

Integrating Artful Practices as a Sustainable and Innovative Approach to French
Language Learning

Holly Taylor, B.Mus., B.Ed.

Department of Educational Studies

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Abstract

This study investigated the successes and barriers that surround the implementation of artful practices into French elementary classrooms within Ontario. The literature demonstrates that integrating the arts has many benefits, allowing students to become more engaged and kinaesthetically involved in their language learning. By examining the narratives of educators who use music and the arts as a teaching tool, this narrative inquiry explored the experiences of teachers integrating the arts into their teaching practices, and also identified the supports needed to implement more elements of the arts into the French programs of teachers who may not be implementing arts-based strategies. Along with my own personal narrative as a co-participant, the remaining 2 participants were engaged in their storied landscapes through qualitative interviews, focusing specifically on what Dewey (1938) refers to as *the nature of experience*. Particularly, the relationships between teachers and the arts, and teachers and French were examined to uncover how these relationships have affected their teaching experiences with this integration.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

In my 6 years of experience as an elementary music teacher in the province of Ontario, I have found that many of my colleagues are hesitant to implement music in their classrooms. They have said that they feel they do not know anything about music other than the songs they listen to on the radio. The most consistent use of music in the classroom that I have witnessed includes playing background music while the students are working. My Bachelor of Education program at the University of Toronto included four mandatory classes of instruction in music education (20 hours) with the Faculty of Education's music specialist. During these four classes, we learned games and participated in a variety of activities that taught us how music could be used in the classroom. Some of those activities encouraged our creativity, asking us to create our own piece of music using different percussion instruments (instruments that you hit or shake). My group members immediately looked to me for ideas as if they truly had no idea what to do, or they lacked the confidence to share their ideas. After those classes, we were asked to write a reflection about the experience we had in our music education development; in sharing our thoughts, I learned that many of my peers felt they needed more music teaching development before they could feel confident about implementing the strategies into their own classrooms.

The Ontario Ministry of Education's (2009) *Grades 1 to 8: The Arts* curriculum details skills for visual arts, drama, dance, and music in elementary school, and yet unfortunately not all teachers are equally comfortable teaching all aspects of this curriculum. A 2013 *Globe and Mail* article indicated that approximately only 40% of elementary schools have music teachers, some of which are only part time (People for Education, 2017). The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) reported that "The

number of Ontario elementary schools with full or part-time music teachers has steadily declined in the last decade” (“Some Ontario Schools,” 2017, para. 1). Therefore, only select schools in Ontario are getting full exposure to their arts education. Such articles remind us that the expectations of the arts curriculum are seldom being met, and teachers often find it challenging to consider integrating the arts into other subject areas.

The concept of an integrated curriculum is nothing new in Ontario schools—indeed, Drake and Reid (2010) note that the use of an integrated curriculum dates back as early as 1937. Integrated curriculum teaches concepts and skills from one subject matter by connecting elements of another subject area. This style of teaching supports student engagement and stimulates students to exceed learning expectations. The non-profit organization People for Education argues that creativity is best fostered through arts education and represents a 21st century skill that is one of the keys to success in today’s society (Gallagher-Mackay, 2013). People for Education works to support Ontario’s public education system by gathering information to inform other stakeholders in the Ontario education system. As Gallagher-Mackay (2013) notes in her report for People for Education, the arts are promoted to encourage student engagement, self-expression, and teamwork, and to cultivate an appreciation for a variety of cultures.

For this study, it is important that I, as the researcher, share with readers the reasons why I have a vested interest specifically in the topics of music and language learning. I also share my own experiences to further rationalize why this work is important before focusing on the literature review, which explores what other researchers are saying. For these reasons, I take part in this research as a co-participant so that my experiences can be explored more fully. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) explained the importance of considering the temporal nature of an experience: The term *temporality*—

meaning many specific moments in time, woven together—should be thought of as ongoing process. Experiences do not end the moment after they are experienced; rather, they are related to our present and future as well. It is all part of what Greene (1995) refers to as a quest. On this quest, my narrative begins at the earliest moments that I can recall my experiences with language and music.

Rationale of Study

My Personal Experiences With Music and Language

My mother told me that I was an incredibly curious child and that I loved to learn. She recounted that I would watch French television shows, claiming that I understood every single word. It was clear to my mother that a French immersion setting was suitable for me to attend in fall 1995, when I became of age to attend school. At this time, in a Southwestern Ontario school board, Kindergarten offered a French Immersion program and my teacher Rose¹ sounded like she had been speaking French her whole life. It turned out that French was her first language, and all the parents had a difficult time understanding her in English. In the beginning, I remember staring blankly at my teacher, not being able to understand anything that she was saying. She never once used English to help me, and I was convinced that she did not know how to speak English. By the time our first-term report cards came out, I was able to translate my teacher's comments for my parents. I remember every subject being taught in French and all communication was in French as well. It truly was a sink-or-swim experience.

I experienced a high fever as a toddler that altered the hearing in my left ear, leaving me with only one working ear that also suffered a moderate hearing loss. Once I

¹ Pseudonyms are used for all persons and participants in this study to maintain confidentiality.

started Grade 2, my parents were nervous about how I would adjust to this disability and acquired me a wireless assisted hearing device (FM system) to amplify my teacher's voice. I do not remember my disability hindering my capacity to develop my French language abilities. The only challenge I do recall was during lessons in which the students sat (on the carpet or at desks) and listened as the teacher stood in front of the class delivering a lesson. Sometimes there were a few visuals written on the board; it was mostly an auditory style of teaching. This was challenging for me because I did not always hear every word my teacher said. After missing some of these words, I would lose the context and ultimately the main message of the lesson and I would stop trying to listen altogether. My favourite memory of learning French was singing the songs our teacher taught us. This made it easy to show my parents what I learned, and it helped that I loved to sing. I believe that my success was a result of the moments where I engaged in immersive, interactive classroom experiences. It taught me how to manipulate the French language to communicate my own needs, ideas, questions, rather than simply reproducing the vocabulary my teachers taught. I was fortunate that I mostly did not have to rely solely on my listening skills to learn French; it was a more involved experience than that. I had learned French to function in my classroom environment and not only for its own sake.

Singing has been my happy place for as long as I can remember. My hobby as a child has always been musical theatre. My parents kept me busy doing community theatre productions since I was 7 years old. Music was my favourite subject in school, and I have always felt that the best version of myself was while I was singing. This was perhaps another reason why I loved learning French. I would say that in my elementary years, I

knew more songs in French than I did in English. The only English songs I knew at the time derived from Disney productions, or the classic rock songs my dad would play every Saturday morning while he made breakfast. I loved music so much that I decided that I wanted to pursue it as a career.

I undertook my undergraduate degree in the music performance program at the University of Western Ontario, where I studied classical voice. This was a big change from the musical theatre background from my childhood. I enjoyed all styles of music and was yearning to learn something new. In some ways, I felt that classical music was more dramatic than the jovial, heartwarming songs in music theatre. In practising music theory, I felt most at home in the beginning because it was like learning a language in many ways. I knew that every music note had a different name based on where it was found on the staff. These positions also demonstrated which of the 88 keys on a piano to play in a song. Different symbols would represent different ways of playing the music, whether it was dynamics (volume) or tempo (speed). Needless to say, this coding fascinated me.

In my vocal practice, I would learn repertoire from operas and songbooks from all the famous composers such as Mozart, Brahms, Mendelssohn, Schumann, and Schubert. Each piece taught me new languages like Italian and German, and I got to continue practising my French in some instances. In performance, it was imperative that we learned how to read each language ourselves using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). This is an alphabet that demonstrates uniform and specific pronunciation of each letter in any given language. It was also essential that we knew the meanings of the libretto (lyrics) to ensure that we were presenting a believable performance. For example,

the words “I am going to get a book” would be written [aɪ æm 'ɡoʊɪŋ tu ɡɛt ə bʊk]. The letters used to spell the words phonetically are meant to be universal so that anyone can read a word with correct pronunciation.

By the end of my time at Western, I had learned to read a variety of languages through song. Though I was not able to communicate my own ideas to someone else in German or Italian, I did have confidence that I would understand someone speaking to me. Lastly, I was introduced to a musical culture that helped me understand how much the world had changed since the days of many of the composers I had studied.

My Professional Experiences Teaching Music and Language

After my undergraduate studies, I enrolled in the Bachelor of Education program at the University of Toronto, where I was taught how to engage children in learning and inspire them through innovative ways of teaching. An important message I took away from my professors was to allow students opportunities to be creative. In *Releasing the Imagination*, Maxine Greene (1995) advocated that those who use their imaginations learn to see the world from someone else’s vantage point. This concept has resonated with my philosophy of teaching and was developed during my placements, where I learned much of my teaching strategies from listening to my students’ stories. It was my job to absorb those stories, be reflective, and react to each student’s learning journey.

Once I graduated from my Bachelor of Education program, I was lucky enough to get a job teaching music at a private school. I had a classroom with a piano, a variety of percussion instruments, BoomWhackers (pitched tubes that can be played by hitting them), and a SmartBoard. Upon talking with some of my teaching friends within the school board, I learned that I was living the music dream with more resources than many

of them. In fact, most of my friends did not even have a classroom and used a cart to bring music to the students. In later years, I experienced this first-hand as a music teacher in Ontario public schools. As I went into different schools as a supply teacher, it seemed as though the subject of music was slowly being pushed to the side with budget cuts and a need for more classroom space. This resulted in music teachers having limited access to instruments and other interactive resources, and ultimately the quality of experience in music education was inhibited. Under no circumstance would I say that students are no longer engaged in learning music; however, there used to be more opportunity to immerse students in a classroom that exposed them to a wide variety of musical elements. Due to the fact that I was younger, I am uncertain when all of this changed. Since I went to a high school for the arts and the University of Western Ontario for music, I noticed a shift when I returned to schools as an educator in 2013. Music instruction has been truncated to a cart in many schools where I have been a supply teacher. My understanding of why certain schools take this approach is due to the number of students in the school and the number of classrooms. Fortunately, this is not the experience in every school, though it appears that music experience is not prioritized in schools.

Upon becoming a French teacher with the public school board in my area, I found a lack of resources in this subject area similar to my experiences with music. My first experience with language teaching was as a Core French teacher, at the same private school where I taught music. I was eager to teach students French and my classes started as young as Kindergarten. This was important for me because having learned French so young, I feel that language learning at the Kindergarten level can make all the difference. Even though my classes at the private school were not French Immersion, I was hopeful

that I would have a strong class based on the previous year's report cards. On the first day of school, I met my Grade 5 class in the hallway, where they were all lined up to enter the classroom, and greeted them with *bonjour*. The students responded with enthusiasm, and I was looking forward to this group because after having 4 years of French under their belts, I thought I would be able to engage them in a French classroom environment.

Unfortunately, this was not how the rest of the year proceeded because this group of students could only reproduce few of the vocabulary words learned in previous years, none of which could be put together to form a phrase or idea. I had made the assumption that my Grade 5 students would have some functional communication abilities based on the expectations in the Ontario Ministry of Education's (2013) *French as a Second Language* curriculum document, which indicates that students should be able to communicate ideas orally in French and participate in spoken interactions by the end of Grade 4.

After some diagnostic assessment during that week, I had learned that the students were dependent on the use of English to understand me and to communicate within the classroom. They also demonstrated that they were most comfortable copying lecture notes. In terms of their written abilities, students were unable to do their work independently if the activities did not have a word bank or English translations.

When it came to student morale, none of the students enjoyed French and they all admitted they dreaded coming to the class. Some students shared that they felt they were already so far behind because they were still unable to use the language and catching up seemed impossible. I wondered if there was another way to inspire my students in class so that French could be enjoyable and functional, which led me to research French

teaching strategies online. My findings would eventually blend together my two passions: language and the arts.

I spent a lot of time outside of school researching songs as well as different approaches and resources to teach language in a way that was more fun and less overwhelming to these students who seemed ready to give up on language altogether. I had asked some of my colleagues if they could investigate what strategies their French teachers used at their schools. Some came back saying that they used the Accelerated Integrated Methodology (AIM) program. I arranged a meeting with one of these teachers to learn more and to observe her classroom. When I walked in, her walls were covered with vibrant posters with pictures and song lyrics. A corner of the classroom was set up like a puppet theatre with costume pieces and backdrops. Already, I was excited to hear more of what this program looked like as I could see that it clearly had something to do with theatre and music. Based on my narrative of experience in a musically integrated approach to learning French, I was eager to see how other educators engaged students in language learning.

The teacher shared that AIM was a language-learning program that integrates different strands of the arts, giving students real experiences using French in an immersive and engaging setting (Michels, 2008). Michels (2008) investigated some preliminary claims of what the AIM program was setting out to accomplish in Core French classrooms. In her research undertaken a decade ago, Core French classrooms were still achieving less than functional outcomes in terms of student performance.

In summary, I questioned if there were other arts-integrated pedagogies like AIM that incorporated the visual, audible, and kinaesthetic involvement I was missing in my

classroom environment. I could not believe that I was only hearing about this program now. How was this not part of my teacher education program? Who has access to the program? What other programs are teachers using? These are just some questions that led me to investigate arts-integration language learning.

Statement of the Research Problem

International studies of teachers using music in their everyday classrooms have been easily accessible within academic journals (e.g., Lackey & Huxhold, 2016; Paolino & Lummis, 2015; Pitts, 2016). In Canada, research has explored the integration of arts-based strategies in secondary schools. While such research is still helpful for a Canadian educational context, few studies speak to our Canadian elementary educational system and arts-based strategies for teaching language to our French Second Language (FSL) population (Dicks & Le Blanc, 2009; Rovers, 2013). The international research advocated the benefits of music in the language classroom and made mention of the success felt by teachers who took part in the studies. These findings make it critical to undertake Canadian teaching studies that ultimately confirm the effectiveness of these ideas (Paolino & Lummis, 2015; Pitts, 2016).

Unfortunately, limited research explains the lack of reform in both new and experienced teachers who are implementing music as part of their daily practice. The use of the term *reform* here refers to the barriers that continue to label teachers as curriculum implementers rather than curriculum makers (Craig, 2013). During the time of this research, few programs and pedagogies used music as a teaching strategy, and even fewer published studies addressed topics involving the musical benefits of music education within Canada.

While some school boards may have a vision for music education teachers, there seems to be little documented on how music—as a strategy—is being incorporated throughout all the subject areas. In Canada, some language programs incorporate the various strands of the arts that exist, and having more access to such programs and training sessions may be the first step to overcoming the challenges that are inhibiting change. It was my goal to add more literature surrounding the importance of music in language learning to allow for continued discourse surrounding musically innovative language learning practices.

Purpose of the Study

This study focused on elementary classroom teachers' stories pertaining to their use of an arts-integrated approach to teaching French as a second language. Throughout this thesis, I use the terms *French as a second language* and *Core French* interchangeably. For me, Core French students are learning French as a second language, and so the two terms have identical meaning. I also use the term *artful* to describe teaching practices that are inspired by arts-based strategies.

Using narrative inquiry as a research methodology, I storied and restoried experiences of educators teaching language using the arts, including stories that are ongoing and have taken place over a period of time (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). I have shared my journey of learning and teaching in the school system and my experience with the AIM program, which I found to be a successful language teaching tool. I interviewed teachers who are using the arts to aid in language learning to uncover their experiences, as well as their successes and barriers. I hoped to uncover some new alternative language teaching practices that exist in the language learning classrooms of others. Sharing

teacher experiences is imperative to discover factors that may affect why teachers have not adapted a more arts-based approach into their language teaching. Music is something that surrounds us in our everyday lives. At the school where I teach, students enter the school with music playing each morning to help them get ready and energized for the day. I have experienced the effects that the songs can have on student emotions—increasing energy or assisting in self-regulating behaviour during reflective and restorative activities such as yoga or meditation.

The experiences above with my former students showcase that while there are some benefits of music in the world of education, there appears to be a dearth of teachers who are comfortable in teaching the arts, while teachers who are specialists in the field are not getting full-time opportunities in schools. This led me to want to know more about how current practices in the arts are being utilized in language classrooms.

Research Questions

This narrative inquiry on the implementation of arts-integrated language practices was guided by the following research questions:

1. How do elementary French second language teachers experience integrating the arts?
2. What successful arts-integrated practices do teachers integrate when teaching French as a second language?
3. What are some of the potential barriers inhibiting teachers from utilizing the different strands of the arts into the learning environment of French second language learners?

Theoretical Framework

In this next section, I focus on the two fundamental areas that guided my research: (a) imagination and (b) a three-dimensional framework approach to narrative. This study explored learning through the lens of creativity and the capacities in which the arts can interplay with language learning. Since the nature of this study is qualitative, there are naturally multiple methods involved with an interpretive approach to the data collected (Clandinin, 2007). In this instance, these methods include reading supporting literature, conducting in-depth interviews, and finding common themes between the two. These processes allowed me to interpret and make meaning of the shared moments in the lives of teachers for the sake of uncovering a better understanding of how French second language classrooms are experienced. The roles of imagination and narrative inquiry are most appropriate to help readers of this research develop a better understanding of the Core French experience. In addition, they have served as a theoretical foundation to help answer my research questions. Below, I expand more on these two specific ideas as the guiding frameworks for my research study.

The Role of Imagination

According to Maxine Greene (1995), thinking outside the box is easier said than done; society struggles to release its imagination and “it is simply not enough for us to reproduce the way things are” (p. 1). Greene was concerned that this cycle of oppression began with teacher education, an institution in which teachers are being taught how to reproduce rather than release the imaginations of others. Greene believed that imagination was a means to experience a coherent world and also makes empathy possible. Opening our imaginations lets us enter the realities of other people, colleagues,

and/or our students: “Of all our cognitive capacities, imagination is the one that permits us to give credence to alternative realities” (Greene, 1995, p. 3). Before Greene, Freire (1970) advocated that all humans have the ability to look critically at the world, and themselves, and that the ways of life are not set in stone.

With regards to this study, imagination and creativity are what our students and teachers need to foster so as to be able to envision what our world is missing. Greene (1995) lamented that young people too often are described as resources rather than people who are capable of choice and critical thinking. Greene uses the term *release* to explain a way of thinking that is open and aware of the variety of vantage points in the world around us. It is about becoming aware of the lens that comes with *seeing small* and allowing other vantage points to be visible by seeing the big picture of what is going on everywhere. Furthermore, teachers need to release their imaginations to consider the possible needs for change within their own teaching practices.

To circle back to my first exposure to an arts-based language-learning program, Wendy Maxwell, creator of the AIM program, is an example of someone who demonstrated releasing her imagination. Through her journey, she imagined new ways to present her French teaching practices. I am including this brief overview of AIM because this French program will be highlighted in various places throughout this thesis as it is an integral part to the narrative of my own teaching practices. It is a personal connection, to a program I know of, whereby someone imagined what she believes to be a better way of doing things. It has since inspired me to continue exploring new ways of teaching language.

Wendy began teaching as an elementary French teacher and slowly became frustrated by the thematic, traditional method of language instruction that inhibited students from becoming proficient in French. She realized that “if students weren’t learning the way they were being taught, [I] had to teach the way they learned” (Aim Language Learning, 2017, para. 2). Uncovering needs within our education system and imagining new possible solutions are how growth within the system is achieved. Greene (1995) referred to this as our social imagination. It is this ability that allows educators like Wendy Maxwell to be aware of the challenges in her language classrooms and then envision another, possibly improved way to teach curricula. Maxwell developed plays from familiar children’s stories, songs, and gestures, as well as stories that the students participated in, collaboratively. She found that this resulted in higher student engagement, reduced anxiety, and a more proficient level of response.

This is just one story that showcases that through discovering our own imagination, we learn to think in a way that “looks down roads not yet taken to the shapes of a more fulfilling social order, to more vibrant ways of being in the world” (Greene, 1995, p. 5). In connection with this study, imagination plays a role in uncovering innovative strategies to help change the way teachers approach language learning. To think outside the box, we need to imagine other possibilities in the teaching and learning of French language.

On the topic of music and the arts, Greene (1995) holds the arts in high regard as she advocated in her book: “the arts have a unique way of releasing the imagination” (p. 27). The arts bring new visions to new and unimagined possibilities, especially in terms of teaching and learning. Integration of the arts throughout the entire curriculum has the

capacity to allow teachers and students to view subject matter from a variety of different vantage points. These different vantage points could result in more student engagement in subject matter that was once potentially challenging. As we listen and reflect on our own experiences, as well as the experiences of others, we can then think critically and imagine ways to effect change in education.

The Role of Narrative Inquiry: A Three-Dimensional Framework

This narrative inquiry study explored music and language learning, both from my perspectives as a student and a teacher, as well as the experiences of teachers who have implemented arts-integrated approaches into their Core French classes. More important, this research also uncovered some of the limitations that inhibit teachers from utilizing a more arts-integrated approach in their language programs. Doing this research through narrative is important to uncover what Clandinin and Connelly (2000) refer to as a *storied landscape*. This concept of a storied landscape is used to conceptualize a three-dimensional framework of a person's ongoing experience on a particular topic. This three-dimensional framework in turn focuses on dimensions that Clandinin and Connelly have identified as temporality, sociality, and place. The term *commonplace* can also be used to reference all three of the dimensions of inquiry space (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). The meaning behind commonplace implies that my personal narratives consider my own experiences as a process based on my surrounding relationships as I revisit the sequence of places that make up my own storied landscape (Clandinin, Pushor, & Murray-Orr, 2007). Individually, each dimension has its own contribution to the overall three-dimensional view of experience. "The inquirer needs to think through his or her responses to each question with the idea of the life space in mind—the commonplaces interrelated in the inquiry space" (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 484).

The dimension of temporality considers the fact that experiences happen over time. Past experiences lead to the feelings and choices made in the present that directly affect future decisions. A person's perception and actions change based on every moment of each experience. The second dimension, sociality, considers experiences from a relational point of view between anyone the participant comes into contact with. Each relationship plays a role in how experiences are shaped. Lastly, the final dimension accounts for the participant's relationship with places and their topical environment where the experiences were had and changed. Together, these dimensions come together to allow for a holistic understanding of someone's experience, allowing researchers and readers to *see big* (Greene, 1995). More on this three-dimensional framework is explored in this study's methodology description in Chapter 3—specifically, how these dimensions were considered upon attending to participants' stories.

For people to learn from one another, they have to listen to fragments of what that person knows from their learning and experience. "Education and educational studies are a form of experience" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 18). As this research is a matter of education and educational studies, it only seems fitting to narrate my experiences and those of my language-teaching colleagues.

In summary, these ideas and theories around imagination and a three-dimensional framework of narrative inquiry suggest that stories are the pathway to experiences. Listening to experiences is a way for people to learn both the strengths and challenges in the world of education. This is where imagination is most important because it allows people to consider different solutions to problems from another person's point of view. Individuals learn and think in a variety of different ways. Learning can be explored through multimodal learning environments in which students learn using digital modes of

reading and writing in conjunction with traditional forms (Walsh, 2008). The digital world is among us, and as Kress (1997) emphasizes, children must access multiple “communicative pathways” to participate in today’s literacy practices. On this topic, “A child’s world is neither isolated nor primarily print-based” (Winters & Vratulis, 2012, p. 531). The existence of these multimodal environments and the understanding that individuals learn and understand in different ways affirms that there are opportunities for people to imagine something new, something innovative. This imagining comes from a person’s ability to think critically as it is the art of analyzing and evaluating an experience and gaining a view on how to improve it (Greene, 1995). This cycle of imagination allows us to raise questions and problems and think with an open mind to communicate new conclusions to continuously improve our experience. Tying this in with temporality, drawing new conclusions on an experience is what then changes a person’s future experiences and, therefore, the storied landscape. In terms of education and specifically Core French programs, imagination and the three-dimensional framework are ideal in underpinning my research as I continue to uncover teachers’ experiences around the arts-integrated practices in the language learning classroom.

Scope and Limitations

The findings of this research were dependent upon the participants and their abilities to engage in critical reflection of their own French language teaching practices. This information was transcribed from open-ended interviews with the teachers involved. For confidentiality, specific names were not mentioned; however, the grades that everyone taught were made public as it is of high importance to the information gathered. When mentioning past teachers and influential people, pseudonyms were used to ensure privacy and anonymity. Participants were given the option to not answer questions or to

withdraw from the research at any time without consequence, and this was made clear in the consent form.

Limitations of this research correspond to the researcher's and participants' ability to reflect on past experiences. It was also important to note my personal experiences shared in the research, as I believe that arts-integration is the best way to approach language learning. This bias affects my interpretations of the data collected from the interview process. The interviews and data collection were completed over the course of a few months, and the data collected reflects the teachers' journeys in learning and teaching language from their time as students learning French to their careers as French educators. It is important to consider that this research does not represent all language teachers and their relationships with music and all the arts; it is merely a starting point.

Outline of Remainder of the Document

Chapter 2 of this document presents a review of the literature related to music and language learning. This review highlights the need for further study on the topic of innovative, arts-integrated programs such as AIM. Chapter 3 entails the research methods and analysis used to conduct this study. Chapter 4 presents the transcribed interviews and reflection on the ideas presented by the participants. Additionally, it includes an analysis of each narrative, exploring how it relates to the theoretical frameworks of imagination and temporality, sociality, and place (3D framework). Chapter 5 discusses the findings along with implications of the research on this topic.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Music is an art that many people cannot help but engage in and experience, and as a result it has always been an appealing subject in schools. Mashayekh and Hashemi (2011) stated that it would be very difficult to imagine a culture without music because our interaction with sound is inevitable, whether we create it or hear it. In terms of metacognition, it is important to consider the world beyond our own existence. Maxine Greene (1995) wrote in *Releasing the Imagination* that music has the ability to provide new perspectives within the world and the people in it. This information allows people to consider that music tells a story and gives listeners information about people, their lives, and the world.

Despite claims that Ontario schools are operating with less music education (People for Education, 2017), Paolino and Lummis's (2015) research in Western Australian, upper primary contexts found that music holds value across other domains, such as science or social studies. In addition, they showcased that there is plenty of research that supports the use of music for first language acquisition. Music does not need to stand alone as music education for its own sake; rather, it has additional benefits as a teaching tool to be used across all curricular areas. In my experience, the use of music to teach language is already being reflected in kindergarten programs that use songs to teach students in their programs. For example, I have seen programs such as *Kindermusik* being used in classrooms, through which the students learn catchy tunes with simple target language that incorporates movement. However, Paolino and Lummis also found that as students move into elementary classrooms, music is heard less and less, as teaching towards standardized testing has become a priority.

Hesmondhalgh (2013) argued that the value of music, especially that of popular culture, is being dismissed as not having the ability to be relevant to academic or social goals. School boards in North America rely on standardized tests to assess students' academic success in schools across the board (Education Quality and Accountability Office [EQAO], 2017). In my experience, standardized tests such as the EQAO and CCAT (Canadian Cognitive Abilities Test) used across Ontario school boards do not consider students' individual or scholastic experience and are only looking to put a value beside their names to quantify the school's academic success. Furthermore, in the nature of this testing process, consideration for different learning styles and thinking processes is overlooked when the test presents student success with nothing but a number (Pinto, 2016).

According to Statistics Canada (2017), school demographics continue to diversify, and changes in the world bring more refugees and new immigrant families to Canada. Our school system is looked upon to adapt and maintain its highly acclaimed education systems to set these families up for success in their new homes; however, some questions remain: How are teachers adapting to support the needs of these English language learners so that they are successful? Is adapting to the English language learners successful? What research exists to support the importance of music education in schools, and more importantly, what are some of the non-music benefits of music education?

In this review of related literature, I showcase studies that highlight the main findings surrounding the value and place of music in everyday life and the everyday classroom, the benefits and barriers that teachers have experienced in using music in the classroom, and the pedagogical benefits of underutilized programs in which music

integration has successfully enhanced the success and engagement of new language learners.

What Is the Value of Music?

The following section outlines the argument that music is an important and underused teaching tool in today's North American classrooms. It articulates ways in which music not only enhances the classroom environment but also students' cognitive abilities, as well as their competence and confidence in social and emotional contexts. Hesmondhalgh's (2013) *Why Music Matters* focused specifically on music's capacity to enrich individual lives as well as the culture of entire societies. Music is a shared experience that can occur between two people or a group of people who engage in music listening, such as a concert. This experience can result in the listener's ability to imagine others sharing the same feelings and responses to the music as they experience it.

Mashayekh and Hashemi (2011) found that music has the ability to be unique for every individual in every context in their respective lives, transforming itself from a means of relaxation, entertainment, or reflection. Using the works of Hesmondhalgh (2013), Mashayekh and Hashemi (2011), Pitts (2016), Norris (2008), Črnčec, Wilson, and Prior (2006), Topoğlu (2013), Cho, Pemberton, and Ray (2017), Bosacki and O'Neill (2013), Campbell (2010), Hanna (2007), and Scripp and Gilbert (2016), this section aims to articulate some places in which music matters. Broadly, these are some of the ways in which an individual can experience music. The following review of the literature explores specific ways that music can affect our everyday life, the classroom.

The Role of Music in Everyday Life

When we consider music and sounds in our day-to-day lives, it is easy to overlook how much they surround and affect us. However, in today's world, music is found

everywhere: songs on the radio, birds singing, restaurant ambiance, stores, concerts, summer camps, and even on the subway as the doors alert passengers that the doors are going to close. For the purposes of this research, I define music broadly as any sounds with a beat and/or a melody, with beat being the steady pulse in a piece of music and melody being a sequence of pitches that are put together to create a tune you can sing.

Mashayekh and Hashemi (2011) researched the effects that music has on language learners and acknowledged that music is everywhere and is used to capture the attention and the memories of anyone listening. It is difficult to imagine a culture that does not have any music. Mashayekh and Hashemi also explored the meaning and importance of music in life. They noted that music is a natural outlet for self-expression and the development of creativity, and cited studies that found children who engage in musical activities are less likely to engage in destructive behaviours such as drinking and drug use. This was believed to be a result of participating in activities with others of similar interests and developing their social skills, sense of community, and self-esteem. Mashayekh and Hashemi also found that music education helped students build confidence in subject areas in which they may feel academically inadequate.

To further emphasize music's ability to build self-esteem, Topoğlu (2013) utilized the theories of John Dewey and his notion of *reflective thinking*. Topoğlu found that reflective thinkers were less impulsive and more thoughtful in a variety of circumstances. His research on critical thinking and music underscored the importance of fostering students' abilities to be more reflective to ensure more consideration when making choices. This would inhibit students from succumbing to social challenges such as peer pressure. Music education has been found to awaken individual abilities of self-expression, further connecting self with others.

In a social context, Bosacki and O'Neill (2013) explored Canadian adolescents' relationship with popular music, particularly in terms of their emotional experiences. They explained that songs and lyrics help bring students together as a community outside of school because they share similar interests in music, thus creating a stronger sense of belonging and overall confidence. Their findings outlined that adolescents who engaged in popular music on a regular basis were more positive and happier. Bosacki and O'Neill also found that the types of music that teenagers were listening to reflect the themes and contexts they have experienced in their own lives. Similarly, Patricia Campbell (2010) studied American children from a variety of ethnicities in her book, *Songs in Their Heads*. She explored that understanding what music means to students, is a means to uncover what it is they know and value in their lives. Therefore, music education is effective in developing aspects of self-identity.

Overall, music provides a space for people to relate to themselves, others, and the world around them. This space looks different based on an individual's social and cultural contexts, which further allows people to express themselves, create opinions, and engage in discourse among a variety of topics. Music offers opportunities for people to discover core values, connect with others, as well as view the world from another's point of view. As Greene (1995) articulated, "we do not all have to be strangers to each other in our schools but that we can strive to interpret our new and many-faceted worlds" (p. 16). These multi-faceted worlds can be uncovered by working through social problems found throughout public schools and instances where students shut down what they do not know before trying to understand the problem on a deeper level. However, this takes experience, awareness, reflection, and imagination. The act of looking beyond our own

personal place in the world demands a more in-depth look at the story or problem at hand. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) speak about individuals' place as being their experiences based on temporality. In considering the notion that humans are known to be emotional creatures, a music learning community that builds on a learner's personality, self-esteem, and awareness encourages a positive affective domain to thrive in, not only in a social environment but in learning as well.

The Role of Music in the Classroom

In a music project called *Soundplay* offered in early-years educational settings in Sheffield, U.K., Stephanie Pitts (2016) aimed to prove that music practise would increase the personal, social, and emotional development of children at risk of developmental delay, and improve program participants' skills in communication, language, and literacy. The participants in this study ranged from ages 2 to 4 and were involved in a 1-hour teacher-led circle that included songs, rhythm activities, and games with a phonics and language focus. This was followed by child-directed play with instruments and concluded with final circle time and a goodbye song. Findings revealed that through the use of existing music and language trackers, students consistently improved beyond their typical developmental expectations. The study concluded that teachers would benefit from the use of music as part of their speech, language, and communication teaching practices. In reference to observations of selected participants, Pitts found that music confidence and involvement helped students find their place and encouraged their communicative confidence in the classroom.

Extending Pitts's (2016) findings, Joe Norris (2008), a professor at Brock University in Ontario, Canada, advocated that our diverse student population calls on

teachers to celebrate multiple intelligences and learning styles. In terms of assessment, students must realize, reflect, and celebrate their individual thoughts and contributions. Norris documents his integration of the arts and how it enables his pre-service and in-service teachers to reflect on their process and find success in the assignments given. His work is based on projects he had done in previous classrooms that show teacher candidates how to integrate the arts in education. He felt that giving students the space to be creative fosters learners' creative spirit, encouraging them to work harder and produce more authentic experiences and meaningful work.

As mentioned earlier, Topoğlu (2013) reviewed several studies that promoted how music allowed participants to develop social, problem-solving, and cognitive skills as well as critical-thinking dispositions. The research articulated this relationship between student development and music through two experiment groups—one exposed to instrumental music and a control group of students without the music exposure. Overall, students who were exposed to instrumental music consistently managed to outscore students without music in reading and math tasks. It is thought that this increase of problem-solving and critical thinking skills is a result of the type of environment created when immersed in a musical setting.

Cho et al. (2017) also used the same theoretical connections between music, creativity, and the imagination articulated in Maxine Greene's (1995) *Releasing the Imagination*. Cho et al. lamented that all the above-mentioned skills are essential to prepare children to thrive in a complex 21st century educational setting. Cho et al. focused their research on the academic value of fostering creativity in an elementary setting (PK-3) and found that creativity was very important for brain development and

preparing students' minds for their future, especially in terms of deciding on a career and postsecondary education.

Music's ability to improve academic skills is further noted by Črnčec et al. (2006) who explain the power of music in terms of the *Mozart effect*—a phenomenon corresponding to improved performance in activities that require spatiotemporal reasoning, for 10-15 minutes after listening to a Mozart piano sonata. Spatiotemporal reasoning is a problem-solving ability that allows students to picture a spatial pattern and understand how objects can fit into it. Unfortunately, Črnčec et al. also note there are very few published studies available that showcase a large-sized Mozart effect, which thus questions the study's credibility. Studies of the Mozart effect also have yet to measure other academic outcomes. In addition, Reimer (1999) stated that the Mozart effect places music education in a vulnerable position. This is due to the fact that it considers the works from western culture to naturally demonstrate symmetry and sequences of patterns. It further implies that music from other world cultures do not have the natural capacity to affect listeners in the same manner.

The literature clearly indicates music's ability to enhance students' capacities in problem solving as well as their creativity and critical thinking. Paul and Elder's (2006) *Miniature Guide to Critical Thinking* notes that the aforementioned skills are essential to develop traits such as autonomous intelligence. According to Paul and Elder, autonomous intelligence corresponds to an individual's ability to self-direct, self-discipline, self-monitor, and self-correct. Many of these critical thinking skills are reflected in the learning skills portion of the elementary public school report card in Ontario (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010).

Wendell Hanna (2007) notes that such cognitive processes are recognized in Bloom's (1956) *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* as higher-order thinking skills. Bloom's taxonomy is a system that outlines six cognitive behaviours in an ordered hierarchy to showcase different levels of thinking (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). It was developed as a hierarchy of cognitive processes that assesses the quality of thinking in different subject domains as well as the thinking used in specific types of tasks (Hanna, 2007). To further explain music's natural contributions to higher level thinking, Hanna also considered Anderson and Krathwohl's (2001) revision of Bloom's taxonomy, in which thinking skills were changed from nouns to verbs to describe the active process that occurs. The result is a taxonomy that allows for music education output to be viewed objectively and assessed in a similar manner to math and science. In this style, it is clear how music has a natural ability to reach all tiers of this hierarchy, and more specifically the ability to help students analyze, differentiate, evaluate, and critique.

Lastly, in relation to the emotional contexts that affect students' learning, Teresa Lesiuk (2010) found that music has the ability to improve individuals' mood, focus, and anxiety levels. Music can be used to create a more positive learning environment for students in ways as simple as background music. Through music, students could work towards a common goal, learn co-operation, teamwork skills, as well as strategies to support each other.

In sum, much research advocates for the value of music in our lives, on a personal and academic level. Researchers understand that the world is immersed in music in vast contexts and music is experienced in very personal and individualized ways. In terms of the learning environment, it is clear that there are academic benefits to musical classroom approaches, as well as emotional benefits that foster positive attitudes towards learning

and creativity. The next area for research consideration is to highlight the research that demonstrates an integrated musical pedagogy in action and, more importantly, to identify if such an approach is effective. Specifically, the next section will deal with teaching strategies and case studies that showcase the success of the learners, as well as the success of the teaching practices.

Music as a Teaching Tool

The previous section articulated the value of music and its capacities to enhance the development of self-discovery, academia, and social contexts. This section of the literature review will focus on the benefits and barriers that teachers and researchers have experienced in terms of implementing music into their everyday classrooms. Therefore, each of the studies will be visited in both sections of this segment to give a more holistic view of the research. The first subsection discusses the successes and specific teaching strategies that were used in classrooms to bring music into the learning environment of the students. The second subsection deals with the challenges that were found when teachers were faced with the idea of sustaining their learned practices throughout their time in each research process.

Benefits of a Musically Integrated Pedagogy

Teachers in Paolino and Lummis's (2015) study had the opportunity to test and experiment with different movement activities and gestures to reinforce the importance of rhythm and movement when learning a language. Teacher participants were sent to the classroom to use their newly learned strategies for 10 minutes during each lesson over a span of 8 weeks. The discussion concluded that the teacher participants found the experience to be positive and would recommend the Orff-Schülwerk approach as a pedagogical tool for teaching Italian. (Orff-Schülwerk is a pedagogy developed by

German composer Carl Orff to encourage the creation of music through the mediums of improvisation and imagination.) The use of these strategies helped students to remember the language and it encouraged more students to participate in classroom activities. Lastly, the teacher participants did not feel that they lacked any of the resources, including a singing voice, to properly and comfortably implement these teaching methods.

Lackey and Huxhold (2016) examined teacher experience related to the implementation of the Arts in Education program (AIE). The study's interview-based data revealed this new arts-infused program built community among the staff and the culture became more family-like. This program intended to find the effects of using the arts in classrooms and what affects the arts-integrated approach had on the school's staff and students. The training was an intense experience for the teachers; however, they felt confident and committed when it came time to implement what they learned into the classroom. The training included a week of intensive sessions that helped the teachers design their integrated curriculum and provided them with a variety of instructional strategies. The confidence built from the training and in putting the program to action helped the teachers resist external criticism of what they were doing because the culture they had established truly made them believe in their purpose. The teachers also advocated that despite the fact that it was a lot of work and preparation, the end result was well worth it. The students were excited to learn and students who once struggled to complete work wanted to proudly share what they were working on. The AIE program not only inspired the teachers at the sample school to think and teach more creatively, but also inspired the students to enjoy and engage in meaningful learning.

The *Soundplay* project that formed the basis of Pitts's (2016) research succeeded in showcasing the value of musical integration and its contributions to linguistic and social development. The research included three terms of 2-hour workshops that occurred across two academic years. The workshops were given to children who were previously identified as having risk for personal, emotional, and communication development (e.g., special educational needs, ethnic minority, English as an additional language, and/or severe economic disadvantage), as well as the educators in those nursery classroom contexts. The project aimed to explore nursery practitioners' confidence and experience with music at the beginning and at the end of the year, along with their understanding of the impact of music on children's language and development. The teacher participants explored children's engagement in the workshops, observing their creativity and social interactions in the circle time and free play activities. Through the use of pre-existing music and language trackers, Pitts (2016) found there was improvement across the school year. In reference to the music trackers, Pitts found the growth was smaller in cases where students had begun with higher averages. The language tracker indicated that students demonstrated a consistent and noticeable increase in their language abilities by the project's end. Overall, Pitts demonstrated that through singing songs in a circle and engaging students in song-based activity, students have more success in their musical and language skills.

In both of these research projects, it was found that with training opportunities and a dedicated teaching community, teachers were able to build their confidence and competence in implementing new teaching methodologies with success. Pitts (2016) found that despite the students' level of social and language skills at the beginning of the year, all students experienced improvement in their language learning by the end of the

year. The most significant growth was noted among students who began the year at the lowest levels of language and social abilities, with the higher achieving participants showing less growth in comparison.

Beyond the success stories of teachers who are new to integrating music in their teaching practices, there is also literature that utilized ethnographic methodology in which the researcher observed the success of the children and their learning directly. In this research, the researcher becomes a part of that learning community and observes classroom practices (Griffin, 2017).

In earlier works, Winters and Griffin (2014) discussed how musical experiences enhanced lexical acquisition and semantic knowledge. They explored classroom practices that allowed students to experience daily music making. Through two vignettes, they found that through the use of songs, gestures, and soundscapes, the children were able to improve their grasp of language and use a more accurate vocabulary when communicating. In the first vignette, a 2-year-old boy took part in a playgroup at a community centre in Western Canada. During the young boy's play, it was observed that the boy barely spoke at playgroup. Though he attended speech therapy, his growth in language development was still behind the other children his age. After about 5 months into the program, the boy's mother observed that her son was able to sing the words in the songs taught at playgroup. The boy was able to use his knowledge of songs and gestures to aid his lexical acquisition. In the second vignette, Winters and Griffin showcased the use of music alongside picture books as a tool to improve comprehension. This study took place in a Grade 2 classroom with primarily students of First Nations and Asian heritage, with some students coming from impoverished home environments. Over

the course of a year, Winters utilized soundscapes and songs with picture books in her study to teach the students about light and luminosity. When the teacher later checked the students for their understanding, the students were able to clearly articulate the meanings of their new science vocabulary. It was found that music and soundscapes were able to give students more ways to understand new material and express their own understanding and thinking.

Music as a teaching tool across other domains has proven to enhance student thinking, empathy, and sense of self. Scripp and Gilbert (2016) used a music plus music integration model that focuses on using music and combining it with other disciplines. It was found that music should be integrated as part of the 21st century education policy because it was shown to advance cognitive skill development and enhance learning achievement throughout the levels of K-8. The study also noted the amplification of student engagement due to the fact that students found their place and their voice in the classroom.

Overall, the main themes from this literature indicate that teachers need more confidence when it comes to implementing new ideas such as music integration. Creative advocates such as Cho et al. (2017) and Maxine Greene (1995) were most concerned about the education of teachers because being able to imagine the possibilities of teaching approaches is just as important as a student's ability to imagine solutions to a problem. Without imagination, teachers are unable to communicate to the students what it means to imagine and to consider another vantage point. The benefits, however, are exciting educators to want to take part in opportunities to learn about new approaches, specifically when it comes to teaching language and language development.

The Interplay Between Music and Language Acquisition

Much of the research discussed in this section demonstrates that using music to aid in language acquisition benefits students, as it is believed that music is another form of language. However, philosophers such as Bennett Reimer argue that while music can be used as a form of communication, it goes beyond the literal science of encoding and decoding (as cited in Colwell, 2015). There is more interpretation to be had in experiencing music, making this artform go beyond the capacities of being classified as a language. With an understanding of the limits and connections of music as a language, researchers have found that the use of songs, gestures, and repetition helped propel and enhance their participants' abilities to speak and understand language.

Additionally, this research is important not just for the students who are learning French as their second language, but also for the growing number of students coming into a new country, a new school, and having to learn English and play academic catch up. This research is even more crucial for the English Language Learner (ELL) population who also wish to learn French. In many schools in Canada at the time of this review, the ELL population is continuing to build and with this increase, innovative practices need to come into play to ensure that no student is left behind. In 2017, People for Education noted that 63% of English language elementary schools and 58% of secondary schools have English language learners.

Barriers in Implementing a Musically Integrated Pedagogy

Paolino and Lummis (2015) sought to identify why teachers participating in their study avoided the benefits of music implementation. The teachers were successful in using the lessons they were taught and after experiencing success in the research process,

teachers found great engagement among the students. Using a series of weekly evaluation forms and exit interviews, Paolino and Lummis discovered that teachers doubted the sustainability of the studies, despite the proof that music is an advantageous teaching tool in the classroom. Since both language and music have many common elements (e.g., both can be considered tools for communication and entertainment), it seems foolish to not use them in tandem. The goal in this research was to showcase ways in which musical practices can enhance language learning. In their preliminary research, Paolino and Lummis expressed their belief that language teachers are limiting their resources by not exploring a pedagogy that incorporates music. Teachers, however, noted that there was an overall lack of resources that matched the themes they were covering, and the resources that were available were either too “babyish” or too difficult for the students to benefit from its use. It was also alleged that many of the teachers were not confident using music despite the fact that most of the teachers engaged in music in their personal lives.

Mashayekh and Hashemi (2011) explored the impact that music had on both primary and secondary students’ performance and how this valuable classroom asset has remained unutilized. Through the review of a variety of literature, they hypothesized that perhaps music has been underestimated as a viable resource due to a learned fear of using an unfamiliar tool. The authors felt that teachers developed their lack of confidence when working with music in their classrooms, and this confidence had been affected from when those teachers were in school, as students. Perhaps they may have received criticism on their abilities in music, thus making them feel as though they are not capable of being musical.

Paolino and Lummis (2015) noted other influential factors cited by participants in their study that limit teachers from comfortably utilizing music in their classrooms, including: pre-service teacher education, expectations and support from colleagues and administration, exposure to professional development, lack of resources, and standardized testing demands on student achievement. Paolino and Lummis's qualitative study sought to provide teachers with knowledge of musical practices that could help teach Italian to their classes in Western Australian primary schools. In the action research phase of their study, six non-music specialist Italian teachers attended a 4-hour professional learning seminar to learn the basics of the Orff-Schülwerk approach. After implementing the Orff-Schülwerk activities in their daily classrooms, teachers noted that time, resources, and training were imperative items required to implement a reform allowing for music integration.

This style of music education is multisensory in the sense that students are taught to feel the music in their bodies and have the opportunity to experiment with it before creating independently (Paolino & Lummis, 2015). Activities were spoken or sung and accompanied by stamping, clapping, drums, and sticks. This methodology incorporates rhymes and rhythms to help children identify patterns in the language, making it more predictable. Unfortunately, to protect the participants in Paolino and Lummis's (2015) study, specific strategies were not recorded. This research advocated that music is a valuable teaching tool that helps students to feel the language they are learning, which ultimately will help their relationships between the three strands of reading, writing, and communication. This highlights that an important factor for this reform to be successful and sustainable is the attitude of the teacher.

Some teachers in Paolino and Lummis's (2015) study recommended having more professional learning opportunities with music to help build confidence and morale. The challenge however is that other teachers may not be interested in the extra work and learning required. The development of community within the school was one of the reasons teachers enjoyed such a stressful learning curve. Everyone needed to be a team player for the reform to work.

Pitts (2016) ran into similar challenges in the *Soundplay* project. The bigger challenge was to communicate and train teachers on how to implement this practice into their classroom settings. The early-years practitioners in the study recognized the findings of the project and were receptive to the potential of music for their students; however, without the guidance of expert musicians and facilitators, teachers found that they were lacking confidence and the incentive to include music in their classrooms. This project was successful in showing its participants the value of musical interactions and how they can contribute to linguistic and social development. Nevertheless, there is more work to be done.

Lackey and Huxhold (2016) also implemented a reform for a more musically integrated practice in an academic institution called the Madison school, located in a Midwestern, college town in the United States. This was an arts-integration project that took place in an elementary school, populated by many children whose families are dealing with the dire effects of poverty and, therefore, underachieving on standardized testing scores. The study included 11 educators who opted to participate in the AIE incentive to identify the effects of using the arts. Teachers were required to integrate one arts unit into their programs and attend 3 weeks of intensive training where they

developed their confidence and competence with the arts. The artforms included in this study were visual arts, musical compositions, plays, and speeches. One of the downfalls of the study was that there were no field texts during the training. This was done to protect the morale of the teachers who may have felt vulnerable. It would be valuable to see what the teachers were most responsive to and the training challenges they faced.

Lackey and Huxhold (2016) found that teachers developed a strong professional community amongst themselves and collaborated often in an attempt to put their best efforts forward for their students. While teachers found that there was much more labour involved creating resources, the end results from the students made it worthwhile. Teachers also found that committing to this process helped them to realize their own personal connections to the arts, which ended up helping them re-introduce old approaches to teaching that were lost in all the focus around standardized testing. The importance of making connections to the arts and community building is further emphasized in the research of Ciuffetelli Parker and Craig (2017) as they stressed the importance of making community connections with students. These connections are what help teachers find common ground with their students and develop relationships despite socio-economic status. Their research also discussed themes around arts-based teacher development in a community in Houston, Texas to help build cultural connections through experiences that students in this community would not have. In this context, students were able to go see a play at the theatre. It was found that students were able to relate to some of the characters in the play and some even found hope for their future.

Revisiting Lackey and Huxhold (2016), some of the fears that teachers had about continuing their journey in developing a more arts-integrated approach at Madison were a

result of the pressures of the school's annual yearly performance review, while other educators had hoped that this new approach would enhance the test scores. In summary, teachers underwent a big learning curve, and this was only to integrate the arts into one unit and not the whole curriculum; however, with the shift in student engagement and attitude, the extra time and effort was worthwhile. While such research demonstrated success with the students and the teachers felt rewarded for all of their efforts through the experiments mentioned above, there still seems to be some speculation of barriers as to what teachers felt they were missing.

Integrating Music in Theory

In specific domains of the curriculum, there are areas where music can be of great benefit. Language, in particular, is in need of more engagement and less pressure to allow for students to take a more active role in language learning. Language is the one subject and skill that is integrated and utilized across all the other subjects in the curriculum naturally, as it is the way to communicate ideas to the teacher and other students.

Paquette and Rieg (2008) described the musical benefits in education, as well as the value of using music to foster creativity and literacy instruction. This is especially true for ELLs as they develop their language skills. In addition, Paquette and Rieg note that musical intelligence is one of the first of the multiple intelligences to be established in children. With that in mind, it is beneficial to include this intelligence to enhance literacy development at the same time as music activities such as singing. Paquette and Rieg also discuss the concept of music being a way to weaken the affective filter as a catalyst for a more positive attitude towards learning, and therefore, students are more successful when learning a new language.

Mashayekh and Hashemi (2011) agreed that music is a successful tool to teach language, society, and culture; songs can embody cultural meanings, inspiration, and worldviews within their lyrics and in one sense “songs tell thousands of human stories” (p. 2189). These musical stories can encourage the use of skills such as comprehension, analysis, synthesizing new conclusions, and enhancing problem solving.

In music and language studies, researchers such as Milovanov, Huotilainen, Välimäki, Esquef, and Tervaniemi (2008), Ferreri and Verga (2016), and Paolino and Lummis (2015) discussed the abundance of academic benefits found in music, including: mnemonic codes for memory retention, daily physical activity, exploring emotions, making connections between home and school, drawing on our prior knowledge, exposure to language practice in passive and active capacities, maintaining student engagement, and creating a fun, non-threatening learning atmosphere.

Much research underscores the importance of using music in first language acquisition and therefore it makes sense to include it in any new language learning opportunities. The researchers cited above specifically outline music’s ability to engage both left and right sides of the brain, which allows for more retention and brain function. It is also a way to ease the pressure felt by students who may struggle with the language barrier. Brutton, Angelis, and Perkins (1985) emphasized that because language learning is an auditory process, music would aid in a component of remembering language. Through the implementation of tests, Brutton et al. were able to measure students’ ability to relate sounds and symbols.

Frimberger (2016) expressed that ELLs want to realize the connections and relevance in what they are learning, and this happens through cultural appreciation.

Music is a way of humanizing language in our teaching and therefore, he suggested that teachers need to stop dehumanizing their programs to better promote language learning. The term *dehumanize* is used to articulate the process of teachers problematizing students' use of their non-dominant language and categorizing them as having no language abilities. Rather than focusing on the deficits, Frimberger suggested a multilingual approach that celebrates and humanizes all forms of language. Frimberger's research related to an event called Language Fest found that teachers and event leaders were able to achieve something more meaningful through the use of the arts and cultural appreciation.

From a developmental standpoint, Shotte (2013) considered theories of Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotski, and Jerome Bruner to develop and support practices for a new pedagogy to more effectively teach English to non-English speaking students. To summarize, these theorists believed that students should be active participants in their learning to enthusiastically create new understanding whenever they interact with the environment. This constructivist interaction with the environment also interplays with sociality, as relationships in the learning space are also aspects of that learning environment.

Integrating Music in Practice

To take a better look into this learning environment, Griffin's work (2017) highlighted what music can bring to language acquisition to help build a rewarding learning community. Under the context of the *Community Arts Zone* research, Griffin searched to uncover if music was successful in catalyzing learning and the links between music, language learning, and community. This research was part of an international project that looked at the interplay of community arts, focused on how the arts function as

a teaching tool and how the arts can connect with literacy. Of the eight projects, Griffin's work, situated in southern Ontario, focused on children's musical experiences both in and out of school.

Griffin's (2017) ethnographic study focused on the impact of music on a group of Grade 1, French immersion elementary children and their experiences with music education integration within the curriculum. The primary classroom teacher in this research context was already using music in the classroom and embraced Carl Orff and the Orff-Schülwerk pedagogy discussed earlier in this literature review. For example, the teacher used a drum to keep a steady beat as the children practised counting in French. They also engaged in rhythmic chants during transition times, and the children often followed these routines without direction from the teacher. The teacher in the research made connections between language elements of music and syllable words by notating the words, using music notes. Music became second nature to the students, and it became natural to hear them singing in French as they went about their work in the classroom, often to the point where they were unaware of how often they used it because language became a type of music for them. Griffin found that the students were not only enjoying language learning but were also exceeding the music curriculum expectations for their Grade 1 level.

Griffin's (2017) study found that the use of music helped solidify the French language among students. More importantly, the program was found to be a successful, fun, engaging, and creative experience. Within her study, spontaneous music making allowed students to experience music while at play which was found to be an important component of language and literacy development.

The Orff-Schülwerk program is not the only musically integrated pedagogy that exists to enhance the language learning experience. Cummins (2014) reviewed different affective contexts in terms of students learning multiple languages. Cummins, a professor at the University of Toronto, addressed the connections between Canadian educational policy and research findings in dual language learning. He said that in many parts of Ontario, Core French as a Second Language (FSL) programs have been disappointing and are not successful in teaching students who are capable of communicating even minimal proficiency in the language. In his research into Core French programs from Grades 4–9, Cummins found that since its development in 2008, the AIM program has been implemented in more than 4,000 schools across Canada. The AIM program, created by Wendy Maxwell, is an immersive, kinesthetic, and arts-based approach to second language learning. Through the use of songs and gestures, the target language is strategically introduced to promote essential vocabulary development and understanding. This methodology was described by Maxwell (2001) as responsive methodology for a variety of learning styles.

Cummins's (2014) review of the literature found that AIM has had positive results in a variety of small-scale studies that demonstrated students using this methodology were notably more proficient in speaking French, though Cummins also noted that some of the small-scale studies did not discover any significant difference in language acquisition. Cummins disagrees with the latter findings in terms of the communication abilities of the students, as the AIM students were less likely to revert to English when expressing their ideas.

Winters and Griffin (2014) affirm the positive effects of music and language

working together as being important because they can work to discover identities, communicate thoughts and feelings, and also unite communities. The relationship between music and language resides in both being forms of communication that allow people to interpret and produce thoughts, stories, and emotions.

In terms of teaching English and French to newcomer students, a large percentage (between 60%-70%) of dual language learners (DLL) at the time of Cummins's (2014) study were not graduating with their high-school diplomas. When looking into how these statistics came to be, Cummins found that most elementary- and secondary-level programs lack pre-service and/or professional development opportunities to nurture and support DLL students during instruction. A fact that is more concerning is that according to the research, DLLs typically take 5 years to catch up academically. This means that teachers are lacking the experience and qualifications and training to support DLL students and therefore, students are falling more and more behind as each year passes.

Despite the conflicts mentioned above, Cummins (2014) found that cultural appreciation was a positive development towards having greater appreciation for students' first and second languages as well as others' languages. He suggests that teachers learn something from the students about their culture, such as a greeting. Returning to the work of Ciuffetelli Parker and Craig (2017), culture can also be explored through the arts such as in a play. Teachers may also highlight pieces of work and efforts from a multilingual lens to help sensitize the student population to all different kinds of language (Cummins, 2014). Other suggestions made by Cummins included encouraging students to use their first language for note-taking and research and using technology to build cultural awareness. Programs such as Google Earth can be beneficial, as students

can take a closer look at different regions around the world and compare similarities and differences to their own lived environments. In terms of linking language learning to a variety of cultures, Cummins advocated that having other subjects integrated into language learning showed more promising results in student French performance compared to Core French classes. Cummins also discussed an arts-integrated approach to language learning; the accelerated integrated methodology was found to touch upon multiple learning styles and used the arts to engage the students in a more meaningful and immersive French experience.

Overall, Cummins (2014) found that Canadian policy makers needed to respond to some of the educational challenges and opportunities for a multilingual population, such as providing teachers with more incentives to develop their instructional expertise. Policy makers need to exercise their imaginations to come up with ways to encourage incentive programs.

In Wendy Maxwell's (2001) Master's thesis (University of Toronto) articulating her journey in developing the AIM program, it was evident in her teaching experiences that her elementary French program was not providing students with competent or sustainable communication skills in the target language. This lack of success inspired her to identify gaps in current French programs and resources available to teachers. In her literature review, Maxwell found no pedagogical framework regarding how second language learning was to be presented, along with a lack of teacher modeling to foster fluency and vocabulary visuals for learners who retain more through what they see in front of them. Maxwell then discovered that Core French programs should have parallels to that of French immersion programs through a content-based teaching approach, rather

than the thematic units often found in Core French classrooms. Maxwell was surprised that up to 635 of Core French classrooms relied so heavily on the first language to teach French. More concerning still was that the Ontario Ministry of Education guidelines failed to outline any communicative based objectives, though they did suggest the use of meaningful activities and the utilization of drama and role-play. Maxwell believed that with a more immersive approach to teaching language, paralleled with the integration of story, theatre, drama, music, and dance, the development of new language would occur more naturally.

Based on her experiences, Maxwell (2001) noted a need for a new way to teach and thus developed a methodology for AIM. Maxwell understood that content-based activities that focused on understanding the message resulted in enhancing language acquisition. As well, teachers should not rely on a singular approach to learning a new language. Maxwell felt that the use of music, drama, and movement within AIM allowed for students with different learning styles a variety of mediums to explore and experience language, once again augmenting acquisition.

Maxwell's (2001) study consisted of two groups of nine students chosen across the academic spectrum of high, average, and low performance. One group followed the traditional thematic approach to Core French and the other engaged in the AIM program. The study was done as exploratory research without any pre-testing of the students and was concluded with a 7-part evaluation to assess student competency in the target language. Each part of the evaluation ranged from easy questions that increased in difficulty and competency until part 7, where students were asked to create their own stories using the target language and puppets.

Maxwell (2001) found that five steps are needed to help students to internalize the meaning of a new language: memorization, oral comprehension, expression, reading/written expression, and creative written/oral expression. Each one of these steps allows students to use language content in ways that begin with a guided approach and move towards independent, creative, and cognitively demanding applications. Maxwell argued that this leads to the use of functional language. Maxwell further developed the concept of functional language in her study as well, identifying the target words students needed most to begin engaging and communicating in the target language.

The results of Maxwell's (2001) study found that despite the fact that the AIM group received 1 additional hour of study, this group was able to respond to the questions, in either their first or target language, 96.6% of the time on average. The other group averaged 13.5% in the same category, which means that comprehension altogether was lacking. In terms of vocabulary, once again the AIM group used an average of 334 words throughout the interview process in comparison with the other group who averaged 44.7 words in French. Some of these French words were also scaffolded in the questions asked to help students formulate their answers. For example, in part three, one of the questions asked: *Qui est le plus petit dans ta classe?* [Who is the smallest in your class?]. Most of the words required to answer the question are built into the question itself. In this particular example, the student only needs to add a Proper noun and change the possessive article to complete his/her answer.

Lastly, Maxwell (2001) found the most significant comparison in her results was in the storytelling component in which students used the puppets provided to tell any story they wanted in French. In the comparison group, only three of the nine students

attempted to participate in this activity. The number of words used by these three students ranged from two to 32, while the AIM group ranged between 78–1,500 words for their stories.

Overall, Maxwell (2001) suggested that an arts-integrated language pedagogy that incorporates elements of French immersion practices demonstrated a higher level of fluency from the participants in her study. Furthermore, the AIM students very rarely relied on switching to their first language, which was believed to be a result of immersing students in the target language through story, drama, music, and movement. More importantly, Maxwell argued that the thematic approach lacks meaningful learning for the students to connect to French and that Core French needs to be relevant to be engaging.

Conclusion

Everyone has some type of connection with music as it surrounds us in our daily lives. The literature reveals that this personal connection also has the capacity to engage critical thinking skills in other domains across the curriculum. Many studies prove music's value in the classroom, especially when it comes to the language-learning environment. It is important that teachers learn to facilitate this environment for their students so that critical thinking can occur in a natural and engaging way. Unfortunately, Cho et al. (2017) found that teachers are experiencing barriers such as teaching to a test and feel intimidated or underqualified to take on music as a teaching tool. Another consideration surrounding the barriers that may be preventing the music integration reform from occurring may be creative oppression and how it is being passed down from one generation of teacher to the next (Greene, 1995). This creative oppression happens as

a result of not having enough opportunity to create and explore in teaching and learning. Teachers often teach the way they were taught and breaking old habits can be intimidating and uncomfortable; such creative oppression may stem from being told how learning should occur when they were students in school, and that cycle continues.

Research also shows that using music will promote critical thinking, better attitudes, and an overall stronger connection to language. This is critical if schools are hoping to continue to support the growing ELL population and build their motivation to become successful, lifelong learners. It is not enough to reproduce the way things are (Greene, 1995). The world is changing, and we have to adapt so that no one is left behind. But the question remains: What is needed to help reform occur?

Throughout this chapter, the literature revealed that music has a positive effect on student learning, particularly in terms of learning language. The integration of music not only relates to different learning styles; its ongoing presence in our everyday lives brings communities together, creating a safer and more stimulating environment for learning to happen. Further Canadian-based research uncovered a new and innovative program known as AIM that puts arts-integrated language pedagogies to practice. The results of this union in small-scale studies indicated that students are retaining a more functional level of French in a more creative and engaging environment.

The next chapter presents the research design of this study and details the methodology of my research. Narrative inquiry is used in this study to give elementary Core French teachers the opportunity to share their experiences with the arts in their classrooms. They are able to share their strategies and preferred programs to develop a

collaborative dialogue to inspire other language teachers to have an arts-integrated approach.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

The intent of this research was to further my understanding surrounding the experiences of teachers implementing the arts in their Core French classrooms. Narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) serves as a methodological foundation that allows researchers to explore teachers' past and present experiences of teaching language. Exploring these stories not only validates my own experiences with programs that integrate the arts into language learning but also enlightens others to learn more about the strengths and challenges of implementing these innovative strategies. As Connelly and Clandinin (1990) remind us, "Humans are storytelling organisms who, individually and socially, lead storied lives. Thus, the study of narrative is the study of the ways humans experience the world" (p. 2).

According to Connelly and Clandinin (2006), it is in human nature to tell stories because it is a natural way for us to learn—from the experiences of others. This chapter outlines the design and framework used in this research, describes the participants selected, the collection of data, analyses of data, limitations, ethical considerations, and establishes credibility. This research was guided by the following questions:

1. How do elementary French second language teachers experience integrating the arts?
2. What successful arts-integrated practices do teachers integrate when teaching French as a second language?
3. What are some of the potential barriers inhibiting teachers from utilizing the different strands of the arts into the learning environment of French second language learners?

Research Design

In designing this narrative inquiry study, I considered eight elements discussed by Clandinin et al. (2007). The first element deals with the justification, which supports the importance of the study. Connelly and Clandinin (2006) believe that it is most important to first use the imagination to conceive the topic as an ongoing and ever-changing space. In the first two chapters of this thesis, the justification and purpose of the study were shared along with literature that supports why artful approaches are not only practical but also socially relevant. As the researcher, my imagination is what led me to see the need for research that explores more integrated ways of teaching language because it is not enough to settle for the way things are (Greene, 1995). I was curious to know more about how different teachers viewed teaching French to their students.

The second element uncovers the topic of inquiry that is unveiled in the first chapter, giving context to the main focus of the research. The third describes the methods used in the study. In terms of methodology, this study considers the participants' experience as occurring "in a multidimensioned, ever changing life space" (Clandinin et al., 2007, p. 27). The study aims to present the experiences of teachers who have used arts-integration in their language teaching practices, along with any benefits and/or barriers that may have come with these methods of implementation. Based on the data gathered from the interviews, I have restored these experiences. The conversational interview questions sought to uncover the participants' journeys—from being introduced to the arts, to becoming teachers who believe that arts-based practices benefit their students in language learning. These stories consider how time and relationships affect the choices of the teachers and, ultimately, their experiences.

The fourth element describes the analytical and interpretive processes that occur after the collection of data (Clandinin et al., 2007). Data collection consisted of open conversations that encouraged teachers to recollect the journey of their experiences and uncover any implications for the future. The use of the term *conversation* is important to ensure that the participants felt at ease but also so that there were allowances for follow-up questions as stories developed. The data were transcribed and revisited in both audio and written transcript formats to understand what elements led each participant to his or her current practices. The audio format gave an extra dimension of the emotions of the researcher as well as the participant, helping to provide a more complete picture of each event. Themes were developed based on commonalities that arose across each participant's narrative.

The use of field texts capture the essence of stories through audio recording of conversations, as well as interview transcripts (Clandinin, 2006). These written texts, or recorded dialogues, are intended to be tentative, open dialogue texts to be read and discussed with the participants (Clandinin, Murphy, Huber, Murray-Orr, 2010). These texts help the readers and the researcher understand teachers' lives in terms of their *professional-knowledge landscape* (Clandinin & Connelly, 1989). This concept considers the temporality, sociality, and places of school contexts. "Teachers spend part of their time in classrooms and part of their time in other professional, communal places" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996, p. 25). This is important because it gives voice to the perspectives of teachers, honouring them as credible, knowledgeable beings.

Upon gathering the teachers' stories, interviews were transcribed, allowing the researcher to be wakeful to the different dimensions of the experiences shared. Elbaz-

Luwisch (2010) speaks about *wakefulness* and asserts that to be wakeful is to be aware of my own positioning in the field of teaching and in society. This is important to protect the authenticity of the participants' stories and to avoid restorying using a critical lens and distorting the narratives of others—remaining true and focusing on the participants' experiences and not adding details that change the original storying of the narrative.

In conducting this research, it was important to approach each narrative understanding of the participant's social context to better understand his/her journey at that particular time throughout his/her life. When I was writing each of the narratives, I kept my research questions near me to help guide what parts of each narrative best addressed the questions. After a first draft of the narratives was written, I would read them over and consider how to better incorporate a more three-dimensional view of each experience. Finally, after completing all the stories, I looked for themes that stood out to help organize my findings. The narratives were also not written in order of the interview questions. I felt it was important that each participant's narrative would read like a story from beginning to end to demonstrate growth and change in his/her relationship with the arts.

According to Tilley (2016) in *Doing Respectful Research*, many individuals have been exposed to a variety of experiences with interviews. This means that this method of data collection is familiar to the participants involved. Tilley also noted that interviewing is often a method used in arts-based research projects due to the nature of in-depth and open-ended interviews inspiring discussion and allowing for new follow-up questions to emerge. This potentially results in a more holistic and diverse view of the world, people, and their relationships with one another (Clandinin et al., 2010).

The fifth element acknowledges the position of the study in relation to the pre-existing literature on the topic (Clandinin et al., 2007). The sixth element considers the uniqueness of the study and allows the reader of the research to understand what is unknown and what this research aims to uncover. The seventh element is ethical considerations, which are essential elements that are unpacked in the later sections of this chapter.

The last element focuses on the process of representation and the chosen style of research. This element considers that writing a research text is, in itself, a narrative act. What I mean by this is that each version of a story becomes a new narrative of its own. As the researcher, it is important to not allow my opinions and my personal experiences to distract readers away from the retelling of someone else's narrative. While each restorying of the narrative aims to maintain authenticity to the experience, there are inevitably some differences as a result of the teller's personal experiences, and interpretations of the narrative, affecting how the narratives are portrayed.

A Three-Dimensional Framework

Narrative inquiry is a relational research process in which the researcher needs to maintain wakeful attention to all the dimensions of retelling and reliving of stories (Clandinin et al., 2007). Doing research through narrative inquiry allows readers to understand the ongoing experiences of others (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). This research outlines the experiences of teachers using a three-dimensional framework. As the 3D framework unfolds, it is essential to attend to the *professional-knowledge landscapes* of teachers (Clandinin & Connelly, 1989). When dealing with teacher experiences in schools, the researcher begins to understand a teacher's personal practical knowledge (Huber, Caine, Huber, & Steeves, 2013). The idea of personal practical

knowledge recognizes teachers as knowledgeable beings, taking what they have learned through past and present experiences and using that knowledge gained to guide future experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 1989).

There are three theoretical dimensions enfolded within this methodology of research (Clandinin et al., 2007; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). The first is *temporality*, in which the researcher must consider experience as an ongoing process with a past, a present, and an inevitable future. This is also where the concept of storied landscape can be understood as the story of experience that takes us, the audience, on a journey. The stories are retold and restoried through processes of reflection and new experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 1989). As this research aims to uncover teacher experience, it is essential to consider temporality for each question and each participant based on his or her life's stage in the experience. Perception of an experience is affected by personal and social growth, and it is important to be cognizant of how temporality plays a role in the retelling of experience. "Narrative inquiry is about life and living" (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 478), which are ongoing processes until we are no longer living. Exploring the theoretical dimension of temporality in my own research allows for me to attend to experience at different spaces of time in my participants' storied landscapes.

The second dimension is *sociality*, which considers that all relationships influence an individual's context, such as the relationship with the environment or with other people. A relationship that is particularly important occurs between the researcher and the participant. This is due to the fact that the relationship plays its own role in the story and experience of the participants and therefore cannot be subtracted from the inquirer's consideration (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). It will also be important to consider the relationships that were a part of each stage of the experiences or influential factors

throughout the participants' storied lives. It could be a family member who inspired the participant's journey with the arts, a teacher, or perhaps a mentor.

The last dimension of this narrative inquiry methodology is *place*, where the experiences physically took place. The physical space is important to consider, though it will morph through temporality. Here, the inquirer considers the impact of each place and the contribution it has in the retelling of each experience. Each place will, no doubt, hold its own impact in the experience.

Together, these dimensions—temporality, sociality, and place—interplay with one another, encouraging questions that explore each of the three commonplaces. The goal of using this framework is to allow for what Connelly and Clandinin (2006) refer to as *temporal unfolding* to ensure that no one part is emphasized nor excluded, affecting authenticity or overall impact of the experience.

Participant Selection

In this study, the participants were selected based on their abilities to relate to the research questions; therefore, they could not be randomized. Through purposive sampling, two participants were selected, along with myself as a co-researcher. Recruitment methods were considered to maintain the privacy and safety of those sharing their stories. Being a French teacher with a musical background, it was clear that upon entering into a Master of Education program, my research would be about the arts and language learning in some capacity. After meeting with my advisor and sharing my passion of incorporating the arts with teaching language, my research project evolved into inquiry surrounding arts-integrated teaching methodologies. Prior to beginning the formal data collection, the participants received a letter of invitation outlining all of the expectations and conditions surrounding the interview process and the research. The

Brock University Research Ethics Board (REB #17-227) cleared these expectations. Each relationship between the participants and myself is unique, in that all the relationships stem from personal friendships. When working on the research data collection, it is important to recognize and detail these relationships.

The first participant, Sophie, is an elementary French and physical education teacher who frequently uses drama, dance, and music in her French classroom. Sophie and I met during one of my first teaching contracts. She was a helpful teaching partner who showed me the resources that the school had and often shared what had worked for her classes. From there, we continued to stay in touch and we found ourselves teaching together once again. Sophie is a teacher who enjoys finding new ways to motivate her students. In the hallways at school, she is often seen making the students laugh, and she enjoys taking them outside to play games, becoming active in their learning experiences. Sophie is dynamic with her students, and this showed in her approach to teaching Core French.

The second participant is Melanie, a teacher whom I have known since I was a student in elementary school. Melanie was my sister's Grade 1 teacher for French Immersion. After completing my undergraduate degree, I came across the opportunity to learn alongside Melanie for one of my teaching placements during my Bachelor of Education program. I got to witness first-hand her differentiated approaches to language learning.

Finally, my own personal narrative is included, as I am a co-participant throughout the journey of this research. Here, I delve more into my language teaching experiences throughout my last 5 years of teaching Core French.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data were collected informally through interviews. These interviews with the participants (see Appendix A: Interview Questions) were used to further gather information about the classroom dynamics in different points in teachers' personal lives and in their careers—including growing up with the arts, learning through the arts, and teaching through the implementation of an arts-based language program.

As the researcher, I conducted the interviews over Skype and in person based upon schedules and comfort levels. The interviews were conversational, with the questions having been emailed to the participants beforehand to allow for thorough reflection. The participants, however, were not expected to prepare answers prior to the interview. Each of the interviews was around 90 minutes long and took place in a private study room in a public library. During these interviews, detailed notes were not taken as the interview was audio-recorded and later transcribed, and therefore the field notes were in audio format. My reactions and thoughts were captured in the recording as well. The benefit of having these transcribed conversations for each of the participants and their experiences was that the narratives could be analyzed and retold in relation to one another. The transcription manuscripts were between 10 and 15 pages each, with minute marks annotated throughout the document to allow me to return to the audio recordings to listen to sections of the interview more easily. These transcripts were later shown to the participants to ensure that their storied landscape was accurately represented. Both participants were content with how the interviews were transcribed. In addition, these audio-recorded field texts invited participants to find gaps in their story's plot, hence encouraging them to fill in their stories with more detail. For Sophie's story, after reading

her transcript, I desired more details to fill in some of the gaps. Seeing the interview in words helped me to better formulate follow-up questions to obtain more depth in her experiences.

After this process, I reread the transcripts several times to detect common themes. Listening to the retellings of the narratives and/or reading the transcripts allowed for the development of main themes, which were categorized based on similarities, differences, and commonalities between each of the participants. Data were also observed using Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) three-dimensional framework to understand the temporality (past, present, and future), sociality (personal and social), and place (physical places), thus allowing for a better understanding of each dimension.

This framework has been useful in my own analysis, and I used one or two of its three dimensions for each of the participants' narratives. Specifically, in terms of data analysis, I utilized temporality, sociality, and imagination for Sophie to explore how her experiences and relationships with the arts over time allowed her to imagine ways to improve her teaching practices. For Melanie, I used temporality and imagination to explore how her childhood helped to cultivate more creativity in her classroom. Lastly, in my own narrative, I explored all three dimensions, as well as imagination, to showcase how my journey has developed throughout this thesis.

This data collection aided in understanding each experience as a story (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin et al., 2010). Through story, readers of this research are encouraged to enter into another person's world, making it personally meaningful. "It is commonplace to note that human beings both live and tell stories about their living" (Clandinin, 2006, p. 44). This action of taking experiences and telling the story is known as *storying* (Clandinin & Connelly, 1989). This method was not only a fundamental

process towards personal growth but also a process that allowed for reflection. As this research looked to uncover the storied landscape of Core French teaching practices, storying and restorying were necessary to uncover deficiencies, successes, and overall themes. The themes represented the key recurring categories, aligning the participants' responses with the researcher's own personal narrative along with the reflections. These findings are presented in Chapter 4, and the discussion and implications of the findings are presented in Chapter 5.

Limitations

Craig (2013) identifies challenges with engaging in narrative inquiry scholarship. She notes that narrative research is known to have common issues in its implementation, including teachers' different abilities to reflect on practice, which could limit the level of depth and implications for future practices. These limitations may affect not only the participants but also the researcher as I tried to recollect memories or emotions. This could result in the creation of gaps or fabrications in the story.

Another possible limitation is the small sample of teachers in my study. My findings do not represent the experiences of all Core French teachers who integrate the arts but instead present merely an overall view of students in the participants' classrooms. Additionally, the teachers selected for this study have both a personal and/or professional relationship with me as the researcher. This could potentially be seen as a limitation because this could make the participants feel pressured to participate, and it is important to acknowledge this as the researcher.

The participants are arts advocates who have already chosen to integrate the arts into their teaching practices. Therefore, the information they present is biased. These teachers have advocated for a change to their curriculum, and therefore their narratives

may not acknowledge some of the barriers they encountered, as they may perceive the initial, transitional part of arts-integration differently.

Lastly, I would like to note a tension that will appear through the data in regard to the AIM program. This is a program that constitutes a substantial part of my narrative, as this was the first program I implemented into my classroom. I draw attention to this as a tension due to my bias at the time of these interviews in the event that my knowledge on this program takes away from the other programs and strategies that come out of the interview process. While I have experienced this program personally, I do not want additional information to imply that the AIM program is superior to any of the other practices mentioned throughout this work. This research is about exploring different practices of teaching French as a second language using the different forms of the arts to enhance student engagement and learning.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were interwoven throughout the process of narrative inquiry from beginning to end (Clandinin et al., 2007), including its framework, methods, and purpose. Further revisions were made to ensure the process of this research was ethically sound. The participants were made aware of this process, and a letter of invitation with all the expectations was provided. To participate in this study, the participants were also asked to sign consent forms, which included the purpose, data collection methods, benefits, and understandings to which the participants were asked to agree. There was also the potential for the participants to feel obligated to participate. Thus, it was made clear through the consent letter that their participation in the study would not jeopardize data collection associated with the study. The participants were also

made aware that they were able to withdraw from the study at any time, and/or choose to not answer certain questions. The participants' names were not disclosed to maintain confidentiality though their positions teaching French were important to illustrate their experiences in teaching elementary French. Therefore, these details were included.

Establishing Credibility

To verify that data acquired was accurate, the transcribed versions of the interview were sent electronically to the participants for their verification, ensuring that the notes were articulated the way they meant for them to be understood. In addition, the research was shared with the participants again when the final manuscript copy was completed. This was to ensure authenticity. It was important to understand the entire landscape of each participant's experience and therefore being aware of relationships is crucial (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). I did not want to be perceived as knowing everything there is to know about each story (Huber et al., 2013). To ensure my own trustworthiness in sharing my own experiences, I returned to commonplaces within and across my experiences to bring more depth to my stories, taking time to reflect on past experiences, and searching for more insight (Huber et al., 2013).

Restatement of the Area of Study

The methodology of this research helps the reader to understand that the goal of the study was to collect more than just stories. Through the process of interviews and narrative inquiry, readers are able to experience how teachers feel about implementing the arts into their schools and their Core French classrooms. In the next chapter, this thesis offers more insight into arts-integrated programs and how the arts are being

implemented and experienced by three French teachers in elementary schools within Ontario.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

Growing up, my scholarly career was French, until high school. I switched over to a school for the arts, and as a teacher, I am now infusing the arts in my French language teaching. Combining my experiences with French and my love of the arts, the purpose of this study is to better understand the artful practices infused in French teaching practices. This includes exploring how teachers feel about this process in terms of their professional development and student success. Specifically, this narrative inquiry draws upon the experiences of teachers to gain insight into the journey of implementing an arts-integrated pedagogy. This study also focuses on the teachers' relationship with the arts and with the French language separately, so as to understand the story of how teachers came to integrate the arts into their teaching practices.

It is important to share the findings of this research to create more positive and informative material surrounding arts-based strategies to teach French as a second language. Through interviews with teachers in the elementary Core French teaching field, and their personal stories, I explored these three research questions:

1. How do elementary French second language teachers experience integrating the arts?
2. What successful arts-integrated practices do teachers integrate when teaching French as a second language?
3. What are some of the potential barriers inhibiting teachers from utilizing the different strands of the arts into the learning environment of French second language learners?

The way in which people experience the arts is different for each individual. As mentioned in the literature review, music has the ability to be unique for every individual in every context of his or her life, transforming itself from a means of relaxation, entertainment, or reflection (Mashayekh & Hashemi, 2011). I have numerous memories involving music and the arts in one way or another during my childhood, whether singing with friends, rehearsal for theatre, or for school. The versatility that the arts has to offer allows teachers to gravitate to the strand or strands with which they most resonate.

Holly's Narrative—Sing Like Nobody's Listening

Experience With the Arts, Growing Up

My first memory of music as a young child is before I started school. I do not recall how old I was, but I remember that my mother would sing me to sleep at night and she had the most beautiful voice. I remember that I would ask for song after song and just wanting to fall asleep to the sound of my mother's voice. On nights where my dad would put me to bed, he would then be roped into singing to me as well. He did not know the same songs as my mom, so he was never able to sing my requests. It is a happy memory—relaxing and safe.

Fast forwarding to a few years later, I remember my second most prominent memory of music where I was singing along with Disney sing-a-long tapes my parents purchased for me. There was a ball that would bounce above the words as the music played. My favourite songs were *Part of Your World* from *The Little Mermaid* and *I Just Can't Wait to be King* from *The Lion King*. I do not know if I was good at singing or not, but I do remember feeling free and not having a care in the world. I look back on this now and wonder what I even worried about at that age to know what feeling “free” was

even like. The best way I can describe it now, is like being on a boat ride where the wind feels warm, despite the speed that it is rushing past you. The wind gives the sensation that the air is fresher than you ever noticed before, and it feels like you are breathing air for the first time in your life. It almost takes your breath away. I experienced that feeling growing up during every voice recital, every theatre production, and choir rehearsal. There were so many songs in my head; each one gave me something different to suit the different situations I found myself in growing up. I also enjoyed drama, dance, and visual arts, though, in my experience, they were always integrated with music—more specifically, musical theatre. In theatre, we would help paint the sets on top of acting and dancing in the musical productions in which I took part. For me, music has always been essential in everything I do.

By the time high school came, I had to choose between French and music, and at the time, it was the easiest decision to make because I wanted to be a Broadway star. The logical conversations I had with my friends recognized more realistic career choices, and we all believed and agreed that knowing French could help you obtain a better job. To keep my options open, I continued to take French classes in high school. Reality set in for me in Grade 12 when I realized that perhaps I did not have the thick skin required to be a singer. There are some people who take criticism as a challenge and use the advice given constructively to improve. For me, I could not help but take it personally. As I was preparing for my auditions to be in the performance programs for several universities, my private voice teacher told me that my hearing was not good enough, and I was unable to sing in tune. This was devastating because no one had ever said anything negative about my singing, and I was embarrassed to think I was actually that poor of a singer. I

remember not knowing what to think anymore so I switched and applied for music education. I ended up going to university for music education at the University of Western Ontario because I knew that I wanted to teach and share my joy of music with others. I still welcomed the opportunity to sing in my classes and since my instrument was voice, I still took private lessons with the voice professors there. It was after my first year that students got to choose their program route—performance or education. Many of my friends at the time said that I should do performance and that I could still take education courses on the side. I remember feeling torn and insecure about it after the criticism I received in high school. I was convinced that I should at least audition and let the faculty decide which route I was to take. I was accepted into the performance program and my choice was made.

One of the courses I took as part of my performance program was diction. It was here where I learned about IPA [International Phonetic Alphabet] and how to pronounce words correctly in Italian, French, and German. I loved this course and it helped me with my French electives that I was taking as well. At the time, I felt that my career path was changing and that I would be a professional singer when I completed this program. I learned new languages every day and sang; this was school for me. I loved it.

Experience Learning French

There are two types of reactions to French that I have encountered in my life, both in my career and personal relationships. First, there are the people who despised learning French, and each class was counted down until the end of the term. Once French was over, they never turned back. I have also met people who fell into the above experience but wished that they had continued with the language into their adult life because they

were finally able to see the value it could have added to their lives. As mentioned earlier in my narratives from Chapter 1, my Kindergarten teacher was one of these inspiring and enthusiastic teachers. Some of the most prominent memories I can recall about learning French were the songs and writing stories. Since I loved to sing when I was younger, the songs we sang in class made me happy because I got to do what I loved. In addition to that, I would have those songs stuck in my head and would go home and sing them to my parents.

Later, in Grade 1, I had another teacher who would have us write stories, and she would turn them into a book for us. On each page, we would write one sentence and draw a picture to go with it. After we fixed our mistakes, our teacher would take the pages and attach it to a cover, and we got to pick the pattern she used. Having kept these stories and re-examining them, I am pretty sure that she covered a piece of cardstock with vinyl contact paper, but this made writing stories that much more fun. After she finished our book, we got to do a read-aloud for the class. The idea of working towards a finished product, of being the author of my own French stories, felt more official than writing a good copy on a lined piece of paper.

I also enjoyed being able to speak with my friends in another language. I remember thinking that it was a secret code that my parents could not understand. It made me feel like I was experiencing what it was like to live in Québec. At the time, I did not know that French was its own culture, but I knew that there were people in the world who only spoke French and their way of life was sometimes different from my own. More specifically, I was referring to the television shows they would watch and the popular

music they had on the radio. I have always wanted to teach students to experience languages and the arts in a way that allowed students to imagine life in a different way.

I desired to become a French teacher because I wanted to be as fun as my French teachers in my early elementary years of school. In high school and university, I remember so many of my friends saying how they wished that they could speak French better. However, being a French teacher was not my original plan. In my final year of my undergraduate degree, it was time to audition for my Master's in Music Performance. One week before my audition, I got strep throat, and I was told that my audition could not be rescheduled. In the end, I was not successful and did not get into the program. Foolishly, I put all my eggs in one basket and only applied for one program. It was looking like I would be taking a year off to decide what was next for me.

I knew I loved music and I knew I loved language. I found myself remembering what I had originally wanted to do at the beginning of my undergraduate program: teach. I went through the motions and got accepted into the Bachelor of Education program at the University of Toronto. I had decided that my teachable subjects would be music and French. During this program, there was limited opportunity for me to learn about teaching in French. This is what led me to Melanie for a final placement. The only thing I remember learning about how to teach French was the curriculum document. Despite my efforts to get my placements in music or in French, everything I practised was in English homeroom. In every placement that I had, the students loved that I knew French, and they confided in me about their challenges and frustrations with the language. I helped them find rules and tricks to remember the lessons they were working on. It all seemed so disappointing that so many people just did not enjoy learning French. I wanted to be

different, and I wanted people to enjoy French as much as I did in my early years of learning a second language.

Arts-Integrated Practices

When I began teaching in the private school, I was introduced to the AIM program, and because the school was able to purchase it as a curricular resource, I embraced it in my teaching practice. I was able to take training courses and webinars to see other teachers using it in action. I remember having all the resources and support to be able to take on my first attempt at a French program. My classroom was a routine machine, and from the moment the students walked into the classroom, everything was in French, despite the fact that my class was only a Core French classroom. The students were immediately exposed to the teacher speaking French in conjunction with the AIM gestures that I had learned on the online training modules. For example, a wave of the hand would mean *hello* or pulsing your hands above your head three times like you were “raising the roof” would mean *fantastic*. There was a script that would help me navigate how to introduce the target vocabulary for each class, and those words were decided based on what AIM felt were the most frequently needed words for a student to begin manipulating the language to share their thoughts and ideas. Things you might hear in my classroom were songs that would start and end the class. Each kit came with a CD, and I could play the songs with the singers or karaoke (if the students were comfortable with the song already). There were also songs that matched with the plays and dances that went along with them as well. It made me happy to see my students being silly in French. I think what I enjoyed most about the program was that I did not need to be competent in music, drama, and dance to incorporate the songs, the play, or the dances. There was

some training and practice involved, but everything was laid out for the teacher. One of the downsides of beginning my career at a private school was the awakening I had when I joined the public school system. Many schools did not use AIM or did not have the funding to purchase the program. Before this research began, I even thought it was the only program that integrated the arts.

In my most recent school assignment, where I was teaching Core French to Grade 5 classes, I was happy that the school had purchased the AIM program for its French teachers. After getting to know my students, I realized that I had some behaviour challenges that made it difficult to implement a program that relies heavily on active participation from the class. I did end up using AIM near the end of the school year, and I chose to adjust my program for my students in the beginning. I continue to adjust to the needs of my students every year as my classes change. These adjustments range from topics of interest to using more technology in my classroom. I find that there are even some students who continue to benefit from repetition and seatwork, while other students need to get up and create a dramatic skit. I realized that my students' needs were addressed in my plans, based on how they were performing in our everyday routines. I generally do not focus on grammar unless I notice that my students are making the same mistakes repeatedly, and then we take the time to explain the rules of French on that topic. After a few years of trial and error, without a script to guide the way, I am now much more comfortable trying new approaches and changing up my teaching strategies because I have noticed that, in the end, the students benefit.

My Struggle With Imagination Through Temporality, Sociality, and Place

Despite my personal experiences with the arts growing up, I continue to struggle with actually implementing the arts in a way I felt would inspire my students. The

amount of training and experiences throughout my life has not prepared me well to fluidly integrate creativity in my classroom practices. It is difficult to admit, due to the fact that I have all the formal training and competence to bring music and drama into my classroom in a meaningful way. In rereading my narrative and all my excitement about the AIM program, I have come to realize that I find comfort in reproducing things that have already been created. Looking temporally at my musical experiences, I was taught to recreate a sound when I sang a song, to follow the notes written on the page when playing piano and practise drills, patterns, and scales. Though I was exposed to the arts, I was sheltered from thinking creatively.

There is also a fear of rejection that has prevented me from being able to *see big* (Greene, 1995). I find myself worrying if I am doing what is best and most accessible to my students. Thus, I can lose sight of my main goal—the students. It seems to be easy to get caught up in my own insecurities and allow them to prevent me from trying something new. It is through this research process that I have been inspired to open my imagination and consider arts-integration more broadly than ever before. As I restory my own narrative, I am uncovering new insights and am finding myself in a new place than when I began to write this chapter.

In considering sociality and my relationships from childhood to present, I have, for the most part, had more positive experiences around music than negative ones. My parents were my most prevalent relationship in my musical experiences, and they have been nothing but supportive since the first day I began singing. They were the ones enrolling me in singing lessons and theatre performances. In elementary school, I excelled in music and never doubted my creativity. It seemed that creativity and music came hand-in-hand. It was not until high school when I joined a Regional Arts Program

(RAP) that I remember being introduced to more creative tasks. This is not a memory I thought to recall when answering and reflecting on the questions. It was not until I began analyzing my narrative that this experience came to mind. In the RAP, we used to have jazz units twice a year where we would learn a jazz song and had to scat. Scatting in jazz is when you take the original melody of the song and modify it using different sounds and words. Basically, it is an improvised solo with the voice rather than with a trumpet or saxophone. I now remember the anxiety that used to come over me when I would practise this. The feedback from the teacher was always to modify the melody. My relationship with improvisation began here and I do not believe it ever improved. Even later on in my education at the University of Western Ontario, we were asked to create cadenzas for the arias we sang. A cadenza is a small vocal passage used to demonstrate vocal ability near the end of a musical work. There is no formula or specific instructions to create a cadenza and each artist creates one that best suits his/her vocal abilities. Once again, I was reminded to create something more original. Finally, now as I read my narrative around my teaching practices, I gravitated towards a program that was planned right down to having a script to read. As it turns out, I am afraid to explore ideas that have not already been explored. My biggest take-away from this realization is that being comfortable with the arts is separate from being creative in terms of teaching practices.

Examining the dimension of place in my story reveals how place can affect teachers' creativity and willingness to take risks. Connelly and Clandinin (2006) consider the effect that context has on experience. Beginning my teaching career at a private school was a very liberating experience for developing my teaching program. I felt supported to take on any approach I wanted. I was able to engage in some research and find resources that I thought would bring out the best performance of my students. If I

wanted to try something, each teacher had the budget and resources to make it happen.

As I continue to consider the dimension of place, I am reminded of the challenges during the transition from a private to a public school. When I left the private school, I not only had to adjust to a reduced budget but also had to transition into not having my own classroom. This proved to be problematic because I had to either bring all my resources with me on a cart to each class or create multiples of everything, so my resources could be left in a bin, in the class. I found this to be limiting, and this demotivated me from wanting to try new strategies. This new place at this new school also did not have familiar resources. The resources that we did have were older, and I felt as though my only option was to create everything from scratch. This was incredibly overwhelming and, ultimately, hindered my desire to try imagining anything new and innovative.

I realize that awakening the imagination seems to be a delicate process. The relationships and places throughout a teacher's journey can be factors that either hinder or cultivate his or her ability to awaken the imagination. In the following sections, I will visit each of the participant's narratives individually, to understand teaching practices through a different vantage point.

Sophie's Narrative—Active Learning

Sophie is a colleague who expressed interest to assist with my research 2 years ago, as a participant. I have known Sophie for 3 years, and at the time of this research, I found myself working with her as a Core French teacher at an elementary school in Ontario. Sophie was very helpful when I came to the school and was always available to show me different resources or share lesson ideas she had used in previous years. Sophie is certified in the primary/junior division and has her FSL [French Second Language]

qualification, part one. For Sophie, life absolutely got busy for her in the past 2 years, when she initially offered to be a part of this study. She became engaged to be married in 2017 and had taken on several leadership roles in the school with sports teams and other opportunities. This made meeting with her challenging in terms of finding a convenient time and location to actually conduct the interview.

During the interview, Sophie was straightforward when answering the questions. I found myself prompting her for more information and details, as well as emailing her after our conversation to gain more insight on her experiences. The follow-up questions were what Sophie may have needed to open up more. Knowing this about her really helped me to approach our conversations more proactively. These were some of the tensions I experienced, and I recognized quickly that this process would require more than just one sitting to get a three-dimensional view of her experiences.

Experiences With the Arts, Growing Up

As a child, Sophie grew up playing sports and dancing. She noted right off the bat, “I have always been a kinaesthetic learner.” As an educator, she acknowledged how amazing it is to see how many students really need to get out of their seats and move around so that they can increase their focus. As we discussed what the arts looked like in Sophie’s life growing up, she seemed to enjoy remembering the details from her childhood:

I really enjoy performing and speaking in front of large groups of people, which is why I guess I love teaching so much. I think doing dance gave me a lot of confidence growing up. It came naturally for me. My parents used to say I should be an actress. A part of me wishes I would have continued, but I also could have never given up hockey.

This was a big decision for Sophie, though at the time, and even today, playing sports is a very important piece of who Sophie is as a person. She needs to be active. Dance also gave Sophie that active outlet that she enjoyed; unfortunately, there is simply not enough time in the day. It is clear that Sophie misses the creativity of expressing herself through dance:

Subconsciously, I think with the arts, you can just be free to be someone else other than yourself. Although I'm very happy with who I have become as a person (for the most part!), I love the arts because it helps children come out of their shell, where normally they would be very shy.

The arts were a way to explore different characters and elements of Sophie's personality and in some ways, helped her to get to know herself better. The ability to be creative inspired Sophie growing up and also helped her see the value in teaching others to be creative:

Not only does it give students the freedom to explore their creative side, but also it's a brain break and a physical activity to get them moving. My brain does not work as well when I am stuck to a chair. I am definitely a kinaesthetic and visual learner. The arts were a perfect way to enhance/complement my styles of learning. You can sit me down and show a math equation and I probably won't understand it for hours, but you get me out of my seat and teach me a dance and I'll learn it right away!

Even into Sophie's career in education, she has continued to play hockey, and her passion of sharing her interests undoubtedly transcends to her students. In terms of teaching with the arts, Sophie believes that you can really make learning "come to life"

through embodiment and artful practices. The tone that Sophie had was so matter-of-fact and confident. She explained that some students have difficulty comprehending concepts or perhaps struggle to relate to the topic, but she noted, “In my experience, it is proven that students learn better through movement and physical activity.”

Experience With Learning French

Sophie learned to speak French beginning in Kindergarten, back when French programs were still offered for that age group. Sophie’s parents were from Montreal and they did not speak French. They wanted Sophie to learn French so that she could have an advantage when she grew up. They understood the value of having a second language. Once Sophie was in French Immersion, she had to attend the schools that offered the program. After elementary school, Sophie ended up having to commute to get to her middle school. In Grade 7, the commuting became too much for Sophie, and she transferred to an English school to avoid having a long commute every day. Although this meant no more immersive French classes, Sophie would still take French at the Core level. Based on her current teaching profession, her abilities to speak French were not hindered: “I chose to continue taking French courses through secondary and postsecondary to maintain the French I had learned.”

Once we began talking about what Sophie remembered about her French classes, I could hear a familiar “eye rolling” tone to her voice as we spoke; though she did not physically roll her eyes, it was almost like we were sharing past memories of the “old way” of learning French. “I strictly remember learning a lot of grammar.” Fortunately, she felt successful in terms of grammar. Her academic challenges were more prevalent in subjects such as math and science. Sophie shared that she struggled in math and science in school, especially because those subjects were in French. Since her first language was

English, it contributed to math and science being unclear in a second language. She explained how it felt as though she had to learn twice the amount of vocabulary, which contributed to unclear meaning and comprehension.

Despite having struggled in math and science, Sophie shared what she enjoyed about French:

I think I enjoyed writing in French the most. It gave me a little bit of freedom compared to math. Presentations were always more fun for me as well. I remember in Grade 6, I was Santa Claus in the Christmas school play and loved it!

Sophie enjoyed having the freedom to express her thoughts and ideas. Having taken dance as an extracurricular program, she appreciated the moments when school allowed her to use her creativity.

Arts-Integrated Practices

Sophie had not planned on becoming a French teacher. In fact, it was the need for French teachers that made her feel that she had something that other candidates did not. She began her first contract, teaching Grade 4 Core French, in 2010:

I had a Grade 4 class and had no idea what the curriculum was, but I used the program that the teacher left me called *Visages*. This program included flashcards for vocabulary review and worksheets. It wasn't very oral-based like other programs, like AIM, but it was simple.

Overall, she felt like it was an "old school" program that needed updating; however, Sophie was relieved to use a program that allowed her to "get back into French and practise vocabulary." At this point, she was not focused on developing her program any further than what she was already given:

Closer to the end of that year, I wanted to do something fun, so I printed a French play *Les Trois Petit Cochons* online and the kids read it and acted it out. Little did I know it was the AIM program! I had no idea. All I knew was the level of language was perfect for them, and they loved it much more than doing the typical worksheets and vocabulary.

After working in a couple long-term opportunities teaching Core French, Sophie received a permanent contract in 2012. Sophie was grateful but, overall, not surprised because she knew that French teachers are highly sought after in Ontario and across Canada. She has been teaching Core French, as well as physical education/health, drama, and dance all in French. “I jumped right on it [the job] and luckily was hired.” She had excitement in her voice, despite the fact that this was a memory and now, having been a French teacher for several years, she understands the demand for French educators. Sophie still enjoys teaching Core French.

Sophie seemed very confident with several forms of the arts (visual art, drama, dance, music), however she shared that other than dance, many of her teaching strategies using music and drama were learned as she developed skills during her teaching career. Sophie shared that although she enjoyed the physicality and active nature of the arts, it was not one of her passions.

She found herself fortunate to have landed a career that requires a lot of movement like dance, drama, and physical education:

When I use movement and gestures when teaching children French, they seem to get it more. When we do French plays or readers’ theatre, the children really enjoy it and years later, they still remember the lines or specific phrases or

concepts from the play because they are acting it out. French has a bad reputation but I'm trying to change that by making it fun and relatable to them.

As she reflected, she realized that it has now become a style of teaching that she aims to incorporate in any subject area she teaches:

I really try to make it fun for them by playing games, singing songs, and making it relatable to them. Once they start to develop a little bit of confidence, it's amazing how they can succeed or at least have the want to succeed. I'm lucky because I'm not just teaching Core French, I'm teaching other subjects that are in French, like physical education and drama, so I can teach them vocabulary and movements and equipment where they already know the names in English and French. They learn very quickly when it's something they are actually doing physically.

In the end, it is a methodology that grew to be something important in her teaching. Learning how to integrate the arts was an inspiration by a former colleague of Sophie's. She knew that she needed it to be fun for the students because in her experience, "French is not of interest to a lot of students." In Sophie's opinion, "children don't understand the importance of learning French like they do math and English." The value of learning French is not clear to the students because outside the school walls, there is no reason to use the language. She also feels that this has an effect on some of the students' overall interest in the subject: "It is my goal to make French fun but also get the point across that knowing the language got me this amazing job."

"I was really lucky to have another Core French teaching partner—she showed me the ropes and taught me what the program was all about." Sophie's teaching partner shared the AIM program, allowing Sophie to incorporate visuals and audible elements

while getting the students physically active. Her Core French classroom sounds more like an immersion classroom with the teacher only speaking French to the students. To make this possible, gestures are linked with each French word to help the teacher act out each word. These gestures are similar to American Sign Language (ASL) with some differences. Sophie incorporated this immersive approach to teaching language, because of how much the students loved the stories: “They were always excited to take part in the plays.”

In addition to using these plays as part of her program, Sophie also said that she and her teaching partner used another resource, Poster Pals, which are prefabricated, thematic worksheets, and they created a lot of their own resources for the units. Sophie and her partner were required to teach according to the curriculum documents: “Using actions and gestures is a huge part of my teaching and is very effective for students learning a new language.” Sophie advocated that practice and consistency were ways that she developed the confidence to take on these programs. This was her message that continued to resonate as we ended the interview: “I can teach them vocabulary and movements and equipment where they already know the names in English to French. They learn very quickly when it’s something they are actually doing physically.”

A 3D Analysis Exploring Temporality and Sociality

In realizing how Sophie came to adopt her teaching practices, Connelly and Clandinin’s (2006) dimension of *temporality* is integral to recognizing where Sophie’s arts-integrated story began and how it has shaped her current teaching practices. Though Sophie took dance lessons growing up, she was not an arts major. She enjoyed how her positive childhood experiences helped her as a learner and played a role in her choosing

to utilize the arts in her career. Due to the fact that each one of Sophie's experiences with the arts was positive, there was never any reason for her to say "no" to trying something new. The risk factor seemed to be minimal for her since her past experiences had always been enjoyable.

Connelly and Clandinin (2006) express the importance of realizing the impact that relationships have on experiences. In this narrative, Sophie's relationship with the arts growing up was positive. As she shared her memories around taking dance, the tone in her voice highlighted what a happy memory this was for her to revisit. This happiness and positive relationship with the arts transcended into how she believes she learns the best. She shared her learning style by stating, "Get me out of my seat and teach me a dance and I'll learn it right away." Though she did end up giving up dance to pursue playing hockey, her relationship with movement has continued to be important in her life and in her teaching practices.

There is also the feeling of safety that emerged when Sophie described how the arts allow her to be transformed into another person. Specifically, she spoke of this transformative experience when she shared examples of engaging in a school play, presenting in class, and expressing herself through dance. In moments of arts engagement, she is comfortable taking on an alternate role to demonstrate her understanding of learning. By revisiting these memorable childhood experiences, she realized that these moments provided safety and enjoyment.

Upon becoming a teacher, safety was developed even further with her professional teaching relationships. Sophie shared her relief in her first year of teaching Core French when she met her teaching partner. It appeared that not only did Sophie

admire this teacher's teaching program, but the two ended up becoming good friends as well. Since this mentor was also an advocate of using arts-based practices, Sophie was able to feel confident that she was capable of taking on a more arts-integrated pedagogy.

Taking on a Role With Imagination

Sophie's stories connect with Maxine Greene's (1995) writing and the importance of imagination. Sophie had a desire for freedom to allow her to be creative and have fun with what she was learning. Being able to embrace her creative side helped her in making learning more memorable and meaningful:

At the very least, participatory involvement with the many forms of art can enable us to see more in our experience, to hear more on normally unheard frequencies, to become conscious of what daily routines have obscured, what habit and convention have suppressed. (Greene, 1995, p. 123)

This supports Sophie's approach to teaching French because she understands that the arts play an important role in making language more accessible to students while accepting that there is not one method that works for every student. Sophie shares that in her current teaching practices, she draws upon different activities and strategies that she has acquired over time. She was able to compile what worked best for her in her classes, and she continues to draw upon new strategies as she develops her practice and her experience.

Melanie's Narrative—Incorporating All Art Forms

I have known Melanie since I was in Grade 6. She was my sister's Grade 1 teacher. Around the time I was entering my Bachelor of Education program, I reconnected with Melanie through theatre. Now, Melanie did not participate in the shows

I did, but she always popped into the gym, where our rehearsals took place, to see what was taking place. It was not until a friend from theatre suggested that I contact Melanie to create my own final placement, outside the Bachelor of Education program, that we reconnected so I could have a French teaching experience. For 6 weeks, Melanie became my mentor.

Experience With Learning French

Melanie is an Acadian who grew up in New Brunswick. Having been born into a French family, French was naturally the first language she learned. She even lived in a francophone neighbourhood and went to Grade 1 in a francophone school. At the age 7, Melanie moved with her family into a new, predominantly English neighbourhood, to be closer to her father's work. She continued to go to a francophone school. Maintaining her French abilities was no struggle. Improving her abilities in English, as her second language, became very important to Melanie as she began to make new friends. This new neighbourhood was a big change for her; she shared an anecdote about making new friends:

The best friend I met didn't speak French, so it was quite interesting because if we wanted to play dolls, we would have our dolls and I'd go "Poupée, poupée" and she'd say "doll, doll" and then she actually was probably one of the only ones in the neighbourhood who actually got an interest in French and wanted to learn it.

The result of Melanie being immersed in an English-speaking neighbourhood meant that she was able to pick up English within the first 3 weeks. She felt that she did not have a choice, and fortunately, languages have always felt easy for Melanie: "Languages are easy for me, much easier than the math and other areas so it was just really easy to learn

and I like to talk.” Melanie laughed as she said this, and it was true: when she talked, each idea flowed into the next as if it was rehearsed.

Experiences With the Arts, Growing Up

There was passion in Melanie’s voice when she began to share her love for music. She reminisced about her dad being in a band singing French songs, and she was always surrounded by music. She seemed to enjoy sharing her memories as a young girl, saying: “I’d go to sleep to, you know, the drums and the music and the guitar playing.” Melanie’s whole family is musical, and she enjoyed singing and writing songs. Since she was 14, Melanie has written about 60 songs. After learning a little bit of guitar from her father, she continued to teach herself. In Grade 12, Melanie sang one of the songs she wrote for her old choir teacher:

I do remember that I enjoyed singing, and I just remember I had nodules on my vocal cords, so I would get reviews for the choir, and the choir leader would say that I have such a beautiful voice, but there’s something going on with my voice. Once I got it dealt with, I remember in Grade 12 we were invited to go sing a song at a teacher meeting. Myself and three of my friends, we sang one of the songs we wrote. I remember seeing the teacher that has been the choir leader, and she started crying because she said, “you’re still singing I’m so happy and it’s so beautiful in the harmony and everything.” I remember like being happy that I never gave up on that part.

Music was such a big part of Melanie’s life that there was nothing that was going to take her away from creating new songs and performing them.

Arts-Integrated Practices

Melanie started her teaching career as a Special Education teaching assistant (TA)

back home in New Brunswick. Despite 3 years of service, she continued to move around in teaching placements from year to year and was having trouble getting full-time hours. She began to notice that she was being overlooked for opportunities for candidates who knew someone on the hiring team:

So, for example, I was supposed to get a classroom with children from I believe it was 6 to 12 and someone else got the job that wasn't in the board who was a niece of someone that was high in the board.

She began to feel like she was not valued, and instead of getting a leadership opportunity in Special Education, she found herself being offered a position outside of the province, 4 hours away: "It was like everybody who knew somebody was getting these positions that I wanted, and I was getting sort of the leftovers."

With her boyfriend moving to Ontario, Melanie began to look at job advertisements and found a job opportunity in the *Globe and Mail*. She applied for a job as a Grade 1 French immersion teacher, and when Melanie's future employers took her out to lunch, they offered her the position: "I panicked, so I said I'll call you on Monday and took the plane back to Halifax." In the end, she accepted with a plan to return home after 5 years. Despite this plan, Melanie has been in Ontario teaching French ever since. Fortunately, because Melanie already had her Special Education qualifications, she was able to use her knowledge in this area every day. Melanie felt that it was important to incorporate her Special Education teaching techniques due to the variety of students in the classroom at all different levels.

In the beginning of Melanie's journey of developing her teaching practices, she said, "I spent time with my colleagues and shared ideas with them often." After reading the curriculum, she then tried to incorporate those ideas she had learned into her

classroom. In terms of professional development, she shared an interest in participating in drama workshops to further her learning. She began to use the Internet and YouTube to discover more ideas and bought and made costumes/props for her classroom.

Melanie noted, “I think my approach has changed over time.” Melanie has always believed in whole language (cross-curricular and integrated learning) and differentiated instruction. She did recognize that perhaps she spent too much time in the past on isolated French grammar lessons. While grammar is important, Melanie began to take cues from students, to decide which grammatical concepts to teach. Melanie would incorporate drama, poetry, and music when it worked well with the curriculum subject. For example, when learning about helping the environment in the Grade 3 plant and soil unit, students could choose to write French poetry based on problems and solutions, write songs, or create commercials using slogans like, “Si tu coupes un arbre, plantes un arbre,” meaning “If you cut a tree, plant a tree.”

With further reflection, Melanie recalled her first experience teaching. Overall, it was positive but “nerve-wracking.” Melanie was in a new province, away from her family, while teaching a new program alongside taking the FSL part one course: “It was quite challenging, but also very rewarding.” With all the stress, she automatically went to her strengths: singing, music, and guitar playing. “Little ones love to sing and learn as well with active learning and actions.” Even though it was a great first experience, Melanie still found it was challenging. Since the arts have always been a big part of Melanie’s life, she began to coordinate a black-light drama club at her school each year. She continues to run this club now, and they do a big performance at the end of the year. She also shared how she would incorporate the arts into units such as the First Nations where the students would make indigenous shields and listen to First Nations music.

“When the students participate in whole language learning and action learning, I know they learn language with greater facility. It helps them learn new vocabulary and it is fun to learn when we are active and feel engaged.” She expressed that the new French curriculum also encourages teachers to teach students by using French thinkers and artists, so it was confirmation that she was planning in the right direction. Melanie looked at where natural links could be made. Occasionally, she was able to go deeper into the arts, depending on the topic:

I have seen how enthusiastic they are about their drama and dance and music classes. I also see how they respond to any activity related to art, drama, dance, and music in my class. I know that it benefits how they are learning a second language as I see the vocabulary development. When students are enthusiastic about learning and enjoy what they are doing, they learn even more. I truly believe that the arts help take their overall development and teaches the whole child. It reaches them more deeply than just being talked to or having materials just given to them. With the arts, the students are active participants in their own learning. Each area of the arts reaches students differently. Students get to express themselves through their art. They also get to interact with one another and show a deeper appreciation for each other. Being creative, innovative, a team player, problem solving, and expressing yourself is all developed more freely and deeply through the arts.

An example of Melanie going deeper into the arts was demonstrated when she shared her five-lesson unit on poetry, which she had created for her French specialist course, and continues to utilize in her classroom. Melanie has continued to find additional strands of the arts to incorporate into her teaching practices. Her pride was evident. Also, poetry is something she enjoys teaching the students. “If something works well one year,

I will use it again or sometimes I use old ideas to develop new ideas with depending on my students.”

The students lead Melanie in terms of their interests as she engages them in various strands of the arts. “This obviously changes from year to year and so, my program is always changing.” One year, the students in her class were interested in Reader’s Theatre so they purchased some resources and chose the play that was of interest to the students. Each student obtained his/her own part as the narrator. Roles within the play were chosen based on student abilities, therefore some children had a more prominent role with multiple lines. They could make props, present to the class, be videotaped, and watch each other.

Melanie’s program seems to be very active, and it demonstrates variety across all of the arts. She truly feels that it is important to take time to incorporate the arts into the program as it makes a program more valuable. Melanie’s words clearly demonstrate her commitment to arts advocacy when she shared, “Little ones love to sing and learn as well with active learning and actions.” Lastly, in moments where Melanie looks for more arts connections, she also collaborates with the music and drama teachers, trying to link her Grade 3 units to their teaching strategies and practices: “Students see the connections and value to learn even more.”

A Temporal Commitment to the Arts

Connelly and Clandinin (2006) highlight the importance of not studying lived experiences as one moment but understanding what comes before and after every experience. Melanie’s commitment to the arts is a result of the way she learned as a child and her exposure to music from the time she was a little girl: “There is not a time in my

life that I can remember not having music.” From the early moments of listening to her family play in a band and sing songs around the house, she too developed a love for music and playing guitar. As those enjoyable memories flourished, Melanie began exploring how to create music of her own, inspiring her to learn more than just the basics of guitar that her dad had taught her. This ability to write songs became an instinctive method of teaching French once becoming a teacher with few resources to draw from. Now, being a very experienced teacher nearing the end of her career, Melanie challenges herself to bring in as many forms of the arts as she can. From poetry, photography, and black-light drama, the students are given not only ample exposure to a variety of art forms but also inspiration to be creative and imaginative.

Inspiring Imagination and Creativity

Greene (1995) reminds us that encounters with the arts inspire young minds to imagine, extend, and make their learning meaningful as developing people of society. Melanie’s teaching practice is always changing and developing according to the needs of her students. There are no limits to the arts practices that she presents to her students; for example, her black-light puppetry club was an opportunity for students to tell a story using music and puppets under black lights. Students would prepare their stories and costumes, deciding what elements they would want to be seen under the black light. “Some kids did dances, some kids do comedic skits; it’s just a chance for them to create and express themselves in a safe way.” Melanie continues to imagine new ways to engage her students and her practice cycles through a variety of different strategies, depending on her students and their needs. She does not fear the risk that comes with

trying something new. If she is ever unsure, she asks. Ultimately, it is for the benefit of her students.

Summary

The three storied narratives shared in this chapter show that teachers do not necessarily need a strong artistic background to be able to integrate the arts into the French language classroom. Through reflection, it seems that there are other challenges aside from confidence that inhibit teachers from being able to run an arts-based French program, including budget, resources, and professional development opportunities. This reflection required the participants (including myself) to recall times throughout our teaching careers and consider how the past has affected our present and future teaching contexts. Recalling a memory from another time and place can be a challenging feat to remember. It is uncertain as to what any of us may have been thinking 5 or 15 years ago in relation to our teaching practices. Additionally, to then consider how our strategies have changed while uncovering the experiences that caused these changes takes a great deal of time and self-reflection. It is not enough to share a linear journey of experiences from the past to the present because there are factors that lead all of us teachers to where we are in our teaching practice. These factors will continue to provide direction in our future teaching.

In my personal narrative, I was surprised to realize all the events that took place in my life that led me to teaching. If you had asked me before this research, I would have shared that I have always wanted to be a teacher. While that is true, it does not take into account that before that, I had dreams of singing professionally. Through this reflection process, I can continue to develop a meaningful understanding of how the choices of

teachers are made through the retelling and reliving of my own stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990).

Through the retelling of my and my participants' stories, I understand that there is an endless list of challenges that come up in the teaching profession, and, at the end of the day, a teacher will most likely gravitate to what he/she believes is going to make a difference with his/her own students. All of the participants in this research agree that incorporating any style of the arts into teaching French as a second language allows students to become actively engaged in what they are learning. Furthermore, they are given the chance to be creative and imagine different ways to manipulate the language to succeed in a task. While having variety in teaching French is ideal to best suit the needs of a variety of students, there is a need for more resources that meet the needs of students in a Core French classroom. As well, for teachers who are less familiar with the arts, having more mentorship and more opportunities for professional development to learn about existing resources may be what will encourage more Core French teachers to leave worksheets and endless grammar lessons behind, moving towards a more active and artistic teaching approach.

In Chapter 5, I discuss the findings in relation to this study's three guiding research questions. In considering the three-dimensional framework and its integral role in narrative inquiry, it is important to attend to all temporal places and relationships throughout each of the participant's experiences. I will also provide recommendations for Core French programs and teacher professional development based on the strategies used by the teachers interviewed. In analyzing and exploring these narratives, I will uncover the contribution of my findings to the current Core French teacher population.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

When my thesis journey began, I had wanted to share research on one pedagogical resource for teaching Core French. As described in my narrative, the AIM program (Accelerated Integrated Methodology) was the first program I had discovered that showcased learning French in a fun, arts-based, and active manner. Upon further discussion in the planning stages, my thesis committee helped spark a new curiosity to uncover other French language programs that exist in today's elementary French second language classrooms. Reflecting on my current teaching practices, I have come to realize that I ultimately enjoy variety in my classes. This was also the main theme that emerged from the participants' narratives. Students need to be engaged and active in their learning within the class. Therefore, it is important that each teacher finds what artful approaches he or she is most comfortable with, especially if this is a new teaching approach for him or her. I learned a variety of ways that the arts can be used from other professionals in elementary French classrooms.

The framework of imagination proved to be very important; as stated earlier, thinking outside the box is easier said than done (Greene, 1995). It took time reviewing and reflecting on the stories that were shared before I realized that my own imagination was limited in the beginning of this research process. After reflecting on these stories, including my own, I recognized there are many ways to bring the arts into the language learning classroom. It takes much work, above and beyond the hours of a typical school day, to put together a creative and engaging French program from scratch. It is additionally challenging to integrate elements of the different strands of the arts with a lack of support and resources. The participants' stories offered different perspectives on the process of using strands of the arts in and through a teaching and learning lens. I have

found that the ultimate goal among all the participants was to allow students to use their imaginations to experience and manipulate language in meaningful ways. Finding what is meaningful to each group of students looks and sounds different in each of the participant's classrooms, from using prefabricated language programs, to designing jingles, and creating black-light theatre.

Much scholarship and narrative inquiry in the research field has allowed the nature of experience to be explored through this research. It is not just about this research as a topic but also how the research was conducted. Using a three-dimensional framework allowed for different aspects of experience to come together. The readers of this research are invited to imagine teaching and learning from another person's point of view. These stories of experience were necessary to help release the imagination and consider the world big instead of seeing it small; as Greene (1995) puts it, "To see things or people big, one must resist viewing other human beings as mere objects or chess pieces and view them in their integrity and particularity instead" (p. 10). In reviewing each narrative, it was challenging to remain unbiased—I was inspired by the effort and variety of arts-based practices that each participant tailored to best suit their students' needs. After writing the findings from each narrative, I struggled to find the best flow for each of the narratives. I decided to create a new document in which I wrote out the participants' life chronologically as the transcripts were originally organized. This aided in exploring music and French experiences separately, and not necessarily in order of life experiences. This was an adaptation that I made to better see the big picture. It then became evident how these narratives can powerfully shape a teacher's identity. It was inspirational to hear the stories of the teachers and their classroom practices as they shared details about the variety of ways the arts can be utilized in elementary French

classrooms. Some of these findings build upon pre-existing understandings, some of which are mentioned in the literature outlined in Chapter 2. Other findings from the shared experiences are new realizations that arose from this research process.

Purpose of the Research

The findings of this research reinforce the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 by exploring the experiences of elementary French teachers who have integrated any form of the arts into their French language learning classrooms. My purpose was to explore three research questions:

1. How do elementary French second language teachers experience integrating the arts?
2. What successful arts-integrated practices do teachers integrate when teaching French as a second language?
3. What are some of the potential barriers inhibiting arts-integrated approaches to be implemented into the classroom environment of French second language learners?

Using the framework of narrative inquiry has allowed me to share different vantage points of what implementing an arts-integrated pedagogy looks like in another teacher's classroom.

Uncovering these stories was incredibly important to allow readers of this research, and hopefully other French teachers, to see that there are many ways to incorporate arts-based practices and through collaboration—they are not alone. Everyone has a story to tell and it is in human nature to share experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). I believe that in sharing these narratives, French teachers can continue to learn from one another and gain confidence to think outside the box and try new teaching

strategies in their French classrooms. All teaching practices shared in this research are in progress, meaning that they are ongoing. This ongoing process reflects the temporality outlined by Clandinin and Connelly. Teachers are always in the process of becoming experienced educators. There is always something to learn, and there is always the possibility of doing things a different way, all for the students' benefit. It was important for the participants to challenge their imaginations to continue adapting to the needs of the students.

These narratives can help inspire other teachers to step away from traditional ways of teaching French and experiment with more interactive and engaging methods of language learning. The stories in this research share some of the methods that other teachers have enjoyed and also acknowledge that change does not come without its challenges. My hope is that these stories inspire the teachers who read this research to take a risk with creativity and imagine using arts-based practices in their classrooms.

Discussion of the Findings

Through the experiences of the participants, French was often taught in a structured setting that focused on a thematic approach to speaking, writing, and vocabulary acquisition. The highlights of everyone's French learning narrative seemed to have stemmed from an immersive and engaging learning environment. The stories of these engaging environments also included some form of the arts, whether it was music, dance, drama, photography, visual arts, or language arts. Through the storied landscapes (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) of the participants, their experiences of learning French contributed to the arts-integrated practices that were later implemented into their classrooms when they became French teachers.

The four themes discussed in the previous chapter (experience with the arts growing up, experience learning French, arts-integrated strategies in French classrooms, and the gaps in an arts-integrated teaching pedagogy) appear through each of the participants' narratives and demonstrate a wide variety of arts-integrated practices that were developed to cultivate an engaging environment in their French second language classrooms. Melanie's narrative demonstrates how her passions in the various areas of the arts influenced her approach to language learning. Having such fond memories of her family's musical background inspired her to incorporate her song writing and singing into her practice. The social dimension of Sophie's narrative showcases how having a mentor can motivate teachers to explore new programs and practices. Programs such as AIM eventually gave Sophie the confidence and the tools to imagine her own program, using the different activities she learned. Upon further reflection on my own personal narrative, I realize that it is difficult to branch out towards something that is unknown. Additionally, these findings will no doubt bring out the theme of imagination as I look more deeply into the dimensions of each participant's experience.

Melanie—Allowing the Imagination to Flow

Melanie used her imagination to see her classroom through someone else's vantage point (Greene, 1995)—that of her students. Based on Melanie's narrative, the process of integrating the arts into her classroom seemed to be what was most natural to her. Having grown up in a family that was heavily involved in playing instruments and music, the transition into the classroom just made sense to her. The challenge for Melanie became finding even more ways of branching out further and implementing more strands of the arts that were out of her comfort zone. As discussed in the previous chapter,

Melanie was less than comfortable with visual arts, as she never viewed herself as an artist. Fortunately, Melanie had a teaching partner who majored in visual arts in university. At first, Melanie utilized her teaching partner's strengths, and she was happy to let her take the lead. As they explored the different types of art, Melanie found that she enjoyed some of the more abstract art techniques. Through working alongside her colleague, Melanie developed some comfort in terms of being able to create and teach visual art assignments that made sense to her. This experience allowed Melanie to further develop her identity as a teacher (Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004). This identity change was a result of imagination and being aware of the many approaches and ways of doing things. Melanie continued developing her arts-integrated practices, realizing that photography, poetry, and marketing jingles were also art forms that could be used in her classroom. We discussed some of these practices in our interview, and there are insightful ways Melanie used the arts in her classroom.

Having grown up as a songwriter, Melanie already enjoyed singing and playing guitar for her students. She encouraged the students' creativity by bringing in jingle assignments where the students had to create a short tune to advertise a product of their group's choosing. Melanie would use her guitar or websites such as YouTube to model examples. Due to her comfort level in composing, the class would make a jingle together before having to independently create one themselves. As Melanie noted,

My environment commercials, they work. They grab the kids and they remember the "Si tu coupes un arbre, plante un arbre" slogan. Then they go around the school telling people to always pick up their garbage.

Melanie notes that the end product is something that is meaningful to the students. We

also talked about her 5-part poetry unit, which she shared. One of her poetry assignments was about what the students could do to protect the environment. Melanie shared songs that she wrote and modeled how to write the lyrics to a song using poetry. In another lesson, Melanie used visual arts throughout lessons on First Nations culture and had the students choose native carvings that would represent themselves in creating their shields. These shields contained animal symbols that had specific character traits. The students would select and create their symbols, describing how these carvings symbolized who they were as a person. Once again, the lessons Melanie shared were meaningful and the connection to the environment helped her students remain engaged. Their work was personalized and allowed them to create freely.

One of the biggest barriers discussed in Melanie's narrative related to resources. There is simply not enough of a budget or time for Melanie to gain access to the resources she feels would help bring her arts-integrated practices to the next level. There was also never enough time for Melanie to continue creating full class sets of resources to meet her students' needs each year. As she said, "I would love more resources, costumes, instruments, props, arts materials of all kinds, posters, access to technology for the students so that they could create movies and videos." Another barrier was "getting support for students with the ISSP [In School Support Program] team." This support program is meant to be for students who are struggling with a specific subject in school. The team is there to help develop a plan to support the students to achieve more success. As mentioned in Chapter 4, Melanie recalled the old way of doing things whereby the ISSP team would suggest to simply pull the students from the French program to focus on their English when they were struggling in French. To add my own layer of

experience to this, I have yet to meet an ISSP member who speaks French in the past 6 years of teaching. This does not mean that they do not exist; however, with the demand for French teachers, I imagine that French-speaking teachers are going into planning time and homeroom classes first before joining the ISSP team. While the old solution of pulling students from French Immersion programs is no longer the solution, I wonder how these French students are being supported by ISSP in schools where there is no French representative. Moving forward, this may be an area for further research, as there seems to be a great need for more French qualified educators. There is also a greater need for student supports, and without having a French support staff, how are students' needs being met in French?

Sophie—Cultivating Her Own Practices

The theme that emerged from Sophie's interview was focused on engaging students in their learning while adapting to their needs and interests. Sophie began her French teaching journey using programs like *Visages*, AIM, and *Club Mystère*, the last program mentioned in Sophie's narrative. *Club Mystère* was unfamiliar to me and when I explored more about the program, I learned about the *common European framework of reference* (CEFR) from which this program is derived. This framework divides language proficiency up into six levels while maintaining a thematic approach to language learning as a mystery is solved (Club Mystère, n.d.). Each activity takes the students through the target vocabulary and leads them closer to solving a mystery. For the *Visages* program, Sophie liked how the lessons were simple and had all the vocabulary she needed with flashcards. She also mentioned that there were listening activities on CD that could be used. Overall, Sophie reviewed the program saying: "As I continued to teach Core French

however, the material was less relevant to the students because it was a much older resource.”

Sophie continuously sought and found more variety to keep the students active and engaged in their French learning. It was very fortunate that Sophie had a personal trainer of sorts, at the beginning of her career, to help her navigate a brand-new program, which at this point was AIM. Having another French teacher to mentor her transition into programs like AIM helped Sophie begin her arts-integrated practices: “I really try to make it fun for them by playing games, singing songs, and making it relatable to them.” It all comes down to relating the learning material to the students and their interests. Due to the nature of Sophie’s experiences, she has approached teaching language fearlessly, with an open mind to trying anything new. These storied experiences are what Connelly and Clandinin (1999) refer to as “stories to live by.” These stories are how she makes sense and understands herself as an educator. For Sophie, there is no single program that is foolproof, and this is in part why Sophie continued to try different programs to find something which was effective.

One of the barriers that Sophie overcame was not having her own classroom. It was challenging, even with a cart, to transport all the necessary materials for the day from classroom to classroom, especially when getting ready to present the plays for AIM. There were set pieces that the students created to perform their plays. These big cardboard creations just sat in the storage room at the school because they were too challenging to cart around. Each of the class sets and prop pieces could not always be stored in their classrooms as the homeroom teacher needed space for his/her projects as well.

Another challenge that Sophie mentioned was not having enough time to work with her colleagues: “I would love to be given more time to collaborate with the other Core French teachers, without someone else being the one to structure the time spent together.” What she meant by this was having time to self-direct how she would like to collaborate with other teachers. It is challenging to have a French resource teacher guide a meeting of what he/she thinks the teachers need. At Sophie’s school, during professional development days, a French resource teacher comes in and facilitates collaboration the way she believes is helpful: “It would be very beneficial to go over long-range plans and make sure our teaching is connected from Grade 4 Core French to Grade 5 Core French.” These connections would ensure that students engage in a program that flows from one to the other. Teachers would also have the chance to share resources in which they find success. This comment is exactly why I felt the need for this research. There seems to be a missing dialogue between French teachers and maybe even other specialized teachers (music, drama, dance) who wish they could share experiences and learn from one another.

Of all the programs and approaches that Sophie experienced, there is no one program that she uses every day in her classroom. The activities that engaged the students the most and were the most fun are those that Sophie continues to include. The mix of different program experiences developed Sophie’s compilation of resources that she uses today in her French classroom.

Holly—Thinking Outside the Box

Before discussing the insights gained from this study, it is important to acknowledge the bias I have had throughout the process of this research. The AIM

program allowed me to implement the arts in my French classroom right from the start. I was blinded in the beginning of my thesis with a mindset that was focused on identifying why teachers were not implementing programs like AIM into their teaching practices. I engaged in thesis research because I wanted to know what factors were preventing such an innovative program from being integrated in every French classroom. I am grateful that my thesis committee members and my advisor encouraged me to keep my imagination open because it allowed me to explore how teachers are using different strands of the arts to enhance their French teaching practices.

My experience implementing the arts was immediate and fairly easy, considering that the AIM program gave me a script for each lesson, every day. There was never a moment where I felt nervous or uncomfortable since music theatre was a hobby that I had been enjoying since childhood. In fact, I now realize that part of the reason why I loved the AIM program was because it came with a script. I was the star in my very own play, in my very own classroom. I would go home and learn my gestures and memorize the learning goals for the next lesson and the show continued the next day. I got to sing, dance, and act every day at work, and most of the students responded very positively to the routines established in the program. Students were singing and laughing in class, and it was not long before they were reading along with our play as well. Some of the students who struggled to participate in the speaking aspects of the program were still able to demonstrate their understanding because of the gestures, which made me love the program even more. After leaving the private school I worked at to join a public board in Southern Ontario, I continued to encounter schools that had the AIM program, and I could continue to teach using the program.

This program was my bag of tricks for teaching Core French until the day I began a long-term occasional (LTO) assignment for Core French where the teacher's guide for the program was missing—no more scripts. I was also coming in near the end of the year and had to assess where the students were in terms of how much French they had acquired. Suffice to say, my French teaching fantasy show was over. I remember feeling overwhelmed thinking about how I had to come up with French materials while still maintaining the arts-integration that I believe to be crucial for creating an engaging learning environment.

I would like to clarify that I did learn how to lesson plan in my Bachelor of Education program. In fact, prior to getting this Core French opportunity, I had taught a Grade 3 French Immersion class for almost the whole year. For some reason, this Core French job was different. I am still trying to pinpoint why this was such a jump for me. All I can think of is that I felt that the stakes were higher in a Core French classroom. At any rate, this program made up a huge part of my professional knowledge as a teacher (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999). The pressure to win the students' interests was important, and I wanted to give the Core French students something other than a thematic approach to language learning with worksheets, like I had back in my high school French elective.

The second big challenge I found was in the lack of resources. Once using the AIM program was off the table as a contract teacher, having resources as basic as French-English dictionaries was not always a guarantee. It was based on the school where I was hired and how the French budget was spent, or not spent. This had me thinking of ways to teach French with few resources, and I began making my own supplies. Similar to Melanie's experience, this took a huge amount of time and, at this point, thinking of how

to implement the arts moved to the back of my mind. Fortunately, I was still able to incorporate a lot of role-play in my classes because this was the easiest way for me to get students speaking to one another in the target language. This was the one area that felt natural to implement.

The last challenge that came out of my experiences was trying to make room for creativity. Students and teachers need to use their imaginations to imagine a better way of doing things (Greene, 1995). I feel that this corresponds to the lack of resources and, more specifically, the lack of French technology. I draw attention to the integration of technology as a consideration for multimodal learning environments (Walsh, 2008). It is important to consider the different modes that students may access to best demonstrate their learning. In trying to incorporate more technology into my classroom practices, I found it difficult to always access the technology for my classrooms when the school shares one iPad cart of 30 iPads amongst all the classrooms in the school. These challenges made it more difficult to become creative with making French more engaging and accessible to this generation of students.

In the end, I did find success in the practices that I have implemented in my French classrooms. Through much self-reflection, contemplating my teaching experiences over the years, and throughout this research process, I have learned that my success is not only tied to one teaching program. Each strategy and program hold its own value in the classroom, and it is closed-minded to think that there is only one way to bring music, drama, dance, and/or visual arts into the French classroom. When I think about the AIM program now, I can see a tension between how it benefits my students while simultaneously inhibiting their creativity. Perhaps there is future work that could be

done to look at French programs through a critical, creative lens. Beyond the arts curriculum, there are more forms of the arts that can benefit teaching French as a second language, such as poetry and photography.

In my own teaching practices, students have responded well to having a routine. Singing familiar songs to start and end the class has helped my students have some predictability in the French class. I have also found that students who are less comfortable with French are more likely to participate during these familiar activities. I have utilized French picture books from my school's library to incorporate drama while familiarizing students with the stories and the vocabulary that is found on the pages. Many popular children's books such as the *Pete the Cat* series are written in French, as well as English. Once again, familiarity has helped develop comfort and confidence in my classrooms. I use these books to invite the students to act out the stories in groups, and I still find the AIM plays effective for this purpose. After familiarizing ourselves with a few French stories and how to read them, I bring in technology and use applications like iMovie to create book trailers in French. Though the application is not in French, students are still able to type captions and create short scenes where they speak in French. Students seem to enjoy that they get to choose a book from the school's library and advertise it to their school community. Since Core French begins in Grade 4, it allows new French learners the opportunity to be a part of the French community and advertise stories to the younger French immersion population. The book trailer function on the iMovie application has themes and trailers that are all premade, and the students input the information they would like to include in the French trailer. The end result is having really creative book trailers that the library displays on the TV for students to see

what fun French books the library has, and students can take pride in how their French abilities have contributed to the school community.

Barriers in Implementing an Arts-Integrated Approach

Despite the positive narrative of overcoming obstacles, there are of course two sides to all stories. To get a more comprehensive view, it is important to note the challenges and limitations that were encountered, both in teaching French as a second language and in integrating the arts. I found through the interview process that there were some commonalities between both participant narratives and my own.

First off, not all strands of the arts curriculum were experienced the same way, and while there were areas in which each of the participants felt confident, there were certainly others that were met with uncertainty. Melanie, for instance, loved to utilize music, drama, and poetry. She continued to build her confidence when integrating visual arts and dance. She explained that having a teaching partner who majored in art helped her discover the style of art that she would later come to enjoy, such as the more abstract side of artwork. From there, she developed some confidence. In the beginning, it was easier to rely on her teaching partner (the art major) when taking on visual arts. She also recognized that her hobby in photography was also an art form that can be used in the classroom.

Sophie, having come from a dance background, found herself gravitating to drama and dance as her most comfortable strands to integrate: “I had to be comfortable and confident before being able to use all of those strategies. Practice and consistency were ways that I developed the confidence.” She also shared with me that much of her learning came from her French teaching partner at the school. This mentor, through the

AIM program, used a lot of actions, gestures, songs, and pictures to help teach French. This is a program that I have been trained to use as well in my teaching practices. This mentor showed Sophie “the ropes” and taught her what the program was all about. The overall sense I got was that for Sophie, she knew using the arts would benefit her students and through her mentor, she realized the benefits in her own classroom. The challenge was to make it part of her everyday practice and to feel confident.

Melanie’s narrative differed because music was already such a big part of her life. It was established that it was natural for Melanie to use singing, playing guitar, poetry, commercials, and plays to share her love of learning with the students. She admitted that she used to sing and play guitar more for her Kindergarten and Grade 1 classes since their programs relied so much on oral communication. It seemed though that being creative across all subject areas to integrate music, drama, and art was sometimes more challenging. She said that her journey to overcome these challenges started with a shift in attitude towards visual arts. It was then that she began to uncover that she enjoyed more abstract activities, as well as those that incorporated photography.

Although the participants found ways to overcome their challenges to integrate the arts, teaching French, in general, has created other limitations for these teachers. Some of these limitations make developing a program of any kind a work in progress. Both participants and myself agree that overall, there is a lack of appropriate resources for French students. For example, schools often purchase French textbooks that cover content in the curriculum, but the material the textbooks may not be appropriate for the level of French for which the students are prepared. These textbooks are written for students in Québec or in all French school settings. Basically, the language is too challenging, and there does not seem to be many resources that meet Core French

expectations. Thus, teachers frequently have to create their own materials. Creating something is always more challenging when starting from scratch. It can be time consuming and stressful. My own experiences have led me to believe that it is easier to explore my own creativity when there is an existing template as a foundation. Melanie agreed that finding resources that worked for the students has been one of her biggest challenges.

Another challenge that Melanie shared was about getting support for students with the ISSP team. The ISSP team used to suggest that the students were removed from the French program if they were struggling and focused on the English. Melanie shared, “This is no longer the case, which is great.” This was a glimpse for me into some challenges from the past. What I have noticed in the schools where I taught is although ISSP is available for French students, very few schools seem to have ISSP members who can speak French. Often times, there is only support in the English language. The challenge here is that students are not getting access to the subject specific support in which the teacher expressed having academic concerns.

Then, there are some different experiences in terms of having the time to work closely with the students who have Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and really struggle learning at the same pace as the other students. Sophie sometimes felt that there is not enough time to sit with those students without interruptions because even when the students are doing independent work, they are not confident enough at the elementary Core French level. They require her support and guidance throughout the class.

Melanie and I also thought that it would be useful for the students to hear French valued outside of the classroom and truly be immersed in the language so that they want to speak it more rather than in isolation in class. For example, when there is preparation

time for the homeroom teacher, the rotary teachers (planning time teachers) come into the classroom to pick up the students, and they could speak French to the homeroom teacher to show the students how French is used to communicate. This brought up a big challenge—the lack of French teachers in many Ontario schools. Every contract that I have had usually requires me to teach all of the subjects that are French, and therefore there is not really an opportunity to speak with my colleagues in French in front of the students. Having more teachers with French-speaking fluency in the building would mean that the rotary teachers could share in teaching some of the French rotary subjects. This would allow the students to witness French conversation among the teachers in the building. Fortunately, this is the case in Melanie’s school so she is able to speak in French with her colleagues in front of her classes.

Sophie pointed out her frustration in not having a designated French classroom. As of this year, I can completely relate to this because bringing all of the French materials and resources to each class is challenging. She expressed that turning the classroom into a mini French room is not a luxury that always fits into the day. For example, making charts, word-walls, and showcasing students’ work would be lovely, though, agreeing on shared space with the homeroom teacher does not always accommodate everyone’s needs.

Summary—Imagining Future Possibilities

In considering all of the narratives shared throughout this research process, I have realized that it is unrealistic to think that teachers should only integrate arts-based language practices through one specific program. I have also come to understand that artful practices look different in each classroom. There are a variety of programs and approaches in existence that explore language arts, theatre, and music along with a

variety of other art forms. Some teachers have limited formal training in any strand of the arts, and they draw upon their experiences of how they learned as students (Oleson & Hora, 2013).

One of the areas in need of further research is in taking action on new innovative programs and how they are being made available for implementation. Taking a closer look at programs like AIM, how is this program being experienced by students on a larger scale rather than the small sample in Wendy Maxwell's thesis? What other programs exist?

Another matter for further inquiry involves teacher experience with implementing arts-integrated language programs. How is it being made accessible to teachers who must adopt a new pedagogy? In many of the articles reviewed in this study, teachers indicated the need for ongoing professional development to help them develop and sustain their confidence in taking on a new methodology. Especially in terms of using the arts, though many teachers have been exposed to elements of music, drama, and movement, many have felt inadequately prepared to teach using an arts-integrated approach.

“Art offers life; it offers hope; it offers the prospect of discovery; it offers light. Resisting, we may make the teaching of the aesthetic experience our pedagogic creed” (Greene, 1995, p. 133). The arts can be integrated into language classrooms without teachers having an expertise in that area. I believe that people do not need to teach Art lessons, but rather artful lessons. Teachers can draw upon artful elements in order to give students rich, creative, and critical opportunities to learn a new language. This research is focused on language learning and this does not require high competency in music, drama, or dance. A barrier for teaching French through more creative and artistic avenues was

not having enough training or professional development opportunities to learn more about a particular strand of the arts. I am glad that despite having a lack of training opportunities, teachers are still doing their best, even if it is basic, to bring the arts into their classrooms as a teaching tool. The learning opportunities that teachers seem to desire stem from understanding how these creative strategies look in a classroom setting. Having an idea of what a program looks and sounds like in a classroom is helpful to encourage teachers to try something that may otherwise be outside of their comfort zone. This is reinforced by Sophie's narrative because she had a mentor to guide her through the learning of new programs. She did not have to do it alone. This aligns with studies mentioned in the literature review where teachers who participated in studies wanted more opportunities to practise new teaching strategies (Lackey & Huxhold, 2016; Paolino & Lummis, 2015; Pitts, 2016). Learning a new program or a new way of teaching requires a lot of preparation and without proper training or even a guiding mentor, it may be too daunting a task to undertake. It very well could be a reason why teaching French, historically, has been approached in a similar way.

It is important to remember the teacher's driving goal when taking on more creative teaching strategies. I want to emphasize that this thesis is not implying that a teacher needs to be an expert at all these strands of the arts in addition to teaching French. It is about using the subject-specific knowledge to be able to amplify the goal subject, which in this thesis is French. For example, Sophie is not necessarily trained in music with a high level of competency; however, that does not mean that she cannot have an appreciation for the importance of singing songs in the classroom, even if it is just used as a classroom management tool or a simple classroom routine. Teachers do not need to

be highly proficient in the arts strands for their French language teaching to be effective or pedagogically sound. I do not mean to downplay the knowledge and contributions of music educators who have dedicated their efforts in the profession. Music educators play an important role in this, as they are valuable resources to help teach French educators with their subject expertise. I am advocating to invite non-arts experts to feel safe trying something new in their classrooms.

Implications

There is a possible tension that perhaps readers of this research who have strong proficiencies in various strands of the arts may have in terms of what arts-integration is and what it should look like. I understand that there is a different interpretation of what integrating the arts means. For readers who have studied a particular strand of the arts in their academic career, I would like to clarify that for the purposes of enhancing French language learning, arts-integration is not a means of bringing cross-curricular content into the French classroom. In other words, it is not necessary to cover content from the arts curriculum in order to integrate components of the various strands of the arts. I am also not suggesting that French teachers should use these integration methods to assess the arts alongside teaching French. I argue that just because a teacher is not teaching the fundamental concepts of music or explaining the creative process (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009) to the students, it does not mean that they cannot apply and utilize those concepts in a language learning setting.

Another tension that stemmed from these findings is to address the possible feelings of music educators and arts professionals who may read this research. As a music educator myself, I cannot help but feel torn as I juggle the two hats of French

teacher and music teacher. I see both sides, and it is important that I remind myself of the goals of this research to guide my thoughts to focus on the language learning classroom.

All of the stories shared through this work have made me reflect on my journey with a more critical lens. After completing this research, I am seeing language teaching through different eyes. In my most recent working contract that I completed while conducting the interviews with the participants in the 2017/2018 scholastic year, I was forced to modify my Core French program due to a lack of AIM resources. As a result, my teaching developed into a more student-driven approach to learning French. Students took ownership in guiding what vocabulary they needed and were free to choose topics and themes that best suited their interests and needs. It was interesting that even though all the students had different topics of writing and different books they were exploring, somehow, the important target vocabulary was still being learned, without me having to explicitly deliver lessons on those words. It was very unsettling in some ways because I was often worried about whether the students were meeting expectations. Were the students learning the vocabulary that they needed to know for Grades 4 and 5? At the same time, there was more freedom for the students to independently explore the language, and as a result, there was less push-back about the work we were completing in class.

As I consider my own struggle with imagination through a creative lens in my teaching practices, I have come to realize that teachers' experiences are interwoven with those of their students. They may, in fact, parallel one another. My struggle with imagination and teaching French could have unintentionally inhibited students from releasing their imaginations which would allow for a more positive learning experience.

Perhaps now, in future research, there is room to explore and honour children's perspectives in learning French.

Through the narratives discussed in Chapter 4, there was a unanimous understanding that there are not enough professional development opportunities to support teachers who wish to bring the arts into their language learning classrooms. Due to this lack of training opportunity, I feel that it is even more important to consider more basic and beginner attempts at arts-integration, such as simply playing music for the students to sing along to. In terms of music integration, using tools like CDs and YouTube are a great starting place, and it is much better than not having music in the classroom at all. It is also important for teachers to choose quality material so that the content being presented is accurate and well portrayed. This is where it would be a benefit to ask the arts teachers at the school to advise and educate the language teachers so that they can feel more confident about what resources they are integrating in their classrooms.

There are more questions that have come out of engaging in this research that have led me to think about where this research can go from here. One question I have found an interest in exploring is: What types of professional development are teachers interested in taking part in to cultivate a more creative environment for French language learners? Maybe there is professional development that could allow teachers to learn more about and integrate more of the creative process and critical analysis process which are elements that are discussed in the arts curriculum (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009). I feel that this would be an important area of study to investigate further because I do believe that imagination and the development of imagination through the arts is a

critical learning tool that transcends not only through French language learning, but other subjects as well. This is in keeping with Greene's (1995) notion that, "in many respects, teaching and learning are matters of breaking through barriers—of expectation, of boredom, of predefinition" (p. 14).

Concluding Thoughts

While the beginning of this journey into approaching French teaching through an arts-integrated lens has come to an end, I am reminded that this is part of an ongoing journey. French teachers need to continue sharing their stories of experience to allow their teaching practices, as well as their teaching identities, to develop. In this thesis, I have used narrative inquiry to contribute to the literature by exploring the experiences of French teachers who have utilized strands of the arts as teaching tools. Through the analysis of stories using imagination, as well as Connelly and Clandinin's (2006) three-dimensional framework (temporality, sociality, and place), I have attempted to uncover successes and barriers that are experienced in the second language learning teaching profession.

The participants and I have shared stories that exemplify what arts-integration may look like in a French language classroom. I cannot help but feel the need to add to my findings, showcasing more ways that an arts-based approach can amplify the language learning classroom. This journey has awakened my mind to become curious about how further research or more professional development opportunities can offer so as to cultivate increased creativity in elementary French classrooms. The fact that I desire to know more on this topic is ideal because it points to the necessity for research, especially in Canada, focused on French language learning and teaching. I hope that my

stories of teaching French can inspire others to want to learn more and take more risks in the French classroom. At the very least, these stories of experience may allow teachers to imagine a better way of doing things (Greene, 1995).

It has become pertinent that French teachers engage in dialogue with other teachers about French teaching practices, discussing how they may be more engaging and meaningful to the students of today's generation. From the findings of this work, I have begun to notice a change in my self-identity as a teacher who was focused solely on the success of one French program, to now a teacher who wishes to advocate for variety and imagination-inducing practices. By reflecting on my narrative and how it developed alongside the reflection on my participants' stories, I have gained a better understanding of my own journey as an educator. I hope to continue to learn through my narrative and the narratives of others.

As I reach the end of this research experience, I find myself reflecting back to my childhood memories of how singing was my happy place. Being able to sing French songs was a ray of light and was imperative to my success in learning French, despite my hearing loss, which could have hindered my success. Teachers agree that arts-integration is an engaging approach to teaching language and having more opportunities for professional development will help allow for future change. This is why I believe it is important for students to have a rich experience learning French through the utilization of different elements of the arts. Through the experiences of myself and my participants, it is clear that the arts give students the opportunity to experience language in a different and more engaging way—a way that challenges their imaginations and their creativity, while inspiring them to want to talk about their learning experiences with others. “There

are always vacancies: there are always roads not taken, vistas not acknowledged. The search must be ongoing; the end can never be quite known” (Greene, 1995, p. 15). This discourse is integral to inspire future teachers and students to imagine an ongoing journey of teaching and learning Core French through the arts, in engaging and enlightening ways.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions

1. Where did you first learn how to speak French?
2. What do you remember about learning French yourself?
 - Describe any memories that were impactful.
3. What did you enjoy about learning French?
4. What were some of the challenges of you learning French?
 - Specifically, what kinds of experiences made learning French a challenge?
5. What made you become a French teacher?
 - Did you have any other career choices in mind?
6. How is your teaching approach different than how teachers of your past taught you?
7. How did you find your first experience preparing for your first French classroom?
 - Please expand on what resources you did or did not have access to.
8. What specific training did you have that prepared you to teach French?
9. What are some of the challenges you faced in your French teaching practices?
10. How did you overcome those challenges?
11. What do you believe are some of the limitations in French classrooms today?
12. What made you interested in implementing the arts in your classroom?
13. What were the processes you went through to establish an arts-integrated program in your classroom?

14. What training did you partake in to learn how to implement the arts into your French language program?
15. What elements of the arts were challenging for you in the beginning?
 - What did you do to overcome those challenges?
16. Thinking about the different strands found in the arts curriculum, which of these strands most interest you?
17. What strands of the arts curriculum (if any) have you left out?
 - Why do you think some of those other strands got left out?
18. If you were given all the time and support needed, what would you ask for in order to improve your implementation of the arts?
19. In what ways, do you believe your students benefit from arts integration?
20. In terms of your professional practice, in what areas do you believe you excel?
 - In what areas do you feel that you lack confidence?
 - What areas would you like to improve?

Appendix B

Letter of Invitation

Title of Study: Implementing the Arts as a Sustainable and Innovative Approach to Language Learning

Principal Investigator:
Dr. Shelley Griffin, Associate Professor
Faculty of Education, Brock University

Student Investigator:
Holly Taylor, Master of Education Student
Faculty of Education, Brock University

To Whom It May Concern:

I would like to invite you to participate in a study on the experiences of teachers who infuse arts-integrated practices into French classrooms. In addition, I am interested to explore the successes and limitations you may have experienced related to your teaching practice. I would like to conduct interviews that ask questions about your experiences learning language and teaching language. More specifically, I would like to learn more about your stories around the implementation of these arts-integrated programs in your classroom. During these interviews, I will collect an audio recording as well as my own notes to ensure a detailed and holistic account of your experiences. It is anticipated that the interviews will take between sixty to ninety minutes. The data collected in the audio recording will be transcribed into scripts, that you will have the opportunity to review to ensure your stories are accurately retold. There is also the possibility for a follow-up interview based on the outcome of the first interview to ask any additional questions that may come out of the first transcript.

The benefits to participating in this research can be found through the reflection on your professional practice as a French teacher. Reflecting upon your practical professional knowledge and the implementation of the arts could result in further reflection on current practices and ways that you discover how to continue your journey in professional development. Once the research is complete, I will be sharing the results with you in the form of a feedback letter. The purpose of this research is to fulfill the requirements of a Thesis for a Master of Education Program. If you choose to participate, your identity will be kept confidential.

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Research Ethics Board at Brock University (file # 17-227). If you have any pertinent questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Brock University Research Ethics Officer (905 688-5550 ext. 3035, reb@brocku.ca). If you have any questions, please feel free to contact one of the researchers. If you are willing to participate, please email or call.

Thank you,

Holly Taylor, Principal Student Investigator, Master of Education Student, Brock University, (647) 921-3148, ht12ts@brocku.ca

Dr. Shelley Griffin, Principal Investigator, Brock University, (905) 668-5550 Ext. 5370, sgriffin@brocku.ca

Appendix C

Informed Consent

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

Name: _____

Date: _____

Project Title: Implementing the Arts as a Sustainable and Innovative Approach to Language learning

Principal Investigator:

Dr. Shelley Griffin, Associate Professor, Faculty of Education, Brock University

Student-Investigator:

Holly Taylor, Master of Education Student, Faculty of Education, Brock University

I would like to invite you to participate in a study on the experiences of teachers integrating the arts in to their French classrooms along with their stories of the success' and limitations that were experienced along the way. I would like to conduct interviews that ask questions about your experiences learning language and teaching language. More specifically, I am interested to learn more about your stories around the implementation of the arts in your French classroom. During these interviews, I will audio record our conversation, as well as take my own notes to ensure a detailed and holistic account of your experiences. The data will then be transcribed into scripts, that you will have the opportunity to review and ensure your stories are accurately retold.

Given we intend to publish job titles and the level of students you work with in study reports alongside anonymous quotations, please note that there are limits to the confidentiality we can guarantee. Due to the small sample size, quotations and the use of these descriptors, it may be possible for a colleague to link your comments back to you.

WHAT'S INVOLVED

Interview - A transcript of the interview questions will be electronically sent to you and you will be given 2 weeks to review the questions (if you feel the need). This will be a 60 to 90-minute interview where I will ask questions surrounding your experience with learning and teaching language. We will also explore your experiences with the arts and how they became integrated in your teaching practices.

Transcript Review – After the interview is complete, I will be documenting your interview by creating a transcript. Upon completion of the transcript, I will provide you with a digital copy of your interview for review. You will be given 2-3 weeks to review

the transcript to ensure that you are comfortable with the content. I anticipate that the review process would not exceed one hour. Upon the return of the transcript, edits will be made (if any) and returned to you for a second opportunity to review. If the transcript is not returned, I will follow up with a reminder email. If there is no response from you, the data will be utilized as is.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND RISKS

Participation in this study may promote deep reflection into teaching practices and may help realize new insights. Reflecting upon your practical professional knowledge and the implementation of the arts could result in further reflection on current practices and ways that you discover how to continue your journey in professional development.

There is the potential for the participants to feel obligated to participate. In the event that interest in the study is lost or if the participant changes his/her mind, however, it will be noted in the consent materials that the participation in the study is optional. This sense of obligation will be mitigated through verbal reassurance as well as the consent materials.

The participant may also feel some psychological emotions, as the participant will be reflecting back on past experiences that may have been challenging, however at any time the participant may wish to withdraw and/or cease to answer questions that make him/her feel uncomfortable in any way.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Pseudonyms will be used in place of the participants' real names to protect personal privacy. Data (e.g., audio tapes, digital recording, transcripts) will be confidentially protected on a password-protected computer and hard copy documents will be retained in a locked cabinet in the student investigator's office. All data will be disposed of within three years of collection (i.e., shredding, erasing, etc.).

You will not be identified individually in any way in any written reports of this research. Paper records of data collected during this study will be retained in a locked filing cabinet, to which only researchers associated with this study have access. Electronic data and audio recordings will be kept on a secure computer to which only researchers associated with this study have access.

All information you provided is considered confidential; indeed, your name will not be included with the data presented in study reports. However, with your permission, anonymous quotations will be used.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you wish, you may decline your participation in this research. You may withdraw at any time by indicating so. In the event that you withdraw, your data will be destroyed (e.g., hard copies shredded, and audio recordings erased).

PUBLICATION OF RESULTS

Results of this study will be used in the completion of a Master of Education program requirement and will be written up in a thesis that will be examined by three Brock Faculty of Education faculty members and an External Examiner. There is also the opportunity for this research to be published in academic journals. If so, participants will be notified. You will receive feedback on the study results when finished and all data will be disposed of within three years of collection.

CONTACT INFORMATION AND ETHICS CLEARANCE

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Research Ethics Board at Brock University (file# 17-227). If you have any questions about this study of require further information, please contact the Principal Student Investigator, Holly Taylor (ht12ts@brocku.ca) or the Principal Investigator, Dr. Shelley Griffin (sgriffin@brocku.ca). If you have any pertinent questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Brock University Research Ethics Officer (905 688-5550 ext. 3035, reb@brocku.ca).

Thank you for your assistance in this project. Please keep a copy of this form for your records.

CONSENT FORM

I agree to participate in the following components of the research study based on the information I have read in the Information-Consent Letter. Please check and sign confirming your participation in the research study.

Interview

I agree to participate in an interview at the request of the researchers.

- YES
- NO

PLEASE SIGN BELOW

Name: _____ **Signature:** _____ **Date:** _____

Appendix D

Research of Ethics Certificate



Brock University
 Research Ethics Office
 Tel: 905-688-5559 ext. 3035
 Email: reb@brocku.ca

Social Science Research Ethics Board

Certificate of Ethics Clearance for Human Participant Research

DATE: 3/12/2018
 PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: GRIFFIN, Shelley - Teacher Education
 FILE: 17-227 - GRIFFIN
 TYPE: Masters Thesis/Project STUDENT: Holly Taylor
 SUPERVISOR: Shelley Griffin
 TITLE: Implementing the Arts as a Sustainable and Innovative Approach to Language Learning

ETHICS CLEARANCE GRANTED

Type of Clearance: NEW

Expiry Date: 3/1/2019

The Brock University Social Science Research Ethics Board has reviewed the above named research proposal and considers the procedures, as described by the applicant, to conform to the University's ethical standards and the Tri-Council Policy Statement. Clearance granted from 3/12/2018 to 3/1/2019.

The Tri-Council Policy Statement requires that ongoing research be monitored by, at a minimum, an annual report. Should your project extend beyond the expiry date, you are required to submit a Renewal form before 3/1/2019. Continued clearance is contingent on timely submission of reports.

To comply with the Tri-Council Policy Statement, you must also submit a final report upon completion of your project. All report forms can be found on the Research Ethics web page at <http://www.brocku.ca/research/policies-and-forms/research-forms>.

In addition, throughout your research, you must report promptly to the REB:

- Changes increasing the risk to the participant(s) and/or affecting significantly the conduct of the study;
- All adverse and/or unanticipated experiences or events that may have real or potential unfavourable implications for participants;
- New information that may adversely affect the safety of the participants or the conduct of the study;
- Any changes in your source of funding or new funding to a previously unfunded project.

We wish you success with your research.

Approved:

Ann-Marie DBiase, Chair
 Social Science Research Ethics Board

Note: Brock University is accountable for the research carried out in its own jurisdiction or under its auspices and may refuse certain research even though the REB has found it ethically acceptable.

If research participants are in the care of a health facility, at a school, or other institution or community organization, it is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to ensure that the ethical guidelines and clearance of those facilities or institutions are obtained and filed with the REB prior to the initiation of research at that site.