

## *Integration of English language and Music Literacy as Innovative Pedagogy for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning*

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### **Abstract**

Teachers are facilitators of learning. As a catalyst of learning, innovative pedagogy is needed to add flavor, light and life in the classroom. As individuals develop, there are different opportunities and constraints for learning. Learning is most effective when differential development within and across physical, intellectual, emotional, and social domains is taken into account. Hence, this study aims to analyze how relevant is the integration of English language and music literacy as innovative pedagogy for the 21st century learning. This 21st century learning refers to the 21st century student outcomes and supporting system. The method used in this study is empirical and theoretical exploring to the content analysis of the different literature review articles supported with interviews from the participants who are pre-service education students of Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute of Technology, Iligan City Philippines during the academic year 2015-2016. Based from the thematic and content analysis, findings reveal that English language and music literacy as innovative pedagogy, enhances the promotion of 21st century skills, such as interactive communication skills, interpersonal skills, technology literacy skills as well as language skills. In conclusion, it is important for teachers to use their knowledge on English language because it opens the door for learners to acquire knowledge that others already have. Learners can use English language to know and understand the world and solve problems with music literacy as innovative pedagogy. Thus, English language and music literacy as innovative pedagogy is very useful in the 21st century learning.

Keywords: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, Integration of English Language, Music Literacy and Pedagogy

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## **Introduction**

Music educators serve their students and themselves well when they use the valuable tool of music to enhance a child's ability to read and appreciate literature. The magic of music can entice a child to practice various reading-related tasks, often without the child even being aware of the learning objective (Darrow, 2008). This implies that music is very useful in learning the acquisition of English Language. In fact, in teaching reading, music is also used as springboard to develop the comprehension skills of the learners. Thus, literacy is naturally developed through music education. By adding rhythm, music, and movement to a learning experience, messages are sent to the brain through various pathways, creating a richer learning experience (McIntire, 2007). According to North, Hargreaves, & O'Neill (2000), *"music is important to adolescents, and that this is because it allows them to (a) portray an 'image' to the outside world and (b) satisfy their emotional needs"*.

Moreover, *"focuses on the use of music can develop literacy in children through emotive quality and structure of musical composition, gaining of skills in listening, and steps toward integration of songs into the reading curriculum"* (Kolb, 1996). This means that through listening the beauty of music, learners will become very motivated and inspired to learn the lessons in all subject areas of their curriculum. This indeed, explains that music literacy is always in the heart of pedagogy which is an innovation way of teaching and learning.

Accordingly, *"music education discourse is marked by frequent comparisons of music to language, and of music notation to written language"* (Waller, 2010). It implies that using music and English language must go hand in hand as an innovative pedagogy particularly in this 21<sup>st</sup> century education where teaching and learning needs to fit to the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning skills. Not only the innovative pedagogy is needed, but also the learning environments that will affect the learning process of the learners. This is supported by an article stated that *"music can transform classrooms into positive learning environments where children thrive academically, socially, and emotionally"* (Paquette & Rieg, 2008). In fact, *"music is beneficial in teaching both social and academic skills to young children"* (Register, 2004). Based from these articles I have read, I am very interested to come up this present study about integration of English Language and music literacy as an innovative pedagogy for the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning.

## **Literature Review**

In this present study, I have been reviewing then analyzing the different articles that served as the basis of the findings of this study through thematic analysis. Accordingly, students that participate in music education programs develop strong decoding and comprehension skills for both music and literature. This explains that participatory approach and interactive strategy of teaching with the integration of music can help develop the comprehension skills of the learners. That is the reason why integration of English language is needed in decoding the message while reading the content of the lyrics at the same time listening then singing the song whose content relate to the topic of the curriculum. In the same way, *"music educators should understand the global, segmentation, and distinctive features inherent in the*

*language and music hierarchy, which underlie both literacy for language and music reading” (Bernstorf, 2008).*

In addition, Ronald Carter highlights key issues for the study and teaching of 'English' for the year 2000 and beyond, focusing in particular on its political and ideological inflections. *“Investigating English Discourse is of relevance to teachers and students and researchers in the fields of discourse analysis, English as a first, second and foreign language, language and education, applied and literary linguistics”* (Carter, 1997). I strongly agreed to the ideas of Ronald Carter because in this 21<sup>st</sup> century learning, learners should be exposed to globalization and internationalization where English language is needed in the communication process of understanding the different people throughout the world. Indeed, English language is the only language that can be used towards attaining the quest of effective 21<sup>st</sup> century learning. This will be achieved through the integration of English language and music literacy as an innovative pedagogy across the curriculum in the global arena. Thus, teachers must be creative and innovative in their teaching profession on how to integrate the critical thinking, communication skills through collaboration among learners as well as the other 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.

As a matter of fact, Morrell (2005), *argues that “what the education sector need in English education is an increased emphasis on critical English education”*. Like language, music is a human universal involving perceptually discrete elements organized into hierarchically structured sequences. *“Music and language can thus serve as foils for each other in the study of brain mechanisms underlying complex sound processing, and comparative research can provide novel insights into the functional and neural architecture of both domains”* (Patel, 2003). *“The content of texts, or the abstract prescriptions of disembodied grammars, genre pedagogies enable teachers to ground their courses in the texts that students will have to write in their target contexts, thereby supporting learners to participate effectively in the world outside the ESL classroom”* (Hyland, 2007). David Crystal, world authority on the *“English language, presents a lively and factual account of the rise of English as a global language and explores the whys and wherefores of the history, current status and future potential of English as the international language of communication”* (Crystal, 2005). *“English is the only valid language that can be understood by everyone all around the world”* (Sarica & Cavus, 2009). Popular media and new technologies can provide a basis for ELLs to develop valuable print literacy as well as other 21st-century skills (Black, 2009).

*“A new generation of assessments is making it easier and more reliable to test students' higher-order thinking skills”* (Saavedra & Opfer, 2009). Every 21st century skills implementation requires the development of core academic subject knowledge and understanding among all students. Those who can think critically and communicate effectively must build on a base of core academic subject knowledge. *“Within the context of core knowledge instruction, students must also learn the essential skills for success in today's world, such as critical thinking, problem solving, communication and collaboration”* (Partnership for 21st Century Learning Skills, 2011). According to Thang, Sim, Mahmud, Lin, Zabidi & Ismail, (2014) argue that digital storytelling which combines the art of storytelling with a variety of interactive media tools can benefit language learning in a variety of ways. It has been found to encourage and motivate students and at the same time enhance their

communication skills and enable them to build conceptual skills and technological skills – all in- line with 21st century skills required by the job market. “*Project-Based Learning (PBL) is an innovative approach to learning that teaches a multitude of strategies critical for success in the twenty-first century*” (Bell, 2010). “*Digital storytelling can motivate and engage students and create a community in the classroom*” (Brenner, 2013).

*“It is likely that the sensory dissonance produced by the spectral manipulation was at least partly responsible for this effect, suggesting that consonance and permanent sensory dissonance universally influence the perceived pleasantness of music”* (Fritz, Jentschke, Gosselin, Sammler, Peretz, Turner, Friederici, & Koelsch, (2009). According to Brandt, Gebrian, & Slevc (2012), “*musical hearing and ability is essential to language acquisition. Music learning matches the speed and effort of language acquisition. We conclude that music merits a central place in our understanding of human development*”.

## **Findings and Discussion**

The findings of this study have been drawn from literature on 21st-century skills, Integration of English language and music literacy pedagogy as a framework for exploring the innovative and creative method of teaching for the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning. In particular, this research study is a theoretical exploration of themes that emerged while reading and analyzing the different scientific and refereed journal articles. Based from the content analysis of the literature review articles the following themes have been drawn:

- 1.English language and music literacy as innovative pedagogy, enhances the promotion of 21st century skills, such as interactive communication skills, interpersonal skills, technology literacy skills as well as language skills.
- 2.Music can transform classrooms into positive learning environments where children thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.
- 3.The benefits of incorporating musical experiences into daily instruction and provides practical activities for classroom implementation, e.g., reading, writing, and singing songs for language skill development, reading fluency, and writing progress. The results imply that the integration of English Language and Music Literacy is very interesting pedagogy in the 21st century learning.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, it is important for teachers to use their knowledge on English language because it opens the door for learners to acquire knowledge that others already have. Learners can use English language to know and understand the world and solve problems with music literacy as innovative pedagogy. According to Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, “Music is the universal language of mankind”. It means that music can have a similar effect on people from completely different cultures. Thus, English language and music literacy as innovative pedagogy is very useful in the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning.

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