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CORE FRENCH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE:
A LEARNING THROUGH THE ARTS APPROACH

By

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submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
through Education
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Abstract

This qualitative case study examined the student attitudes of one Ontario, Canada grade nine core French as a second language class toward learning French through the arts. With a focus on the constructivist literacy theory of language acquisition, the study also examined students' motivation and enthusiasm to speak French under these circumstances. Additionally, this study questioned students' attitudes based on past experience with traditional models of language instruction. The study found that students learned French via the arts (visual art, music and drama) and their motivation to learn and speak French in the classroom increased as a result of arts-based instruction. The author attempted to provide a candid analysis of student attitudes toward learning French through arts-based activities. The study also provides a variety of arts-based grade nine core French lesson plans.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my husband Kurt Becker, my inspiration and my most valuable teacher.

Acknowledgements

This is perhaps the easiest and hardest chapter that I have to write. It will be simple to name all the people that helped to get this done, but it will be tough to thank them enough. I will nonetheless try...

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Overview

Today in Canada, the three French-language teaching programs most commonly found are core French, extended (core) French, and immersion with 90% of students enrolled in a core French program (Canadian Parents for French [CPF], 2004, p.50). Variations on core French programs are known as intensive (core) French, compact core French and *le bain linguistique*. This study will limit itself to the traditional core French program in the Ontario English language school system. Core French is defined by LeBlanc (1990) as "a basic program in French as a second language where French is the subject being studied and the language is taught in periods that vary between 20 to 50 minutes a day" (p. 2). In secondary school, core French is taught in periods up to 90 minutes or more. The core French program has three objectives, (1) to teach students basic communication skills, (2) to teach students language knowledge, and (3) to teach students an appreciation of French culture in Canada and beyond (Turnbull, 2004). In English schools in Ontario, the core French program is mandatory for all students from Grades four to nine. Current research findings point to the unpopularity of the core French program with both students and teachers. This study explores an alternative delivery model to the core FSL curriculum in order to assess student attitudes and motivation toward learning French in the core FSL class.

Statement of the Problem

"Why do I need French as a second language"? Student attitudes toward the study of

French in Canada are increasingly negative (Kissau, 2005; Netten, Riggs, & Hewlett, 1999). Due to their inability to speak French for practical purposes, many of today's core French students question the usefulness of French as a second language (FSL). Consequently, many teachers also struggle with the relevance of teaching core FSL. According to the report "State of the Core French Program in Canada 2004", the Canadian Parents for French association states "Attrition between the last grade of compulsory core French and the last year of high school range from 85 to 95 per cent. Furthermore, existing core French programs are not successful in producing functionally bilingual graduates. Of the students interviewed for the report, almost half of those who had completed secondary core French programs felt unable to understand spoken French" (CPF, 2004, p.34). Many students begin the FSL core program as early as kindergarten, and yet even with eight years of elementary French along with the compulsory grade nine course, few of them graduate with the confidence and ability to speak French fluently.

Background

The core French program is not popular with today's youth: "Core French enrolment continues to decline and analysis of enrolment patterns suggests that current core French programs are not successful in retaining students to the end of high school" (Shea, 2004 p. 60). In fact, as with many other school boards in Ontario - ultimately due to insufficient funding - Windsor school boards have eliminated their primary core French program (K-3). With so many students not interested in the current model of the FSL core program in Canadian elementary and secondary schools, the program beckons change. Furthermore, as few students actually gain functional fluency, the question is: What purpose does the core French program serve?

Similar to the state of the core French program, arts programs (visual arts, music and drama) are also undermined. For example, many Ontario school boards have eliminated the art teacher thus leaving the responsibility of art instruction to the already stressed regular classroom teacher who often has little expertise in arts. According to Bayley (2006) "Governments and school boards generally cut or undermine arts programs because it is easy to do so. If you devalue something you do not work to advance or strengthen it. Politically, it is one of the easiest areas to cut without too much complaining from the electorate. Educated and caring parents do even more to supplement their children's education by getting from the private sector (private schools, private music lessons) what they used to get in the public sector (public and separate schools)" (J. Bayley, personal communication, February 18, 2006). With the increasing budgetary cuts of arts programs (visual arts, music and drama) coupled with the declining popularity of the core French program in Canadian schools, could we teach core French through the arts? This might establish a new enthusiasm for the core French program while maintaining the integrity of an arts curriculum in the schools.

Brookes (2002) believes that since art budgets are still threadbare, teachers have gone ahead and educated themselves in how to use the arts as one of the most powerful teaching tools they have. Not surprisingly, many core French teachers also supplement the curriculum with arts-based activities. Thus, the teaching of core French through the arts is a relationship worthy of exploration. According to the "State of French Language in Canada 2004" annual report by the Canadian Parents for French Association, "The Action Plan for Official Languages is targeting the goal of improved core French programs by renewing teaching approaches and encouraging the examination of

innovative methods of delivery" (p. 2). Even the CPF association is calling for a change in the instructional approach for core French. This is particularly interesting because the core French curriculum document does not prescribe a teaching approach. Thus teachers are free to choose a teaching methodology. For example, some teachers may teach the core French curriculum primarily with a focus on form while other core French teachers instruct via a more communicative pedagogy, such as the *Accelerated Integrated Method* developed by Wendy Maxwell. Perhaps the CPF is suggesting that indeed a teaching methodology should be prescribed.

As a remedy to the lost arts programs in the schools, one innovative method of delivering the core French curriculum would be by teaching core French via the arts based on principles of constructivism. McBrien (1997) defines constructivism as the belief that students learn best when they gain knowledge through exploration and active learning. Hands-on materials are used instead of textbooks, and students are encouraged to think and explain their reasoning instead of memorizing and reciting facts. Education is centered on themes and concepts and the connections between them, rather than isolated information. Thus, constructivist ideals would be a natural fit in arts classes because arts classes entail mostly hands-on activities such as tapping a drum to a rhythm in music class, or painting using the impasto style in visual arts. Consequently, core French instruction via the arts merits investigation.

The Council of Atlantic Ministers of Education and Training (CAMET) concluded that Canadian student attitudes toward the core FSL program are becoming increasingly negative. One reason is their disappointment in their inability to express themselves in French. (CAMET/APEF, 2001-2002). Furthermore, in 2003, the federal

"Action Plan for Official Languages" challenged the French second language education community to double the percentage of high school graduates with a functional knowledge of their second official language by 2013. The plan focused attention on the need to enhance core French education and explore alternate delivery models in order to achieve this ambitious goal. In fact, the CPF association said: "It is a welcome and sorely needed initiative as there is much to be done" (CPF, 2004, p.60). Indeed, as the Action Plan states, there is a need to make changes in the teaching of the core French program in order to increase students' French speaking ability. The Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers (CASLT) concurs: "Core French programs, which currently hold the overwhelming majority of students learning French as a second language, present a fundamental dilemma. Despite their popularity, there is almost universal recognition that current outcomes could not qualify as 'functional bilingualism' in any meaningful sense" (CASLT, 2004, p. 43).

There is evidence that secondary core French programs are viewed negatively by students: "When asked how they and their peers viewed core French courses in high school, the majority (52%) reported they had not had a good experience in the program" (CAMET, 2004, p.38). Furthermore, according to research, it is clear that many of the current teaching practices used in the core FSL program are ineffective and have shown to negatively impact on student attitudes and success with regards to functional language knowledge: "The 2004 CPF survey of undergraduates who had studied core French in high school confirms these findings: Students continue to complain of a lack of French speaking and listening practice and most felt that they were not able to hold a conversation with francophone peers" (Shea, 2004, p.60). Additionally, a recent study of

Grade 11 students who had dropped out of core French programs (Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation) [APEF], 2002), concludes "that a paradigm shift in methodology and curriculum content of the core French program is required. French has to become more interesting, more relevant and more oriented toward the goal of learning to speak the language. This is the obvious first step toward motivating students to continue their study of French" (p.19). In light of these aforementioned studies, more research on student attitudes toward the core French program is needed.

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this collaborative/case study was to explore how an arts-based, constructivist teaching approach affected the attitudes of students in a Grade nine core FSL class.

Educational Relevance: The Importance of the Study

A. Scholarly Research:

1. The study explored student attitudes towards the core French as a second language program.

2. The study extended LTTA (Learning Through the Arts) research into the core FSL program.

3. The study looked at second language acquisition theory in the core FSL programme.

B. Teaching Practice:

1. The study explored the use of a constructivist/arts-based teaching approach for the core FSL program.

C. Education Policy:

1. The study added to the discussion around the benefits of an arts-based core French

program.

2. The study helped to reinforce the need for a more innovative core FSL curriculum.

Definition of Terms

Elementary Core French as a Second Language Program

The aim of *The Ontario Curriculum: French as a Second Language – Core French, Grade 4-8, 1998* is "To develop basic communication skills in French and an understanding of the nature of the language, as well as an appreciation of French culture in Canada and other parts of the world. The core French program offers students a valuable educational experience and the opportunity to develop a basic usable command of the French language that can be expanded through further study or contact with French-speaking people" (The Ontario Curriculum, 1998, p. 2).

Secondary Core French Program

The aim of the secondary core French program is "To provide students with fundamental communication skills in French and an understanding of the nature of the language and its culture. Core French offers students the chance to develop a usable command of the French language that can be expanded through further study or through contact with French-speaking people. By the end of the four-year program, students will be able to participate in straight-forward conversation in French; will be able to read-with the help of a dictionary-books, magazines, and newspapers in French; and will be able to understand the general meaning of radio and television news and other programs" (The Ontario Curriculum, 1999, pp. 2-3).

Functional bilingualism:

Bilingualism is defined as the capacity of speaking two different languages, often

with equal proficiency (International Webster, 1975). For the purpose of this study, the definition of functional bilingualism is having a solid proficiency of usable language in active speaking and writing as well as maintaining a high level of passive comprehension in listening and reading. The CPF was contacted in order to obtain a definitive definition of 'functional bilingualism' however, they deemed this term to be arbitrary and not definable (CPF, personal communication, 2006). On the other hand, in his research on the education of bilingual students, Cummins (as cited in Edwards, 1998) notes that immigrant students can quickly acquire considerable fluency in the target language when they are exposed to it in the environment and at school but despite this rapid growth in conversational fluency, it generally takes a minimum of about five years (and frequently much longer) for them to catch up to native-speakers in academic aspects of the language. Thus, for Cummins, the term 'functional bilingualism' is sub-divided between conversational proficiency and academic proficiency. In the State of French Second Language Canada (2004) the CPF stated that Canadian Heritage has funded a study undertaken by the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers (CASLT) to identify indicators for French proficiency. One key conclusion is that national standards need to be developed and implemented before a test and a proficiency certification can be designed. Next steps will require further consultation and partnership between CASLT and the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada. Therefore, the government is seeking to implement proficiency testing of French in the future in order to optimally define functional bilingualism.

Constructivism

Constructivism is a philosophy of learning founded on the premise that by

reflecting on our experiences, we construct our own understanding of the world we live in. Each of us generates our own rules and mental models which we use to make sense of our experiences. Learning, therefore, is simply the process of adjusting our mental models to accommodate new experiences. There are several guiding principles of constructivism:

1. Learning is a search for meaning. Therefore, learning must start with the issues around which students are actively trying to construct meaning.

2. Meaning requires understanding wholes as well as parts. And parts must be understood in the context of wholes. Therefore, the learning process focuses on primary concepts, not isolated facts.

3. In order to teach well, we must understand the mental models that students use to perceive the world and the assumptions they make to support those models.

4. The purpose of learning is for an individual to construct his or her own meaning, not just memorize the "right" answers and regurgitate someone else's meaning. Since education is inherently interdisciplinary, the only valuable way to measure learning is to make the assessment a part of the learning process, ensuring it provides students with information on the quality of their learning (Brooks & Brooks, 1993).

The Learning Through the Arts™ (LTTA) Approach

This research adopts the same philosophy as that of the LTTA initiative, which was created and developed by The Royal Conservatory of Music. LTTA was launched in 1994. Now LTTA is one of the largest public school initiatives in the world - currently operating in 300 schools across Canada. LTTA evolved from the premise that schools

which encourage teachers to make learning and teaching participatory, active, and connected to the personal interests and learning style of each student are the most effective in achieving academic, social, and personal development in these students. The arts include visual arts, music, drama, and dance (movement). With LTTA, the arts become tools for delivering general curriculum. LTTA students explore new ideas by making images, creating dances, telling stories, and singing songs. Furthermore, this national program aims to transform the way in which curriculum is taught and learned in schools across the country. LTTA also seeks to promote the academic, social, and emotional growth of students; to engage all children successfully in learning through participatory hands-on activities; to improve the academic achievement of all students; to provide teachers with a diverse array of instructional tools; to develop a strong sense of purpose and direction in every student; to promote creativity, problem solving and teamwork; to provide opportunities for self-expression and self-discovery; to create a means to explore cultural, ethical and social issues (Royal Conservatory of Music, 2004).

Accelerated Integrated Method (AIM)

This pedagogy, created by Wendy Maxwell, a core French teacher, is an intensive second language (L2) methodology that significantly raises the expectations and performance of students in core French classrooms primarily through the use of music and drama. Through this approach, all target vocabulary to be learned by the student is taught kinesthetically, visually and in an auditory manner, thus responding to a variety of learning styles. Because words are kinesthetically presented through gesture and contextualized through story and drama, students learn to see and feel the language. Through every aspect of this approach, words are constantly associated with a very strong "emotional hook". For example,

McCafferty (2002) explains that gesture plays an important role both in promoting language learning and in facilitating positive interaction between the two participants (student and teacher), helping to create a sense of shared social, symbolic, physical, and mental space. Furthermore, McGeehan (2001) describes the importance of the 'emotional hook' in learning: "Essentially the brain asks, "Does this make sense?" and "Do I care?" New input must carry emotional value and useful content or the brain efficiently ignores it. Conversely, when information lacks personal meaning and an emotional hook, the neural networks needed to create long-term memories are not formed" (p. 11). Moreover, LeDoux (1994) explains that emotions not only have their own physical pathways in the brain but also drive attention and create meaning. As Robert Sylwester points out: "A memory is a neural representation of an object or event that occurs in specific context, and emotionally important contexts can create powerful memories" (p. 96). McGeehan (2001) describes the application of 'making meaning' for the students in the classroom:

> A teacher can influence the kinds of input students receive, but only students can make meaning from incoming sensory information, and the meaning they make is based on their own prior experiences as encoded in networks of communicating neurons. Teachers cannot know what is meaningful to students unless they know their students. Such knowing requires that we focus effort on building personal relationships with our students. For students to construct personal meaning from the school curriculum, they must see how it connects to their lives. When we know our students, we can help them discover those connections. (p. 11).

The Three Strands of The Grade 9 Core French As A Second Language Program

The curriculum expectations for all FSL programs are organized into three strands that

correspond to the main areas of language use: oral communication, reading, writing. "The development of strong oral communication skills provides the foundation for students to read and write effectively. Students should have numerous opportunities both to listen and to speak French for practical purposes in everyday situations. They should have an adequate 'listening period' before they are expected to communicate in French" (The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 9 and 10: French as a Second Language, 1999, p. 6).

"Reading is a complex process that provides a bridge between speech and writing. Reading skills and knowledge should be developed after language has been introduced orally in a meaningful context that encourages students to think about what they are reading. Oral pre-reading activities build vocabulary, set a context, and relate texts to the students' experience or prior knowledge of the topic. A well-balanced reading program will provide students with opportunities to consolidate language learned orally, build vocabulary, and develop comprehension skills. Students should read a wide range of materials for information and enjoyment. These materials should be appropriate to their age, interests, and level of proficiency in French" (The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 9 and 10 French as a Second Language, 1999, p. 6).

From their experience with oral communication and reading, students acquire skills they need to become good writers who are able to communicate ideas and opinions with ease and clarity. As students read a variety of written texts, they increase their vocabulary and learn to vary their sentence structure, their organizational approach, and the voice they use in their writing. Students' writing activities, in turn, support and reinforce their oral language skills. Writing activities that are seen by students as meaningful and that challenge them to think critically and creatively will help them achieve a fuller and more lasting mastery of the

language.

Language Acquisition

Language acquisition refers to the process of natural assimilation involving intuition and subconscious learning which is the product of real interactions between people where the learner is an active participant. It is similar to the way children learn their native tongue, a process that produces functional skill in the spoken language without theoretical knowledge. It develops familiarity with the phonetic characteristics of the language as well as its structure and vocabulary, and is responsible for oral understanding, the capability for creative communication and for the identification of cultural values. Teaching and learning are viewed as activities that happen in a personal psychological plane. The acquisition approach praises the communicative act and develops self-confidence in the learner.

A classic example of language acquisition involves adolescents and young adults who live abroad for a year in an exchange program, attaining near native fluency, while knowing little about the language in the majority of cases. They have a good pronunciation without a notion of phonology, do not know what the perfect tense is, modal or phrasal verbs are, but they intuitively recognize and know how to use all the structures (Krashen, 1988).

Language Learning

The concept of language learning is linked to the traditional approach of the study of languages and today is still generally practised in high schools worldwide. Attention is focused on the language in its written form and the objective is for the student to understand the structure and rules of the language through the application of intellect and logical deductive reasoning. The form is of greater importance than communication. Teaching and learning are technical and are governed by a formal instructional plan with a predetermined syllabus. One

studies the theory in the absence of the practical. One values the correct and represses the incorrect. There is little room for spontaneity. The teacher is an authority figure and the participation of the student is predominantly passive.

L1

L1 refers to one's first language, spoken since birth. L1 is also known as one's native language or mother tongue.

L2

L2 is a second language learned in addition to one's mother tongue.

Applied Level Grade 9 Courses

Applied courses focus on the essential concepts of the discipline but develop students' knowledge and skills by emphasizing practical, concrete applications of these concepts and incorporating theoretical applications as appropriate (Ministry of Education of Ontario, 2000).

This study will examine the rich and highly engaging learning potential of arts-based education interwoven with core French education. Ultimately the author seeks to establish a transformative synergistic relationship between core French and the arts. The author focuses on music, visual arts, drama and some movement in the French class in order to explore student attitudes and motivation toward learning to speak French.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The arts are essential parts of the human experience. They are not a frill. We

recommend that all students study the arts to discover how human beings

communicate not only with words, but through music, dance, and the visual arts.

During our visits (to schools) we found the arts to be shamefully neglected.

Courses in the arts were the last to come and the first to go. (Boyer, 1987, p.4).

Teaching through the arts is making a comeback: "The arts are coming back, stronger

than ever, whether they get funded or not. In the last ten years I have watched the

awareness and implementation of the arts increase dramatically. At a time when art

budgets are still threadbare, teachers have educated themselves in how to use the arts as

one of the most powerful teaching tools they have. The reason this shift is taking place is

because it works" (Brookes, 2002). Unfortunately, this comeback is taking its time.

Deasy (2003) writes:

> You're under the gun to raise reading and math scores. The district, the state, and
>
> now the federal government are increasing the pressure. So what can you do?
>
> You're sorely tempted to cut back on the "extras" to increase the time spent on the
>
> core subjects. How about cutting art? Don't! Don't axe the arts! By including
>
> arts in your core curriculum, you can provide skills and motivation that will boost
>
> achievement in all subjects (p. 14).

Deasy further relates that a "school subject is labeled 'core' when it embodies a set of

skills and knowledge deemed critical for success in school, life, and work. In this regard,

the arts have suffered because the skills and knowledge they require and develop have not been well understood. Yet, they are as essential for every student as English and language arts, mathematics, or science, which Congress recognized when it included the arts as a core subject in the No Child Left Behind Act" (p. 18). Deasy explains that the arts are among the most powerful learning experiences a student can have and, with the right kind of planning, the arts will enrich the overall performance of an entire school.

In spite of the budgetary cuts, many educators are taking it upon themselves to interweave the arts into their curriculum. "The 'Learning Through the Arts' initiative is now the largest full school intervention program in the world, reaching more than 100,000 children each year. Demand for LTTA continues to increase exponentially. It is anticipated that, by 2008, there will be 600 LTTA schools in Canada, and teacher professional development centres in 10 countries. This national program aims to transform the way in which curriculum is taught and learned in schools across the country" (LTTA, 2006).

Likewise, many Canadian core French language teachers are also teaching their subject via the arts. In fact, the aforementioned LTTA initiative just doubled the number of lesson plans for French second language teachers in 2006. Notwithstanding, government funded arts programs and Canada's core French program have seen many budgetary cuts. In fact, both the public and separate school boards in Windsor, Ontario have eliminated the K-3 Core FSL program. Therefore, generally, students begin the core French program in grade four and end their French second language experience with the compulsory grade nine French course: "FSL is in great shape at the elementary and junior high levels. In the more senior high school grades, though, FSL is in deep trouble.

Across Canada, about 90% of students in core FSL programs drop French before they reach Grade 12. Most of the students who drop out of an FSL program do so immediately after Grade 9. The reason for this cut-off point is simply that, in jurisdictions where French is obligatory for part of student's schooling, Grade 9 is usually the last grade in which students are required to take a French course" (The State of French Second Language, Canada, 2005 p.53). Nevertheless, in many cases, students continue to take core French until grade twelve. An analysis of students' reasons for dropping core French after Grade nine will be addressed later in this paper. The aim of the Grade nine core French program is:

> to provide students with fundamental communication skills in French and an understanding of the nature of the language and its culture. Core French offers students the chance to develop a usable command of the French language that can be expanded through further study or through contact with French-speaking people. By the end of the four-year program, students will be able to participate in a straight-forward conversation in French; will be able to read - with the help of a dictionary - books, magazines and newspapers in French; and will be able to understand the general meaning of radio and television news and other programs (Ministry of Education, 1999, p.2).

To be clear, the core French curriculum document does not state how this aim is to be achieved, nor does the curriculum document prescribe a specific teaching approach. The core French program may be seen by many as a non-essential course. As Maxwell , a core French teacher, states: "To date, core French programs have been less than successful in creating even a beginning level of fluency among students, especially

during the initial years of instruction. It is in this crucial time, during the first one to two years of language instruction, that it is imperative that students experience success. If students do not feel that language acquisition is possible during this crucial initial exposure to the language, what often appears to happen is that students develop a feeling that French class is a waste of time" (Réflexions, 2005, p.3).

Studies show that there are many benefits to students in arts programs. For example, Deasy (2002) found that students in arts programs repeatedly outperform other students in reading, history, vocabulary and the language arts and that mastering the visual and performing arts can advance students' use of oral and written verbal forms. Moreover, Mumford (2005) concluded that the creative and divergent thinking nurtured in an arts program are transferred to other areas of the curriculum such as Math, Science and Writing. Recent studies such as "Critical Links and Champions of Change" provide evidence (both qualitative and quantitative) of the positive relationship between regular, sequential instruction in the arts and improved cognitive capacities and motivations to learn. These often result in improved academic achievement through near and far transfer of learning (i.e., music and spatial reasoning, visual art and reading readiness, dance and non-verbal reasoning and expressive skills, theater and reading comprehension, writing proficiency, and increased peer interaction). Furthermore, the arts are uniquely qualified to cultivate a variety of multiple intelligences. Oddleifson (1995) explains that humans think in several other "symbol systems" besides language. A few examples are (1) the use of line and colour in drawing and painting, (2) in musical notes when singing, or (3) playing an instrument, or in physical motion when dancing. In the "Learning Through the Arts Canadian National Assessment," it was found that computation and estimation

scores on standardized mathematics tests increased as a result of LTTA programming (Upitis & Smithrim, 2003). Furthermore, the most commonly reported benefits of arts education include the development of the imagination (Greene, 1995), the elevation of students' intrinsic motivation to learn (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997), the improvement of children's spatial reasoning abilities (Rausher, Shaw, Levine, Wright, Dennis & Newcomb, 1977), and the development of higher levels of self-esteem (Sylvester, 1998). Also, biorevolutionary scholars claim that the sensory characteristics of the arts are one of the reasons that the arts are necessary for human survival (Dissanayake, 1992).

Recent American studies also report increased academic achievement for students involved in the arts (Catterall, 1998; Chapleau, & Iwanaga, 1999; Hamblen, 1993; Luftig, 1994; Moore and Caldwell, 1993; Murfee, 1995; Music in World Cultures, 1996; Welch & Greene, 1995). Learning through the arts also transfers to the three strands of language use in the core French program: oral communication, reading and writing. For example, Maxwell created the AIM Method where words are kinesthetically presented through gesture and contextualized through story and drama. Maxwell explains that her core French approach would not have achieved the success that it has without the concurrent implementation of specially designed stories for dramatization:

> It is essential, when one's goal is to have students use and understand new vocabulary, that it be provided to them in a comprehensible context, in which they see how the language flows in narrative discourse as well as dialogue. By using the language base of a meaningful story with which the students become intimately familiar over an extended period of time (as opposed to shorter thematically-based units), teachers are provided with a wide range of possibilities for language manipulation activities that help reinforce

students' knowledge of vocabulary and help them to develop confidence and competence in self-expression within the familiarity of long-term study (Maxwell, 2005, p. 7). Much research in the area of language acquisition has brought teaching and learning through the arts to the surface. For example, Eisner (1994, 2002) and Greene (1995) note the importance of the arts for experiencing the joy of creating, developing attention to detail, and learning ways to express thoughts, knowledge, and feelings beyond words. Furthermore, researchers also report that students involved in the arts exhibit higher academic achievement than their peers who are not involved in the arts (Catterall, 1998; Catterall, Chapleau, & Iwanaga, 1999; Deasy, 2002; Fowler, 1996; Hetland, 2000; Lufitg, 1995; Murfee, 1995; Welch and Greene, 1995). Eisner elaborates on the thought process of reading and writing: "The writer [as critic] starts the process of writing by seeing and by having an emotional response that is then transformed into words intended to capture the flavor of that response. Thus, the writer starts with vision and ends with words. The reader, however, starts with the writer's words and ends with vision. The circle is complete" (Eisner, 2002, pp. 88-89). Eisner relates that reading and writing do not exist without a 'visual,' thereby stating how easily the visual arts transfer into language learning. Thus students learning to read and write a second language may also benefit from arts-based instruction.

The teaching and learning of French through the arts will be discussed in three separate sections. As little research on language acquisition and learning through the arts includes the core French program, inferences will be drawn from the findings of studies conducted in the general language arts programs and in French Immersion/Francophone (L1) studies. The first section will review the literature on drama in education. The second section will review the literature on music as well as kinesthetic/dance in education and the third section will review

the literature on the effects of visual arts in education. In an effort to link these art forms, a fourth section will discuss the importance of utilizing the constructivist literacy approach in the second language classroom.

Drama In Education

Dramatic enactments, particularly by young children, enhance their abilities to comprehend texts, identify characters, and understand character motivations (Catterall, 2002). The same is true for older students. Professor Larry O'Farrell of Queen's University's Faculty of Education has been studying how drama classes work as equalizers in high schools and found that young people who may face disadvantages in their daily lives do not feel them in drama class, thus they may do better in drama class than in other, more traditional courses. O'Farrell's research suggests that this environment promotes a feeling of equality among diverse students and that these positive experiences could keep them in school. He explains that indifferent to their socio-economic, racial, or academic background, students feel equal in drama class. He also found that students agreed that high school's traditional cliques melted away and they were freer to be themselves while performing. Drama proves beneficial in the core French program as well where students are freer to speak more French while performing: "Through the use of story, dramatized initially through scripted plays, then moving to more student-centered improvisational drama and storytelling activities, students experience work with story in-depth over extended periods of time, thus internalizing the process of storytelling. Students thereby feel confident and competent in the language, and therefore develop a high degree of motivation to continue to improve their fluency levels" (Maxwell, 2005, p.6).

In the study "Effects of Creative Drama on Self Concept, Social Skills and Problem Behaviour" (2005), Freeman et. al. examined the role that creative drama plays

on student behaviour in the classroom. The study found that creative drama has many social and self-concept developmental benefits. Furthermore, behaviour was found to improve as participants developed emotional control and the skills needed to cope with various situations. Student attitudes and behaviours are particularly relevant to the study of the core French program because, as Kissau (2006) observes, there is a growing concern among second language educators in Canada that male students are losing interest in studying French as a second language. Moreover, despite the fact that numerous studies have indicated a general decline in the status of FSL instruction in Canada (Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers, 2004; Canadian Heritage, 2005a; Canadian Parents for French, 2004a), there are few studies that document and give voice to the students in French as a second language core programs (Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers, 2004). A focus on drama might encourage students to focus more on the language, thereby eliminating the potential for behavioural or attitudinal issues in the classroom.

In her study "The Effects of Creative Drama on the Social and Oral Language Skills of Children with Learning Disabilities" (1995), de la Cruz found that the children who participated in the creative drama program increased their social skills and also significantly improved in their oral expressive language skills when compared with the control group. These results provide indicators of the helpful effects of dramatic activities on the social and language skills of students with learning disabilities. Also, when asked about what they learned in the experiment, students reported that the drama lessons helped them listen and speak better. This study makes a unique contribution with its focus on the effect of drama on the expressive and receptive oral-language abilities of

students with learning disabilities. Betty-Jane Wagner (Catterall's Critical Links, 2002) writes that this study "is appropriately grounded in the rich body of claims and research on the effects of drama as a stimulus for growth in the development of oral language for all students, not just those with learning disabilities" (p. 20). Based on de la Cruz's study, it is suggested that the effects of drama as a stimulus for growth in the development of oral language be applied to those students in the core French second language programs as well.

Interestingly, according to the State of French Second Language (2004), the PCH (Patrimoine Canadien/Canadian Heritage) funded study on the use of drama for teaching a second language is intended to address the problems of high school core French attrition, low motivation and inadequate proficiency levels. This study also seeks to develop materials, techniques and teaching methods. "Preliminary results of this pilot project suggest that students are more motivated and have more confidence in their language and ability when they are engaged in highly interactive, imaginative, language rich, and student-centered activities. The experience is more meaningful since students take control and responsibility for their own learning" (Dicks, 2006).

Drama in the second language classroom is gaining momentum. Not only is the popularity of Wendy Maxwell's AIM pedagogy growing and being adopted and implemented by many school boards across Canada, but the results of Dicks' study also indicate that student-centred activities are indeed more meaningful to students. The meaningful learning via dramatic activities described by both Maxwell and Dicks echo the constructivist literacy theory.

Music In Education

Some well known Canadian core French teacher/musicians are *Etienne, Jacquot* and Matt Maxwell. They are all singer/songwriters who use music in order to engage students who are learning the French language. Hetland (2000) and Rauscher et al. (1997, 2000) firmly establish the relationship between music and spatial-temporal reasoning, a capacity employed in both language and mathematics. The idea that music makes you smarter has received considerable attention from scholars and the media. Shellenberg's (2005) report is the first to test this hypothesis directly with a random assignment of a large sample of children (N=144) to two different types of music lessons (keyboard or voice) or to control groups that received drama lessons or no lessons. IQ was measured before and after the lessons. Compared with children in the control groups, children in the music groups exhibited greater increases in full-scale IQ. Interestingly and unexpectedly, children in the drama group exhibited substantial pre- to post-test improvements in adaptive social behaviour that were not evident in the music groups. Nevertheless, research supports the notion that there are similar principles underlying the processes of both music and language. Sloboda's 1985 seminal research, (as cited in Lowe, 1995) states that empirical work has shown that music and language are derived from the brain's organizational and developmental need to impose structure and meaning on auditory sensory information. Furthermore, although music and language represent different means of communication, they share common auditory, perceptive, and cognitive brain mechanisms. Heller and Campbell (1981), in their pioneering work, (as cited in Lowe, 1995) also state that music and language are complimentary forms of human aural communication, adding that the potential for music acquisition for each human infant is approximately the same as that for language acquisition.

More recently, Fiske (1993) concludes, as do Heller and Cambpell (1976, 1977, 1981), that the analysis of speech processing clues can help us answer the questions about music processing because there are similarities in the brain mechanisms needed for language and music, at least at the meta level (mechanism for rule production). Sloboda (1985), (as cited in Lowe, 1995) found seven major similarities between the principles of language and music: 1) Both language and music are characteristics of the human species that seem to be universal to all humans and specific to humans; 2) both language and music are capable of generating an unlimited number of novel sequences; 3) children seem to have a natural ability to learn the rules of language and music through exposures to examples; 4) the natural medium for both language and music is auditory-vocal; 5) although the auditory-vocal mode is primary, many cultures have developed ways of writing down music and language; 6) receptive skills precede productive skills in development; and 7) the forms taken by natural language and natural music differ across cultures, but some universal features contain these forms.

Dunbar-Hall (1991) agrees with Sloboda (1985) and summarizes four basic similarities between language and music as media: Both use aural means, both involve a message sent by an originator to a receptor who analyses and assimilates it, both exist in two forms: sound-centred (speech, and performed music) and print centred (books, etc., and sheet music) and both consist of a set of sounds and rules that govern them, organized in infinite combinations and with subtleties of context to produce statements that are transformational, being capable of generating endlessly new utterances.

Likewise, Swain (1986) found three similarities between language and music perception. Both language and music involve organized systems of sound patterns, sound patterns of both are hierarchically organized, and both require the learning of specific language

or music systems.

Since the theories described thus far concerning speech/music analogies apply to the similarities between native language and music, one wonders if the same parallels can be drawn between music and French as a second language.

In Butzlaff's study, *Can Music be used to teach Reading* (2000), Larry Scripp (Critical Links, 2002) provides four reasons why educators should be interested in looking into the potential benefits of teaching language in the context of music studies. The rationale stems from four ways to approach conditions for learning transfer that may exist between music and language:

> (1) music and written language employ highly differentiated symbol systems yet both involve analogous decoding and comprehension reading processes (such as reading from left to right, sequential ordering of content, etc.), (2) there are also interesting parallels in underlying concepts shared between music and language reading skills (such as sensitivity to phonological or tonal distinctions), (3) music reading involves the simultaneous incorporation (and reading) of written text with music, and (4) learning in the context of a highly motivated social context such as music ensembles may lead to "heightened academic responsibility and performance" that may enhance reading achievement (p. 107).

Moreover Flynn's (1987) research indicates that the mental processing of L2 in children follows the same set of deep principles used in the acquisition of the L1, suggesting that similarities may exist between the mental processing of L1 and L2. Gee (1987) explains the similarities between learning a second language and learning music:

> For most of us, playing a musical instrument, or dancing, or using a second

language are skills we attained by some mixture of acquisition or learning. But it is a safe bet that, over the same amount of time, people are better at these activities if acquisition predominated during that time. The point can be made using second language as the example: most people aren't very good at attaining a second language in any very functional way through formal instruction in a classroom. That's why teaching grammar is not a very good way of getting people to control a language (p. 4).

Gee's theory of acquisition and learned literacy will be discussed in the final section of this literature review on constructivism. The similarities between language acquisition and music acquisition abound. As with constructivism, in second language acquisition, the focus should be on speaking before writing. Likewise, when acquiring music, the focus should be on sound before symbol.

Dance And Kinesthetics In Education

Anne Green Gilbert (2002, Introduction) describes her experience of using movement as the key to learning:

Spelling words by forming the letters with bodies, forming punctuation marks and expressing the feeling of sentences through movement, learning multiplication by moving in sets of threes and fours, discovering the difference between lunar and solar eclipses through planet dances, and choreographing our way across the Oregon Trail somehow made everyone equal. The gifted children discovered a new and exciting way to learn, the slower learners quickly became actively engaged and successful, the non-English speaking students could finally understand the curriculum through our new nonverbal approach. Instead of

dreading the long school day, we eagerly awaited our next movement experience. Attendance went way up; test scores rose substantially: there was laughter; racial tension dissipated (Gilbert, 2002).

Research such as Gilbert's suggests that dance and movement may improve student learning. Moreover, physiological evidence abounds for the importance of increasing the role of movement in learning (Jensen, 2001). Some studies indicate that a sensory-motor component can positively influence achievement in reading. Rose (1999), for example, examined a grade one program called "Basic Reading Through Dance", comparing children who were involved with the dance program with those children who had the regular reading program. At the end of three months, the students in the Basic Reading Through Dance program scored significantly higher than their peers on basic reading skills. These grade one students improved more in their ability to relate written consonants and vowels to their sounds, and to segment phonemes from spoken words, including nonsense words, compared to the control children. Furthermore, students in the "Learning Through the Arts National Assessment" (Upitis & Smithrim, 2003) indicated that, if they had their way, more time in school would be devoted to subjects involving the body and the arts. In Grade 6, 78% of the students wanted more gym, 65% wanted more art, 40% wanted more drama, and 30% wanted more dance. By contrast, only 25% wanted more science, 23% wanted more math, 19% wanted more social studies and 15% wanted more language arts (Upitis & Smithrim, 2003). These statistics are believable, but one has to wonder if the former subjects are 'fun' and the latter are 'work' as opposed to any influence that the former subjects might have on overall learning.

In another study on dance (Seham, 1997), this time with older students at the

National Dance Institute Jacques D'Amboise School, results showed significant improvements on all scores for cognitive learning against a control group that received no special program.

Based on the aforementioned studies, it is suggested that a case could be made for dance/kinesthetics in the core French program in order for students to gain a better ability to read, write, and speak French through movement in the classroom. Furthermore, in an interesting case study of two boys with behavioural disorders "Effects of a Movement Poetry Program on Creativity of Children with Behavioral Disorders" (1995), a 7 and a 10 year old were both able to develop a portfolio of poems written from movement, indicating that improvisational dance from a linguistic stimulus can generate original thoughts with a degree of fluency. Furthermore, both boys gained an interest in poetry, one gained social behavior skills, the other gained motor coordination skills, and both boys enjoyed the program. From this last study, one could speculate that while young boys with behavioural disorders were able to create original and fluent poetry through dance, perhaps then students in the core French classroom could also learn to generate original thoughts with a degree of fluency in spoken French through improvisational dance.

The physical body and the senses are at the base of all cognition (Merleau-Ponty, 1962) and yet as stated in Bresler's study (as cited in Bowman, 2004) there is far too little attention in schools to the body's role in learning. Bresler's study (as cited in Bowman, 2004) explains that as children get older, classroom practice includes less and less physical movement, handwork, and free movement about the classroom. Children have an instinctive urge to move. "Sit still" would not be such a common directive otherwise.

When children are involved physically in activity, they are engaged more fully.

In their LTTA (Learning Through the Arts) (2001, 2004) studies, Smithrim and Upitis found that students, teachers, and parents all voiced strong support for the importance of movement in the classroom. This is important to this study of core French language programs because the addition of dance/movement is another arts form that aids students to further express themselves.

Like Arts programs and the core French program, physical education programs have also been subject to cutbacks. Furthermore, like the core French program, after Grade nine, Ontario students are not required to take physical education courses, and most do not. According the Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance (CAHPERD), over the last decade or more, there has been a significant decline in the quality and quantity of school physical education being offered to our children. With a back-to-basics mentality predominant in our school system, physical education has fallen victim to cutbacks in time, resources, and qualified teachers. Most schools in Canada are not providing the recommended national standard of 150 minutes per week of physical education, or even the minimum requirements as set out by their own provincial curricula. (CAPHERD, 2005). With a focus on constructivism, students in the core French program would not be bound to the back-to-basics mentality of sitting in a desk doing worksheets. Rather, students could move about the room doing meaningful activities that promote language use.

Visual Arts In Education

In his book: "Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Social and Academic Development" (2002), James Catterall relates that unlike all other forms of art in education, the visual arts turn out to be quite unexplored territory. The researchers, compiling *Critical Links,* discuss the following studies on visual arts. These articles include:

1 Instruction In Visual Arts: Can It Help Children Learn To Read (2000);

2 The Arts, Language and Knowing: An Experimental Study of the Potential of the Visual Arts for Assessing Academic Learning by Language Minority Students (1997);

3 Investigating the Educational Impact and Potential of the Museum of Modern Art's Visual Thinking Curriculum: Final Report (1999); and

4 Reading is Seeing: Using Visual Response to Improve the Literary Reading of Reluctant Readers (1995).

The overall findings are that drawing is an effective communicator of learning in history and contributes to organization and persistence in writing; that training in visualization contributes to reading skills; that reasoning about visual art seems to transfer to reasoning about science and that instruction in visual art increases reading-readiness among preschoolers. These four studies lend weight to the argument that the visual arts add value to what and how students learn beyond specific subject matter attainment. Thus visual arts can be seen as an aid in communicating, organizing, reading, and reasoning, all of which are essential skills in learning a second language. Nevertheless, Wilson

(Critical Links, 2002) states:

> While it is important to understand the value that visual art can add to students'
> cognitive skills, it is just as important (if not more so) to know the how and why
> visual art contributes to learning, as well as the organizational and instructional
> conditions that allow arts learning to help students become more successful
> students. (p. 139).

In his book "The Arts and the Creation of Mind" (2002), Eisner discusses the role of the visual arts in the growth of mind: "Many of the most complex and subtle forms of thinking take place when students have an opportunity to work meaningfully in the arts" (Eisner, p. 49). Just what kind of thinking takes place through art is the essential question which Eisner deliberates. Eisner believes that fundamentally, (visual) artworks are about ideas:

> Work in art is typically directed by an idea that is realized in the material and
> through the form that the artist creates. These ideas can be large or small,
> important or trivial; they can reveal what has gone unseen, or they can put the
> familiar in a context in which it can be re-seen in a new and vital way. The artist
> can comment on or celebrate a slice of the world (p.51).

Eisner's description of visual arts as ideas may work well into the Core French program where students could learn to express themselves meaningfully in a variety of ways because what they would be saying would be based on their own ideas/creations. That is, after students create an original visual drawing or painting, they would then hopefully be able to describe their art in the French language. Also, Eisner relates that thinking in the visual arts can include aspects of the kinesthetic, the tactile, the auditory, and the verbal.

However, Eisner cites Dewey's seminal theory making it clear that thinking in art is not, in general, dependent on the mastery of rules and conventions and that the analogy with language is misleading. Dewey (1934) states:

> To think effectively in terms of relations of qualities is as severe a demand upon thought as to think in terms of symbols, verbal and mathematical. Indeed, since words are easily manipulated in mechanical ways, the production of a genuine work of art probably demands more intelligence than does much of the thinking that goes on among those who pride themselves on being 'intellectuals' (Eisner, p.15)

Eisner returns frequently to the influence of John Dewey and discusses various modes of thinking that overlap with other school subjects. However, Eisner addresses the very important issue of whether the arts should be integrated into other subject areas or remain a core subject on its own:

> Aesthetic qualities occur frequently in our daily life, but it is only in the arts that they are cultivated and consciously valued. Attention to them is required for both the creation of and the response to expressive forms. This is what distinguishes art from other subjects, and it is the central organizing idea that allows one to call art a discipline. The *aesthetic* constitutes the major goal of art education (Eisner, p.21)

Eisner insists on keeping art as a separate subject in the curriculum. He has consistently argued that attention to the aesthetic tends to be short-changed in an integrated curriculum.

In spite of Eisner's ideal of maintaining a visual arts program all on its own,

postmodern theorists endorse art education where art is contextualized, boundaries between domains are blurred, and emphasis is placed on content in relation of form (Efland, Freedman & Stuhr, 1996; Hutchens & Suggs, 1997; Clark, 1996). In his book "Art and Cognition: Integrating the Visual Arts in the Curriculum" (2002), Efland discusses the ways in which the arts overlap with other domains: "The visual arts display complex patterns of reference and thoughts, each work being a particular case where themes interact in ways that cannot be predicted....Artworks are about ideas that derive from social, cultural, and personal worlds and their complex overlapping with material from other subjects is their educational strength" (p.164). One of Efland's examples is the palace at Versailles, which can be seen as an exemplar of the French Baroque style and also as a symbol of the centralized authority of the French monarchy. Such works can be approached from diverse perspectives and lead the learner in several directions. "The understanding of a work of art", he says, "requires it to be grasped in relation to the social and cultural realms where it took form, and reciprocally...helps the learner comprehend the social and cultural worlds it mirrors" (p.166). Because of this, artworks can serve as attractive connecting points to school subjects such as core French.

Stafford (1999) examines the connection between mind and image from a visual culture perspective. She states that consciousness is essentially pictorial and argues that consciousness finds its truest expression in art:

> The visual arts, as especially high order forms of envisioning, make an elusive personal awareness substantially real in an external realization. They help us understand the myriad modes by which people endlessly modify and reuse elements available to them (p. 138).

Visual arts are a suggested benefit to students in the second language classroom because, as Vygotsky and Piaget conclude, children construct their own knowledge by forming new mental representations rather than reproducing knowledge fed to them (Black, 2005). Vygotsky, Piaget and the other constructivist thinkers are discussed in the next section.

Schools integrating the arts into the curriculum as part of a comprehensive reform strategy are documenting positive changes in the school environment and improved student performance (Deasy, 2002). Visual arts, kinesthetic learning, drama, and music are all beneficial to student learning in an abundance of ways. Six major types of benefits associated with the study of arts and student achievement include: 1) reading and language skills; 2) mathematics skills; 3) thinking skills; 4) social skills; 5) motivation to learn; and 6) positive school environment (Deasy, 2002).

The current state of the core French program is in dire straits. One reason is the students' disappointment in their inability to express themselves in French (Council of Atlantic Ministers of Education and Training, 2001-2002). With a constructivist core French classroom, students might be more motivated to speak French. Therefore the implementation of an arts program within the core French curriculum is suggested in order to revitalize the core French program while preserving the arts in public education.

The Constructivist Literacy Theory In The Second Language Classroom

Visual arts, dance, music, and drama interwoven into the core French program might help the students to make language learning more meaningful. This 'making meaning' is explained as constructivism by McCarty (1991):

Under the constructivist philosophy, knowledge develops out of an individual's

efforts to construct meaning out of experience. Discrete facts and skills become knowledge only when they take on personal meaning for the individual. Furthermore, with an emphasis on skills rather than meaning, students are deprived of the opportunity to gain pleasure from the act of reading itself. They are expected to be satisfied with extrinsic rewards for time-consuming, mind-numbing memorization of discrete bits of data (p.57).

Gardner (as cited in Brandt, 1993) suggests two models that could help schools make learning more authentic: children's museum-type programs and apprenticeships. Gardner discusses these programs:

I was searching for learning situations that minimize the kind of mindless, context-less learning that takes place in schools and maximize people's understanding of why they're doing things-by giving them opportunities to try things out in new ways. And I came up with these institutions, one that's very old and one that's very new (Gardner, 1993).

Both museums and apprenticeships are founded on the principles of constructivism. The learner is not expected to memorize information but interact meaningfully with his/her environment in order to internalize new knowledge. With apprenticeship programs, students have a mentor and they must 'make' or 'do' everything that they are learning. For example, in a luthiery apprenticeship, the student observes the master luthier, listens to instruction and knowledge and then, incrementally, through hands-on practice, the apprentice will make his or her own musical instrument. In an apprenticeship environment, the learning is constructed meaning. Similarly, in a science museum, students are expected to move about the many rooms and observe, touch, experiment or

participate. Gardner (as cited in Brandt, 1993) describes the constructivist learning environment of a museum: "There are actual experiments that lead students to draw conclusions about science and it does not matter the first or the second time they do something whether they have any idea as to what the 'right' physical principle is: they're getting familiar with the phenomena in a way that fits their tempo, learning style, profile of intelligences....When you've encountered an idea in your own way and brought your own thinking to bear, the idea becomes much more a part of you" (p. 6).

Like in apprenticeships and museum settings, students acquiring a new language should do so at their own pace through meaningful experience. It is important to mention here that the process of language learning is distinguished between *acquired language* and *learned language*; however, it is the acquired language learning which coincides with the constructivist learning theory. Therefore, literacy is described as the process used to acquire and express meaning in symbolic form, and so is appropriately applied to visual and performing art forms (Boyer, 1993; Eisner, 2002). Bruner and Freire have been identified by some researchers as key individuals in the development of educational constructivism as we know it today (Fogarty, 1999; Milbrandt, Felts, Richards & Abghari, 2004). Other researchers contend that John Dewey, Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky have played more critical roles in the development of this theory (Abdal-Haqq, 1998; Freedman, 2003; Fogarty, 1999; Kozma, 2003; Prater, 2001). Freedman (2003) points to the roots of constructivism in Dewey's pragmatic approach to bringing everyday life experiences into the classroom. Dewey coined the term "direct living" in which learners participate in hands-on workshops, developing skills and knowledge by means of experiences and resources provided by teachers. Particularly important for Dewey was

the provision of concrete situations in authentic, practical learning situations. Students

acquired and expressed their knowledge through collaboration and creativity. Therefore

arts education and constructivism are a compatible fit as Black (2005) states:

"Incorporating constructivist practices into arts classrooms is by no means a great leap:

Arts educators have often practiced project-driven, problem solving, student-centred

approaches, particularly when designing studio art curricula. Today, it is common

practice for teachers to adopt the role of *bricoleur* (a "do-it-yourselfer"). They mix

teaching styles and teaching content, often covering the discipline-based art education

(DBAE) areas of art history, art criticism, aesthetics, and studio production. Content is

delivered through: demonstrations; discussion; teacher, class, or peer critiques; and

lectures" (p. 25). Black further associates art education with constructivism:

> This is in addition to the art educator carefully preparing to teach and challenge
>
> students with a student-centred, studio-based assignment on, for example,
>
> expressionism using acrylic paint for the portraiture study, or the way in which
>
> light can be manipulated and distorted in watercolour landscape studies using
>
> three-dimensional perspective. This way of proceeding is more oriented to a
>
> constructivist approach in which the educator sets up a challenging studio
>
> assignment which leaves latitude for individuals to seek knowledge, self-express,
>
> document process, and finally make a diverse work of art differing from those
>
> done by others in the class (p. 25).

Essentially, Black relates that teaching the arts *is* constructivism. Black describes the

constructivist educator:

> The constructivist educator is an altered being. Taking into consideration the

nature of the constructivist approach to learning, the role of the teacher has
changed in constructivist classrooms. No longer is the educator believed to be *the
sage on the stage,* lecturing and imparting age-old truths onto blank slates. There
are many words to describe this new Piagetian role for teachers: *guide, manager,
co-explorer,* or *facilitator,* providing stimulating environments in which rich
resources are at students' disposal (p.27).

What Dewey, Vygotsky, and Piaget have in common is the belief that people learn by
internalizing knowledge and building mental constructions. This is quite different than
the traditional emphasis on rote learning, imitation, repetition, memorization of facts, and
alleged truths emerging from the expert teacher. For example, in the "State of French
Second Language in Canada, 2004," there were a number of complaints when students
were asked what they liked least about their elementary core French classes:

Confusing grammar, conjugation of verbs, drills and repetition, boring classes, a lack of
discipline in the classes, memorizing vocabulary lists and grammatical rules. Some
students regretted the lack of speaking practice, while an equal number thought they had
learned nothing. Other dislikes included a poor teacher, the difficulty of the subject, too
much writing, translations, textbooks, and too much review (p.39).

Furthermore, when asked what they disliked about the secondary core French program, the
most frequent complaint was about grammar: "students disliked memorizing and being drilled
on verb conjugations and learning grammatical rules" (p. 40). Moreover, of the secondary core
French program:

Many students found it difficult, confusing, boring, and the frequent reviews to be
tedious. Other complaints, in the order of frequency mentioned, were a lack of speaking

practice, the boring classes, the teacher, the compositions, the constant repetition, having little or uninteresting reading material, having no listening comprehension exercises, and being given too much review. Other complaints were a dislike of the textbook, the lack of useful vocabulary, a poor class attitude and lack of discipline, homework, split grades, poor marks, dialogues and translations. A few found the program to be too difficult, while others found it was not challenging enough (p.40).

As these complaints suggest, it is rather obvious that the students were taught core French with traditional instruction. In constructivist learning environments, learners must:

a. Compile, reject, and accept information;

b. Categorize, analyze, and ruminate on the knowledge provided; and

c. Create and comment upon knowledge formed from individualized understandings.

The constructivist literacy theory with its focus on 'hands-on' learning lends itself to acquisition based learning over the more traditional 'learned' literacy approach. Gee (1987) in his seminal research gives the following description of literacy:

> Literacy is control of secondary uses of language. Any discourse (primary or secondary) is for most people most of the time only mastered through acquisition, not learning. Thus, literacy is mastered through acquisition, not learning, that is, it requires exposure to models in natural, meaningful, and functional settings, and teaching is not liable to be very successful ~it may even get in the way. Time spent on learning and not acquisition is time not well spent if the goal is mastery of performance (p. 25).

Here, Gee raises an important factor for second language educators to consider: if the ultimate goal for core FSL teachers is to have students speak French or gain functional

language knowledge, they must remember that acquisition is good for performance, learning is good for meta-level knowledge" (Scribner & Cole, 1981). In the core French program, studies show that most students do not come out of the program with functional language knowledge. For example the State of French Second Language Canada study (2004) concluded that even students who had completed Grade 12 or OAC core French courses identified speaking as an area of difficulty (State of French Second Language Canada, 2004). According to the same study, when analyzing student attrition from the core French program, the net loss of students from compulsory core French Grade nine to the optional core French Grade 12 is 94.4%. That means, less that 10% of students continue on with the core French program to Grade 12. In fact, the net loss from the compulsory Grade nine course to the optional Grade ten course is 80%. Furthermore, students in this same study reported a number of specific speaking difficulties: lack of vocabulary, lack of practice, uncertainty about grammatical rules, lack of confidence, and concerns about pronunciation or accents (State of French Second Language Canada, 2004, p.41).

Teaching the core French language program through the arts based on principles of constructivism offers an opportunity for students to actually acquire spoken French rather than focusing on grammar rules, for example. Moreover, Richardson (1998) shares that "while rules may be useful in the pragmatic sense, they often make more sense once students have already acquired the competence that the rules have been designed to portray" (Richardson, 1998 p. 123).

Through the arts, students may gain a more functional language knowledge in the core French program because as Krashen (1981) describes, they would be acquiring the

language through meaningful experience: "Language *acquisition* is very similar to the process children use in acquiring first and second languages. It requires meaningful interaction in the target language, natural communication, in which speakers are concerned not with the form of their utterances but with the messages they are conveying and understanding." (p. 1). Krashen's seminal research (1981) explains attitudinal factors relating to second language acquisition that perform one or both of two functions:

First, they will be factors that *encourage intake*. Others have said this before, for informal language contexts" (Gardner, Smythe, Clement, and Gliksman, 1976, p. 200) (see also Oller's Hypothesis 6 in Oller, 1977). They are simply factors that encourage acquirers to communicate with speakers of the target language, and thereby obtain the necessary input, or intake, for language acquisition. Second, attitudinal factors relating to acquisition will be those that enable the performer to utilize the language heard for acquisition. Simply hearing a second language with understanding appears to be necessary but is not sufficient for acquisition to take place. The acquirer must not only understand the input but must also, in a sense, be "open" to it. (p. 22).

In his study investigating the teaching of reading, Wray (1997) agrees with Krashen stating that children need to be taught the technicalities of reading, but these must be set into a context of meaning. Although Wray discusses only reading, it must be understood that oral communication is the first step toward gaining reading or writing skills: "The development of strong oral communication skills provides the foundation for students to read and write effectively" (Ontario Core French curriculum, 1999, p. 1). Nevertheless it is important to keep in mind that in L1 programs, there is no language barrier but in L2 programs there is. Generally, in L1 programs students acquire the

spoken language first and then learning to read and write takes place. Thus reading and writing are only introduced once students already know how to speak the language. On the other hand, in L2 programs such as core French, generally, students have been taught language rules and technicalities before speaking abilities are fully developed. Thus it is important to recognize that even if students are encouraged to express themselves due to exposure to the arts, they will not be able to do so unless they have the language skills that allow them to do so in French (Flewelling, J. Personal communication, 2006). However, Gee (1987) states the importance of also keeping in mind the findings of Scollon & Scollon 1981 and Heath, 1983: "That some cultures highly value acquisition and so tend simply to expose children to adults modeling some activity and eventually the child picks it up as a gestalt, rather than as a series of analytic bits. Other cultural groups highly value teaching and thus break down what is to be mastered into sequential steps and analytic parts and engage in explicit explanation" (p. 3). With its current focus on the development of oral communication, it is suggested that the core French program lean toward the acquisition model so as not to overwhelm students with analytic bits. Furthermore, since the federal government in their "Action Plan for Official Languages" (2004) made a government policy to double the population of secondary student graduates with a functional knowledge of their second official language by 2013 (Canadian Parents for French, 2004), one way to increase student enrolment might be by emphasising oral communication through constructivism and teaching through the arts. This would thereby de-emphasise error correction and explicit teaching of rules that are not relevant to language acquisition (Brown and Hanlon, 1970; Brown, Cazden, and Bellugi, 1973). Nevertheless the re-implementation of the arts as outlined in the United

State's *No Child Left Behind Act* (2001) is taking its time because, being over 1000 pages

of legislature, two-thirds of Americans surveyed in 2004 reported they knew "very little"

or "nothing at all" about NCLA (Ruppert, 2006). Moreover, in her study "Status of

Elementary Art Education: 1997-2004", Chapman (2004) says:

> Art educators are caught in a Catch 22 environment of policy making. On the one
>
> hand, standards-based reforms offer some promise of raising awareness of the arts
>
> as a worthy domain of study. On the other hand, since the *No Child Left Behind*
>
> *Act of 2001 (NCLB),* the law does little to support education in the arts, or foreign
>
> language, or the humanities and social studies…these neglected subjects have
>
> been called the "the lost curriculum" by the Council of Chief State of School
>
> Officers (CCSSO, 2002) and cited in a discussion of the 'atrophied curriculum'
>
> by the Council on Basic Education (p. 2).

Chapman further relates that these growing concerns suggest that extraordinary

leadership may be necessary to retain and strengthen school-based studies in art in the

next decade (National Art Education Association [NAEA], 2003a; NAEA, 2003b). The

integration of the 'lost arts' into the core French program is a suggested way to

regenerate and nourish the arts as well as the core French program in Canada.

A look at student attitudes towards the arts also helps in advocating for an arts-

based curriculum. In their study "Learning through the Arts: French Immersion and First

Language Schools: Final Report," when Upitis et. al. (2004) asked students in focus

groups if they would like more music, drama or arts in schools, there was a resounding

'yes.' This question elicited the most enthusiasm of any question in the focus group

interviews. These Grade three students reported theatre and dance most frequently as

desired arts subjects. Students' reasons for wanting more arts were varied. Some students wanted more arts because they loved the arts "J'adore le théâtre, la musique." Several students wanted more arts because they were "plus actif."(more active.) Other students wanted more arts because it got them away from their regular school work: "Sortir de la classe pour pas faire les travaux" (To leave the classroom to avoid doing class work). All of the students in this study believed it was important to have music, drama and the visual arts at school. One student noted that the arts were a good way to learn other languages. She stated: "on devra faire ça plus souvent parce que on peut parfois en théâtre apprendre de nouvelle langues comme l'espagnol" (We should do dramatic theatre more often because when we do drama we learn new languages such as Spanish).

From this LTTA study as well as from all of the aforementioned studies, it is suggested that teaching French through the arts may be an optimal solution for encouraging students to enjoy learning to speak French while mastering their arts skills. Moreover, creativity, like learning, is rooted in finding or making connections (Marshall, 2005). Recognition of this correlation between creativity and learning is not new. Koestler (1990) believed that creative ideas are generated through bisociation or the juxtaposition (or connection) of previously unassociated entities. These bisociative pairings are unexpected, often dissonant, and their dissonance compels the mind to build a bridge between them in imaginative ways. It therefore seems likely that a bisociative pairing between the arts and the core French program could greatly benefit students in their second language development.

In Western history, it was Aristotle who attempted to resolve an apparent conflict

between the arts and philosophy - a relationship believed to be invalid by Plato. Aristotle articulated "three kinds of thought: knowing (theoria), doing (praxis), and making (poesis), the latter including poetry as well as other productive arts" (Sullivan, 2000, p.1). In more recent times, Dewey's work suggests that an aesthetic experience "involves a clear continuity between doings and undergoings; the effort integrates intellect, feeling and practical functions; and the overall result is a kind of consummation pervaded by meaning, a predominant emotion, and practical resolution" (Sullivan, 2000, p.1). For Dewey, works of art held the most promise for exemplifying all of these qualities and could provide an aesthetic experience. In the "State of French Second Language Canada" 2004 study, some of the future recommendations for the core French program embrace Aristotle's philosophy as well as both the constructivist theory and the language acquisition theory:

1   Revamp FSL courses so they are more 'real' for students and better meet their
     needs.

2   Devise ways to make the teaching of grammar more intellectually challenging and
     interesting instead of relying on verb drills and memorization of rules

3   Reassess both elementary and secondary core French programs to provide more
     speaking and listening comprehension practice.

4   Use different media to extend learning beyond the classroom.

5   Provide meaningful cultural exchanges (p. 42).

Looking at the literature, learning through the arts is a pedagogical trend in Canada as well as in the United States. However, slow progression of the

implementation of arts programs in schools is due to insufficient funding along with a lack of public awareness. Also it has not been established whether arts should be taught as a subject all on its own or if the arts should be implemented across the curriculum. In any case, the teaching of the core French program via arts-based activities would be accomplishing two objectives with a single action.

"Always among the highest expression of every culture, the arts teach us much about every historical period through its literature, visual arts, music, dance, and drama. Today it is recognized that to be truly well educated one must not only learn to appreciate the arts, but must have rich opportunities to actively participate in creative work. The arts are languages that most people speak, cutting through individual differences in culture, educational background, and ability. They can bring every subject to life and turn abstractions into concrete reality" (New Horizons for Learning, 2006). Learning through the arts is based on principles of constructivism. Constructivism is described as knowledge that is constructed by an individual through his or her own experience. The constructivist approach to learning emphasizes authentic, challenging projects that include students, teachers and experts in the learning community. Learning through the arts often results in greater academic achievement and higher test scores along with the non-academic benefits of self-esteem, motivation, and improved attitudes toward learning. This study advocates learning to speak French in Ontario's core French program via arts-based activities.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH AND METHODOLOGY

Research Questions

The following research questions were investigated:

1. What attitudes do core FSL students have toward French second language learning?

2. How do students feel about the core FSL program with a focus on an arts-based curriculum?

3. In which arts-based language activities did students tend to speak more French?

Ethical Clearance

Ethical clearance to conduct the research was received from The University of Windsor and from the participating school board and principal of the school, as required. Consent forms were distributed to the parents/guardians of all children taking part in the research. Furthermore, assent forms were distributed to each student.

Research Site and Selection of Sample

The selected school was an inner-city public high school in Windsor, Ontario. This school was purposefully selected because the core French teacher taught Grade nine applied level classes using arts-based activities and was willing to collaborate with the researcher. Applied level Grade nine students were chosen over academic level students because these are the students most at risk for not continuing on with the core French program after Grade nine. At the start of the study, it was generally thought that these students were taking French because they had to. At the end of the study, however, it was found that the majority of students were taking French because they chose to. Most schools do not offer an applied level grade ten core French course. For these reasons, the grade nine applied students were deemed as having valuable input for this study. The

sample of 18 students came from one applied level grade nine core French class.

Teaching strategies

For one core French grade nine applied level class, I developed twelve music/movement/drama/arts/language interdisciplinary lesson plans in collaboration with a grade nine core French as a second language teacher. The lessons were team taught by the classroom teacher and me every day for period of two and a half weeks.

I believe in constructivist 'hands-on' activities for the students. Consequently, I believe in hands on research for researchers. For this study, I found it imperative to conduct action research in order to fully experience the influence of the arts on student attitudes toward the core French program. Action research is valuable to teacher-researchers because it gives teachers the skills needed to work on problems specific to their classrooms and their schools. By using an actual research procedure, researching teachers can resolve their own teaching challenges. They learn how to ask a focusing question, define terms, collect relevant data, use an analysis process that rules out bias, and includes methods that yield validity and reliability. The findings become immediately applicable to their individual situations.

The main pioneer of action research, Kurt Lewin, associated the idea of action research with the idea of doing experiments, albeit in the field rather than in the laboratory. He found that an action research experiment must not only express theory but it must express theory in such a way that the results of the experiment can be fed directly back to the theory (Lewin et al. 1939). For this to be possible, the experiment must be an expression of the theory in such a way that there is a one-to-one relationship between the concepts of the theory and the variables of the experiment. In this way action research

can be described as a theory expressed in action. Most proponents of action research argue that theory alone has little power to create change and that there is a need for more complex interplay between theory and practice. (Reason et al, 2001). For this study, constructivism and action research are complimentary because both approaches are rooted in the act of doing rather than in the act of telling.

Throughout the interdisciplinary learning experience, teacher/researcher roles were specified. Even though both taught according to their area of expertise, they shared the leadership of the activities. "In fact, I (once a music teacher and artist), was responsible for leading the musical and visual art parts of the language/arts activities. On the other hand, the Grade nine core French teacher who has experience in stage performance, led the students in the drama and presentation activities as well as the music activities.

French language curriculum objectives pertaining to oral and written comprehension, reading, writing, vocabulary, grammar, and oral and written composition were covered during the study.

Research Perspective

Since the study was developed as a collaborative effort between the core French teacher and the researcher, a qualitative collaborative research design was chosen where both the classroom teacher and the researcher were reflective partners in the co-construction of knowledge pertaining to educational practice (Cole & Knowles 1993; Davidson, Wasser & Bresler, 1996; Desgagne, 1997; Schon, 1983, 1987, 1994). This type of research values the competency of the actor-practitioner as a key informant of the investigation (Giddens, 1987). Collaborative research also has dual outcomes, thus, is

beneficial to both the researcher and the practitioner. It unites both research goals (production of knowledge) and educational goals (professional development and reflective opportunities for the teacher to improve his/her practice). In this study, it was anticipated that the collaborative nature of the initiative would provide the teacher with professional development through the modeling by the researcher of ways to incorporate more arts into the core French language curriculum.

Qualitative research in education considers the researcher's viewpoint as a crucial factor and as an important variable of the research (Hara, 1995). Hara (1995) further noted that a qualitative research approach in education is able to encompass interpersonal, social, and cultural contexts of education more fully than a quantitative approach.

Bogden and Biklen (2003) define qualitative research as having five features: naturalistic; descriptive data; concern with process; inductive; and meaning. This research included the features that define qualitative research. It was naturalistic to the extent that I participated in natural conversations with students whom I taught and I collected data from on location, in the classroom. The data was descriptive, taking the form of words, not numbers. The research was concerned with process because it focused on how students developed their attitudes toward learning the French language. The research was inductive because it was through the exploration of this topic that important themes emerged. Finally, the research was also interested in meaning or how students made sense of learning French through 'hands on' artistic activities including details about their assumptions, feelings and past experiences. Furthermore, this study was highly concerned with meaning because it was based on the principles of

constructivism or how students learned through meaningful experience.

A case study is a detailed examination of one particular setting, a single participant, or one particular event (Stake, 2004). Case studies facilitate the investigation of complex social phenomena. Case studies are a particularly appealing design for applied fields of study such as education (Bogdan & Bilken, 2003). In this research, a case study was the most appropriate choice because it would result in a rich account of how grade nine applied level students perceive learning French as a second language through the arts.

Data Collection Strategies

Merriam (1988) and Marshall and Rossman (1989) contend that data collection and data analysis must be a simultaneous process in qualitative research (Cresswell, 2003, p. 203). In this study, data was collected using the principles of action research - "The systematic collection of information that is designed to bring about social change" (Bogdan and Biklen , 1992, p. 223). An emerging theme design using qualitative methods of data collection and analysis was used to address the research concerns of this study (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Eisenhart & Howe, 1992; Goetz & LeCompte, 1984; Robson, 1993). Emerging themes were the observations that arose as the study progressed.

The researcher's involvement in the study provided for a rich and wide-ranging description of the intervention. It is through qualitative methodology that rich classroom-based stories can be told. These stories are anchored in real, local meaning and experience, and, over the last several decades, have earned and increasingly legitimate place in scholars' study of educational phenomena. The three fundamental data collection

methods in qualitative research are: (1) interview, (2) participant observation, and (3) document analysis. These three methods provide multiple data sources for the telling of disciplined stories (Pugach, 2001).

Data was collected through multiple sources to include interview, observations and document analysis (Cresswell, 2003).

1. Focus group interviews of 3-4 students per group were conducted with the 18 students at the end of the intervention (Appendix A).

2. A questionnaire for each individual participant was also developed for this study in order to address the research questions (Appendix B).

3. Participant observation was conducted throughout the study by both the researcher and the regular classroom teacher. The researcher and classroom teacher communicated and commented daily via email. They also held discussions before, during, and after each lesson. Only the researcher took notes of these personal communications.

4. Informal interviews were held with the classroom teacher.

5. A personal journal was kept by the researcher.

Both the interviews and questionnaires were reviewed and coded by the researcher only.

Data were analysed through processes of constant comparison and triangulation. In constant comparison newly gathered data are continually compared with previously collected data and its coding in order to refine the development of theoretical categories. The purpose is to test emerging ideas that might take the research in new and fruitful directions (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss, 1987). Different data sources of information

were triangulated by examining evidence from the different sources and using it to build

a coherent justification for themes (Cresswell, 2003).

The questionnaire, designed to identify student attitudes toward learning French,

was administered at the end of the intervention to all students who agreed to participate in

the study (n=18).

Activities

Twelve music/visual arts/ drama/movement/language interdisciplinary lesson

plans were developed by the researcher in collaboration with a grade nine applied core

French as a second language teacher. The lessons were team-taught by the researcher

and the classroom teacher every day for a period of two and a half weeks. Specific

learning objectives were identified for both French and the arts (music/ movement/ visual

arts/ drama). Playing drums, singing, drawing, painting, active listening, acting,

chanting, pantomime, composition, food making and tasting were the activities chosen to

reinforce concepts in both French and in the arts. The twelve-day arts intervention lesson

plans are included. (Appendix A).

CHAPTER 1V

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Many themes were identified during the course of the study and they will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

The findings of this study illustrate that the interdisciplinary (French, arts) pedagogical strategies planned and developed by the teacher and the researcher and utilized during the intervention contributed to the success of the teaching as well as the student attitudes and motivation.

The lesson plans were developed with a constructivist approach to learning emphasizing a student-centred pedagogy where students build on previous learning experiences and discover new learning (Heuwinkel, 1996). Thus the teacher and the researcher prepared the learning environment to ensure independent learning and the use of meta-cognition skills. The following comment by the classroom teacher reflects this learning environment: "You are giving the students a lot of cool opportunities to put themselves into their learning, and it seems to be working".

As the study progressed, new themes and data emerged and will be discussed here through a detailed description of the setting followed by analysis of the data for themes or issues (Cresswell, 2003). During data analysis the data was organized categorically and chronologically, reviewed repeatedly, and continually coded. Moreover, using the narrative approach in descriptive case studies involves describing how the narrative outcome will be compared with theories and the general literature on the topic. (Cresswell, 2003). Furthermore, Cresswell states "A popular approach is to include more

literature at the end of a qualitative study than at the beginning" (p. 46). Therefore, comparisons with other research will be made throughout the narrative (Cresswell, 2003) in addition to the separate literature review at the beginning of the study.

Activities chosen to enhance student learning seemed to be of interest to all participants. Students, during informal (focus group) interviews and formal interviews (questionnaire), shared that they loved the poster project best: a group work activity where they had to choose a song of their choice, in English, and illustrate the song's meaning in a poster and then present the song and poster using a list of French descriptive words. One strong student said that the element that stimulated her most during this interdisciplinary arts/French intervention was that the ideas used in the poster presentation and other creative activities came from them. One student wrote: "It was fun presenting our song because we got to decide the music and create a cool poster." Another student wrote: "I liked it because it was 'hands-on' and not so concerned with writing, the words were also on the board for us to use."

Yet another student described the poster-project as his favourite activity because: "It was something we cared about."

Next in popularity among the activities planned for the students was the self-portrait painting/ drawing activity. Students were asked to first paint themselves in a Picasso style and then again in a realistic style. They then had to present their artwork using newly acquired art terms in French. Because the self-portrait required that I photograph each student a few days before so that each participant had a picture of him/herself, I noticed a much stronger rapport with the students after this. Furthermore, students from this day forward were more responsive. In fact, I received the five

unreturned consent forms the very next day, thus showing the students' enthusiasm and willingness to actively participate in the study. When I asked the classroom teacher: "How are the students' attitudes and behaviour toward this activity?" he said: "You have no idea! I've never seen these students respond so positively all semester. I was counting on major discipline problems, but I was wrong!"

The teacher indicated that generally his students do not respond as eagerly as they did and that the fact that there was no resistance from the students said a lot about the success of the intervention. Of one particular female student who walked in every morning saying: "Bonjour Monsieur, Bonjour Madame" the classroom teacher said: "Unbelievable, she has not even attempted to utter a single French word all semester until now."

Data showed that the students made the greatest effort to speak French during the skit activity "How to Plan a Surprise Party." When asked why, one student commented: "Because we had the words to read from, giving us confidence to use the language and then making the small changes was no big deal." Another student commented: "When you and our teacher presented the skit, you were hilarious. It was like a Saturday Night Live skit, we wanted to try too." During this drama skit, students were asked to change/ improvise the words thereby eliciting creative composition. The students were very comfortable with their improvisations after listening and seeing the skit performed only once before. According to observational data, students enjoyed themselves while practising their lines. All of the data showed that the compositional activities (poster/song and visual art, drama and music activities) were favoured by the grade nine students.

Surprisingly, in another short skit "Goldilocks and the Three Bears," students were less enthusiastic. Students were given the script and listened to the play twice before being asked to perform. Observational data showed many male students snickering. One student said: "Miss, come on, are you serious? This is a little kid's play! I don't wanna be Baby Bear." It was observed that two groups of students thought the play to be funny and presented their skit very well, while others (mostly boys) found it to be too juvenile and were not able to present at all. This particular lesson was also the only class where management was an issue due to some of the boys' decision not to participate.

It is important to keep in mind that this Wendy Maxwell play is specifically designed for elementary level students: mainly for the primary/junior level. It was probably not the best choice to use with secondary students. The researcher chose this play because of the students' limited language knowledge. The ease of this junior level play allowed students to comprehend the language immediately and thus use the language immediately in small group presentations. Furthermore, with class being only 40 minutes a day, a more advanced play would have to have been studied for over a week's time in order for students to become familiar with the language. It was important not to rush the students through a more challenging play, since as Gardner (1993) states: "The greatest enemy of understanding is coverage. As long as you are determined to cover everything, you actually ensure that most kids are not going to understand. You've got to take enough time to get kids deeply involved in something so they can think about it in lots of different ways and apply it" (p. 7). From this activity, it was noted that students were more enthusiastic and motivated to learn when presented with a play they could relate to.

Many participants spoke highly of the "Amazing Race" game where students worked as a small team and raced around the classroom to get through various French activity centres: One male student remarked: "I liked running around the classroom trying to win. It was fun! It's better than sitting and doing verbs". The other four students in this focus group all concurred: "Yeah".

Yet another favourite activity was the "Painting Under the Desks Like Michelangelo" activity. On almost all of the questionnaires, students made mention of this activity. Students had to lie on the floor on their backs and paint an image with their hands using water-colour in order to mimic Michelangelo and the Sistine Chapel. Some of the observational data during this activity were: "Miss, the water-colour paint is dripping on my face, and my arms are tired. This guy was crazy!" As students reacted so candidly, I reminded them to try again in French. One student said: "*Michelle-ange* est cool".

It was observed by the classroom teacher and me that all the students enjoyed the activity and tried their best in their painting and in their presentation of their painting. In the focus groups, more comments were made about this activity: "You had us doing things that are not traditionally done in French class;" "It was fun because there wasn't an emphasis on writing;" and "I liked seeing the final results, everyone's (hands) were so different, it was cool." It was observed by both the classroom teacher and me that the students were proud of their paintings, they therefore made a better effort to speak French during the presentations of their 'masterpieces.'

On the final day of the study, the participants learned about the culinary arts. Students were taught to prepare an hors d'oeuvre. Student responses showed that all

students made some mention of making food as one of their favourite activities during the intervention. It was observed that students made a good effort to present their hors d'oeuvres with precise pronunciation. Data also showed that toward the end of the intervention, students were more willing to take risks to speak French with better intonation, fluency and precision. One focus group related: "We were having fun with food, we were not afraid to be silly and try on a French accent."

Learning was identified in French, music, art and drama and students were able to make connections among these subject areas. Students learned how to prepare and say all of the steps in the preparation process of an hors d'oeuvre in French. Students learned to distinguish abstract art from realist art and could make comparisons between these art forms using the French language. Furthermore students learned to draw and paint in these different styles and could present a tableau to their peers using the French language. Students also learned to distinguish different rhythm patterns. In groups, students created a rhythm and described the rhythm to the class, all in French. Students learned to describe a variety of songs through illustrations and the French language. Moreover, students learned new vocabulary by acting out short skits and short plays. Evidence of students learning through arts was also apparent in the 'Amazing Race' game, where students, in groups, had to move about the room and complete a variety of arts-based activities in hopes to win a race. The arts-based activities were a review of past activities learned in the past 3 weeks. The speed and ease which students demonstrated in this game revealed that the students did indeed internalize new knowledge via arts-based instruction.

From the beginning to the end of the study, all data indicated that students were

learning and using the French language. Students composed short sentences, learned new vocabulary, applied rules of grammar, spoke and read with ease and comprehension and deepened those skills as the study unfolded. In fact, after almost three weeks, both the classroom teacher and I noticed that:

1   Students gained skills and confidence in oral and aural French skills.

2   Students were motivated to try new activities.

3   Overall student class participation increased.

4   Students came to class on time.

5   There were noticeably fewer behavioural problems.

The classroom teacher commented: "Very well rounded educational project."

At the end of the study, during the focus group interviews, one student commented: "Miss, you had us doing so much! Normally, it would have taken us much longer to complete just one of those projects." Students, during the French learning process, also demonstrated skills in drawing, painting, rhythm as well as drama. Moreover, students were able to make connections between arts and language as a means of communication, for example describing a song using French adjectives.

Results and Discussion of Music in the Core French Class:

In the African drumming music lesson, most students were able to improvise and compose short rhythmic patterns. Many students were observed to have the ability to play with rhythmic accuracy and most were able to lead their classmates in French in a rhythm using the left and right hands. Students were observed to work well in groups and chose rhythms from songs they knew.

After selecting their own music and bringing it in for the class to hear, students

were able to describe songs using a list of French adjectives. Students then translated the song and descriptive adjectives into a poster drawing. When asked to describe the poster to the class, it was observed that some students had difficulty expressing themselves solely in French because their creative ideas were beyond their ability to express themselves in French. Nonetheless, the classroom teacher testified that the learning outcomes of these two French/music projects extended beyond his personal expectations.

In the lesson plan about Acadians, I asked the students to sing along with an old Acadian folk song. It was observed that all the students made an effort to sing along while I played the guitar. It was also observed that each time I picked up the guitar, the students were mesmerized and really focused. This was also seen the day before when I played two very different guitar songs which students described using their music adjective lists. It was observed that once the students saw me playing them guitar songs, they responded positively and all made a very good effort to use spoken French to describe the songs in terms of feeling, mood, and colour.

Results and Discussion of Visual Art in the Core French Class

In visual art, almost all the students were able to describe their hand painting and self-portrait paintings and drawings using appropriate art terminology. The classroom teacher observed that students were trying their best and admitted: "I had no idea that he (a student) was such an (visual) artist".

One student commented on his questionnaire that he liked the French through the arts classes because: "We could just relax." When I first read this comment, I was alarmed. However, after seeing the name of the participant, I realised that this student felt quite at ease with the curriculum during the intervention and perhaps did not realise that he was

learning. This same student was observed to have increased his participation during class activities and his behaviour was much improved as noted by the classroom teacher. At first he appeared as one of the class clowns, yet in the end he became one of the class artists.

All the students wrote on their questionnaires that they wished French class could be taught through the arts (music, visual arts, and drama). When asked why they liked learning French through the arts, the majority of students, in focus groups, answered with the following comments: "Fun"; "No textbooks"; "Doing arts keeps our attention"; "Hands-on"; "There's no boring writing"; and "Oral focus." Students were then asked to remember and describe their favourite past experience in French class in elementary school. Again, unanimously, the answers were all hands-on experiences where students were actively involved in arts based activities: "Christmas French play"; "Making sculptures outside in the snow"; "Outside time during French"; "Detective game"; "Etienne concert"; "Songs"; "Picnics"; "Assembly about France"; "Puppets"; "Food"; and "Bingo".

It was observed that after hanging all the art on the walls, students lingered longer in class after the bell in order to observe the paintings and brag to the incoming class about their work. Students were proud of their work and made very admirable efforts when describing their work in French. Students were able to discuss Picasso and Degas in relation to abstract and realist art and could place them in their respective historical periods. Students, during the learning process, also demonstrated skills in drawing and could make connections between art and French as a means of communication. When asked what they learned from the visual art activities, data revealed that over half of the

students wrote that they learned about abstract art. Participants were found to be quite limited in their descriptions of what they thought they learned, however, observational data suggested that during the class presentations, students used the target vocabulary when describing their art. Elliot Eisner (2002) relates the benefits of visual arts in learning:

> Work in art is typically directed by an idea that is realized in the material and through the form that the artist creates. These ideas can be large or small, important or trivial; they can reveal what has gone unseen, or they can put the familiar in a context in which it can be re-seen in a new and vital way. The artist can comment on or celebrate a slice of the world…(p.51)

Results and Discussion of Drama in the Core French Class

Dramatic oral expression is a form of creative drama, an improvisational, process-centred, non-exhibitional form in which participants imagine, enact, and reflect upon human experience (Davis & Behm, 1978).

During the "Planning a Surprise Party" drama skit, students worked in pairs to plan a party over the telephone. Students improvised many lines so as to make the skit more meaningful to their personal lives. For this activity students made many choices - from whom to invite to what music would be played. It was observed by both the classroom teacher and me that students made a much greater effort to speak French through this activity because they had the script to read from. Data revealed that this activity elicited the greatest amount of spoken French. When I asked the students why this might be, most students commented:

"Because it was something we would write, we felt more confident."

Yet another student observed in the focus group: "Getting up and acting is so much more fun than sitting in our desks doing work."

According to Courtney's (1985) seminal research on drama in education: "An artist, in this case the reader as performing artist, is one who 'discovers new ways of knowing using innovative methods to explore meaning' and 'focuses on the mental processes of imagining, seeing possibilities and then expressing them in action" (p.1). It was observed that students did, in fact, create much of their own dialogue. It was also observed that students felt very comfortable performing this skit because they could relate the experience to their own personal lives.

When asked to explain why drama helps to use the French language, some replies were: "Skits can happen in real life, and when you've acted it out, it'll come easier"; "Yeah, because what good is a word when you don't know what it means"; "It's easier to speak French when you're pretending to be somebody else, it's not as scary"; "When you are talking you have to act it out, so you have to know the meaning"; and "Because it makes you challenge yourself."

Cheek, Flippo and Lindsey (1997) discuss literacy as an event, an experience, when children activate their own experiential background and interact with the text. Collins and Cheek (1999) refer to the experience of reading as "Creative reading that involves 'an expansion of the cognitive comprehension skills into the affective areas of individual reactions and expressions" (p.334). Furthermore, Collins and Cheek also recommend the inclusion of drama in education as a means of expressing reactions to the printed word. According to Bolton, in his seminal research on literacy and drama (1979) "the simplest form of drama in the classroom is dramatic oral expression which makes

language both "a non verbal and verbal code for encapsulating and sharing experience –
the currency for handling meaning" (p.119). Moreover, in their study "Process Drama in
the Core French Classroom: Using Global Simulation," Dicks and Leblanc (2006), found
that students are more motivated and have more confidence in their language ability
when they are engaged in highly interactive, imaginative, language rich, and student-
centred activities. The experience is more meaningful since students take control and
responsibility for their own learning.

These four studies show that meaning making through drama allows students to
further develop oral expression - which is the main goal of the core French program.

In another dramatic activity, when making the hors d'oeuvres on the last day of
the intervention, students were asked to come up in front of the class as if they were
playing a chef on a TV show. After having seen me demonstrate the snack preparation
only once, students worked hard to memorize the preparation steps. It was concluded
that students were able to remember the various steps in the food preparation process
because they were doing as they were speaking. This drama activity confirmed the
benefits of a constructivist approach. Students should be active learners involved in
meaningful tasks that are set in real-life contexts (Drake, 1998). Data revealed that this
activity was mentioned on almost all of the student questionnaires as another one of their
favourite activities. Observational data showed that students felt very comfortable
because it was the last day of the intervention and a rapport had been established between
the researcher and the students. Furthermore, it was observed that the students enjoyed
playing the stereotypical role of a French chef and took creative license to speak with a
silly accent.

Teaching French Through The Arts Enhanced Student Well-Being

In the article *Teaching for Understanding*, Gardner (1993) states "When you've encountered an idea in your own way and brought your own thinking to bear, the idea becomes much more a part of you. It isn't something that you read about from 3 o'clock to 3:15 and then forget: it's a part of your own experience" (p. 6). In fact, the activities planned in the study, besides promoting the learning of French through the arts, helped to develop creative, motivated, and well-rounded grade nine students. Students often expressed feelings of being proud after engaging in a creative endeavour. In my opinion, the higher self-esteem felt by the students contributed to the success of the study. Goleman, (1996) states that intrapersonal ways of knowing which entail the capacity to understand oneself, to appreciate one's feelings, fears and motivations (Gardner, 1983) are essential factors that determine educational and life success. He also mentions that when teachers use strategies that include the development of this intelligence, the curriculum becomes interdisciplinary and allows for students with different learning styles to succeed. Therefore, because this study focused on the attitudes and French language use of applied level students, student well-being became an integral component to the success of the study. Moreover, positive attitudinal changes have been observed in students involved in arts-rich programs.

Several research studies document positive effects of arts education of creativity, dropout rates, self-esteem, social skills, attitudes toward learning, and school attendance (Catterall, 1998; Catterall, Chapleau, & Iwanaga, 1999; Hamblen, 1993; Luftig, 1994; Moore & Caldwell, 1993; Murfee, 1995; Welch & Greene, 1995). Moreover in a recent LTTA National Assessment (Upitis & Smithrim, 2003a), students' comments indicated

that they recognized ways that the arts engaged them emotionally. One grade six student involved in LTTA stated "The arts teach how to bring out inner feelings, how to cooperate, listen, express ourselves."

I will draw a few comparisons between this study and the results of another collaborative qualitative study where the integration of music and other art forms was done in a third grade French first language curriculum. Firstly, in both studies, learning occurred in language and in the arts (Lowe, 2003). Furthermore, in both studies, the development of self-esteem was observed in the sources of data. Students felt proud of their achievements in the arts and expressed their pride through smiles and verbal expressions. It was found that student pride contributed to positive student attitudes toward speaking French. It was noted that even the shiest girl in the class who refused to do oral presentations in either English or French made an amazing effort in her oral presentation of her self-portrait. For this effort she received applause from her classmates. As stated by Lowe (2003) "Again, we acknowledge the power of the arts to increase self-esteem and to reach the child in the depth of his emotional being thus, enabling him or her to learn" (p. 26). Moreover, both studies revealed that the integrated language/arts activities and the pedagogical strategies used to motivate the students contributed to the success of the studies. It is important to keep in mind that students in the present study were studying French as a second language in a predominantly English society whereas in Dr. Lowe's study, students were learning French as a first language in a predominantly French society. Therefore, expectations of students' functional language skills were vastly different.

Furthermore, this study models its philosophy of arts in education from the

Learning Through the Arts initiative. As the executive director of the Royal

Conservatory of Music attested in 2004, the Learning Through the Arts initiative has

never ventured into the core FSL program (Elster, 2005). It is important to note that this

study is in no way connected to the LTTA initiative.

Student Attitudes Toward Elementary Core French

What is interesting about a grade nine class is that many students come from

different public schools. Although some students came from the same feeder school,

participants had varying experiences of elementary core French as a second language

instruction. Many questions on the questionnaire addressed student attitudes toward

Core French classes they had taken in past years. Data revealed that students had much to

say regarding their past experiences in French. In fact, it revealed that most of the

students (75%) wrote that their past experience with the core French program was in

some way negative. One student wrote: "My old French teacher was kind of mean. She

mostly gave us worksheets that were way too hard. Nobody really enjoyed French

because she made everyone miserable. We could hear her cart rolling down the hallway

and we would get scared." Another student shared: "It was boring, we usually copied

notes from the board."

A few students wrote negatively about how their past core French teacher spoke

mostly in French. Alternatively, several students wrote negatively that their core French

teacher spoke too much English. On the other hand, one student wrote: "Ms. _____

spoke mostly in French, if I paid attention I could have understood it more."

Data revealed that student attitudes toward their core French teachers speaking

French in elementary school were quite varied. Conclusions cannot be drawn pertaining

to past year's teachers' spoken French. Students were mostly interested in describing the teacher, thus the student-teacher relationship is clearly paramount.

Student Attitudes Toward Speaking French

Within the present study's practical arts-based lessons, students were challenged to move beyond memorizing facts to pursue a topic in more depth and to see patterns and relationships. Thus, as constructivism states, students were encouraged to construct knowledge rather than to simply gain information. For example, while being engaged in creative French/arts activities, students made connections between language and arts skills and constructed the new knowledge acquired from hands-on experience. With less pressure on perfecting the small details of language through writing, it was observed that students made a greater effort in their use of oral language.

Data revealed that when asked why they were taking French, the majority of the students answered: "You need a Grade nine French"; "Because it's a compulsory course"; "To get the credit"; "We have to"; "I'm taking it because I have to, I failed it twice." However, some of the students (almost half) also noted: "I want to learn a new language" and "Because it's good for future jobs".

Nevertheless, when asked if they liked French class, over half of the students said 'yes' and had positive comments about their current teacher: "Mr. ___(classroom teacher)___is so cool." One student answered, when asked what French teachers could do to encourage students to speak more French: "To be like Mr. ___(classroom teacher)___". A few other students wrote: "To do art activities like Madame Annie (the researcher) did." Yet another student wrote: "Less writing and fun games like Mr. __(classroom teacher)__".

Observational data revealed that the classroom teacher spoke mostly in English with his students except during games, skits, songs and other activities. Students spoke in English to their teacher with great ease as though he were a friend. It was observed that the classroom teacher did not push the students to address him in French. Nevertheless, when it was time to do the French activities, the students did not resist making an effort to speak French.

Unlike the classroom teacher, when it was time for me to lead the lessons, I spoke mostly in French. When students did not understand, they were quick to let me know. On the first day one student said: "Hunh? Miss we don't speak French"
It was observed that students' faces revealed a sense of being uncomfortable when I explained the activities in French only. However, when I asked students to try to tell me in English what I just said, they were indeed able to explain the activity.
According to observational data, students were much more relaxed with me speaking French in the third week. I suspect this is because it took some time for students to become used to my style of teaching compared with that of their regular classroom teacher. I also suspect that the level of French competency differed between the researcher and the classroom teacher. Due to the fact that the classroom teacher did not make an effort to speak French with his students, I believe that, over the years, his French competency may have diminished. Nevertheless, the classroom teacher had an excellent knowledge of French grammar and language rules as demonstrated in his songs and games.

With the two very different teaching approaches towards speaking in French to teach French, it was observed that with the classroom teacher, students knew their

teacher's expectations and did not give more than was required. Nevertheless, students did speak French during the classroom teacher's games and songs. Thus it was observed that they spoke French only within the framework of an activity with teacher prompts. On the other hand, because I was someone new to the students, I let them know from the beginning of the study that I would be speaking to them mostly in French and expected an effort to address me in French. Because students were not expected to do this normally, I was met with some resistance at first, yet through the course of the intervention, it was observed that students put in a better effort to speak French with me. The classroom teacher stated: "Wow, they're [the students] really making an effort to speak French with you."

Student Attitudes Toward Their Classroom Teacher

Over half of the students answered 'yes' when asked if they might be taking French in grade ten: "Since I'm in Grade nine it's mandatory, but I plan on taking it in the future because our teacher makes it interesting," Plus he's our teacher again for Grade ten." Students knew that their teacher would be teaching them again the next year and this seemed to play an important role in their continuing on in French. When asked how their teacher made French interesting, one student answered in the focus group: "He's so into it, he is always teaching us new songs and he has the whole school in on the verb game." I was quite impressed with the level of dedication the students had for their teacher and overwhelmed at the data: over half of the students wanted to continue taking core French. Clearly their homeroom teacher was well liked and an important factor in student attitudes toward continuing with the core FSL program. The teacher was also an important factor in determining if the students enjoyed learning French. One student

noted: "It depends on who the teacher is."

When asked what it was that they liked about the teacher, one student said: "Because he's funny, we get to sing songs, play games, and he makes acting fun too." Another student said: "He's like a rock star, he has a song for everything we learn." On almost all of the questionnaires students made mention of arts-related reasons for why they liked their teacher: "He tells us stories, we play a ball toss game around the class, we have to sing his songs as fast as we possibly can." When discussing the popularity of the applied core grade ten French course, the classroom teacher said: "It's almost unheard of in Ontario, most schools do not even offer Grade ten applied French."

Indeed, the influence of who the teacher is plays an important role in student attitudes toward the core FSL program. However, it is important to consider the reasons behind the popularity of the teacher - perhaps his creative arts-based teaching style or the fact that the teacher spoke mostly in English. Observational data indicated that when the classroom teacher and researcher taught in English, students understood what was being taught and this in turn reduced student anxiety and frustration. Further research regarding the role of the teacher on student learning is necessary. Research is also suggested regarding the effect of speaking English on student attitude and achievement in the core French language program. It is interesting to note that the Ministry Guideline indicates that instruction of the core French class shall be done in French (Ontario Curriculum, 1998).

At the end of the first week, it was noted in the staff room while discussing the project with curious staff members that the core FSL teacher was very enthusiastic about the project. When discussing the research with other teachers, the classroom teacher

looked at me and said: "You should see all the neat stuff she's doing with the kids - it's awesome, the students had to lie on the floor yesterday and paint under their desks!" The classroom teacher's enthusiasm was very obvious and overt. This positive influence transmitted directly to the students who held their teacher in very high regard. The teacher's attitude and responsiveness to the study greatly contributed to the success of the project. With less enthusiasm, it can be inferred that students might have read their teacher differently and might therefore not have been as willing to try the new activities or to speak French.

Interestingly, the data revealed that teaching styles between the researcher and teacher were compatible: "We both have the same philosophy of teaching and learning" said the classroom teacher. The classroom teacher also stated: "Both teachers must be flexible, open to change and quick to improvise when faced with unpredictable situations. She (the researcher) picks up were I leave off! In addition, we must be passionate about what we are doing. Teaching the core French program is the best."

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Summary

In this study, the teaching of French through the arts intervention was beneficial in many ways to all participants and it did enhance student motivation towards learning French. Overall, students made a greater effort to speak French and enjoyed coming to class. All students supported the idea that there should be more arts in the core French classroom.

This study reveals how valuable it can be to create a French environment in the classroom in order to simulate real-life situations, which in turn make language learning meaningful. Students learn to speak French when they are put in situations where they need to use French, not in situations where they need to memorize facts. According to Wong (2003), research on the utility of drills found that these activities are not necessary or beneficial for foreign language acquisition or the development of fluency and should be discarded from instructional practice. Wong's findings do not stand alone. Cummins (2001) notes that the research is very clear that drill-and-skill phonics instruction that teaches complex sub-skills in a rigid sequential manner and in isolation from engagement with real text is not effective in developing reading comprehension. It is imperative however, to keep in mind that there is a place for drill and practice in the language classroom. Indeed, learning particular grammatical distinctions requires a great deal of time even for the most skilled learners. For example, Chomsky (as cited in Hook, 1969) showed that native English speakers were still in the process of acquiring certain grammatical structures in English well into adolescence. Thus the question is not so

much, 'should there be focus on form?' but rather, whether it is possible to accelerate students' natural learning of grammar through instruction. Pienemann (1984) demonstrated that subjects who received grammar instruction progressed in their language development more quickly after a two-week period, a passage normally taking several months in untutored development. While the number of subjects studied was admittedly small, the finding provides evidence of the efficacy of teaching grammar rather than leaving acquisition to run its natural course. With regard to whether instruction can help learners acquire grammar they would not have learned on their own, Eckman et al (1995) point to the value of form-focused instruction to improve learners' accuracy over what normally transpires when there is no focus on form. Cummins (2001) concurs that the most effective approaches to developing initial reading are those that combine extensive and varied exposure to meaningful print with explicit and systematic instruction in phonemic awareness and letter-sound correspondences.

Currently in Ontario secondary schools, students are required to take one arts course. Since the arts are split up into individual subjects, a student must choose from music, art or drama. Therefore, most high school students in Ontario do not get a well-rounded education in the arts. Students in this study thought that the arts were important, indicating that it is important to have the arts in school to encourage personal expression and enjoyment in learning. In this study, it seemed that the strong presence of the arts contributed to greater enjoyment of the core French program. Furthermore, it was observed in the Grade nine core French classroom that when teaching French through art activities (music, movement, visual arts, and drama), there was more interaction, that is, students spoke French to one another during art projects. Thus, because the French

teaching was presented artistically, students, although not strong French students in a conventional sense, were drawn to participate, thus increasing their sense of accomplishment. This study supports the assertion that teaching core French via the arts can be beneficial to French language learning and it also acknowledges the non-academic benefits such as the development of creative abilities, self-esteem and the development of positive attitudes toward one's teacher.

Furthermore, data that emerged from this case study indicates that by presenting the core French curriculum through art activities, students were fully engaged in their learning and thus an obvious decline in negative classroom behaviour was noted. Therefore, although teaching French via the arts may not appeal to every teacher, it is a method that teachers should consider not only for dealing with classroom management as well as motivational and achievement reasons, but for retention in the program - making students want to take French beyond grade nine.

Limitations

The difficulty of finding similar studies to this one was vexing because, although this study essentially built on the LTTA initiative, such an initiative by the Royal Conservatory of Music Canada has not yet been conducted within a core French classroom. Cresswell (2003) discusses making an interpretation of the data "which involves comparing the findings with past literature and theory, raising questions, and/or advancing an agenda for reform" (p.206). However, the possibility of comparing the findings was limited because few studies address teaching the core French program through the arts.

Another limitation to this study was that the focus was on students in an applied

level grade nine class only. Furthermore, this case study was limited to 18 students. A larger sample would have allowed for a stronger set of conclusions. In addition, the class time of 40 minutes per day greatly limited the possibilities of more advanced arts projects. Moreover, since the classroom was used all day for other classes, there was limited set-up and take-down time which made it difficult when doing art projects.

The study was further limited by the fact that the classroom teacher spoke mostly in English with the students. Thus the findings in this study cannot be generalized to all grade nine core French classrooms. Although the Ontario Ministry of Education French curriculum documents mandate that core French teachers teach in French, this is often not the case and it bears heavily on student attitudes in the core French classroom and on the development of oral skills.

Suggestions for Further Research

More research in the area of core French teaching through arts-based activity is suggested. Specifically, because this study focused on only one core French grade nine applied level class, it would be interesting to compare student attitudes toward learning through the arts in the applied level with students in the academic stream and in other grades as well – both at the elementary and secondary levels. Moreover, it is suggested that comparative studies be conducted on student attitudes in a core FSL class taught traditionally with a core FSL class taught through the arts. Comparative studies between inner-city and rural students is also suggested. Research comparing student attitudes from different Canadian provinces toward learning French through the arts in the core French language program would also be beneficial to the improvement of the core French language program. This is important because Canada's constitution (British North

American Act, 1867) defines education strictly as provincial, rather than federal jurisdiction. Therefore, each of the 10 provinces and three territories in Canada has completely distinct and separate policies and curricula for education. There is no national-level policy for education in Canada. According to Cumming (2000), apart from limited communications, for example, across the Council of Ministers of Education or from the Commissioner of Official Languages, there are no direct linkages between provinces with regards to language education. Thus more focus is needed on policies and practices for language education across the provinces and territories.

Also, it is suggested that more studies are needed concerning the amount of spoken French used by core French teachers in the classroom. In particular, it might be of interest to focus on French teachers' confidence in speaking French since teachers with a higher level of confidence in their French skills might be more willing to adopt the learning through the arts approach.

As the classroom teacher in this study was particularly enthusiastic and passionate about teaching the core French program through the arts, further research on teacher self-efficacy - people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce effects - in the core French classroom would help to better understand student attitudes, motivation and achievement.

Moreover, as the Ministry guidelines do not prescribe one teaching methodology for the core French program, it would be useful to compare the varying teaching styles of core French teachers in order to establish how the teaching methodologies affect student attitudes, motivation and achievement. It would be interesting to research the theoretical and practical foundations behind prescribing a teaching methodology in the curriculum. Perhaps establishing one teaching methodology for all core French teachers is necessary

for consistent and optimal language learning across Ontario and Canada as a whole. Nevertheless, one is encouraged to bear in mind that perhaps the answer lies not in prescribing one single methodology for all teachers but in providing a thorough literature review that states that successful language learning occurs through constructivist, arts-based activities. As provincial curricula are often prescribed, they do not allow for students and teachers to actively co-construct, to grow and tend to a curriculum they mutually desire. Arguments against prescribed curricula are not new and alternatives to prescribed curricula are believed to allow for richer, more meaningful experiences, and ultimately are true expressions of democracy and liberation (Freire, 1970; hooks, 1994; Illich, 1971; Noddings, 1992).

Research into the reasons why many grade nine academic students choose applied core French over academic core French is also needed.

A thorough investigation into why arts-based activities are so well suited to address the many different learning styles and abilities of applied level students could be valuable. As this study encompasses all arts forms (visual art, music, movement, and drama), another suggestion for further research might be to look at student attitudes toward learning the core French curriculum via only one single art form. Lowe (2003) states, "Educators still resist the integrated arts approach to language learning!"(p. 28). This resistance could be due to the fact that an interdisciplinary approach to learning would demand a shift in teaching methodology and in ways of viewing assessment. Furthermore, as noted by Flewelling (2006), "Educators resist an integrated approach to language learning because many teachers do not have a strong background in the arts and therefore do not feel comfortable in engaging in art, music, drama and the like" (Personal

communication, April 29, 2006). In order to implement change, more studies similar to this one need to be developed. These studies must include a strong research component with convincing data that will help construct new understandings of the benefits and advantages of arts-based curricula for the core French as a second language program and the challenges that would face teachers and boards interested in adopting this approach.

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Appendix A

Lesson Plans

Week One, Day One, Tuesday, April 18, 2006.

Lesson: African Polyrhythms: Two Against Three

Expected Learning Outcomes:
- **Core French Oral Communication:**
  - Count numbers out loud in French
  - Develop vocabulary by explaining left hand and right hand rhythms to classmates, for example:
    > Avec la main gauche frapper sur le 1, 3, 5...et avec la main droite frapper sur le 2 et 5.
  - Using as much French language as possible, work in groups of 4 to create a bi-rhythm: the occurrence of two different rhythms at once, and present in French, also stating the name of the song and group that they took the rhythm from.

- **French Listening Comprehension:**
  - Understand (in French) the rhythmic vitality of West Africa as opposed to European classical complex harmonies of tones.

- **Music:**
  - Master the art of creating a bi-rhythm: the occurrence of two different rhythms at once
  - Listen to and repeat both teacher led and student led bi-rhythms
  - Learn to hear the difference in tone and play a variety of different drums: djembe, tablas, congas, and bongos.

Learning Strategies

The classroom teacher and researcher explain the history behind West African cultures and their multiple layers of rhythm. The researcher introduces and demonstrates rhythm on the different drums. The classroom teacher illustrates a rhythm on the dry-erase board and plays this bi-rhythm of his creation for the students. The students and the researcher are then asked to count aloud and tap this rhythm on their laps. The researcher asks for volunteers to tap the rhythm on the drums. One student is asked to come up to the front and write out a bi-rhythm on the board. This student is then asked to explain the rhythm to his/her classmates using the target language. Students then repeat the directions and play them on the drum.

The students choose groups of 4 to create a bi-rhythm. (In some groups, more than one bi-rhythm was created). Many groups chose a rhythm from a song they knew. Students are to write down and practice the rhythm as a unified group.

Conclusion:

Each group comes to the front of the class with their drums and writes out their bi-rhythm on the board, gives the class instructions explaining the left and right hand hits, then plays the rhythm for the class. The class is then asked to play along with this groups' bi-rhythm.

The researcher leads students in a rhythmic rain storm: fingers snapping for rain drops, leading into hands rubbing for rain fall, leading into hands tapping lap for a downpour, leading into loud drumming and feet stomping for a full-on thunder storm effect. The reverse effect is then conducted for the cessation of the storm.

Week One, Day Two,Wednesday, April 19, 2006.

Lesson: "Une Etude de la Musique" ~a Music Listening Study: Students describe what they think of various songs.

Expected Learning Outcomes:
- **Core French Oral Communication**:
  o Using a list of adjectives, students choose words to describe their sentiments of various songs
- **Reading Comprehension:**
  o Students read the list of descriptive adjectives and translate their meaning in English *translation was not an encouraged activity, but for the adjective list, students were quick to call out the English meanings.
- **Listening Comprehension**:
  o Students listen to French songs' lyrics in order to 'pick out' familiar or repetitive words
- **Music:**
  o Students listen to songs in order to get a sense of, rhythm, mood, genre, composition, theme and emotion. Students are then asked to describe the song in terms of colour (tone) and how it makes them feel.

Learning Strategies

Researcher has descriptive adjectives written on the board on individual flashcards and goes over each of their meanings. Many of the words are cognates (the word in French is similar to the word in English). Researcher plays the song *Ne me quitte pas* by Nina Simone, a popular French jazz singer. Students listen and give feedback using descriptive adjectives. Researcher plays a soft tempo song on the classical guitar: *Blackbird* by the Beatles. Students describe the song. Researcher then plays a quick tempo song: *Malaguena* a Flamenco style classical song by Papas. Students describe the song.

Conclusion:
Students are asked to form groups of 4-5 and choose a song 'of their own' to bring into class tomorrow. Students are then given a large poster board in order to begin illustrating the song. Students are told not to write on the poster but to draw an image of how their song makes them feel. Students are reminded they will be presenting their song and poster to the class using the descriptive adjective list in French. Class time will be allotted the following day to work in groups.

Une Étude de la Musique

Que pensez-vous de la musique ou de la chanson?

Entourez vos réponses

| 1 = pas du tout | 3 =on ne sait pas | 6 = oui, beaucoup |

La musique est :

Chaleureuse :	1	2	3	4	5	6
Froide/ Indifférente :	1	2	3	4	5	6
Tranquille :	1	2	3	4	5	6
Intéressante :	1	2	3	4	5	6
Drôle :	1	2	3	4	5	6
Ennuyeuse :	1	2	3	4	5	6
Complexe :	1	2	3	4	5	6
Répétitive :	1	2	3	4	5	6
Trop longue :	1	2	3	4	5	6
Effrayante :	1	2	3	4	5	6
Inspirante :	1	2	3	4	5	6
Puissante :	1	2	3	4	5	6

La musique a :

Les bonnes paroles :	1	2	3	4	5	6
Un thème inspirant :	1	2	3	4	5	6
Une bonne orchestration :	1	2	3	4	5	6

Quand j'entends cette musique/chanson, je voudrais :

Danser :	1	2	3	4	5	6
Penser :	1	2	3	4	5	6
Dormir :	1	2	3	4	5	6
L'entendre encore une fois :	1	2	3	4	5	6
Le chanter ou la jouer :	1	2	3	4	5	6
La jeter dans la poubelle :	1	2	3	4	5	6
Taper les mains ou claquer les doigts :	1	2	3	4	5	6

Je crois que le compositeur-compositrice /chanteur-chanteuse sent :

Triste :	1	2	3	4	5	6
Heureux/Heureuse :	1	2	3	4	5	6
En amour :	1	2	3	4	5	6
Furieux/Furieuse :	1	2	3	4	5	6

Si cette chanson soit des couleurs, elle serait

_____

Quand j'entends cette chanson, je pense à

_____

Week One, Day Three, Thursday, April 20, 2006.

Lesson: Une Étude de Musique ~continued from Day two

Expected learning outcomes :
- **Core French Oral Communication**:
    - o Using the list of descriptive adjectives, students describe their song as well as their poster drawing.
- **Listening Comprehension**:
    - o Students listen to other songs chosen by their peers and listen to their oral presentations.
- **Music**:
    - o Students listen to songs in order to get a sense of, rhythm, mood, genre, composition, theme and emotion. Students are then asked to describe the song in terms of colour (tone) and how it makes them feel.
- **Visual art**:
    - o In their groups of 4 or 5, students are given a large poster board in order to begin illustrating their song. Students are told not to write on the poster but to draw an image of how their song makes them feel.

Learning Strategies

The classroom teacher is absent and the substitute teacher is a guitar teacher who plays a song for the students. Students describe the song using target vocabulary. In their groups, students are listening to their song on their Ipods and drawing an image to represent the song. (a few groups completed much of their posters for homework!) Students also choose appropriate descriptive words for their presentations.

Conclusion:
Presentations. Each group (5 groups) plays a segment of their song for the class and discuss their song and poster using target vocabulary. Students not presenting are encouraged to add feedback in French. Posters go up on classroom wall.

Week One, Day Four, *Friday*, April 21, 2006.

Lesson: Skit : Réserver une partie surprise/Planning a Surprise Party.

Expected Learning Outcomes:
- **Core French Oral Communication** :
  - o With the use of the script, students plan a surprise birthday party for a friend 'over the phone'.
- **Listening Comprehension**:
  - o Students listen to classroom teacher and researcher model the skit one time.
- **Reading Comprehension**:
  - o Students read script in groups of two and practise the phone conversation. Students are asked to make choices in the script and to improvise and change some of the wording as they go along so as to make the conversation as realistic as possible.
- **Writing Comprehension**:
  - o Students write down the small changes they make in the structured script in order to personalize their conversation.
- **Drama**:
  - o With a partner, students get up in front of the class and act out a telephone conversation. One student is asking a mother's permission to have a surprise party for her son/daughter. Phone props are provided for student use. One student plays a mother, the other student plays himself/herself.

Learning Strategies

Skit template is distributed to all students. Researcher and Classroom teacher act out the skit for students. Students are grouped in twos and practise the script. Students are encouraged to improvise and to write down any changes made to the original script.

Conclusion:

Presentations. Two groups of students perform their telephone conversation for the class. The remaining groups are to present on Monday.

Week Two, Day Five, Monday April 24, 2006.

Lesson: Skit : Réserver une partie surprise/Planning a Surprise Party ~continued.

Expected learning outcomes:
- **Core French Oral Communication** :
  - With the use of the script, students plan a surprise birthday party for a friend 'over the phone'.
- **Listening Comprehension:**
  - Students listen to classroom teacher and researcher model the skit one time.
- **Reading Comprehension:**
  - Students read script in groups of two and practise the phone conversation. Students are asked make choices in the script and to improvise and change some of the wording as they go along so as to make the conversation as realistic as possible.
- **Writing Comprehension:**
  - Students write down the small changes they make in the script in order to personalize their conversation.
  - Students create a 4-6 frame cartoons with a written conversation between two characters.

- **Drama:**
  - With a partner, students get up in front of the class and act out a telephone conversation. One student is asking a mother's permission to have a surprise party for her son/daughter. Phone props are provided for student use. One student plays a mother, the other student plays himself/herself.
- **Art:**
  - Individually, students create a comic strip: draw two cartoon characters and write out a very short conversation in speaker bubbles.

Learning Strategies/Conclusion
Presentations. 10 groups of students perform their telephone conversation for the class while seated students listen and work individually to create their own comic strip. Students are asked to complete the comic strip for homework.

Week Two, Day Six, Tuesday April 25, 2006.

Lesson: Short play : Boucles d'or et les Trois ours, ~by Wendy Maxwell.

Expected Learning Outcomes :

- **Core French Oral Communication** :
  - With the use of a script, students read and act out characters from a short 'familiar' fairy tale play.
- **Listening Comprehension**:
  - Students listen to an audio cassette tape of the play two times.
  - Students listen to their classmates presenting the play.
- **Reading Comprehension**:
  - Students read script in groups of four or five. Each student reads a role: Le narrateur, Boucles d'or, Papa ours, Maman ours and Bébé ours
- **Drama**:
  - With a partner, students get up in front of the class and act out a short play 'Goldie Locks and the Three Bears'.

Learning Strategies:

Skit template is distributed to all students. Audio cassette is played two times for all students to hear and 'follow along with.' In groups of 4 -5, students choose a role and practice the script. Teacher circulates as students dramatize the script.

Conclusion:

Presentations. One or two groups are asked to act out the play for the entire class.

Week Two, Day Seven, Thursday April 27, 2006.

Lesson: Mr. Picasso Head ~an introduction to abstract art.

Expected Learning Outcomes :

- **Core French Oral Communication**:
    - o Students review body parts vocabulary through Picasso's art.
    - o Students describe and present their own rendering of a Picasso head using complete sentences.
- **Listening Comprehension**:
    - o Students listen to researcher describe abstract art and present a few Picasso Heads.
    - o Students listen to their classmates presenting their abstract Picasso Head. Reading comprehension:
    - o Students read hand out for key-words in order to present their artwork.
- **Visual Art**:
    - o Using paint brushes and tempera paint, students model their own Picasso Head after the many visual Picasso paintings and abstract body parts at the front of the class.

Learning Strategies:
Researcher presents many Picasso paintings of faces and people. Researcher briefs the students about abstract art. With individual abstract style flashcards, students review body parts. From all of the 40 flashcards on the board, students choose a style of Picasso head and create their own abstract self-portrait using tempera paints.

Conclusion:

Presentations. Students are told to clean up and to be ready to present their self portrait the following day.

Week Two, Day Eight, Friday, April 28, 2006.

Lesson: Mon auto-portrait/Self-portrait in two styles: Abstract and Realism.

Expected learning outcomes:
- **Core French Oral Communication**:
  - o Students review body parts vocabulary through both Picasso's and Degas' art.
  - o Students describe and present their own self-portrait renderings of a Picasso head and a Degas Head using complete sentences.
- **Listening comprehension**:
  - o Students listen to researcher and classmates present their self-portrait in two styles: abstract and realism.
- **Reading comprehension**:
  - o Students read hand out for key words in order to present their artwork.
- **Visual Art**:
  - o Abstract art: using paint brushes and tempera paint students complete their abstract self-portrait.
  - o Realism: using HB pencils and a photograph of themselves, students try to copy and draw their likeness (realism).

Learning Strategies:

Researcher presents many Degas paintings of faces and people. Researcher briefs the students about the Realism art movement. Students are asked again to review body parts, this time through Degas' paintings. Researcher shows own self-portrait pencil sketch done in the realism style. Students either complete their tempera-painting-abstract self-portrait and/or begin their realism-pencil sketch self-portrait. Both self-portraits are to be completed on the same paper.

Conclusion:

Presentations. Students are told to clean up and to be ready to present their self-portrait the following day.

Week Three, Day Nine, Monday, May 1st, 2006.

Lesson: The Amazing Race

Expected learning outcomes:
- **Core French Oral Communication** :
  - Students review body parts vocabulary
  - Students sing "Oh Canada"
  - Students review ordering a pizza in French
  - Students sing song "Me, Te, Se" by Etienne and create a sentence using one of these reflexive pronouns with the subject pronoun and the verb i.e. Je m'habille, Tu te laves, Ils se coiffent...

- **Reading comprehension**:
  - Students read a défi de l'esprit (word puzzle) and try to figure it out.
- **Visual Art**:
  - Students play Pictionary: drawing Picasso style body parts.
- **Music**:
  - Students sing the national anthem in French.
  - Students sing French song "Me, Te, Se" by Etienne
- **Drama**:
  - Students use Pantomime to act out action words

Learning Strategies:

Researcher and classroom teacher describe the game Amazing Race to students:
Desks are pushed back, students are put into groups of 4-5. Groups are to go through the 5 stations and collect a ticket once the group completes the task. The five station tasks are:

1. As a group, sing the national anthem in French (review)
2. As a group, sing song 'Me, Te, Se' by Etienne (review) and create a sentence using one of the reflexive pronouns.
3. Students read a défi de l'esprit (word puzzle) and try to figure it out.
4. Pictionary: Each member of the group has a turn drawing a different body part in the abstract art style and group members have to guess the word.
5. Pantomime: Each member of the group acts out a different action word, members have to guess the verb.

Conclusion:

Students scramble around the room in groups to get through each station. Each station has a student or teacher rep. The first group with all 5 tickets from each station gets a prize.

Week Three, Day Ten, Tuesday, May 2nd, 2006.

Lesson: Michelangelo: "La création de l'homme"

Expected learning outcomes:
- **Core French Oral Communication** :
    - o Students review art styles 'le réalisme' and 'l'abstrait'
    - o Students review target vocabulary: les mains, les doigts, Dieu, Adam, l'homme, les couleurs, la Renaissance, la chapelle Sistine, style d'art abstrait, style d'art réaliste la peinture, les frescos
- **Reading comprehension**:
    - o Students read short paragraph about Michelangelo and the Sistine Chapel
- **Visual Art**:
    - o Students paint watercolour "The Creation of Adam by Michelangelo". Under their desks, students lie on their backs and paint a rendition of Michelangelo's masterpiece. Students choose to paint in an abstract art style or in the realist art style.

Learning Strategies:

Researcher and classroom teacher describe (in French) the Sistine Chapel using many visual props at the front of the class. The "Creation of Man" is presented and discussed using target vocabulary. Students are asked to paint their own rendition of the painting under the desks so as to experience Michelangelo's 3 year task. Paper is taped under desks, watercolour paints and brushes are distributed. Students create their own masterpiece under their desks.

Conclusion:

Students asked to clean up. Art work is mounted on wall. Presentations to follow next class.

Week Three, Day Eleven, Wednesday, May 3rd, 2006.

Lesson: Michaelangelo: "La création de l'homme"continued.

Expected learning outcomes :
- **Core French Oral Communication**:
  - o Students present their Michelangelo masterpieces using target vocabulary:
    Voici la Création d'Adam (Eve)au style d'art _____(réaliste, abstrait).
    Voici.... les mains, les doigts, Dieu, Adam, Eve, l'homme, les couleurs
    sont ....
  - o Students are expected to refer to some of the descriptive vocabulary used week one,
    day one and two.
  - o Students are asked to present their work as though they were a docent in an art gallery and
    compare their artwork with another student's work using comparative sentence structuring .
  - o Teacher and other students interject during the presentation and
    ask 'pourquoi?' and wait for presenter to reply in French.

- **Written comprehension**:
  - o Students copy the following note:

L'adjectif	Le comparative	
Bon, bonne	meilleur (e) que	=better than (sing)
Bons, bonnes	meilleur (e)s que	=better than (plural)

Ex : Michelange est meilleur que Degas.
  Les Wings sont meilleurs que les Leafs.
Assez... que = almost as plus...que = more____than
Aussi... que = as ____as moins...que = less ____than
Ex : Ce tableau est plus beau que le mien.
  Mes couleurs sont aussi neutres que les votres.
  Tes mains sont plus grandes que les miens.

Learning Strategies

Researcher and classroom teacher show students how to present their artwork
Students copy note and prepare for their presentation while the other students present.

Conclusion:
One at a time, students go the side of the class and describe their art and compare their
work using 'le comparatif.'

Week Three, Day Twelve, Thursday, May 4th, 2006.

Lesson: Les hors d'oeuvres.

Expected Learning Outcomes :
- Core French Oral Communication:
  - Students describe the making of a hors d'oeuvre step by step.
  - Students make and try different hors d'oeuvres and make comparative comments i.e.' Le canapé fromage est meilleur que le croissant Nutella. Le canapé au thon est moins délicieux que le biscuit français'.
  - Students are asked to present their hors d'oeuvre to the class as though they're a French chef.
  - Students make comparisons of the various hors d'oeuvres using 'le comparatif' or comparative sentence structure for example : 'Cet hors d'oeuvre est plus delicieux que ce canapé'.

Learning Strategies:

Researcher and classroom teacher show students how to present their hors d'oeuvre:

Hors d'oeuvre:
Un canapé-fromage
Placez un canapé sur une assiette.
Prenez du fromage.
Enlevez l'emballage du fromage.
Coupez le fromage en deux.
Etalez le fromage sur le canapé.
Mangez !

Conclusion :
One at a time, students present their hors d'oeuvre by memory and make comparisons to other hors d'oeuvres using comparative sentences.

Appendix B

Focus Group Questions

1. What was your favourite activity in the last two and a half weeks?
How did it make you feel?

2. Did you notice a particular class activity in the last two weeks where you spoke more French?

3. I noticed that in the _____activity, you were more willing to express yourself in French. Can you tell me why that might be?

4. If you could only choose one option, would you prefer to learn French with a focus on visual arts, dramatic activity or music?

5. Can you tell me about one of your favourite past experiences in French class in elementary school?

6. Would you prefer to learn French the way you learned in elementary school or in the way you were taught in these last three weeks?

7 Statistics show that the majority of students in Canada do not take French after Grade nine.
What do you think we teachers can do to change that?

Appendix C

Student Questionnaire

Core French as a Second Language: An Evaluation of the Learning Through the Arts
Approach

_____   _____
name   date

1. Do you like French class?

2. Why are you taking French?

3. What, if anything, did you like about French class in the last two weeks?

4. Thinking about how you were taught in the past (not now), what is your reaction
   to:
a. French tests

b. French textbooks and workbooks

c. The teaching style of your teachers

d. Activities done in French class

5. Do you enjoy speaking French? Why?

6. What kind of activities do you enjoy in French class?

7. In French class how do you feel about:
a. Playing games
b. Reading stories
c. Singing songs
d. Learning Grammar
e. Learning vocabulary
f. Speaking French in class

8. In a few sentences, describe how your last French teacher taught (not Mr. Langlois). Was the class taught mostly in French? Did it seem as though your teacher enjoyed teaching French? What kind of activities did you do in class?

9. Would you prefer to speak French or write French?

10. Do you see any value in learning to speak French?

11. How could speaking French help you in your life?

12. In your opinion, what could French teachers do to help make learning French more interesting?

13. Do you enjoy learning French through songs?

14. Is it easier for you to remember words when you first hear them in a song?

15. Do you think it's easier to learn a language through music?

16. Drama means you have to act things out. Do you think it helps you to use the French language when you do dramatic activities(acting)? Why?

17. How did you feel when I asked you to paint a picture using vocabulary words?

18. What did you learn about art when you did your painting?

19. Do you plan on taking Grade Ten French?

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Assent for Secondary School Students

I am a student researcher, and I am doing a case study on student attitudes toward learning French in the Core French language program. I will be coming into your class and collaborating with Mr. Langlois. Together, Mr. Langlois and I will teach twelve lesson plans that place a strong emphasis on the arts. I would like to ask you to simply be open to the next two weeks of French class where we will be teaching French through the arts.

During the two week period I will be observing you during French class. At the end of the twelve days, I will be asking you to fill out a questionnaire with your personal feedback on the experience. I hope you will be as honest as possible and provide me with information that you think will help to make French class a positive experience for all Grade nine students.

In the third week, I will also be holding small focus group interviews with you and your classmates. A focus group is simply a face-to-face interview in a small group of four to six students. At that point I will take notes on what you think. I will be asking you a few open-ended questions as well. When I am finished talking with all the students who agree to be in my study, I will write a report on what I have learned. My professors at the University will read it, and it might be put in a book, but no one will know who the students are that answered my questions.

I want you to know that I will not be telling your teachers or parents or any other students what you answer.

Your parents have agreed that it is okay for you to answer my questions on student attitudes and fill out a questionnaire. Do you think that you would like to answer them? You will not get into any trouble if you say no. If you decide to answer the questions you can stop answering them at any time, and you do not have to answer any question you do not want to answer. It is entirely up to you.

I understand what I am being asked to do to be in this study, and I agree to be in this study.

_____   _____
signature   date

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CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Title of Study: **French as a Second Language: An Evaluation of the Learning through the Arts Approach.**

Your child is asked to participate in a research study conducted by student researcher **Anne Rovers**, from the **Faculty of Education/Graduate Studies** at the University of Windsor. The results of the study will support the writing of a Masters thesis.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel to contact **Anne Rovers, student researcher, 258-3221; Dr. Janet Flewelling, Faculty Supervisor 253-3000 ext. 3810; Dr. Jonathan Bayley, Faculty Supervisor, 253-3000 ext. 3813.**

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

More research is needed to address the issue of teaching the Core French program through a new and innovative approach and its effect on student attitudes and success. The purpose of this collaborative/case study is to explore how teaching French through the arts affects the attitudes of students in a year nine Core French Second Language class.

PROCEDURES

If you give consent for your child to participate in this study, I am asking the following things:

For two and a half weeks, your child will be asked to come to French class as usual; however, instruction in French class will be done through the arts. During this time Mr. Langlois and Madame Rovers will be collaborating, that is, they will be teaching the French/arts classes together. For example, your child may learn how to paint a *Monet* and describe the painting using French words; or your child may learn rhythm through French songs to help with grammar acquisition or perhaps your child will write and perform short dramatic plays (in small groups) in French.
The two and a half week 'French through the arts' classes will be highly creative classes with a lot of active participation.
Observation:
During the French classes the researcher will be observing your child and analyzing his/her enthusiasm for the various activities as well as his/her motivation to speak French.
Questionnaire:
At the end of the two and a half week period, your child will be asked to fill out a questionnaire for the researcher based on his/her experience and personal thoughts about 'learning through the arts'.
Focus Groups: a focus group is a face-to-face interview in a small group of 4 to 6 students.

At the end of the two and a half week period, your child will be asked to share his/her thoughts and feelings about learning French. Your child will also be asked to offer some future suggestions for the Core French language program. These focus groups are highly confidential (private), therefore the researcher asks that your child does not disclose any details of the conversation to anyone outside the focus group.

The researcher will be at the school for the remainder of the third week in order to conduct the focus group interviews and collect the questionnaires.

At the completion of the study, the researcher will post the results of the study on line. If students have any questions after the three weeks they can email the researcher.

To be clear, only Mr. Langlois can collect marks for the duration of the two and a half weeks. Madame Rovers is not collecting marks or conducting any evaluations.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

There are no foreseeable risks in this study. Students may be concerned that Mr. Langlois requests student participation or else be penalized. However, Mr. Langlois will not know which students choose to be in the study. Mr. Langlois will never see the questionnaire and he will not be around when the researcher asks questions at the end of the third week.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

There are many benefits to being in the study. Students will be immersed in an energetic French class and will share in the enthusiasm of two creative French teachers for the period of three weeks. Furthermore, students will have the opportunity to share their personal views about the Core French language program and thereby help to effect change for the future. Mostly, the students will benefit from the interdisciplinary lesson plans which have the ability to reach all students, that is, the visual, the auditory and the kinaesthetic learners. It is hopeful that the students gain the ability to make connections between language and art.

PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

The subjects will not receive payment.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission.

To ensure confidentiality of data, when I discuss the study with the students, Mr. Langlois will be out of the classroom in order to avoid coercion. I will ask the students to return the consent form and assent form to me, not Mr. Langlois in order to alleviate coercion. At no time will Mr. Langlois know which students choose to participate and which students do not. Furthermore, students will not be penalized if they do not participate in the study. It will be made clear that I am not there to mark students, but to analyze their attitudes and reactions to the French through the arts lesson plans.

The focus group questions will be conducted outside of class so that Mr. Langlois is not

watching and does not hear who is in the study and who is not.

During the focus groups I will tell students that I would like a high assurance of confidentiality. That is, if they verbally talk about the focus group questions outside of the focus group, the confidentiality decreases.

At no time will any personal information be released to any other party for any reason. I will retain the questionnaire information as well as the focus group questions for a period of one year where the data will then be destroyed.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL
Your child can choose whether to be in this study or not. If he/she does choose to volunteer to be in this study, he/she may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. Your child may also refuse to answer any questions they do not want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw your child from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

FEEDBACK OF THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY TO THE SUBJECTS

Research findings will be made available to students in the following school year at the following address: www.uwindsor.ca/reb

SUBSEQUENT USE OF DATA

This data from this study will be used toward a Masters thesis and may also be published a book.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

Your child may withdraw his/her consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. If you have questions regarding your child's rights as a research subject, contact: Research Ethics Coordinator, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario N9B 3P4; telephone: 519-253-3000, ext. 3916; e-mail: lbunn@uwindsor.ca.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT/LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

I understand the information provided for the study **Core French as a Second Language: An Evaluation of the Learning through the Arts Approach** as described herein. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to have my child participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

_____

Name of Subject

_____   _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian   Date

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

These are the terms under which I will conduct research.

_____   _____

Vita Auctoris

Anne Rovers was born in Windsor, Ontario, Canada. Her sense of adventure led her to live in locations across Canada, including St. Catharines, Ontario; Banff, Alberta; Victoria and Vancouver, British Columbia. She has traveled across Canada several times and in much of the United States as well as in China and Europe. Anne is currently living in Windsor, Ontario with her husband Kurt Becker and daughter Elsa.

Anne enjoys being in the classroom, both as a student and a teacher. Before beginning her masters, she taught the core French program in Vancouver for over three years and in Windsor for one year. She has taught music at a French Immersion school and is currently teaching for the Francophone school board in Windsor.

Anne is very passionate about the arts and enjoys drawing and painting; yoga; playing guitar and flute and singing along with her husband..