

Draper, R. J. (2002). Every teacher a literacy teacher? An analysis of the literacy-related messages in secondary methods textbooks. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 34, 357-384.

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Summary: This study examined the literacy-related messages contained in secondary education methods textbooks. The messages analyzed described content-area literacy instruction. Nine widely used textbooks, three each from social studies, mathematics, and science, were analyzed as to the quality of the reading and writing instruction contained in each.

Assumptions:

- For the purposes of this study, the author defined literacy as reading and writing in relation to print texts.
- The term *content-area literacy* best describes the purpose of this study as it emphasizes both content and literacy.
- By combining literacy instruction with content area learning teachers provide support for their students by helping them with both their literacy and content needs.

Results:

- Texts discussed literacy and methods related to content-area literacy in qualitatively different ways with few similarities across content areas.
- There were no consistencies in the amount of detail authors provided.
- Textbooks offered various reasons for content-area teachers to include reading instruction, but the basic role of reading was implied rather than stated explicitly.
- Textbooks offered various definitions of reading and descriptions of the reading process.
- Textbooks offered generic types of methods for how teachers could help their students better comprehend content-area reading.
- Some authors said that reading is one of several methods that teachers could choose for teaching.
- Six out of nine texts suggested that teachers should provide students with additional reading material than the textbook.
- All of the authors spoke to the weaknesses in content-area textbooks.
- Little advice was given to help future teachers in textbook selection.
- Some textbooks offered a good deal of information about the use of writing in the content-area classroom and its use in promoting learning.
- Authors did provide methods and suggestions that are consistent with those made by literacy educators.
- Only one textbook suggested that secondary teachers help students think about their writing.

Conclusions:

- This study provides insight into what authors of content-area textbooks believe is important to share with content-area teachers.
- Discussion of reading and writing instruction in textbooks is limited.
- Since content-area textbooks contained negative discussions about traditional teaching methods, teachers may assume that content-area literacy is somehow bad as they relate reading to the use of textbooks.
- Textbook authors seemed to care about content-area literacy but did not describe it in meaningful ways. This could speak to the failure of literacy researchers to make their messages of content-area literacy instruction relevant to content-area researchers.

#### Suggestions for Teachers:

- Provide students access to relevant content in addition to necessary skills and processes to understand that content.
- Be prepared to help all students, including struggling readers, make sense of content-area texts.
- Do not deny any student access to knowledge by denying necessary literacy instruction in the content classroom.

#### Suggestions for Literacy Leaders:

- Help all educators recognize the power of literacy and its relationship to learning.
- Help teachers understand that the responsibility for student literacy development needs to be shared by all.