it is. I mean, it’s not as fun like we don’t play with puppets and read stories and it’s more like, get this done in just 30 minutes. But, you know, at the end of the recital you’re like ha, ha, ha, ha.

R: Then the product …

Baker: I know (laughs).

R: Finally!
Baker: Exactly.

R: What do you think is your level of confidence when integrating music and literacy integration? How do you feel about it?

Baker: I feel pretty confident about it. I’ve had 15 years to really think through what’s important, what’s not. When I went from having two teachers in a school to one teacher in a school, and it cuts my lesson plans in half, and I really had to analyze and say what’s fluff and what’s got to be there and it took me a couple years to say, this is what I have to do. And so, it’s really helped me now that even though there’s another music teacher and they get twice as much time, I’m still going: This is what they have to have.

Baker: And so, I think that I’ve really thought about it and I have great sources, Artie Almeida. There’s a lot with like 14 pages and a lot of literacy on, you know, very simple little picture kind of literacy to start the kids out. Lynn Kleiner does a lot with story books in her classroom because she’s more Orff Associated. Feierabend, of course, he’s all about literacy. A new thing, I don’t know if you’ve seen Quaver?

R: Yes, I have, mm-hmm (affirmative).

Baker: Have you seen their class play stuff?

R: I have not. You saw only like their videos, but I’ve not used the other stuff. I haven’t been able to play around with it.

Baker: Let me show you a class play really quick, because you’re going to love this from a literacy standpoint. So, class play is like game is like. If you want, I can put it up. It’s on the big white board.

R: Okay.
Baker: We just added, we had a school fundraiser that did really, really, really well (song).

R: And you added that?

Baker: No, our principal got us the videos, but we’ve been using the website, you know, because it’s free for quite a while, but part of our pitch to our principal was that they’re trying out this class play stuff and if we subscribe now, we get it for free.

R: Okay. I think I got an email about that.

Baker: Well, I know that you’re super really thinking about other stuff.

R: So, I will definitely know but I want to check it out.

Baker: Yeah, so this is more like a text book.

R: Okay.

Baker: Here is the first one and it’s solfege, split song song to solfege pitches and rhythm preparation, correct pitch and rhythm, sing-along with the lyrics. They call this a hub, and so introduce, play, apply is their process, so as far as solfege reading.

R: That is very cool.

Baker: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

R: So you do this …

Baker: (Song).

R: That is very neat.

Baker: Yeah, it’s like technology.

R: Really cool.

Baker: It’s like …
R: And this comes, right, this is …

Baker: Right now, it’s free.

R: Okay.

Baker: Right now [crosstalk 00:37:28].

R: Because we bought two … we didn’t buy the whole thing, the whole, you know, you know how there’s a lot of videos and stuff. We only bought like, I think like two or three series, because we use it for some babysitting time that we have.

Baker: Exactly.

R: But I’ve never used that, you know?

Baker: Yeah, this is brand new, like they just introduced it at MEA.

R: That is very cool.

Baker: The fun thing is that you can toggle it off, (song). They don’t have the visual to help them to read.

R: Just like literacy, you know, it’s tracking for you and on a beat.

Baker: So you can … Hold on, let me put the score back on. They can do it, just rhythm.

R: Just the rhythm.

Baker: And I think they say, (song).

R: Cool.

Baker: Then she will count it (song).

R: Very cool.

Baker: Right, so the hubs are all different, like I was doing Bingo with the kids, it’s so cool, they loved it. They like folk instruments like the mandolin and the banjo played in
the recording with the little animated video that they showed of them singing Bingo. But then, they showed a video of them recording, the banjo and the mandolin, so they showed the instruments, they still had the lyrics down at the bottom but then the kids were playing with that folk band. And, you know what I’m saying, like you heard a banjo, “Look, this is a banjo.” You know, what I’m saying, so.

R: They experience it.

Baker: Yeah, they take it to another level, but I will do that but then I have to like scramble to five different places, “Oh, quick, look over here, there’s a banjo.” Where did I put my banjo, you know?

R: Yeah, (laughs) yeah.

Baker: It’s all … so I can segue so much quicker because it’s all in one place.

R: Right, it’s very cool.

Baker: It’s nothing end all be all and it worries me that, you know, I would hate for an administrator to look at that and say, “Why do we need a teacher then?”

R: Yes.

Baker: But, this cannot rehearse a program.

R: Exactly.

Baker: So.

R: And, by you just playing this, they are watching it but there’s no guidance, you know, that’s so-so meaning [crosstalk 00:40:36].

Baker: It doesn’t mean anything to them.
R: Yeah, they’re not going to be able to replicate that so-so meaning any other way if you don’t, the teacher …

Baker: Yeah, you would be like me watching Telemundo.

R: Yes.

Baker: I’m not learning Spanish.

R: Yes.

Baker: I’m going, what are they saying?

R: Exactly.

Baker: (Laughs) If I had you sitting by … I mean, do you speak Spanish?

R: Yes, I do.

Baker: If I could tell and let you how it’s little bit of an accent, so I figured it was Spanish, but you could sit and say, “This is what they’re saying,” and then, I will be like, [crosstalk 00:41:05].

R: And I can guide you. Exactly.

Baker: Yeah.

R: And, the same thing, you know, would you put a math, you know, what side or science, what side too? Teacher guess.

Baker: That’s my other thing about literacy too is that I had to fight sometimes, like we had an art teacher and they wanted to teach music and art by semesters, like they went to the art teacher first semester and they came to me first semester. And I said, well, you might be able to do art that way, but music is literacy. Would you teach reading that way?

R: Yeah.
Baker: Would you do a semester of math and a semester of reading?

R: No.

Baker: Then you should not do music that way. If you want the children to have any kind of sequence to their understanding, [crosstalk 00:41:54].

R: You have to have a school year.

Baker: … they need to have it every week.

R: Yeah.

Baker: And admittedly, you know, they’re only getting a semester of music anyway, but at least they’re coming back and reconnecting. I had to do a fourth, fifth, and sixth grade campus, that way, they had art first semester and music first semester is horrible. They came up from fourth grade to fifth grade, they didn’t remember a thing, starting every year over again. It was frustrating.

R: So would you say that consistency would probably be a problem or, [crosstalk 00:42:27]

Baker: Yes.

R:… you know, a frustration?

Baker: It’s a frustration I’ve had in the past, so you know, music is just was topping and if you don’t get it, then it’s okay.

R: It is … no.

Baker: It’s not okay. And I tell my students all the time, music is who we are as a people. Show me a culture that hasn’t developed music. Show me a car that doesn’t have a way to play music.
R: Yes.

Baker: Yeah, and so, it’s how we connect as people. It’s what separates us with the animals. And so, you know, I told them it’s so important that they pay me to teach you this. It’s not something that you can just hope that you get, it’s something we need to understand for each person.

R: You need to understand, yeah, absolutely. Any successes you have experienced when integrating? You mentioned your students and being able to translate that into the academics. Any other successes you experienced?

Baker: These are my kids. They’re singing at __MEA.

R: Oh, wow!

Baker: I know.

R: Cool.

Baker: So, apparently in high school has my four students in it and so I have the little lines are my former students. And so, that also they’re musical, one that’s musical in __________, I think down at Tommy Tune Awards.

R: So they’re taking it beyond?

Baker: I know that I did not, you know, direct that show. You know what I’m saying? But at the same time, actually I was at the __MEA two years ago when the boys, the __________ boys were singing for the Convention. They were the select boys’ choir and I had … Derek Roddy had some of the girls play handles for the boys, and there was this girl sitting there and she said, “Mrs. __________,” and I was like, “Oh no,” because I look so different, so, “Hi.” She said, “Do you remember me?” I said, “I remember your face,
honey.” Her name is ________. She’s like, “Mm-hmm,” she said, “you made me love music.” And I was like, that’s it, that’s the paycheck. There it is.

R: That’s what you do.

Baker: Exactly. So I don’t make every child love music, 750 kids, I can’t touch all of their hearts on the same day at the same time but I try.

R: You had your successes, definitely.

Baker: I try and yeah. And so, I feel like, I always tell them. I went to the Tommy Tune Awards because my husband is an assistant principal at the high school, so it’s his kids on the stage and my kids, you know, they were both of our kids. And the guy who won lead actor, he was from _________ High School but I was like … He knows because he said something about his beat, his choir director who’s made him understand that even before he’s a good musician, he needs to be a good person.

R: Wow!

Baker: That’s it. And I tell my kids that all the time, I said, “If you grow up to be a professional musician, great. But are you a good person?” So, we’re going to get the good person thing down and then [crosstalk 00:45:58] everything else is great.

R: Will come (laughs).

Baker: Yeah, so.

R: What professional development opportunities regarding music and literacy integration specifically do you think are available in your area?

Baker: Like on a regular basis?

R: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
Baker: Is it throughout the year or?

R: Throughout the year I would say [crosstalk 00:46:20].

Baker: Well, I know Artie Almeida is coming in June, between the [Kodály 00:46:24] and Region 17, they are pooling in people. Unfortunately, our district does not pay a lot for clinicians sadly the last couple years I’ve been doing (laughs) the clinic. I’m like, oh.

R: You’re the expert (laughs).

Baker: I know, how did this happen? and of course because it’s me, the teachers are like, “Yeah, Lisa’s talking again,” and they don’t always listen to me so, you know, Artie is coming. Texas is such a big music place that there are people available all the time that you can go and listen to, and those people, you know, Kodály Association is about reading. They have a system in place to get children reading music. Orff is not so much about reading, it’s more about performing in my opinion, but you know, I can’t get an Orff person to say, “You don’t read music.”

R: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Baker: So, usually, they’re some kind of reading component to every music, workshop, in-service.

R: So you think that through the Kodály and Orff and the Region …

Baker: Region ___.

R: … seventeen region meetings that you get professional development regarding music and literacy integration.

Baker: Right, yeah.

R: Okay.
Baker: I don’t think I’ve seen a specific core specifically on music and literacy, but if you pay attention, then they’re talking about notes, reading, and naming and that’s, to me, literacy.

R: Correlates to that.

Baker: Yeah, and they’re using, you know, they’re connecting in same ways that we connect in the regular classroom to reading.

R: Do you think that this professional development that you’ve taken, you know, in TMEA and this other professional developments in the area, and you’ve mentioned you this before, I just want you to rate this. How have they helped you to implement music and literacy integration in your classroom?

Baker: I guess because they’re specifically music, they really say, you know, they give you hard evidence of what you can use that will help the children read, so they say, take this, do this in your classroom. And then, they just … I keep coming back to Artie Almeida because, you know, she’s a professional musician, but she’s been teaching elementary school forever. And, you know, as a professional musician, she wants her kids to be readers and so she’s hit so many different ways to get the kids to think about looking at a page and getting that page to come to life. She has so many supplemental aids.

R: Sorry.

Baker: That’s okay.

R: Let me just shut it down. No, thank you (laughing).

Baker: Anyway, she just has so many different ideas about getting kids to read.
R: And so, how do you think these opportunities helped you achieve your professional goals?

Baker: Sometimes, the person just inspire, re-inspires me that what I’m doing is important, that you know, I’m not the only one, there are people out there trying to do what I’m doing and are being successful. And, you know, “Wow! This person is amazing. Maybe I can grow up and be like that some day.”

R: Mm-hmm (affirmative). One day I’ll grow up to be like you.

Baker: I know (laughing).

R: I felt that way.

Baker: Exactly. Inspiration, new ideas, new connections, just you know, a constant reminder that I am never finished as a teacher. I can always learn more. Just because I’ve been teaching 15 years doesn’t mean I’m done. I can keep finding new ideas that are even better.

R: There’s always room to grow. How do you think your school principal and your curriculum specialist value music and literacy integration?

Baker: I think it’s been a big learning curve for my principal and she only spent three years in the classroom and one year as an assistant principal. She was a really young principal. So the last seven years, we’ve been at this campus together. I noticed her embracing more and more the idea that our children are showing success through music, and that translates to the classroom. So I try not to be obnoxious and toot my own horn, but I try to point out, look what music is doing for the kids. Look at how this child that wouldn’t speak in the classroom is now singing on the stage, you know? Look at how this
child who won’t behave for anyone is now eagerly standing still so they can do something musical.

So, if we can give them those successes here, and she just invested $2,000 in Quaver and she invested $5,000 in the sound system, and she let us use extra funds to get this drums, so that’s another $2,000. So like in the past three years, she’s invested $9,000 in our music program. I think that it’s taken her a while to figure out, but it may not be on the STAAR test, but it’s the heart of the school. I firmly believe that the music teacher is the heart of the school, so the homeroom teachers the brain and the music teachers the heart.

R: The heart, absolutely.

Baker: Yeah.

R: In an ideal situation, how do you think music and literacy integration should be valued where everything is pink and perfect?

Baker: Everything is unicorn and rainbows.

R: How do you think music and literacy integration should be valued?

Baker: Frankly, if everything was unicorn and rainbows, I think the teachers would be doing more music in their classrooms.

R: Taking this back in their classrooms.

Baker: Yeah, they should be listening to music teachers and seen how our kids learn to read and using some of that in their classrooms. It’s funny, because, you know, I thought about it so much and they’ve not thought about at all. And so, I would feel kind of like that, why don’t you get it, you know? No, it’s kind of like with the kids, “Why don’t you
know how to do this?” Because, you know, I was talking to someone about their child being really good at music and the mom actually said, it was actually, that child Markham, he’s amazing in the piano. She was like, “Why can’t he … why can’t we take some of his intelligence and apply it back to his reading?” Because she just been in conference with the teacher and, you know, his reading is really behind.

So proving that it’s behind and I started to talk about music literacy, and the homeroom teacher butts in, and like, “Yeah, they learn multiplication by singing their facts and la, la, la, la.” And I’m like, “That’s not what I’m talking about at all. You’re talking about singing the topic. I’m talking about understanding literacy. That’s two different things and most of the time, they don’t get it on that deep of a level that this is … they’re doing the same thing.

R: The same process?

Baker: Yeah, we’re not just, you know, another way to … I don’t know. I have a lot of teach …

R: To memorize? Yeah, with a song.

Baker: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Baker: I don’t need to teach the seasons, I need to teach music. Now, if I have a musical idea and then they’d sings about the seasons, great. But you can sing about the seasons in your classroom, but my classroom it says, you know, that’s not one of my [state objectives]. You know, I can integrate your idea into what I’m supposed to be teaching, but I’m not supposed to teach your subject matter by singing it up with song. They don’t understand the difference.
R: Yeah, difference between that. There is confusion.

Baker: Yeah.

R: Has your school principal or your curriculum specialist, or both, provide any music and literacy integration in here for the school? A professional development I mean.

Baker: For the other teachers?

R: Yeah.

Baker: No.

R: Okay.

Baker: Now, we do have this GT thing at the beginning of the school year and I did this thing with puppetry and music for regular Ed teachers.

R: You for the school?

Baker: No, for the district.

R: For the district.

Baker: Yeah.

R: Okay.

Baker: So I did an in-service for the district and I talked about integrating puppetry and music into their literacy. And so, I’ve talked about, you know, using puppets and stations, and show them how to like act out a story with puppetry and music, and talking about bringing the arts into their literacy. And half of the people loved it and the other half looked at me and said, “We don’t have time for that.”

R: Interesting.
Baker: I maybe touched 12 people. One of the things they did tell them and this is like, “There’s some of your students who would not learn without this, you know, excitement that you would add.” They’re, pull out a puppet and the kids are like, you know? It’s like you’d turn on a light switch. It’s like that Quaver, I turned on Quaver and they’re like, I’m like, “I’ll just sit back here and you all can watch in.”

R: You all can watch in (laughs).

Baker: Yeah. You can blow up some bubble gum and you all are going think it’s like the best thing ever. So, just watch them (laughing).

R: Now, what rule do you think the available research has played in your implementation in music and literacy integration, like have you looked for research? How has that inform you into implementing?

Baker: I think there’s a lot of research about how children who have a musical background are more successful. Obviously, children who are literate are more successful. I don’t know how often they’d make the connection between the two.

R: Okay.

Baker: So I know that if you talked to somebody like this, they will start going, yeah, yeah, but I don’t know how often that talking goes on so I don’t know, you know? I know there is definitely people who have made that connection, but as far as it being a widespread idea, unfortunately, a lot of music teachers, they aren’t interested in integration because they feel like it cuts into their music time.

R: Mm-hmm, (affirmative) and they’re not …
Baker: And so, they just … I can’t get them singing as if we talked about how this is science, and it’s like, “Well then, they’ll understand what’s going on with their singing voice and let’s do it more.” You know? So they think that the discussion time maybe like a waste of time.

R: Yeah, now, what advice would you offer to a music teacher trying to implement music and literacy integration in their classroom?

Baker: They can find it. It’s out there. So if they listen close enough and dig deep enough, they’re going to find a wealth of information about how they can do that integration. There’s great sources out there and go to kindergarten, listen to a kindergarten teacher about how they get their kids reading and you can, you know, apply any kind of language learning, so yeah.

R: All right. Any other thing you want to add for the record?

Baker: I thought so (laughing).

R: All right. Thank you so much.

Baker: No problem.

R: Thank you. Thank you.
Mrs. Campbell

R: Can you please describe your position and what led you to this career choice?

Campbell: My position at this school is music specialist. I’m teaching at a Performing Arts Magnet School for kindergarten through fourth grade students. When I chose to become a music teacher was back when I was very young. My mother was the Soprano Soloist that sang in church all the time. Music has always been a part of my life.

Then in high school, we had a phenomenal choir director. I just was in the music room and the band hall constantly. Music was so much a part. I loved chemistry and I loved music but I went on to choose music major and went to a small university in Iowa and began my studies. My brother two years older than myself was also a music teacher.

R: Have you been music teacher since then since you graduated?

Campbell: Yes, since I graduated and that’s since 1979.

R: That’s awesome.

Campbell: Here in _________, the same School District and the same basic neighborhood. I have teachers at this school I taught when they were children.

R: No way. That is awesome. That is very cool. One day, I’ll grow up to be like that.

(Laughs) Now, what is the first thing that comes to mind when you hear the phrase Music and Literacy Integration?

Campbell: The lyrics of the songs is the word is integrated into the rhythm that the language is merged with beautiful notes. I have a very strong background in church music and participating worship services, it really exemplifies what music and word and the connection uplifts who we are as human beings. Closest thing to God there is; closest
thing to speaking in that beautiful language.

R: What are your beliefs regarding Music and Literacy Integration?

Campbell: I believe that in the music classroom is already integrated. I believe music accelerates learning that if there’s anything that needs to be taught, if it’s connected with musical notation, it will be retained longer. It will be learned faster. Just the language of our children and whatever their native language is, their native music is paired so much with the speaking voice that temples matches the accents in the language; whether it’s French, whether it’s Spanish, whether it’s English. It’s mimicked with all the literature and in all of the music.

If a child who’s struggling in music class and is Spanish speaking, integrating some of the Spanish songs or just giving them a little bit more time to wrap themselves around the words to feel what the beat is in that language. Then all of a sudden they have that sense and then it’s merged together forever. That rhythm of the language is so essential to teaching both directions; to teaching literacy and for reading and comprehension.

R: Speaking they take from each other.

Campbell: Yeah, and then the music it mirrors it. When things are translated, the music maybe originally was in French and then the language is changed to a different language. It never fits perfectly. I was a voice major so a lot of that going. It’s really hard. You end up with a piece of music, French music of a mass. It’s the rhythm of the word, and the music so different than a dramatic composer composing in a German language of a mass. The words are the same but because of the emphasis of their own native tongue, it
influences that music so much. It’s very connecting.

R: It’s like the music definitely reflects the actual language.

Campbell: Yes and the language affects the music and the music affects the language.

R: It’s a little circle.

Campbell: A little back and forth.

R: Now, how did you become aware of Music and Literacy Integration?

Campbell: Initially was when I would do songs as a performer and my teachers would say, “Think about the meaning of the words. Think about what you’re saying. What does it mean?” Then listening and knowing that many times an accompanist and a composer would have certain things happening in the piano and having that ear, “That makes it feel this way or makes it feel that way,” because the words connect with what’s happening musically there.

Then as I became involved with this Performing Arts Magnet School, it really was very heightened because of the need to connect what we’re doing with our Magnet theme at the school being Performing Arts with classroom teachers bringing art into their classroom and then for myself to always be conscious of what am I doing with the children to connect to social studies to connect to language arts to derive meaning and rhyming words and colors and accessibility with the language that just teaching Sol Fish solfège or the rhythm is not all there is. There’s so much more that we’re teaching to our children besides that music.

It really became heightened with the necessary, with the need to connect to literacy when we started our Magnet. I was handpicked to be involved with the
development of the school, the program. We’ve developed two separate curriculums to integrate for the classroom teachers to integrate the four arts areas into their classroom instruction. They aren’t successful as what I would like them to see to be. Both of those curriculums are binders that are now just stored in the closet. It’s been very difficult to continue it.

For me, when it was really became aware of was when I came here. I was in a Magnet School before that was environmental studies. There, I was bringing everything about the environment into my music class. I was connecting that scene with musicals and shows and anything that we could do to promote that through song. I started that with …

R: Then in here, it’s more with the core academics.

Campbell: Yes, to connect the four core subjects with the four enrichment subjects.

R: You said you were at least one of the people in-charged of creating the curriculum.

Campbell: This particular school, yeah.

R: For how long have you been here in school?

Campbell: This school this is 14th year.

R: That’s awesome. Aside from the need of because you’re with Magnet School where you aim to integrate, is there any other reason that you feel personally compelled to integrate music and literacy?

Campbell: There are materials now. There are some lovely, lovely materials that are available that are fun to ties the song looks like mainstream right here. It’s Don Gato with following the book and that clever illustrations and the song. The children know that they can have a story sung to them as well as the story read to them. That it comes both ways.
Just the delight of telling a story and the connections.

The past Spring in ____________, we had a gentleman from Boston University, Karl Paulnack that was presented at __MEA, a pianist. He was talking about music increased the capacity to engage in life itself. We just had that this week the electricity went out. The kids brought their flashlight lantern to my room. Because it’s too bright because there’s no light, we put the basket over the top and immediately they went to the song; I taught them previously. I told them a story about the Underground Railroad without me even saying anything, The children said, “That’s just like when you taught us the song.” The whole class started singing the song.

It was because the experience was so connected to the music. I’m going check that capacity to engage and that capacity when a song is connected, it’s the whole experience’s remembered. It’s a forever moment. I would like to do some studies with how music teachers really are saving the lives of our elderly that have strokes or even young adults that have strokes. Music many times is what brings language back.

R: With them together. What aspects of your personality and attitudes contribute to shape your feelings about Music and Literacy Integration?

Campbell: I grew up as a kid just singing all the time to my dolls and singing all the time when as my dad had a restaurant. In the early mornings, I’d be mopping the floor and singing, making up my own songs and singing constantly. What’s interesting though is I don’t like to read because I have an Irlen where the letters move on the page. It’s difficult for me to sit and read. Yet language and speaking in that aspect and language and singing is just so dear to me and so easy for me.
It’s interesting that part of literacy, the speaking part and the listening part and writing, the reading is the hardest for me. The other three is so wonderful for me. I just delight in it and share it with the kids all the time. Also I take the time, we have ________ writing for our Hispanic children. I take the time every year to do every level of ________ training. It’s offered through __EA.

I can remind myself what Hispanic child sounds like or what a child who’s not a native English speaker, what their voice and their responses sound like when they’re at the different levels. I can listen and go, “Stop.” I need to be shorter sentences or take all the extra out. Speak slower and work with them to try to understand and comprehend, so that language is very accessible.

We do so many performances here. Every grade level has a great level show with full costuming, full musical with costumes and set. They do their show all on their own, by themselves without directors doing anything. They take total ownership. We do that Christmas time with the whole school. It’s about 250 kids in that show. We have those opportunities and that’s so important.

R: It seems you’re more connected with the expressive part of the …

Campbell: The performance.

R: Performing.

Campbell: It’s part of the use of the language.

R: To what degree you think this instructional strategy, Music and Literacy Integration compliments your teaching philosophy?
Campbell: At this level, elementary level, it’s all about the singing voice and the song and beautiful singing, getting those voices light and up in tune. Many times the language can be a barrier to keep the intonation from where it needs to be. I, as a teacher have to help them with the language so that it does stay right on part.

Using American Folk Songs, that’s the Kodály approach. It’s so great because it’s focused on folk song. It allows the child to join in when there’s a repeated phrase. Have that pleasure and feeling of language acquisition right away. They only have maybe one or two or three little words they have to fit in. They’re participating and ride along with everybody.

Learning new words and what they mean. Learning old words. Learning words they know but in another context because the music historically can come from different places. Then taking the opportunity such as today, working with the word waterproof of what does it actually mean. Stopping the lesson sometimes and understanding, coming up with a definition, coming up with words that make sense.

One of the boys told me a few weeks ago, “Campbell, you teach so much more than music. You teach history. You teach math. You teach language arts. You teach everything in music class.” I grew up in a small town. We did German club. We did band. We did choir. We were on the stage acting. We did it all. That was the philosophy of this Magnet School. The kids don’t pick and choose what they do. Every single child does every single art.

Since I was here from the start, that’s been the basic philosophy for this building. The marriage of music and literacy is just a natural fit.
R: It’s natural.

Campbell: It’s just natural.

R: To what degree using Music and Literacy Integration is helpful to your students’ academic achievement?

Campbell: That’s always been such a hard area to prove. However, the success I see in my children with this classroom and the successes I see on stage and knowing that a child is struggling in the classroom and struggling with whatever they’re doing but they find a success some place is just so meaningful. Having a student that won’t lift a pencil for a classroom teacher come in here and complete his rhythm assignment for me, this and I don’t know if that’s necessarily music and literacy but that it allows another venue. It allows my Hispanic children, the children that are struggling with English because it’s their second language a place to practice English in a large group setting.

I don’t know how we always measure those things. However, I do know they did a survey of our high school graduates in Performing Arts and in the School District when there are such low graduation rates for everything else. They’re 100% in Performing Arts are graduating from high school. There’s a real message. If these kids are participating in drama, in music at this level, I hope and pray that they are doing the same thing when they leave here and go to intermediate middle school, and high school. That gives us some success.

As far as whether or not the language acquisition that I have in my classroom has a direct effect, I’m sure it does. I just know it’s there. I know there is nothing that I do that’s going to make them do worst poor job. They can only do better. I feel that some of
our testing is horizontal testing rather than tracking the children for success vertically. Every year, the kids are different. Yes, they’re the same, “socioeconomic situation” or whatever. Every child is different. We should track that one child all the way and find out what made a difference in that child’s life and mimic whatever is in line. Let’s go for that.

R: What challenges if any do you face when trying to integrate music and literacy?

Campbell: I have two parts for that answer. The one part is music and literacy in my classroom. It’s very successful. I do not have somebody telling me how to “teach my lessons”. I can bring in whatever resources I need, whether it’s off the internet, whether it’s a book. Many other resources are in English and Spanish.

There are a lot of accessible materials out there that printed word can be English. I would love to be a Spanish speaker. I don’t need to just focus on that but that would be an area where I could do better job for my children if I spend more time learning my Spanish and my Spanish songs and so forth to help the children feel better and be more accessible.

The second half would be the music integration as far as a Magnet School, which is a whole another monster. That only happens when you have administrator support from the top to get the curriculums that we’ve developed in the classrooms. Let go of some of the practice activities for testing and do more open-ended and extension lessons using the arts as a springboard to amazing learning because it’s out there.

I recently asked one of our skill specialists to give me a stack of lesson plans. I said, “I don’t want lesson plans that have arts integration in. I just want a classroom
teacher’s lesson plan.” She gave me a lesson plan K through four. I recently went through them all. The lesson plans go to here and I’m going, “If they would just go one step further.” They’ve written their story, “If they would just act it out.” They’ve collected their vocabulary words, “If they would just draw them.” They’ve worked on their math problem, “If they would just move spatially in the room and mix and match math problems with each other spatially.”

It just goes to one point, it could just go and learning could be to be outside of the box and connected with a life experience forever. They will have it forever. It shows learning. It shows that they understand. You can watch and see. That’s always the challenge with music or anything. You can’t see what’s going on except what they show you. That you have no idea whether they’ve learned it until their using it …

R: Until you see the product.

Campbell: Then you know if they haven’t. We have an amazing curriculum that we’ve developed that follows from 15th century to present all the arts. There’s a project for each one. We did it for a year and a half at this school. The District said, “No, you have to write your lesson plans like this.” Then the administrator at that time said, “Pack it up. Put away.” We had broadway Broadway shows, broadway theater going down the first grade hall, a circus going on in the gym.

We had third graders that we’re running exhibition that we’re taking parents around the whole school. It was an amazing venture. I just think we’re so focused on numbers that this terribly is terribly exciting to talk about and terribly exciting for the children to do. It takes great classroom management to handle it because that’s the key to
it. If they aren’t in line with what you need to do then you aren’t going to accomplish anything. They’re focused on something.

R: Conquer the world.

Campbell: Yup, they just go for it.

R: You’ve shared a little bit of this already but if you can expound maybe and share any frustrations that you have experienced when integrating music and literacy in your classroom. If you have, how did you overcome these frustrations?

Campbell: Maybe a different angle. I don’t know it wasn’t music. I just worked with a group of kids on writing. It’s keeping the subject matter “school-friendly”. It’s not an issues a title-one child. It’s about children making the right choices when they’re improvising words or coming up with ideas. That could be frustrating with some of our classes where we just have. That’s a classroom management issue where you set your boundaries of what’s acceptable when it’s time to go that way.

That would be a frustration in the classroom management. The classes that are not able to go that extra mile. Although shutting down the activities and saying, “We’re just going to sit,” and saying, “Those classes will sing 20–25 minutes nonstop and love it.” You think of how much language there is in that and what joy that the music brings to the words. It’s great.

In those classes, it’s time to do a book. We’re just going to regroup, stop and sing these books through and then have their show off time for their classroom teacher when they come to the door, that performance time.

As far as obstacles, like I said that add up to move on. I don’t really have that
many obstacles. The only other obstacle is being … We’re going to go there. Being evaluated by an administrator that does not see that what I do affects the children’s academics. That’s the most frustrating thing. I do so many extra things besides just a music class; not being appreciated for all the effort and the work.

It takes a lot to get these kids in these shows, get a kindergarten or a first grader to stand by themselves in the middle of the stage, a bilingual kindergarten to sing in English. His whole little verse on the microphone and it’s beautiful and it’s perfect. You think, “Oh my gosh, that kid a year ago was not speaking a single word of English. Now look, we’re on the stage with a self-esteem to be successful.”

That’s it. Class management situations where the behavior isn’t such that you can really take them or you want to take them and then allowing them to surprise you sometimes. Then also that it’s not being acknowledged from what it really is.

R: Acknowledgement.

Campbell: Every reteach strategy is an arts strategy. It’s not called what it is.

R: What is your level of confidence when integrating music and literacy integration? How confident do you feel?

Campbell: Very confident. I feel I could bring a person in, a contracted young audiences, different performing groups to come to the school and stuff like that to … Like I said before with internet, accessibility now is just there’s so much. It’s just available. Still I think there is nothing better than the human voice. The technology is just a tool or is just a resource. Sitting and singing a song with kids in the community of song is just so vital. Telling a story and weaving a story through the songs that we did Rondo form this week
and the Rondo form was for kindergarten, first grade was an engine, a train that was connected together with the box cars.

*We took the rhythm from* Engine Engine Number Nine. *Put it on the instruments.* Then they could put their favorite at the end of the year, put their favorite song as the B and their favorite song as the C. *Engine Engine Number Nine* was on the instruments as a connecting boxed cars. It all fit but it takes the time to create some of this imagination and be creative. That’s where my thinking outside of the box has never been stifled.

R: This is what you were talking about before all the lesson plans you were evaluating that you were seeing, this will be the next level. You had your rhymes. You have your stories. This is the next level now. You’re putting it all together with an experience like you said that they will never forget. They’re performing, they’re singing, they’re creating. That’s it. Any successes that you have experienced when integrating music and literacy in your classroom? You’ve mentioned a few, maybe more.

Campbell: I’ve done integrating and partnered with classroom teachers. The third grade bilingual teacher and I collaborated on the book called *Harvesting Hope* about Cesar Chavez. We created a musical. Fortunately, we had a day where the electricity went out so I could spend a whole big chunk of time in her classroom. The children rewrote the story and the script, created their own script. Added songs of Cielito Lindo, De Colores, the No No Nos Moveran, the song that Cesar Chavez sang as they went from Delano to Sacramento. The children created this musical.

At that time I was involved with, __EA had a group called __________ which is the Center for __________. We took our children to one of __________ summits in
They performed. Then we worked with the teachers. Our librarian gave me a whole set of books that were the same thing or as a person or a situation that could be acted out. The teachers wrote their own musicals, working in partners and groups. They came up with a script structure. They could take back and we shared with one another. Those kids came back the next year when they were fourth graders. The whole thing has payout in their bilingual class. It’s about standing up yourself, who you are.

The next year, the principal came to their classroom and saw the children playing Monopoly. He said, “You’re just playing a board game. You need to be studying and working, getting ready for at that time [state] test.” The children wrote letters and said, “No, this game is valuable because it’s teaching this and this and this.” We created a whole classroom of Cesar Chavez. We’re not going to stand for anything and a culture that’s very taught to be very quiet and very accepting.

We taught a whole group of kids to be reformists. They have never forgotten that. It was so cute because that one little group, all of a sudden, I had three little girls at my door that year we were working on the musical. They said, “Campbell, we have something for the intercom. It says that Cesar Chavez’s birthday today and we went on the internet and we researched. We have some things to say on the intercom.” I said, “Okay.” I’m thinking that that was a project their class teacher have do.

We did an intercom and I went back to the teacher and said, “Thank you for sending me those girls.” She goes, “I didn’t sent them.” They did that whole thing on their own. Just by taking a little tiny bit and it sure takes time and exceptional teachers to be willing to work with me. It was just worth it because those kids are changed forever.
R: Life experience.

Campbell: It was so rich for them and just what they’ve picked for their words. Then I did it with the kindergarten class. We did the little book and I have the books in both English and Spanish. The classroom teacher read it in Spanish. I have to do it in English. They rewrote the book called *The Little House*. They made all their pictures and we published it in a book for them.

What was interesting with the bilingual kids is they wrote English and Spanish. That both of their products were in two languages back and forth.

R: Kindergarten.

Campbell: Kindergarten. They have to work in their little teams. The teacher helped group them so that some could translate for each other and help me. They’d have to explain themselves in English and Spanish. One would say, “No, I mean this.” They went, “She’s trying to say this.” That’s the way the script came out. Unbelievable, so rich and so deep.

R: That’s amazing.

Campbell: I’ve had some fabulous value. That’s just the tip of the iceberg. Those two are partnering experiences were really quite fine. Finding time to do it.

R: You found time. You did it.

Campbell: That’s just makes it happy.

R: What professional development opportunities regarding music and literacy integration are available in your area?

Campbell: Sessions that I teach.
R: The ones that you teach.

Campbell: Yes, from Magnet Schools I’ve done that. Actually, we have the group that I work with the Kodály program, one of the teachers has done … We team together and have done collaborative … We’ve done workshops. One of the teachers did just on the books, the reading books that you can do the song books and sing it with some extensions with that. We’ve done a workshop on improvisation, which is the language development, also on musical development.

They’re out there. They maybe don’t translate exactly as music and literacy. However, music and manipulating language like that is literacy. It’s just defining it from what it truly is. We’ve had workshops with couple of gentlemen from out of New Mexico have come here, Randy Kriske and …

R: Kriske and De Lelles…

Campbell: They do a lot of literacy things with their improvisation of words. It just works great. Truly it is literacy. There would be nothing, no problem with their connecting with ESL teachers, classroom teachers. A lot of what they do would easily translate for both music teachers and classroom teachers.

If you’re aware of what’s going on, there are things that are available. There are some great teachings going on there.

R: How have these professional development opportunities helped you implementing music and literacy integration in your classroom?

Campbell: Just constant materials and then adapting what someone has done with this particular song or this activity and doing it with another activity or doing this Rondo
form. I do it a little bit different with the fourth graders than I do the other ones than the little ones. It’s just learning to adapt and change but still the meat, potatoes of it and the language connections are all there.

R: They’re keep on there.

Campbell: Just getting fresh ideas. Even as a presenter having opportunities for a teacher to say, “I do this.” The fun part for me is I teach level three Kodály. I have all these lessons and lesson segments that my students, adult students present. I have all these great ideas I get from them every single summer.

R: From your students.

Campbell: I’m just emerged from these great ideas. They connect the songs and the Kodály is so based in connecting the songs and it’s connected through literacy. Either the topic of the song or this phrase of words matches this phrase of words or this connects with this or that. There are so many connections there that that’s the beauty of the lessons. It flows from beginning to end, no interruptions. It’s just there.

R: I like that idea. As a presenter, you still get the benefit. You still get to hear other ideas. How have these opportunities help you achieve your professional goals?

Campbell: At this point in my career, I’m very proud to say that I’m teaching teachers. That’s just a gift that I’ve been given. My first gift was having the gift of music to be able to sing and perform. That has been wonderful being able to … I sang with ________ Grand Opera for about eight years on the stage. I’ve sang at beautiful weddings and had beautiful performance, opportunities and teaching kids that when they come and sit and listen, they’re absorbed in what I’m doing. Working with teachers now as the last closer
to the final chapter is just so exciting.

The enthusiasm that these teachers and they have to do their video tapes and send them to me for critiquing and seeing the wonderful things they’re doing for children and somehow some wonderful things. I’m there to help them.

R: Your master teaching then.

Campbell: Just to celebrate in how much that these kids are getting. We did a workshop here in __________. We had 80 teachers at the workshop and we asked each teacher to write down the number of students they have contact with. That one workshop, we figured we touched the lives of 40,000 children.

I know we’re a major city but still you start thinking about reaching out like that. I am the secretary now for OAKE (Organization of American Kodály Educators), the national organization that there’s even more connections with the national level and even the international level what’s happening in music, it’s just really such a powerful tool.

If anybody ever wants to see The Singing Revolution and realize how important music is to a country and a culture. If you haven’t seen that movie, you need to.

R: No, I’ll put it in my …

Campbell: It’s about Estonia and how they gained their freedom. There’s so much power. We know it’s there but seeing exactly what we can do.

R: With music.

Campbell: Yeah.
R: You mentioned a little bit of this before but if you want to expound this, how does your school principal and your, you call it skill specialist here. How do you think the school principal and your skill specialist value music and literacy integration?

Campbell: Let me start with the skill specialists. We have three of them. The one I was going to have you work with, she is a professional dancer. She already has a connection with the arts. As a very positive, positive reflection of what respect for what I do with the children and work with the kids. The other teachers, they really know that what we’re doing in here makes a difference in these kids life. How whether it’s measurable or not or how measurable it is. That’s the hard part. The respect and the appreciation for what’s happening in the arts here is very deep and very fine.

Administratively speaking, the assistant principal just has had other music teachers and just really is an off what, knowing the sound, area event, or toot my own whistle. She’s very pleased with what she sees happening in our music room. The kids are doing. They’re responding. They know what they’re talking about.

The principal, he respects what’s going on in the music room. He doesn’t come to see my classes. If he has a message for me, he’ll come and watch the kids but there’s no feedback. I’ve never received a walkthrough. He’s been here, this is his third year. We never received a walkthrough observation from him yet.

As far as professionally speaking, I just get the final evaluation last year. My evaluation was much higher. This year it was lower. I did a young audience partnership at the beginning of the school year where we had 120 residencies in the school that artists came and worked in the classroom alongside the teachers. Because one teacher
complained about one artist, the whole thing was a failure which every single one of those teachers said, “I would love to have an artist in my room next year.”

He allowed me to have so many dollars of Title I money to have this program. I’m on the board of Young Audiences Education. We were able to do a collaboration and get grant money from them to make up the other half. It was 50-50. We had _______ Commission of Arts’ money too. We have this huge project with three major performances. It was the whole thing was a failure because you can’t prove that there’s any gain in there, their academic achievement.

He’s a real black and white numbers person. Not everything is about black and white always. It crosses that line of do you feel supported or not. He walked out of the Christmas program and has yet to watch any of the programs all the way through that we do the musical sets that we do here at the school. He’ll show up maybe the last song. He can get the chairs picked up and moved out of the way.

I don’t know whether … I don’t know. As a person, I should go and talk to him to find out what it is. However, I shouldn’t have. It should be at a Performing Arts Magnet School. It should be a given. That’s why I said on the onset, “At a Performing Arts Magnet School, it takes a very special administrator to be part of it and it makes or breaks the program.”

R: Absolutely.

Campbell: It really does.
R: In an ideal situation where everything is pink and pretty, how do you think music and literacy should be valued from top to bottom? It looks like you have the most teachers in here are probably your ideal situation.

Campbell: I know my classroom teachers that if I wanted to partner with anyone, I know exactly which teachers I could go to and partner if I had the time; even when I have the time to do these special projects with them. Anytime I have performances at the end of class, I have a kid waiting at the door, “Okay, time to come in.” Then we do a performance piece like five minutes in between each grade level.

A lot of times my five minutes where I’m supposed to be able to go to the bathroom is my performance time because the teacher will come and do some performances. It’s just wonderful to give those compliments to those kids and for those classroom teachers to take them back to the room feeling like they have first of all, it’s great review for their lesson. You go through all of the vocabulary and the literacy in what they’ve learned or structure music and everything, patterning.

In that respect, I’m fine here. There could be more reaching out to the classroom teachers. I have lots of materials here that could go to the classroom teachers, books from the Magnet program or CDs and sets of books about composers that could go to the classroom teachers to do some centers.

There’s always room for growth. We’ve had a lot of faculty turnover. A real good way to build is when you retain your faculty and you have one teacher this year and now you have these three teachers and then pretty much the whole team is on board. It’s real hard to do when you have disgruntled teachers amongst the faculty and people who are
leaving all the time. It’s very very hard.

That again, it has to do with the administration to retain teachers in the building and really build the rapport and relationships like that.

R: It seems like your school principal at least provides, he supports you financially with your programs.

Campbell: The Performing Arts Department gives us funding. We have no funding from the school per se for what we do. Last year, I was on the budget committee. I said, “If you’d like, I can change this amount of money through a grant, double it and bring in an artist.” “Okay, we’ll do that.” Then it wasn’t received by him. The classroom teachers loved it.

Then the year before I brought in the American Boy Choir that they were traveling through and they did a performance at our school. It was a thousand dollars to have them come perform. He took it out of his principal’s budget to have them come in.

R: Does he also provide anything for your professional development?

Campbell: If I request it. We have in the School District, the Performing Arts Department will send you to the State Conference once every three years. I go to the State every year and then I go to the National Kodály every year. He did allowed me to go to my conferences and so forth this year and not take personal days but to have them designated as professional workshop days.

Part of that too was because then it doesn’t count as an absence against the school. It has a double edged in play. He will release me and I don’t have to take sick days or whatever to be able to go.
R: As far as professional development opportunities that he would provide would be that, him allowing you to be able to go. Would you say that these opportunities you mentioned, that States Convention and the National. Obviously, have you, you think that at least professional development opportunities help you also in your growth in integration?
Campbell: Absolutely. It’s always great to connect with other people and get fresh new ideas and even the conversations about training programs with at the national level with what they’re struggling with to make my teaching at the teachers of teachers’ level. Then also with the kids, you see wonderful people.

There was a great workshop on literacy and choral performance that Joan Litman did and she did it with the Volunteer Women’s Chorus. They’re all mothers. They did this most beautiful cultural music from all over the world. She said, “We thought the music was about this but then once we got into the culture, we realized that because of the culture, it was like Iraq or Iran folk song.” They thought it was just about the wedding, about the groom. Actually, it was about the mother giving her son away. She said, “You have to take the time to learn about your music because it takes a whole new meaning.” They sang the song plain. Then they said, “Now, this is what’s really going on. Listen to us sing.” It’s just absolutely amazing because it was sung completely different. It was about losing a child.
R: It was a complete different meaning.
Campbell: Absolutely. That’s about language and culture, everything tied together.
R: Fantastic. What role do you think the available research regarding music and literacy
integration has played in the implementation of music and literacy integration in your school?

Campbell: As far as my search for any research to support?

R: Mm-hmm. (affirmative) It can be.

Campbell: What I’m doing?

R: Yes, to support or supplement what you do or maybe even if it’s your skill specialist, she found this wonderful research and she brought it to you or anybody in the school has used research to base music and literacy integration. Give a some foundation, a scholar foundation to the music and literacy integration.

Campbell: Honestly, the only research-based connections have been … different studies about piano, learning piano and that’s more “basic learning”. As far as music, helping with literacy there’s … what’s his name? Timothy Rasinski has a whole research and study about how poetry and music help with language fluency. That’s made a difference. I think it’s Rasinski, that’s who it is.

He’s a gentleman that has done a lot on the fluency for our ESL children to say that … and even for our regular ed students. That if a child can memorize poetry, if a child can memorize songs, manipulate the songs, change the words, change this or that and keep it going, that helps the reading fluency. There’s been direct with that. He’s been in our district several times doing workshops. That’s a big one with literacy and language.

Has anybody come to me asking for CDs of different songs? That hasn’t happened. It’s been more myself going out. Some of the teachers will come back and ask
for different things on thematic or some ideas. Otherwise, it’s more of the expectation that we’ve done. We serve the faculty and specialist teachers.

It had changed the color of classes special. That had changed it to essential inside our school. I did a workshop with online or over-the-phone workshop with MENC talking about language used when it’s discussed in music. Be careful how you label music. Is it special? It’s rather essential. I went back and said, “We’re going to change this schedule.” Our rotation schedule for our school is called the Essentials Skills.

R: It is really called, you call it the Essentials?

Campbell: I told him that. He’s changed it to Essentials, the Essentials teachers.

R: That is fantastic. I like that a lot.

Campbell: That is a hold. We do that. It’s a mixed thing going. That’s been a big one because the School District has adapted this whole idea of fluency.

R: The whole district had probably …

Campbell: Had done workshops and then that filters down. However, sometimes the ideas are here but then what really happens in the grassroots …

R: They’ve leave the research and leave it there and then …

Campbell: Yeah, and then we get to call the worksheets out to work out on the STAAR test. That’s it. Whereas the music teacher goes, “Okay, I’m going too …” See, that’s where we have the freedom to teach what we need to teach.

R: How we need to teach it. My last question for you today, what advice and you as a master teacher that teachers other teachers, pretend you’re in there in a room with a room full of teachers that want to try and implement music and literacy integration in their
classroom. What will be your advice to them?

Campbell: Make the connections happen. Take the time to connect as teachers with other teachers and then try to unify the language so that you’re saying it the same way for the children. That vocabulary as we can stretch the vocabulary. If we use the same words to connect things, it will happen. There has to be time to connect. Also it’s truly a village to make it happen for these kids.

R: Collaboration to …

Campbell: Yeah. What comes to mind is just make the connection. Just connect.

R: Make it happen.

Campbell: Yup.

R: Any other remarks you wish to convey?

Campbell: No, those are great questions.

R: Thank you.

Campbell: You probably got more information than you needed.

R: Yes, I love it. No, this is fantastic. Thank you so much.

Campbell: You’re welcome.

R: Definitely.
Mrs. Harris

R: It's fantastic.

Harris: And so I can mention names to you just to keeping my stories straight and then always come out …

R: I will come out. All names will be taken off.

Harris: Perfect. So it's harder to me like, "okay, they once stated my one year may be three years ago.

R: Yeah. And especially to keep the story straight you think of names and you think of.

My So my first question is, please describe your position and what led you to this career choice?

Harris: Okay. Currently I'm the RTI specialist at ___________ Academy that stands for response to intervention, but I'm kind of the catchall. So I'm the RTI interventionist. I work with reading, primarily with students who are struggling with reading, all grade levels through K through four. And I'm also the EIT, which is the early intervention team coordinator. And also, I'm the dyslexia skill specialist. And I'm also 504 and Title I and I think that's it (laughing).

And my background history, my mom was actually a classical Indonesian dancer. And she was sent over when Indonesians was granted its independence. I guess, they were doing like a world tour just kind of like "hey we're independent now, come be our friends". So she was part of that cultural like embassy that would travel. And so she ended up in New York, work for Indonesian Oil Company and then move to United
States. And so that's how our family came here through dance. And so I grew up in dance and I did this different kind of cultural things and then I went to performing arts high school.

After college I wanted to become a teacher, but I went to _____ and that's really expensive and I didn't figure that out until my senior year. I was like, I can't do two more years of student loans, let me just graduate, I will figure it out later. And so I was in the corporate world for about seven years.

And then it was just by chance that I was a volunteer for the __________ and my partner was a principal. And I was like "how can you get into education if you don't have a degree in education". So she was telling me what to do. So I'm ACP which is alternative certification and so that was four years ago.

So I started at ________ Academy. I was the third grade and I was the third grade inclusion teacher. And so I had special education kids, dyslexia kids, kids who really needed additional support in the class. And then, because I guess, I was good at that I moved over into this position this year.

So I have been working with lot of struggling raters and what not and I love it. And so that's what I was telling you about I found my niche. I'm an interventionist at heart and that's what I want to continue doing.

R: Fantastic. That is …

Harris: Long story long, that's me (laughs).

R: Then how performing arts, you came back to where you belong. Cool. So what is the first thing that comes to mind when you hear the phrase music and literacy integrations?
Harris: I personally, love it. But I see both sides, because coming from an arts background I feel like it's very natural. Everything that I do in front of my kids is very sing-songy and very animated, I dance through everything. But when teachers hear it and they're like, "oh, I don't how to sing". So it's like that double edge where it like" no really it's really easy, you can do it, I promise".

And then, because teachers are loaded up with so much things that they have to do it's like "oh, it's one more thing I have grade. Now I have to sing a song, awesome I had to add it". So there is a lot of resistance to it. But I love it and I think it's easy to do and especially with the kids I work with the ESL kids, the struggling readers, it lends itself to their improvement in reading.

R: Good. Now, so I think you said that a little bit already, but if you can expand a little more what are your beliefs regarding music and literacy integration?

Harris: My personal belief is, I think that, if you add the musical component with the reading that it kind of makes it more personal and more relatable and it makes it more easily accessible to a student who might not be able to read as well, because I usually see it through the lens of the struggling students. I teach summer school a lot and I have like books and we always sing songs for like the Pledge of Allegiance or the Star Spangled Banner or poems and things like that.

I went to lot of workshops with Timothy Rasinski and I love him. And so I have his fluency books and I use that with my kids and we would do it everyday, either a poem and we sing it with like a certain cadence or we do an actually. And we pull vocabulary words out of it. I have kids in the fourth grade that come back to me" hey Ms.
do you remember the Grand Old Flag, could we sing it together. Sure, let's sing Grand Old Flag together”.

And then I have kids this year who I saw on summer school who hated it they were like "I don't like to sing songs, I don't like this book, I don't want to sing your song" but this year they were like, "hey Ms. _______ do you have that book? What book? The book with the songs in it. I thought you hated that" he was like "I did", but I don’t "okay, well there it is, go ahead and get it". And so I think it makes it more accessible for students to be able to read while using it through music.

R: And so how did you become aware of music integration?

Harris: Quite honestly, Pre-K (laughing).

R: Pre-K.

Harris: Pre-K. I remember I went to Montessori School and I my teacher is ...

R: Your Pre-K?

Harris: My Pre-K.

R: Okay.

Harris: My Pre-K. I played the triangle. And we would sing songs. And then we would sing songs and then they would give us the words to the songs and then we end up. And my mom tells me the story she loves it all the time. She is always like, "oh, remember there is this one time I brought a book and you had no idea what it was and then I said, oh you just memorizing it so I gave you another book and you read the same words, I like oh, I'm so happy". I was like, "okay". I don't remember the story, but I do remember my pre-K music teacher. We play songs and then she would either do it to math, which is the
common thing, but then she give us the lyrics to the words and then we just pick up words and start saying it and then that's where it started.

R: And so it came from a personal experience.

Harris: Yes.

R: Cool. What compels your music teacher, what do you think compels her to integrate music and literacy in her classroom?

Harris: Ms. _______? What compels our music teacher to integrate music in education?

R: Yeah.

Harris: One, she just loves in music, in general. You just know what you see it. And I wasn't here, but she was like district teacher of the year and she just loves sharing her knowledge with people. I know she is always doing workshops. She is working with other new teachers, the old teachers in our district to try to get folks to do. She always comes and she talks to "hey, I have this great idea, how about if we do a Shakespeare play or" we always do what was it, Harriet Tubman, whenever, that's one of our [state objectives].

She always give us information on songs that they would sing, all hymnals, the quilt, like there is like the pattern club and she would put up on the school just to make it seems like it's a natural part of just your way of life.

I think she wants our kids to, especially where we are, we're title one school. We have low economic kids. We have a lot of parents that don't speak any English. And so she just doesn’t want it to be something only certain people can have access to. She wants it to be known that everyone can appreciate music and arts and what not. So I think that's
where it comes from and you can tell, because it's all over our school. And that's Ms. _________. And so she does really good job with that and I think that's where it comes from. She just wants to share and have everyone to be able to experience it.

R: Now what aspects of your personality and attitudes you think contribute to shape your feelings about music and literacy integration?

Harris: Like I was telling you my history, family comes from the arts, grew up in the arts and so wherever I can throw it in I throw it in. I partial to dance because my background is in dance, but with dance comes music. And so I like showing the kids what was, what is and what could be. We were looking at "oh, what were we watching, we were …" we were doing something with time and rhythm and they are like what …

R: We we're talking about what aspects of your personality and your attitudes and you were saying that.

Harris: About the tap dance.

R: Your dance.

Harris: So it's something about I can't remember. Oh, it was civil rights. So we were talking about civil rights. We were talking about Martin Luther King and then so I went back in history about tap dancing. And then I was telling her, I was like back in the day and we were talking about When Marian Sang. You know that book?

R: No.

Harris: It's, why I have forgotten, Marian Barry how she wasn't allowed to perform in the United States, because she was African American and so she had to go to Canada and the UK in order to perform and then finally Lady Bird, Lady Bird Harris is it, she got her to
come back finally to the United States to perform for a Caucasian audience. So we were reading that book and that's another way I would like to integrate stories.

And so they were like "oh, why was that" so we were showing videos about, I can't remember their names, but the two tapping brothers who were always in the videos and movies and Shirley Temple and we just went through the history.

They loved it, they soaked it up and they were like, "can we find another one? Sure" then Gregory Hines "oh, well, can we find another one, sure". Well, he had his guys now Savion Glover, he has passed away now Savion Glover is kind of picked up the tapping thing. They were like "oh, that's really cool" and they get excited, because I'm excited about it and I'm just bubbly in general and so kind of feeds after the kids.

R: It's part of who you are.

Harris: I'm just loud and animated and I don't like attention.

R: Not me.

Harris: Not me. Don't pick me. My hand is not up in the air.

R: Now how does this practice, music and lyrics integration complement your educational philosophy?

Harris: Now that's it's, I'm developing it now knowing that I want what I want to do, I feel that a lot of our struggling students whenever they are in classrooms you really have to work on interventions to get them to succeed. Because it's really starting to get on my nerves about the whole, "oh, he can't read, oh, he can't learn, oh, he is just low, oh he is just this, this and that".

And where I'm coming from is last year I have third grade class and then the
majority classes on kindergarten level. By the end of that year I had them reading, if not at grade level, just little bit before. And it wasn't, did I complain about it, sure I did, because I think it was hardest year ever. But I knew that those kids could read and so I would have to raise those expectations to make sure.

They didn't know that they were reading at kindergarten level, but they knew they had to get with it, like they were like "oh, there is B, we need to be on M, let's go" they didn't know what grade level correlated with what letter, but they just knew where to go. And so when adding the musical component to it with poetry, with lyrics, it makes it shorter and it makes it more, like I said, it's more accessible for them to read. They just have to read five words in a line, they can figure out rhymes and the patterns in the words and when they can read something small and short they feel successful. And the more successful they feel the more confidence they build and more they will try to do something else.

Because you will get kids who have never been successful in their class, they've always failed their test. And they come to you, and they're like I'm not going to track them then they fail. Like have a kid who talk to me one day after a test and she is like" it hurts so bad to feel so dumb" I'm like "you're not dumb, its not what it is", I was like " do you have a lot of work sure you do, but it doesn’t you're stupid, it doesn’t mean anything that it just means you have to work harder and I know you can do it so let's go".

And so that's why I like to put in the music component, especially with like the lyrics because when we little cadence on the song they can memorize it. And then it's just that building upon it. It's not music and putting all that, it's not just for the GT kids, it's
not just for the smart kids, it will work even better for the lower kids, because it's small and it's something they can memorize and then they can build on it and grow. So that's where I'm putting it in with my philosophy of education in teaching.

R: When you mentioned those third graders were these whole class or were these kids that needed remediation from the whole third grade class?

Harris: It was my class.

R: Okay. It was your personal home, because you were homeroom teacher.

Harris: Yes. Because I had a history of doing well with the struggling kids and so that just the class that I got. I mean, last year I was like the big class, because it was a number of things. If you want the history behind it I had a classroom of 24 and I had half of the kids were reading like, kinder, beginning at first year and the other half was on grade level. And we didn't have enough staff for people to come and usually I would have a special ed student in my classroom so we would have an inclusion teacher come in and we could just team teach and co-teach and break groups. But now without a special ed student in my classroom it is just me and I didn't have any paras come so I wasn't able to hit the groups in the interventions like I needed to.

And so the solution was to take all the grade level kids, disperse them and I keep all of the struggling kids. So that was about I think that happened December of last year. So for the whole year I had all of the struggling students in third grade were mine. But they made huge growth. So that's why I moved into intervention now. Now I see all the struggling kids, but they are not my homeroom. They're mine but they're not mine.

R: Yeah. But they're not yours, yeah. So how do you, considering you mentioned already
with your experience last year, but can you expand a little bit more on how do you think that music and literacy integration was helpful to your student's academic achievement?

Harris: Like I was saying, it made it easier. It made it more compartmentalize. It made it more, you either breakdown, because if you have a song as patterns, there is lyrics. When you have a song or poem you already know what their idea was going towards so if you just needed to pick something for, say you want to portray a story that was like a negative story or something you could just hit [crosstalk 0:15:43.6] (laughing). Now I'm totally lost track again. I'm still [inaudible 0:15:53].

R: Luckily I have a list of questions in here so. Okay, good. We're talking about how do you consider music and literacy integration being helpful to your students’ academic achievement. And you were talking about that it helped you focus on its skills, would you say that there are some overlapping skills in music and reading that could probably be conducive to the integration of these two subjects?

Harris: Yes. Let me think why. Let me answer those yes, when it comes to music and integration.

R: Because when you mention the like the rhythm and you said something else I can't remember right now but …

Harris: Themes. That's one of our major [state objectives] and it's really hard to teach kids that abstract concepts of themes. We show them different songs, we show them different poems, it's really easy, it's quick like "oh, look here is a theme, what's the theme here" "oh, they are talking about being sad, yes, they are talking about being sad. Oh, they're talking about being happy, yes, now they're talking about being outside". So you can help
with those larger abstract ideas that are really really hard for kids to get.

I use this one book by Aliki, it's called The Listening Walk. And the book is like a big drawing home. And I use it for me idea all the time, because in for those ideas it's like okay" these are the details, because there is only four lines of stanza, let's sing it like a stanza what are they're talking about". "Oh, here is the main idea, oh there it is, four details, main idea and they're, here is the next one".

And so you can move into the reading or vice versa or you can take lyrics to a song" what's this part about? Oh she is talking about how she is, she is remembering her old boyfriend", bam, here is the details here is the main idea. Now, "they're talking about the breakup, yes, they are", here is the details there is breakup.

And so like it's easier for putting them into those subjects that are more abstracts for the kids to figure out specially if it's songs that they know, because I will throw in "oh, my grandmother sings that" "really I'm only 32" backup. (laughing)

R: It's sad when they think that in the 90s is so old.

Harris: They're asking me the other day "oh, was that in black and white? No, it wasn’t in black and white" (laughing), [inaudible 00:18:34].

R: Some of them don't know what a cassette or a CD is. I mean like they don't that anymore, because iPods, they rule now, crazy. I was going to ask you what evidence can you provide to support your statement of literacy integration being helpful to your student's academic achievement other than you seeing how useful songs are to learn about themes for example. You mentioned that last year for example you were able to see an improvement on your kids, the reading level increased, would you say that it was
through of course of your wonderful teaching, but do you think music and literacy integration was part of that improvement. And do you see that also in your students that you have right now that you are providing intervention.

Harris: Last year was my first year of using the fluency books from Timothy Rasinski. Now it was with the songs and poetry. I saw larger jumps that year than I did in previous years although I didn't know about it. In previous years in teaching I would just sing songs about solar systems or whatever songs that I can find out. I didn’t link it to reading, that's wasn’t the purpose. The purpose was to learn about a subject.

And then last year the purpose was to actually read and build their fluency. And so last year I saw like two years growth, two-and-half years growth. Previous years I would see like a year-and-half, sometime see it but it wasn’t consistent. Last year it was like a consistent, everyone is making huge jumps in progress.

And this year with our interventions I used two different programs, one is direct construction and the other one is maps, but it's based on my house, which is the dyslexic through the reading teacher support. And they use these cards and it has the picture, it has a letter, it has a picture representation and it has how you pronounce it. So if you're like A apple, E elephant a, U umbrella a.

And the way I use that, because with my dyslexic students it's a fun logical awareness issue. They can't hear the sounds to enable to and that's how it links to music too, they can't hear the letters in their head like they're saying bat, what are sounds in bat, it's very difficult for them to bat They cant split up the sounds they can't hear it.

And so you take that for granted and when you are just a regular reader. And so in
our dyslexia program we have to teach them the correlation between a letter and the
sound and actually writing it down. So it's always thinking I always found we have to
think about it and then hear it and speak it and write it. And that's the order that we do it.
And so it's gets higher into like the, for example, they always mess up the consonant
cluster, like “ng” [bell rings] that’s the attendance bell.

R: Oh, my gosh.

Harris: Yeah. So it really figure out like, you better be awake, better example. It's called
vowel, it kind of randomly go, but it vowel syllable it makes unexpected sound. So like
OR, in WOR, it will sound like word, even though it looks like WOR, so they have to
remember it's OR WORLD R. And so they have like they’re looking like "I don't what
this is [Ms. _______ 00:22:07], I just said think about how it sounds in your head and
now go back, OR WORLD RR, world, yes, or it will be like OR for ORK, because the
vowel R are faint, but they don't sound like the way they are written like, I Albert R there
were a muff all the time, kind of like is that [inaudible 00:22:07], like think about in your
what's that song that we sing. IR BIRD R. Oh, R bird. And so that's how it helps with my
dyslexic kids.

For my non-dyslexic students we use a program called direct instruction and it's
kind of the same lay, but the way it is, it's very patterned hence so you will have a group
of words, underline whatever field that you're working on. So it's say the vowel EE, so
they'll say, a point will be underlined they have to tell the vowel is and then what the
word is E, meat, C eat, E feed and then but it's I'm snapping, because there is a rhythm to
it.
And then they love it, because they're usually really boring and then I went to a meeting and there was this guy and he was a singer and he was like, "dude turn it into a song", I was like "huh", he was like, "I can dance with it, I would snap", because I used just knock on the table when it was their turn to do it and they would hate me. "Oh, boy, I hate it" and I'm like okay. So I called it a snappies, everyone wanted to be in the snappy group, just because I did, I was snapping, I was snapping I did it to a rhythm, I turn it into a song and there was a beat all of sudden everyone was cool to be in the snappy group. What meant that you're like a lowest readers in my class, but man, I'm cool, because I'm snapping and they're snapping and they're going to.

So that's how this year it's worked with the interventions, because they hear it in their head and they remember it. And so if you would remind them, so what I'm doing is I'm training them to remember it on your own to bring it back to the classroom and so that just mean being their as their classroom teacher. So also have a good relationship with the teacher. So we check too, I'm like, are they using it. And they will tell me I will see them do this, and then read, so I'm like okay, at least they're starting to use it.

R: Yes, they are thinking about it. Good. Now what challenges do you think that your music teacher faces when integrating music and literacy?

Harris: Buy-in, number one I would say, because everyone thinks it's something more. And then it's buy-in from the teachers, its buy-in from the admin, it's buy-in from just in general making folks think that it's easy because it is.

We were coming from a musical artistic background, you know that it's easy, but if you don't, they are like, "oh, that's over there". So it's getting teachers and see it's not
hard -- so I have been talking to Ms. __________ too and she was making really good connections, she said, "what if in their lesson plan" because I our kindergarten teachers they read songs all the time, they sing songs, that already is music integration. You don't have to be like, okay, well now we're going to sing this song and now we're just going to sing this song for the sake of singing a song and so that.

And then also another thing that I do it purchase materials. And so I was talking to Mr. ________, I was like "hey can we purchase some materials, may be to use in the classroom like musical things" and that's not always the, well, I can't think of the word anymore, it's not a priority. It's always, I mean, in general the arts are always the last, the first things to go and the last one is thought about.

And so it's because that might just be a general admin thing also easiest thing to cut, music, arts, but they don't realize that it lends itself to the using both of the brain and getting them work harder. Because I prom... like, "what was it, oh" I went to a workshop it was "Worksheets Don't Grow Dendrites" and she is like, have you read that, it's awesome.

R: No, but I like the, the title is great.

Harris: She is a brain research person. I can't remember her name on the book. I will mail it for you later.

R: If you remember let me know.

Harris: But that's what it's called, Worksheets Don't Grow Dendrites. And she was telling us some study where there was a study of a high school, it was a dropout rates between a performing arts school versus a non-performing arts school. And the performing arts
school had like something ridiculous like a 2% dropout rate and the school without the arts had like a 50% dropout rate. And it was just right there and I was sitting there with Wold, and I'm like "oh, look at that, it's important". But it's so easily, it's just pushed aside, because it's seen as something extra, as something additional and not something that's easily incorporated. So I think that's the hardest things to get people to buy it in.

R: To buy it in. Now what would be the challenge for you, if you have any when you integrate little bit of music in your intervention groups?

Harris: Planning it in. It's always like where do you stick it and what's the best place for me to put it, because with interventions it's different because lot of it's heavily scripted. It's scripted but it's up to you how to present it. So how do I put it in so it makes it more fun and engaging for the kids so that just planning it in those place, because I can't do it all the time, but where can I put it to be most effective and more bang-for-your-buck.

R: Can you share any frustrations that you or your music teacher have experienced when integrating music and literacy here in the school?

Harris: It was definitely staff development. I don't know because you didn't talked about it. Whenever they mention integration I was always like “argh!, again?” (laugh). So it was like yeah it was like one of those.

R: Like no reception, like there is no …

Harris: And it's not from everyone, but our vocal negative people are very vocal. Because I was looking at this -- we were reading this book for next year, it's called Soup and it was talking about the ratio between actively engaged and actively disengaged people. And if your ratio is 8:1 you are off them, we're 6:1. So like, hey we're really good, but
that one is really loud, really hates life and really wants to share it with other people. So I was talking to like tame her down.

And also one of the frustration that I see here and I've talked to Ms. ___________ about it too, is they kind have the backwards here, I love Mr. ___________. I don't want to say it, but since it's confidential it's between us. It's backwards, they want the art teachers to integrate [state objectives], classroom instruction into the arts. Yeah, you can put adding with dance steps, but weren’t that be way easier to link a dance performance with social studies? Yeah, it would be.

So their focus is on how can we get the classroom integration into the arts when it should be, how do we get the arts into the classroom? And then have that communication between each other. I don't if it's our district or our schools, but we have performing arts integration lessons. And I will be totally honest, it was my first year as a big binder of beautiful wonderful lessons of how to integrate arts in the classroom, it was just so huge and I was like, I don't have time for this. And I put it on my shelf and I called it a day. So it's just really that open communication, because it seems like it's classroom teachers and this special, I mean, there is names for it, the classroom teachers and the specialist teachers. We don't plan together. So how are you going to integrate it if you're not allowed to plan together?

R: So there is no like collaboration.

Harris: Right. And that really needs to be from top down to make it the most effective. But if your top really is the one that's making it go the wrong way, in my opinion, then how do you make it seem -- you're trying to make it a seamless transition don't move it
in, but they're trying to do it the other way, it makes it hard.

R: And so how would overcome this, is there a way to?

Harris: Magic, the wand, always. I think a lot, this year has been interesting, because I have been noticing because I just out of the classroom and folks know the types of classes that have, so it kind of gotten street credit, when it comes to intervention. And folks here know that I have a arts background so I got street credit when it comes to that. And so I think we're trying in working with Mr. ___________. He is a very particular person so you have to speak to him in a specific type of way for him to receptive. And I'm pretty good at. Talk about the street credit (laugh).

R: Yes.

Harris: So it's kind of like a nice bridge, because I'll talk to Ms. __________ and then I'll talk to Mr. ___________ and it's kind of like a

R: Peacemaker (laugh).

Harris: Because it's not completely bias like I'm split both ways. I'm a classroom teacher, but I'm an artist at heart. So I can show you both sides. And it's not there yet, but I think we're starting to work on, getting that there. So there has been lot of changes this year for the good doing more events. Like we have had the mother, daughter dance and a father daughter dance and the winter carnival and things like that.

R: Good. So what do you think is your music teacher's level of confidence when integrating music and literacy in her classroom?

Harris: In her classroom?

R: Um-huh.
Harris: Okay. She is a pro, I would say her confidence is right up there. Because she is so chockfull of ideas and she wants to share with everybody and she shares as much as possible, she really does. She got the ___________ chronicle, she gets the ___________ chronicle that e-Chrone or whatever it is she got that for our campus. There was another e, I can't even remember what it is, I think e-books she got that program for us. So she is a very prominent figure on the campus when it comes to literacy and learning.

So it's not just, I'm here just to do music, but it's everything, grant earnings, getting books, getting slides. She is very known to be the, I will do anything for you all. And she does all the grants for like our field trips. She organizes all our field trips for all of our students.

R: Even if they're not related to music?

Harris: Oh, yeah, no, she has all of them, she has every single one. And our kids have two field trips a year and the way that she sets them up is one as you choose and the second arts in it, it's some arts related ones. So they go to plays, they go to the _________ Theater, and they go to the outdoor theater where else they go, they don't like, couple more of kids went to the _________ a bunch of times. And couple of kids went to the _________ a couple of times. They will actually go, oh, one of our kids, we went to the Symphony. Who gets to do that from here? Our population is they're going to the Symphony orchestra.

R: It is probably their only, the only way they will go.

Harris: Yes, yeah, definitely.
R: They could go.

Harris: Because it's expensive. I rarely go.

R: It is very expensive.

Harris: Theatre District here is ridiculous. And so she makes sure, and I think that's why she does it is to make sure that our kids are exposed to the arts. And so I would say she is a highly respected person on our campus. But sometimes she just kind of gets sipped under the rug, when it comes to certain things. So she tries to be as vocal as possible, but are you going to be heard it depends.

And I think too Mr. ____________, sorry, I just don't think he understands art well. He just needs to be opened up to it, because I just don't think he ever grew up with it. If you don't grew up with it you just kind of have to learn to love it, not later on in life. And really see the benefits of it, because he is a very facts. I didn’t see proof, I didn't see facts. So if you show me facts and you show me proof then okay, then I'm cool with it. Because once you give it to him that way he is like, oh, yeah I'm cool with that, I'm okay with that. But until you give it to him in that manner, if it's like warm and fuzzy, I don't know, and the arts are very warm and fuzzy, so I'm fine right (laughing) [00:35:06]. And that's why I'm like okay I can try to see if I can put it in this and I could throw it in from the intervention aspect of getting our struggling kids to grow.

R: Now can you share and you've shared a few, but if you have any more you can.

Harris: I told you I was wordy.

R: No, I love it, thank you, I love it. Can you share any successes that you and your music teacher have experienced when integrating music and literacy here in your school?
Harris: Yes, I think it was the last year. Last year we did a Black History Month program. And like I said I had my 12, we called them the Fat 12 so I had the Fat 12 and one of our third grade team members was also a music teacher, well she is a piano teacher and because our funds were cut she came into the classroom and so she was on our team. And so she gave us a song like one verse about Dr. King. Dr. King, Dr. King, Dr. King, Dr. King was a civil rights leader, Dr. King. Dr. King he had a dream. So she passed that on to the rest of third grade and each of our grade levels created additional verse. And so now we've got nine verses of Dr. King and one of them -- and it went chronological order we had one about Coretta Scott, we had sing about what he did and I may be we had one about his death, I can't really remember.

So we put that in there and the kids made it up. So it really had and it was really short, because you only had like that one verse that you had to do. They really had to think about what did they think was really important about Dr. King that they wanted to put into their verse. These verses were really good. And my kids, it is a good verse, but then we had to perform it.

So our kids made up the dance component to go with it. And so we ended up having a whole third grades stand up and perform a song that they had written about social studies, about Dr. King and Coretta Scott and civil rights and we performed it.

R: It's like full integration, that's fantastic.

Harris: And it was awesome, they loved it. And then may be two years ago, and I think they're doing it this year. We have a lot of random people on our social studies to learn for biographies. Just random people like I have no idea who that, The Four Chaplains, I
don't who you are. I have just four guys in the boat, that's not what it is (laughing). And so literally I have like 20 random people to remember. It's on a test, I'm like great awesome (laughing).

So I couldn’t figure out how to review for it. So last year we split up the people by classrooms, because we had four general Ed teachers I think, so we split them up and we had our kids either in groups or in pairs and they wrote either songs or they wrote skits, or they made plays or whatever it was that they wanted to do, but it was performance based whatever they had to do it had to be based on performance about that person. And we had our third grade show. And I'll promise you all those kids we never had higher scores on that benchmark, because they remembered it. And the kids took it heart and they …

R: And they were actively engaged in the -- it was not someone telling them well so and so, he was born here, died here and yeah.

Harris: And we were funny like one of (laughs) my kids, and again, my kids were I think writers again, I loved them, they work so hard. And that's the thing that I want to make sure this is off topic, but something that wasn't there anyway.

So many, no, I don't want to say so many, but there is enough teachers out there that think that just because they're low they can't give you anything. My kids last year were low get out and there were days where I came just exhausted and tired and just in tears, like I don't know what to do. But they worked so hard for me. And they just worked really hard so I just want, they're not dumb, they're low, they stay low, because we think they are low. Yeah, they're low, I know they're low, they won't know that, you ask any of
my kids they think they're the smartest kids ever. And they will love you for it. And they will work for you for it. And as long as they know that as long they give their best then that's all that matters, their best is what they can give you. And if that's what you're asking them for then their best gets higher and higher. So that's my soapbox, because that was just, it's just been on mind this past week just in general about things and people and teachers. So off topic, what was the question, where was I. I'm sorry, (laughing).

R: No well, we were talking about …

Harris: I had a point, what was my point?

R: We were talking about successes that you had experienced when integrating music and literacy and you were talking about all this, your projects with biographies that you have they were successful in the benchmarks, because of that that active engagement. And I think that was it. (laughs).

Harris: Yeah. Okay. Then I got myself boxed and I'm off. Okay, next question (laughing).

R: But it relates because you were working with some of those kids that did were involved in this projects were probably.

Harris: That's where I was going, my band, my kudos. I had and they were, oh man, like my one child like I really okay, what's the next, what's the number after 55, just add one. Okay, one plus one is, okay, here is one and one how many things will I have, two. Okay, one plus one, 12, okay, five minute conversation, third grade. Ma'am when it came to Harriet Tubman it was so awesome. Because I was like whatever you want to use my classroom go for it, props whatever, and it was freezing in my classroom so I always had a blankets and I had this like coated scarf and I had lantern. So they had costumes, they
made props and they would go.

R: Added whatever they found.

Harris: Added whatever they found and then they would be like, okay, we are going to the Underground Railroad. Then she would break the wall, it's not a real railroad, it's just a route. And then she would go back, okay, Harriet, and she would cover her with the blanket and she is walking this way with the kids like we're not seeing here, she is not really under a blanket, but pretend that we're outside in the dark. And they keep going. I'm like where is this coming from.

But that's just finding a different modality for them to show what they're good at. And so it's sometimes you just have to break outside the box. And even though I don't think music is outsides the box, a lot of people do and so it's just making the box bigger and to incorporate the music.

R: To some people music is intimidating, because they think it's you have to be born with that special talent and they see it that way and they feel intimidation in just even singing a simple song or just even getting, we're talking about performance it's getting silly, just getting pretending because they are …

Harris: Auditions are just, I've got them almost, throw them out of the window, it gets cool, I will make fool if it proves a point. But not everyone has that.

R: Now what professional development opportunities regarding music and literacy integration are available in your area to your knowledge?

Harris: Zero? Mary Stephens? To my knowledge yeah, I don't think this area... Well we're staring to do, just so I will put this out, this was big this year in staff development was I
read to you, you read to me. And readers’ theater has become really popular so may be that can be a bridge from dramatic, everything, reader’s theater this, reader’s theater that, and I'm like okay what else. Yes we've got reader’s theater what else can we do. We can do something else with that. And so that might be actually a good bridge from dramatic play into songs.

From what I hear [state test] is supposed to be more here are just rumors from people that I here and supposed to be more heavily geared towards poetry and dramatic play where it has like stage direction and stage queues and kids are supposed to be able to understand that so that might be the buy in that we actually need not that hey it's a good teaching practice, now it's a requirement by the states because it's going to be incorporated in [state test] so here is a way for us to do that, some follow me, it's available. So it might be a good thing that's it's on the [state test].

R: Yeah, because it’s attached to the score.

Harris: Yeah, if it's a [inaudible 00:44:03] score then we will totally do it. Oh, I hate this (laughing). Let’s leave those for different day.

R: Words like that. Now so my next question was going to be how this professional development has helped in implementing music and literacy integration in your school, but so they have been know to your knowledge so then do you think that everything that's been done here for music and literacy integration that you have done that the music teacher has done, you have to kind of like put it together yourself.

Harris: Well now we have those binders like the performing arts curriculum. I don't where that came from our magnet from the district or that came from our campus, either
way I don't know how well they're being used. And I remember my first year it's like here is a binder, find things. That will be great. And lot of it has to do with time. But like you said with the intimidation factor what you just going to open it up and like a play I can't act, I'm good.

But even if we did school-wide staff development and just pick like one or two, like this is how you can incorporate in your classroom try it, see what happened. Then that might be something that wouldn’t help. And so I know we're working on like staff developments for next year and that actually would be kind of good just on how…
R: Dust off that binder and…
Harris: And get it going, because a lot of our staff developments are based on, this in general, are based on theory. This is the best teaching practice, well we can, because of this and because of that and what teachers want they want to make and takes. Here is what I want to do, here is an example, go back and use it.
R: Like we were talking about the kids, they were able to remember the facts because they were actively engaged in the activity. If you were just lecturing them probably they would have not remember anything. It's the same thing with the dogs they need to be actively engaged.
Harris: And if it's something that can just autumnally transfer in the classroom, oh man that would be way better for this, a little work and prep involved, because like I was saying the planning is what hinders people from wanting to doing, because they don't want to add more, they can give it you there it is everything.
R: So I think you said it through all of this time, but I wanted to tell me a little bit on how do you value music and literacy integration?

Harris: Are you sure you want me say again, I was kidding. (laughs).

R: Just remind.

Harris: Just been the, yeah.

R: To hear it again.

Harris: To hear it again. How do I value it. Sorry I'm so ADD. Yeah, I value it because I know it works. I know it works, I have seen it work and it makes my life more fun. And if I can make it more fun then my kids will have more fun. And if my kids were having the fun then they will learn more, because I'll have kids come up to me like, "oh, Ms. ______ your class was so fun, I don't even really what we did as to why it was fun, but then we are always moving and singing and doing different things.

And so making that lasting impression with the student on the life long learner.

We have like the third grade is where it supposedly you can figure out, if they're going to dropout or not. And third grade is also the grade that they say that you can figure out that's what the county uses to see how many jail cells they need to make is based off the third grade scores.

R: Oh, my goodness.

Harris: Isn't that crazy, yeah.

R: I did not know that.

Harris: They use third grade scores to see how many jail cells they need to make.

R: Oh, my goodness.
Harris: And so we are right there. We were like "oh, its so early now it's crucial". And so anything and our dropout rate is ridiculous. We're a recognized district, because our dropout rate is so huge. And you can blame them if they've been failing since the third grade on [state test]. Why you want to keep failing repeatedly, I just want to go and work and feel like I'm okay at something. So if you install something in them now, some type of a joy, some type of fun, then hopefully they'll remember that and keep going.

Because obviously, if I remember my pre-K teacher and my triangle and then I think about it too about my, where I'm in my life right now in my career and education and I remember all of the arts projects that I did. I can tell you in third grade that we did Kachina dolls. I can tell you in fourth grade that we did a SisBoomBa for the performance and how we read the script and we read the play and I didn't know it had anything to do with fluency and prosody, but it did.

And I know tell you in second grade when we wrote poetry books and we performed poetry books, who knew that had to with writing and with drawing. I just thought that was fun. And you think back on all the memorable projects they all had to with some kind of arts integration. And I think we forget that.

And so that's what my main thing is, if you want kids to remember, if you want kids to learn and love to learn, you got to make it interesting and fun. And the easiest way to do is stick a song into or some movement or some dancing and then they go together, because it's that tactile.
R: Now how do you think that these opportunities, professional development and implementing music and literacy integration, how do you think they have helped you achieve your educational goals?

Harris: Not like, where I'm in my like a career?

R: Yeah, like your goals as an educator.

Harris: Coming in first year teacher, I had no idea what I want to do. First I wanted to move into ESL. Then I wanted to move into special ed. Then I wanted to move back in the ESL. Now I want, now I'm sure I want to do reading and dyslexia for like the whole intervention thing.

And then I always try to put in like the arts component in there just because that's the way I like to do and it makes more fun, but it help me figure out that I always tied it to reading. Everyone talks about music and math, I don't get it. I get it with beats and stuff, I don't get it. I'm not a math person, I bought a little brain in music book, then I read it, I don't have it.

But what I like looking back on myself and how I worked I always put in some kind of music, some kind of dance, some kind of component into it. And then now that I'm working with just the intervention students, and I'm using it all the time and we're using like, when we do our syllables we use hand gestures and I turn it into a song, like co-syllables, like there is cadence that goes with it and they get it.

And then like (Ms. ___________ 00:51:00) who walked as my first year being the dyslexia coordinator, last year there was a dyslexia coordinator as well. And I can't say his name, but he is not, he doesn’t do the arts and he is one that likes very anti. But he is a
classroom teacher now.

And she was saying, she was always the across the hallway from him, she says, my kids who were his kids last year, she is like I don't even know who those kids are this year because they are total different group of children, because they are engaged, they are in it, they are working and they remember it. Just like I don't know what was going on last year, that's just us gossiping, so I can only take with a grain of salt, but like she was like no they know more. It was like I can hear it, I can see it.

And so I know it works. And so it's just kind of gotten me honed into what I really want to do and what I really want to do is reading intervention, because there is too many kids out there that are struggling and no one is getting them to come up. It's just, oh, they are low, they are low, they are low that's where they are going to be. We need to, okay, I get it, they are low, what else can we do to make them not so low, they may be low for the rest of their lives, but how do we make up them to be not, to be as high as they are low can get them.

Like not everyone is a genius. I'm not a genius, but I will tell you where my best is and that's where I hope to be all the time. How can we get our struggling kids do that too. And I think music and really incorporating that has helped, because I have seen how it works and how it just brings it back to the purest form of reading back to basics. So that's how it grows.

R: Now how do think that your school principal or administrators in general value music and literacy integration in this school?

Harris: I know it's kind of hard, because he is a very hard bird to understand. I think he
appreciates it. I think he knows logically that music and integration works because that's why he is stresses for performing arts teachers to bring curriculum into their classrooms. I think he knows that connection, but I think the execution is off.

And so because he wanted to go from classroom into the arts, instead of the arts, into the classroom and so it makes it harder. And then that's why I think a lot of the buy in isn’t there with our teachers, because it just sounds hard. And like before there was that lack of collaboration between the specialist teachers or the performing art teachers and the classrooms teachers together, where they can't just share ideas.

And so I don't think he, because I know that Ms. __________ feels under, like unappreciated. But then when you talk to him like his – this is funny because I’m reading the Five Languages of Appreciation… his is, he will give her money, he has done the ________, The Young Audiences of ____________, he tried that. I don't know if he knows how much it works because there is no numbers attached to it. So if I could show him the numbers aren’t there automatically, but it's more of look at it holistically and you will see what that growth is.

So with him it's the numbers things the tactile. If you look at a kid and like, oh he loves to learn, that does really count, because what did do on the test scores. Then that comes from higher in the district because we have to meet AYP, and I understand the stresses he goes through. He can really focus on fuzzy warm feeling songs when he knows that if he doesn't meet AYP so our campus doesn’t then he is going to hear it from his district sup and she is going to hear from arts sups.

R: Because up above they're also looking for scores.
Harris: And they are the ones who are like, oh, what magnet can we cut today. Luckily our magnet wasn't cut. But so I do feel that they cut this, I believe they cut the science magnet and the business magnet and the bunch of other magnets. So I think we're one of the only elementary magnets left.

So there is some appreciation from way up that we do, do something because at _________ they are performing arts, because we're not part of the same protocol, but we feed _________ to ____________, ___________ to __________ somewhere to _____________. And so we're all linked in the performance arts chain. And they do really well. So there must be something going on good somewhere.

R: Good coming from here.

Harris: So at least we will keep this line going. So how long would you keep that up, I don't know.

R: Okay. So in an ideal situation where everything is pretty and pink.

Harris: All we care is about growth.

R: How should music and literacy integration be valued by everybody from top to down.

Harris: I think it should be seen as something that's just a natural way of teaching. It's natural because if you want to do fluency, the best way to do fluency is to have good prosody and only way to have to good prosody and it read like you're talking is to read like you're talking. And sometimes you have to over exaggerate it in order to bring it back down. So the best way to do is, is to do in songs so that's the exaggerated version of speaking. And if you aggregate it and then it you bring it back down, by the time you brought it to that simple level now are reading like you're talking.
And so if the big push is fluency and prosody what better way to do is through music. And so I think if we see it as a natural part of reading then it would just be used all the time and then it would just make things easier.

R: Now do you facilitate any music and literacy integration professional development. Have you ever shared that with anybody here in campus?

Harris: Like how to do it? I did it when I was in third grade like we would do, what was it, we kind made the cardinal shuffle, you know the cupid shuffle song, we changed the lyrics to the cardinal directions. And so we did that as a grade level and then we all performed it outside and then do things so it was team oriented than it was staff. But this is my first year.

R: As an RTI. What role does the available research regarding music and literacy integration, what role does it play in the implementation of music and literacy integration for you or for the music teacher or in general in the school, what do you think what role available research has.?

Harris: I think like not things that you're doing but things that are already here?

R: Things that are already readily available like studies and books and people that perhaps have come to talk about studies that have already been made.

Harris: Our district is always very research driven. We can't do any interventions and I would say it's research based, research based, research based, up and down everywhere. So they won't do music integration unless there is research based evidence proving it. And so I think that's what role it need to play more heavily if its not as probably, I don't know what research to see or find, but the more there is the more we can use it.
And that's why the district brought in Rasinski, because he is research based. And so he will tie that and but he is coming from the reading aspect and not from the music aspects. So he is trying to go from reading and like to music.

So if there was more of that research based music to reading like with what you are doing and then doing on collaboration too with the reading folks and all that, then that would be work to be used for the districts and the schools and the principals heads as to, "oh, this is research based, yes we can use it". Because they wont use it and they wont pay for it, definitely they wont pay for it unless there is some kind of research backed up to it.

R: Some kind of proof.

Harris: Yeah.

R: And what advise would you offer to others trying to implement music and literacy integration in their classroom, their schools or their districts?

Harris: The easiest advice is to just try it.

R: And give it try.

Harris: Just give a try or just start with something simple. Start with nursery rhymes, start with a poem and then from the a poem move on to a song, then from the song move to like thematic song and then from that move into your own songs made up, then move it into what your kids made up. They are always talking about differentiated instruction and scaffolding. So you got to the same thing with our teachers who are reluctant to use it, I think.

Start little and then once you got that basic foundation then you see, oh that's kind
of fun. Then move on to the next level, because if you hit too hard at the top and it's the same thing with our students with education and instruction, if you hit it where it's way too rigorous for them to get they're just going to drop it and quit. So if we start just finding out where you are in you comfort level, start there then maybe way out.

R: Great. Any other remarks you wish to convey.

Harris: Can I get a copy of this when you're done.

R: Absolutely.

Harris: Because you will be my research that I have
Mrs. Brown

R: Can you please describe your position and what led you to this career choice?

Brown: I am currently the Skills Specialist here at ____________. What led me to this was … I’ve only taught since 2002. I came into the career late after my kids were all gone to college and everything, and I just thought, “What am I going to do?” I knew it was going to be for a short period. I’ve always been a parent that volunteered always when my kids were there, so I felt like I always worked in the school, always volunteered.

Anyway, after I went back and got a degree in education, my initial degree is in Psychology, went back and got a degree in Education. I taught and then I went back and got a Masters in Reading because that’s just my passion: Literacy and the Arts. When this job came available I knew it was something I always wanted to do at the end of my career. I’ve done it for these last two years and I love it. I really hate to leave, but it’s time.

R: You’re ready.

Brown: I am ready and my husband is ready.

R: What is the first thing that comes to mind when you hear the phrase ‘music and literacy integration’?

Brown: Success, because kids love music. We’re trying to get them to love literacy as well. Some students have never, especially some of our students we get, have never had stories read to them and some have. To me, to get them to sing those songs and then to focus on that language is so powerful. They just go together.
One of our teachers just finished doing a presentation at Rice and it was something our students wrote. They’re done, they’ve already presented it and I said, “No, we’re not done. We have to let the whole school hear this to music.”

That’s what I’m trying to do with my spare time, is come up with some kind of writing, find the music that fits the lyrics. Just some kind of instrumental that would go with these words, that speaks to the words. To me, success. That’s what I think of.

R: What are your beliefs regarding music and literacy integration?

Brown: My belief is that they go together. In working with our music teacher last year, I think she and I got together … and Literacy is my Masters, is in Literacy. I wanted to share some ideas with her and some things that she could do since I’ve done this longer than she has with smaller kids at this age.

My beliefs are that if you can just get kids motivated and interested in the music, the words will come and vice versa. If you get them to the words, they’ll want to sing them. Some words come off like songs off your mouth. When you say ‘frizee’ or ‘delicious’ or ‘humongous’. That to me is a song.

R: The rhythm …

Brown: The rhythm. To me, when I teach … I used to teach 3rd grade next door when I first started teaching … but I used to try and get my kids to listen to the rhythm. I read to them over and over and over and over again because they didn’t know what that sounded like. I said, “You guys, it’s just like a music.” We would read … you can do a little bit of higher reading with 3rd grade than you can with these kids. We would read some powerful critical literacy and say, “Yeah you hear that rhythm?” and try and get them to
write with that rhythm. To me, just like music, I think our words have rhythm.

Whenever we hear someone speak in a different language and you love their dialect, it’s because of the rhythm. It’s something different. It’s just like when a new song comes out, you want to play it over and over and over because you know you love it. It’s just some people that I can just talk to forever because of their dialect, and their rhythm and stuff. That’s how I see them coming together in my classroom and everything I do.

R: Awesome. How did you become aware of music and Literacy integration?

Brown: The way I became aware of it initially was when I went to the Museum of Fine Arts. I’m trying to think of the guy’s name before it leaves my mind. It might come to me. The black author who they discovered, who university … I mean, who Museum of Fine Arts __________ discovered … and I’m going to think of his name. He was, I want to say, in Mississippi and he had all this junk. Some kind of way they found him and they wanted to see it. He said, “You want to see this junk? It’s just stuff I do. It’s stories I tell through pieces I put together.”

When they introduced his stuff here, they introduced it with music. We were next door and I was just a brand new teacher in 2002 or 2003, whenever we did that. That really just got me so interested in art and literacy and music. What he did … where is his … o, God. This is just …

R: That’s okay. Just shoot me an email when it comes to you.

Brown: What he did, his was just basically art. Museum of Fine Arts __________ discovered him some kind of way, somebody told somebody and they went and found this guy and said, “We heard about you. We’re from the Museum of Fine Arts
and we want to see what your art.” He said, “My art? Man, what you talking …” Really, oh my God in the Deep South.

It was absolutely phenomenal. They were like, “Why did you that piece? Why did you take that metal?” This guy was a retired scrap metal … he worked on the mines or something as a steel miner or something. He has all this scrap metal in his yard, on his property in the country, where he lived.

He has taken them and he has created huge masterpieces that are as big as this wall that tell the stories of 9/11, of stories that his grandfather told him about slavery, of people fighting for freedom. He uses these old white sheet cloth and he sprays them with paint, and he gets them hard and he makes them into a bird. He puts it on these big huge steel canvases; they brought that to the Museum of Fine Arts ________ in 2003 or 2004. I’m going to have to Google his name before you leave because I can’t leave here without you … anyway …

R: It’s like a steel canvas with stories and art. Wow.

Brown: Hold on one second. This is driving me insane. This is driving me crazy. Who would know that? Corey, she would know. I’m just going to see real quick. Let me just see real quick because this is driving me absolutely insane. When it comes up, I’m going to be like, “How could I ever forget that name?” When I was finishing my Masters, one of my final projects was that. Museum of Fine Arts ________, here. I want to Google ‘artist presentation’ … I don’t know how to do this. Artist presentation …

R: Maybe ‘steel artist’ or something like that, maybe?
Brown: ‘Collage artist presentation,’ it was like a collage. ‘Artist presentation using steel in collage.’

R: It’ll come up. You got it?

Brown: No [inaudible 00:09:50] because she crazy. Dang it. Let’s do this, ‘Museum of Fine Arts __________ presentations in 2000 …’ we left here in 2006 so it must’ve been 2004 to 2005. I don’t know. I can’t believe I [inaudible 00:10:25]. I’m going to call Corey before you leave here.

This guy, he used art. From that, our art teacher talked about other ways you can express through music and literacy, and that just got me going. I said all that to say this. I just think the guy’s name is so important.

R: You can think about it later and I’ll definitely look it up. I wrote here steel canvass …

Brown: I have your name and I have you in my phone, and I’m going to text you as soon as you leave here because it’ll come to me. Anyway, once we did his art and we had our kids talk about it, and then I had my kids come back and create experiences in their life, unforgettable experience, they had to use something other than crayon to create these pieces that were 8x10 to tell a story. Then they could put it to music and talk about it. It was amazing. That just got me involved. That just got me excited about music and words and art.

R: That’s awesome. It was the full integration of all the arts and the literacy. What compels you and your music teacher to integrate music and literacy here in your school?

Brown: I guess because it comes so natural and it’s what kids love. They love it. They love stories. I walked in a teacher’s classroom yesterday, it was totally chaotic and she
had to step out. As soon as she stepped out I said, “Guys, I’m going to read you the best story you’ve ever heard. One of my favorite stories.” It motivates them. It captures their attention. What was your question again? I’m sorry.

R: What compels you? What is it that drives you and your music teacher to integrate music and literacy?

Brown: It’s just that kids are so motivated by it. It’s just a common language. It’s something familiar, it’s nothing foreign and it’s always fresh. It’s always new. It’s never “I’ve heard that song before.” I’ve never heard a kid say, “I don’t want to sing that. I’ve sung it before. I don’t want to say that.”

I guess it’s just a combination of … the coming together of the words and the melodies, just motivates kids. It grabs them. As teachers, if you can grab a student, you’ve got them. You can teach them anything. You can put your alphabets to song. You can put your poem to song. When they get excited, I’m more excited. When they love it, I just I want to keep on going with it.

R: You feel it engages them?

Brown: It totally engages them. It’s real. It’s like whenever I did Literacy and – I used to do the Literacy lab here. It’s just funny how now we’re telling teachers “You need to engage your kids more in nonfiction literature. Not everything is a fantasy.” They need to know fantasy. It’s really important. It’s the building block for our kids.

What I found is that… I would have kids rotate. “You can get these two books and you cannot rotate until Ms. Malone rings the bell.” “Ms. __________, I’m done.” They had the book two minutes. I’m like, “You are not done. I know you don’t read but
you start to read.”

When I put out authentic books, when we did our series on How the World Works and they were discovering the ocean, and it’s real pictures of fish and men diving, real sharks and it’s not cartoons, I couldn’t get them to put the book down. I just think that authenticity of the real world captures them. That’s how I think it is with music.

R: Music is part of the …

Brown: Music is part of that.

R: What aspects of your personality and attitudes contribute to shape your feelings about music and literacy integration?

Brown: Is that I’ve shown them that I feel it. I don’t hide it. I’m not stiff. I show my emotions with the music so I want them to know they’re free to do the same. Just like when I read the story yesterday. It’s just one story that I read … I forgot who the author is … and it’s a rhythm. It’s about Beauty, this little girl who looks in the mirror. When you read the story it’s like a rhythm because you’re reading it and it says something like, “And the beauty is in me, and the beauty is in me.” That’s in the story but I’m singing it. I show them that you can do all that, and it’s not a right way and a wrong way. My kids would say, “Is this right?” and I’m like, “However you say it, it’s right.” To me, that’s how I get them, is just by letting them know first of all, there’s no wrong or right way. Whatever comes out, if that’s what you feel, it’s right. Do you know what I’m saying?

R: Your personality is expressive. You let it out.

Brown: I let it out. I help them to know that the way I express it is different from the way you express it. However you express it, that’s you and it’s right. I found that when you do
that, kids are more risk takers. they don’t mind taking a risk. “I’ll try it Ms. _________.
It’s okay, I’ll try it.” Because I’m not grading you. I’m not saying, “Well can you do it like this? Can you say it a little louder? Can you sing it like this? Can you make it all happy?” No, it’s however you feel. I do that a lot.

R: How do you think this practice, music and literacy integration, compliments your philosophy as an educator?

Brown: For one thing, it allows kids to bring what they have. You don’t get to choose who comes to your class. Whatever they bring is what you work with. Music and literacy working together allows kids to bring what they have to … I mean, some of my kids will come to school with some rap songs that weren’t appropriate. I’d say, “You know what, that’s a good song. I’m glad you like it, but right here, it’s not appropriate. It’s appropriate some places, maybe, but not in here. Let’s find some songs that are appropriate here.”

I still don’t dismiss what they do. That’s how I think it … it allows you to let the kids know that what they bring is valuable and it’s accepted. To me it just helps you to give them more to have in their toolbox.

R: It’s like another venue.

Brown: Another venue. This is just like another little tool in your toolbox of songs. You need to know many. Let me just expose you to Mozart or somebody different than what you already know.

Like with my poems, they might learn the little dirty dozen poems in the neighborhood and that’s okay. That’s appropriate there. Let me tell you some more
poems that you might like to know. I just think bringing the two together just allows you
to help to let kids, again, be expressive.

R: You’re using what they love, what they like out there at home …

Brown: What they know.

R: … what they know, and you’re using it here.

Brown: I’m using it here.

R: To get to them.

Brown: To get to them. That’s what you do. You use whatever you can to get to them, to
get them to write. What you get when you do that is amazing because you’re not
discrediting what they bring; you’re just saying, “That’s a good one, but let me teach you
one, too. You taught me yours; I’m going to teach you mine.” Then there’s a trade-off.
Then you get their best surprise. “I gave you something, I accepted, now let me give you
some of mine.”

R: Do you consider that music and literacy integration is helpful to your students’
academic achievements?

Brown: Absolutely.

R: Do you have any evidence where you’ve seen it and you feel like this success was
because of music and literacy integration?

Brown: I’m trying to think. I’ve seen kids who … and I think Ms. _________ has told me
some of the kids who were chosen for choir, to still sing and say these words, to sing
these melodies and say these lyrics, are not kids who excel in academics, but they excel
there. I think that’s really powerful, that those are the kids who get chosen to represent
our school.

I’m just talking as a tester now. They’re not the one who the teacher would pick to represent her if she had a visitor to show off her class. She wouldn’t choose them because academically, they’re not there. When it comes to saying those words and singing that melody, that’s how they can excel. To me, that just opens the door. If a person has never felt successful, they don’t know what it’s like. They keep saying, “You need to do this to be successful.” Well, they’ve never felt that.

I remember when I was in college. I just was in college, I thought, “I got to go college, and I’m going to do it and it’s okay.” I really wasn’t trying to be on the Dean’s List, but I started hanging out with this girl, who’s a phenomenal teacher now, she’s amazing. She said, “You’re not on the Dean’s List?” and I thought, “No.” She’s like, “Oh.” Once I got on the Dean’s List because she said that to me, I thought “I’ll never not be on it again.” Do you know what I’m saying? Music to me and literacy integrated is a way you can help kids who may not be successful be successful. To me, once they taste success they know what it tastes like.

R: They want it.

Brown: They want it. If you had never been successful, do you think you’d want to be it again if you’d never knew what it was like? You wouldn’t know. Ms. __________, she has a rubric the way she chooses her kids for music, and the way they enunciate the words, and the way they can put the lyrics together with the melody. She chooses them for that reason. I’m telling you, a couple of them, I was just shocked. I thought, “Really? They sing?” She said, “Oh, you should hear them.” To me that is powerful.
R: Maybe the homeroom teacher in the classroom could use that to get the best that they can from that child through music. Obviously that’s their forte.

Brown: That’s the kids’ forte. I think it does something for the child’s self-esteem. How do you feel when you keep getting called on and you don’t know the answer? You can’t do any of the letter sounds and it’s the end of the first 9 weeks, and you should know half the letters by now. You should know actually two-thirds of the letters by now. You may know 10 or 5 or whatever, but you can sing. You get chosen to go and represent the school. That boosts your self-esteem, and I just think that helps those kids.

R: Assuming that they’re not being successful in the plain literacy, like reading a book or

Brown: Doing letter sounds and what we do.

R: Through music they’re singing and they’re doing …

Brown: They’re singing, and they’re pronouncing words, they’re doing vocabulary. I know Ms. _________ talks to them about, she introduces songs. You see what I’m saying? To me, it’s another avenue to learning.

When she does her songs, like last year we did Black History, and she introduced them to these songs, but she told them something about the song. “This song is about this, and this is why this little girl is asking for this. This is what she wants. This is what it means.” That’s learning. That is engaging. It’s just in a different way but they’re getting it. It’s just is another avenue for getting kids.

R: What challenges do you think your music teacher faces when integrating music and literacy?

Brown: One for us is that … I’m just talking. I think this might be a challenge because I
did Literacy lab and for me this was a challenge. It was no music. Half of the school is bilingual, well you know that right? At the beginning of the year, when you get your students and you’re trying to get them to sing and to do whatever, some of them, this is their first really integration with English. In their home, they’re often Spanish speakers. I think something's lost really in the translation because I know it was lost for me when I did Literacy lab. I mean I'm telling the story and then I'm telling them with feeling and then the teacher translates it. She may not be feeling it like I'm feeling it. You know what I'm saying? I feel like …

R: It's lost in translation, literally.

Brown: I don't know what to say. It’s lost in translation. I feel like, I don't know how we could do that. I don’t know if there's songs in Spanish that maybe she could learn so it's songs that they know. When she gets them in August, they don't really know English, they've really not … because the teachers here do have to start off doing 10% English a day, then 20% English a day and build it and build it and build it until it's 30 or 40 or something like that.

But at the beginning of the year, you're not there yet. You're just trying to do procedures and routines for the first whatever. We still start rotation day three or four. They're still coming to music. To me, I feel like sometimes things might be lost in translation, like Miss Kim is feeling this and she wants them to get it but by the time the teacher translates it, it may not be the same. I don't know…

R: I understand what you're saying. Can you share any frustrations that you and/or music your teacher have experienced when integrating music and literacy, and how have you
overcome that frustration if you have any?

Brown: I feel like sometimes … this is confidential?

R: Yeah.

Brown: I feel like sometimes … and I'll never say it on Miss ________ ’s class, I just have to say that, I mean for the whole class, whatever … but I know that what she's trying to do is she's trying to make sure they know some music too, not just sing, but they know something about music, the art of music, which I think is good. But sometimes the teachers feel like it’s over the kids' head. I just feel like that they should trust her. She is the music teacher. She knows where she's going with this. Do you know what I'm saying?

R: Yes. Absolutely.

Brown: Sometimes when I bring my kids in here who are low learners, I do a simple thing where I put the plate and I have five things on it. I'm like, “Look at those five things,” and then I'm going to take it away. Now we're going to talk about what was on there. Now if somebody walked into my classroom, “What has that got to do with learning alphabets?” But I'm working on their short term memory, because these are kids that I've noticed that can't remember anything. They’ve never had to.

Their mother never said, “Remember when we went to the store yesterday and you saw that green jacket …” Nobody has ever said that, they've never had to work on their short term memory or work on even their working memory. They’ve never had to go back and recall something they did last week or a few minutes ago. Maybe nobody has asked them. The teachers say, “Ms. __________, she just knew it and now she doesn’t.” I said all that to say, I know, as a literacy teacher, with a Master’s Degree, what to do to
help kids build their short term memory. They have none. Before I can help you remember some alphabet, I got to help you just to remember that there was a baby bottle, a safety pin, a book, a twister and a knob on this plate. I just wish the teachers would give her that respect, of giving her the opportunity to do it the way she needs to do it.

R: Because she’s the expert.

Brown: That’s what I’m saying. She’s the expert. She knows where’s going. She knows her [inaudible 00:30:07], she’s not trying to get them to be her music student. They’re not going to play the piano, they’re not going to play the flute. She wants them to know something about music. That’s what learning is. That’s why you scaffold it.

You’d give them a little bit … like I’m telling kids here that every sentence ends with a period. That’s what I teach them. Now, really, it doesn’t. Poems don’t. Other things don’t. they learn that later. I just want you to get the foundation. I think that’s what she’s trying to do. That frustrates me, when teachers are complaining. Just let her do her job. She knows what he’s doing. She’s the expert, you’re not.

R: What do you think is then your music teacher’s level of confidence when integrating music and literacy in her classroom? What do you think is her confidence level?

Brown: I think her confidence level is better this year because … I think it actually started last year too because when I became Skills Specialist, I said, “You’re on a Pre-K campus, you know that.” Because she and I talk, we’re very close. I said to her, “Let me give you some things that are going to help you …” I make sure she had a copy of some things like the [inaudible 00:31:47] I made sure she had a copy of the scope and sequence, things like that that would help her in knowing when we are studying this,
when we’re on that. That way you can integrate it.

Then what I did is she and I got together one day, I think at my house, and as a Literacy teacher, I told her some things that she and kind of integrate music with it. We went online and found some things. I told her some things I knew and some things that I had done. I tried to make sure that’s he had all the literary components that she needed, that she was well-informed.

What letters are we studying the nine weeks. For the first nine weeks of every year, we study ABCFMOST. Those letters for English. For Bilingual, we say AEIOUMPLST. She didn’t know that. Just something as simple as that. Making sure she knows that so if she’s going to do something, she might can find an A song, the B song, a C, a F, any of those but also she’s still incorporating literacy.

They’re learning those letters. They’re learning words that began with those letters. They can maybe sing a B song, make up a silly B song or whatever, and those letters. That way, teachers don’t feel like, “Okay, it’s not relevant to what I do.” Not all the teachers feel that way, don’t get me wrong. But you have those few. I did that. I make sure every time I gave teachers something, I gave her one as well.

We just got this new book ‘The Daily Five’ which our whole campus is going to be based on this year. I gave one to the literacy teacher and I’m giving one to the music teacher. They’re going to check this book out. This is what our whole literacy net year will be based on, ‘The Daily Five.’ What it is, is five things … we got this book in Nebraska when I was there in 2006, they were doing this. When I left in … I was finishing grad school in 2009. They were doing this book in 2007, in Nebraska but
they’re just … I guess they started it in the district a couple of years ago. The whole district is doing this book now.

The teachers just checked their books out. I just finished the last one today and I saved one for Ms. __________ and one for the literacy teacher and one for the music teacher. I think it’s really important for her to go through here and know what they’re doing in literacy next year. They come to her classroom, she might want to have a little music something called … the way this book is … just real quick, just to give an idea of what I’m talking … is that … Here, I’m just going to give you a quick overview.

R: Who’s the author?
Brown: Here, they are sisters.
R: Gail Boushey and Joan Moser.
Brown: Basically, this is how this book is [inaudible 00:34:50]. I just wanted Ms. __________ to have this because … I wanted her to maybe come up with some little music something because what The Sisters content … which it works, I've seen it in action and I've gone on several workshops on it … is that if you do these five things with your kids throughout the week … pre-K, we can't do all five every day because we don't have them that long. During the week we want to hit all five.

It does several things. It makes your kids more independent with their literacy and it frees you up to do small groups. You're there … you just have to see the program. I wish you had seen it at the beginning of the year. Because we have two teachers who did it this year and then ... the area program director came and looked at them and she was just blown away at what they have done with it. It's amazing.

I want Ms. __________ … the literacy teacher will know what to do because it’s
what she does. Ms. ____________ will too but I want she and I … either that I'm no longer going to be here, I'll always teach at heart. They know I'm going to be coming back to volunteer. I want Ms. ____________ and I to get together and see The Daily Five. Read to self, read to others, read with a partner, word work and listen to reading. All these five components that make up the thing. I was just trying to think of with how can we … and it's not that I'm trying to get her to change her whole program, but this is what the whole school is going to be doing next year. I just want her to be on board and she needs to be on board as well. Here they are.

R: Would you say that some of these skills that are enforced and re-enforced in here … would you say that there are some that might even overlap with … like music skills and that's why you see that there's a … that they could actually integrate?

Brown: Right. Because when I thought about doing this, read to someone, sing to someone. Sing to someone. You get a buddy, "Can you think of a song?" This might be after she's taught them some songs, because generally the first few weeks when we get these kids is really routine. We’re pre-K. They don't even know how to go to the restroom. They don't know how to raise their hand. They don't know how to answer. All day you’re calling, "James Smith, is James here?" James doesn't know he's supposed to raise his hand. You're teaching them. I'm just saying if when she gets them, "You guys, today I'm going to teach you some songs, two or three little songs, we'll sing them over and over. Now, I want you to pick one of those songs."

She might have picture clues. This song might be ... I don't, know Humpty Dumpty or something, and one might be Little Red Riding Hood, one might be Twinkle,
Twinkle, Little Star. She might have the star, a cone and a something. "Can you all look on your chart …" I'm thinking she'll have a chart, a little laminated chart with a star, a moon, a bicycle, or something. “You got your chart, can you think of a song you can sing to your friend?” That's getting them ready for when they go to their classrooms.

R: Exactly. There’re even books, little cute books, little cute songs.

Brown: With those songs in them. Even though they can't read it, they can have it there, it's their cue. She might do a picture song book where she does the pictures and she's flipping "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star," that's page one. "How I wonder what you are, up above the world …" "Up above the world so high …" That's reading. That's what we teach them to do, is picture read.

I saved one for her and the literacy teacher. I checked the last one out to my teachers but they're taking it home over the summer, mark it up, do what you need to do to it, whatever, whatever. As a group. Put them forth to a group and work on singing, work on singing. It's not just singing [crosstalk 00:39:30]

R: They could write too their symbols and there's codes and same …

Brown: Same thing.

R: Decoding as in literacy …

Brown: Right. I just want us, as a campus, to all be on board, everybody. And the movement teachers, she can do the same. I think all the special teachers, I thought about that. Last week, whatever, “I need to make sure I’m saving one for all the special teachers.” Every teacher who sees a student should read this book over the summer. How can I incorporate this into what I do? These kids are seeing it. They are engaged in it.
They’re doing it all over the campus. That’s how.

R: Can you share any successes that you and your music teacher have experienced when integrating music and literacy here in your school?

Brown: I’m trying to think of a specific … I know the kids engaged … they feel like they have a voice. So many times kids feel like they don’t have a voice. They’re four. They really do. That’s what we want them to know, for me. When they leave here, I want them to know they have a voice. I know people think, “Well, they’re four …” They still need to know that what I say is important, I count. I would have to say the successes is that you have to see it when you come to graduation. I don’t even know how to say it. You’ll have to see it when you come to graduation. They’re on the stage and they’re singing or doing their final presentation for their parents. They’re so confident. They are so on point. They’re so proud. At that point, they know they have a voice.

R: Do you think it also would also help them acquire … because you mentioned when they come, first day in August, they are practically non-English …

Brown: They’re non-English. For many of them, they’re non-English. By the end of the year, having gone in her class, they know English songs. They know English nursery rhymes. That’s what they’re going to have to know. When they exit fourth grade over there, there are no more bi-lingual, all bi-lingual class, all day long. It ends when they leave fourth grade over there.

It gets them ready. It gives them the confidence. It exposes them. It engages them. It builds a foundation for what they’re kindergarten teacher is going to do over there. It just opens doors. The thing about it, kids are not just on the playground with bi-lingual
kids. They’re on the playground playing hop skip with Ms. ________ Vietnamese class, with African American kids, with other kids who do different nursery rhymes. They’re not singing Cinco Lobitos but now they know other songs than Cinco Lobitos. They know Jack Be Nimble. They know other … Hickory, Dickory, Dock … They know all that other stuff. I think it just gives them confidence. It’s a way to open doors to friends to them. It helps build them. It helps to build them, to build the kids.

R: What professional development opportunities, regarding music and literacy integration, do you think are available in your area?

Brown: I’m just trying to think … I would have to say, I don’t know, because … I don’t know. I would say if something, maybe through region four, maybe. Maybe through region four. I hate that … this year, I know they had IRA right in ________, this year. I do know, for International Region Association convention, they are constantly integrating literacy with the arts. Lansky, L-A-N-S-K-Y, he always presents there. He is an author, has numerous books, portrait books, that he performs to music. I just really wish we had more of that available here.

R: If there are any in there, they’re probably not very well advertised.

Brown: Yeah, if they are, because I have not heard it. Like I said, I know he was there this year, but I just had so much stuff, I just could go, even though it was right in _________. He teaches you with music how to get kids motivated into creating, into writing their own lyrics or songs, and he does it with teachers. The conference is for teachers.

He did it with us, and both conferences I’ve ever been too, he’s phenomenal. I
always go to his presentations because they’re phenomenal. He does it with a guitar because he’s just moving from place to place, wherever he presents. It’s with music, and it’s just a way to get the kids involved and get them involved in the lyrics and writing and rhyming, which is one thing that we do. All of that, but I just don’t know of many.

R: That is many. My next question was going to be: How they have helped you implementing but it’s like [crosstalk 00:46:10]. How do you, you said it in many ways, so far, but I want you to reiterate … how do you value music and literacy integration?

Brown: I rate it high. To me, music and literacy … music, literacy and math … they have to go together. They cannot be separated. Literacy is rhythm. Music is rhythm. Kids know music before they know literacy. They hear it before they can read, before they can even spell, they can sing.

R: That’s true.

Brown: How can you not? I value them greatly. I value them … whenever … like reading and writing. You can’t separate it. When a teacher says, now take out your writing journals. I’m like, “No!”, or “Put your reading away. Take out …” When they say, “Now, we’re ready for writing.” Oh please, don’t say that. “Now, we’re ready for reading.” It’s integrated all day. How can you separate it? I feel that way with literacy and music and math. How can you separate it? Especially literacy and math, I mean literacy and music. They’re both rhythm. They’re both feeling. They’re both expression.

To me, they’re rated the highest. They go together. You want to grab somebody’s attention? Start singing … start reciting a poem and do it to a rhythm. You’ve got everybody. I attend the I Can conference, when I was in Nebraska. We’ve lived there
three times before. We retired here. My husband retired back here in 2009.

They constantly send me stuff about the I Can conference, which is a women’s professional conference. They have it every year in Omaha, Nebraska. They just happened to send it to me. I clicked on this girl who was doing a poem about inner voice, and I saved it.

I’m like, “Ms. [inaudible 00:48:27], you have to show this to the staff at the beginning of the year. I won’t be here, but you have to show this girl reciting this poem. She does it to a rhythm. She’s so powerful for teachers to hear at the beginning of the year. It’s just to me, it rates … they go together. You can’t separate them.

R: How do you think these opportunities of integrating music and literacy have helped you achieve your goals as an educator?

Brown: As an educator, I think they’ve … the way I’ve used it is that I’ve encouraged other teachers to not be afraid to do it. For me, if I do it, it’s just one me doing it but whenever I do it, I try to encourage other teachers to try it or to try it in your classroom. My goal as an educator is that we all teach the whole child, is that we don’t isolate what we do, we don’t … it has to all be integrated.

You can show me a picture book of all the thousands of books we have in here that I can’t teach a math lesson from, and that I can’t put to a rhythm or a rhyme. To me, when I learned that and I knew that and I wasn’t a afraid, I gained my confidence to go out and do it … to me, as an educator, I felt like I had to show everybody else how to do it. That’s what I do. That’s what I did here as Skills Specialist. That’s what I try to do, to show other teachers how to do it. Just one me doing it is not going to get it.
R: How do you think you’re school principal values music and literacy integration?

Brown: I think she values it greatly. That’s why she fights to keep a music teacher on this campus. That’s why she uses her … part of her … I’m trying to see … I know … I picked myself in movement … or title one … when we had to cut some programs here, she didn’t cut music, and she didn’t cut literacy. We have a literacy lab and a music lab. Those were the … and art stayed … She did not cut those.

R: It’s important to her.

Brown: French had to go and drama had to go because those are things that you can incorporate in your class. She did not cut music and she did not cut literacy. She said those will be the last things to go. If something had to go, art maybe would have to go, because you can do art in your class.

There needs to be a professional music person here. There needs to be a place for kids to go to explore, to express themselves musically. There needs to be that integration of those two teachers getting together. I think, she values it greatly.

R: In an ideal situation where everything’s pink, how should music and literacy be valued from top to bottom?

Brown: In an ideal situation? In an ideal situation, kids would go every week to music instead of every five weeks for us, in our campus. They only get to go once every five weeks. They would go every week. Those teachers could maybe team teach. They could bounce their professional ideas off of each other, and blend them together, and do their class, instead of separate.

We would have this facility where maybe you would knock down that wall, if it
was me, and I had the money to do it … I would knock down that wall, and say … when
Ms. _________ has kids do their story dictations and then every kid who does his story
dictation … and that’s a project that we’re doing. Then they have to tell it and act it out,
they’ll be doing it to music. Let’s find a song that goes with the story that you just told.
To me, that would be the ultimate … that’s what I would do.
R: You mentioned that you definitely help your music teacher with resources that you
have. Have you been able to offer yourself any kind of professional development
opportunities, maybe to music teachers or maybe to your campus, regarding music and
literacy integration?
Brown: When I do staff developments, I do them with the teachers the way I want them
to do it in their classroom. I try and tell them things like … I don’t know if this answers
your question, so let me know if I am on the wrong track … I try and do things like
whenever you’re changing gears, you use music to change it. Whenever they write,
whenever I have teachers do a section, I play music, and so many of our teachers do that.
Like we went to zoo, when the kids come back, they have to do a section. Play a music
that you think motivates them to do that reflection, to write. Another thing we do, and
most teachers do this, is that when we do our unit “How do we express ourselves?” we
have kids listen to different music. Now, draw what you hear. How does this music make
you feel? Draw it. What are you thinking about? We do that in our staff development and
then hope that they will go back … and most teachers do.
R: You show them different techniques that they could bring back to their classrooms?
Brown: That they can take back to their classrooms.
R: You said that they take it back. Obviously, [Crosstalk 00:55:41].

Brown: In our hallway, I can show you, we have pictures that our students to painted to music. Then they kind of talked about how are you feeling. We integrated art with music with literacy. How did this make you feel? Things like that … So many times they write to music or they paint to music. So many times.

R: What role does the available research, like studies and papers, and things that you might have been able to come across, have helped you or your teachers to help you implement music and literacy integration? How do you think research has helped this school implement music and literacy integration?

Brown: I’m trying to think of what was the article …

R: You think you or your teachers or your music teachers actually search for studies in research and to inform …

Brown: I know, I did research for the principal because some teachers … that wouldn’t be instruction … that’s different. I’m trying to think. I know we’ve written several grants and in our grants we’ve talk about … and I’ve actually not been on any of those teams, I provide them with information that they needed, but I’ve not been on the team.

I know those teams that have written those grants have talked about how the arts, how all of the arts … how all of the arts help students advance academically and how incorporating the arts into your daily routine helps the students academically. I’m trying to think off hand of any specific ones … I’m just trying to think. That’s some writing in that grant. It didn’t go through. I know we have done some because we had to do it for the grants. We’ve done that…
R: They’ve used it for the grant, but do you think that probably has kept in the back of their heads? Then when they go back to the classrooms, they maybe try to incorporate a little bit more of music and literacy integration in their classroom? Do you think that has helped them to implement it?

Brown: I think that has helped them and I think the fact that when they’re kids go to music they see how excited they are to go and then they come back in the classroom and try … and a lot of times they’ll do something like they did in literacy or that they did in music or in art.

I think it does help them. I definitely think it does help them to just make them more open and aware that this is important and this is why. We do incorporate many things other than what’s just in our Pre-K guidelines and to what we do with our kids everyday …

R: One of the themes of IB is the … it’s not integration. There’s another word, but it’s basically the same thing. How do you call it? I forgot the word now, but it’s …

Brown: Transdisciplinary?

R: Transdisciplinary.

Brown: We are all about carrying things over. Whenever kids leave art, for example, the first thing they do with the art teacher before you can do any of this art you see on the wall, is she talks about lines. Sleeping lines and waving lines and lines that link down and lines that are just sleepy, they’re not laid down yet but they’re sleepy.

When the teacher gets to the classroom to teach them how to make a “Z”, she says, “Now, this is going to be a sleepy line …” We do try and transfer everything we do
across campus. That’s why I think it’s so important for the music teacher to have this book.

R: Not only music if they came into the classroom, but what happens in the classroom …
Brown: Is taken back to music.

R: What advice would you offer to others trying to implement music and literacy integration in their classroom, school, or district?
Brown: I would just tell them to not be afraid to try it. It’s not going to be perfect the first time you try it, but it will get better. You will become more comfortable as the students … as you become more comfortable, they will become more comfortable. That’s it.

When they see that you’re comfortable with it … it’s just like any training we go to.

One teacher goes to a ton of training, but he never implements them last year. I said, “Why? You go to this training, and that training, and that training. I know you’re going to them. But you don’t do anything.” “Well, how do I start?” I said, “You just start. I can’t even tell you. How do you do it? Today, I learned how to do …”

Thornton Dial is the guy’s name, the author. Thornton Dial! “I learned how to do collages, but now how am I going to take this back and do it with my kids?” I said, “You just try it the first day, and then go back. Okay, this didn’t work, not doing that tomorrow. Scratch that.” That’s how you get it right. At the end of this year, guess what, you’ve already perfected that for next year. Put that in your tool box. Just pull it out next year. You’re not starting over.

As a rotations teacher, Music, Literacy, Art, Drama, French, whatever, the first rotation that we get in the five week rotation are the Guinea pigs. Unfortunately because
they’re the first people that I’m doing this lesson with, and you know what? I think about day three, this is not working. Guess what. For my second rotation, with these six teachers, I’m doing this totally different. But you learn. That’s what I would tell them. To do it. Go do research, do more research that says about it. Have your support. That’s going to help you confidence. That’s for no one else but you. Sometimes, people think I’m a research-aholic. It’s not that I love research. I do love research, by the way, but I don’t have time to love it that much.

Sometimes when I’m teaching teachers a new kind concept, I have to first build my own confidence in that concept. I need to feel really confident when I stand up before these 35 teachers and deliver this. Right now, I’m not feeling it. I know the district said do it. This is what they gave me, but I’m not feeling it. I would tell that teacher whose trying for the first time, to go do the research, for you.

It’s for your to build your confidence so you will know. The worst thing to do is try to present something that you don’t feel stern about. You got to want it. My worst slots in undergrad school and grad school, with anything, was when I did it half-heartedly. “I think this might work, I’m not sure but I’m going to present this paper and it’s terrible.” Even if I got a passing grade, in me, I know it was terrible.

I would tell them to do their research to get … to help give themselves confident, and then try it. Make your notes. Fix it along the way. It’s just like doing that one form research … I forgot what it’s called … where you just fix it as you go, adjust it as you go. This is not working. Excuse me. I’m going to adjust this, and I’m going to keep going. That’s what I would tell them. They will see, at the end of the day, when you get it just
the way you want it, that’s when the fun begins, because you’ve got it. You can put it in your toolbox for next year, and guess what, next year, you can make it more fun. You can add something different to it, because I’ve got it now. I’m confident that this is going to work. Now, I can take it there.

R: Any other remarks, you wish to convey?

Brown: Not that I can think of. If you can think of something else … I just love music and art … music and literacy together. It’s just because of the rhythm and the rhyming and the lyrics, and the everything. What music does for literacy, when we get it right, it teaches kids that not all songs have to rhyme, because the rhythm of the melody makes up for the rhyme.

The melody makes up for the rhyme. Well, right now, we’re trying to teach them to rhyme, but I’m just saying for older and as they go on, if we could get them to rhyme with music early, and then get them to … guess what, not all poems rhyme. You can put them to music and they’ll still have a good melody. You’re going to love it. You’re going to love saying this poem.

R: Great. Thank you so much.
Mrs. Williams

R: Please describe your position and what led you to this career choice?

Williams: I am a fine arts curriculum specialist for a school district and what led me to this choice is that I was a music teacher for 23 years and my elementary experience I was in all levels. Probably my elementary experience most of all peaked my interest in curriculum because I just had some fantastic principals and they were really good with curriculum school wide, campus wide and I just really got fascinated with that. I started joining up on volunteering to be in some of the curriculum, elementary music curriculum writing teams and from there I sort of led some different festivals and events in the district and eventually my position grew out of it because the director needed some help. The director is a band person and a secondary person and lot of times curriculum writing isn’t their love or also their area of expertise. That’s how I became a fine arts curriculum specialist. It started out with my love of the arts, my love of music grew from there.

R: What is the first thing that comes to your mind when you hear the phrase music and literacy integration?

Williams: The first thing that comes to mind is integrating language arts, reading the processes of teaching reading with the process of teaching music.

R: What are your beliefs regarding music and literacy integration?

Williams: I believe it’s very similar, the processes that we go through to teach and the processes that the ELA teachers go through to teach classroom teachers. In some ways, the music classroom can help reinforce what they are teaching in the classroom. For
example, that left to right reading aspect in their young age. We put up icons and we reinforce the left to right reading. We help in different ways, different plains that they don’t because when we introduce the staff we are not only reading left to right, we are adding another level of higher thinking skills by adding the up and down to the staff, the high and low.

They are not only reading left to right. That’s a really hard skill for them to understand. They are reading left to right but they are also reading up and down. In some areas in music, we take them to a new level. In other areas, we reinforce. That’s what I think in literacy learning at the young age. I am speaking specifically about the young age but I think it continues throughout their learning K12.

R: How did you become aware of music integration? Was there points where you heard about it and went like, “Aha this is...”

Williams: Early in my career, I just thought that music integration was very superficial. It wasn’t until I took my Kodály training that professors talked about the different styles of learning for students and in the Kodály training they really reinforced the teaching of music literacy. They start with a sound before the symbol and that was something new to me. I was wanting. I am visual learner so I want to go immediately to the symbol. Music I think it’s really important than the literacy developed the sound through the symbol and it was there that I got hooked into whole teaching of literacy in a new light for music.

I am trying to think it was in the early 2000s here at the __________ Fine Art Summit. I was asked to do a session on integrating language arts with music. I worked
with the language arts curriculum specialist in our district. That was probably the most enlightening for me because I went into classrooms. Kindergarten, first grade, second grade and we went up to third grade and we got teams together of music teachers and of language arts teachers and we observed in both the classrooms and then talked about some crossover. It wasn’t at that point where I watched some real proficient teachers teaching reading to young students where I realized the process the way they teach reading and also the way they teach writing composition, how to compose was so incredibly similar.

The process was so incredibly similar to how we would teach composition in music create this piece, create this phrases. Start with the beginning and put an ending here, put a middle. We could use so much. That whole project gave me a whole lot of opening because I never was able. As a teacher, I was always teaching. In my classroom, I never was able to go into the language arts classroom and observe those processes. I was able to see it. More of that needs to take place and not enough of that does. We may go into another music teacher’s classroom but we don’t go into another core academic area classroom.

R: Here goes my next question, which is related to that. What do you think what would compel your music teachers in your district to integrate music and literacy in their classroom?

Williams: By observing those teachers and being able to have planning time with those teachers. I know it’s almost impossible because you can’t integrate everything at once. You can’t integrate science and you can’t integrate mathematics but if they could rotate
and do some planning and some observations in those classrooms in different grade levels and kind of make a plan like throughout the school year, I think it would be the total difference in the world but the administration at that campus has to allow that to happen. If the administration at that campus doesn’t allow it to happen, it’s never ever going to happen. They are going to stay in their silos and they are not going to observe in those other classrooms because they are not even in their silos. They are just teaching. They are doing something.

R: They are doing what they were hired for.

Williams: I don’t know how you do it because during your conference period it’s your conference period but if they could just figure out some way or maybe even an after school thing where the campus would facilitate now they are going to give a demonstration in this process and everybody including the music teachers would give a demonstration lesson at their faculty meeting for glimpse into how they teach literacy.

R: They understand each other.

Williams: Exactly. They want to focus on literacy. That’s what they do.

R: What aspects of your personality and attitudes personally contribute to shape your feelings about music and literacy integration? How do you think your personality plays in?

Williams: English was what I liked when I was in school. That is one thing. I naturally gravitated toward that because I was good at it and I hated math. The other thing is that I am a structured person and learning things by wrote was not the way I liked to learn music or learning things by ear. I liked to learn it by looking at it and knowing,
understanding the symbols and interpreting the symbols and making music out of that. I am not play by ear person. I am not a play off the page person. That made me more of a literacy nut. [Laughing]

R: I would love that.

Williams: That kind of structure.

R: How do you think this practice compliments your educational philosophy?

Williams: In the title one schools, for example, kids don’t have the opportunity like I did growing up to take piano lessons and to learn to become music literate from whenever you start piano lessons and learn how to do things and I went to private school, so I didn’t necessarily have what we call general music. We really had more church music. My educational philosophy is that all students need to be made musically literate and they are not going to all take private lesions.

My philosophy is that we need to teach them this in a sequential manner all the way through. If we are going to have a musically literate society, we are going to have to continue to do it. You are going to churches now and they may not even put up the music. They just have the words. It drives me crazy because a long time ago people would take out hymn and be able to sing in four parts.

R: At least see the notes.

Williams: Exactly. We are not going to lose that in our society. We need to do it in the public schools for everyone. Not just in the privileged areas where kids have violin lessons or whatever. That’s how it fits into my educational philosophy.

R: Obtaining that music literacy could probably aid in or connected into language arts.
Williams: Exactly and anything that we could do to connect those kids say the kid’s second language is English and they are in the school trying to learn. Music is the universal language. If they have come from another country and they may have learnt that. Can you stop it for one second? She is interviewing.

R: Do you consider music and literacy integration helpful to your students’ academic achievement?

Williams: Yes, because I think, let’s see how can I describe that? You can touch students in a different way. They may relate to something in music and it maybe an “aha” moment of something the language arts teacher was trying to teach them. Becoming literate that way, it isn’t just music. It’s also mathematics. It’s everything that could maybe be presented to them in a different way. Say the question again.

R: Do you consider that music and literacy integration is helpful to the students’ academic?

Williams: Absolutely. The more we can connect subjects, vocabulary, processes of how we learn the better it is for the students.

R: Do you have any evidence of that occurring? Have you seen it maybe in the classrooms that you’ve visited or you heard a teacher telling you an experience that she had where?

Williams: Yes. I am trying to think of one specifically that I can pull out of my memory bank. We all know about the students that are struggling to learn to start reading in particular and you will hear that maybe they are working on that left to right. Maybe that’s simply what they are scrambling things a little bit and I have had first grade
teachers in particular come back and say, “You know it’s so weird they related it to music class to the song they were reading.”

I also think the more we can put up the icons, the symbols for them once they have got a song in their ear and relate it connect that sound to something concrete that they are seeing that that helps them connect the sound of words to the visual word. I think definitely and first grade teachers have shared with me that they will refer back to something they have learned in their music class.

R: What challenges you think that your music teacher face when trying to integrate music and literacy in their classes?

Williams: First of all, they don’t know what goes on in the classrooms. That’s the first thing. They are unaware, I was. It was that like I said referring back to that project I did when I was able to go in and observe the different grade level teachers and actually I just thought back it was a kindergarten. It has been a while since we did a project.

A kindergarten, a second grade and a fourth grade class that we went into and that’s the thing they don’t know sequentially what goes on in the reading process, in the language arts process or any of the other subjects in the classrooms. That’s the biggest challenge. Second challenge is they don’t have time to talk to those teachers and plan with those teachers. Now, they do have time to go and look at the curriculum but I don’t think they take that time to go and look at the curriculum.

R: It’s probably something that pops in their heads first.

Williams: Right.

R: Can you share any frustrations that you and/or music teachers have experienced when
trying to integrate music and literacy integration and how you or they have overcome that frustration?

Williams: When I first started my project with, that I referred back to, I got together teams of music teachers and regular classroom teachers and it was evident from the beginning that the music teachers were the one that was going to have become familiar with the language arts text and it wasn’t going to go the other way around because music was out of the other people’s realm.

There was only one guy that was a guitar player, singer and a musician that really got into it. The rest of them it was all how music could integrate their text. It didn’t go the opposite way. That’s the biggest challenge is that everybody expects us to integrate but it doesn’t go opposite way and they are not open to it. I would say that’s the number one challenge. It isn’t a two-way street.

R: What do you think is the level of confidence of your music teachers or any music teachers that you might have in your district when trying to integrate music and literacy? What do you think is their level of confidence?

Williams: It’s higher than maybe we think at first because all of us feel that we at some point learn to read and write and we went through processes in the school. That it maybe higher than what we think but the main thing is that they are so overwhelmed with the small amount of time they see their students to get what they think is important to cover in music that they failed us to make them verbal connection. I think they are doing it. They are just not making it obvious to the students that it’s the same thing. They maybe using different terminology and so the number one difference is vocabulary. They are
not using similar vocabulary.

R: Couldn’t you say they are probably doing it and not aware may be?

Williams: They are doing it and they are not aware and they are also doing it and not making it conscious to the students. The students aren’t getting the connection because it’s like they are talking two different languages to them, it’s really the same thing but the students would have to really stretch themselves. Maybe some do see the connection but some don’t see it right off the bat. Couple of them do right off the bat.

R: Can you share any specific success that you or your music teachers have experienced when integrating music and literacy in your district?

Williams: The best success I have seen in a classroom was after we went and did the observations in each and actually we never even, so this is another thing I should probably bring up. We never even were able to get release times for our music teachers to go into the classrooms and the classroom teacher to go into the music classroom.

What we did is video-taped lessons and then they watched the video-taped lessons and then sat around the table and discussed how they could integrate and the most successful thing that I watched was a teacher in one of our elementary campuses, they did a second grade lesson and she used the process, the exact wording, the exact process, put the chart paper up with exact process of how they’re going to write a composition, how they are going to write a story and they wrote a piece just like that so that the students were. “Oh yeah, this is your beginning, this is your ending, this is your middle and you are going to use this.”

Then she related it to the music form and this is how the story would go but this is
how the music composition would go and the light bulbs just went off. I have a video
tape of that and the light bulbs just went off using that and this is more of a writing
project than a reading project I will say. They certainly needed to be able to read and
they read patterns and they talked about what patterns they would use and what form they
would use and how that related to the exact process. She felt really good because one of
the things music teachers have a hard time doing is teaching composition, teaching kids
to make a composition and to make it make sense and when they related it to their written
compositions in the classroom they got right away.

R: What professional development opportunities regarding music and literacy integration
specifically are available in your area?

Williams: Not probably what they need to be. We pretty much will take a different
subject area every year. With math and science was being really looked at, we really
drilled math and science as what we wanted to try to focus on to integrate because we
have so much we could do out there for integration.

This past two years the scores in our state standards or state testing have been low
in writing. We have tried to think of ways that students could write in our music class and
that included all the way up to orchestra. One teacher was having them write in a journal
while one group would be warming up or being assessed on something they are needed to
be assessed on, the others would be writing in a journal about their last performance or
their last thing that they played.

Using some of those writing techniques in the music and using their exact format
that they use at that school to help the kids with writing. We have done it in isolation
though. The piece that is missing is that the campus needs to get those teachers together and that’s what’s missing. District wide which they get district to do that. You know you are from a big district. If you try to get all the language art teachers together with all the music teachers, first of all there are too many language art teachers and you can’t do it and at the secondary level what’s missing in our schools is that they do teaming, they do academic teams but they leave out the electives and so there is no interaction there for lack of better word, the core subjects versus the enrichment subjects.

While we have professional development available in our district for in trying to integrate certain specific things that we focus on each year what’s missing in our professional development is the other teacher being there with us and the classroom observation.

R: Do you think in these professional developments that you have provided to your music teachers in integration … how do you think how they have helped you and your music teachers? How they have helped you in actually implementing them in their classrooms?

Williams: I think one of the things that has helped the most is that many of them have shared because on some of their campuses like I said okay let’s say writing was low on their scores. They got a campus wide initiative to improve those scores. What has helped is that those teachers have come together and said, “I tried this, it didn’t work. I tried this, it did work.” They are finding things that work and they are sharing things and maybe one campus is lucky enough to have actually had more interaction with the other subject area teacher so they have shared it. The professional development I guess has been most successful is people sharing what works in integration.
We also brought in a group from California about, it was the opposite way. It’s about how the core subject area teachers can take how we teach in fine arts and we did bring them in through an insurance conglomerate company that sponsors them. We brought them in and many, many, many of our ELA and science and math and social studies teachers attended and they liked it because they could use the processes that we used to teach theater, dance, music, and art in their classrooms because we tend to sometimes being more hands on and so that was the flip. That is the only time we have a flip that was successful. They used our processes and it was a theater group that brought in their techniques.

R: You said this already but can you reinstate how do you value music and literacy integration?

Williams: I value it because it helps students. Because it makes students learn better. If they are learning and getting it in more than one subject, it’s just going to reinforce their knowledge.

R: Do you think these professional development opportunities have helped you achieve your educational goals?

Williams: I think yes but it’s an ongoing process. There is a lot more I think in education in general. We pay a whole lot of lip service to integration and we don’t really do it. I think the reason especially in the State of ________ that we don’t do it is because we are so test driven and they are afraid if they take time away in integration that they are going to lose something in that one subject area. I think it is disappointing how far we have not come in integration.
R: How do you think school principals in your districts value music and literacy integration?

Williams: I unfortunately have a little bit of a negative attitude about that. I don’t think that principals value integration as much for the reasons I just said before. Testing is the bottom line and they are too worried about that and so they don’t want to give up anytime so that teachers can get together and plan or observe each other because they are too afraid of taking that time away. I think we are locked into a system that’s preventing further it would take a real, real out of the box administrator to really get integration going on their campus.

R: In an ideal situation where everything is pink, how should music and literacy integration be valued from top to bottom from superintendents to teachers to parents even in your district?

Williams: There is a project going on in a neighboring large urban school district where they have been given lots of money in a national grant type situation where they actually can hire a person that is integration specialist that is an arts person but that will take the arts and integrate it into the regular classroom. Say it again.

R: In an ideal situation how do you think music and literacy integration should be valued by everybody in your district?

Williams: The first thing I think is that they need to consider us core because no child left behind actually says we’re core but in the State of ________ they keep referring us to outside of core enrichment and so that’s the first thing they need to say we’re core and then the second thing is they need to put some time and money into it so that there is a
person that’s in charge of integration in that campus that goes around and helps get it going but that thing is going to take some time and money.

We had a pilot and this wasn’t with music but it was with art and we had a pilot where principal actually took all their average kids that were failing, put them into an art and math class and their scores improved but it took extra staff. It took him taking a personnel unit and putting it together and having two teachers teach one class, having an art teacher and a math teacher teach one class so I think that’s the other thing. It’s going to take money to have a music teacher and the language arts teacher teach one class at the secondary level.

R: Financially that would be another challenge.

Williams: Another challenge, finance …

R: My next question is and you have answered it already but I just want to make sure that I got understood what you said. What professional development opportunities regarding music and literacy integration have you facilitated for your music teachers? You mentioned ________ when you did that.

Williams: Yes, we offer ________ to all of our teachers and we expect those teachers, for example, I had one elementary music person come and then I rather than me bring it back, I have them bring it back.

R: You also mentioned, for example, when you were doing the writing you facilitated that.

Williams: Right. When we wrote and, the way that we did with coming up with the next text revision when we wrote our online curriculum for our district. We wrote first our put
the state standards on, then we put what curriculum we wanted to have above and beyond the state standards and then we went through and looked at how we could integrate. We are the only subject online elementary music is actually the only subject online that put the integration into other [state] standards. Now we haven’t done it yet for the new testing standards and we are getting new [state objectives]. We are waiting but we actually took some major areas of testing objectives and stuck them in where we thought we really integrated there.

R: You mentioned that your music teachers have been able to benefit from this and can you tell me, because I believe you already told me this but, how have these professional development opportunities specifically _________, and the writing, and what you are writing on the curriculum, how do you think these have helped your music teachers in actually implementing it in their classrooms?

Williams: Well I think they are teaching more … let me just cover music literacy first. Sometimes we don’t even teach especially at the elementary level our music literacy. When I go and observe the teachers classrooms, more literacy is definitely taking place. Do I see integration when I am going around? I see pockets of it and I see projects or units being done but I don’t see it as an all time. It hasn’t become a natural thing where it’s not. It doesn’t happen all the time consistently kind of spread out over. It’s just pockets. It has helped get pockets in but now we need to get. It’s natural. It needs to become natural, seamless I guess would be a better word.

R: What role does the available research regarding music and literacy integration has played in the implementation of music and literacy integration in your district?
Williams: I don’t think it has played a big one and personally I think I am very interested in your project and other people like you that are doing projects into literacy because I think a lot of the research in music connections have been music and math and so I am really happy to hear that it might be music literacy because I don’t think that we talk about it very much. It’s definitely there but I just don’t think it’s…

R: Nobody talks about it.

Williams: …It’s not at the forefront. I hope that if you have some projects published and some research published on it, that it would really help.

R: What advice would you offer to others trying to implement music and literacy integration in their classroom, in their school, in their district? What advice would you give them?

Williams: The first advice I give them is that they definitely start small and like if they writing curriculum that they try to take one area, one subject in one grade level and look at that and then maybe put a different committee on looking. They have to divide it up because otherwise it’s an overwhelming task because the core subjects especially language arts, their state standards are overwhelming to look at. It has to start small, maybe just take a grade level and trickle it up and down and let’s see what else, start small on the planning, start some after school. If a campus already has small learning communities or whatever, what do you call them?

R: We have PLC.
Williams: PLCs. If they have PLCs, start some projects like that. Start small with a PLC and see if we can go from there and grow it but the problem is that I think it’s so overwhelming that no one wants to start anywhere.

R: Don’t you think probably the lack of understanding maybe not knowing exactly what you are getting into could play a role not trying to take over?

Williams: I also think the language arts teacher just don’t want to get on a team where they think they are going to have to produce some music in the classroom.

R: Could be intimidated.

Williams: Right. They need to understand that they are not going to have to produce that music in the classroom unless they want to. We can’t take them too far out of their comfort zone.

R: Any other remarks you wish to convey?

Williams: When is your paper going to be published so we can get it out there. I think if there would be a study like if we had a group of average kids that have done really poorly in reading and we put them in a specialized integrated music and reading class that I just haven’t heard of that study you may have in your studies but I think if we could bring that to the forefront it would help. I think for so long in our state we were focused on math and science. Now we are going back a bit to writing because kids can’t write. I don’t know if that reflects how badly they read too or not.

R: It’s part of language arts. Thank you so much.

Williams: Did that answer it or was I too much into ELA and were you really talking more just …
Mrs. Davis

R: Let me just tell you a little bit ... I told you in my e-mail what this is about is basically what I want to get in my study is the perceptions of music teachers, school principals, and curriculum specialists. I want to get their perception on music and literacy integration and of course I decided to ask you to participate because I know that in your previous school you were really involved with that, that’s why I wanted to talk to you about it. My first question to you is can you please just describe your position and what led to this career choice?

Davis: Do you want me to talk about my position as the principal at Neff Elementary or currently at Spring Branch?

R: Actually, since those are school principals at this point I just want to hear what led you to this career path? It’s really not related in music integration or literacy, just what led you to choose your career that you have today?

Davis: Okay. I wanted to be in education since I was six years old. I always wanted to be a teacher. I love to teach people how to read and write. I enjoyed reading myself so much. The reason I chose to be a principal is because I wanted to serve a larger number of children. As a classroom teacher, it felt like I was only responsible for just the children in my own room. As a principal, I felt my duty and my responsibility was to be able to provide and support for more children in the school and well as to meet with other principals from other campuses to make sure that the largest number of children were being served with good education and best practices.

R: Okay. You just wanted to be able to serve more students, more people?
Davis: Yes.

R: Okay. Now going into the music and literacy integration aspect of this, what is the first that comes to your mind when you hear the phrase, “music and literacy integration?” When you hear that what comes to your mind?

Davis: When I think about music and literacy integration, I think about how teachers use music to help children learn how to read and write and enjoy learning all together. No matter what content area, literacy involves social studies, science, math, everything that they are doing academically and even in their own social environment. I see children being able to implement or act to the music through those content areas.

R: Okay. What are your beliefs regarding music and literacy integration? What do you think happens when a music teacher integrates literacy in his or her classroom?

Davis: I think there’s a reason that God gave us two sides of our brain. I think that there’s a part of our brain that is able to handle fine arts whether be music, drama, dance, visual art, whatever that includes, and there’s the academic part of it. I think that until we, as educators, bring those two pieces of the brain together and let information flow from one side to the other, then we’re not really meeting the need of what our children ... the components that they have already in their physical body or in their brain that they have.

When I hear music teacher being able to integrate literacy, and I think the same thing should happen in the classroom where the teacher needed to integrate music through literacy or vice-versa in the music classroom.

R: Would you say that these two can be transferable, like these two knowledges, these two capacities can transfer to each other, can benefit from each other?
Davis: Yes, most definitely. I think most children they are like sponges, they take in new information and they like to be ... I consider children to be very carefree. Music is a way of opening that social environment for them or that social part of what learning should be about. I just believe that if you infuse music or fine arts into academic learning then children are going to have number one, more fun and they’re going to find it more enjoyable for them to be able to learn.

R: How did you become aware of music integration, you personally?

Davis: About 12 years ...

R: I’m sorry. I think I’m losing you. Hello?

R: Let's try that one again (laughs). Yes?

Davis: About 12 years ago, my school applied for a grant from the __________ Annenberg Foundation and it was a Fine Arts grant on how to integrate fine arts into the curriculum and prove academic learning, student test scores. We do a lot of research, there was a person that we hired as well as the Teacher's Committee. We worked with the middle school, we worked with the elementary school across the street and drafted a proposal, and during that time, all of the research supported the integration of fine arts into academic learning environment of children. Just, you know, from then on I've been reading articles that supports their connection between the two and just have continue to supported with my classroom teachers and education, talking to different groups, working with side agencies, things like that.

R: I think you've already told me this right now, but I want you to expand a little bit more on, so what compelled you and your a music teacher specifically. I know that your
program involved the fine arts as a whole group and different fine arts. But talking about your music teacher specifically, what compelled you and your music teacher to support music and literacy integration in your school?

Davis: Well, at the time when we wrote the proposal, I was at a very small school, which was Sharpview, which was a ... we were a relief school for one of the districts and became the smaller [area 00:02:02] in ________. We only have like 150 children, and during that time, we had a music teacher that taught arts, that taught music, and then taught classes during the day, and then, we had a drama teacher. That was the special ed teacher, the drama teacher, and then the librarian. And so, what we've found during that really small school experience was that, the teachers could do both and what we've found is that those two teachers were integrating a lot of the academic knowledge to teacher during those fine arts times, especially during music. The children were so receptive to it and they didn't see that they were going from one class to another. They just saw that the teacher was teaching different contents, but they were all related.

And so, when the grant became available, we went out and we actively pursuit it, and then also, one of the things that I enjoyed doing is I feel like school should not be ... they shouldn't be close. What I mean by that is that we should be open to work with other campuses, so we also reached out to the middle school across the street and to see like, number one, that we could use their facilities to perform for their children, to share some of their band equipment. Things like ... for the art children, because we were a very, very small school with a very, very small budget. And so, we were trying to reach out to other campuses where we could share and offer support, give support also, to also give them
words.

R: Not only you integrated subjects but you also integrated resources, like you were collaborating (call drops)...

R: Can you hear me?

Davis: Yes, I can hear you.

R: Okay, perfect. What I was saying is that you not only integrated subjects in your school, but you also integrated resources, right? You were combining resources from school to school?

Davis: Yes.

R: That is fantastic. What aspects of your personality contribute to shape your feelings about music and literacy integration?

Davis: I think that it's because I'm very outgoing, or … well, I can't say that I'm outgoing.

R: (Laughs).

Davis: I'm going to say that I'm a visionary. I think that I don't look at what we're doing now. I look at what we can do in the future.

R: Okay.

Davis: If there's an opportunity to do something where we can collaborate with someone else, or we can use the research to support a new initiative, then that's what I would like to be able to do. I think it's the quality of being able to look into the future and see what's down the road for our children.

R: Excellent. In regards to your educational philosophy, how do you think this practice matches your philosophy as an educator?
Davis: Well I think that every … you have to look into the future when you work with children, and you have to think what is it going to look like for them 10 years down the road. What is it going to look like when they're in the business world and the real world? What does it look like when they get to college? I think that the impact is how we're willing to change as educators to meet the needs of the ever-changing educational system for kids.

R: Yes. Having experiences, since 12 years right, because you've been involved in this for about 12 years ago, to what degree do you think music and literacy integration has helped your students' academic achievement?

Davis: Well, I think it's helped them on two levels. One, I think that they've created a sense of self-esteem and social development for them that they might not have had. With that self-esteem and that assuredness that they're able to do something besides just academically, brought them into learning that in order to dance the words and sing that you need to read.

You have to learn how to read. You have to learn how to write. Those components of fine art are then integrated in what you talked about with literacy, in that they have to have a literacy component in order to be successful in the other areas of fine art.

R: Do you have any evidence? Something that you've seen first-hand in your campuses that could probably support what you're saying? That the growth …

Davis: Well, two things; one of them was in the decrees of discipline reports that we had. Once we've stopped taking children out of special or ancillary classes where they didn't
miss fine art, and when we started doing the fun [filled 00:04:00] performances, children weren't taken out of those things and so the behavior started to improve because they had some sort of an extracurricular outlet.

Then 10 years ago the school was acceptable, and from that time on we've either been an exemplary school or we've been a recognized campus.

R: Wow.

Davis: A lot of it has been through the reading, where our reading scores went way up, and our math scores went way up. So, there's academic performance as well as social behavior and social modification I guess.

R: Not only it affected the academics, but also the behavior. That's very interesting.

Davis: Yes.

R: That's really good. So what challenges do you think that your music teachers faced when integrating music and literacy?

Davis: I don't think they faced anything. I think that they understand. I guess the biggest thing that they have is, are they familiar with the research?

R: Okay.

Davis: Whenever you start a fine arts program, fine arts teachers, they're just like regular classroom teachers. They have to understand, they have to know what the research says about integrating the two content areas together. I think the biggest thing is making sure that the teachers have that research and that understanding that is not only their job to teach music, but it's also their job to teach literacy.
It's changing your concept of what your job is as whatever kind of teacher you're teaching. It's like a math teacher. Their job is teach writing. If our kids are not doing writing through math, and writing down how they're able to solve problems, then they're not retaining that information for long periods of time.

They're just regurgitating. The reason some of our kids don't do well in algebra and geometry is because they don't know the process. They don't know how they got there. It also creates a creative outlet for them, especially when if they are able to do something musically, or something in a dramatic fashion. They're going to be more apt to remember the information.

R: Yes. They can be more open. Do you think you can share any frustrations that you and/or your music teacher have experienced when integrating, and if you have any frustrations to share, how did you overcome these frustrations?

Davis: Well I think one of the biggest things is what educators and principals talk about all the time, and it's the time factor. It's because the time that you create for music teachers to plan with regular classroom teachers is usually something that happens at the end of the day when teachers are very tired, and have spent the entire day with children. One of the things that we did at Neff is that we worked on a yearlong project with _________ Grand Opera and ________ University's Fotofest. There was a number of organizations involved.

What we did is each six week period, we would cover classes so that the specials teachers could meet with each grade level to talk about the project and how each one of
them could integrate it into what they were doing in their own class, whether it was the fine arts class, or whether it was the regular classroom.

One of the biggest frustrations I think for teachers is making sure that principals understand that good work doesn't happen at the end of the day when you're exhausted.

R: Yes.

Davis: It happens during the instructional day so that you are putting the value then on what the process is.

R: Good.

Davis: If I'm paying for substitutes to come in and cover those classes so that teachers can plan together, then it shows that the principal supports the program and we're willing to put our money where our mouth … I mean, how does that expression go?

R: Yes…

Davis: Put your money where your mouth is.

R:… put your money where your mouth is, yes.

Davis: Yes.

R: That is fantastic. Yes, I've heard time definitely is always the issue, isn't it? At school, it's the time. That time, oh my gosh. So elusive …

Davis: Well, and the other thing is working with fine arts, the other thing always has to be that we don't spend enough time doing the reflection piece. We did a great job of planning and talking about what we were going to do, but then after the process was over, we didn't spend a lot of time talking about then reflection on what we would do differently.
I think people had different ideas and then it wasn't until we go to the next planning that people were like, oh yeah, when that happened and …

R: Yes.

Davis: … but you also have to make sure that you create time in the process for the reflection piece to see what works and what doesn't work.

R: Absolutely. What do you think was your music teachers' level of confidence when integrating music and literacy integration? You've provided all this time to prepare, to research, to learn, so what do you think their level of confidence was when they were actually into the classroom and put it into practice?

Davis: Oh, they weren't confident at all. They didn't think that they understood the curriculum that was being taught and how it would integrate with either the piano classes that we had, or the vocal music classes that we had.

There was a lot of discomfort at the beginning about, well how am I supposed to teach literacy? Or we were integrating social studies and science. The first year we did social studies, and the last two years we've been working primarily on science.

The teachers were very uncomfortable, but it wasn't until they sat down with the grade levels and started talking about how much the two things went together. The life cycle of the butterfly … oh my gosh. There was so much that the music teachers were able to integrate into their lessons on that.

After they had conversations with the teachers, it became easier, but at the beginning they were very overwhelmed and didn't think that that was a possibility.

R: Yes, I can't imagine at the beginning, starting from scratch. Can you share any
successes you and your music teacher experience when integrating, after that process?

Davis: Well, we saw the communication between the classroom teachers and the fine arts teachers were stronger. They also had a different respect for each other in that people, regular teachers had a perception that the specials, all they did was cover or play songs, or sing songs during their class.

Then when they saw them integrating and actually putting into practice some of the lessons that they were teaching, there was a different respect and a different culture between what the ancillary teachers and what the regular classroom teachers were doing. The other thing is that we even had a number performances for our children, so it was a big thing for our kids to get up on stage and play the piano, and to dance and to have a drama presentation.

It was also a bigger thing when we had our __________ Grand Opera project, a yearly project, because we had a number of people from different arts organizations that came in and saw what children at elementary could actually do with either the Fotofest project, or the dance routine, or the drama presentations, or the musicals that were put on. People have a perception that you only see that in middle school and high school, and once they saw our children perform dance at an elementary school, they were just blown away. I mean we received a number of kudos from different organizations in Houston about what it looked like, and with such a large number of children because every child got to participate.

Every child had either a piece of work or a drama presentation, or were in a choir. There wasn't one child, including from pre-K thru five that were not part of the
celebration.

R: Wow.

Davis: That was really great opportunity to see something done at a school-wide level.

R: That's amazing. That really is. I mean, that amount of kids, wow. That's really …

Davis: There were 1,100 of them. It wasn't like …

R: Wow.

Davis: … there were 600 children. We had 1,100 children.

R: It's not like a small school.

Davis: Yes.

R: Wow.

Davis: Nobody was left out. Even teachers had presentations that they did because they'd learned from dance steps, they learned how to paint. We did a lot of things with young audiences where the artist came out and not only worked with the kids, but worked with the teachers as well. It was a great experience for everyone on the team.

R: That's fantastic. Now, you've mentioned several of these opportunities, but I wanted to ask if you can reiterate what professional development opportunities regarding music and literacy integration are available in your area?

Davis: Well the first thing that we did when we first started out is we worked a lot with young audiences. We had the artist come out and do something project-based with just the teachers. From there, the teachers then took what they learned and put it into their classrooms.

The other thing that we did is we attended the Saturday classes at the museum of
fine arts. I think it's called the Literacy through Art. I think that's what it's called. The teachers were then given, like at the time it was [state] objectives and how you can integrate a tax objective through fine arts, and have children understand, whether it's a math concept or reading concept, and then how you would put that into use in your classroom.

Also the fine art teachers did a lot of the training at the end where they shared ideas in how to incorporate. Then we also made it available so that the fine arts teachers went into the teacher's classroom.

R: I don't know what's going on. I love everything you're saying. I mean it's so hard because you're saying great things, and I'm losing what you're saying. I don't want to interrupt. Oh my gosh. Okay, so here we go again. Let me put you on speaker again.

Oh, okay. All right.

Davis: Okay. Did you hear the part about the Museum of Fine Arts, the young audiences?

R: Yes.

Davis: The Specials, the fine arts teachers did a lot of training with the classroom teachers, and then we made time during the instructional day where the fine arts teachers could actually go in and do lessons as like a co-teach with the classroom teachers and integrate fine art into the regular general education classes.

I'm trying to think. Oh, we did a big project with the _________ Grand Opera. We actually went to their site to kind of learn about the opera and how to infuse fine art into the classroom. Then they came out and we did a big, like a social studies or a
social… sociological study. It was actually an immigration project … or actually not immigration, it was more migration on how you got to the __________ area.

We taught children how to record. The teachers took the training then and put it into practice into their regular classroom. In __________, there's just so many [inaudible 00:18:06]. We worked with the writers in the schools, because when we did their migration project, we talked about how do you then record your journey then from wherever you came from to __________ Elementary.

People did it through pictures. The kids did it through writing. They did it through illustration. One child did it through a drama piece. I'm trying to think … and we did Fotofest, so I mean we worked a lot with pictures to tell about celebrations in the children's lives.

We worked with a local artist who then worked with the children to paint murals. We worked with the __________ School of Art, and they took the children's projects that they made … this is when we were working with the __________ Grand Opera on the 100 year celebration of the migration of the monarch butterflies from Mexico to Canada.

The children made their own animals that would migrate and talked to … and made up something about how they would migrate. Then those things were turned into these huge sculptures that are now sitting in the butterfly garden at the school. The children's little clay objects became into these huge sculptures …

R: Wow.

Davis: … that are now sitting on the campus. The kids can actually climb on it and play
on it. It's amazing. It is just absolutely amazing.

R: That is just awesome. You would say that there are definitely professional development opportunities if you wanted to pursue music and literacy integration in your classroom?

Davis: Oh, everything in the Houston area. Schools are not tapping a third of what's available out there in our __________ community. It is just amazing.

R: That is fantastic. Also, it was very interesting to hear that these are not only for music teachers, but also for just the classroom teacher. It was very interesting to hear how your fine arts teachers went into the actual classrooms and collaborated with the classroom teachers.

Davis: That was really the neatest thing and it really wasn't so much about the teachers, it was about the kids. Then the children understood how important the fine arts was, and if you had your music teacher in there, then wow, what does that say then about what I'm doing in music? It must be important.

R: Exactly.

Davis: It was a big thing for our children at the time when we did that.

R: To the children, also, it must have been a cool experience seeing both of their teachers, their music teacher and their classroom teacher, working together. I think that would have been a very good experience for them probably, right?

Davis: Yes, most definitely.

R: How will these opportunities help you achieve your campus goals? Do you think they help you achieve your campus goals?
Davis: Well I think they were one of the many strategies that we used to move the school forward academically.

R: Good.

Davis: It's just another … instead of doing afterschool tutorials, we did afterschool dance classes, we did afterschool bell classes, we did afterschool chess classes, and we did afterschool drawing classes.

Instead of making the day longer for children academically, we made sure that they were able to participate in extracurricular events that they would never have gotten in their community, and they could never have afforded to have received.

It was just, there were others … I don't want to say others. There were strategies that we had developed in order to move student performance further ahead.

R: Okay.

Davis: We did it in different ways than most campuses would have done it.

R: It was kind of like viewing it as an enrichment opportunity, right?

Davis: Well, I don't want to say enrichment, because when people say that, they think it's an add-on, and it really wasn't an add-on. It was part of our instructional vision. It was like, if I have a strategy for teaching children how to do multiplication, the strategy might be that they have to … multiplication would be to use the lattice model, which is something new for most children, and for most teachers.

The other way then is teaching them how to do it through music, or how do they have a beat to how they multiply. It's part of the instructional program. When people think of it as enrichment, they think that it's add-ons and it's not. It's just another way of
teaching children how to learn something new, and keep it in their long-term memory as opposed to their short-term memory.

R: Yes. It's not an add-on. A thing without a purpose is a very purposeful strategy.

Davis: Right. I'll give you a perfect example. My child had to take a ridiculous social studies test last week …

R: (Laughs).

Davis: … in fifth grade at her school, and then something that they had learned back in third grade, so I don't know why they were revisiting her grade level, but she had to write down all of the state capitals of all the states. Well she put them on flashcards. She had an app on iPad where she had to mix and match them, but she did not get that. When the teachers … I don't know, one of the parents brought a video of a song that someone had created and put visuals of what was happening in Nebraska, and what was happening in Texas, that's when she learned it. I can just imagine Marissa taking her social studies test on Friday, and she was probably singing the whole thing as she memorized the capitals of states and their capitals.

She was able to do it through a musical function rather than just a rote memory or a memorization. It was interesting because she got it. I mean we studied for days, and then two days before, the parent brought in the video off of YouTube, and she practiced that song for two days and she had them all memorized. It had nothing to do with the studying that we had done.

R: (Laughs).

Davis: It was just another way of her learning it because she's very musically inclined.
She hears music. She sees music. Her body moves to music.

R: Yes.

Davis: It's just one of her wonderful learning modalities that she has. A lot of children have that.

R: Yes, absolutely. Hello?

Davis: I'm still here.

R: Oh, okay. Yes, I completely agree with you that children definitely have different modalities to acquire learning, to understand something. Not all will understand writing it down on that chalkboard, or reading it from a book. Or, like you said, having mom practicing on index cards. That music, that drawing can definitely activate that learning. I think you've said it in many, many ways, but I'm going to ask you one more time. How do you value music and literacy integration?

Davis: Well, for me, I don't think you can teach children without it. I think that it has to be an essential part of any learning environment. I know you're talking specifically about music, but I think that for me, it's everything with fine arts because every child, you know, I never realized this. I always tell people that I don't have a fine arts bone in my body …

R: (Laughs).

Davis: In order to believe what I believe, and to practice and to carry it through in the classrooms, I think, gosh, I must have been the most talented person in the world, but I just never did music. I didn't do dance. I didn't draw, and it was about the teachers that I had. It wasn't an interest that was ever created in me.
R: Yes.

Davis: I carry it through in a different way, in a more creative way, in the vision that I have for children. I think for our children, for the kind of world that we're moving into with technology, with things from other countries, I think we have to make sure that we afford children that opportunity to participate and use it.

Like I say, it goes back to using both sides of the brain to perform, and to think and to come up with solutions. That's another big piece of it, is once you've put the two pieces together, you have better solutions and you have out-of-the-box solutions.

R: Yes, absolutely. Did you have a curriculum specialist in any of these schools where you had fine arts integration?

Davis: We had a person that worked primarily with reading and math, but the thing that we didn't do is we never met separately. The fine arts person met with the language arts, that met with the math, that met with the science person. We were always sitting down and seeing how we could integrate the content areas.

R: Okay.

Davis: We did it through … I don't if you're familiar with UBD, Understanding by Design?

R: I am not familiar but I've heard of it before.

Davis: Okay. It's a framework on how teachers develop units of study, and so the units of study, one of the core things that is part of it is a performance task at the end. You might have a unit of study that lasts two weeks, or four weeks, or six weeks, but at the end of that, those children then present the information that they learned in a performance
task.

One of the things that we were really working hard at, at __________ …

[recording continued at a later date due to technical issues]

R: Ok, so on our previous interview, the last thing I had recorded was, we were talking about, you were telling me about UBD – “Understanding by Design” at __________…

Davis: Yes

R: And you were saying that you had, this is what, I’m going to read what you said: “it’s a framework on how teachers develop units of study and the units of study one of the core things that is part of it is a performance task at the end. You might have a unit of study that lasts two weeks, or four weeks, or six weeks, but at the end of that, those children then present the information that they learned in a performance task. One of the things that we were really working hard at, at __________…” and that is when it got cut off, so if you can just amplify that a little bit, that would be great.

Davis: Well the thing that we were doing was that not only were the performance task related to what we were doing academically, but they were related to what we were doing in fine arts. So the fine arts teachers were working with the classroom teachers to provide a common performance task that had some drama or theater or music or dance in it, so that we were incorporating the fine arts as well as the academics.

R: Ok. Alright, and so, you mentioned that your curriculum specialist…you had people that….curriculum specialists in different…like she worked primarily with reading… Did you have two or just one person that worked with reading and one with math or that person worked with both together?
Davis: They worked both hand in hand. So that somebody was working with the teachers like in reading they can just take their ideas like language arts, reading and writing and incorporate it with what they did in math as well.

R: And so how do you think these people valued the integration of music and literacy?

Davis: Um, well, they saw the importance of integration so that the children were making the connection between what they were doing in the fine arts classrooms as well as what they were doing in the regular classroom. So it also showed the teachers that the children were a lot more creative than they had thought or what their perception was and children, you know, with the amount of music and technology that they had they were able to incorporate that into a lot of their lessons.

R: Ok. And what professional development opportunities regarding music and literacy integration were you able to facilitate for your music teacher specifically? Were there any opportunities that you were able to facilitate?

Davis: We did a lot, at the beginning we did a lot of training with the Museum of Fine Arts. We worked a lot with the __________ Grand Opera. They did training for all of our teachers. They worked with the fine arts department in ____________ at the time when they went on staff development days from work. They had artists come out and meet with them. We actually had a dancer from the ___________ Ballet, they came out and did a one day session with the children in dance class. Um, trying to think what else we did…and there was also the academic were they continued to receive the information about what the children needed to be doing at every grade level. Not only did they have their own [state objectives] that they had to teach, but they had to work around the [state
objectives] at the grade level as well. So they had to be very, you see we integrated it with Science. So, cause our science scores were the ones – they weren’t low – they were like 89%, but that was the one content that was keeping us away from being an Exemplary school at that time. And so we, they integrated science vocabulary and how things, [00:05:16 - inaudible] came together, everything about science. So that was the content that we were working on at the time.

R: Ok. And, so, how do you think that these professional development opportunities helped your music teacher? Do you think it made her more confident in implementing this integration in her classroom?

Davis: Yes, I think so because it also made them feel like they were part of – testing isn’t the whole thing in the school – but when you have that accountability and everybody felt responsible for it and so it created an accountability in the system that just wasn’t for the classroom teacher. It was for the lower grades as well as the fine arts teachers. Because they were also teaching the vocabulary and getting the kids ready for testing whether it was Stanfford and Aprenda or [state test] testing, it was [state test, different acronym] at the time, but getting them ready for any kind of testing that they had to have.

R: OK. Now what role do you think that the available research regarding music and literacy integration played in this implementation of integration in your school? Was all this professional development that you had research based? Did it have an important part in your consideration?

Davis: Yes. Ever since we received the grant, eleven years ago to work with __________ A Plus, the grant that we actually ended up receiving a lot of material and supplies and
training, everything came from research. And so we just took out the recent research about how important, number one, Fine Arts is to a young child and then we also looked at working with Title I children and the lack of opportunities that they received and so if they don’t get it as a neighborhood, then they get it in their schools and we looked at all of the research and data that showed how important Fine Arts is to a child.

R: What advice would you offer to others trying to implement music and literacy integration in their classrooms or their schools or their districts? What would be your advice?

Davis: Well, I think that you have to make sure that you have the buy-in from the teachers and you have to start like a small cadre of people to start talking about it and researching and then having those teachers share with the rest of the staff about the importance. You also have to be able to work well with outside organizations because when I led that we worked with Writers in the School, we worked with Young Audiences, we worked with the Houston Ballet, we worked with the ___________ Grand Opera, we worked with ___________ University Continuing Education, the Literacy Project with ___________, we worked with FotoFest, oh gosh, who else were we partnering with…So you have to be able to work with outside organizations because the school district or even the school, do not have the capacity to have all those organizations at their fingertips. So you have to be able to manage those and reach out and ask for assistance. A lot of them provided free services. ___________ Grand Opera wrote a grant, they received a federal grant, it was called ___________ [00:09:41 – inaudible] and they were able to fund all of the opera visits that we had. We went to the opera, and
they had one person that was working with us during school time to do our end of the year project. So you just have to be able to reach out and work with other organizations.

R: So, to capture, everything that you have wonderfully contributed, in an ideal situation, how – if you were going to just put it in a statement – how should music and literacy integration be valued?

Davis: I think it needs to be a part, a core of what you are doing. I think that it should not be an add-on program when we look at the full educational program for children that needs to be a vital piece of it. I don’t think that you should just only look at your academic program, you should be able to look at your physical education program, your fine arts program, and your academic program altogether. And it sounds like UBD, where you are looking at a unit of study and you are looking at what is your overall goal for your children. Your overall goal is for your children to be able to compete whether is academically or through the fine arts strand when they go into middle school and high school. Because the only thing it does is it adds value to the child because when they start applying for college they want to see “did you participate in a dance group?” “did you participate on an athletic team?” “did you participate in a band?” So all it does is it adds value to the children as they progress into high school or college. And that’s our overall goal is to get children, every child should be able to have the opportunity to be accepted into a college of their choice and to continue their learning.

R: Excellent. Alright, those are the questions I had left for you. Any other remarks that you wish to convey?

Davis: I think one of the things to add is that it doesn’t take extra money. Every school
has fine arts teachers and so we didn’t use any extra, well we did through the grants with A Plus, to get like our dance floor, and our piano lab, but it really doesn’t take any extra money in order to do a fine arts program because the district gives you your personnel and they give you your supplies. And so how a principal chooses to fund those and use those to add to the academic value to your school it doesn’t really cost more. It’s just how you use those extra people.

R: And that’s so important because that’s probably one of the biggest fears that administrators can have, thinking about the cost. How am I going to do this without the funds.

Davis: Well the thing is, like I said earlier those organizations out there that have their own funding and they’re just looking for schools to be able to assist because they also have to show whatever funding organization they have that you are working with children in the school setting. And they’re able to provide, If not free, low cost services to the campuses. And so, like I said, you’re not looking at more money, you’re just looking at more integration and also collaboration between other outside organizations. So it doesn’t have to cost you more money. Often times think that it does, and once you get started, yes, you start putting your money where your mouth is, but you do it because you think it’s important and it’s vital to a child’s education.

R: Excellent. Alright. I appreciate it, I mean, you don’t know how much I appreciate it! Thank you, thank you, thank you!
Mr. Lopez

R: My first question is I’m just going to ask you to please describe your position and what led you to this career choice?

Lopez: I’m a school principal and I am in this position because I felt like the impact that I had in the classroom was not satisfying anymore. I wanted to do more. After my classroom I went and managed a parent literacy program, the Even Start. I don’t know if you’re familiar with it but it’s a program where we teach parents struggling using techniques on how to teach their little ones to read. While they’re getting GEDs, education parenting classes we educate their 9 months to 3-year old kids. I did that for 3 years and then after that I moved into a middle school, ________ Middle School. We actually moved it into a fine arts magnet and worked there for 2 years and this school or split. They have their early childhood center available so I applied and here I am. I went back to early childhood.

R: Early childhood. That is great. It’s interesting what you said about being in a fine arts magnet school before. You’ve dealt then with the fine arts. Cool.

Lopez: Yeah. We had a very good composer. Actually he’s a musician, a local musician. He was our band instructor and we’ve done some good things and that program base is still one of the strongest.

R: They’re still doing it?

Lopez: One of the strongest in the district.
R: In the district? Cool. All right. What is the first thing that comes to mind when you hear the phrase music and literacy integration? What pops in your head?

Lopez: I hear music as kids are maybe reading, maybe teachers actually using somewhat the techniques that they use and teaching music integrated and the literacy instruction. Exposing our kids in different ways into music through literacy.

R: You see it taking place in the classroom, in the homeroom classroom or in the music classroom? When you hear about it where do you see it most happening, in the classroom or in the music classroom by music teacher?

Lopez: Obviously if you have a music class specifically there’s going to be much more instructions there. You can actually still use music to educate kids. One of the things that we are trying to implement here is there in the cafeteria put some music for the kids to enjoy while they eat. That’s one of the things that I wanted to do at _____ but I never found the resource. I want to do things that have research-base and one of the things is like I never want to put Vivaldi or Bach into a cafeteria full of middle schoolers without telling them why this is important to them. I think that would be a great thing. I was never educated with music but my parents always exposed us to music, yes.

R: What are your beliefs regarding music and literacy integration?

Lopez: Reading is important. If you are tied to something that right away you don’t, you can get your emotions tied to it, it’s easier. You can actually correlate both of the things at the same and then make sure that the students they read, they can listen to music and they have something positive while they read.

R: More there happening.
Lopez: Yeah.

R: How did you become aware of music integration?

Lopez: Like I say, my parents I remember every morning my mom would play Vivaldi and as we get ready to go to school and that … I feel very fond of Vivaldi and it wasn’t something that turned me off. As I read I listen to music. It is something that since I’m very young, very familiar with it.

R: It’s part you say your personal, okay.

Lopez: My personal. Yeah. It’s not something that I learned in school it’s something that I personally experience.

R: Yeah. You personally integrated music and literacy as listening while you read a or,..

Lopez: While I read or I study.

R: Okay.

Lopez: When I was a teacher I would put music as my kids would do the test or they do any type and it wasn’t classical music that I would play. I taught 3rd grade.

R: Okay. Good, 3rd graders. What compels you and your music teacher to support and practice music and literacy integration in your school?

Lopez: This is an early childhood center. It’s a literacy center but it is also a fine arts school. One of the things I want to do is not only expose my kids to music but to all sorts of fine arts. Drama, dance, choir and I feel like that will enrich the student experience in our school. It’s not necessarily only music but music and we do have some great music teachers. They work and introduce this constantly to our students. It’s something that I
want to make sure that our students in our communities know that our school has a balance of literacy and academic rigor but we also want to expose our kids to fine arts.

R: To the fine arts.

Lopez: Yeah, fine arts background.

R: Do you think your music teacher and maybe somehow that in her classroom, in her music classroom and integrate some sort of literacy instruction while she teaches music?

Lopez: I think she does read to them. I think she has read bibliographies of musicians. We do have two types of music here. We have the choir and we have the instrument. They do have two different things. How are you going to be able to do choir? There is that type of literacy and not only [crosstalk 00:07:52].

R: Like the music, the written music or the songs that they do. Okay. What aspects of your personality, you mentioned a little bit before growing up with music but what aspects of your personality and attitude you think contributes to shape your feelings about music and literacy integration?

Lopez: Personally when I was little I was raised in Mexico. In Mexico they try to bring this type of education where there is an exposure to a good level of the fine arts. I bring that to my position and when I have my kids here I not only allow them to learn to do choirs and to sing but I also want them to perform and that’s one of the things I keep telling my parents that I used to remember when I did Baile del Viejito and that was kinder and I still remember. I tell my parents that we want to expose our kids to a good level of rigor but we also want to give them, enrich their beginning of the academics into giving them something positive when they’re performing.
The little ones and we, I try to do a performance every month and to be able to expose, to be able to be in front of the kids, I mean in front of their parents and be able to do some type of performance that’s very positive for the kids’ self-esteem, for the kids’ memory so one of the things is I want them to build good memories from our campus.

R: Grow up with good memories.

Lopez: Absolutely.

R: How do you think in music and literacy integration complement your educational philosophy.

Lopez: Actually it makes my philosophy because I want my students to learn through fine arts and that to be able to learn how to read about cultural things like humanities. That’s one of the things that it helps me actually create that ambition. I want to make sure that our kids have that exposure. To be able to know composers or be able to recognize a melody as they grow up. You do have to respect the times and you have to respect people’s taste and music sound because I don’t want them just to listen to classical music. I want them to be exposed to all kinds of music but to have an appreciation to put it not just to listen to it but to have an appreciation for it.

R: For that. To what degree do you think that music and literacy integration is helpful to your student’s academic achievement? Do you think they can learn specifically language arts through music?

Lopez: This year, this is my first year here in this campus and one of the things that I wanted to do is integrate more the musical aspect and that requires professional developments and you can’t just tell the teacher teach.
R: Do it.

Lopez: Yeah, teach through music. That’s not going to happen. That is a step that I want to achieve. I don’t think that we’re there yet but yeah, I could definitely believe that it could be done.

R: It could happen.

Lopez: Yes. You do need to have people; they know how to do it to be able to do that. Actually, Ms. _________ has actually done some professional development from _________ University and she came here and showed some of my staff how to teach using dance. That’s one of the ways to do it because at the beginning of the year I keep telling my teachers, “You know what, this is a fine arts campus make sure that you integrate arts.” That means so much to a lot of people one of the things that we need to do is make sure that they have some guidance on how to do that.

R: Yes because you cannot just like you said, just tell them, “Hey, do it.”

Lopez: “Do it.” Yeah.

R: Maybe this is my next question and I think it’s a little bit of what you just said. What challenges does your music teacher face when integrating music and literacy and maybe even the homeroom teachers, what challenges do you think?

Lopez: I think it is the lack of training, professional development. We do need to find a good curriculum. Trust me I have tried to look for it. I have found some good articles to support this type of integration of fine arts and literacy. Like I said if I’m going to be doing something I want to make sure that we have resources.

R: Exactly.
Lopez: I don’t think I have found a good curriculum where I say this should be the one.

R: This is what I want.

Lopez: You come in to my campus and you walk into my teacher’s classroom I want you to say, “Okay this, this is happening here.” We’re not there yet. It’s just a working progress.

R: A work in progress. Maybe in this next question might be already answered because I was going to ask you share any frustrations that you have experienced when integrating music and literacy in your school and it’s probably maybe would you say trying to find a curriculum that you can use maybe.

Lopez: Yeah, professional development. One of the other things that you need to be aware of is that our campus is split. We have a Pre-K to 1st and then we have another campus, which is 2nd to 5th. One of the biggest challenges is that we do share our ancillary teachers and that to me is one of the biggest difficulties because if we had a music teacher here she or he will be able to help give us some guidance but since those guys after 11:00 they go the other campuses to do some more teaching they’re not truly able to do wonders. We’re able to expose our students but not to the level where I would want.

It is and like I said a working progress. That’s one of the biggest frustrations I have. I’m requiring a professional to split their time into two campuses with two different expectations, with two different philosophies and I would not want that. I told anyone that works with me that I’m not going to do something that I’m not comfortable doing and I’m not going to ask you to do it. We will try to meet with them. We have met
with them and trying to solve this problem and make it easier or more effective for
everybody. Again, you know what this year we’re probably going to have to go the way
we’re doing right now but coming 2014, 2015 I think we’ll have to figure something else
so we could have all the teachers and not to have them go over there.

R: Yeah. That’s true because they will be following two different visions like you said
and it’s like having two different jobs.

Lopez: That’s right. You know what? My emphasis is really into exposing my kids to
the fine arts and be able to give them positive memories. I have Pre-K to 1st and not to
say that we don’t have high expectation for our kids but we don’t have a test that the state
gives us and say, “You better have those kids.” You go to principal’s desk to emphasis,
that’s your job. Fortunately, I don’t have that pressure.

R: You’re lucky.

Lopez: We create our own pressure. We create our own expectation because I feel like
we have a great opportunity and if we do it right we can share this type of job, this
formula to the other districts.

R: You have the most precious age. This is so important. This is the foundation of their
lives.

Lopez: Right.

R: This is fantastic. That’s your, I would say your test.

Lopez: That’s right.

R: What are they going to become after they leave here? That’s your standardize test. I
think it’s important.
Lopez: You know what? We don’t want anybody to leave our campus without reading. Everybody will be reading. They’ll have the foundation. There won’t be gaps and my hope is that we ease their job. We make it easier so they won’t be focused so much in making sure the students are ready. Kids will come in reading, you just continue the positive reading and they’ll be able to perform well with those tests without you trying to teach them to a test or curriculum. That’s my goal to give them that, to give them good positive kids that are ready to learn and then they can do and continue what we’re doing here.

R: Yeah. You would say that because my next question is what is your music teacher’s level of confidence when integrating music and literacy integration you would say that probably in the developing stages just because of the professional development not being

Lopez: Yeah and you know what to be honest, one of the issues that we have with our music teacher she has found another job and she’s going to be finding …

R: I met her the other day, yeah.

Lopez: Yeah. We’ll be contacting someone and I’m hoping that she decided to go somewhere else because she found better opportunities and not because the assignment that she had this year. Whatever her decision was we’ll respect it but my point is to have someone here and be able to give us that type of quality instruction that we want for kids. Yeah, I don’t think she had the chance to be able to integrate a lot of the stuff we wanted to do but we have the vision, we have the goal and I think once we find the right person or the person willing to stick around for …

R: A little bit.
Lopez: One or two years, we should be able to be in good shape.

R: Okay. Do you know of any successes she might have had, the music teacher might have experienced integrating music and literacy in your school or do you like you said, it’s still …

Lopez: When we started our year they were very skeptical about working with Pre-K and Kindergartens. Anything it was able to be done. If I would say that one of the success stories would be that they were able to see that the kids were able to learn, the Pre-K. I don’t know if you have ever taught Pre-K or kinder or you ever walk into. Music plays a huge part on their literacy, their oral skills and do you know if you see our Pre-Kinders sing, you see our Pre-Kinders perform I would say that even though they might not see it but they have taught our kids some literacy skills.

R: They probably have been successful they just don’t know it.

Lopez: Exactly. You know what unfortunately what we’re having right now is not much that we can celebrate. I have recognized their success and I have but it is like 5 minutes here, okay that’s good now I’ll have to go over there and just have to do my other tasks. I’m not very happy and not too comfortable but it’s what we have right now.

R: That’s the way it is. Yeah. You have to take it. What professional develop opportunities regarding music and literacy integration are available in your area that you know of?

Lopez: Professional development in my area. I go back to my years in ____ because the band instructor was … he always went to this conference and I wanted to take our…

R: __MEA maybe in ________ ?
Lopez: Yeah because he would never stay … He always left.

R: Yeah, left it. Yeah.

Lopez: This year I think we’re sending Ms. Rodriguez to that one and to be honest and I’m not sure if you ever run into the other principals but I told him, “Listen, help me pay for some of this.” He’s like, “Yeah. You know what I don’t think it’s …” I don’t think it was so important for him to do professional development for our ancillary teachers and when I saw that we have right now a conference in _________. I think it’s the fine arts.

R: It’s ________?

Lopez: I think so.

R: Yes, yes.

Lopez: I told him, “Let’s send a couple of our staff here.” He’s like, “Well I don’t know if I can,” and I’m going to send some. I’m going to send someone because no matter what you can’t expect people to perform if you don’t give them tool or you don’t give them an instrument for that, skills for them to learn. Right now, I’m sending Ms. Rodriguez and we were trying to send the other art teacher but she was not … She got married so she’s going to be in a honeymoon.

R: Okay.

Lopez: ________ is going, Ms. ___________ is going and my hopes is that she’s going to be able to get some good contacts, get some ideas for us to come and bring over here.

R: Become an implement, yeah. You think that these professional developments, opportunities will help implement music and literacy integration in your school eventually?
Lopez: I don’t know but it’s my hope that we’ll get that. A lot of the times you send teachers to professional developments and they don’t pay attention. My hope is that they’ll bring some …

R: We are.

Lopez: They’ll bring ideas and they’ll bring strategies so they can share with colleagues. To be honest I feel like the best way for us to be able to prepare our teachers into integrating music and fine arts into our curriculum is bringing someone over here and maybe paying a Saturday and then everybody stays here and do a whole day of training on how to get ideas and show that they understand how those ideas can be implemented and then having the teachers come up with their own strategies or how does those strategies look like in their classroom.

R: They can take ownership of their learning.

Lopez: That’s right.

R: That’s a great idea.

Lopez: I think that will be the best way to do it but …

R: You were saying that that’s your roadmap to achieve your campus goal?

Lopez: Yeah, absolutely. Yeah, building human capital is this goal, is the recipe for success. You prepare your teachers. First you have to have the right people and then you give them tools and they’d be able to do that.

R: The tools are main. I think you said it in different ways but I want you to reiterate how do you value music and literacy integration?
Lopez: Yeah. I think it’s extremely important to have music be integrated into literacy. Literacy looks different in every grade level. Like I mentioned in Pre-K you don’t necessarily have to be reading with them. You can develop singing skills with them. That is a development of literacy with the kids. Every grade level you see the progressions and my hopes is that eventually some of these kids…In the other school they do play music. Right now we’re just exploring. Our teachers who are a little skeptical about it but finding the right person saying, “Yes, I can do this.” We could definitely achieve a lot with the integration of music and literacy.

R: Good. How do you think that your curriculum specialist or I don’t know if they call it differently here, can use instructional coach?

Lopez: Teacher development specialist.

R: Okay. How do you think person in your school values music and literacy integration?

Lopez: I don’t think that there is that. You mean the person that comes from the district or the person I have in campus?

R: The person you have in campus.

Lopez: I think she has a good understanding and she knows that that’s important to me so she goes with what I ask. I feel like she understands that the music and the fine arts are excellent way of introducing a lot of subjects to our kids.

R: In an ideal situation where everything is pink...

Lopez: Absolutely.

R: How do you think music and literacy integration should be valued by everybody?
Lopez: I think it should be valued highly. Literacy and the fine arts … I’m sorry. Literacy, music and the fine arts I think is a great combination to achieve especially for kids that I work with, the early ones, the little ones. I think music in their classroom is exceptional. We have kids all the way to our kindergarten; we should have our first grader be able to sing during the morning so they can start the day. It’s an excellent way to learn routine. It’s a good way to start learning morning numbers, ABC’s, days of the weeks and routines first. Yeah, it should be valued highly.

R: You mentioned that you’re looking to find. Next question was going to be what professional developments do you facilitate for your music teacher but you mentioned that you’re willing to provide for them to go and attend professional development opportunities but you also wish to even better bring someone to school.

Lopez: To prepare every teacher. Not necessarily our music teacher but to prepare everybody.

R: Everybody.

Lopez: I think most of my teachers understand the importance of music during their instruction but they don’t understand why it’s important. Maybe that’s the missing piece. They’re like, “Will we do this because it’s a routine?” To share, I have a little 9, 10-month baby and when I stay at home in the weekend we have a little music like so we could sing and he just listens and he just looks at me but we see the importance of that.

R: Yes, absolutely. What role and you mentioned earlier that research to you is very important and that everything you bring has its research-base so what role does the available research regarding music and literacy integration has played in maybe not right
now the implementation but it has played into your setting up your campus goals for integration.

Lopez: I think it’s easier because if I tell teachers, “Go ahead and implement music to your instruction,” they are, “Okay, we’ll do it because he’s telling us to do it,” but if I bring research that shows that there’s positive effects or positive benefits for our students to learn through music it’s more powerful. It’s easier now to get buy in from our teachers but to justify in our district. If the district comes, this person comes and say, “Why all these music? Why all these fine arts?” It’s easier to show, “Let me show you the resource. Let me show you the articles that justify why we do this.”

R: You find that there’s justification there. Have you been able to find any so far?

Lopez: During _______, I started a doctorate program too with U of__ so I have the tools to be able to research. I was at ______ I didn’t have that. It was very difficult for me to find research and articles that justify what … That’s why I never implemented classical music but now that I have …

R: The tools.

Lopez: JSTOR and EBSCO and all that stuff I’m able to get all of this information and say, “Okay, here it goes.” Like I mentioned I have found some good articles to justify and shows the benefit of integrating fine arts in their early childhood education.

R: What advice would you offer to others, can be in other school, another principal, what advice would you give them when trying to implement music and literacy integration?

Lopez: First, again just extremely piece, there’s always something. If I would find the professional developments, if I would find the answer I would be able to tell them,
“Okay, do it like this.” It’s just like I can’t tell a teacher to teach this. I could advice some of my colleagues to implement and incorporate music but first, if I would want to make a positive impact on those individuals, on those principal for example, I will have to make it very easy on them to be able to locate it and say, “Okay, this is a good idea and moving along,” because their heart and their minds are on the right places unfortunately the emphasis is not necessarily where their heart and minds are. At least ensuring the students can pass those tests.

I could talk to principals and tell them, “You know what, fine arts and music will help you achieve this,” but I don’t have to have first professional development line up and tell them, “This is how you should do it,” and articles that shows why they should be doing it. As far as advice I would say, I do it because I have a passion and I believe in it. Again, you know what? If I would have been in a campus where I have Pre-K to 5th I don’t know if I have that flexibility. To be honest I will make the effort to incorporate music into our campus. As far as advices if they can see how the students enjoy singing and they can see students perform and they can see how a teacher can easily tie those two things together they will see the benefits.

R: You probably have to like model it first and then tell them, “Hey, this is what I’m doing, take a look.”

Lopez: Yeah, absolutely.

R: All right. Any other remarks you wish to convey regarding this experience, music and literacy integration?
Lopez: This is a great experiment that our district is doing, splitting these two campuses. In fact that’s my doctorate dissertation that this whole thing going out. One of the things that I noticed is that I do talk to other early childhood center principals and they all have signs and they have other emphasis in their campus but whenever I’m able to talk to them about fine arts they’re like surprised, they’re like, “Okay. I didn’t realize that that would be something that we would want to incorporate,” especially if singing is happening every day in the classroom especially if role playing is happening. I believe as an early childhood centers, fine arts is the best way to do it. That is something that I’m sending out myself to prove that the fine arts and splitting our campuses is the best way to do fine arts.

R: Probably the best way.

Lopez: To start it, to do at elementary.

R: Thank you so much. I appreciate your insight. It’s really very, very …
Mr. Martin

R: Please describe your position and what led you to this career choice.

Martin: I'm the principal of ________ Academy for the Performing Arts. I've been the principal for three years. Prior to that, I was an assistant principal at the middle school level for total of 11 years and prior to that I was in a classroom teaching elementary school, fourth grade and then third grade for six years.

What led me to the teaching profession was the fact that my father was a teacher for 37 years and he helped cultivate my interest in the teaching field. Once in the teaching field, I felt a strong desire to pursue administration and once I became an assistant principal and felt like I had adequate experience, I began looking for a position as a building principal. All of my 20 years have been spent in the ________ Independent School District, starting in 1993.

R: What is the first thing that comes to mind when you hear the phrase music and literacy integration, specifically from the perspective of an administrator, in a performing arts school.

Martin: I think the first thing that jumps to my mind is that it could yield some very important benefits to children. I think that if done correctly, it would be done in the music classroom but also in the core area classrooms. There would be a flow of ideas, back and forth from the rotation class to the core curriculum classes. This sharing of ideas, the way in which we communicate to pool our resources, would help ensure that we are truly and authentically, integrated.
R: Your personal beliefs regarding music and literacy integration, what do you think they are?

Martin: I think that they both deal with many of the same objectives. I think that music and literacy deal with the process of understanding point of view, they deal with emotion, they deal with setting, and they deal with fact and opinion. There's typically sequencing involved. They both have many overlapping, what I would call themes, but the state would call ________.

R: How did you personally become aware of music and literacy integration?

Martin: I suppose that it occurred sometime during the years in which I was an assistant principal. I began to see the importance of, and I the need to talk to, what are referred to as “electives” teachers at the middle school level. Understanding the importance of these teachers and the critical need with which they could provide support to the core curriculum areas. I began to provide them with examples of how authentic integration could be accomplished. I would talk to the department about how they could then relate what they're doing to the real life experiences that our kids were experiencing in those classes. It didn't matter whether it was band or choir or orchestra or even some of the other electives, like P.E. There was certainly ways in which we could have done things to make them connect.

R: Was there a need or was this something that you thought was just beneficial and you wanted to try it?

Martin: It came as a result of my reading articles about brain research. Talking about right and left brain, not only in terms of music but art, colors and sound, things of that
nature and the way in which the brain can then process things and hold those things in the memory for longer periods of times.

It wasn't something I just thought up. It was something that after reading a couple of articles about the brain and how the brain learns seemed to indicate to me that we were perhaps not doing enough of a service for our children.

R: Would you say that's what compelled you to support the practice of music and literacy integration, your research?

Martin: Yes, very much so.

R: What aspects of your personality and your attitudes would you say that contribute to shape your feelings towards music and literacy integration?

Martin: I think it comes down to the success of children. My belief is that we help kids succeed, one child at a time based on their ability to do so at their level. I think that we have to look at every way in which a child can learn. I have a thirteen year old severely autistic son. The one thing that he enjoys is music. It happens to be Blues Clues and other musical toys, but music is the thing that he is interested in.

R: I think you've already mentioned this, if you maybe can expand a little bit more. How this practice then complements your educational philosophy? You mentioned already that you believe that it's the success of the kids. It can be achieved through many modes. Is there anything, any other way you feel this practice complements your philosophy as an educator?

Martin: I think it comes down to understanding brain research. I think that after reading Carol Dweck and reading Eric Jensen and other individuals who talk about brain
research, you need to look at what it is that will help our kids, not only learn, but then be better able to retain knowledge over the long run. It's an association, a connection between the right and left hemispheres and how do we create that connection, how do we appeal the both hemispheres. What can we do to get the concrete and sequential side of the brain connected to the creative side? That central idea is what has shaped my desire to see this integration occur.

R: What degree do you the music and literacy integration being helpful to your students here in your school to your students academic achievement?

Martin: That is a tremendous unknown. The truth is that we have not yet reached the point where music and literacy, on this campus, are integrated on a meaningful level. That is why I fervently believe that this idea of curricular integration goes beyond music. I really subscribe to the belief that curricular integration involves all of the performing arts. There is a ‘disconnect’ on this campus between the core and the performing arts. It's a focus of mine and an objective of mine to get them to create that very legitimate connection. It has not happened yet, but it's something that has been discussed on an ongoing basis.

R: What challenges do you think that your music teacher and perhaps your classroom teachers, you think, face, when trying to do this ... say it has not happen yet. What challenges do you think are preventing them from fully achieve this integration?

Martin: The easiest excuse would be a lack of time. But that's just an excuse, that's not a legitimate reason. The legitimate reason is a lack of commitment. It's a lack commitment on the part of the performing arts teachers and the core content area teachers to sacrifice
time after school or before school to collaborate and produce meaningful lessons that would integrate music and literacy.

R: Would you say ... do you think they have any frustrations that will cause this lack of commitment or that they don't feel they want to do this because there's some frustrations or just simply just lack of commitment?

Martin: I don't believe it has anything to do with frustration. I think it has to do with a lack of commitment and lack of desire to set aside time to make it happen. The cynical part of me would say, “If I allocated funds for curriculum writing, would it get done?” The answer is, “I don't think so because I don't think there would be enough people who still would be willing to give up summer hours to come in and actually work on creating cohesive units.”

R: Even if they created it, will they be willing to implement?

Martin: The implementation part is the responsibility of the administrative team. We can make sure that it's carried out. What we can't do is to do it for them. That has to be something that is done by the teachers for the teachers. Again, I would say that I don't think that that commitment will be altered by compensating them for their time. I still think that there would be a lack of dedication to that process.

R: What do you think is specifically your music teacher’s level of confidence when integrating music and literacy in their classrooms?

Martin: Her level of confidence is very high.

R: Can you share, are there any successes where you ... we understand that it hasn't been fully developed but has there been any occasions where it has happened at least to some
degree, this music and literacy integration and has there any success that you had been a part of or witnessed?

Martin: Yes, there was one lesson in the three years I've been here where I observed the music teacher using an authentic piece of literature that was set to a tune and accompanied by [state objectives] aligned questions.

R: You deem that it was successful?

Martin: In as much as the students were able to participate in the question and answer process, yes. How many of the students were successful, if we were looking at PDAS it would be well under the 80% proficient threshold. But, the fact is that the lesson was taught. That, in and of itself, is a positive.

R: What professional development opportunities regarding music and literacy integration do you think are ... is, if it's one or are available in your area?

Martin: I know that the music teacher attends music conferences on the state and the national level. Beyond that I would be hard pressed to think of other offerings. The person who comes to my mind most easily is Dr. Timothy Rasinski who had been a presenter in his district a handful of times, three, four times and has talked about the importance of songs and the singing of songs to increase fluency and comprehension. I've only heard him once and it was outside of the district, but I know that he's been retained by the district on at least three separate occasions. He is very active proponent and I've shared many of his examples with the staff of using singing to help students with their reading ability.

R: At the district level, you could say that district has provided some resources.
Martin: The district has provided some resources. Yes.

R: How do you think these opportunities to __MEA, MENC, and with Dr. Rasinski. How do you they had helped, specifically your music teacher implementing this integration in your school?

Martin: That's an unknown. I couldn't quantify that.

R: Do you think these opportunities somehow, specifically ... maybe Dr. Rasinski because I'm assuming that your, at least most of your staff has been able to attend and see. How do you think these opportunities had helped you achieve your campus goals to some level?

Martin: They've increased the awareness but have not helped accomplish.

R: If you can put a value, how would you value music and literacy integration?

Martin: I value it very highly. On a scale of one to ten, ten being the highest. I would say the importance of complete authentic integration between music and literacy is probably a ten. Because of what brain based research tells us. Because of what we've learned about singing songs and how songs rhyme and how songs are repetitive and how singing the same song over and over again does in fact increase fluency. With that comes comprehension. Not perhaps at the same rate as fluency, but comprehension does come as a result of increased fluency.

I read a book called “In Praise of Slow Reading” which contradicts a lot of what has been said in terms of words correct per minute. Even Dr. Rasinski, the person who freely admits that he was more responsible for having created these misconceptions, states that words correct per minute is not as important as deep reading. He has said that
he's tried to retract his prior statements regarding the efficacy of reading fluency again and again saying that the importance of reading quickly is not as important as reading with prosody and comprehension.

Speaking for myself, I'm a slow reader and I doubt very much that I could meet the standards that the fourth graders have to make on this campus in terms of words correct per minute when you have to read them aloud and then answer comprehension questions, it's 140. I don't read very quickly. Certainly wouldn't read with any kind of meaning behind what I was reading nor would I be able to retain any of the basic information that I was supposed to retain in order to answer questions.

R: I personally find myself sometimes I had to read and read and read and read same sentence to fully grasp the meaning.

How do you think curriculum specialists and you call it skill specialists here in your school, in your district. How do you think, he or she or they because I think you have more than one value music and literacy integration in your school?

Martin: I think they understand the importance, but are restricted by time.

R: In an ideal situation where everything is perfect and pink. How should everybody, from top to bottom, from you all the way down to everybody in the school should value music and literacy integration?

Martin: I think they should all see music and literacy integration for what it is. One of the most fundamental ways in which we can get kids to learn to read.

R: I'm reading these questions but I already asked you that. Going back to professional development, aside from TMEA, MENC and district, the district opportunities that
you've mentioned before. I want to change this question a little bit. If there was anything available that your music teacher and perhaps your teachers, your classroom teachers. If there was an opportunity where they could go and attend the professional development that will help them better understand and fully integrate, completely integrate music and literacy integration in the class. Would you support that?

Martin: Absolutely. Through Teacher Created Materials, I tried to retain the services of Dr. Rasinski. This was at the beginning of last year, but I was unable to do so. He had multiple commitments. Yes, he was in the district at the end of the 2012 school year. I was not able to get him to lead off the beginning of the 2012–2013 school year. That's who I was aiming for. We had allocated the funds to do so, and we could have paid his retainer. He was the one that I wanted. We could not get him.

R: You're willing if the opportunity presents again, you would definitely.

Martin: Absolutely, I'm willing. I thought it was critical that every single teacher on this campus here, what he had to say about the importance of singing songs to children. He has numerous studies to reinforce what he's discussed. I think that it would also help them understand that there's nothing wrong with doing that in the classroom. I firmly believe that unlike the years in which I attended kinder, first, and second grades, where teachers did seem to sing songs. It's pushed towards the music teacher rather than something that is done every single morning and every afternoon. I could remember singing the good morning song, then it's the clean up time song, lining up for lunch. There was a song that seemed to relate to everyone single thing that we did and we all
sang it together and we all sang in unison and we all did the thing that it was asking us to do.

I can remember vividly doing that in third grade. Beyond that, a little fuzzy, but I know that in third grade we were still singing the good morning song and other songs as well.

R: I wonder, do you think that classroom teachers might be, at some degree, a little bit intimidating of having to sing, feeling confident with their ability to sing.

Martin: Just like their ability to read aloud. One of the things that we've talked about here and I've modeled is the importance of reading with voices. The example that I usually use is the Lorax and I'll read the Lorax aloud enough doing the different voices for the ones learn and so on and so forth. I think that there's a difficulty, maybe a reticence or need for them not to do that for fear that they'll lose some element of control that they won't use voices when they read. They won't change their intonation. Men won't read with a higher voice to represent a young girl. Female teachers won't lower their voice to be a boy. It doesn't happen and I think it's the same thing. I think it's either the fear or the lack of confidence or perhaps the inability to let themselves go a little bit and thinking of it in terms as a management issue.

I don't know, that's unfortunate. I think it's true, I don't hear very many people reading with that kind of intonation. We talked about it with the kids and the importance of reading with prosody. We don't do it for the kids so that they could see.

R: They probably need to take the place of the kid and the student and understand that once ... when you're making voices, when you're getting silly. They're not being you, they're seeing the characters in the pictures. They're engrossed in the story in the book.
Martin: I think the same thing is true with music. With music and literacy, I think it's exactly the same thing. They're not necessarily concerned with you singing. They're too busy singing by themselves. They're singing. They could not care less what you sound like.

R: You mentioned this from the beginning but I'm going to ask you a little bit more to desire. What role does the available research regarding music and literacy integration play in the implementation of music and literacy integration in your school. I understand, it's not fully implemented but definitely you have mentioned that research is very important to your awareness, your knowledge and your support of it.

Martin: I think the research is very clear and I think there have been enough studies that the meta-analysis clearly indicates that this is something that is an absolute necessity. I'll go back to the idea of even though I'm straying a little bit from music and literacy, the idea of art and the printed word and the idea that you need to use bright colored backgrounds. Bright colors tend to impact the brain much more significantly than a brown, or a pastel, or even white in and of itself does not impact the brain the way, say, gold or sun bright yellow would when you're trying to recall facts and information. If you think about the fact that it's the same way with music and literacy, the idea that I can remember School House Rock learning my multiplication facts by singing along with the little character animals.

R: It's that engagement factor. That's definitely, the arts can provide. What advice would you offer to others trying to implement music and literacy integration in the classroom, their school or their district?
Martin: I think the best advice is to continue to share its importance but then to cultivate or perhaps create the kind of buy-in necessary with the people you hire in order to perhaps bring it to its fruition. I think it's very difficult coming into any situation where even if you're looking at, say, 20% of the staff having departed. Still being able to create that kind of change. When we interview, we talk about integration. How would you integrate math into music. How would you integrate the idea of character development into dance or drama? We ask those kinds of questions because it's important that the people that we're hiring now understand that they will be the ones responsible for the creation of this dynamic.

We also understand that our time is very limited here and that funding issues are very much a current issue. The district eliminated 8 magnet programs the year I came to this building. We narrowly escaped last year. I don't know how much longer they'll allow us to do this if we can't show with some definitive proof that the kids are benefiting from what we do. If our test scores were substantially better, I think we could use that as a reasonable argument, but they are not. Our ranking was in the middle and our test scores put us in the bottom 20%.

We have some work to do. We can certainly discuss what ... one of the biggest answers to that problem is by looking at the way in which we addressed how kids learn how to read. How we can teach them new words, but that goes beyond a simple word wall that goes into that whole idea of when we're talking to children and how we're teaching them. I think of something as simple as rowing and how kids are going to understand what it means to row a boat. Some kids have never actually seen a poet. The
idea of rowing is an enigma to them. They have no connection and yet we use to sing a
song about that all the time and around and acted out. It's frustrating, it can be done. It's
frustrating. You're dealing with long standing resentments. Resentments created perhaps
prior to my arrival here. Those are often times difficult to disentangle your staff from.
R: Specially if they've been long, way longer.
Martin: We have some extremely talented individuals on this campus. I just believe that
we need to do a better job of utilizing their talents and focusing our energies in a way that
it'd be beneficial to the kids in their development. The only way we're going to do that is
by appealing to both sides of the brain. I think that that's going to be the key right there.
That's going to be the one thing that provides us with that leverage to get us in that top
10% of the elementary schools in this district.
It's not going to have anything to do with the number of practice sheets that we can
produce. That is going to have to do with the authentic, the very authentic engagement
that is only created when you get all of the kids involved. Yes, they can call be engaged
with a worksheet, that's now authentic, that's original. That's very compliant. I do this
thing because I am told to do this not because I choose to do this.
Perhaps, in another three years, we'll see what happens.
R: Build it from the ground up as they come, teachers come. Make sure that they are clear
of campus expectations. Any other remarks you wish to convey?
Martin: I can't think of any. I tend to get a little caught up on this subject. No, I can't
really think of any. I think that we do have our work cut out for us, it's not a task that
can’t be completed, it can be. It just requires a few very, like I said, dedicated,
committed individuals. Some who won't necessarily need to be rewarded for their time with money but simply understanding that we're doing this in the best interest of the children that we serve and that all 876 of these kids deserve to have the highest quality education that we can give them.

R: Just have that true commitment.

Thank you very much. I appreciate your time. Like I said, I'm very...
Curriculum Vitae

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PROFESSIONAL PROFILE

- Fine Arts Curriculum Writer (2013-2014)
- Clinician: TCDA Convention (July 2013)
- Presenter: Katy ISD Elementary Music Teachers (February, 2012; August, 2012; August, 2013)
- Katy ISD Elementary Music Representative – CEDFA summit (June, 2013)
- Katy ISD Differentiated Strategies Bank Co-Author (June, 2012; July, 2013)
- District Music PLC Group Leader, Katy ISD (2010 - Present)
- Team Leader, Bonnie Holland Elementary, Katy ISD (2009 - Present)
- Teacher of the Year: Spicewood Elementary, Round Rock ISD (2007)
- Presenter: Round Rock ISD Elementary Music Teachers (January, 2007)
- National Board Certified Teacher in Music, Early and Middle Childhood (2005)
- Music Teacher Mentor, Orange County Public Schools (2004)
- Teacher of the Year: Camelot Elementary, Orange County Public Schools. (2004-2005)
- Presenter: Orange County Public Schools Music Teachers (January 2003, August 2005)

EDUCATION

BOSTON UNIVERSITY, Boston, Massachusetts 2015
Doctor of Musical Arts, Music Education

SHENANDOAH UNIVERSITY, Winchester, Virginia 2002
Master of Arts, Music Education

BERKLEE COLLEGE OF MUSIC, Boston, Massachusetts 1996
Bachelor of Arts, Music Education
PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Katy Independent School District, Katy, Texas  
Assistant Choir Director, Beck Junior High  
- Choral Music: 6-8  
- Sweepstakes Trophies: UIL  
- Superior Ratings: 6th Grade Choral Festival  
August 2014 to Present

Katy Independent School District, Katy, Texas  
General Music Teacher, Bonnie Holland Elementary  
- General Music: K - 5  
- 5th Grade Choir  
- Musicals: 2nd and 4th grades  
- Leadership: Team Leader, Webmaster  
August 2008 to July 2014

Round Rock Independent School District, Round Rock, Texas  
General Music Teacher, Laurel Mountain and Spicewood Elementary  
- General Music: K - 5  
- 4th and 5th Grade Choir  
- Dance Ensemble  
- Teacher of the Year 2008-2009  
August 2006 to July 2008

Orange County Public Schools, Orlando, Florida  
General Music Teacher, Camelot Elementary  
- General Music: K - 5  
- 4th and 5th Grade Choir  
- Dance Ensemble  
- Teacher of the Year 2004-2005  
August 2001 to July 2006

Frederick County Public Schools, Frederick, Maryland  
General Music Teacher, Waverley Elementary  
- General Music: K - 5  
- 4th and 5th Grade Choir  
- Musicals: 4th and 5th Grades  
August 1999 to July 2001
Baldwin School of Puerto Rico, Bayamon, Puerto Rico August 1996 to July 1999
General Music Teacher, Pre-School to 6th Grade
• General Music: PK - 6
• 2nd to 6th Grade Choir
• Metropolitan Opera House’s Creating Original Opera: 3rd Grade

MEMBERSHIPS

• Texas Music Educators Association 2006
• Texas Choral Directors Association 2013

COMMITTEES

Katy Independent School District, Katy, Texas 2013 -2014
Elementary Music Curriculum Writing
• Create Unit Plans including activities and resources based on new TEKS
  (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills)

Katy Independent School District, Katy, Texas 2012-2013
Differentiated Strategies Bank Development
• Develop resources and activities to include in online strategies bank

PRESENTATIONS

• Texas Choral Directors Association Convention 2013
  “More Clap, Pat and Tap; Less Yap!”
• Katy ISD Elementary Music Teachers 2013
  “New Elementary Music TEKS”
• Katy ISD New Elementary Music Teachers 2012 & 2013
  “Help! I’m New Here!”
• Katy ISD Elementary Music Teachers 2012
  “Listening Activities: 3rd through 5th Grades”
• Katy ISD Elementary Music Teachers 2012
  “Movement in the Elementary Music Classroom”
• University of Houston Graduate Class 2011
  “National Board for Professional Teaching Standards”
• Round Rock ISD Elementary Music Teachers 2007
  “Movement in the Elementary Music Classroom”
• Orange County Public Schools Elementary Music Teachers 2005
  “Movement in the Elementary Music Classroom”
• Orange County Public Schools Elementary Music Teachers 2003
  “The Effects of Participation in the Elementary School Chorus on the Self Esteem of Children”

POST GRADUATE RESEARCH WORK

• Doctoral Dissertation: May 2015
  Reading the Song: Diverse Perspectives on Music and Literacy Integration
• Master Thesis: August 2002
  The Effects of Participation in the Elementary Chorus on the Self-esteem of Children

LICENSES/CERTIFICATIONS

Texas State Board of Education 2006
Standard Certificate, Music EC-12

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards 2005
Early and Middle Childhood, Music

Kodaly Certification 2007
Level 1

TRAININGS

International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program, Austin, Texas 2006-2008
Choral Choreography with John Jacobson, Orlando, Florida 2003
Yamaha MIE Keyboard, Grand Rapids, Michigan 2001