

2 **Aligning Literacy Practices in Secondary History Classes with Research on Learning**

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ABSTRACT

Literacy is a basic element of the discipline of history and of traditional secondary history instruction. However neither the growing body of research on learning with texts nor modern learning theories support the traditional literacy practices that are taking place in many secondary history classrooms. Nor are classroom literacy practices a reflection of the type of reading in which historians engage. History teachers should align the literacy practices in their classrooms with literacy research and modern learning theories, particularly as they apply to reading expository texts, documents, historical fiction, and multiple texts. Students should be encouraged to think critically about the variety of print and electronic expository texts that they encounter. The inclusion of historical documents in history classes, coupled with explicit instruction on historian's heuristics of sourcing, corroboration, and contextualization, helps students increase their content knowledge and critical thinking skills. Historical fiction provides an additional type of resource that may help students develop historical empathy, the ability to engage in contextualization, and critical thinking skills. Teachers are encouraged to provide opportunities for students to synthesize information from, and think critically about, multiple types of resources. Aligning literacy practices with research will result in increased learning of historical content and improved literacy skills. Suggestions for future research as well as implications for teacher development are considered.