THE HEART AND SOUL OF LANGUAGE TEACHING: MAKING INTER-CONNECTIONS BETWEEN HOLISTIC AND SECOND LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN THE POST-SECONDARY CONTEXT

by

Merlin Charles

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Graduate Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
University of Toronto

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Abstract

While much research has been conducted on the cognitive and methodological aspects of language pedagogy, there has been little research on the other essential aspects of teaching and learning, such as teacher presence. The aim of this doctoral research study was to discover, describe and document the various ways in which holistic education is operationalized in the Canadian post-secondary language teaching-learning context. Using French as a second language (FSL) instruction as a concrete example, the study was further aimed at developing a comprehensive understanding of what teachers do to facilitate holistic engagement in learning a second, foreign or additional language in the post-secondary classroom and beyond. Particular attention was paid to the various holistic interconnections and relationships involved in language teaching and the ways in which these helped to foster a spirit of inclusiveness, balance and connectedness in the language teaching-learning environment.

This qualitative research inquiry utilized a blend of narrative and case study methodologies, and included a variety of data sources such as face-to-face (individual and focus group) interviews, classroom observations, and surveys. The research has been primarily informed by a core group of participants comprising of six FSL university instructors as well as a peripheral group of five other language instructors from both the college and university contexts. Students of the core participant group also lent their voices to this endeavor, thus providing a rich understanding of how they perceive their experiences of post-secondary language teaching.
On the one hand, beliefs and assumptions underlying teachers’ approaches as well as the methods and strategies that they employ, constituted an important aspect of the investigation. However, on the other hand, significant emphasis was placed on the participants’ perspectives on teaching presence and how they seek to engage the whole student -- body, mind and spirit. The findings highlight the centrality of teaching presence as a fundamental element for maintaining flow and connectedness within and beyond the classroom. Implications include rethinking the relevance of teaching presence in the post-secondary language classroom and its potential for enhancing the teaching and learning experience, fostering positive emotions, building relationships and encouraging lifelong learning.
Acknowledgements

This doctoral research process can best be described by using the metaphor of a journey. Like all journeys undertaken for the sake of authentic inquiry, mine had its joys and challenges, interwoven within the threads of creativity, and heightened by the awe and wonder of enlightenment. I have met wonderful people, been to interesting places, and participated in many exciting events which have all influenced me along the intertwining pathways and passages. As I meandered through the flow of the thesis journey, there were others there, to offer a helping hand and to facilitate the process of: Navigating through the complex fields of notes, climbing the undulating mountains of data, peering through lenses of theory, exercising choice, structuring and formatting of the text, contemplating, reflecting, writing, processing... I relish this moment to express my sincere gratitude to a number of people who, through their aid, guidance, training and support have helped me to successfully arrive at my destination.

To All My Participants: Instructors and Students

Thank you for sharing glimpses of your lived experiences, for welcoming me into your classrooms, opening your minds, your heart and soul... and most of all, thank you for your valuable contribution in helping illuminate new paths of knowledge and wisdom in education.

My Thesis Committee:

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Dedication

My sons, Jamaal and Gabriel whose love, encouragement and understanding went a long way in helping me progress through along this long journey, never losing sight of the light at the end of the tunnel. This work is dedicated to you, the future generation to whom I hand over the torch!

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<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>ASCD</td>
<td>Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPF</td>
<td>Canadian Parents for French</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCL</td>
<td>Canadian Council on Learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>CLT</td>
<td>Communicative language teaching</td>
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<tr>
<td>EFL</td>
<td>English as a foreign language</td>
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<tr>
<td>ESL</td>
<td>English as a second language</td>
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<tr>
<td>ELT</td>
<td>English language teaching</td>
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<td>FSL</td>
<td>French as a second language</td>
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<td>L2</td>
<td>Second, additional or foreign language</td>
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<td>SLA</td>
<td>Second Language Acquisition</td>
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<td>SLT</td>
<td>Second Language Teaching</td>
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<td>OCOL</td>
<td>Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages</td>
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<td>OISE</td>
<td>Ontario Institute of Studies in Education</td>
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<td>ZPD</td>
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CHAPTER 1
IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD

“Language is the centre of human life... through language we plan our lives and remember our past; we exchange ideas and experiences; we form our social and individual identities.”

Cook (2001, p. 1)

Cook’s quotation aptly captures the essence of language and its prominent role in the lives of human beings everywhere, since the beginning of time. Along with this need to communicate, there is little doubt as to the tremendous social, economic and political benefits in learning an additional, foreign or second language. In Canada, language teaching / learning forms an important part of the curriculum in schools, colleges and universities. In particular, given its status as an official language, French as a second language\(^1\) (FSL) has been and continues to be a highly desirable benefit to teachers and learners at all levels. As such, there has been a great deal of research concerned with the development of various methods and strategies geared towards increasing the proficiency of learners, particularly at the primary and secondary levels.

Admittedly, with the advent of the communicative language teaching approach (CLT), there has been much progress -- or at the very least, promises -- in the field of second language education. What is often forgotten however is the opportunity that the teaching and learning of language provides for bringing about balance, inclusion and connectedness in the lives of teachers, students and the society as a whole. The purpose of this research is to discover, describe and document the various ways in which holistic education is operationalized in higher education. In other words, this inquiry (as the title suggests) offers an exploration into the “heart and soul” of the language teaching landscape and to document along the way, the myriad of relationships and interconnections that may result from the various interactions in the classroom and beyond.

\(^1\)Lapkin, S. (1998) French Second Language Education in Canada: Empirical Studies, defines FSL as “Any program (core, extended, or immersion) taught in any jurisdiction where French has official language status as in Canada, where English and French are both recognized as official languages” (p. xv).
Research Focus and Questions

This doctoral research study attempts to gain a deeper understanding of second language teachers’ experiences in the post-secondary context. Focusing particularly on FSL instruction, the study is further aimed at developing a comprehensive understanding of what university and college teachers do to promote student engagement and joy in language learning. One the one hand, the theories and assumptions underlying teachers’ approaches and the strategies that they employ constitute an important aspect of the investigation. However, on the other hand, significant emphasis is placed on the ‘presence’ of the teacher participants and how they seek to engage the “whole student” – body, mind and spirit. This calls for paying attention not only to the intellect, but also to the emotional, physical, social, aesthetic, and spiritual development of students and to transform their learning experience, where possible. This qualitative research inquiry was undertaken using a narrative case study approach and includes narratives of second / foreign language instructors in the post-secondary context. Within the framework of holistic education, my research seeks to answer the following overarching question: How is holistic education operationalized in the post-secondary language classroom? From this main focus arose the following sub-questions:

1) Who are the post-secondary language teachers (i.e. what are their educational backgrounds, learning and teaching experiences, insights, beliefs and assumptions about language teaching and learning)?

2) In what ways do post-secondary language teachers seek to facilitate / transform students’ language learning experiences and engage the whole student – body, mind and spirit - both inside and outside the classroom?

3) What do post-secondary language teachers understand by teaching presence and how it might contribute to relationship-building and interconnectedness in the language classroom?

4) What are students’ perceptions of their instructors’ teaching presence and its impact on their language learning experience?

Emergence of the Research

This research study emerged from my own personal and professional passion for language, learning and teaching. It was also inspired by the need to fill a gap or build a bridge between second or foreign language and holistic education research, theory and practice. I have always been intrigued by
language and the environment in which I grew up provided a fascinating arena for the appreciation of language and its impact on various interactions: interpersonal, socio-economic / political and cultural. These experiences, combined with formal language instruction in diverse educational settings have contributed to my keen awareness of this phenomenon not only as a tool for acquiring vocabulary and grammar skills, but as an important medium for communication, growth as well as connectedness.

Radnor (2002) asserts that: “To be able to communicate with others means we share a form of life. We recognize what it means to be human. Language is the universal medium in which understanding occurs... Language is not merely a system of signs... [it is] being in the world” (p. 14). My awareness of the importance of language as a core component of human societies has been particularly heightened by my own ‘apprenticeship of observation’ (Darling-Hammond, 2006, Lortie, 1975) as a second language student and subsequently as an FSL instructor. Language is the medium through which we organize our lives, exchange our stories, share memories from the past, and hopes for the future. As Cook (2001) notes “language is the centre of human life... Through language we plan our lives and remember our past; we exchange ideas and experiences; we form our social and individual identities” (p. 1). World renowned anthropologist Wade Davis succinctly describes language as the embodiment of “all the thoughts, dreams, ideals, myths, intuitions, and aspirations brought into being by the imagination since the dawn of consciousness” (cited in Hawken, 2007, p. 94).

While the above discussion presents a rich appreciation of language and its importance in our lives, the process of teaching and learning a language presents many challenges, which sometimes tend to overshadow the joys of such an endeavour. This is particularly evident when it comes to second language acquisition and instruction. Moreover, among the many benefits of teaching and learning a second language is its usefulness for making connections and for fostering meaningful relationships through communication. Savignon (2007) states that “where two or more languages come together, two or more persons come together” (p. 210). As affirmed by the Hall-Dennis Report over 40 years ago:

[E]qual to, or of perhaps greater importance than its contribution to the development of Canadian unity, is the educational value of acquiring an additional language as a communicative tool to reach people better. No other learning experience brings home so well to the learner, the distinction between words and the ideas for which they stand; a salutary lesson both for the child who is learning to read, and for the intellectual to whom language can become an end in itself (Hall & Dennis 1968, p.8).
This observation is equally, or even more relevant today, and the current Canadian context presents a good case in point. For example, in addition to highlighting the distinct career advantages of FSL, the Ontario curriculum document also makes reference to research which acknowledges its benefits in enhancing students’ creative thinking abilities, and their increased tolerance and respect of other cultures (Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 1999). Further, in recognizing the importance of communicating in Canada’s two official languages, the federal government put forward the 2003 Action Plan. This plan is aimed at doubling the number of bilingual high school graduates and is designed to “improve school programs, increase the number of qualified teachers, facilitate student exchanges and support research” (2006-2007 Annual Report, p. 15). As John Ralston Saul affirmed in his opening speech at the Symposium of the Official Languages entitled Vision and Challenges for the 21st Century: “Bilingualism and biculturalism must increasingly find their way into Canadian universities and colleges. If they do not, 30 years of progress in bilingualism will be lost” (OCOL, 2004). Speaking at the same symposium, Sharon Lapkin emphasised the need to make French “real” to students, by not isolating it, but by integrating it into other subjects. Lapkin also stressed the importance of sensitising students to the relevance of French, as well as making them aware of the various challenges or difficulties involved in learning a second language; this, she felt would greatly contribute to a change in students’ attitudes. Lapkin also recommended the active use of resources such as technology and exchange programs. In addition, there has been a call for increased partnerships between community colleges and universities in order to enable new post-secondary programs by facilitating the transfer of credits between these institutions (CPF’s National Stakeholders Forum, 2004).

**Call for Engagement in FSL at the Post-secondary Level**

Despite the benefits of French-English bilingualism, studies have shown that there is a high rate of decline in student enrolment in FSL programs in Canada. According to various reports, it has become increasingly challenging for teachers to engage students or to maintain their enthusiasm in French language learning (Kissau, 2005; Lapkin, 2003; Richards, 2005; Shea, 2004). The Canadian Parents for French reports a high rate of attrition from high school and the lack of opportunities for obtaining quality education in FSL at the post-secondary level “where students can use and improve their French language

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2Along with the Ministry of Education and Training (and its various Boards of Education), which provides guidance for FSL curriculum and instruction, the Ontario Modern Language Teachers Association (OMLTA), the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers (CASLT) and Canada Parents for French (CPF) are among the organizations which provide additional support for FSL.
skills” (p. 2). This has been a serious concern over the past few years, as it raises the important issue of how our educational system can attract and sustain the interest of engaged teachers and students in FSL, especially in the post-secondary context. Further, as pointed out by Mollica, Phillips and Smith (2005) in their follow-up report, “without an enthusiastic and competent corps of teachers, FSL programs cannot be implemented successfully” (p. 32). One of the primary goals of the Action Plan is to put measures in place which seek to “provide better access, improve participation… quality… and students’ learning experience within the French Language post-secondary education system” (Action Plan 2005-06 to 2008-09). In his comprehensive report on the status of FSL at three levels of learning in Canada, Stern (1985) observed that due to a preoccupation with French at the primary and secondary levels, the important role of post-secondary FSL instruction has not been given the attention that it deserves. Stern calls for a recognition of the crucial need for quality FSL teaching at the university level in order to maintain the general standard of FSL in Canada.

Reporting on a recent study entitled: “Two languages, a world of opportunities: Second Language Learning in Canada’s Universities”, the Office of Commissioner of Official Languages (OCOL) laments that very little research has been conducted on second-language teaching and learning in the post-secondary context. While extensive knowledge has been accumulated about second language learning at the elementary and secondary levels in Canada, less is known about learning at the university level – the extent of current second-language learning opportunities, key items and challenges, and what is effective (OCOL, 2010, p. iii)

Further, the study, which involved key informant interviews and focus groups with students, professors, administrators and other stakeholders, found that language programs, perceived as “inferior to true academic domains” are therefore not valued in the university context (OCOL, p. 19). In addition to the fact that French (or other languages) were given “no place” in English language universities, it was reported that the teaching approach tended to focus on literature rather than “actual language teaching and learning” (p. 19). Most importantly, the study found that students desired “more focus on oral and written communication skills and opportunities to use language in everyday, real-life situations, as well as closer links to academic subject-matter content and areas of career interest” (p. 19). Thus, based on these key findings, there is a call for students to be afforded increased opportunities for language use and practice, and more opportunities for them to interact with speakers of the language. The report also called for more effective teaching, smaller classes, and other learning support (e.g. tutoring) as well as a greater
commitment on the part of high level university administrators to play a key role in improving teaching and learning in the post-secondary context.

However, while the scenarios described above provide an impetus and some form of rationale for research into these issues, this study seeks to go beyond government expectations and reform policies, as these tend to adopt a one-size-fits-all solution to educational problems. Rather, this inquiry seeks to explore the experiences of language teachers and students in their particular contexts and describe and document how holistic approaches are operationalized in these contexts.

Through my personal experiences as a L2 learner and subsequently as a FSL teacher, I have become aware of the complexities of language instruction and some of the challenges faced by both teachers and students. This “personal practical knowledge” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998) combined with my doctoral studies has led to a vision which centers on the notions of interconnectedness, wisdom and compassion in education. As Romanysyn (2007) reflects, “research with soul in mind, re-search that proceeds in depth and from the depths, is about finding what has been lost, forgotten, neglected, marginalized, or otherwise left behind” (p. xi). This present research has been designed with the intention of examining the implications of some of these notions within the framework of holistic education and their adoption / implementation into the second language curriculum. Given the realities of my current context, I have become increasingly aware of the benefits of holism and its potential in fostering wholeness and engagement in education. Although this research applies to language education on a whole, this inquiry also focuses primarily on the case of FSL teachers in the post-secondary context, and its main purpose is to identify, describe and document, the various ways in which post-secondary instructors nurture their own presence in order to teach to the whole student: body mind and spirit.

Research Context

Second language programs are offered at post-secondary institutions across Canada. The Association of University and Community Colleges of Canada (AUCC) lists 129 institutions of higher learning, of which there are 23 universities and 24 community colleges in the province of Ontario. In the context of my research, the term “post-secondary” is synonymous with “higher education” or “tertiary education” and refers to institutions of higher learning such as community colleges and universities that learners can access after having completed high school and / or have obtained the necessary equivalency. University programs include undergraduate and graduate degrees, continuing education (including long distance and part-time), joint college and university (diploma or degree) and cooperative educational
programs. There exists a wide range of disciplines represented in higher education. Language departments offer second or foreign language programs, of which French as a second language is one of the most common ones offered.

In its status as one of Canada’s two official languages, FSL refers to any program aimed at developing students’ proficiency in the French language and is offered across all levels of the education system - elementary, secondary and post-secondary. FSL is also taught in alternative public schools as well as private schools in all provinces across Canada. In the Ontario curriculum, FSL (notably Core French) is mandatory from Grades 4 to 9 and in order to obtain their high school diploma, all students must take an FSL course at the Grade 9 level. The Extended French and French immersion programs are designed to offer students greater exposure to, and experience in FSL and those who wish to continue may opt to take university preparation courses in Grades 11 and 12.

As stated in the current Ontario curriculum document published in 2000, FSL programs (i.e. Core, Extended and Immersion) are designed to “prepare students to perform effectively in the challenging world they will face by providing them with the skills they will need to communicate in a second language” (p. 1). To this end, the document outlines overall and specific expectations with regards to French language skills in oral communication, reading and writing for all FSL programs covering both primary and post-secondary levels. The document also states that: “To make the curriculum relevant to students’ lives, knowledge and skills are taught in contexts that reflect their interests and experiences” (p. 1). These are quite similar to the stated aims of most university language programs, as the goal is to continue along this continuum through post-secondary and into the labour force. Nevertheless, while there has been a lot of emphasis on the political and socio-economic benefits of FSL, it should be pointed out at this point, that this should not be considered the end of the journey. Language learning, like all learning should be viewed as a lifelong process; a great part of this research seeks to discover ways in which this can be (or is being) fostered.

In surveying the various post-secondary institutions in Ontario, FSL is most frequently designed to offer undergraduate courses ranging from beginner, intermediate to advanced levels. These are geared towards developing proficiency in the French language and may include courses in conversation, comprehension, pronunciation, grammar, survival language, as well as culture-focused courses. There are also specialized language courses including those designed for reading of specific (e.g. scientific) texts, those targeted to tourists, and courses for immigrants, just to mention the most popular ones. However,
according to the OCOL, despite what may seem like a wide range of courses, there remain some “serious gaps and unmet needs” (p. iii). The FSL post-secondary student population is quite diverse, comprising of recent high school graduates, as well as young adult and mature students. These students generally come from various social and ethnic backgrounds and reflect the typical Canadian multicultural mosaic (especially in larger urban communities).

In recent years, there has been a large inflow of international students in the post-secondary FSL classrooms (particularly in the community colleges) many of whom have had little or no previous FSL instruction. FSL undergraduate classes tend to be heterogeneous, not only in terms of students’ ethnicity, but also in terms of their level of competence, as some may come from immersion, core French, extended French and other traditional programs. As a result, their levels of proficiency are quite different and so too are their expectations and attitudes towards their language learning. Many of the first- or second-year undergraduate students enrol in these courses because of their interest in the language, but do not necessarily intend to specialize. As Case (1988) notes, a great number of students who enrol in FSL courses are not interested in French literature or linguistic studies. Their main motivation is to land a good federal or provincial job. In other words, their goal, for the most part, is to obtain a level of competence that will allow them to function, to express themselves and to communicate in the language (p. ix).

Efforts are still being made to achieve this goal. A CPF survey of university students who remained in core French revealed that: “Almost half reported that they could not understand spoken French; one-third expressed little confidence about their ability to function in a francophone environment; and most said they would not be able to carry on a conversation in French beyond a few set phrases” (CPF Literature Review, p. 12).

**From Fragmentation and Disengagement to Connectedness**

Research has shown that the lack of engagement in education can be largely attributed to the broader problem of fragmentation, which has characterized the western industrialized world (Capra, 1996; Bache, 2008; Miller, 2007; Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski & Flowers, 2005; Weil, 1994; Wilber, 1997). Although loosely defined as the act of ‘separating something into smaller parts’, fragmentation has become a dilemma which has greatly impacted all aspects of human life - economic, political, social and cultural – and has given rise to violence, fear, abuse, environmental destruction, global warming and a host of other problems (Campbell, 1986; Easterbrook, 2003; Weil, 1994). In addition to these external factors, fragmentation exists even within human beings themselves. The great American philosopher
Ralph Waldo Emerson has been quoted as saying that, “the reason why the world lacks unity, and lies broken and in heaps is because man is disunited with himself” (1990, p. 54).

Education has not escaped fragmentation. Over the past few decades there has been research which has sought to raise awareness of this problem along all phases of the educational continuum – particularly curriculum and instruction. Chris Bache (2008) relates fragmentation in education to the notions of Newtonian science where atoms are seen as separate and disconnected from each other. Bache describes this ‘atomistic’ worldview as one “…composed of separate parts, where the big parts are made of smaller parts that are made of smaller parts still until eventually you come down to an irreducible nugget…” (2008, p. 39). Similarly, other writers have observed that education is compartmentalized into a set of separate packages broken down into lessons, further sub-divided into units to be delivered by teachers to students in the classroom (Cummins, 2001; Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Miller, 2007; Weil, 1994).

Another form of fragmentation or separation, which has been prevalent in mainstream education - particularly in western industrialized societies - is the disconnection between mind and body. There is a tendency to focus only on cognitive skills (the head, or mind) while the other aspects of human development remain severely ignored (Miller, 2007; Cummins 2001; Weil, 1994; Johnson, 2004, 2006, Piccardo, 2010). This phenomenon has largely been linked to the misguided adoption and perpetuation of the Cartesian philosophy and its well-known adage: cogito ergo sum, “I think, therefore I am”. Furthermore, contemporary trends tend to place an over-emphasis on learning outcomes through standardized testing, thus creating further imbalance at all levels of the education system (Bache, 2008; Cummins, 2001; Hays, 2006; Miller 1993, 2000, 2006, 2007, 2010; Piccardo, 2010; Weil, 1994).

Evidence of this can be found in the imposition of reform programs such as No Child Left Behind, (NCLB3), which Koln (2007) has described as “an appalling and unredeemable experiment” (USA Today 2007, May 31). As Anne Quindlen (2005) is quoted as saying in a Newsweek article, “our education system is broken; accountability and standards will fix it. This is the mantra of government testing programs, from local certifications to the federal NCLB program, which might as well be called no child left untested” (p. 88). This approach to the curriculum has generated much criticism from progressive educators, researchers and theorists, and has been viewed as a real hindrance to teaching, learning and the general well-being of both students and teachers (Bache, 2008; Cummins, 2001; Hays, 2006; Tacey, 2004; Johnson & Neagley, 2011; Miller 1993, 2000, 2002, 2005, 2006, 2007; Weil, 1994).

3The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 is a standard-based education reform program legislated in the United States by the George W. Bush Administration.
Much of the discussion surrounding the notion of fragmentation in the education system and the barriers it presents to effective communication has stemmed from what Paulo Freire refers to as the “banking concept”. According to Freire:

Education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiqués and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize and repeat…the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filling and storing the deposits (2005, p. 72).

Freire’s description of this “fragmented view of reality” (2005, p. 73) as perpetuated by the banking concept is particularly widespread in traditional approaches to language pedagogy where students are expected to repeat and memorize words and phrases without perceiving their true meaning. Similarly, Cummins (2001) has observed this fragmentation in language classrooms, and points out that traditional pedagogy “decomposes language into its component parts (e.g. phonics, vocabulary, grammatical rules), which are then transmitted in isolation from each other; learning is assumed to progress in a hierarchical manner starting with simple elements and progressing to more complex forms” (p. 218). This orientation to language teaching can be contrasted with transformative pedagogy, which has been influenced by the works of Paulo Freire (Cummins, 2001; hooks, 1994; Miller 1993, 2000, 2002, 2005, 2006, 2007). This will be discussed in more detail in Chapters 2 and 3.

The traditional model as described above, along with the stifling test-driven curriculum which has become the norm at all levels of education, often results in the lack of engagement, boredom and even apathy among students and teachers alike, as they fail to see the connection between the parts and the whole. Iannone and Obenauf (1999) observe that: “Our instincts tell us that there is something more meaningful that we should be doing with education and the curriculum to engage students with the world” (p. 53). This yearning for meaning-making and fuller engagement is reflected in a variety of educational publications, in both the holistic and second language literature. As will be pointed out in this thesis, there has been a movement away from this fragmented view of education, especially in second language education, with the advent of communicative approaches to language teaching.

**Communicative Language Teaching: Embracing Change and Making Connections**

There is extensive research (Lapkin, 2003; Lightbown & Spada, 1993; Littlewood, 1981; Mollica, 2008; Mollica, Phillips & Smith, 2005; Savignon, 1983, 2007; Shea, 2004; Richards, 2003) that points to the effectiveness of communicative language teaching (CLT) in the development of overall proficiency in the target language while actively engaging students in the learning process. Savignon (2006) affirms
that the essence of CLT is “the engagement of learners in communication in order to allow them to develop their communicative competence” (p. 209).

Additionally, approaches such as the Whole Language, as the name suggests, could be considered holistic given that it is intended to focus on activities that are meaningful and relevant to students’ lives, needs and experiences, its use of authentic material and its facilitation of all aspects of L2 learning (Freeman & Freeman, 1992; Richards & Rodgers, 1986). However, citing the work of Aaron (1991), Richards and Rogers point out some criticism of Whole Language as being “anti-direct teaching, anti-skills and anti-materials, assuming that authentic texts are sufficient to support second language learning and that skill development will follow without special attention” (2001, p. 113). Further, while its suitability for adult learners when compared to the instructional approaches used or recommended in communicative language learning has been brought into question (Richards & Rodgers, 2001) others have praised the effectiveness of Whole Language in fostering adult literacy (Brockman, 1994). Bergeron (1990) in her review of the literature on the subject, points out the differences in the definitions and descriptions offered by authors in the primary and elementary as opposed to those in the university contexts. Details on the research surrounding whole language and other SLT methodologies will be further discussed in Chapter 2.

A growing number of French language teachers at various levels of education in Canada have recognized the holistic vision and have adopted practices (including the arts, drama, improvisation, and storytelling) into the FSL curriculum in an effort to engage students and enhance their learning experience. In so doing, they have demonstrated possibilities of transforming the teaching and learning experience in a very structured world. Since the early 1980’s there has been a proliferation of resource manuals with detailed descriptions of so-called communicative activities designed for the language classroom. CLT also allows for the inclusion of a wide range of strategies including holistic teaching strategies however, there are no specific guidelines on the most effective ways to integrate these into L2 programs for older learners. This tends to confirm the research findings from the OCOL.

While many of the CLT activities have roots in holistic education and have been adapted for use with language learners, there has been little research focusing specifically on holistic teaching in language classrooms. Additionally, Savignon (2007) points out the lack of attention given to teacher education in the CLT literature. Based on her review of the research undertaken in CLT in Asia, Latin America and North America, Savignon (2007) draws our attention to “a disconnection between the theory explained in university methods classes and classroom teaching practices [and that] …there persists considerable
confusion among classroom teachers and their students as to the meaning of CLT” (p. 215). Spada (2006) also observes that due to the many different interpretations and implementations of CLT, it has become “a rather vacuous term”, and calls for the need to strike a balance which allows for “the integration of language…with communicative skills” (p. 271). My research investigates ways in which holistic pedagogy in FSL teaching is adopted, implemented and operationalized, in the post-secondary context. Further, it heeds the call to go “beyond methods” (Kumaravadivelu, 2003) and pay attention to “the practical understanding of the participants themselves” (Savignon, 2007, p. 213).

Moreover, much of the literature on holistic education highlights the effective implementation of holistic practices in diverse educational contexts. In Holistic Learning and Spirituality in Education: Breaking New Ground, Miller, Karsten, Denton, Orr and Kates (2005) present many such works related to science, mathematics, computer applications. However, there has not been empirical research focused specifically on holistic teaching practices in language classrooms, particularly in the FSL post-secondary context. This research study attempts to fill this void, given its particular focus on investigating ways in which post-secondary (language) FSL teachers seek to inspire a spirit of connectedness within themselves, their students, their immediate learning environment and the community on a whole.

Significance of the Study

Exploring together

As evidenced by the preceding discussion and my research questions, my principal preoccupation has been to gain a richer and more accurate understanding of (holistic) SLT practices within the parameters and boundaries of the post-secondary context. Of particular interest is the role of instructors in this endeavour. As a college instructor, I became increasingly focused on the idea of collaborating with other L2 or FSL teachers, while exploring ways in which their practices might inform my own knowledge and understanding of this larger phenomenon and thus draw on its potential benefits to me and to my students.

Studies presented by Gardner and Lambert (1972) and Gardner (1985), have called for the need to understand other contexts affecting second language learning. As Moyer (2004, p. 2) asserts: “Narrowly focused explanations for SLA outcomes do little to an appreciation for such complexity” (i.e. language teaching and learning). Hence, my interest in going beyond my own classroom environment naturally led to the idea of acknowledging the “whole” reality of the post-secondary L2 / FSL landscape. This
“holistic” understanding allowed me to make the necessary connections which would not only benefit me and my students, but also the wider community of post-secondary teachers and students.

The following observation by Freeman and Hawkins (2004) resonates strongly with me on both a personal and professional level:

Teachers generally work in isolation. They spend much of their time in individual pursuits without the chance to confer or collaborate professionally with others: teaching in their classrooms, planning lessons, and communicating with their students. Opportunities to exchange ideas or discuss with colleagues what they know or believe are rare and valued. Most professional development fails to counteract such isolation. The chance to think together, in disciplined ways, through collaborative exploration, reflection, and conversation is key (p. 3).

One of the main aims of this narrative case study, therefore, is to tap into, explore and document the various rewards and challenges that result as teachers interact and share in the negotiation of meaning. The desire to learn more nudged me into a new direction where I could further connect with a community of (holistic) FSL practitioners. Although the research design does not permit generalization beyond the study context, I believe that this authentic inquiry serves to increase our understanding of holistic education and begin to develop the basis of a theory - or at the very least, a common language - for discussing this approach to L2 / FSL teaching and learning in the Canadian post-secondary context.

Therefore I believe that this current study is of significance given the lack of research on holistic education in the post-secondary context and more specifically how it is operationalized in language (particularly FSL) undergraduate programs. In addition, the importance of “engaged pedagogy” in the FSL post-secondary context and the potential use of holistic pedagogical strategies in language classrooms along with its possible benefits to classroom teachers, teacher educators, and FSL students at all levels, also merit further exploration. Most importantly, I believe that the interpretations drawn from the data collected in this research study will enhance and where appropriate, transform teaching and curricular approaches and attitudes in the L2 classroom, the wider community and beyond.

**Positioning Myself**

**Negotiating My Holistic and Linguistic Identity**

I have become quite familiar with the old saying that we cannot know where we are going unless we know where we've been. This is an opportune moment to highlight the key experiences or legacies which have contributed to my current pursuits and particularly my role in this research. Further, I have
been exposed to a variety of opportunities which have served to deepen my understanding of theory, practice and research relating to curriculum, teaching and learning, particularly in the area of holistic and second language education. This process has enabled me to have a greater appreciation for people, places, language and culture, which have all contributed to the analysis of the research. The various stages which have led to this research are outlined in Figure 1.

![Figure 1. Stages in personal development leading up to the study.](image)

First, I retrace my steps back to the island of Dominica⁴ the land of my birth. It was during my formative years in Dominica that I have had my first experiences with nature, family, schooling, work and parenting. In retrospect, I now realize that the awe-inspiring natural environment in which I grew up along with my elementary learning which enveloped a spirited engagement of mind, body and heart, may have been the catalyst for my growing interest in holistic education. Therefore in this exploration of my journey as a researcher / educator, it is with great reverence that I acknowledge the land of my birth, and the positive earth connections there, in which I am grounded.

Further, there is little doubt that much of my interest in languages had been triggered by the experience of growing up in a lively and rich linguistic environment. Even before my formal introduction to L2 learning in high school, I developed a keen sense of awareness and varying degrees of interaction with the three main linguistic groups around me: The vibrant, expressiveness of Creole, its mythical oral presence (especially its ludic and lucid function for telling stories and jokes); the “seriousness” of English, imposed as the official language; and last but not least, there was the lingering legacy of French,

⁴Also known as the “Nature Island of the Caribbean”, with its rich abundance of flora and fauna, waterfalls, lakes and 365 rivers – one for every day of the year - Dominica has been voted among the top 10 ecotourism destinations in the world.
ever present as the lexical base for the Creole language and anchored as it were, in the human and physical landscape (still evident by the names of people, towns and villages throughout the island). It was a fascinating arena for observing and experiencing, the various socio-cultural, political and economic interplay of these languages and the impact that this had on the community.

Migrating from Dominica brought a different dimension to my experiences with various concepts and theories relating to both holistic education and language learning in higher education. I consider my sojourn in France very significant as I was afforded the opportunity to travel outside of my island for the first time. As a mature student, I became exposed to a whole new world. Through reflection on this “real-life” journey, I came to appreciate even more the importance of interaction and immersion for second language learners. This multicultural milieu (with students from diverse racial, socio-economic backgrounds) within an FSL program is a phenomenon which for the most part, characterizes the current Canadian FSL context at all levels.

**Language, Spirituality and Education in the Dominican Diaspora**

When I immigrated to Canada in 1992, as a mature woman I brought with me a wide range of experiences relating to language, spirituality and education. My background has afforded me the opportunity to fully experience the epistemological questions that arise from Dominican orality and the space that language occupies in the community. Inevitably, I decided to apply these several theoretical and academic interests to studying the Dominican diaspora in Toronto. In 2002, I undertook a qualitative research initiative which sought to study the attitudes / perceptions of Dominicans resident in Toronto towards their language of origin; in particular their sense of identity with the language, its status and role, and the learning strategies used by families to acquaint their children with the language in the multicultural environment of Toronto. Despite the fact that it is often a passive knowledge of the language that is transmitted, the very nature of this orality vehicles certain essential ethical, linguistic and spiritual codes. Given the relationship between language (in terms of cultural experience / expression) and spirituality, I became interested in studying the connection between spirituality, commitment to social change and community work among the Dominican diaspora in Toronto.

Another significant project which has strengthened my knowledge and skills in several areas pertinent to research on language, education and spirituality was my involvement with the Bridging the Solitudes Project in 2001. Funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), the Community-University Research Alliance program, labour unions, post-secondary institutions as well as
other community agencies, this access and equity project was aimed at facilitating the transition of marginalized youth into college and university education and/or their integration into the workplace. In my role as peer mentor to these youth, I was able to witness the plight of these young people and their struggles which were often expressions of crises of identity. This phenomenon is thoroughly discussed in Case’s (1985) work entitled *The Crisis of Identity: Studies in the Guadeloupean and Martiniquan Novel*.

Coming to Canada has been a very important leg of the journey and has afforded me numerous opportunities for growth in all aspects of my life. I have had many eye-opening experiences in my on-going struggles as an immigrant, visible minority woman, sole-support parent… I have found new hope in my meaning-making quest through the pursuit of post-secondary education. The community college / university articulation program that I enrolled in provided a sanctuary for future learning and teaching endeavours. Through undergraduate studies in Communication Studies and French Studies followed by a Master of Arts degree in French Language and Literature, I became exposed to a variety of language teaching and learning approaches, methods and strategies.

More importantly, I have been afforded the opportunity to observe and interact with a great number of instructors and students. My accomplishments in this venture fuelled my desire to pursue higher learning opportunities (i.e. doctoral studies), which have steered me into the teaching profession. So far, it has been a rejuvenating and inspirational challenge to work and interact with professionals and students from diverse backgrounds. I enjoy working with my colleagues and students as a team of learners who have come to post-secondary to achieve a common goal – to gain mastery of our personal lives, our academic lives and our careers. Stories gleaned from these experiences, combined with that of teacher education assistant and community college FSL instructor, will inform this narrative case study.
Roadmap to the Thesis

“Life is one big road with lots of signs...”
Bob Marley

In Chapter 1, I began with the background information leading to the research questions and the rationale for undertaking the study. The issue of fragmentation and disengagement and the need for connectedness through engagement in L2 teaching and learning, particularly within the FSL post-secondary context, constituted a major part of the discussion. The latter part of the chapter was devoted to positioning myself in the research, by sharing aspects of my journey as a learner, and educator, and how these events / experiences have shaped or informed the current study.

Chapter 2 consists of a review of the literature highlighting the dominant message in relation to curriculum, teaching and learning, and the relevant interconnecting themes pertinent to both holistic and second language education. Specifically, this review seeks to synthesize the relevant concepts related to the notion holistic interconnectedness and the various trends / movements in traditional, as well as communicative approaches to L2 teaching and learning.

In Chapter 3, I present the various theoretical frameworks, which have been used as lenses for understanding the research findings. As well, a unified framework which integrates the concepts gleaned from the various models examined from both holistic and second language theorists is presented.

Chapter 4 offers a detailed description of the research design and methodology used in this qualitative study, which consists of a blend of narrative and case study methodologies. Detailed descriptions are given of the multiple sources and instruments used for data collection as well as the analysis and representation of the data. My role as a researcher, the ethical considerations along with the limitations of the study are also presented, followed by the quality criteria relating to the validity of the research.

Chapters 5 to 8 consist of the findings gleaned from the various data sources. Although each of these chapters generally tends to focus on one of the research questions, given the “inter-connected” nature of this inquiry, relevant aspects of the questions are addressed in all the data chapters, to varying degrees.

Chapter 5 foreshadows the other data chapters and is designed to help us get to know the participants. Portraits depicting their educational background, teaching experience, how they perceive
their roles as educators in the post-secondary context, as well as their perceptions of teaching presence are presented.

In Chapter 6, I present the language learning experiences of the instructor-participants, and the lessons learned (or insights gained) from these experiences. Participants’ beliefs about language teaching (and learning) and how these have helped in shaping their orientation to curriculum, teaching and learning will also be presented and discussed.

In Chapter 7, I present a detailed overview of what instructors actually do to engage students in their language learning. I highlight the diverse holistic interconnections discovered not only in their classrooms, but on campus and in the wider francophone community.

In Chapter 8, I revisit the instructors’ perspectives on the notion of teaching presence, triangulated with students’ voices in terms of their experience of this phenomenon, and its role in fostering various holistic interconnections (or relationships) in the language teaching and learning environment.

Finally, in Chapter 9, I present a summary of the major findings and themes which emerged from this inquiry as well as their interpretations and implications for holistic / language teaching-learning. This is followed by an epilogue which highlights some reflections relating to the impact of the study from the participants’ point of view, as well as a glimpse of ideas and prospects for future study in the field of holistic education and second language teaching / learning.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this Chapter is to map out the body of knowledge related to this research study as contained in the scholarly literature developed around holistic and second language education. Specifically, this review includes topics and themes relevant to concepts and / or research studies undertaken in holistic education and identifies and discusses ways in which they (inter)connect with second language teaching. Starting from the broader field of curriculum, teaching and learning, I gradually zone in on the various aspects that relate specifically to holistic education and second or foreign language pedagogy within the post-secondary context.

Re-identifying Curricular Aims

The term curriculum or syllabus - as it is often called in higher education - is difficult to define and so an attempt at identifying its aims is just as illusive. Various theorists, researchers and scholars have offered different definitions in their efforts to unravel the complexities of this term. For the most part, curriculum has traditionally been narrowly defined in terms of what is to be learned (basic skills and content), and how it is to be learned (methods). However, John Dewey’s (1916, 1938) work has served to broaden the definition of curriculum, thereby situating it firmly in the domain of student experience. This view of curriculum has significantly contributed to the educational discourse, and in more recent years has become widely influential in inspiring a student-centered approach to curricular issues, especially those related to teaching and learning.

Further, Parkay et al. (1996) seem to capture the essence of this term by offering that: “Curriculum refers to the experiences, both planned and unplanned, that enhance (and sometimes impede) the education and growth of students” (p. 322). This serves as a broad working definition, as it speaks primarily to the important relationship between curriculum and instruction; it goes a long way in emphasizing that the aim of engaging in this enterprise is to promote student learning and development. Traditionally, this process has been narrowly restricted to the intellect, thereby presenting a hindrance to the student’s meaningful experience of learning and overall growth. The quest for effectiveness in curricular issues, obviously relates to all aspects of students’ lives, as Allingham (1992) illustrates in her exhaustive list of over 30 items / experiences that can be associated with curriculum:
The curriculum is text books and storybooks, and the pictures -- and the seating plan and the group work and the posters and the music, the announcements, the prayers and readings the language spoken in the school, the food in the cafeteria the visitors to the classrooms, the reception of parents in the office, the race (or races) of the office staff, the custodial staff, the teachers, the administration, the displays of students’ work, the school teams and sports played, the clubs, the school logo or emblem, the field trips, the assignments and projects the facial expressions and body language of everybody, the clothes everybody wears...it is the whole environment (p. 20, italics in original text).

Although this definition may have been construed primarily with the public (primary / secondary) school environment in mind, many of the elements mentioned can also be applied to the post-secondary context, especially as Allingham appropriately concludes by stating that: “It is the whole environment.” Allingham’s statement resonates well, especially within the context of this research, as it speaks to the notion of wholeness in curriculum, teaching and learning. Furthermore, this certainly uncovers certain aspects that have been referred to as the “hidden curriculum”, a concept which brought about a new dimension in curricular discourse from the late 1960s to the 80s by such scholars as Dreeben (1967), Vallance (1973), Willis (1977), Apple (1982, 2004), Giroux (1983) and Margolis (2001). In his comprehensive analysis of these theorists, Kentli (2009) concludes that the hidden curriculum involves an exploration of how students are informed and socialized by pedagogical practices, and the need to take these factors into consideration in educational research.

The Self that Teaches: The “Who” Question

Moreover, as Palmer (1998, p. 4) appropriately points out, despite its importance, very little attention has been paid to “the self that teaches” yet this “who” question is equally important, when discussing issues related to curriculum, teaching and learning. This current research, with its focus on teachers, triangulated with student voices (surveys / focus groups) endeavours to take this question into consideration. In other words, not only does it focus on what the teachers do, and how they teach, but also on who they are: their feelings, insights, beliefs, assumptions, etc., which are essential in their motivation for bringing about transformation in the teaching and learning environment. As Booth (2006) shares: “Students have to see you immediately as who you are, what your job is, and to recognize what you have to offer. You strip yourself to the essence of teacher: “I am here to be with you, so that together we can do more than you can do by yourself” (p. 70).

The general consensus among many respected researchers in education has been that teachers’ beliefs are at the heart of why they do what they do. Maxine Greene, states:
Teaching is purposeful action . . . [the teacher’s] intentions will inevitably be affected by the assumptions he makes regarding human nature and human possibility. Many of these assumptions are hidden. Most have never been activated. If he is to achieve clarity and full consciousness, the teacher must attempt to make such assumptions explicit; for only then can they be examined, analyzed and understood (1973, pp. 69-70).

Palmer (1998) reminds us of the importance for teachers to reflect on their own “inner landscape”. In addition, this awareness relates to research findings by Laconte and Canabal (2005) which affirm that what teachers bring with them to the classroom is relevant. In addition, Yero (2002) states that beliefs contribute to the “understanding of the social, cultural and institutional context where teaching takes place” (p. 34).

Further, Csikszentmihalyi (1996) sheds some light on this phenomenon by making an interesting distinction between “teacher” and “professor”, while drawing on the etymological and historical analysis of the two terms. Csikszentmihalyi explains that whereas the former has traditionally been concerned primarily with transferring information to students, the latter relates more to the notion of “professing” which, in middle English and older Latin signifies “being bound by a vow and having faith in expressing allegiance to some idea or goal” (1996, p. 72). Csikszentmihalyi affirms that the most effective professors are those who have the intrinsic motivation for learning and are therefore in a better position to educate others. He identifies the intrinsic rewards from learning as “the enjoyment one gets here and now from the act of learning itself, and not from what follows later from having acquired the knowledge” (1996, p. 73). Csikszentmihalyi further notes that:

Higher education succeeds or fails in terms of motivation, not cognitive transfer of information. It succeeds if it instils in students a willingness to pursue knowledge for its own sake; it fails if students learn simply in order to get a degree. The best way to get students to believe that it makes sense to pursue knowledge is to believe in it oneself (1996, p. 72).

An Ethic of Care in the Curriculum

In keeping with the above discussions, it would be no exaggeration to state that effective teaching goes hand in hand with curriculum in order to develop the “whole student” -- an endeavour that can best be achieved by connecting with students and by adapting an integrated approach to teaching. Effective teaching inevitably involves an on-going effort to motivate students to acquire an excitement for life-long learning. Several scholars have argued that these relationships can only flourish in a loving and caring environment. The consensus among these authors, researchers and educators is that the element of care in the teaching and learning environment is of utmost importance to the well-being of students, their

In his review of the Poplin and Weeres (1992) study on the status of schools in the US, Cummins (2001) highlights that:

No group inside the schools felt adequately respected, connected or affirmed. Students, over and over again, raised the issue of care. What they liked best about school was when people, particularly teachers, cared about them or did special things for them. Dominating their complaints were being ignored, not being cared for and receiving negative treatment (p. 1)

bell hooks -- who has written extensively about teachers’ practices in the post-secondary context -- offers a perspective, which significantly contributes to this conversation. hooks (1994) affirms that teachers should teach in a way that “respects and cares for the souls of our children” (p. 13), adding that teachers’ work is “...not merely to share information but to share in the intellectual and spiritual growth of our students” (1994, p. 13). Indeed, by making reference to the words “soul” and “spiritual growth”, hooks sheds light on a new dimension to this discussion (which will be explored more fully later in this chapter).

A Higher Purpose in Higher Education

hooks is not alone in this affirmation. Palmer and Zajonc (2010) remind us of the purpose of university education in their book entitled The Heart of Higher Education: A Call for Renewal. The authors provide a rationale for this call for renewal by citing the works of former university deans Harry Lewis and Anthony Kronman of Harvard College and Yale Law School respectively. As Lewis (2007) observes, “Harvard and other great universities [have] lost sight of the essential purpose of undergraduate education” (p. xv). Lewis asserts that the aim of the curriculum is to help students “learn who they are, to search for a larger purpose for their lives, and to leave college as better human beings” (2007, p. xiv). Kronman makes a similar observation, stating that, “college or university is not just a place for the
transmission of knowledge but a forum for the exploration of life’s mystery and meaning through the careful but critical reading of the great works of literary and philosophical imagination” (2007, p. 6).

**Aiming for Happiness in Education**

It would also be useful to emphasize the significance of aims, which is often overlooked in educational discourse yet constitutes a fundamental consideration in curriculum development and effective teaching. Noddings (2003) affirms that, “…without continual, reflective discussion of aims, education may become a poor substitute for its best vision. Moreover, just as freedom takes on newer and richer meanings as times change, so must the aims of education change” (p. 76). By drawing on the works of Dewey, Noddings (2003, 2004) raises awareness of the importance of aims, which, among other things: remind us of what education is about; help us make informed decisions relating to curriculum and teaching; underscore the value of teachers and teaching; help us ask the right big questions; and support the quest for effectiveness. Noddings therefore posits that this ethics of care is linked to happiness. We are more likely to feel happy (or safe) in an environment where we know that we are being cared for, and the classroom is no exception.

A number of contemporary scholars have rekindled the discourse on happiness and the human condition, tracing its origins in Western Thought to the writings of Aristotle and Plato (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Mills, 2011; Smith, 2005). By drawing on Aristotle’s take on happiness, Mills (2011) affirms that, “other things for example wealth, esteem, pleasure are but means to the main goal, which is happiness… our main aim as educators, should be to educate to enhance happiness” (p. 23). Again, reference must be made to the works of Nel Noddings, whose book appropriately titled *Happiness and Education* is a valuable resource in the understanding of this phenomenon. Noddings (2003, 2004) laments the frequent exclusion of this important component from educational aims talk in Western society, affirming that: “People want to be happy and since this desire is well-nigh universal, we would expect to find happiness included as an aim of education. Its failure to appear among the aims usually stated might be a sign that Western society is still mired in a form of Puritanism” (2004, p.131).

**Finding Flow or Optimal Experience**

Csikszentmihalyi, in his seminal work entitled *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience* poses the question: “If happiness is really the bottom line of life, what do we know about it?” Csikszentmihalyi (1990) describes happiness as “the prototype of positive emotions” (p. 18), makes reference to Aristotelian thought, and affirms that: “…everything we do is ultimately aimed at experiencing happiness.
We don’t really want wealth, or health, or fame as such – we want these things because we hope that they will make us happy…” (pp.18-19). Csikszentmihalyi takes up this challenge of finding out more about this elusive term primarily through a method entitled Experience Sampling Method (ESM). His research involving people from different walks of life and from numerous countries across the globe illustrates that the way to happiness is by enhancing the quality of our inner experiences. Thus, Csikszentmihalyi presents the notion of “optimal experience” or flow, which he defines as: “the state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter; the experience itself is so enjoyable that people will do it even at great cost, for the sake of doing it” (1990, p. 4). Tied to this, is the notion of attention, which Csikszentmihalyi refers to as “psychic energy” affirming that: “Attention shapes the self and is shaped by the self… attention is the most important tool in the task of improving the quality of experiences…” (1990, p. 34). Csikszentmihalyi’s conceptualization of the notion of flow in education has been greatly influenced by the work of Dewey (1938) who referred to a continuous spiral process, described as follows:

It is part of the educator’s responsibility to see equally two things. First, that the problem grows out of the conditions of the experience being had in the present, and that it is within the capacity of students; and, secondly, that it is such that it arouses in the learner an active quest for information and for production of new ideas. The new facts and new ideas thus obtained become the ground for new experiences in which new problems are presented. The process is a continued spiral. (p. 79).

There has been growing interest in research focusing on flow in various pedagogical practices in a variety of educational contexts. As Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi (2009) note: “Educational settings present an important arena for applying an understanding of flow” (p. 2002). For example, in their study Rathunde and Csikszentmihalyi (2005) found that Montessori students experienced more flow and higher levels of motivation than their counterparts in traditional school settings. With regards to research on classroom activities both in high school (Shernoff, Csikszentmihalyi, Shneider & Shernoff, 2003) and post-secondary (Peterson & Miller, 2004), research revealed that flow experiences were more common in cooperative learning than in passive, lecture-based environments. In addition, studies have found a correlation between teachers’ experiences of flow and that of their students’ as well as students’ intellectual engagement (Basom & Frase, 2004). In her phenomenological study entitled “Holistic education: Flow and pulse of learning”, Nigh (2011) presents the experiences of her drama students who reported a high level of engagement and focused energy while applying mind / body awareness exercises in the natural environment.
I now present some of the research that has been done in second language education which has utilised this idea of flow.

To my knowledge, very little research has been undertaken with regards to flow in the language teaching and learning environment. Tardy and Snyder (2004), in their exploratory interview-based study entitled “That’s why I do it’: Flow and teachers’ values, beliefs, and practices”, investigate the experience of flow among 10 English-as-a-Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in Turkey. They found that “describing flow experiences gave teachers the opportunity to reflect upon when they perceive learning to occur in the classroom, and when they personally felt most engaged, involved and excited about their teaching” (2001, p. 123, italics in original text). Egbert (2003) in her research entitled “The study of flow theory in the foreign language classroom” reports on the existence of flow in language classrooms. More specifically, Egbert (2003) highlights both theoretical and empirical research related to this phenomenon, while exploring the various characteristics of, as well as the conditions that need to be in place in order to experience flow; she also lays out the groundwork for future research on flow and learning.

In addition to examining the various relationships between flow and language learning, Egbert (2003) discusses the theoretical relationships, barriers to flow, along with an analysis of a variety of tasks / activities that encourage flow. From a theoretical standpoint, this research on flow provided the lenses for investigating: balance between challenge and skill, a person’s interest, control and attention focus during an activity. Details surrounding the theory of flow (as an emergent theme in my research) and its adaptation / integration into the lenses for analysing my data are further discussed in Chapter 3.

The Flow of Engagement: Well-being, Joy and Enthusiasm

The term “well-being” has also been used interchangeably with happiness (Vernon, 2008; Huxley 2004; hooks, 1994) and is defined as “a person’s cognitive and affective evaluations of his or her life” (Diener, Oishi & Lucas, 2009, p. 187). In the context of my research, the term happiness is synonymous with joy – a term which often appears in the holistic education literature. In Educating for Wisdom and Compassion, Miller (2006) highlights this phenomenon, making reference to people like the late poet William Blake, Nelson Mandela, the Dalai Lama who are noted for their ability to share that spirit of joy. Miller (2007) further points out that “timeless learning leads to a deep sense of joy” (p. 154). Emerson’s affirmation that, “nothing great has ever been achieved without enthusiasm” (2003, p. 324) reminds us of the importance of the notion of enthusiasm and its close link to happiness and joy. In their book Teaching with Joy, Shelton-Colangelo, Mancuso and Duvall (2007) present the works of several authors who have
integrated these important elements into their (post-secondary) teaching. My research is aimed at finding ways in which second language, particularly FSL instructors seek to foster the spirit of joy, happiness and enthusiasm, in their L2 teaching-learning environments.

Thus, second language education (and education on a whole) should not be seen solely as preparation for succeeding in a material world, but should instil in students a sense of connectedness within themselves and their environment, which would, in turn, lead to full engagement in their language learning. Loehr and Schwartz (2005) assert that: “To be fully engaged, we must be physically energized, emotionally connected, mentally focused and spiritually aligned with a purpose beyond our immediate self-interest” (p. 5). These authors join voices with many educators and theorists who have recognized that full engagement requires paying attention to the whole person – i.e. the physical, emotional, mental, aesthetical and spiritual - in order to achieve wholeness.

**Holistic Teaching and Learning**

**Interconnectedness in Holistic Teaching and Learning**

Holistic education recognizes the importance of interconnectedness and aims to connect education to the vital realities of nature (Miller 2007, Cajete, 1994). As Cajete asserts: “The old dichotomy of head and heart, science and religion, beauty and function seemed to be about fragmentation and we needed to see things in larger wholes” (994, p. 21). Further, Cajete calls for balance and flexibility in teaching, while catering to the needs of both the individuals and the community. Cajete affirms that “our physical and biological survival is intimately interwoven with the communities that we create and that create us” (p. 166). Similarly, Johnson (2011) recognizes ecological understanding as an essential component of human capacities for spiritual growth stating that “ecological thinking honours both the physical embodied nature of being and the connected, interdependent, relationship nature of the earth its life-forms (and potentially, the universe)” (p. 9 italics in original text). Hence, in seeking wholeness in teaching and learning, it is important to consider the importance of connectedness, inclusion and balance, which constitute the basic principles of holistic education (Miller, 2005, 2007; Miller, R., 2002).

From the holistic perspective “learning is the active construction of meaning by persons, the understanding of a whole, a process that is in some essential way different from learning a series of parts or elements” (Miller & Seller, 1985 p. 151). Similarly, Gandhi (1980) describes the learner as an indivisible whole, consisting of head, hand and heart but he laments that in our current school system, only the head is recognized. Gandhi asserts that:
But unless the development of the mind and body goes hand in hand with a corresponding awakening of the soul, the former alone would prove to be a poor lopsided affair. By spiritual training I mean education of the heart. A proper and all round development of the mind, therefore, can take place only when it proceeds *pari passu* with the education of the physical and spiritual faculties of the child. They constitute an indivisible whole (1958/1988, p. 138).

Gandhi therefore reminds us of the importance of all aspects of the student development – intellectual, physical, spiritual - in other words the “heart and soul” - which constitute the essence of this research.

**Connectedness to the “Whole”: Body, Mind and Spirit**

Gallegos (2001) discusses the meaning of the word holistic as follows:

The term “holistic” comes from the Greek *holos*, which in our context means wholeness. The term refers to comprehending reality as a function of a whole in the integrated processes. The term “holistic” is used to denote that reality is an undivided whole; that it is not fragmented; that the entirety is the fundamental reality. The whole, from such a perspective, is not a static structure, but a universal, impermanent flow. The type of intelligence necessary to comprehend it is different from mechanical thought...The holistic vision is based on an integration of knowledge. Science, art, spirituality and traditions interface with one another to create a culture of wisdom that overcomes the fragmentation of knowledge manifested in the academic disciplines. Given that it is not possible to comprehend the new reality from isolated disciplines, however, the holistic vision is transdisciplinary by nature (p. 13).

The aim of holistic education, therefore, is to educate the whole student: “intellectual, emotional, physical, social, aesthetic, and spiritual” (Miller et al., 2005, p. 2). Thus, in addition to inspiring students’ academic success, holistic educators seek to encourage communication and problem-solving not only through analytical thinking, but also through intuitive and creative thinking; hence the importance of the arts in holistic education environments, for the development of students’ artistic sense, and for helping them find purpose and direction in their lives.

This worldview is manifested in the work of Rudolph Steiner, pioneer of Waldorf education (Steiner, 2007). Also, Maria Montessori, the founder of Montessori schools has developed what she terms “cosmic education” which relates to seeing our planet as part of the universe (Boone, 2005; Miller, 2007). As we have seen, in addition to a sense of purpose, holistic education promotes joy in the teaching and learning environment, as it is believed that we all have a right to this joy and happiness which, as Noddings (2003, 2004) notes, should be included among the aims of education.
Further, 18th century French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau - one of the fore-founding fathers of holistic education - believed that the educators should respect the student’s individuality and that love should be the basis of all relations between teachers and students (Miller, 2007; Forbes, 2003). Similarly, Palmer (2010, p. 96-97) invites us to suspend our notions of romantic love and suggests that we consider an “epistemology of love”, a notion which comprises of the following seven interrelated states: respect, gentleness, intimacy, vulnerability, participation and transformation and finally imaginative insight. These, he posits are essential in an integrative educational environment.

In the course of my research journey, I have had the opportunity to explore various media (film, video, CDs, DVDs, etc.), which have served to inform and broaden my understanding of language teaching-learning in different contexts. One of the most inspiring documentary films on education entitled Étre et Avoir (To be and to have), features Georges Lopez, an exemplary teacher in rural France, whose patience, kindness and empathy for his students is described by reviewer Rob Thompson as “the purest expression of love ever seen on film”. Although he uses traditional methods (such as dictations, tests, etc.), Lopez’ approach demonstrates that the element of love is fundamental to good teaching. The message in this film stands in stark contrast to critically acclaimed film Entre les murs (Between the walls or The Class) based on Francois Beguadeau’s book Entre les murs which features a Parisian inner-city middle school. The film portrays the tensions and dilemmas experienced by both teachers and students and touches on many of the issues associated with lack of motivation and disengagement that are prevalent in many (language) classrooms around the world. Clearly, the documentary-style film demonstrates the disconnection between the teacher and students – or to put it bluntly - the blatant lack of love and the need for more meaningful interaction within and beyond the classroom. Phillip Falardeau’s Oscar-nominated film -- Monsieur Lazhar -- is also worth mentioning, as it strongly demonstrates the importance of attending to emotions in the learning environment and the vital role of teachers and the entire school community in helping students come to terms with the realities of life (and death).

With emphasis on nurturing the whole student, the aims of holistic education are quite in keeping with those of the renowned Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), which advocates recasting the definition of the successful learner “…from one whose achievement is measured solely by academic tests, to one who is knowledgeable, emotionally and physically healthy, civically inspired, engaged in the arts, prepared for work and economic self-sufficiency, and ready for the world beyond formal schooling” (ASCD “Schools matter…”). This vision of education has been embraced by private schools like Waldorf and Montessori (Miller, 2007). The success of these schools has inspired
similar visions within the public sector and in the past few years, we have seen the establishment of at least three alternative public schools in my local community, which have adopted a holistic approach to curriculum, teaching and learning.

As Ron Miller (1997) notes, holistic education is aimed at “…creating a learning community which will stimulate the growing person’s creative and inquisitive engagement with the world” (p. 78). Miller (2007) aptly captures this essence of fostering connectedness and community:

The focus of holistic education is on relationships: the relationship between linear thinking and intuition, the relationship between mind and body, the relationships among various domains of knowledge, the relationship between the individual and the community, the relationship to the earth, and our relationship to our souls. In the holistic curriculum the student examines these relationships so that he or she gains both an awareness of them and the skills necessary to transform the relationships where it is appropriate (p. 13).

Cummins, (2001) makes a similar observation, affirming that “human relationships are at the heart of schooling” (p. 1).

“Soul” in (Language) Teaching and Learning

It is evident that in keeping with a holistic worldview, it is important to incorporate the notion of soul into the curriculum. Although this may seem out of place in traditional educational discourse, its importance must be emphasized. Peabody (1935) reminds us that “education depends on its attitude towards the soul” (p. xvii) to which it should be in-tuned otherwise it fails. As Gougeon (2007) notes: “Colleges themselves bear much of the blame for this failure for, as Emerson warned… they address only the head while repressing the soul, the source of the life-sustaining Divine Spirit in humankind” (p. 185). Unfortunately, traditional approaches have focused on skill development and financial success which are considered pertinent to the ego, but underestimate the soul’s needs (Moore, 1992).

Miller (1996) asserts that:

Bringing soul into education is not to deny the need to teach skills to our students so that they can be productive citizens. Soulful education is also education with high expectations. However, soulful learning seeks to restore a balance between our outer and inner lives (p. 5).

Soul is often described as the animating, vital energy and the deepest, mysterious part of our being that can be felt through various experiences that move us, such as music. Schiller (2005) views soul as “the inner depths from which feeling, knowledge and change originate” (p. 161). Lancia (2011), in citing
the Boulder Statement on Soul in Education for the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, describes the soul as “a timeless universal concept referring to that deep, integrating aspect of humanity, which embodies our highest qualities and life energies and when consciously connected to our lives, gives a strong sense of meaning, caring connectedness, purpose and direction” (p. 69).

**Spirituality: A Defining Aspect of Holistic Education**

Given its importance in education - particularly holistic teaching and learning - the question of spirituality warrants some sort of definition or at least distinction. In this section, I attempt to highlight some of the definitions or dimensions of spirituality in its central role in holistic education, as offered by several authors in the published literature.

Miller (2007) makes reference to “the lack of shared meaning or mythology” which has contributed to fragmentation and a reliance on scientific materialism and consumerism. He observes that what’s missing is spirituality, which he defines as “a sense of the awe and reverence for life that arises from our relatedness to something both wonderful and mysterious” (p. 4). Bohm (1993) offers a similar definition through his exploration of the word spirit:

What is spirit? The word is derived from a Latin word meaning “breath” or “wind” – like respiration or inspiration. It is suggested by the trees moving with the invisible force of the wind. We may thus think of spirit as an invisible force – a life-giving essence that moves us deeply, or as a source that moves everything from within.

Tacey (2004) discusses the lack of intellectual understanding of the term spirit in contemporary humanities and social sciences as well as the lack of appreciation of the term in a sacred context in terms of its “universal or cosmic power” (p. 58). However, as Tacey further observes, university students are increasingly referring to spirituality in this sacred context, and display a strong desire to “develop” their spirituality, which as Tacey notes, “suggests that they want to go on some kind of journey into hidden depths and self-journey” (2004, p. 59). Tacey therefore calls for a rethinking of the university’s conceptualization of the term spirit to include not only an informational approach, but one that is also transformational; this is essential in order to speak to what it means to “educate”, bearing in mind the Latin *ex ducere* -- to lead out. As Tacey explains, this would honour students’ innate yearning for spiritual development.

In his article “Spirituality – Letting it grow in the classroom” Suhor (1998/1999) poses the question: How can we as teachers best translate into the curriculum and into the classroom, the
experiences that profoundly connect us with our inner selves, other individuals and nature? In his attempt to answer this question, Suhor makes a direct link to holistic education, stating that: “The word holistic as used in academic and popular contexts has advanced the idea of the interconnectedness of the learner, the teacher, school subject areas, local and global communities, the planet and indeed the cosmos” (13).

By drawing on the works of respected educational theorists and researchers we are increasingly able to embrace spirituality as an important aspect of education because it offers different lenses for which to view the world. Further, spirituality helps us understand the value of the knowledge that we are creating and enhances our connectedness to others, the environment and ourselves. Moreover, spirituality can be viewed as a valuable tool in bringing about transformation of ourselves, our communities and our world. (Bache, 2008; Hart, 2004; hooks, 1994, 2003; Johnson & Neagley, 2011; Miller, 2006; Palmer, 1998, 2004; Tacey, 2004; Wane, Manyimo & Ritskes, 2011). For example, through her works involving published literature as well as on-going research with educators, Johnson (1999, 1998, 2005, 2011) undergirds the significance of the spirit dimension of human development and its relationship to education, and outlines effective ways in which some of these theories can be put into practice.

Based on this exploration, Johnson (2011) suggests not just one definition, but offers various “distinct themes or categories of definition” anchored in the central theme of connectedness and which are interconnected to the human capacities. The themes and categories of definition identified with regards to the spirit dimension are as follows: contemplative, self-reflective, meaning-making, emotional, ethical, ecological and creative. As Johnson points out, these are not exhaustive, but suggestive, and are understood through a wide range of human capacities (i.e. behaviors and abilities), notably: aptitudes, skills, faculties, potentials, duties, roles, capabilities and powers.

According to Tisdell and Tolliver (2003), spirituality helps us develop a greater meaning to life, and the search for identity. Houston succinctly sums it up as follows:

When I talk about spirituality, I am talking about those things that bring us together as humans. To me spirituality is simply creating a deeper connection to our most profound human aspects. It is also a willingness to reach out to others and join in the human dance that unites us (2011, p. ix).
Nurturing Self-learning and Lifelong Learning

In closing this discussion on curricula aims, I also find it appropriate to highlight the purpose statement offered by Taba (1962) which affirms that curriculum should develop students’ skills to allow them to become self-learners. Although this affirmation dates back to the 1960s, its significance remains pertinent today and has in fact been reiterated in more recent works. This coincides with the principles of holistic education which considers learning as a lifelong, “timeless learning” process that results not only from external pressure but from internal motivation and awareness (Miller, 2006). The question of lifelong learning particularly speaks to my research which is primarily concerned with older learners in the post-secondary context. Often referred to in various terms such as self-authorship, self-directed learning, or autonomous learners, researchers and theorists have affirmed the importance of inspiring students to become lifelong learners. Magolda (1999) notes that this requires an approach to teaching, that “becomes a matter of understanding and welcoming the student’s way of making meaning and simultaneously engaging them” (p. 6). Moreover, the idea of timeless learning seeks to cultivate a state of mindfulness or an awareness of the here and now in both teachers and students; it suggests going beyond strictly intellectual aims towards developing wisdom and compassion in the teaching and learning environment (Bache, 2007; hooks, 1994, 2001; Miller, 2006; Palmer, 1998, 2007).

Inevitably, questions relating to intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are often raised when discussing engagement especially in language teaching and learning. Research has shown that there is a positive connection between students’ attitudes and motivation and their foreign language achievement (Gardner, 1985, 1988; Gardner & Lambert, 1972). My research adds to this conversation as it attempts to capture the voices of both instructors and students in the post-secondary language teaching and learning context.

Further, the question of lifelong learning in particular, speaks to my research, which is primarily concerned with teaching young adults or adults in the post-secondary context. In its August 2010 report entitled: “Taking Stock of Lifelong learning in Canada: Progress or Complacency?,” the Canadian Council on Learning (CCL) presents findings from research conducted on the status of lifelong learning at all levels of education in Canada. By incorporating different domains and contexts of learning (home, community, school, and work), the CCL presents a framework, which offers a holistic approach to lifelong learning. Identified as the four pillars of learning, this framework encompasses the following components:

- Learning to know – development of skills and knowledge of how to live in the world
• Learning to do – acquisition of applied skills (occupational success)
• Learning to live together – development of social skills and values (respect, concern for others), social and interpersonal appreciation of cultural diversity, mutual trust, support communities
• Learning to be – learning that contributes to a person’s mind, body and spirit – creativity, personal discovery; acquired through reading, internet, sports, arts (CCL Report, p. 8).

The latter point in particular, connects to the research undertaken by Carrasco and Piccardo (2009) who address the question of savoir-être (learning to be) from the perspective of language teacher education, within the Common European Framework of Reference. The authors note that teachers need to develop not only their savoir-faire (know-how), but also their savoir-être by adopting an attitude of openness in their reflective as well as their prospective potential, which, in addition to benefiting their students, in turn leads to lifelong learning. The use of portfolios is highly recommended as a tool in facilitating this endeavour towards self-discovery through deep reflection (Carrasco & Piccardo, 2009; Piccardo, 2006).

Fostering Positive Interdependence in Higher Education

The notion of collaboration is directly linked to interconnectedness particularly the concept of positive interdependence, which refers to students working cooperatively in face-to-face interactions in an atmosphere that is psychologically safe, and where there is trust (Miller, 2007; Johnson & Johnson, 1994, 1998).

There is a rich body of literature surrounding cooperative learning in the three major areas of theory, research and practice. In their article entitled: “Cooperative Learning Returns to College: What evidence is there that it works?” Johnson, Johnson and Smith (1998) specifically speak to the underuse of cooperative learning in higher education and the need for educators to embrace this form of learning, which they describe as “the heart of problem-based learning” (p. 28). Johnson, Johnson and Smith (1998) traced the historical roots of cooperative learning (and positive interdependence) all the way back to the late 1800s (in England and the US), and make reference to the long tradition of investigating the various influences of individualistic, competitive and cooperative learning. It is interesting to note that post-secondary classrooms provided the first major research site for these studies, which recruited student-participants in the early 1920s. Citing a shift in focus to the K-12 level in the 1970s, the authors note that there has been a resurgence of interest in research in the post-secondary context since the 1990s. Of the numerous studies undertaken at all levels of education, over 305 are situated in the post-secondary context.
Based on research over the past forty years, Johnson, Johnson and Smith (1993) affirm that “cooperative learning promotes higher individual achievement than do competition approaches… or individualistic ones” (p. 34). Further, they identify five major elements for the existence of cooperative learning:

- Positive interdependence
- Individual accountability
- Promotive interaction
- Social skills
- Group processing

Johnson, Johnson and Smith (1993) also outline the practical application for its use in the classroom, affirming the need for structure, adaptation and intervention on the part of the instructor and one where the students adopt a “sink or swim” attitude (i.e. they cannot succeed unless others do), in order to ensure a fruitful cooperative learning environment. (Details of the theoretical underpinnings of cooperative learning that promote positive interdependence are presented Chapter 3 – Theoretical Framework).

Community Service-learning

One of the aims of holistic education is to help students develop a sense of connectedness, not only in the classroom, but also within the communities in which they live and learn. Ideally, the main purpose for L2 teaching and learning is to go beyond the classroom; the intention is to put their linguistic and communication skills to practical use through interaction in the real world. Given the challenges involved in finding opportunities for everyday interaction in the target language L2 learners need to actively seek opportunities to interact with others who speak the language. One of the strategies for achieving this is through service-learning-- a community-based initiative designed to give students experience in their local communities. Bringle and Hatcher (1995) define academic service-learning as follows:

A course-based, credit-bearing educational experience that allows students to (a) participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and (b) reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility (p. 112).
From this broad definition, Jacoby (1996) emphasizes the experiential learning aspect, by defining service-learning as “a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human conditions and community needs together with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote student learning and development” (p. 5).

Unlike volunteer work, which focuses on the (host) agency or other learning initiatives undertaken outside the classroom such as practicum placements and internships, service-learning offers something in-between. Andrew Furco, who has done extensive research on measurement issues related to community engagement and service-learning, underlines the importance of distinguishing service-learning from community service and field work. Furco argues that while community service or volunteer work is usually designed to benefit the (host) agency and that field education (such as practicum placements and internships) involves student-centered learning initiatives undertaken outside the classroom, service-learning offers something in-between. Furco (1996) states that service-learning is intended to “equally benefit the provider and the recipient of the service as well as to ensure equal focus on both the service that is being provided and the learning that is occurring” (1996, p. 5). In order to further clarify these interconnections, Furco (1996) presents an experiential education continuum, which is designed to show the distinctions among service programs, as follows:

*Figure 2. Experiential education continuum (adapted from Furco, 1996, p. 3).*

Figure 2 which displays Furco’s (1996) Experiential education continuum (reprinted with permission) clearly illustrates the merits of service-learning as providing a balanced focus on both service and learning and its potential benefit to all parties involved.
Service-learning: A Holistic Approach

There has been growing interest in Community Service-learning (CSL) in Canada. The Canadian Alliance for Community Service-learning (CACSL), whose mission is to support active participation in service-learning, cites the following vision: “Students, educators and communities, building partnerships to learn from each other while working together in innovative ways to strengthen individuals, communities and society” (CACSL). In her report entitled: “Community Service-learning in Canada: A Scan of the Field”, Hayes (2006) surveyed over 30 universities and colleges in Canada, detailing the initiatives taken by various faculty in terms of implementation, curricula practices and challenges faced in their service-learning endeavours. In recent years, research in service-learning has gained momentum, particularly in language programs.

Tilley-Lubbs (2004), in her brief article entitled “Service-Learning and Foreign-Language Teacher Education” reports on a workshop conducted on service-learning at the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (AATSP). In addition to presenting various service-learning models, the use of service-learning as a tool for assessment and accreditation in teacher education programs was explored. Service-learning also formed the basis of Tilley-Lubbs’ (2003) dissertation in which she researched the role of this approach to learning in developing relationships between university students and their interactions with the local Latino community. The various themes that emerged from this investigation include: Establishing and developing relationships, appreciating and understanding diversity, empathy, and advocacy with oppressed populations.

Many of these findings are in keeping with holistic education principles, in that the students’ connection to the community is highly valued. Also referred to as “engaged service” (Donnelley, 2002) or community-based work (Arguelles, 2002), service-learning fits well within the notion of holistic and global education where emphasis is placed on the importance of interdependence and interconnectedness within various levels of community. In addition, the works of Bohm (1983), Shelby (2001) and Cook (2003) have been dedicated to raising awareness of the importance of compassion, empathy and cooperation in learning-centered and community-centered environments.

In his recent publication entitled Teaching with the Wind, Dallaire (2011) goes a step further, by making reference to “engaged spirituality” to describe some of the service-learning initiatives that he undertook as chaplain of a Canadian suburban high school. Dallaire affirms that “engaged spirituality seeks to bring the social and political concerns of life into our spiritual journey. It encourages the political
and the mystical simultaneously and sees both dimensions of life as fundamental arenas for personal attention and communal focus” (2011, p. 80). Dallaire likens this awareness to Freire’s pedagogy of conscientization which he highly recommends as a way forward for Canadian educators. Further, as Bringle and Hatcher note: “Faculty who use service-learning discover that it brings new life to the classroom, enhances performance on traditional methods of learning, increases student interest in the subject, teaches new problem-solving skills, and makes teaching more enjoyable” (1996, p. 2).

One of the goals of this present inquiry is to discover and describe incidents of service-learning as well as other community-based learning initiatives undertaken by participants. My research highlights the role of service-learning as well as other community-based learning initiatives undertaken by my participants as both a holistic and innovative approach to language teaching and learning in higher education.

Teaching Presence: The Roots of Holistic Education

Many of the educational ideas hitherto discussed cannot be facilitated or accomplished without the “presence of the teacher”, which, according to Miller (2007, p. 190) constitutes the “root” of the holistic curriculum. As Miller (2007) further observes, despite its importance, teaching presence is seldom addressed and often ignored in teacher education. Rachael Kessler⁵, whose work centres on spirituality in education, has made a significant contribution to the understanding of teaching presence through her practice and research involving youth. Kessler asserts that “[b]eyond technique and curriculum, the most effective teaching also includes our modeling. We celebrate these precious moments when we embody a “presence” that carries the class to a place where minds and hearts are moved and genuine connections occur” (2000, p. 7). Kessler (2000) notes that while some teachers seem to naturally possess this quality, it needs to be discovered and cultivated in others. Kessler further states that: “We can have the best curricula available, train teachers in technique and theory, but our students will be unsafe and our programs hollow if we do not provide opportunities for teachers to develop their own souls, their own social and emotional intelligence” (2005, p. 8). This point has been repeatedly stressed in the previously reviewed literature on holistic and second language education alike.

⁵I was fortunate to have attended the 9th Annual Holistic Learning Conference held in Geneva Park in October 2009, where Kessler delivered the keynote address. Kessler founded the Passageworks Institute, an initiative designed to help students find connection, compassion and character at school.
Making Sense of Presence: An Etymological Exploration

An etymological exploration allows us to dig beneath the surface and uncover some interesting details. First of all, the word presence is derived from the family of verbs esse, which means “to be” and is rooted in the following three words in Latin:

- praeesse: “fact of being present” (also praesens “being there”; praesentia “face to face” or “in the situation in question”)
- abesse – “be away from, be absent”
- inter-est – interest or “to be in-between”

As Runtz-Christan (2000) observes in her research involving teachers and actors, a close examination of the composition of these three Latin words above, reveals that their root meaning is of a metaphysical nature, whereas their prefixes are embedded in the domain of the physical: prae signifies pre, before and because of; ab denotes distance (i.e. “from” or “away from”); inter signifies the space between the two. The concept of presence therefore implies a close relationship between space and time (e.g. being present at (or absent from) a particular place at a particular time, e.g. in class at 9 am). According to Runtz-Christan, this renders the idea of presence as being both rational and irrational, and raises a number of questions. For instance: Can one be absent and present at the same time? Should one seek to be “in-between” as suggested by the prefix inter? Then again, if one chooses to be inter does that mean that they are neither here nor there (i.e. neither present nor absent)? As has been argued by some holistic educators, the dichotomous or fragmented approach to the curriculum traditionally prescribed at all levels of our educational system (Miller, 2007, 2010, Palmer, 2009, Kessler, 2005) rarely allows for the exploration of the “in-between” which has the potential of bringing balance, and thus authentic presence into the teaching and learning environment.

Further, a survey of various academic resources (including dictionaries, thesaurus) reveals that in essence, the contemporary meaning of the word presence conjures up many other synonymous words and associations, including: “to be”, “essence”, “air”, “companionship”, “omnipresence”, “bearing”, “spirit”, “assurance”/ ”self-assurance”, “personality”, “poise”, etc. Further, the Merriam-Webster on-line thesaurus also lists the word “regard” which is in turn defined as “attention” and “care” as well as “affection” and “esteem”. These are all interconnected and certainly tie in with the various principles associated with holism.
In addition, Kessler (2000/2005) draws attention to three qualities which are vital in this endeavour: respectful discipline, an open-heart, and being present in the here and now. Along with being “truly alive to the present moment”, these qualities, she affirms, create conditions for students and teachers to connect deeply, as well as develop and maintain care and trust in the classroom. In *The Tone of Teaching*, van Menen (1986) succinctly describes the importance of teacher presence by emphasizing such qualities as tactfulness and pedagogical thoughtfulness including the positive learning experiences that are beneficial for both teacher and student growth. bell hooks adds to this conversation by affirming that what distinguishes holistic or “engaged pedagogy” is its emphasis on wellbeing. As she explains: “That means that teachers must be actively committed to a process of self-actualization that promotes their own well-being if they are to teach in a manner that empowers students” (1994, p. 15). This speaks to the importance of the presence of the teacher which is crucial to the teaching and learning enterprise.

This process of self-actualization can be directly linked to the psychological underpinnings of holistic education, which acknowledges the contribution of Abraham Maslow, considered one of the founding fathers of this worldview. Based on the view of the individual as an “integrated whole” Maslow (1970, p. 19) conceptualised a “holistic dynamic theory” (p. 35) synthesizing the works of several authors such as James, Dewey, Werthermer, Goldstein, Freud, Fromm, Horney, Reich, Jung and Adler and presented the hierarchy of needs.

![Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs](image)

*Figure 3. Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs.*

As depicted in Figure 3, self-actualization – which relates to the highest potential and self-fulfilment that human beings can achieve – is placed at the very apex of Maslow’s (1970) well-known
hierarchy of needs. The other echelons of the hierarchy, particularly esteem needs (self-worth, self-respect, esteem for/from others), as well as love and a sense of belonging respectively are of great significance, and need to be taken into consideration in the teaching and learning environment. Moreover, Maslow’s hierarchy of needs is said to demonstrate the importance of classroom community as an excellent way of facilitating the enhancement of student motivation for learning and overall growth towards self-actualization (Bickert, Jablon & Dodge, 2005; Loreman, 2011).

Palmer (1998) reminds us that: “we teach who we are” (p. 2); he emphasises this point, by sharing his own experience: “When I teach, I project the condition of my soul onto my students, the subject and our way of being together” (1998, p. 2). Further, Palmer highlights the importance of paying attention to the interior landscape of the teaching self and charts three important paths that must be followed, affirming that “intellect, emotion and spirit depend on each other for wholeness” (1998, p. 4). Palmer describes “spiritual” as “the diverse ways we answer the heart’s longing to be connected with the largeness of life – a longing that animates tone and work, especially the work called teaching” (1998, p. 5).

Holistic educators and scholars have reiterated the importance of recognizing the difference between spirituality and religion (Bache, 2008; hooks, 1994, 2003; Miller, 2000, 2005, 2006; Tacey, 2004; Palmer, 1998, 2004, 2010;). While religion requires adherence to a strict set of doctrines and belief systems that tend to exclude those who do not subscribe to them, spirituality is more “open, inclusive and welcoming of a wide variety of diverse practices…” (Shelton-Colangelo et al., 2008, p. 1).

A Brief Overview of Language Teaching through the Ages

Richards and Rodgers (1994) provide a very valuable resource in tracing the developments in language teaching and learning over the years. During the Reform Movement in Europe in the late 19th century there arose much controversy surrounding the grammar-translation method, leading to its opposition and growing decline - eventually giving rise to new methodologies in language teaching. This movement was further facilitated by the increasing demand for oral proficiency and communication prospects among European countries (Richards & Rodgers, 1994, p. 5-7). Given the context of this inquiry, it is interesting to point out Richards and Rodgers’ observation that “contemporary texts for the teaching of foreign languages at the college level often reflect Grammar-Translation principles” (2001, p. 7). This method of teaching places emphasis on narrow subject matter and rote learning for the
development of the intellect, and as noted by Richards and Rodgers, “although the grammar-translation method often creates frustration for students, it makes few demands on teachers” (1994, p. 6).

Innovative attempts at language teaching were first advanced by reformers such as French specialist C. Marcel (1793-1896), Prendergast and Gouin, each of whom based their approaches on the observation of children’s language learning patterns. Marcel, for example, advocated “the importance of meaning in learning...and tried to locate language learning within a broader educational framework” (Richards & Rodgers 1994, p. 7). This brought about a strong emphasis on the use of contextualized gestures and actions in language learning, which later developed into the Situational Language Teaching and Total Physical Response. Unfortunately, these new approaches as advocated by Gouin and Marcel did not receive as much widespread “credibility and acceptance” as the ones proposed by such thinkers as Henry Sweet, who argued that “sound methodological principles should be based on a scientific analysis of language” (cited in Richards & Rodgers, 1994, p. 9).

Traditional Approaches to L2 Education

Traditionally, language teaching and learning have suffered from the problems of fragmentation and compartmentalization which have plagued education in general. Language teachers were expected to adhere largely to the traditional grammar-translation (GT) paradigm. This method of teaching language, based largely on the “explicit teaching of grammar rules that students were expected to memorise and then apply as best they could to translation tasks” (Danesi, 2003, p. 4) that encouraged no real interaction with the target language. As Breen (2001) points out:

Current theories in the last thirty years that have promoted and accounted for language acquisition as primarily the interface between learners’ mental processes and the grammatical system of the target language have pursued a research agenda that seeks to account for generalized patterns of development across all learners. Intervening variables other than the cognitive and the linguistic that may either enhance or inhibit such development are likely to be positioned as a distraction from the agenda (p. 173).

The traditional way of teaching second language has been attributed to the influence of the Cartesian philosophy, where the physical and emotional are seen as separate from the intellectual. Indeed, the study of classical languages (Latin and Greek) was valued as “training for the mind” and modern languages adopted the same grammar-translation model which has (even today) proven resistant to change (Danesi, 2000; Savignon, 2006, Piccardo, 2010). As Johnson (2004) notes, “we have stayed far too long in the mind of the learner, and in the process, we have neglected to recognize the forces that
interact with the individual mind” (p. 189). As many scholars have observed, because of this heavy adherence to cognitivist theories, other essential components of learning such as affectivity and imagination had for a long time been excluded in the classroom (Danesi, 2000; Moskowitz, 1978; Piccardo, 2010; Richards, 2005).

Further, Piccardo (2010) sheds light on the debate surrounding the place of emotions through her examination of a number of research studies in philosophy as well as in the sciences. Piccardo points out the inseparable link between body and mind and between reason and emotions and calls for the integration of a humanistic dimension in education given its central role in the change process. As the author notes, this vision is particularly important in language education, where the tendency has been to keep these dimensions separate, however she affirms that: “Paying attention to the affective aspect will not only lead to more effective learning, but also the act of stimulating the different emotional faculties, such as self-esteem, empathy, motivation can in fact considerably facilitate the language learning process” (Piccardo, 2010, p. 250). This current research seeks to uncover some of these other forces that work together to bring about wholeness in language teaching and learning.

**New Advances in SLE**

Throughout the 20th century, numerous methods / techniques have been advanced with a view to improving the effectiveness of second language instruction. Many of these, however, tend to focus narrowly on individual aspects of language learning rather than integrating a diversity of approaches which could, in turn, meet the needs of a diverse range of students (Hadley, 1995; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). This narrow focus further contributes to fragmentation, a phenomenon which, as we have seen, already typifies the education system (Capra, 1996; Miller, 2007, 2006; Senge et al., 2005; Wilber, 1997). Kumaravadivelu (2003) explains that, “the traditional concept of method with its generic set of theoretical principles and classroom techniques offers only a limited and limiting perspective on language learning and teaching” (p. 42). Kumaravadivelu proposes instead, a macro-strategic framework consisting of 10 macro-strategies that are “theory-neutral as well as method-neutral” (2003, p. 38). This means that they are unconstrained and unconditioned by any (narrow) particular theoretical principle or methodological classroom procedures associated with language teaching and learning.

**Distinguishing Between Approaches, Methods and Techniques**

In their seminal work *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching: A Description and Analysis*, Richards and Rodgers (1986), provide some useful insights with regards to the distinction
between approach, method and technique. They cite the work of Anthony (1963) who describes the relationship between approach, method and technique as follows:

The arrangement is hierarchical. The organizational key is that techniques carry out a method which is consistent with an approach… An approach is a set of correlative assumptions dealing with the nature of language teaching and learning… It describes the nature of the subject matter to be taught… Method is an overall plan for the orderly presentation of language material, no part of which contradicts, and all of which is based upon the selected approach. An approach is axiomatic, a method is procedural. Within one approach, there can be many methods… A technique is implementational – that which actually takes place in a classroom. It is a particular trick, stratagem, or contrivance used to accomplish an immediate objective. Techniques must be consistent with a method, and therefore in harmony with an approach as well (Anthony 1963, pp. 73-77).

The section which follows provides a brief overview of the origins and the theoretical underpinnings of some of the various methods and approaches which have been developed with regards to second language teaching.

**Overview of Second or Foreign Language Teaching Methods and Approaches**

Table 1 provides a brief overview of some second language teaching methods including the age-old grammar-translation method along with the many different ones which have emerged over the last 35 years. (These eight methods were chosen on the basis of having gained familiarity with them through graduate methods courses, as well as conversations with other students and teachers; the choice was also based on my own observations and interactions with some of the methods by virtue of having been exposed to some of them as a language learner). The information contained in the table has been gleaned from the works of various scholars notably Danesi (2000, 2003), Richards and Rogers (1986, 2001) and Savignon (2007).
Table 1

A Sample of L2 Teaching Methods and Approaches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method or Approach</th>
<th>Learning objectives</th>
<th>Emphasis</th>
<th>Classroom practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grammar-Translation Method</td>
<td>read and understand of literary texts; enhance mental discipline; develop the intellect;</td>
<td>Strong focus on grammar: the sentence, translation.</td>
<td>Memorization; use of native language; correction of written errors;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Method</td>
<td>Oral communication grammar implicitly taught</td>
<td>“Authentic” learning context</td>
<td>Use of auto-correction; NL discouraged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio-lingual</td>
<td>acquisition of “correct” linguistic structures</td>
<td>Structure and form of language</td>
<td>Memorization (words, sentences, dialogues); repetition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Silent Way</td>
<td>students to student communication; discover or learn on their own rather than memorize or repeat</td>
<td>Learning by discovery</td>
<td>teacher as silent as possible;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggestopedia</td>
<td>eliminate psychological barriers</td>
<td>Creating relaxed atmosphere</td>
<td>Listening to dialogues; use of soft music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Language Learning</td>
<td>Oral; Interpersonal communication;</td>
<td>create a welcoming atmosphere; awareness of challenges</td>
<td>Students are expected to determine what they want to learn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)</td>
<td>Reading, writing, speaking, listening</td>
<td>All skills; full range of conversation functions; social interaction</td>
<td>Facilitating opportunities for a variety of student-centered authentic activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Beyond Methods: The Post-method Condition in Language Pedagogy

There have been on-going discussions and debates among language theorists and authors about the effectiveness of methods and, inevitably, the call for a movement away from “methods”. One of the proponents of this movement is Kumaravadivelu (2003), who has proposed a “post method condition” (p. 32) comprising of three significant interrelated features as follows:

- finding “alternatives to methods rather than an alternative method” – this calls for a movement away from the top-down to bottom-up processes, thereby empowering practitioners to “construct their personal theories of practice” (p. 33);
- recognizing teacher autonomy - this includes the tacit knowledge and experience that the teacher brings to the classroom “by virtue of their lives as students” (Freeman, 1991, p. 35);
principled pragmatism – the idea of shaping and reshaping classroom practices based on teachers’ “self-observation, self-analysis and self-evaluation” (p. 33).

Teacher Knowledge and Beliefs

The Apprenticeship of Observation

In Powerful Teacher Education: Lessons from Exemplary Programs, Darling-Hammond (2006) describes the notion of ‘apprenticeship of observation’ as “the learning that takes place by virtue of being a student for twelve or more years in traditional classroom settings” (p. 35). Drawing on the work of Lortie (1975), Darling-Hammond (2006) observes that although this phenomenon could be a source of motivation for prospective teachers, it presents various tensions and dilemmas, which can be quite challenging or limiting in many ways. Lortie has argued that because of their limited vantage point, students are “not privy to teachers’ private intentions and personal reflections on classroom events. Thus they are not pressed to place the teachers’ actions in a pedagogically oriented framework” (1975, p. 62). As a result, it is not easy to glean the complexities of teaching practice, and therefore teachers tend to imitate superficial aspects of teaching given the fact that they may tend to simply order and deploy certain skills through unexplained and unexamined assumptions.

Since the 1990s, there has been research aimed at gaining further insight into this notion and its effects. Many of these studies, which have focused largely on novice teachers, report that teachers often find themselves reverting to traditional methods of language teaching that they had learned through their apprenticeship of observation (Borg, 2004; Johnson, 1994; John 1996; Richards & Pennington, 1998; Tomlinson, 1999). While these studies have dealt primarily with the experiences of L2 / FL teachers in the primary and secondary school context, my research provides insight into the experiences of post-secondary instructors (some of whom are teacher educators), and the impact that this phenomenon may have had on their own teaching. Participants’ narrative accounts of their own experience learning a second language, and its impact on their teaching will be contrasted with their current teaching practices. The findings gleaned from this data will be particularly relevant in gaining more insight into this phenomenon (i.e. the apprenticeship of observation) within the context of post-secondary second language teaching.

Personal Practical Knowledge

Teachers’ personal practical knowledge (PPK), a term coined by Clandinin and Connelly (1995) is described as “that body of convictions and meanings, conscious or unconscious, that have arisen from
experience (intimate, social, and traditional) and that are expressed in a person’s practice” (p. 7). There is a growing body of qualitative research which has been inspired by this concept particularly in the area of teacher education (Beattie, 1991; Carter, 1993; Golombek, 1998; Knowles & Holt-Reynolds, 1991). Holistic education researchers have also found the exploration of teachers’ practical knowledge as a useful outlet for bringing to light various aspects of holistic practices, particularly those related to reflection and contemplation. For example, in her dissertation entitled “Contemplative teachers’ practical knowledge: Towards holistic teacher education”, Im (2010) explores her own experiences as well as those of three other early childhood educators in South Korea, and demonstrates how this process, along with contemplative practice can serve to inform teachers’ personal practical knowledge. Hunt (2010) affirms that: “It is through our daily experiences that we become aware of our own personal beliefs, as well as our private language for expressing our beliefs” (p. 20).

With regards to the personal practical knowledge of second language teachers, Gagné and Schmidt (2006) present a thorough review of the literature in their article entitled “Using dilemma-based scenarios in teacher education to explore the complexities of linguistically and culturally diverse classrooms”. Of particular interest to my research is the study done by Golombek (1998), whose research involving ESL teachers, further explores personal practical knowledge and sheds light on the consequential nature of experience and its relevance in the larger classroom community. Golombek affirms that,

...a moral and affective way of knowing is permeated with a concern for community, for how teachers’ knowledge and action affect others. Through the stories they tell, teachers can learn not only what they know but also what the moral and affective consequences of their practice are (1998, p. 449).

Along with this acknowledgement of the relationship between teacher knowledge and practice, Golombek calls for the need to examine teachers’ practical knowledge through their own stories and how their perception of these impact upon them and their students.

Ellis (2006) also adds to this conversation, in her review of the literature on teacher knowledge, beliefs and insights. Ellis (2006) observes that these terms are hard to define and that given the many, diverse interpretations by various researchers (Borg, 2003; Woods, 1996; Clandinin & Connelly, 1987), there is very little consensus on the different uses of the term. Ellis (2006) proposes Woods’ definition of knowledge as “things we ‘know’ – conventionally accepted ‘facts’ which we hold to have been
demonstrated or at least to be demonstrable” (1996, p. 195). Ellis also acknowledges Clandinin and Connelly’s definition of personal practical knowledge (PPK) as “knowledge which is experiential, embodied, and reconstructed out of the narratives of a teacher’s life” (1987, p. 490). In terms of the definition of insights, Ellis (2006) offers the following:

…an understanding gained from personal experience that allows us to see how previously understood realities could be different. It illuminates something previously unseen, makes sense of something previously incomprehensible, or lends a new perspective on something taken for granted. It is the meeting place of knowledge, beliefs and experience (p. 11).

This appreciation of the notion of insights as a way of interacting with past knowledge and beliefs to generate new meaning has formed an integral part of Ellis’ research. Notably, in her study of English as a Second or foreign Language (ESOL) in Australia, Ellis (2006) demonstrates “some of the ways in which different language experiences can lead to the development of key insights on which teachers appear to draw in framing their approach to learners” (p. 24). As Ellis (2006) further points out, there is a lack of research on the role of language learning experiences in shaping L2 teachers’ professional knowledge and belief. By exploring these issues in my study through individual interviews, guided conversations and focus groups, it is hoped that this present research will make a meaningful contribution to this body of literature.

The “Sociocultural Turn”

As we have seen, many of the changes to L2 teaching which emerged during the 1960s and 70s ushered in a shift in language studies from grammar-based paradigm (Austin, 1962; Halliday 1973, 1975; Halliday, MacIntosh & Stevens 1964), pioneered through the works of theorists such as Hymes (1972, 1984), who stressed the importance of social aspects of language. Johnson (2006) succinctly describes human learning as a “dynamic social activity that is situated in physical and social contexts and distributed across persons, tools and activities” (p. 237). This observation defines what has now become known as the ‘sociocultural turn’ (Rangoff, 2003; Wersch, 1991), where knowledge is not only viewed as an accumulation of information relating to the form of the language, but also as the lived experiences of all those involved in the learning process (Chaiklin & Lave, 1996; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998).

According to Ellis (1999), this social view of language acquisition, …calls for research that adopts a more holistic approach to discourse involving learners and their settings, and which, therefore, employs qualitative methods that are more sensitive to the ways in
which interactions are constructed by participants as they dynamically negotiate not just meaning but also their role relationships and their cultural and social identities (p. 17).

Ellis’ call for a holistic approach to research has been well-heeded in this thesis. In particular, the various concepts surrounding the negotiation of role relationships, and their impact on classroom interaction as well as community-based experiential learning have been explored in this dissertation.

Understanding Communicative Language Teaching

The term communicative competence was first coined by Hymes (1972) in his argument for the meaningful application of language to specific situations; this paved the way (albeit indirectly) for the movement towards communicative approaches to second language teaching (Danesi, 2003). Littlewood (1981) in his book entitled *Communicative Language Teaching* offers a succinct introduction to the basic ideas involved in this approach; he affirms that CLT opens up a larger perspective not only in terms of the form and structure of the language (i.e. grammar and vocabulary), but makes us consider “what people do... when they want to communicate with each other” (p. x. italics used in original text). This involves understanding the functional and linguistic meanings of the language as well as understanding and expressing its social meanings in order to achieve communicative competence (Littlewood 1981; Hymes 1972, 1984; Germain, 1994).

From a theoretical point of view, communicative language teaching has been described as an approach, which places students in authentic situations for communication and corresponds to their lived experience, their interests and their everyday lives. It encourages interaction among students in the classroom, between students and teachers, with other students within and beyond the school community. These exchanges are meant to enrich the students’ appreciation of the language not only as a subject in the curriculum, but as a practical social tool which allows them to communicate, to think, to learn and in that way, establish relationships in the world (Cazabon, 1993, Germain, 1993; Hadley, 2001; Lentz, 1996; Leblanc, 1990). In the context of French language learning, CLT takes on a particularly significant dimension in that it opens the door to communication outside of the classroom towards an active interaction between the classroom and the wider community, thus facilitating a richer learning experience. (Cazabon, 1993; Lentz, 1996; Germain, 1993; Leblanc, 1990).

Summary

In this chapter, I reviewed the relevant literature in both holistic and second language education and presented the interconnecting topics which serve to provide an orientation towards the various ideas
surrounding the present research. The next chapter explores more deeply, the various theoretical underpinnings of some of these ideas and their relationship to curriculum, teaching and learning, particularly within the context of post-secondary L2 teaching.
CHAPTER 3
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

In this Chapter, I define theory and its role, particularly within the context of my research. I then present some relevant theories and concepts that represent or connect holistic and second language education and their effectiveness in helping me make sense of my data. In other words, I examine how these theoretical and conceptual frameworks are (inter)connected to holistic education and their usefulness in informing the analysis, interpretations, implications of post-secondary language teaching (and learning) throughout this inquiry. With the aid of a visual representation, these theories and concepts are then correlated into a more manageable, coherent whole, and used as lenses for “making sense” of the data findings.

Defining the Role of Theory in this Inquiry

In terms of definition, Cohen and Manion (1994) assert that theory is a way of integrating “all the isolated bits of empirical data into a coherent conceptual framework of wider applicability” (p. 14). They also draw on Kerlinger’s description of theory as “a set of interrelated constructs (concepts), definitions, and propositions that presents a systematic view of phenomena by specifying relations among variables, with the purpose of explaining and predicting the phenomena” (cited in Cohen & Manion, 1994, p. 14). Mouly simplifies it even further by stating that: “If nothing else, a theory is a convenience – a necessity, really – organizing a whole slough of unasserted facts, laws, concepts, constructs, principles, into a meaningful and manageable form. It constitutes an attempt to make sense out of what we know concerning a given phenomenon” (1978, p. 52). I am particularly drawn to Mouly’s definition as it provides an understanding of the role of theory in terms of its potential in contributing to the quest for meaning-making throughout the research process – from conception to finished product. Thus, theory is particularly useful in helping me organise and make sense of the various sources of data collected throughout the research process.

Along with the above definitions, Richardson’s affirmation of “theory as story” (2000, p. 927) is also a useful metaphor in identifying the role of theory in this research, particularly for analysing the rich data provided through various sources such as classroom observations, documents, artefacts, video footage, and most importantly, my participants’ narrative stories. These ties in with the methodological approach to this research, particularly the idea of “narrativising” to which Richardson makes reference; it
involves a process of retelling participants’ personal, as well as collective stories and thus blurring the boundary between “narrative” and “analysis” (p. 927). In a sense, this sheds considerable light on the role of theory in the writing of my research work, particularly when it comes to situating the narratives of my participants within the context of holistic and second language discourse. Writing then becomes what Richardson appropriately describes as “a process of discovery” (2000, p. 936), as I attempt to connect various interconnected concepts to help me create meaning.

According to Cohen and Manion (1994), concepts serve as a tool for theory and help give order to, provide coherence and make sense of reality. The authors further affirm that concepts are “the means by which we are able to come to terms with our experience. How we perceive the world, then, is highly dependent on the repertoire of concepts we can command” (Cohen & Manion, 1994, p. 17).

The wide variety of sources used in this research study brings together different of people, places, events and ideas, which all contribute to a substantial amount of rich, empirical data, that will be integrated into the conceptual frameworks relevant to my study. These revolve largely around concepts relating to holistic approaches, and their interconnectedness to second language teaching and learning. Needless to say, holistic education is very comprehensive, and inevitably integrates a wide variety of interconnected concepts related to wholeness in curricular as well as teaching and learning practices. This notion of interconnectedness constitutes the fundamental philosophical premise of holistic education and has been thoroughly addressed by Aldous Huxley (1944/1970) in his seminal work entitled the Perennial Philosophy, in which he offers the following definition:

The metaphysic that recognizes a divine Reality substantial to the world of things and lives and minds, the psychology that finds in the soul something similar to, or even identical with, divine Reality, the ethic that places man’s final end to the knowledge of the immanent and transcendent Ground of all being – the thing is immemorial and universal (1970, p. vii)

Often cited by holistic education scholars, this quotation goes right to the heart of those who value an approach to teaching and learning which embraces opportunities for connection not only with our individual minds but also expresses the vital role of the universe on a whole.

Moreover, as post-secondary language teaching and learning provides the context for my inquiry, relevant theories of SLE (both conceptual and empirical) will also be used to explain the various experiences manifested through the lives of those engaged in that environment. In the quest for meaning-making, relevant aspects of the theories from these two areas have been blended to provide an integrated theoretical framework that further situates my research into curriculum, teaching and learning. (See
Chapter 2 for a more in-depth discussion on holistic education, as well as relevant literature on second language teaching and learning).

**Exploring Theories and Concepts**

This section highlights the interrelated theories and concepts associated with both holistic and second language education which are considered suitable for analysing my data and in tracing or interpreting the patterns that my participants display in their teaching, in terms of what they say (personal / focus group interviews), what they actually do in the classroom (observations) as well as what their students say (questionnaire / focus groups). These are then correlated and presented as a unified theoretical framework to be used as lenses for further discussion, interpretation and understanding of the data findings.

I now present and discuss the following conceptual and theoretical frameworks which have been considered for these integrated lenses:

- The 3T Model, Miller and Seller (1985, 1990)
- Cummins’ (2001) Nested Pedagogical Orientations
- Theory of Flow, Csikszentmihalyi (1990);
- Theory of Interdependence, Johnson & Johnson (1994)
- Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), Vygotsky’s (1978)
- Experiential Learning Cycle, Kolb (1984)

**The 3T Model: A Holistic Orientation to the Curriculum**

In *Curriculum: Perspectives and Practice*, Miller and Seller (1990) present the 3T Model which consists of three major orientations to the curriculum as follows: Transmission (T1), Transaction (T2) and Transformation (T3)\(^6\) – hence, the 3Ts. Together, the 3Ts constitute the major orientations\(^7\) in curricular programs, and provide a tool for curriculum development, implementation and evaluation. The

\(^{6}\)NB: Instead of T1, T2 and T3, some writers have opted to use M, A and F respectively, where M=Transmission; A=Transaction and F=Transformation (e.g. see Orientation Inventory developed by John Myers, which has been used as one of the instruments in assessing teachers’ orientation to the curriculum in this research).

\(^{7}\)The terms “position” and “approach” are synonymous with “orientation”
3Ts offer a framework for the analysis and understanding of diverse perspectives relevant to the integration of curricular practices. In the context of my research, this would translate into examining these diverse perspectives in language classes. The 3Ts also help identify the various challenges or dilemmas that teachers and students are likely to face on an on-going basis and the possible results of such interaction (Miller & Seller, 1985/1990; Miller, 2007, 2010). In *Dilemmas of schooling*, Berlak and Berlak (1981) have identified various dilemmas, which fall into the following broad categories: teacher-student relationships, diverse views of knowledge, motivation and learning perspectives. For the purpose of providing a better understanding of the relationship between “educational practice, and the philosophical, psychological, and social assumptions on which they are based” Miller and Seller (1985, pp. 9-10) have adapted and integrated nine of these dilemmas as follows:

- whole student vs. student « as student »
- teacher vs. student control
- personal knowledge vs. public knowledge
- knowledge as content vs. knowledge as process
- extrinsic vs. intrinsic motivation
- learning as holistic vs. learning as molecular
- each student unique vs. students have shared characteristics
- learning is social vs. learning is individual
- student as person vs. student as client

Further, Miller and Seller (1985 / 1990) highlight the three positions in terms of their function in education, the various instructional strategies used, the philosophical, psychological and social contexts in which they are founded and implemented (including the historical moments), and finally the view of the individual. The following overview of the 3Ts is aimed at providing some insight into the theoretical characteristics of these three positions and the ways in which they could be adapted and implemented, within the context of this research.

**T1 - Transmission**

The transmission position derives its psychological underpinnings in the behaviourist theories of Thorndyke and Skinner and stresses student learning through an accumulation of knowledge, skills and mastery of traditional subjects. There is a one-way flow of information from teacher to student, involving instructional strategies through teacher explanations, textbooks and rote learning. This position adopts an atomized view of the individual and encourages competition among learners. The teacher’s role is to “transmit” knowledge and skills to the student.
Miller and Seller (1985/1990), attribute the transaction position to the theories of Piaget, Kohlberg and Dewey. In particular, Dewey’s (1897) work entitled *My Pedagogic Creed* has often been cited as the classic statement for the transaction position. This position presents more opportunities for interaction, but is based primarily on cognitive development. It emphasizes intellectual as well as problem-solving skills, and the student is viewed as rational, capable and intelligent. In this position, instructional strategies are rooted in the scientific method and much emphasis is placed on the importance of dialogue between teacher and student and the reconstruction and manipulation of knowledge.

**T3 - Transformation**

The transformation position is the most inclusive of the three positions and its aim is to link various forms of learning. It is therefore considered the most holistic in that it involves a more humanistic orientation and [that] integrates spiritual, environmental, transpersonal development and social change. As Miller (2007, 2010) notes, rather than “diminishing” the individual, the transformation position emphasizes the “wholeness” which is synonymous with holism, in that it acknowledges not just the mind, but also the body and spirit. The theoretical underpinnings of the transformation position are derived from the works of Freire (1972/2005, 1977) whose advocacy for social justice and change in education has been recognised among scholars such as Cummins, hooks, Miller, just to mention a few.

Instructional strategies of the transformation position are also considered holistic, in that they are geared towards ecological harmony and interdependence. This acknowledges not only interpersonal relationships (i.e. among faculty, students, and their respective peers); relationships with the earth should also be not only a concern, but an actual aim. In addition, these strategies include links to other forms of learning and value the importance of authentic learning through creative problem-solving, cooperative learning, positive interdependence, collaborative work and whole language (Miller, 2007; Miller & Seller,
Communicative and experiential approaches to teaching are considered linked to this position, which also include service and community-based learning.

As indicated in Figure 5, rather than subscribing to one position in its totality, teaching should be aimed at integrating / nestling these three positions as appropriate (Miller 2010, p. 44). This idea of an integrated model has been depicted as follows:

![Integrated 3T Model](image)

**Figure 5. Integrated 3T Model (adapted from Miller, 2010, p. 44)**

I later became aware of other similar models, which relate teachers’ orientation specifically to language learning, notably Kumaravadivelu’s and Cummins’ respective metastrategies and nested pedagogical frameworks. I will now turn my attention to the interconnectedness of these two frameworks to Miller and Seller’s 3T model.

**Interconnecting the Pedagogical Frameworks**

Second language theorists and educators have identified, categorized and described the various orientations to the curriculum. In terms of patterns and characteristics, these are quite similar to Miller and Seller’s 3T Model described above. Of particular relevance are the works of Cummins (2001/2009) and Kumaravadivelu (2003).

**Kumaravadivelu: Three Strands of Thought**

In *Beyond Methods: Macro Strategies in Language Learning*, Kumaravadivelu (2003) explores the historical role and function of the classroom teacher in order to show how these have shaped the nature and scope of institutionalized education, particularly within the context of teaching an additional, foreign or second language. Kumaravadivelu (2003) identifies three strands of thought in the current
literature as follows: teacher as ‘passive technician’, ‘reflective practitioner’ and ‘transformative intellectual’. Despite the slight difference in terminology, these three strands clearly identify and classify the various roles of the teacher and correspond to Miller and Seller’s Model and the notion of the 3Ts - i.e. transmission, transaction and transformation, respectively.

**Teacher as “passive technician”**

Thus, ‘teacher as passive technician’ can be likened to the transmission position in which Kumaravadivelu (2003) notes an over-emphasis on content knowledge which is broken into “easily manipulative … items and presented to the teacher in what might be called teacher-proof packages” (p. 8). Teachers are expected to rely on the privileged professional experts and thereby become passive technicians who are required to transmit a pre-determined knowledge base to generations of students. Kumaravadivelu (2003) describes the technicist / transmission approach as one where teachers are “constrained to operate from handed-down, fixed pedagogic assumptions and to seldom question their validity or relevance to specific learning contexts” (2003, p. 9). This approach, Kumaravadivelu contends, results in the “disempowerment” of teachers, citing Kincheloe (1993), who observes that the teacher’s role thus becomes “so passive, so unchallenging, so boring that teachers often lose their sense of wonder and excitement about learning to teach” (cited in Kumaravadivelu, 2003, p. 9). Indeed, this sense of wonder is considered one of the distinguishing features of holistic teaching and learning, and serves to set the tone for a more fulfilling experience for teachers and their students alike.

**Teacher as “reflective practitioner”**

Kumaravadivelu’s (2003) conception of the term “teacher as a reflective practitioner” is synonymous with the transaction position. Like Miller and Seller (1985/1990), Kumaravadivelu (2003) notes that this orientation to teaching is largely attributed to the earlier works of Dewey (1933), who, in his seminal book entitled *How We Think* advocates the movement away from routine to more reflective action. In *The Reflective Practitioner* Schön (1983) later expands on this concept of reflective action and its potential for decreasing the gap between theory and practice and as such identifies two distinct conceptual frames when it comes to viewing the teacher’s role, notably “reflection-in-action” and “reflection-on-action”. Whereas reflection-in-action involves an active monitoring and evaluation during the lesson itself, the latter refers to the act of planning lessons, followed by teachers’ conscious evaluation of these lessons afterwards. Reflection-in-action therefore allows the teacher to identify any problems that may surface instantaneously (i.e. during the act of teaching).
Reflective teachers tend to display the characteristics identified in the transaction position. Although potentially useful in the movement away from the content-driven transmission approach, this orientation presents “serious shortcomings” identified by Kumaravadivelu as follows: 1) the tendency to be too teacher-centered, as it focuses primarily on the teacher’s own thought process, while ignoring the involvement of others such as learners, administrators, parents and other stakeholders; 2) whereas there tends to be considerable focus on teachers’ actual classroom practice, no particular attention has been paid to the “the socio-political factors that share and reshape teachers’ reflective practice”; 3) there has been very little attempt to change teachers’ strong reliance on the so-called “professional wisdom” (2003, p. 13).

**Teacher as “transformative intellectual”**

Finally, by drawing mainly upon the works of critical pedagogists as well as language professionals such as Auerbach (1995), Benesch (2001), Giroux (1988), McLaren (1995), Simon (1987), and Pennycook (2001), who, in turn have been largely influenced by the work of Friere, Kumaravadivelu (2003) identifies a more integrated role where teachers are seen as being “transformative intellectuals” (p. 13). Despite Kumaravadivelu’s use of the term “intellectuals” - which may seem somewhat limiting in a holistic education context - this approach to teaching aligns well with the transformation position as described by Miller and Seller. In this category, teachers see their role as being in-tuned with their social, political and historical realities. In keeping with this concept, Giroux and McLaren (1989) view teachers as professionals who are able and willing to reflect upon the ideological principles that inform their practice, who connect pedagogical theory and practice to wider social issues, and who work together to share ideas, exercise power over the conditions of their labour, and embody in their teaching a vision of a better and more humane life (cited in Kumaravadivelu 2003, p.13).

This describes an approach in which the teacher’s role extends beyond the mere transmission of knowledge and skills in the classroom to a broader, more inclusive vision of the whole.

**Cummins’ Nested Pedagogical Orientation**

*Transmission as traditional: The “banking” model*

To a great extent, the orientation patterns outlined above have been highlighted in the works of Cummins’ (2001, 2009), who also emphasises three approaches to teaching. Focusing specifically on language pedagogy, Cummins’ nested pedagogical orientation interconnects with Miller and Seller’s 3T
model and Kumaravadivelu’s conceptualization of teacher-role. Like Miller and Seller, Cummins (2001, 2009) uses the term “transmission” to describe the traditional approach to language teaching as one where the teacher maintains a rigid focus on the structure of the language, by employing the grammar-translation method to impart knowledge and skills while manipulating the interactions towards instructional objectives. As pointed out by both Miller and Seller and Kumaravadivelu, this also conveys the idea of the banking model (see previously reviewed literature, Chapter 2 of this thesis).

**Transaction as a social constructivist model**

With regards to the transaction position, Cummins uses the term “social constructivist” which is tied to the idea of “progressive” pedagogy (Dewey, 1963) and active learning (Vygotsky 1962, 1978). While it places emphasis on the importance of the student experience, Cummins notes that this approach to the curriculum focuses “narrowly on the teaching-learning relationship and fails to articulate a coherent vision of the broader social implications of instruction which should logically extend to the power relations that shape what counts as knowledge and whose knowledge counts” (p). Cummins’s observation is similar to what many other theorists in holistic education have observed about the nature of this orientation to the curriculum.

**Transformation: Crossing the threshold**

However, as Cummins further observes, although the constructivist orientations point to a more whole language approach, they “decline to cross this threshold, preferring to remain within the confines of the classroom rather than venturing into the social landscape beyond” (2001, p.220). This observation is particularly relevant to my research, and is useful for exploring ways in which instructors venture to go beyond the classroom by embracing various techniques related to experiential and service-learning which form part and parcel of a holistic language teaching and learning experience.

This question of going beyond is the main distinguishing factor of the transformation position, which constitutes the next component of Cummins’s Nested Pedagogical Framework. Like Miller and Seller as well as Kumaravadivelu, Cummins draws on the pioneering work of Paolo Freire, maintains the same terminology and highlights similar characteristics of this position (as previously described) when referring to the transformation position, which he links to a more recent phenomenon in language teaching. Cummins notes that while focusing on whole language, and a joint interactive construction of knowledge through critical inquiry, the transformation position also pays explicit attention to a “critical examination to student experience and social realities” (2001, p. 219).
Cummins (2001) notes that all three orientations – transmission (traditional), social constructivist and transformation - should be seen as “...points on a continuum that merge into one another” (p. 218). Likewise, in his recent works, Miller has increasingly emphasised the importance of integrating all three positions in the pursuit of whole teaching.

It is important to note that the 3Ts refer to an orientation (position, or approach) to curriculum, rather than a “method”. While the latter traditionally calls for rigid applications of pre-determined techniques and strategies, holistic education seeks a vision. As Miller has observed, the tendency to focus on technique in the West, has in turn led to an over-emphasis on strategies related to teaching and assessment “without a corresponding link to a broader conception of learning and a vision of the whole [student]” (2007, p. 8). In seeking to arrive at a balance in these relationships, there has been some pioneering work through the establishment of school systems, which adhere to a more holistic approach. Noted for their contribution in this endeavour are Maria Montessori and Rudolph Steiner, who established the Montessori and Waldorf schools respectively. Ron Miller (1992) cautions that: “Holistic education was not to be defined as a particular method or technique; it must be seen as a paradigm, a set of basic assumptions and principles that can be applied in diverse ways” (p. 21). Thus the idea of the 3Ts as an orientation suggests that this can be adapted into a pedagogical framework which strives for a broader vision of the curriculum as an integrated whole. Unlike a great majority of other models, the 3Ts offers a non-dichotomized view of reality – a phenomenon which is facilitated by the wide range of possibilities offered by its three broad categories, given the fact that it is composed of three and not two major orientations. The following diagram represents the 3Ts as conceptualized by Miller and Seller (1990), and
includes the interrelated ideas and terms advanced by Kumaravadiyelu (2003) and Cummins’ (2001, 2009), especially as they relate to the curricular orientations to language teaching.

![Diagram of pedagogical orientations]

**Figure 7. (Inter)connected pedagogical orientations.**

In the above section, I presented Miller and Sellers’ 3T Model, along with the pedagogical frameworks from Kumaravadiyelu (2003) and Cummins (2001, 2009) which speak to the orientation of teachers to the curriculum.

Cranton’s contribution to this discussion is also useful as the author highlights some of the ways in which teachers can facilitate transformative learning, which she affirms, constitutes “the primary goal of adult education” (2003, p. 64). Cranton asserts that critical reflection is the key in this endeavour. Critical reflection is described as “the means by which we work through beliefs and assumptions, assessing their validity in the light of new experiences or knowledge, considering their sources, and examining underlying premises” (2003, p. 65). While acknowledging that “there are no particular teaching methods that guarantee transformation” Cranton suggests some useful strategies for transformative teaching, which could be applied in an adult learning context (2003, 71). These include: encouraging creativity (song, drawing, sculpture), articulating assumptions (describing beliefs through autobiographies and journal writing), engaging in critical self-reflection and being open to alternatives (discourse, debates, role play). Many of these strategies are in keeping with holistic education principles bearing in mind the central goal of making connections with the inner and outer world. Moreover,
reference can also be made to the research findings of Dirkx (1997), which reveal that it is relationships among people - and not rational discourse – that are pivotal to transformation. In the following sections, I will present the other frameworks, which help connect holistic education to language pedagogy within the context of my research.

**Theorizing Flow: A Process of Intrinsic Motivation and Authentic Communication**

Csikszentmihalyi’s (1990) ‘flow’ theory (defined in Chapter 2) also provides a useful set of lenses for analysing, discussing and interpreting findings in this research, particularly those related to happiness (or joy) and engagement in the teaching and learning environment. Csikszentmihalyi (1997) affirms that “the real task of a professor is to enable the learner to enjoy learning” (p. 76). To this end, he traces the history of enjoyment in pedagogy to the writings of Plato, who urged young people to have a sense of joy in their learning, and, more recently, to the works of John Dewey, who also stated that the role of the teacher is to stimulate students’ continued interest in learning through enjoyable experiences.

In contemplating on the notion of flow and its implications to the holistic learning experience, Kessler (2005) goes a step further by making a connection between the flow experience and the idea of transcendence. Citing Weaver and Cotrell (1992, p. 433), who define transcendence as “moving beyond everyday dimensions of life and its usual limitations” Kessler offers that: “When students are “lost” or “immersed” in play, dance, or any other form of the creative process, they often experience a kind of transcendence described as “flow” (2005, p. 117). Similarly, on the question of establishing flow in teaching, Csikszentmihalyi (1997) states that, teachers can derive intrinsic rewards through the process of continuing their own learning of the subject matter as well as by motivating their students to enjoy their learning. According to Van Lier (1996) this process requires authentic communication, which he describes as:

>[A] process of engagement in the learning situation, and as a characteristic of the person engaged in learning. As such, authenticity relates to who teachers and learners are and what they do as they interact with one another for the purposes of learning . . . In the classroom, authenticity relates to processes of self-actualization, intrinsic motivation, respect and moral integrity in interpersonal relations (p. 125).

By making reference to this process of engaging teachers and learners, Van Lier identifies many of the different elements previously discussed by other authors and theorists with regards to what constitutes authentic communication within a holistic framework.
Adapting the Theory of Flow in the Language Teaching Context

As reviewed in Chapter 2, Egbert (2003) has laid the groundwork for the adaptation of this flow theory model by showing the relationship between the concept of flow and language learning. The following has been adapted from Egbert’s (2003) representation of flow in language learning:

**Figure 8. Flow in language teaching-learning (adapted from Egbert, 2003, p. 502)**

This model traces the experience of “flow” described as a psychological state which can occur in the learning environment, and which can be achieved through activities that teachers facilitate that allow learners to participate in, and focus on tasks that are interesting, time efficient, conducive to immediate feedback and which promote learner autonomy (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Egbert, 2003; Tardy and Synder, 2004, Piccardo, 2010). Flow experiences allow students to take responsibility for their learning and develop not only their language skills but may result in enjoyment or more engagement in the task and further inspire in them the willingness to take risks (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Egbert, 2003; Tardy and Snyder, 2004, Piccardo, 2010). Many of these ideas will be considered in analysing, discussing and interpreting the data pertaining to participants’ accounts of their experiences as well as activities observed in the language teaching and learning contexts. In particular, these lenses will go a long way in capturing participants’ enjoyable moments in teaching, which, as Tardy & Snyder (2004) point out, are rarely emphasised in educational research.

Finding the Right Balance in SLE

In addition to considering the psychological state, new approaches in second language teaching emerged where it was felt that the body needs to be included in the teaching-learning environment. This became necessary, in order to arrive at the right equilibrium, to alleviate the conflict between the mere
transmission of knowledge and the goal of language teaching, as well as the question of who needs to transmit knowledge in the classroom. As Shelton-Colangelo et al (2007) note:

The traditional dichotomy between teacher and student too often has impeded the development of all participants in the learning community. To truly transform ourselves and our world, all teachers might acknowledge what Carol Witherall and Nell Noddings call our “reciprocity” with students. For this relationship to be reciprocal, teachers need to cultivate freedom within an environment of love, not fear. For many years, the role of love in the classroom was avoided. However, recently educational theorists such as bell hooks have affirmed the value of unconditional love – accepting students, caring about their learning, and wanting the best for them – as part of an engaged pedagogy (p. 2).

The role of the teacher needed to be reassessed in keeping with the context and the needs of students. This is where the holistic practice intersects well with second language education, as it allows the teacher to be present from a place of well-being. Gardner’s (1999) multiple intelligences theory raised awareness of the importance of honouring individual learning styles particularly given students’ diverse backgrounds and lived experiences; the student was no longer seen as a “tabula rasa” – a vessel that needed to be filled. This is particularly relevant in the post-secondary context, where (as adults and young adults) students’ lived experiences play a very meaningful role in the learning process.

In addition, the need for learners to take full responsibility for learning led to a new relationship between the teacher and the student. The teacher’s role became increasingly that of a facilitator / listener instead of monopolizing the classroom. Participation became crucial and engagement inevitable in the learning process, and the needs and goals of learners needed to be determined based on the uniqueness of every classroom. The ‘good learner’ was seen as someone who was willing to take risks (Krashen, 1982). It became a question of how to stimulate students’ interest in learning and respect their affectivity as well as their individuality.

**Being in the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)**

Vygotsky (1934/1978) introduced the concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD), which he defines as “*the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers*” (p. 86; italics in original text). This theory stresses mediation between the learner and his or her learning environment. Central to this discussion is the role of collaboration and social interaction which, according to the vygotskian approach, relate to the
ways in which meaning is constructed, and its importance in the development of thought and language. William and Burden (1997) offer that:

Vygotsky’s approach was essentially holistic in that he rejected the view that what is to be learned can be broken down into small subcomponents and taught as discrete items and skills. Instead he argued that meaning should constitute the central aspect of any unit of study. Moreover, any unit of study should be presented in all its complexity, rather than skills, and knowledge being presented in isolation (p. 40).

According to Cummins (2001) the term interpersonal space overlaps with Vygotsky’s notion of ZPD. Cummins (2001) views ZPD as “the interpersonal space where minds meet and new understandings can arise through collaborative interaction and inquiry” (p. 30). Cummins (2001) also makes reference to the “construction zone” – a term advanced by Newman, Griffin and Cole (1989) - which may equally describe this interpersonal space where teachers and students collaborate to construct knowledge and to create contexts where students’ identities can be affirmed. The notion of proximal development therefore enables co-operation and positive interdependence which will be the focus of the next section.

Positive Interdependence and Transformation

Theoretical underpinnings

Johnson, Johnson and Smith (2006) affirm that cooperative learning draws from three main theories: social interdependence, cognitive-development theory and behaviourist learning theory. Cooperative learning (CI) is more firmly rooted in the social interdependence theory which had been conceptualized by Kurt Koffka and further developed by Lewin (1935), and later by his student Deutch. CI is concerned with intrinsic motivation, interpersonal interaction and common goals of all those concerned in the learning environment and in particular encourages collaboration among students as opposed to individualistic or competitive attitudes. Johnson and Johnson (1994) examine the benefits of cooperative learning and its relationship to positive interdependence. Johnson, Johnson and Holubec (1994) in The New Circles of Learning summarize the various forms of interactions as follows:

Positive interdependence (cooperation) results in promotive interaction as individuals encourage and facilitate each other’s efforts. Negative interdependence (competition) typically results in oppositional interaction as individuals discourage and obstruct each other’s efforts to achieve. In the absence of interdependence…there is no interaction as individuals work independently (p. 14).
These provide a solid link to the other ideas previously discussed in this framework, such as the transformative approach to teaching, which encourages cooperation, rather than competition among learners.

This awareness has brought about a better appreciation for the use of other forms of learning, including the incorporation of a variety of activities involving music, anxiety-reducing techniques, risk-taking, interpersonal relations, story-telling, role-play, drama, humour and games in the classroom. These are known to facilitate deep engagement among students and coincide with the notion of transformation which is essential for the achievement of wholeness in holistic teaching and learning. Cicogna, Danesi & Mollica (1992) present a comprehensive book featuring the works of several authors who have written about the ways in which this approach can help foster deep learning while developing problem solving strategies. For example, in her contribution entitled, “Co-operative story telling games and activities for language learners” Gagné (1992) discusses the benefits of cooperative learning and its connectedness to positive interdependence, a phenomenon which is highly encouraged in holistic teaching and learning. Gagné explains that: “In most cases, positive interdependence is achieved by having small groups of students work toward common goals while ensuring the assignment of individual work responsibilities” (1992, p. 186). As has been pointed out by other researchers, storytelling (Booth & Barton, 1990), games (Cicogna, Danesi & Mollica, 1992) along with other activities involving cooperative learning (Johnson & Johnson, 1994; Johnson et. al., 1998) have proven quite beneficial in the language classroom. While helping to improve students’ literacy and linguistic skills, these activities also help create a positive affective climate, provide more opportunities for meaningful language use, as well as increased motivation and feelings of self-worth among students. (Gagné, 1992).

In keeping with the above discussion, the transformative approach to teaching has been recognized for its active movement away from mere transmission of knowledge and adherence to cultural literacy prescribed by the status quo. It calls for a more active involvement in the socio-cultural / political aspect of education, which embraces life beyond the classroom and thus inclusion of the whole community (Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Cummins, 2001; Miller & Seller, 1990). It is important to bear in mind that one of the aims of holistic education is to help students develop a sense of connectedness, not only within the classroom, but also within the communities in which they live and learn. Ideally, the main purpose for learning a second language is to go beyond the classroom, and ultimately enable practical use of linguistic skills for real-life communication and interaction. Research has shown that one of the ways
in which this can be facilitated is through community-based initiatives such as experiential learning, and in particular, service-learning (See literature review, Chapter 2).

**Visualising an Integrated Theoretical Framework**

**Holistic Description of Visual Representation of Integrated Framework**

In Figure 9, I present a visual representation of my theoretical framework: a blend of the different theories or concepts which will be used to analyse my data. Following is an explanation of the various symbols (or symbolism) which represent these frames of reference.

*Figure 9. The heart and soul of language teaching: An integrated framework*

- **The Hands:** The visual representation of my theoretical framework depicts two hands held upwards together, touching at the rist, forming a tree trunk-like structure which culminates in open palms with fingers slightly cupped, but remaining open at top.

- **The Heart:** Contained in the open hands is the symbol of the heart, which has been conspicuously placed at the centre of the structure. In addition to the symbol, the words “open heart” also appear in the framework.
  - **Transmission, Transaction, Transformation (The 3Ts):** Intersecting with the upper left and right portion of the heart are two concentric circles labelled transmission (T1)
and transaction (T2) respectively; the heart itself is labelled transformation (T3). These come together to represent the orientations to the curriculum presented earlier in this chapter (Miller & Seller, 1985, 1990; Cummins, 2009; Kumaravadivelu, 2003). (NB: given the emphasis on the transformation position in holistic instruction, the word “Transformation” - the term common to both holistic and second language educators – appropriately falls within the symbol of the heart itself.

- **The “U”:** Outlined in the palm of the hands is the image of a “U”, which has dual signification. On the one hand the U literally denotes “University” (bearing in mind the specific research context); it is also a representation of the broader post-secondary context. On the other hand, the U also symbolizes “Theory U” as adapted from Senge et al. (2005) and Sharmer (2007). The upper left and right sections of the U feature the words “Open Mind” / “sensing” (observing) and “Open Will” / “realizing” (acting with the flow) respectively. At the bottom of the U are the words “Open Heart” / “presencing” (reflecting).

- **The Arrows:** The four arrows which follow a circular motion between the heart and the U can be said to depict multiple repesentations as follows:
  
  - **Flow:** Czikszentmihayli’s theory of flow connects directly with the idea of “realising” or acting with the flow, having an open heart (Sharmer, 2005; Kessler 2005), along with the associated concepts such as joy and happiness (Noddings, 2004; Miller, 2007).
  
  - **ZPD:** Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development is also represented in this integrated framework. This is connected with the “interpersonal space” (Cummins 2001, 2009) or the “construction zone” (Newman, Griffin & Cole, 1989).
  
  - **Positive Interdependence:** Johnson, Johnson and Smith’s (2006) conceptualization of positive interdependence is connected to cooperative learning, which falls under the wider umbrella of the theory of interdependence. This can also be linked to the notion of interconnectedness which form the basic philosophical underpinnings of holistic education (Bache, 2008; Huxley, 1970; Miller, 2007; ).
  
  - **Experiential Learning Cycle:** Kolb (1984) identifies four cycles in the learning process, which together, form a holistic, integrative perspective. They are: reflective observation (RO), active experimentation (AE), abstract conceptualization (AC) and concrete experience (CE).
It has often been noted in the holistic education literature, that while there has been an over-emphasis on the head (or the cognitive), little attention has been placed on the hands or the heart (Miller 2007, Gandhi, 1988). Gandhi asserts that: “I would develop in a child, his hand, his brain and his soul. The hands have almost atrophied. The soul has been altogether ignored.” (1988, p. 144). Therefore, in this illustration, I attempt to place emphasis on the these vital parts of the body - the hands and the heart - and their significance in a holistic teaching and learning environment. In the following section, I will expand on the significance of the various components of the framework.

The Hands: A Symbol of Responsibility, Relationships and Respect

The hands are said to be the richest source of (tactile) feedback and have the greatest positioning capacity of the body. As a tool to facilitate language (including sign language), the hands are used to convey different meanings and expressions through gestures for non-verbal communication, or in parallel with the spoken word. There is no doubt that the hands play a very significant role in teaching – from the simple and practical, to the more complex and symbolic usage. In addition to being a tool for non-verbal communication, it is with the hands that teachers perform some of their most fundamental actions: writing (or typing), marking papers, giving feedback to students, pointing things out, gestering, and other similar activities. Most importantly, in the context of this research, the hand is used in a symbolic and metaphoric sense in this framework and also represents the three R’s - responsibility, relationships, and respect - which have been identified by holistic educators as being fundamental to holistic education principles.

Responsibility. This refers to the notion of accountability and the teachers’ role in “lending a hand” of support to their students by caring for their learning and overall well-being. The term responsibility is synomyous with accountability, which, from a holistic perspective, extends beyond mere “competition among students to excell on paper-and-pencil tests” (Miller 2007, p. 193). Rather, according to Miller (2007, p. 193-194), accountability involves an inclusive approach and operates at four broad levels:

- Being present to the whole student.
  As Miller notes “Our ability to listen to students is fundamental to assessing where they are and how we can respond to their needs” (2007, p. 193 author’s italics).
- Being accountable to the institutions we work for.
  Included in this inevitable call for integrity is what Palmer (1998) has referred to as the ‘undivided self’ which speaks to the need to nurture both the inner and outer. Of particular relevance to the
post-secondary context is the more recent work of Palmer and Zajonc (2010), where the authors call for a more “integrative, transformative and humane environment for teaching and learning” (p. 75).

- Accountability to the community in which the educational institutions reside.
  Here, the work of Reeves (2002) has been acknowledged for its holistic accountability in that it provides guidelines for community leadership and practices and their applicability to various teaching contexts.

- Accountability at the more global level.
  This calls for developing “a sense of reverence and respect for the natural process of the earth and the biosphere” (Miller, J. 2007, p. 194). Johnson (2011) also emphasizes the “rippling results” that can be derived from having a sense of place and “taking responsibility for and productive action toward attaining ecological balance” (p. 9).

As pointed out in the previous chapter, this notion of accountability also extends to the student, who needs to assume some responsibility in the process of building these relationships; this will be the focus of the following section.

**Relationship.** This is a key aspect of holistic teaching and learning and is directly related to the notion of connectedness which forms one of the major premises of holistic education. As we have seen in the literature previously reviewed in Chapter 2, holistic educators give central value to the question of relationship as being vital in building and maintaining meaningful teaching-learning environments. This denotes connectedness within the individuals themselves, in the classroom, in the wider community. Synonymous with connectedness, this notion refers to the commitment on the part of both teachers and students to creating and maintaining positive relations in the teaching and learning environment on many different levels: intellectual, social, environmental as well as spiritual (Miller, J., 2007, Miller, R. 2002; Forbes, 20003; Krishnamurti, 1981). In his paper entitled “Values in Holistic Education” Forbes discusses relationships as both a source and a topic of education. He notes that:

> [A]s a source, relationships are an excellent mirror in which to see ourselves – we learn a great deal about ourselves by seeing how others respond to us. As a topic, learning about healthy, mutually sustaining relationships – how to create them and maintain them – is seen as necessary to solve many of our social and personal ills (1996, p. 6).

Along with the intellectual or cognitive work involved (particularly when making various pedagogical decisions), and the emotional aspect (i.e. the teachers’ commitment to caring for and
supporting students’ learning), there is the physical act of doing. Thus, the hands could also be said to “embody” the physical or “hands-on” aspect of teaching. Even during certain “behind-the-scenes” or preparational work that the teacher must perform, the hands also play a prominent role in what they (and their students) actually do in the classroom. Furthermore, the whole purpose of teaching – and ultimately student learning – can be directly (or indirectly) linked to the hands. Indeed, it would not be an exaggeration to declare that teaching and learning go “hand-in-hand”.

**Adapting the Experiential Learning Cycle**

Thus, the endeavour to show this relationship between teaching and learning in the FSL post-secondary classroom, brings into focus the notion of experiential learning, which Kolb (1998) defines as “the process whereby knowledge is created by the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the process of grasping and transforming experience” (p. 241). Further, by drawing upon the theory of psychological types advanced by Jung (1923), Kolb affirms that learning should not only be restricted to perception or cognition, but should also integrate other essential human functioning, and hence incorporates “thinking, feeling, perceiving and behaving” (p. 31). Thus, based on this assertion, Kolb (1984) proposes the experiential learning cycle which is composed of the following four components: reflective observation (RO), active experimentation (AE), abstract conceptualization (AC) and concrete experience (CE). Kolb himself makes the connection between holistic education and experiential learning by describing this cycle as “a holistic integrative perspective on learning that combines experience, cognition, perception and behavior” (1984, p. 21). He further states that “learning is an Holistic process of adaptation to the world” (1984, p. 31).

**Instructors’ hands-on facilitation.** Although Kolb’s cycle is usually discussed from the perspective of the learner, in keeping with the primary focus of this research, this frame of reference will be useful in examining how the instructors themselves facilitate experiential learning. It is also useful in illuminating teachers’ perception of the impact of their teaching on students’ learning as well as feedback from students themselves about their experiences in the language classes. As Tennant (1997) notes, Kolb’s cycle provides an excellent framework for planning teaching and learning activities, and that it can be used by teachers as a guide to check whether the learner is effectively engaged. Further, given the fact that experiential learning (along with the related notion of community-based service-learning) has been adapted into the post-secondary language courses, Kolb’s theory provides a reference point for discussion of related data. Moreover, the symbolism of the hand in this integrated framework is of particular relevance, as it coincides with the phase of the
cycle that is concerned with instructors’ facilitation of certain parts of the process. This active facilitation may sometimes extend well beyond the classroom, giving rise to concrete experience (CE) and active experimentation (AE). One example of this is service-learning which is concerned with the act of learning by doing or active participation beyond the immediate classroom community.

**The Theory of the U**

In *Presence: An Exploration of Profound Change in People, Organizations and Society*, Senge et al. (2005) outline their theory about exploring the deeper levels of learning and transformational change through the “Theory of the U”. Drawing on the fundamental question: “What does it mean to act in the world and not on the world?” Senge et al. (2005, pp. 87-92) raise awareness of the idea of presence, as a natural, whole and interconnected process involving “sensing” (observing), “presencing” (reflecting) and “realizing” (acting with the flow). In his follow-up book of the same title, Sharmer (2007) presents the “Theory U” and illustrates three major components by tracing a similar pattern along the U: the open mind, the open heart and the open will. These three basic concepts of the Theory U coincide with the components of presence advanced by Kessler (2005), notably, an open heart, respectful discipline, being present in the here and now, and the willingness to care. Hart (2011), by making reference to the idea of *knowledge by presence* adds yet another dimension to this discussion. As he explains, this involves “not only looking at the outer data, but also opening into ourselves” (p. 15). Hart (2011) further clarifies that:

*Presence* in this sense is eminently practical for learning and may be recognized by such qualities as nondefensive openness, flexibility of thought, curiosity and questioning, a sense of wonder, suspension of disbelief, leading with appreciation over judgement, an emphasis on contact over categorization, and a willingness to really meet and therefore be changed by the object of inquiry, whether a new idea or a new person. (pp. 15-16 italics in original text)

In Figure 9 (visual of integrated framework), the top left side of the “U” has been labeled as “the open mind” (where the teacher/student receives information); at the bottom of the U resides a very important space in the teaching and learning dynamics – the open heart. It is where, according to Senge et al., that “presencing” – a merger of the words “presence” and “sensing” - takes place, and further represents the merging of the past, present and future. Here, it is worth repeating Miller’s (2007) affirmation that teaching presence is the root of holistic education. In order for transformation to take place, teachers must be fully “present” in the classroom.
Heart and Soul

Embedded in the title of my thesis, the term “heart and soul” is of great significance to this research. There is undoubtedly, a close link between the words “heart” and “soul”. In some contexts they are synonymous with each other, signifying such terms as “core”, “spirit”, “compassion”. Often associated with expressions of courage, strength, determination and motivation, the metaphor of the “heart” animates many of our everyday aspirations. Furthermore, taken together, the term “heart and soul” could signify “essential”, “total person”, “complete”, “absolute”, “the entirety of one’s energies and affections” or “most vital part of some idea or experience”. As such, the symbolism of the heart forms an essential part of this integrated framework, in that it represents a concept that has inspired the works of theorists, scholars and educators related to holistic education, including: Kessler (2005), hooks (2001), Palmer (1998), Palmer and Zajonc (2010), Schamer (2007), Senge et al. (2005), as well as van Menen (1986), some of whom will be discussed in this section. It is important to note, that the symbol of the heart, an essential element of holistic teaching and learning also represents other concepts much emphasised by holistic educators, which will be further explored below.

Love: The Heart of Teaching

It is worth mentioning that much to my delight, while contemplating on the relationship between the various components of my theoretical framework (particularly “heart” and “teacher”), I stumbled upon the realisation that the word HEART is embedded in the word TEACHER! The symbol of the heart, also provides a space for talking about some concepts which are fundamental to whole teaching. In Pedagogy As Love, Loreman (2011) acknowledges the different contextual connotations of the word love and attempts to define it within three major frameworks: a) psychological (Cho, 2005; Berscheid, 2006; Fehr & Russell, 1991; Sternberg, 1986; Beall & Sternberg, 1995); b) religious (Clough, 2006; Magliore, 2008); c) philosophical (Hamilton, 2006; Plato (trans). 1956, 1992; Moseley, 2006; Friere, 1970; Darder, 2002; Rinaldi, 2006). Other than constructing any “definitive or absolute definition” of love, by drawing on these different perspectives, Loreman (2011, pp. 13-14) affirms that it is possible to theorize about love and presents the following framework which consists of the salient elements of love as pedagogy and how it can be operationalized:

- Love involves kindness and empathy

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8These have been a compilation of the various definitions offered in dictionaries.
• Love involves intimacy and bonding, producing loyalty
• Love involves sacrifice and forgiveness
• Love involves acceptance and community
• Passion infuses all aspects of love

Further, the heart is the organ which is often associated with feelings, affect, emotions. Lopez and Snyder (2009) present a number of studies which points to this phenomenon. In discussing the role of the heart in the generation and sustenance of positive emotions, McCraty and Rees (2009) highlight “the sophisticated connection between the heart and the brain” (p. 527). The findings from this research reveal that contrary to previous beliefs, the heart - along with the brain, the body and the external environment - plays a key role in emotional experience, particularly positive emotions (McCraty & Rees, 2009; Damasio, 2003; Pribram & Melges, 1969). Based on their research involving the Heart Rate Variable (HRV) - a tool used for measuring the interactivity between the heart and the brain - McCraty and Rees (2009) found that heart rhythm patterns both reflect and determine emotional experience, and that the heart is “the primary and most consistent source of dynamic rhythmic patterns in the body” (p. 531). They further found that whereas “emotional stress such as anger, frustration and anxiety leads to heart rhythm patterns that appear incoherent…. sustained positive emotions such as appreciation, compassion, and love, generate a smooth, ordered, sine wave-like pattern in the heart’s rhythms” (p. 528-529).

McCraty and Rees (2009) also emphasize the connections that have also been made between the heart, positive emotions and spirituality, asserting that the heart is the center for intuitive insight and spiritual transformation. Citing the other research (Vaillant, 2005; Siebert, 1980; McCraty, Atkinson & Bradley, 2004), as well as various religious traditions, McCraty and Rees (2009) affirm that:

When people engender heart-centered feelings, the resultant coherent heart rhythms reflect an emotional state normally associated with the spiritual – internal harmony, tranquility, a greater capacity for love and compassion, an increased impulse to forgive and even euphoria and transcendence (p. 534).

Further, Suhor (1998/1999) discusses the power of experience and how we apply some of these ideas in the classroom, The author affirms the importance of person to person contact, stating that “the most accessible spiritual experiences are deep love for, and close communication with, other people” (p. 14).
Palmer and Zajonc (2010), in addressing the critique that emotions have no place in the classroom affirm as follows:

The claim that emotions have no place in the classroom raises serious issues. The problem is that no matter how much we may want to factor them out, emotions will never disappear from the classroom. Wherever two or three are gathered, feelings will be generated – and those feelings will work for or against the aims of education. Show me a classroom “devoid of feelings” and I will show you a classroom in which feelings have been driven underground, where they will do more harm than good to the educational process (p. 41).

Schrier (2008) underscores the importance of paying attention to emotions in the classroom, by making reference to the works of educational researchers such as Hargreaves (2001) and Dipardo and Schnack (2004) who have emphasised the emotionality or emotional geographies of teaching. As Schrier explains, teachers need to “establish a close emotional bond with students, and then seek to convert the student’s emotional engagement with the teacher into cognitive engagement with the curriculum” (p. 291). This is another reason for the inclusion of the symbol of the heart in this framework, as a space where empathy, joy, enthusiasm, courage and a host of other interconnected concepts reside and where they find relevance and resonance. From a holistic perspective, central to these concepts, is the notion of love or compassion… Apart from romantic love with which the symbol of the heart is often associated, there are other aspects of love which need to be considered.

In defining love as “the key that unlocks the door which leads to the ultimate reality” Martin Luther King Jr. reminds us that: “The meaning of love is not to be confused with some sentimental outpouring. Love is something much deeper than emotional bosh” (1968, p. 52). The philosophy of love has often been explored by drawing on the Greek language and Platonic and Aristotelian models (King, 1968; Moseley, 2006; Loreman, 2011). For example to further elucidate the meaning of love, King, Jr. (1968) draws on the Greek language which offers various conceptualizations of the word love as follows:

In the platonic dialogues eros is a yearning of the soul for the realm of the divine. The second is philia, a reciprocal love and the intimate affection and friendship between friends. We love those whom we like, and we love because we are loved. The third word is agape, understanding and creative, redemptive goodwill for all men. It is an overflowing love which seeks nothing in return, agape is love of God operating in the human heart (p. 50).

Another concept which lends to this discussion about love - particularly in the broader teaching and learning context, which extends beyond the classroom - is Ubuntu. In exploring the various notions of love, therefore, it would also be appropriate to include the notion of Ubuntu, which, in the Zulu language
translates to this notion of a shared, communal love: “I am because you are” or “you are because I am”. According to Bhengu (2011), this can be interpreted as follows: “…a person gets actualized in interaction with other people” (p. 32). Further, Bhengu (2011) refers to the “cosmic principle of harmony” (p. 32), affirming that: “Ubuntu is simply the movement and feeling of compassion for our fellow human beings and the spontaneous desire to act in a caring and compassionate way” (p. 31).

Nelson Mandela, whose life literally embodies this concept explains the global significance of the spirit of ubuntu, which involves a process of embracing our own humanity and that of other human beings in our quest for a better world. He affirms as follows:

I have always known that deep down in every human heart, there is mercy and generosity. No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin or his background or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite (1994, p. 542).

Many of the authors, researchers and educators cited so far in this research have tried to bring these other aspects of love into awareness and have written about the place of eros as a motivating force as well as a pedagogical process in education (hooks, 1994, 2003; Miller, 2007, 2010, Palmer, 1998, 2004; Palmer & Zajonc, 2010). hooks (1994) captures the essence of this discussion, with the following affirmation:

Understanding that eros is a force that enhances our overall effort to be self-actualizing, that it can provide an epistemological grounding informing how we know what we know, enables both professors and students to use such energy in a classroom setting in ways that invigorate discussion and excite the critical imagination (p. 195).

Thus, the symbol (or symbolism) of the heart, embedded into this integrated framework represents the various aspects of love – eros, philia and agape as well as ubuntu – along with other interconnected virtues such as compassion, and empathy. These will all come together to illuminate the lens for identifying holistic teaching and learning in the language classroom and beyond.

Summary

In this chapter, I defined theory and its role within the context of this current research. I also presented a brief overview of the theories related to both holistic and second language teaching and learning, considered as useful lenses for making sense of my data. Given the broad theme of interconnectedness which drives the study, I first presented Miller and Seller’s (1985, 1990) 3T model, and integrated the second language theories surrounding orientations to the L2 teaching curriculum as
conceptualized by Kumaravadivelu (2003) and Cummins (2001, 2009). I then presented other pertinent conceptual and theoretical frameworks such as the theory of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, 1996, 2009), Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Develop (ZPD) as well as ideas related to the Theory of Interdependence drawing primarily on the works of Johnson and Johnson (1998, 1999) as well as various frameworks pertaining to the notion of presence as advanced by Senge et al.’s Theory of the U along with Sharmer’s Theory U. In the next chapter, I present the research design and methodology utilized in this study.
CHAPTER 4
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In this chapter, I describe the methodological approaches used in my study, the aim of which is to gain a deeper understanding of holistic approaches to second language teaching in the post-secondary context. I begin by providing the rationale for choosing a qualitative approach to the inquiry, which consists of a blend of narrative inquiry and case study -- two methodological approaches, which have guided the study. This is followed by a description of how the study was carried out: the research sites, the recruitment process, the various data sources and the methods used for collecting the data. I then present the data analysis instruments and the processes followed, as well as a discussion of the various forms of representation of the data collected throughout the course of the study. In subsequent sections, I explain my role as a researcher, by sharing the various insights gained from my experiences, particularly those related to design and methodology throughout the various phases of the inquiry. Finally, I discuss the ethical considerations which govern this study, the challenges and limitations of this process, as well as the quality criteria employed within the context of the study.

To introduce the rationale for the methodology chosen, it would be helpful to restate the research questions which drive this inquiry, beginning with the following overarching question: How is holistic education operationalized in the post-secondary language classroom? From this main focus arose the following sub questions:

1) Who are the post-secondary language teachers (i.e. what are their educational backgrounds, learning and teaching experiences, insights, beliefs and assumptions about language teaching and learning)?
2) In what ways do post-secondary language teachers seek to facilitate / transform students’ language learning experiences and engage the whole student – body, mind and spirit - both inside and outside the classroom?
3) What do post-secondary language teachers understand by teaching presence and how it might contribute to relationship-building and interconnectedness in the language classroom?
4) What are students’ perceptions of their instructors’ teaching presence and its impact on their language learning experience?
Rationalising a Qualitative Approach

Given the nature of my inquiry, I decided to undertake a qualitative research study which constitutes a blend of narrative inquiry and case study methodologies, as I believe that this would be the most suitable approach for arriving at the answers to my research questions. In order to better understand and appreciate the role of methodology, it would be helpful to review the meaning of the word research. By way of definition, Mouly offers that:

Research is best conceived as the process of arriving at dependable solutions to problems through the planned and systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of data. It is a most important tool for advancing knowledge, for promoting progress, and for enabling [an individual] to relate more effectively to his environment, to accomplish his purposes and to resolve his conflicts (as cited in Cohen & Manion 1994, p. 40).

Based on the above definition, research can be viewed both as a process and a product: the former relates to the initial act of planning, collecting, analysing and interpreting data; the latter concerns what is actually produced from this endeavour (i.e. increased knowledge, better human and environmental relations and conflict resolution). Notwithstanding the orderly and systematic approach that the above definition suggests, many researchers and scholars recognize the complexities involved in this enterprise. In fact, the qualitative research process has often been described as “messy business” with its varied and sometimes multifarious interplay of methods, techniques and approaches. In light of this, I can well appreciate the observation made by Clandinin and Connelly (1998) who remind us that “experience is messy, and so is experimental research” (p. 159). Thus the overall aim of this chapter on methodology is to gain an understanding of not only the product, but also the research process itself (Kaplan 1973; Cohen & Manion, 1994).

In my research, I used a qualitative approach to methodology, which Denzin and Lincoln (2000) describe as “a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretative, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world” (p. 3). To me, this approach to research has tremendous appeal in that it caters for many interesting elements that fit well within the context of my study. Denzin and Lincoln further state that, “qualitative researchers deploy a wide range of interconnected interpretative practices, hoping always to get a better understanding of the subject matter at hand” (2000, p. 3-4).

Therefore, given the interconnected practices, which form the very nature of this research, a qualitative approach to the inquiry is particularly suitable. Additionally, there are many interconnected
practices between the two methodologies, as outlined by Creswell (2007), who offers that like narrative inquiry, case studies are bounded by time, place and characters. Narrative is particularly useful as a way of representing a case in story-like form, rather than in a disjointed manner. In the sections which follow, I explain how these two complimentary methods (Creswell, 2007) have enhanced the feasibility of my study. I also outline the design of the narrative case study and its suitability for examining this phenomenon.

**Narrative Inquiry and Inquiry into Narratives**

Creswell (2007) describes narrative inquiry as the “best for capturing the detailed stories or life experiences of a single life or the lives of a small number of individuals” (p. 55). This form of inquiry served a valuable purpose in that it was useful for the collecting and retelling of participants’ experiences, as well as for organizing and presenting these experiences in story-like form. The decision to inquire into the narratives of these participants, led me to naturally gravitate towards the use of a methodology, which best captures its essence. This process of undertaking research is further substantiated by Clandinin and Connelly (1998) who affirm that

…it is equally as correct to say inquiry into narrative as it is to say narrative inquiry. By this we mean that narrative is both phenomenon and method. Narrative names the structured quality of experience to be studied and…the patterns of inquiry for its study (p.153).

Therefore, given that the phenomenon being investigated is concerned with the discovery and exploration of holistic and innovative language teaching in higher education, narrative inquiry presents a valuable medium for capturing the quality of this experience. By using the stories related by the teachers and students themselves. I will trace the patterns occurring through the various methods: narrative interviews, conversations, artefacts and other forms of communication afforded by narrative inquiry, which capture the lived experiences of my participants. Thus, a narrative inquiry would be useful in helping me gain more insight into teachers’ experiences particularly in relation to second language instruction as well as holistic education practices. Furthermore, my involvement in FSL learning and teaching at various post-secondary contexts (both community college and university) has afforded me the opportunity to reflect more critically upon my own teaching practices, as well as those of other teachers whom I interviewed and observed.

According to Creswell “[r]esearchers recognize that their own background shapes their interpretation, and they “position themselves” in the research to acknowledge how their interpretation
flows from their own personal, cultural and historical experience” (2007, p. 21). Through narrative inquiry, teachers are afforded the opportunity to explore their interior landscape and to consciously reflect upon their personal practical knowledge (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998, see Literature Review). This involves sharing stories related to the various significant people, places and events that have inspired and helped shape teachers (consciously and unconsciously) along their journey both as language learners and educators.

A large component of this thesis writing has been centered on personal experience stories, which have become as Carter (1993) asserts, “...more than simply a rhetorical device for expressing sentiments about teachers or candidates for the teaching profession. It is now, rather, a central focus for conducting research in the field” (p. 5). In referring to autobiographical stories, Molly notes that “the retelling of a life through autobiographical writing is another method of creating field texts that capture a tension between self and others, of generating a reflection on the fluctuating place of the subject within the community” (as cited in Clandinin & Connelly 1998, p. 167). Moreover, I believe that Polkinghorne (1985) captures the essence of narrative inquiry, which he describes to as:

[A] subset of qualitative research designs in which stories are used to describe human action….It is a linguistic form uniquely suited for displaying human existence as situated action. Narrative descriptions exhibit human activity as purposeful engagement in the world. Narrative is the type of discourse composition that draws together diverse events, happenings and actions of human lives into thematically unified goal-directed processes (p. 4).

Since the beginning of the 1980s, life histories / autobiographical methods have become very useful in conducting educational research on numerous subjects focusing particularly on teachers and their everyday lives, apprenticeship, cycles of careers, thoughts and attitudes on education, curriculum development, in-service training, professional development and other related issues (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Goodson, 1992; Goodson & Sikes, 2001; Pineau, 1983; Pineau & Le Grand, 2002; Josso, 2000; Dominicé, 2000). This supports the notion that connectedness to the processes that surround the learning context, as well as to the target community is key to understanding successful language learning (Gardner, 1985; Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Norton, 2000).

Moreover, it is important to note that the idea of making connections is one of the major premises of holistic education and further speaks to the idea of life-long learning. This research has been designed to help gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of L2 / FSL teachers in the Canadian post-secondary context. Data collected as a result of conversing with and observing various participants who
have been recruited from these contexts, have been used to construct and develop what Creswell (2007) describes as “a pattern of meaning... typically forged in dense interaction with others” (p. 21). As Creswell (2007) further points out, qualitative researchers try to develop a more “holistic account” i.e. a complex picture of the problem or issue under study. This calls for reporting multiple perspectives, identifying the many factors involved in a situation and generally sketching the larger picture that emerges.

**Case Study Methodology**

Given that my research involved identifying, describing and presenting holistic approaches to language teaching in higher education, a case study component proved to be especially suitable as a methodology. According to Yin (1989), case study is defined as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context” (p. 23). Yin (2003) further elaborates upon this observation, affirming that case studies allow investigators “to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events” (p. 2). In addition to paying attention to participants’ everyday experiences within their specific contexts, this method is both exploratory and explanatory in nature and seeks to examine a contemporary phenomenon and how it is operationalized (Yin, 2003). Stake (2005) also adds to the conversation regarding the purpose and content of case study methodology, by pointing out that a case study identifies what needs to be studied. Furthermore, Creswell (2007) offers that this type of research “involves the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system” (p.10). This refers to the setting or context in which the research is to be conducted.

In light of the above, my case study has been designed to focus specifically on the following key elements: a) the research sites identified within the post-secondary language teaching and learning environment; b) narrative inquiries into the real-life experiences of university and college instructors through interviews, as well as classroom observations, surveys and focus groups with students of the focal group of participants. The goal is to find out how holistic practices are operationalized in that context. Details relating to the research site(s) involved in this study, as well as the various participants who were interviewed, observed and surveyed are presented in the following section.

**Research Sites**

In keeping with the goals of my study, research sites were identified at post-secondary institutions, in order to collect data aimed at discovering, exploring and describing holistic teaching practices among language instructors within that context. As there was a particular focus on FSL, this narrative case study
involved participants from multiple sites in the university and community college contexts, where L2 (especially FSL) programs are offered. My focal group of participants were recruited from second language programs at City University – a large, research-intensive urban university in Southern Ontario. This primarily consisted of a multiple-case tri-campus study involving six FSL instructors – two from each campus. Students enrolled in the courses of these instructors were also recruited to complete a survey and to participate in focus group interviews at the end of the semester.

Yin (2003) points out that, multiple-case designs are generally considered more robust and compelling than single case studies. This type of qualitative inquiry was quite appropriate to my study, as Creswell recommends case study as an excellent approach when the inquirer has clearly “identified cases with boundaries and seeks to provide an in-depth understanding of the cases or a comparison of several cases” (2007, p. 74). Along with the focal or core group of participants (these terms will be used interchangeably), a peripheral group of instructors of other languages (notably Spanish, German, Italian) from various institutions of higher education (both university and college) were also recruited to participate in the study. The following section contains details of the recruitment process of the various participant groups and their level of involvement in the study.

The Process of Participant Recruitment

Post-secondary language instructors were selected to participate in this study primarily through purposeful sampling. In other words, case sites were chosen by consulting on the recommendation of key stakeholders and experts in the field, as they were able to “purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study” (Creswell 2007, p. 125). In addition, given my own experience - as an FSL student at various educational levels and in diverse settings and subsequently as a community college FSL instructor - I had had ample opportunities to establish rapport with stakeholders and potential participants who were able to provide rich data for the study. In addition, my active involvement in holistic education also allowed me to make use of my network of holistic practitioners as well as FSL teachers and students to identify potential participants. Furthermore, during the early stages of the recruitment process, prospective participants were sometimes recruited through “snowball” or chain sampling. Creswell (2007) endorses the usefulness of this form of recruitment, stating that it “identifies cases of interest from people who know people who know what cases are information-rich” (p. 127). Information letters and consent forms - giving details of participants’

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9Pseudonyms have been used for the name of the research location and participants
involvement and outlining the scope and limitations of confidentiality among those participating in the focus groups were distributed to interested participants.

As a result of this recruitment process, six core participants from City University consented to participate in the study. (See letters of information and consent forms for the core group of participants in Appendix A). Consent was also obtained from administrative heads of the programs in which the core participants taught. (See Appendix B).

As explained in the information letter, the core participants’ involvement was as follows:

- Complete a pre-interview inventory/questionnaire
- Participate in three interviews:
  - two one-on-one interviews
  - one focus group with other core participants
- Allow a maximum of six classroom observations
- Provide course documents (or other documents/artefacts deemed relevant to the study).

Students enrolled in the language courses taught by the core participants were also recruited to participate in focus group interviews and to complete questionnaires. (See students’ information letter and consent, Appendix C).

In addition to the core participant group, a peripheral group of five other second language instructors from other post-secondary contexts (both university and community college) consented to participate in the study. (See Appendix D). The information gathered from the other L2 participants as well as students was used to triangulate results.

**Data Collection Sources and Methods**

Creswell affirms that “[u]nquestionably, the backbone of qualitative research is extensive collection of data, typically from multiple sources of information” (2007, p. 43). This is well manifested in my study, which brought together a collection of data from a variety of sources as listed below:

- Individual and Focus Group Interviews: Core Participants
- Orientation Inventory / Questionnaire: Core Participants
- Classroom observations (field notes; audiovisual recordings)
- Peripheral Group of Second Language Instructors: Individual / Focus group interviews
In my attempt to capture and convey a sense of the whole, this study naturally gravitated towards the image of a crystal, taking full advantage of the rich variety provided by the research sites. The chance to interview instructors, observe them in their classrooms, as well as the opportunity to survey and conduct focus groups with their students presented a unique opportunity to explore multiple facets of this setting where my participants teach and learn. It turns out that this is also a place where they laugh and play. In much the same way that a crystal reflects and retracts, at various points in the research certain themes are brought to the forefront while others receded into the background or converged to connect the numerous nodes that bind them together to form a sort of web – not unlike the Indra Web - an image
which is often associated with interconnectedness, the essence of holistic education (see Miller, 2007, Palmer and Zajonc, 2007). In the following sections, I provide details relating to the various methods highlighted above, and the rationale for considering them in my study.

**Interviews / Guided Conversations**

Interviews are an essential source of both narrative (Clandinin & Connelly 1998; Mishler, 1986) and case study information (Yin 2003; Creswell, 2007; Stake, 2005). During the data collection phase of my study (from February to August, 2010), interviews were conducted with a total of 11 post-secondary language instructors and 17 students. The purpose of these one-on-one as well as focus group interviews (with instructors) was to gain insight into the participants’ overall philosophy with regards to language teaching and in particular, their beliefs about second language / FSL curriculum and instruction and ways in which they might adopt or have adopted holistic practices in their classrooms. These interviews generally followed my case study protocol, and were of an “open-ended nature” (Yin 2003, p. 89). Therefore, within the context of the study, it would also be appropriate to say that this phase of the data collection was conducted primarily in the form of “guided conversations rather than structured queries” (Yin 2003, p. 89).

In addition to its effectiveness in helping me to focus on the purpose of the study and providing some direction or loose structure, guided conversation was also useful in maintaining the flow of the interview as it unfolded. This approach allowed me as the researcher to listen deeply to my participants and to pay attention to the questions that emerged. This was particularly helpful given my role as co-participant / facilitator especially in the focus groups as it greatly allowed for the sharing of interrelated stories or those, which had resonance with my own experiences, where appropriate. Moreover, it is this awareness of resonance which fuels the process of narrative inquiry and inquiry into narrative (Conle, 2000, Clandinin & Connelly, 1998).

**Core Participant Individual Interviews**

Two sets of one-on-one interviews (Appendix E) were conducted with my six core participants, who were assigned the following pseudonyms: Alice, Amélie, Yannick, Louise, Pamela and Sitelle. These individual interview sessions were designed to focus on specific objectives of the study and on average, lasted approximately 90 minutes. The first set of interviews centered on participants’ background information, their beliefs and assumptions about L2 / FSL teaching and learning, and their views on and / or use of methods, strategies and approaches in L2 / FSL teaching. In terms of content, the second set of
individual interviews was designed to go “beyond methods” and focus more specifically on teaching presence and other related topics, exploring ideas or musings in the more “abstract” or contemplative realm such as “soulful” language teaching and learning and other issues / challenges involved in L2 / FSL teaching and learning in higher education.

The first phase of these interviews or guided conversations was conducted at the beginning of the study while the next set was scheduled towards the end of the data collection period (i.e. after three months of observation – see details in following section). The second phase of individual interviews was conducted following the final observation visit of each classroom. In terms of venue, the interviews took place at the participant’s office on campus whenever possible, or at another location on campus that we mutually agreed upon.

Core Participants Focus Group Interviews

Toward the end of the data collection period, all core participants were invited to take part in a focus group interview. The purpose of the focus groups was to give participants the opportunity to confer with each other, to exchange ideas or discuss their beliefs about (holistic) FSL or L2 teaching in general. Although the original plan was to have one focus group with all six of the core participants together, it became necessary to schedule two sessions due to various sundry reasons (such as travel, conflicting schedules, etc.). Therefore, one focus group with two of the core participants – Cameron and Amélie – was held during the month of June and the other was held in July with three of the other participants – Louise, Alice and Pamela. (One of the core participants expressed her regrets for being unable to attend the focus group). Participating instructors got a chance to think together, to converse, explore and share their reflections on post-secondary second language teaching and learning during the focus group interviews, which lasted approximately 90 minutes.

Interviews With the Peripheral Participant Group

In addition to the core participants, five other L2 instructors - of other second languages (i.e. Spanish, Italian, and French) were also interviewed for this study. As displayed in Table 2, this diverse group consisted of two male instructors (Dino, Maigret) and three female instructors (Patrice, Jocelyn, Carmen). These participants represented both the university and college contexts; they were at various levels of language teaching and at various stages in their careers. The patterns of interviewing changed slightly depending on the participants’ availability. Maigret granted an individual interview while the others chose to explore the topics with a peer. The latter format can best be described as a guided
conversation or professional dialogue: Dan and Patrice, two university instructors were interviewed together, and Jocelyn and Carmen, the other two instructors from the community college context, also opted for a joint interview.

Table 2

**Education and Linguistic Background of Peripheral Instructor Group**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Peripheral Instructors</th>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Language(s) Taught</th>
<th>Language(s) Taught</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dino</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Italian, English</td>
<td>Italian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrice</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>English, French</td>
<td>French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maigret</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>English, French,</td>
<td>French, Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>German, Spanish</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jocelyn</td>
<td>Community College</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>English, French</td>
<td>Italian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carmen</td>
<td>Community College</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Spanish, English</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Student Focus Groups**

At the end of the observation period (which coincided with the end of the semester), data were also gathered by conducting four focus group interview sessions with a total of 17 students of all focal participants with a view to finding out students’ perceptions about their FSL learning experience (See Appendix F). This group of participants consisted of students from diverse backgrounds, and all levels (ranging from years 1 to 4) of their undergraduate FSL program. Also included in this group were teacher candidates enrolled in FSL curriculum and instruction courses offered at City University’s faculty of education. Despite the challenge involved in getting the students together once the semester was over, these focus groups were conducted in a spirit of celebration. For the students, this coincided with the end of the semester (and in some cases graduation from their respective programs), and for me in particular, this called for a special celebration marking the final data collection phase of the study. Following each focus group, participants were treated to a light meal or refreshments.
Table 3 summarises the student group interviews highlighting the following categories: date of the interview, the number of participants who attended, their gender, language(s) they spoke and the core participant whose class they had been attending.

Table 3

*Focus Group Interviews with Core Participants’ Students*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Participants</th>
<th>FG Student Participants</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Languages L1/L2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alice</td>
<td>Kay</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>TC</td>
<td>June, 2010</td>
<td>Eng./Fr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maria</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>TC</td>
<td>“</td>
<td>Italian/Eng./Fr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fay</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>4th year</td>
<td>“</td>
<td>Eng./Fr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Susan</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>TC</td>
<td>“</td>
<td>Eng./Fr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sim</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>TC</td>
<td>April, 2010</td>
<td>Punjabi/Eng./Fr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amelie</td>
<td>Fareeha</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>4th year</td>
<td>March 5, 2010</td>
<td>Arabic/Eng./Fr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sylma</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>4th year</td>
<td>“</td>
<td>Eng./Fr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louise</td>
<td>Donald</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>TC</td>
<td>April 30, 2010</td>
<td>Eng./Fr./Sp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pamela</td>
<td>Nikita</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>3rd year</td>
<td>March 5, 2010</td>
<td>Russian/Eng./Fr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Angela</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>2nd year</td>
<td>“</td>
<td>Italian/Eng./Fr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bopha</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>2nd year</td>
<td>“</td>
<td>Mandarin/Eng./Fr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elpedio</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1st Year</td>
<td>April 30, 2010</td>
<td>Tugaloo/Eng./Fr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sitelle</td>
<td>Jamal</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>2nd Year</td>
<td>June 24, 2010</td>
<td>Arabic/Eng./Fr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Qiong</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>2nd year</td>
<td>“</td>
<td>Mandarin/Eng.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yannick</td>
<td>Marlon</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>2nd year</td>
<td>March 5, 2010</td>
<td>Hebrew/Eng./Fr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Geeta</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>1st year</td>
<td>“</td>
<td>Hindi/Eng./Fr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adwoa</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>1st year</td>
<td>“</td>
<td>Yoruba/Eng./Fr.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Recording and Transcription of Interviews**

All individual interviews were audio-taped. In addition, permission had been sought to record the focus groups audio-visually, so as to allow me to accurately identify the participants. This is in keeping with the advice of Rasmussen et al. (2006), who recommend that focus group interviews be video-taped in order to “…see who said what [as] on an audio tape, it is often very difficult to determine who is talking” (p. 106). At the end of the data collection period, all the participating instructors’ interviews (both
individual and focus groups) were transcribed verbatim, whereas the student focus group sessions were selectively transcribed.

**Classroom Observations**

Lightbown and Spada (2007) note that “… the best way to promote language learning in the classroom is through research that specifically investigates relationships between teaching and learning” (p. 137). Therefore, following this advice, I found it was important to make field visits to the case study site and conduct direct observations in the classrooms of each of the core participating instructors. (See Appendix G, part I for an outline of the classroom observation protocol). In this study, classroom observations served to provide some useful information on how teachers’ beliefs translate into practice in the classroom. Moreover, as Yin (2003) points out, “observations can range from formal to casual data collection activities [...] and are] often useful in providing additional information about the topic being studied” (pp. 92-93). Merriam concurs, adding that: “Observation is a major means of collecting data in qualitative research. It offers a firsthand account of the situation understudy and, when combined with interviewing and document analysis, allows for a holistic interpretation of the phenomenon being investigated” (1998, p. 111). During the classroom observations, I was afforded the opportunity to experience firsthand how my participants taught and interacted with their students.

Classroom observations were conducted over the winter semester January to April, 2010 (approximately four months); the number of visits or the length of time spent in the classrooms was negotiated based on the teacher-participants’ schedules or planned activities. In addition to taking field notes, where appropriate, I videotaped activities, which I considered to be congruent with holistic strategies or practices, or if they were deemed experiential in nature. According to Yin: “Observations can be so valuable that you may even consider taking photographs at the case study site...to convey important case characteristics to outside observers” (2003, p. 93). From the point of view of holistic teaching and learning, I believe that observations of the classroom (at the very least) also helped to shed some light on the “aesthetics” or physical layout of the classroom. Further, this helped to understand the participating teachers’ philosophy and as Paul Theobald notes, “messages are sent by the way the classroom is laid out, whether we, as teachers, are conscious of these messages or not” (cited in Hutchinson, 2004, p. 77).

In addition to recording aspects of the physical setting, I paid attention to my own reactions as well as particular events and activities (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992) that can be identified as related to holistic teaching and learning. For the most part, the observations took place in the classroom; however, it
was also interesting to observe some off-campus experiential-type activities that the teacher facilitated or helped to organise during the semester (for example, movie nights, the Italian play, restaurant / theatre visits and other field trips). Field notes were taken during classroom observations (see Appendix G Part II); to supplement these field notes, I also audio / videotaped the specific activities (such as role-plays, games, theatrical concerts, drama productions and the like) which provided rich data for the study.

At the end of the first set of individual interviews, classroom visits were prearranged with the instructors, who provided their schedules for the semester; these were subsequently confirmed via email communication. During my first visit to the participants’ classes, the instructor introduced me to the students and then invited me to give a brief overview of my research. I then distributed the information letters and consent forms on which students were to indicate whether they were willing to participate and in which of the categories (i.e. focus groups, survey, observations). The completed consent forms were retrieved at the end of the class.

**Questionnaires**

Brown (2001) defines a questionnaire as “any written instrument that presents respondents with a series of questions or statements [pertaining to fact, attitudes or behaviours] to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers” (p. 6). Two sets of questionnaires were used during this research – one was designed specifically for instructors (the Orientation Inventory), and the other for students. Following is a description of each of these questionnaires and their role / contribution to the inquiry.

**A Curriculum Orientations Inventory for Instructors**

With regards to the teachers, the questionnaire (or rather, inventory) constituted an important component of the data collection process (See Appendix H). This inventory was developed by John Myers, teacher educator at Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto. Based on Miller and Seller’s 3T model (see full description in Chapter 3, Theoretical Framework), the inventory is designed to help teachers reflect on their beliefs and assumptions about teaching and learning, while focusing on their classroom teaching practices. As Myers explains, this inventory is a way of “helping us help ourselves by being consciously reflective practitioners [and]....offers a language and a means for discussing serious issues in teaching and learning” (p. 9). The items are generic, and therefore can be adapted to all subject areas, including second language. Completion of the questionnaires was optional; however, teachers were invited and encouraged to complete them. In the interest of convenience, and to
facilitate the process, participants were allowed approximately 15-20 minutes to complete the questionnaires at the beginning of the focus groups. In addition to being convenient, this procedure constituted for an interesting point of discussion to begin the conversation.

**Student Surveys**

Further, students who had consented to participate in the study completed a questionnaire comprising of both quantitative and qualitative questions (Appendix I). The purpose of this questionnaire was to get some background information on the students as well as elicit feedback from these students about their learning experiences in FSL programs or classrooms that they might be more open to sharing via this more private medium.

The process of creating and managing my surveys was facilitated by the use of Survey Wizard [an on-line “URL” link provided through the University of Toronto]. Although the original idea was to have students complete the survey [on paper] in class, in the interest of time (i.e. to avoid taking the 20 minutes from the instruction time in class), and for other logistical reasons, the questionnaires were made available on-line and students were invited to complete them at their convenience. In addition, survey wizard allowed for the documentation and representation of the data in the form of excel spread sheets and other computerized programs; it also provided access to different kinds of data representation such as pie graphs, histograms, and other useful information (such as written comments) that could easily be incorporated into the research text. The survey was launched on-line on April 30th (at the close of the semester) and remained open until the end of the data collection period (July 31st). There was a total of 75 respondents from all six of my core participants’ classes.

The survey proved to be a very valuable resource for obtaining the student perspective and also contributed significantly to the “triangulation” of the other data sources. Details of this process will be provided in the section headed “representation of data”, later in this Chapter.

Table 4 provides an overview of the on-line student surveys describing the number of respondents, their course levels, and the core participants with whom the information will be triangulated.
Table 4

Student Survey Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Participant</th>
<th>Course Level</th>
<th>Student Enrolment</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alice</td>
<td>4\textsuperscript{th} year / FSL Methods course</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amélie</td>
<td>4\textsuperscript{th} year</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louise</td>
<td>4\textsuperscript{th} year / FSL Methods course</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>41</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pamela</td>
<td>1\textsuperscript{st} year</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3\textsuperscript{rd} year</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sitelle</td>
<td>2\textsuperscript{nd} year</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yannick</td>
<td>1\textsuperscript{st} year</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2\textsuperscript{nd} year</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total 20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Documents and Audio-visual Materials

Throughout the data collection phase of the study, I also collected some useful and relevant materials such as course outlines, lesson plans, various hand-outs and other artefacts for analysis as is customary with case study research (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998; Stakes, 2005; Yin, 2003). According to Merriam (1998), “documents or artefacts are often underused in qualitative research” (p. 124), however they can provide valuable insights or information, which would be relevant to the research questions. Although the focus was primarily on the teachers’ narrative stories, it was also interesting to do a brief content analysis of course material - whether these were already present in the research setting (course outlines), or generated during the research study (samples of instructional activities).

In addition to providing relevant information and insights, as well as for the purposes of triangulation, the document content analysis was also useful in making a connection between the actual lessons and the curricula aims. It also served as a way of identifying the instructors’ orientation to curriculum, particularly those that seem geared to a more “transformative” position. Bogdan and Bilken (1992) affirm that documents such as those mentioned above, including official documents from an institution, can be analyzed as raw data. They also affirm that photographs, films and videotapes
collected as data “have a long tradition in anthropology and education … [and] can be analyzed for meaning” (Bogdan & Bilken 1992, p. 16). Incidentally, I was able to view samples of students’ (creative) work, particularly learning portfolios; these served as concrete examples and provided useful information which helped in establishing the relationship between “whole” teaching and learning in that environment. Figure 10 summarises the data generation methods and gives an overview of the data collection schedules and the various participants involved in the study:
**Individual Interview 1**  
February – March, 2010  
6 Core Participants  
(Alice, Amélie, Louise, Pamela, Sitelle, Yannick)  
*Focus: Beliefs, assumptions about language teaching and learning*

**Classroom Observations**  
30+ visits – core participants FSL classrooms  
February – April, 2010

**Individual Interview 2**  
April – May, 2010  
6 Core Participants  
(Alice, Amélie, Louise, Pamela, Sitelle, Yannick)  
*Focus: Beyond Methods: Holistic practices (e.g. teacher presence)*

**Documents and Artefacts**  
- Course outlines/relevant material shared by participants  
- Video footage  
- Photographs  
- Field notes

**Focus Groups with Instructors**  
*Core Participants:*
- Amélie, Yannick       June, 2010  
- Alice, Pamela, Louise  August, 2010  

*Peripheral Group:*
- Maigret               February, 2010  
- Dino, Patrice          June, 2010  
- Jocelyn and Carmen      July, 2010

**Questionnaires**  
*Orientation Inventory (7 respondents)*  
*Student Surveys*  
(75 respondents)

**Focus Groups with students**  
- Campus 1 3 students  April, 2010  
- Campus 1 4 students  May, 2010  
- Campus 2 5 students  May, 2010  
- Campus 3 3 students  May, 2010  
- Campus 3 2 students  June, 2010  

**Audio/Visual**

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**Figure 10. Summary of data generation from multiple sources.**

Throughout the various descriptions of the research design and methodology, I have made allusion to my various roles in facilitating the study somewhat *en passant*. The following section will be devoted to describing my role as a researcher in this inquiry.
Researcher Role

Quite a few terms could be used to describe my role in this research, depending on the particular phase and the task involved: Facilitator, investigator, information gatherer, and bricoleur\(^\text{10}\). In the most practical sense, the terms facilitator and information-gatherer aptly describe my role in this inquiry. However, in a more figurative sense, I think that the term “bricoleur” seems to fit the description of my role in this process quite appropriately. Methodological theorists, such as Denzin and Lincoln (2003) have made reference to the qualitative researcher as being a bricoleur or a quilt maker, by virtue of the multiple facets and the overall complexities entailed in qualitative research. The following quotes from Denzin and Lincoln (2003) help clarify this notion: “The product of the interpretive bricoleur’s labour is a complex, quilt-like bricolage, a reflexive collage or montage - a set of fluid, interconnected images and representations” (p. 9).

This study emerged largely out of my deep passion for language and the inter-connections that animate and transform the learning process, as well as my interest and involvement in both holistic education and second language instruction. More specifically, my involvement in the simultaneous act of teaching FSL (at the community college level) as well as a teaching assistant while pursuing doctoral research studies in Curriculum Teaching and Learning, led to deeper reflection on my own ways of being and how this can be enhanced both inside and outside the classroom. These opportunities to actively explore and reflect upon my own experiences as an educator from several different perspectives have been quite fulfilling both personally and professionally and ignited in me a burning curiosity to further explore the landscape and to observe and learn more about the experiences of others in the field. Further, by virtue of being both an instructor and a student in that context, I found that my role shifted when appropriate, thus allowing me to wear many different hats in this research.

Given the above, I must say that my role fluctuated between that of information-gatherer, facilitator and co-participant in the study, depending on the nature of the activity and what it entailed. Here again, I am reminded of idea of the bricoleur, as Denzin and Lincoln affirm: “The interpretive bricoleur understands that research is an interactive process shaped by his or her personal history, biography, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity, and by those of the people in the setting” (2003, p. 9).

\(^{10}\)The term *bricolage* was coined by anthropologist Claude-Lévi Strauss in his book entitled: *La Pensée Sauvage* [*The Savage Mind*] first published in French in 1966.
As I mentioned before, my role as a researcher fluctuated depending on the phase or nature of the data collection. For the most part, my role can be described as that of information-gatherer and facilitator. However, this would sometimes shift to that of “participant as observer” (Merriam 1998) or preferably, to what Adler and Adler (1994) have referred to as a “peripheral membership” role. Particularly obvious during the classroom observations, this allowed me to “observe and interact closely enough with members to establish an insider’s identity without participating in those activities constituting the core of group membership” (cited in Merriam, 1998, p. 101). In a sense, my level of participation was determined by the needs or recommendation of the instructor-participant and was based on the activity being undertaken in the class. On some occasions, I was invited to pair up with students (for group work) or for various activities particularly those which involved role-play.

With regards to the focus group interviews with the instructors, I would describe my role as that of a facilitator and oftentimes as a co-participant in what would often become a professional dialogue, where we could all share our experiences. Furthermore, the fact that I was simultaneously teaching various levels of FSL at a community college throughout the course of my data collection, also allowed for an intimate connection to my research. I was inclined to “test out” some of the ideas which surfaced, especially those which had resonance with my own teaching style and which I considered useful for my students or appropriate to my own teaching-learning context. Finally, while facilitating the focus groups with students, I tended to (naturally) resume the role of the doctoral student, which I felt constituted for a much more open discussion (among students).

Data Analysis and Procedures

Creswell (2007) affirms that in qualitative research, data analysis generally involves the following procedures: a) the preparation and organization of the data b) reduction of data into themes; c) coding and condensing of the codes d) final representation of data (i.e. figures, tables, discussion). Throughout the process of data analysis for this study, I followed these general guidelines, and the details of the core elements are provided in the sections which follow.

Preparation and Organization of Data

Given the variety of methods used, the data collection phase can be described as extensive as well as intensive, and required an efficient system of organization. Manual files were kept for each case, and contained documents relevant to the various participants or participant groups. After each interview, audio (and audio-visual) files were uploaded in my computer and converted into the appropriate format.
for transcription, word processing, storage and retrieval. The months immediately following my data collection were devoted to preparing and organizing the data for analysis. I first began by transcribing the interviews. Individual and focus group interviews with both my core and peripheral groups of participants were transcribed verbatim; the student focus group interviews were selectively transcribed. All transcriptions were word-processed and stored in my password-protected computer under the appropriate pseudonyms. Word files were created from field notes generated from the classroom observations as well as results from the two questionnaires (survey wizard and the instructors’ Orientation Inventory).

Although this phase of the research seemed long and painstaking, the process allowed me to get to know my data very well and to “keep connected” with my participants’ voices through the various methods.

Summary tables formed an integral part of the data preparation and organization. The first phase involved creating a series of tables or spreadsheets which contained surface-level descriptions of my various data sources including: interviews - who my participants were and what they think; classroom observations - summary of the hand-written notes gleaned from my classroom observations integrated with the appropriate video footage which complemented the observation notes as well as other documents or artefacts (such as course documents, lesson plans, etc.). I also created Microsoft Excel files and later tables (in Microsoft Word) depicting the results of the students on-line surveys under various categories or themes, based on the questions. Similarly, the scores from instructors’ orientation inventories were tabulated and later thematically analysed. Both questionnaires were correlated with the other summaries indicated above.

Further, the data collected from the various sources were analyzed for all the characteristics of holistic education. This involved a constant back-and-forth movement between the data and the literature review, as well as peering through the lens of the various interrelated theoretical frameworks identified in Chapter 3. I focused particular attention on the 3T Model, bearing in mind the major premises of holistic education particularly the notions of connection, inclusion and balance. The data analysis process also included insights, literature, as well as research strategies used in second language education. This process was undertaken in order to exemplify theoretical ideas, problems and issues in respect to tensions and dilemmas involved in post-secondary language teaching and learning, and the ways in which these were used (or not used) in practice. As is customary with narrative inquiry and case study methodological approaches, after the interviews had been transcribed, the data - which also included field notes and other relevant documents (such as course outlines and lesson plans) - were managed and
categorized through the creation and organization of files (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 2005; Yin 2003).

With regards to narratives, analysis was done through the thematic exploration of the various forms of data, interacting with them in various ways: Interviews - successive reading and re-reading of the transcribed texts. I did a lot of reflection on the participants’ words, expressions, actions; a great deal of time was spent navigating through the various word-processed pages on hard copy or on the computer screen; sometimes getting lost amid the mountain of data, and other times feeling like a seasoned investigator - detective, looking for clues in my attempt to put together the pieces of the puzzle. I also spent a considerable amount of time simply listening to, or reviewing the audio version of the interviews and the videos of the focus group interviews and other video footage respectively. The questionnaires were analyzed by means of description and correlation of the data. Finally, the results of quantitative analyses served to inform the thematic exploration of the qualitative data, as summarized in Table 5.

Table 5

Data Analysis Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Participant Group</th>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>Data Collection</th>
<th>Data Analysis Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who are the post-secondary language teachers (educational background, learning/teaching experiences, insights, beliefs, assumptions)?</td>
<td>Core and Peripheral Group of Instructors</td>
<td>Qualitative: Narrative Inquiry/Case Study (NI/CS)</td>
<td>Orientation Inventory</td>
<td>Total score tabulation and (3T) classification Transcription; Thematic coding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In what ways do post-secondary instructors facilitate / transform students' language learning experiences and engage the whole student?</td>
<td>Core and Peripheral Group of instructors</td>
<td>NI/CS</td>
<td>Classroom observations Teacher Interviews Student surveys</td>
<td>Transcription; Thematic coding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do post-secondary language teachers understand by teaching presence and how it might contribute to relationship-building and interconnectedness?</td>
<td>Peripheral Group of Instructors</td>
<td>NI/CS</td>
<td>1-1 Interviews; Focus groups</td>
<td>Transcription, Thematic coding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are students’ perceptions of their instructors’ teaching presence and its impact on their language learning experiences?</td>
<td>Post-secondary Students enrolled in L2 Programs</td>
<td>NI/CS</td>
<td>Student Survey Classroom Observations Focus Groups</td>
<td>Transcriptions; Thematic coding; Data consolidation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Description and Representation of Data

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, my research constitutes a blend of case study and narrative methodologies. Therefore, where appropriate, some of the case study data will be represented in a narrative form using the techniques of narrative analysis. (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998; Polkinghorne, 1995). As acknowledged by numerous scholars, this approach offers an excellent way of representing the case in story-like form rather than in a disjointed manner. Numerous scholars have embraced stories as a key element in their analysis of teacher knowledge (Carter, 1993, Cole and Knowles 1992; Clandinin & Connelly, 1990; Elbaz, 1991).

Below, I present a general description of the research data, from the various sources including the individual and focus groups with participating instructors (core and peripheral), as well as the Orientation Inventory which the core participants completed. I will also give an overview of the data collected from students’ surveys and focus groups.

Gleaning Participants’ Narratives Through Portraiture

From the two sets of individual interviews conducted with the core participants, quite a few themes emerged. Much of the data collected from these interviews were used in creating participant profiles or what I prefer to refer to as ‘portraits’. In their book Art and Science of Portraiture, Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (2002) describe portraiture in qualitative research as that which “creates a narrative that is at once complex, proactive, and inviting, that attempts to be holistic, revealing the dynamic interaction of values, personality structure, and history” (p. 11). This is what I have attempted to do in the following Chapter (5), where I present portraits of each of the core participants, followed by the peripheral group of participants. Interview data have also been represented in the remaining data chapters as appropriate.

Inventory as “Conversation Starter”

In addition to providing an initial glimpse of the instructors’ orientation to the curriculum, this inventory also served another purpose in this inquiry. Having been given the time to complete it during the first 15 to 20 minutes before the start of the focus groups, the Orientation Inventory/questionnaire also served as an excellent icebreaker or conversation starter. As intended by the developer, it was an effective way of getting teachers “to talk in value neutral terms about what they do and why they do it” (Myers, 2011). It was a catalyst for getting the conversation started in the focus groups, and for allowing
instructors to think, reflect and dialogue together about matters related to the curriculum especially in relation to their particular post-secondary context. A description of this process is the focus of the next section.

Core Participants’ Focus Groups: A Professional Dialogue

As indicated above, two sets of focus group interviews were held with the participating instructors. In addition to discussing some of the statements presented in the Orientation Inventory, instructors also engaged in a discussion with regards to the 3Ts. Apart from having a general sense of the significance of the terms “transmission”, “transaction” and “transformation” within the broader context of education, some of the instructors were not familiar with the 3T model as developed by Miller and Seller (1985). (I explained the basic premises of the model, provided information pertaining to relevant literature and later followed-up with specific references). Nevertheless, there ensued some very interesting dialogues surrounding the whole notion of the 3Ts and its possible implications in language pedagogy. Details of these discussions are provided in the last section of Chapter 6. In addition, several other themes emerged during these focus groups, much of which will be integrated throughout the thesis (particularly the data chapters 5-8) as appropriate. In the following section, I will give a brief overview of the student participants’ contribution to the research.

Student Surveys and Focus Groups

Both the surveys and focus groups provided a very rich source of data for the study. With regards to the surveys, there were 75 respondents to the online surveys, which consisted of students from the classes of each of the core participants. In these surveys, information was gathered on a number of categories including inter-alia: Second language learning background; personal interests and reasons for pursuing L2 or FSL post-secondary studies; and most importantly their experiences in the courses that they had just completed with the core participants. Following is a breakdown of the data collected from the surveys:

- Background information: number of languages (L2 / FSL learning in previous contexts);
- Post-secondary language learning background (i.e. year of study, degree requirement, etc.)
- Interest in and reasons for pursuing L2 / FSL (personal, career, other)
- Level of engagement in the course
- Usefulness of the course vis-à-vis goals
- Relationships with instructors or peers
• Perceived improvement (writing, speaking, listening, reading, cultural, overall communication)
• Recommended changes
• Opportunities (if any) for practicing linguistic skills (diverse contexts)
• Plans for continuation FSL learning (and how)
• Additional comments

Please refer to Appendix I which displays PDF version of the students’ online questionnaire (accessed through Survey Wizard).

\[\text{Student Participation Summary}\]

\[\text{Figure 11. Ratio of student participation in survey and focus group}\]

As indicated in Figure 11, all the students who attended the focus group indicated that they had already completed the on-line survey. Thus, the focus groups provided an opportunity to elaborate upon, and further discuss some of the themes that emerged from the surveys. In facilitating these group discussions, I kept in mind the purpose of the study, and thus guided the conversations accordingly, while trying to maintain the flow of the discussions. Although there emerged a number of other interconnected themes during the course of the discussions, particular attention was paid to those relating to students’ experiences with the core participants, in the analysis and interpretation of this data. Generally, the main topics discussed in the focus group included: engagement, how they perceived their instructors’ personalities and approaches to teaching, relationships (with peers and instructor), and experiences of group work.

\textbf{Other Representation}

Along with the use of narrative stories, one of the strengths of my case study research is that it incorporates different forms of representation such as photographs and other imagery into the research
In addition to the textual representations, other audio-visual, arts-based imagery such as song, music, dance and drama used by teachers have been integrated throughout the text as appropriate. This helped document and describe the instructors’ inclusion of diverse forms of learning as part of their language teaching strategies. Quite apart from expressing these aspects of holistic education, I considered that the integration of arts-based imagery (involving song, music and dance) would be an interesting way of helping to fuel the reader’s imagination as well as adding pulse and rhythm to the piece. In their article entitled “Writing Rhythm: movement as method” Cancinne and Snowber (2003) explain how choreography and self-reflective writing inform qualitative practices and “the importance of the self as a place of discovery within the research process” (p. 237).

Quality Criteria: Strength, Service and Sharing

Many of the forms of representation described in the preceding section have effectively informed the construction of my research text. Notwithstanding the above, I would like to present another set of criteria for judging the quality of my inquiry by drawing upon the work of methodologists Muholland and Wallace (2003) who offer some useful advice to qualitative researchers. While recognizing that “no set of criteria can guarantee truth in a postmodern world” (p. 3), Muholland and Wallace present three sets of criteria for enhancing legitimation in qualitative studies: strength, sharing and service. This is particularly useful in narrative inquiry, the object of which, as the authors observe, is designed to understand “…the evident perspectives of those who tell about the lived experience [rather than] …arriving at a truth or reality [or] an exact replication of experience” (p. 6). Along with narrative inquiry, the case study component explores other facets of the crystal that help to illuminate the findings through the perspectives of my various participant groups. In my research, I discover, describe and document the cases surrounding the lived experiences of my participants and how they represent themselves as language teachers within the post-secondary context. The methodology used in this study consisted of a blend of several elements, which explain how all three quality criteria: strength, service and sharing have been fulfilled in my study to varying degrees.

Strength

The strength criteria, according to Mulholland and Wallace (2003), refer to “…the truthfulness of the data obtained and integrity of the research process” (p. 7). One of the strengths of my proposed research study is that it ties together the overall theme of my quest for meaning-making (i.e. understanding language teachers’ lived experience in the post-secondary classroom) while trying to
answer the questions relating to holistic teaching practices among second language / FSL teachers in that context. Given my current context as both post-secondary FSL teacher and doctoral student-researcher, I consider this research as an authentic inquiry. I present several narratives (including my own) as well as multiple data sources pertaining to the lived experience of FSL instructors in a thorough, coherent, chronological manner; many of these have been substantiated through various forms of representation including recorded interviews, field notes from observations and other audio-visual images.

**Sharing**

In order to fulfill these second set of criteria, the authors assert that “[t]he reader should match a study against his / her own experience and be persuaded by what the researcher has to say” (Mulholland & Wallace 2003, p. 8). In other words, this calls for gaining legitimation from the reader. This idea of convincing the reader of the claims of the study has been identified by other authors who have referred to it in the following terms respectively: consensual validation, transferability, plausibility, believability verisimilitude (Eisner, 1991; Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Blumenfeld-Jones, 1985; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). It is hoped that most readers, especially members of my research community and certainly other language teachers, teacher candidates and students (at all levels of education, but especially those in the post-secondary L2 / FSL environment), will find resonance with the stories of the participants. Furthermore, this narrative case study has been presented in a style of writing which contains the elements of what Adler and Adler (1994) refer to as vraisemblance or verisimilitude. As Mulholland and Wallace 2003 explain:

A text with vraisemblance or verisimilitude is internally coherent and plausible and draws readers into the worlds of the participants so that the readers recognize that the experiences described match their own experiences and those that they have read about in other texts (p. 8).

Guba and Lincoln (1989) also affirm that “thick description” is required in fulfilling the sharing criteria, as this “gives the context of an experience, states the intentions and meanings that organize the experience, and reveals the experience as a process” (cited in Mulholland & Wallace 2003, p. 8).

**Service**

The third set of criteria, which Eisner (1991) calls referential adequacy is meant to “expand perception and enlarge understanding” (Eisner 1991, p. 114). Similarly, the terms ontological authenticity and educative authenticity advanced by Guba and Lincoln (1989) aptly capture the essence of these criteria. As Mulholland and Wallace explain, the service criteria seek to promote the overall
“enhancement of individuals’ (readers and participants’) conscious experiencing of the world and understanding of others” (p. 8). I believe that this constitutes the most useful criteria for my study, which has been undertaken with a view to increasing self-knowledge / awareness as well as enhancing L2/FSL teaching and learning in the post-secondary context. It is hoped that this research initiative will not only benefit me as an individual, and other holistic practitioners and FSL teachers, but will eventually make a significant contribution to the field of education. The following quote from Clandinin and Connelly appropriately sums up the purpose of my study and its potential service not only to myself as the researcher, but also to my community as a whole:

Even in autobiographical work it is crucial to write not only for the self but also for others. Writing for others takes place in the research text. In a fortuitous twist of fortune, the expressions of meaning contained in research texts are often profound for the self. Just as serving the self serves the community, so too serving the community in research texts also serves the self. (1998, p. 174)

**Ethical Considerations**

Ethics form a very important component of research and are primarily concerned with the treatment of individuals. Muholland and Wallace (2003) state that the dominant ethical considerations are “issues of access, informed consent, security of data and anonymity of participants” (p. 141). The authors also affirm that among the most important values which define the research activity and relationship are “...trust, symmetry, risk sharing, humility” (p. 142). This narrative case study has been construed with the involvement of both myself as a co-participant and other second language teachers, as research subjects. Therefore, although the research poses minimal or no risk to anyone, I have adhered to the ethical considerations specified above, even for my own narrative account. As Clandinin and Connelly caution “autobiographical studies pose a somewhat unique case... we must consider issues of care for those field texts and research texts we create about ourselves” (1998, p. 169).

Furthermore, as is customary with qualitative research, I informed all participants both verbally and in writing about the study and each participant signed a consent form. Pseudonyms were used to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of the people and places that have been mentioned in my study. In addition to their pseudonyms, the terms “instructor”, “teacher”, “professor” or “educator” may also be used when referring to the core and peripheral group of participants in this study. Permission had been sought from people to use their photographs and in some cases faces have otherwise been blurred. Details of these and other relevant ethical considerations were provided in the ethical review protocol, which had
been submitted to, and approved by the University of Toronto Ethics Committee, before proceeding to the data collection phase.

The following chapters of the thesis (i.e. Chapters 5 to 8) are aimed at exploring three major areas. The first part will be to discover who the participants are: their backgrounds, beliefs and assumptions about L2 teaching and learning. I will then explore participants’ various approaches to teaching, what they do in the language classrooms and how holistic teaching-learning is operationalised in these classrooms and beyond; in other words, how instructors go about fostering student engagement in their learning – i.e. the notion of creating “flow” in the classroom environment. The third part will be aimed at discovering and describing notions of interconnectedness with holistic teaching and learning, notably, the connectedness to various aspects through relationships: the relationship between the self, and others in the classroom (interaction with faculty and peers), to the community and to the environment. All of this will culminate with an exploration of participants’ own perspectives related to properties of teaching presence, which constitutes the root of holistic education.
CHAPTER 5
NAVIGATING THE INNER LANDSCAPE:
GETTING TO KNOW THE PARTICIPANTS

Introduction

The main purpose of this current research is to discover, document and describe the operationalization of holistic teaching and learning in the post-secondary L2 landscape. In keeping with this overarching objective, this chapter is dedicated to getting to know the participants, in other words, “the self that teaches”. For this purpose, I present portraits of the participants gleaned from their narratives which reveal the dynamic interaction of their lived experiences, personalities and values relating to their journey as language educators. These portraits are presented in two main segments: The first depicts the portraits of the six core participants, followed by those of the peripheral group of participants. Each portrait culminates in a portrayal of participants’ perspectives on teaching presence. The summary and discussion at the end of the chapter focus on some of the salient themes generated by the narratives of the participants.

Core Participants’ Background Information

The core participants in this study are identified by the following pseudonyms (in alphabetical order): Alice, Amélie, Louise, Pamela, Sitelle and Yannick. Table 6 displays a brief overview of each of these participants’ background information, including education, teaching experience, courses taught and number of students enrolled during the data collection process.

Table 6
Core Participant Background Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of participants</th>
<th>Educational background</th>
<th>Teaching experience</th>
<th>Courses taught during the data collection period</th>
<th>Number of students enrolled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alice</td>
<td>MA French Literature; PhD. Candidate</td>
<td>ESL teacher (France); FSL teacher (Canada) Teacher Educator (City University, Ontario)</td>
<td>FSL Methodologies; FSL Related Studies</td>
<td>35 37 Total 72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amélie</td>
<td>PhD French Studies (Literature)</td>
<td>FSL undergraduate (USA, Canada)</td>
<td>FSL undergraduate 4th year</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of participants</td>
<td>Educational background</td>
<td>Teaching experience</td>
<td>Courses taught during the data collection period</td>
<td>Number of students enrolled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louise</td>
<td>PhD Philology</td>
<td>Private High School Ontario, Canada; Language Instructor Teacher Educator</td>
<td>FSL Undergrad. (4th year) FSL Methodologies (teacher educator)</td>
<td>35 40 Total 75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pamela</td>
<td>PhD French Studies</td>
<td>High School (Western Canada); TA 5 years FSL instructor (13+ yrs. Southern Ontario)</td>
<td>FSL undergrad: 1st Yr. 2nd Yr.</td>
<td>35 36 Total 71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sitelle</td>
<td>PhD French Studies</td>
<td>TA FSL Instructor (10 + yrs.)</td>
<td>2nd Yr.</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yannick</td>
<td>PhD French Studies</td>
<td>ESL high school (France); FSL (Canada)</td>
<td>FSL Undergraduate 1st year 2nd yr.</td>
<td>22 20 Total 42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 6 indicates, there are quite a few similarities among participants as well as some differences. With the exception of Alice, who had been pursuing doctoral studies in education, the core participants hold PhDs in an aspect of French Studies, Language and/or Literature. All the participants have had over 10 years teaching experience both in Canada and abroad and a great majority had taught at different levels, particularly high school in both the public and private sectors. Sitelle was the only instructor who reported to have actually begun her formal teaching in the post-secondary context. At the time of the data collection, all core instructors were teaching one or two undergraduate FSL courses – ranging from 1st year (beginners) to 4th year (advanced) level courses.

One of the most obvious differences among the participants is the number of courses that they taught and number of students enrolled in their individual course(s); this ranges from a minimum of as low as 9 and 12 students (as in the case of Amélie and Sitelle, respectively) to a maximum of 35 and 40 (Louise and Alice). With an average of approximately 28 students per class, the overall class size could be considered quite small by university standards. While there are likely to be students who aspire to be second language teachers in all the participants’ FSL undergraduate courses, it should be noted that Alice and Louise were each responsible for teaching FSL methodology (or related studies) courses in the teacher education program at City University.
Portraits of Core Participants: “We Teach Who We Are!”

In this section, I present individual portraits or profiles of each of the core participants. In the first instance, each core participant’s profile will highlight the following major themes: educational background and teaching experience, decision to become a teacher, their earliest memories of teaching, and their L2 learning experiences. The portraits will also touch upon the beliefs and assumptions about language teaching and learning; influences on their teaching; their general approach to language teaching as well as how they see their role as post-secondary language educators. The section culminates in a description of participants’ notion of teaching presence, which, along with their students’ perceptions will be elaborated upon in Chapter 8. These serve to foreshadow the emergent themes, which are discussed in the current, as well as the ensuing data chapters as I go more deeply into what instructors actually do in their classrooms, paying particular attention to various methods or strategies that they employ to facilitate engagement of the whole student within and beyond the classroom.

Alice’s Portrait

“I am who I am; and that is somebody who is fortunate enough to grow up with exposure to lots of cultures, lots of languages, lots of travel and ... lots of diversity in every form and way”.

Educational background

Alice completed her primary and secondary schooling and some of her post-secondary education in Western Canada. Having always enjoyed reading French literature (particularly 20th Century playwrights), she decided to do her BA in French studies. Alice completed her MA in Ontario, after having done the first year of the program in France. At the time of the data collection period, Alice taught in the teacher education program as well as a related studies course at a faculty of education in at City University while pursuing doctoral studies in second language education.

Self-knowledge and teacher identity

Alice describes herself as someone who was fortunate enough to have grown up with exposure to different languages and cultures and believes that diversity is the key to her identity. In particular, the fact that she is bi-racial, coupled with her experiences growing up as a minority in a large city in Western Canada as well as “someone who later discovered diversity in terms of sexuality” - have all served to sensitize her understanding of multiculturalism. As Alice asserts, these lived experiences - in addition to helping shape her identity - have inevitably had a huge influence on her teaching. Alice elaborates on this point, as follows:
...I’m left-handed… it’s interesting, I think, when you belong to a majority you don’t really necessarily see those things or you sort of take for granted those things that just appear normal. But even for me as a left-handed person, something that would seem so natural and routine – like buying a glove for a soft ball game – is not simple for me. So it really infuses my teaching: who I am, and my experiences.

**Early language learning experiences and context**

Although she considers English her first language, Alice had been exposed to a number of other languages including Tamil, Hindi, Spanish and French and shares several interesting stories about her second language learning experience. She describes her acquisition of French as being very “organic” in that she feels that she has always known it, by virtue of growing up (during the first five years of her life) in an francophone environment surrounded by family and friends: her mother, maternal grandparents, other relatives, baby sitters and others in her community. Although she learned Spanish later on in life, Alice also reported to have been lucky in the sense that she was able to apply her knowledge of the language through immersion as a result of frequent visits to her sister who resides in Mexico. As for her formal FSL instruction, Alice describes her experience as being “rather painful”. However, her love, passion and enthusiasm for the French language and culture kept her motivated to pursue studies in the field (particularly 20th Century French Literature); she subsequently obtained her qualifications to teach FSL in Canadian primary and secondary schools.

**An effective language learner.** Alice recognises the various challenges involved in language learning pointing out that: “Every individual is capable of learning something to do with languages, but I do realise that certain people have a penchant”. Alice illustrates her point by offering the following comparison:

...kind of like a Wayne Gretzky, he might succeed on the first try, but it might take someone else 50 tries to show the same level of development. However, she feels that an effective or engaged language learner is “somebody that’s open to trying...to taking a risk or two; willing to listen and learn something new. I think that because it’s hard...learning a language is a big challenge.

**Teaching experience**

Alice has been teaching since 1997. She decided to teach FSL because of her love for French Language and Literature. Alice’s expertise as an additional language instructor in different contexts and at various levels of instruction has been exemplary. Well before embarking on her career as an FSL teacher in Canada, Alice made her debut as an ESL teacher at a high school in France. Despite the challenges involved in teaching in the latter environment - oversized classes with students who were sometimes her
own age - Alice maintains that it was a fun experience and one which no doubt prepared her for adapting to a variety of teaching approaches in order to actively engage her students. Her effectiveness as an elementary and secondary school FSL teacher propelled her into the role of FSL instructor and teacher educator at City University.

**Positive moments in teaching.** Alice declares that what she enjoys the most about teaching is that “it’s a lot of fun to get to know people and teaching is a great way to do that”, she also adds that: “It’s like going on an adventure together!” Alice adds that: “It’s fun to have discussions, debates, to hear different points of view. I quite like it when people don’t agree, because it’s much more enriching”.

**Self-identified role as post-secondary language educator**

Alice sees her role in the post-secondary classroom as serving as an example or model, providing personal anecdotes, narratives or stories, and by sharing her successes, as well as her struggles and failures while exploring different topics with her students. To her, the most effective teachers are those who understand why they are there, those who are not fearful of recognising their comfort levels, what they know (or don’t know), and where they come from. A strong proponent of the communicative language teaching approach, Alice tries to infuse her teaching with authentic material (including debates, films etc.) while drawing upon her own “intuition and instinct” and tries to make her teaching fun. These words by Alice capture the essence of her philosophy:

I just want my students to be proud of themselves in being unique and to see that as a strength and not a weakness, and an asset and not a liability – you know, to not be afraid to be themselves – to not be afraid to express themselves - to not take things for granted and to enjoy – and see life. I mean and I just think that it’s a bit odd in this society where we’re so fortunate and so lucky and yet somehow we all seem so depressed; it just doesn’t make much sense, that a lot of us are unable to kind of just smell the flowers, just look around and see how many exciting and wonderful opportunities there are.

Alice’s efforts to raise awareness and motivate her students to develop self-worth have been well received by her students; those who participated in the focus groups spoke highly about that fact that having her as a teacher has helped them reach their highest potential not only in their language learning, but in all aspects of their lives.
Alice’s Perspective on Teaching Presence

“Presence is being who you are…”

Alice begins by making reference to the physical connotation of presence. She thinks that it is unfortunate that sometimes there is too much focus on her, as the instructor in the classroom. Therefore she tends to move around a lot – change where she sits or stands particularly during small group activities which present a perfect opportunity to participate in conversations. She shares that: “To me, I feel much better when I’m not the only presence or the only dominating presence”.

Alice agrees that presence goes beyond the classroom and that it’s connected to one’s personality, she states that presence “...is being who you are”. She goes on to explain that whether or not she was a teacher, she would still be doing certain things in her life such as “…riding [her] bike, going to films, reading books and newspapers… I would try to eat healthily…”

So Alice strongly believes that she did not need to change any of that on becoming a teacher and that “…I think that if I didn’t lead the life that I wanted to live outside the classroom…I think that what I do as the person that I am in the classroom is the same person that I am outside the classroom. I mean, I don’t have a split personality. I am who I am”.

Alice believes that it is very important to share who you are with your students in order to be fully present. She recalls that there was a time in her teaching career where she did not share or talk about her personal life with her students. She particularly made reference to “that one key aspect that I didn’t share and I didn’t feel good about that”. She notes that she felt such a great sense of relief and connectedness to her students when she finally opened up and started to show her own humanness, without feeling the need to “hide anything”. She shares that to her, self-knowledge - while recognizing the fact that everyone is different - is the key to being present.

Alice concludes by making reference to what a lot of the other participants have emphasised when speaking about presence – “you just teach who you are”. She believes that her own personal experiences have really sensitized her to the need to understand that other people are not like her and that, to her, is always a challenge. She goes on to explain that while she her goal is to facilitate student success, it is important to realise that they [students] may not be able to succeed in the way that she wants. She also recognises that as a teacher, she may not necessarily have the kind of connection that she would like with all her students, “But you do your best; you do your best, and that’s all you can do”.
Amélie’s Portrait

“Language teaching involves a dynamic exchange between teacher and student.”

Educational background

Amélie learned French as a second language in elementary school in Greece, where she was instructed for two extra hours each day as part of the normal curriculum. In describing her experience as a second language learner, Amélie acknowledges that she was exposed to a very traditional approach, involving a fair amount of the grammar-translation method, at all levels of her formal education – primary, secondary and university levels. In terms of its influence on her teaching, Amélie declares that: “Now that I’m thinking about it in a more conscious way, it has; in the sense that I really give solid grammar bases / foundations to my students... my learning is back to haunt me, and my students” she laughs.

Self-knowledge and teacher identity

Amélie describes herself as a high-impact, high-energy teacher. She jokes that “at least students stay awake when I teach”. Amélie believes that her role as a teacher is that of a guide; someone who provides a framework for students and who encourages them to come to her office when they have problems (or simply to talk) so that they are aware that she is there for them when they need help. She believes in providing her students with a lot of resources and feedback. Although she admits that she may even be a bit “overprotective” of her students, she is proud to say that, “in the end, it helps them”.

Teaching experience

Amélie recalls that her earliest memory of teaching was when she was 18 years old. She had just entered university and was giving private lessons as a French language tutor to Greek students. She also vividly recalls the very rewarding experience that she had while teaching FSL at a university in the US – an opportunity which afforded her “the chance to interact with passionate instructors”. When asked why she decided to become a teacher, Amélie recalls: “Well I know it sounds... cliché, but ever since I was ten years old when I started taking French, I knew I wanted to be a French teacher”.

Influences on teaching. Amélie believes that her current teaching has not been overly influenced by any specific theoretical approach or method. Rather, she has developed (and is still in the process of developing) her own unique style through trial and error and by using a variety of strategies.
Positive / enjoyable teaching moments. Amélie therefore describes her overall approach to teaching as “a dynamic exchange between teacher and student,” and her main aim as a teacher is to help students to develop a “thirst for knowledge”. In addition to enjoying the act of teaching itself – i.e. being in the classroom, Amélie shares that what she enjoys the most about language teaching is the opportunity to interact with students, through group discussions or simply by exploring their interests with them and seeing them engaged in their learning. Amélie also enjoys preparing and presenting new material and / or, experimenting with different pedagogical tools and strategies, and in turn seeing students’ response – in terms of their interest and motivation in the material and that most, or preferably all of the class is following.

An effective language learner. Amélie believes that each individual has his or her individual learning style and that the most important thing is a learner that is autonomous and who feels engaged enough in the material “so as to do the readings and the homework”. She has also observed that an effective language learner is one who is not afraid to ask questions. Again, she goes back to the idea of a “dynamic relationship”, stating that “you have to be a good teacher in order to have good learners because if you’re intimidating and, you know, students think by asking a question that you perceive them as being stupid then it destroys the whole dynamic. So I think a good learner goes hand in hand with a good teacher”.

Service-learning initiative. I recruited Amélie as a participant in the study, having heard (through snowballing effect) that she had taken the initiative to implement a service-learning component in her advanced fourth year oral French course. It was the first one of its kind to be introduced in a language program at City University and I was eager to find out more. Both Amélie and her students spoke passionately about their experiences with the service-learning course that she had developed.

Amélie’s Perspectives on Teaching Presence

“It’s their presence that counts; it’s their comments that count!”

Amélie begins sharing her understanding of the notion of presence by at first zoning in on its physical significance, indicating that she seeks to rather “diminish” her presence. She explains that as a learning-centered facilitator, her role is to make every effort to provide students with the necessary tools, so that they need her less and less, as “it’s their presence that counts; it’s their comments that count”.
Amélie also believes that maintaining an active presence requires establishing some strong lines of communication, by remaining connected with students and “being there” for them. For Amélie this requires frequent communication with her students through various media such as email to keep them informed about current events taking place in the community, even after the course is over. She jokingly adds that, “sometimes I feel like I almost bombard them with emails”. She also shares that a great way of being actively present is by encouraging students to meet with her during her office hours as this affords her the opportunity to give them “personalised advice” as well as provide feedback on their assignments and reflective papers.

Louise’s Portrait

“Language learning could be an exciting experience; it’s not just classroom-based"

Educational background

Louise decided to become a teacher because of her “desire and love of language and culture”. Born and raised in the francophone town of Liége, Louise shares that she always wanted to learn a new language. Therefore, in addition to acquiring full fluency of the English language, she also enjoys a good command of Spanish, Italian and German, and is able to read in Arabic. Interestingly enough, because of her love for reading, Louise admits that she was initially motivated to learn these languages in order to be able to “read great works of literature”. However, she became increasingly aware of the importance of the practical use of an additional language, especially when, as a non-native speaker of English, she migrated to an Anglophone environment. Her interest in languages, coupled with graduate studies in literature and philology at a large urban university Canada, laid the foundation for a successful and satisfying career in language (FSL) teaching and teacher education.

Self-knowledge and teacher identity

Louise believes that the best way to motivate students is by getting to know them and paying attention to them. She also believes that in order to be effective, there has to be a strong connection between the students and herself. Louise views teaching and learning as a two-way process, which is always evolving. She admits to learning a lot from her students by listening to them, by “making it real” and by providing opportunities for interaction both inside and outside of the classroom. As she stated during her interview: “They need to know that a second language could be an exciting experience; it’s not just classroom-based”.
Teaching experience

Louise describes her first memories of teaching as being “very tough”. In the private Canadian high school where she taught FSL as well as Latin and Geography of Eurasia, Louise - at age 26 - had to constantly deal with classroom management issues. Looking back, Louise explains that what she perceived as the lack of respect displayed by some of her students may have been largely due to the close proximity in age as well as the need for her to adapt to a new environment where the teacher/student relationship was not as formal as in Europe…. Nonetheless, Louise is quick to add that this experience was very “useful and enriching…I learned a lot in that year. I learned a lot a lot of valuable skills such as organizing courses of study and most importantly motivating students … and I made friends with teachers there”.

Influences on teaching. Louise shares that her experience learning a second language has greatly influenced her approach to teaching, particularly when it relates to motivating students. She admits that as a child she became bored or distracted quite easily. “So this is something very useful for me to remember…when I started to teach I was looking out for those students who were like me; and I tried to do everything like circulating in class, trying to vary activities, trying to give more group work or peer work.” Having been instructed through the use of the traditional grammar-translation method, Louise recognizes that the most effective way of learning a second language is through immersion. “What I would do now with the knowledge that I have [would be] to throw myself into the language rather than, you know, start with grammar”.

An effective language learner. Louise believes that the effective language learner is someone who “shows interest in their learning [and]…has some confidence in his or her skills”. She observes that some learners may be very good, but tend to keep this information passive, and never activate it. She believes that this tendency to stifle the rich information that they already possess may have been caused by a number of factors including certain methods of teaching, the environment or even their own personality. Her advice to learners is to use all the rich information that they already have, and to show interest in the various resources used in the classroom such as dictionaries, on-line encyclopaedias, reading of background information so that they can ask questions. She considers asking questions very important in second language learning as it helps to clarify any confusion that students may have.
Self-identified role as post-secondary language educator

Louise believes that learners should be mindful of their multiple intelligences, as this goes a long way in helping them supplement their knowledge. For example, she tries to get her students to make connections between their other areas of interest / study (e.g. philosophy or science) and their second language by learning the terminology in those subjects which they are specialising in, and be able to use their second language as an enriching tool for doing so. Moreover, Louise believes that this approach would really help students to see how important it is to speak French particularly in Canada and to explore their various options as bilingual undergraduate or graduate students.

Louise’s Perspectives on Presence

“There shouldn’t be a great distance between the teacher and the student. I think there should be respect and there should be limits but not a distance that’s not bridgeable but something that you actually communicate.”

During orientation week when she began her journey as a post-secondary teaching assistant, Louise recalls the following words of advice given to her by her mentor:

You have to develop a certain persona and to have a presence in the classroom is sort of a start to be in a certain role, because you will be acting - it’s like a stage, so you have to be aware that you have an audience at all times, you have to be prepared, you have to be competent, you have to be able to gain their respect.

Since then, Louise’s view of presence has evolved, thanks to another great teacher – experience. Having since gained a lot of experience (and confidence) as an instructor, Louise is now able to articulate her own understanding of presence.

So for Louise, presence in the classroom is twofold: first of all, being able to put forth whatever she has best as a person, as a teacher, and as an academic; and secondly, knowing how to bridge her needs and expectations with those of the students. In order to achieve this, Louise believes that it is very important to “be very aware of students – their abilities and their individual needs”.

Louise also believes that awareness of students’ multiple intelligences is very important in teaching presence, given the diversity among students, and that she recognises that as a teacher, she has to work together with her students in order to establish some common terms for use in the classroom. Therefore Louise feels that this requires that she develop a “certain style” and this is based on respect. She states that: “I think everything comes from respect”. She explains that it is quite common in language
classes, to have informal settings in the classroom, especially during group work, and there may be excessive noise and students sometimes tend to revert to speaking in English or be less productive. So for Louise, it is very important to set clear expectations and encourage active learning in order to establish mutual respect in the classroom. At the same time, she recognises that students need to be motivated in order to learn a language. “But in order to motivate them, you have to let them play a little bit and act. It’s sort of like drama; it’s a dramatic effect. You always have to think, ‘how can I make this more dynamic?’”

Louise acknowledges that there are some days when this may not work: “You cannot always be in your best mood and have them all participate, and it depends on so many things, like if it’s in the morning, or if it is in the afternoon...” However she believes that these problems can be overcome by being well organized. To Louise, this would entail starting the lesson by informing students of what she has planned and setting goals for the lesson before getting into it. She believes that this adds to her credibility, which is an important aspect of presence. In addition, Louise also emphasises the importance of following through on lesson plans and paying attention to other promises to students (such as scheduled breaks), as to her, failure to do so can result in students’ loss of respect.

In the following anecdote, Louise discusses how her own experience as a student has sensitized her to the importance of paying attention to, and caring for students; it also brings out the whole notion of empathy as a very important aspect of presence:

So my presence in the classroom has much to do with my experience as a student. So for instance, if I see students that sort of drifted off, I try to move towards them, because I think, you know, walking in the classroom, or going close to what they’re doing and checking a little bit of work. Let’s say there is work in groups and again I see a student who is sort of not doing any work or struggling with something, so in a very non-threatening way, I just come by, smile, ok, so I sort of review what they have to do, ask if there are any questions, and I move on. So I know that that can happen, so I don’t see it as a problem. I think people need to be engaged, need to be active.

So Louise has come to realise that although she agrees that presence in the classroom is in some way “putting on an act” it is also important to be “as truthful as you can be”. She emphasises that in order to gain students’ confidence and to establish rapport, instructors need to be themselves.

She believes that it is important to develop trust by opening up avenues for communication so that students feel comfortable initiating small talk or coming to see her after class for various reasons/needs. “So I think, there shouldn’t be a great distance between the teacher and the student. I think there should
be respect and there should be limits but not a distance that’s not bridgeable but something that you actually communicate.”

Louise maintains that her main role as a guide and coach is to find out what students want to achieve and help them develop and grow in that direction. By so doing, she believes that she is able to gain students’ confidence by making them understand that she is there to support them so that they feel less threatened to speak or to take part in discussions. Louise reiterates that part of her responsibility - which is tied to her presence - is to remind students that they are in a university setting and that the quality of their work should be reflective of that context. She believes that a great part of presence involves modelling for students: “…if you come prepared, if you show them that you work for this course that you’re teaching, then you establish a certain persona in the classroom”.

**Pamela’s Portrait**

“I try to gear teaching second language towards both having fun with languages and what the students would do with it.”

**Educational background**

Pamela completed her primary and secondary schooling as well as her undergraduate studies in a Western Canadian province. She came to Ontario to pursue her doctoral studies at City University, where she started teaching FSL to undergraduate students as a teaching assistant. She has been a FSL instructor for the past 13 years. Pamela shares that her real motivation for returning to academia to pursue doctoral studies was to get a better understanding of herself and subsequently, to teach in the post-secondary environment. Besides, to her, it provided a welcome change from what she refers to as the “crowd control” which she had to deal with her during her few years of high school teaching.

**Self-knowledge and teacher identity**

Along with language teaching, Pamela displays a healthy sociolinguistic awareness. She is cognisant of the various issues that affect L2 language teaching and learning and is candid about the “politics” involved in language teaching-learning in the post-secondary context. Mindful of the various issues which tend to contribute to teacher burnout such as overwork, time, and other constraints, Pamela seeks ways of bringing balance to her life through maintaining professional relationships as well as finding time for her personal well-being. Although she places a great deal of emphasis on teaching cultural awareness, Pamela recognises that there are certain factors which affect students’ experiences and involvement (or lack thereof) in experiential learning and other such activities outside of the classroom.
Teaching experience

Earliest memories of teaching. Pamela traces her earliest memories of teaching way back to her childhood days, when, as a student in grade two or three, she was frequently asked by her teacher to help her peers in her English language class. Years later, as a young university graduate, Pamela officially embarked upon her career as a teacher in the high school context, motivated by the notion that “one can change the world by teaching people critical thinking skills”. Pamela’s experience in teaching at the undergraduate level has been a lot more rewarding. Over the years, she admits to have learned quite a lot, and her ideas about teaching on a whole, and particularly language teaching and learning have evolved into a practice that she finds quite gratifying for her and her students.

Self-identified role as post-secondary language educator

With regards to her role as an instructor, Pamela describes herself as a model, an explainer and a mentor. She adds that: “I try to break the grammar down as comprehensively as possible, try to be able to analyze sentences, combined with getting to say interesting ideas, jokes and things like that”.

Pamela is particularly mindful of the importance of taking into account the heterogeneity of degrees of understanding or French within the class. Pamela shares part of her approach to language teaching as follows:

I try not to make assumptions about what people will and won’t understand... and I try to take into account individual differences in pronunciation and what is idiolect; and what is totally accurate or inaccurate pronunciation and how does the accuracy firm up and consolidate over time.

Positive moments in teaching. To Pamela, finding “new and powerful ways of explaining different concepts” account for her positive moments in teaching. She also enjoys when students go off and through the activities “truly do”; again this is manifested through the way students interact with each other and explore their curiosity for example, after a presentation when they are asking the members of the group questions. As Pamela articulates: “…when other than as a fly on the wall evaluating them, I technically wouldn’t even have to be there and they [students] would still be having the same discussion. And where I become no longer necessary but to evaluate what they’re doing”.

An effective language learner. Pamela offers that while participation is key, good language learners try not to “monopolise the discussion”, and that these students are “enthusiastic to indulge the content over and above the language and engaged in the class to the point that they want to communicate over and above the fact that they want to learn French”.
Pamela’s Perspective on Teaching Presence

“You’ve got to be real! ...It’s a mysterious process”

To Pamela, teaching presence is principally about mood, attitude to teaching, self-presentation and openness to the students as opposed to “just faking all of that but actually being a wall.” She believes that teachers should try to be as honest as possible because students can detect if their teachers are being phony.

Oh yeah. They can also tell when – and this I’m big on because I’m not always in a great mood - depending on the day, I’m very overworked and I start hitting the wall around the same time they do. I’m not going to pretend to be in a good mood...but I have to be totally willing to help them... You’re there to do that- it’s not their problem and you’re there to do what you’re there to do. We all are. And they respect that. And they can tell; they can tell you’re having a crap day but that it’s not their fault and that you’re there with the good will to do what you’re there to do.

Pamela has observed that as long as she remains conscious of her moral obligation to the students, her bad mood tends to dissipate, once she gets into the classroom. She also believes that opportunities to interact with students outside the classroom (e.g. office hours) could also be helpful. Although Pamela shares the view that teaching is like acting, she points out however that “…you can’t keep the acting up from the time you arrive in the office [on campus] to the time you leave. You save it for the face to face interaction with the students and your colleagues”. To Pamela, this acting involves “connecting with your own personality at the same time...It’s the ‘you’ that you become in order to teach”.

Pamela admits that she is not sure how to prepare for that; however, she believes that it all forms part of “that mysterious process” which she finds hard to describe. She goes on to explain that: “There’s an act of will that makes it happen. Now that I know what it is, I know how to get there but I can’t explain how, I can’t explain that...” Pamela further expounds on this mysterious process:

Again it’s…very difficult to describe. It’s like when you’re on and you’re doing something almost despite yourself. Regardless of what you’ve planned, this is happening out of you. It’s kind of like watching yourself perform when it goes really well. Because you’ve got the complete synthesis of everything and what you do comes out of that synthesis because you’re setting yourself aside and doing what you’re doing and that creates...you get this kind of shamanistic presence where the energy fills the whole classroom and they’re all with you...

Pamela also refers to various forms of meditation that she has tried, and talks about one in particular:
Oh yeah. The Zen process of zoning out that goes along with the acceptance also helps and I’ve learned how to shut it off. I’ve learned how to shut my brain off when necessary. And just sit, or even to create - as in Zen, there is a level of you back there watching the rest of it happen.

**Sitelle’s Portrait**

“There’s got to be that feeling... that buzz in the air!”

**Educational background**

Sitelle situates her first memories of teaching in a 2nd year undergraduate FSL classroom about 10 years ago while in the process of completing her Master of Arts degree in at City University. Like many of her colleagues - who were required to fulfill their mandatory teaching hours as Teaching Assistants (TA) or sole responsibility FSL instructors which formed part of their graduate funding package - Sitelle admits to have had no formal teacher training.

**Teaching experience**

Sitelle vividly recalls her first experience as an undergraduate FSL instructor as follows:

I knew absolutely nothing about teaching...completely petrified...figured it out as I went along. I can’t say that that was a pleasant experience because I was so afraid of the whole thing. And when I look at it now, I could see why people were so relaxed about the notion...my class was great, considering I was so scared... students were very forgiving.

Nevertheless, despite the stressful “on-the-job training”, Sitelle declares that she had a lot to be grateful for. She recalls that, when she compares the feedback that she received at the beginning and at the end of the semester, there was a “huge difference” in terms of her presence in the classroom and how she interacted with her students. She attributes much of this to the following reasons: She had gotten to know her students; her made use of her own intuition; her ability to improvise; and the students’ willingness to forgive. Sitelle enjoys talking about her overall approach and attitude towards second language teaching and what made her continue:

Oh it’s fun! How cool is it to be able to help students speak another language. It’s just fun, I don’t know how else to describe it. And it is totally rewarding. …Maybe I have been very lucky. I have yet to experience an unpleasant class. I have had great classes, the students have been great, and it’s been fun - it’s just fun!
**Positive moments in teaching.** “There’s got to be that buzz in the air! You want to have that buzz because that creates engagement and motivation but you can’t create it by yourself; it happens in the interaction among the students, between the students and you, and vice versa. Everybody creates the buzz”.

**Experiences in language learning**

Sitelle enthusiastically declares that she has always loved languages and having had the opportunity to do a lot of travelling during her youth, she took pleasure in becoming fluent in French, German and Spanish. Sitelle relates stories about the wide range of experiences that she had as a learner, in both formal and informal contexts. Always seeking out challenges to satisfy her curiosity, Sitelle describes herself as a very technical, “what if?” learner, thus becoming quite versed in her knowledge of grammatical structures and rules related to the target language. Sitelle stresses the importance of curiosity as a major asset in L2 learning.

**Self-knowledge and teacher identity**

When asked: Who are you as a teacher? The following response from Sitelle clearly shows her versatility:

I mean, to some extent, I’m a performer. To some extent, I’m a coach. To some extent, I’m a facilitator, dependant on what we’re doing. Definitely, I am the champion of the language! Let’s put it that way – I’m the one going “is this not cool?” So I’m the one who is going to be providing enthusiasm! I do try and be cognisant of what is going on with my students and try and be accommodating… I try to move things around, if things need to be moved around, and adjust according to where we’re at…

**Self-identified role as post-secondary language educator**

During the interviews and various conversations with Sitelle, she often used the analogy of “being in a boat together” to paint a vivid metaphorical picture which captures the essence of her role as a teacher and her approach to teaching - a vision that she often shares with her students on the first day of class: “As a class, we’re a group, and we’re all going in one direction… we’re in one boat, so we don’t want anybody who fell out the boat back there, and is left there all by themselves to struggle...”
Sitelle’s Perspective on Teaching Presence

“Presence is that positive energy!”

In defining presence, Sitelle offers that “it’s not so much about the physical ‘you’re there!’ It’s about impressions.” She recognises that she could be physically present in the classroom and “be detached from the whole process and have nothing going”. First, Sitelle believes that tone is very important. She demonstrates that by pretending to give some monotonous instructions to a class: “turn to page…copy this and that ...now, go do this exercise”. She picks up the pace by affirming that there’s more to presence than merely being there physically: “Presence is energy!” With this, Sitelle models a different, more energetic way of being in the classroom:

Bonjour tout le monde! Comment ça va – qu’est-ce que vous avez fait ce weekend? (Hello everyone! How are you – what did you do this weekend?) So you’ve got energy that’s coming across. You’re in a good mood, this is a great day! You know, we get to do some French! What’s everybody been up to? What’s everybody’s mood like?” And I have to admit, that I do I kind of expect everybody to respond. I expect everybody to say:

“Bonjour Madame, ça va bien...ou ça va mal” (Good day, Madame, things are going well... or bad) – however they want to respond.

Sitelle actually stands and “acts out” the above scenarios during the interview by way of demonstrating the two ways of entering the class to begin a lesson – explaining that one (the latter) is more conducive to effective presence.

So Sitelle believes that one important part of presence is that positive energy, which goes with enthusiasm, passion, and interest in your topic. She also believes that teaching is like a performance. However, she adds (based on her background in the performing arts), that it is not really about assuming a new persona, but a slightly exaggerated part of one’s personality. Sitelle explains that this idea of exaggeration -- that has become part of her classroom practice -- is twofold: First, it’s an attempt to “give students more, so that they get something” and that it also keeps them alert. While she believes that a great part of presence is sharing “that positive energy”, she recognises that not all students possess the same energy level as she does, and acknowledges that whereas some students may find her approach / presence “cool or interesting” others may even be thinking “oh my God, I hope that she doesn’t expect me to do that all by myself!” To Sitelle, the important thing is to recognize that we’re all different, with different levels of expertise and “that is good in a class… and we want it all…we want to share it all!”
Another great part of presence, Sitelle believes, is the ability to create an atmosphere which lends itself to sharing what everybody already brings to the classroom – and by this she means, not just prior knowledge, but also that which allows for the teacher to gain some insight into the learning process in the here and now. As she reiterates:

You have to be in the moment! You can’t be thinking: ‘Oh my God, I have 50000 things to that I have to correct, oh my God, I forgot to do this, and here I am trying to teach them the *passé composé*. You’re like there, and everybody is there. And nobody can ever sleep in my class, and frankly, I don’t think anybody ever has; and if they have, I don’t think they’d last very long. With presence definitely you have to be in the moment – it’s not about what happened yesterday, it’s not about what’s happening tomorrow, it’s about what are we doing now. It’s a very intense set up, pleasant intense…I’m exhausted in the end.

**Yannick’s Portrait**

“In order for enthusiasm to work, there must be some structure behind it”

**Educational background**

Yannick completed her teaching degree in France, taking full advantage of opportunities to participate in various France/Canada exchange programs, offering her expertise as a French tutor for a number of years... Later, upon completing her doctorate at a large Canadian university where she also taught as a TA, she eventually pursued specialization as a FSL teacher. She taught high school for a number of years before beginning her career as a post-secondary FSL instructor at a large urban university in Southern Ontario.

**Self-knowledge and teacher identity**

In response to the question: “who are you as a teacher?” Yannick willingly shares part of her teaching philosophy. She believes that it is very important to build one’s identity as a teacher – an activity, which, to her, happens over a long period of time and evolves through a number of processes that include experiences, placements and internships and other opportunities. There are three major interrelated themes, which emerged while interacting with Yannick throughout the personal interviews, the focus groups as well as in the classroom observations: the human factor, commitment and accountability.
Teaching experience

Yannick’s love for teaching - particularly FSL - has persisted to this day, and is clearly evident in the classroom. To Yannick, like many of the other participants, enthusiasm is the key to effective teaching, particularly a second language:

I think it is important to be enthusiastic about your subject area so that you can convey that enthusiasm and try and convince students that it is actually worth learning. Otherwise it just doesn’t work. Now for enthusiasm to work, or passion which would be the same, there needs to be some…structure behind it”.

Positive moments in teaching. When talking about the positive moments in teaching, Yannick shares that: “The most, maybe satisfying, I’d say, rather than fun, is definitely being in the classroom and interacting with the students as a group and doing different activities and seeing them improve and progress, I think that is probably the part that is most rewarding”. In particular, Yannick spoke about the joy of seeing students several years later down the road, doing something different, perhaps having a job and being able to talk with them about their university years and what they got out of it, “what they can’t see while they were actually at university.”

Yannick’s potential as a language teacher was tapped into ever since her early childhood. As she recalls:

My first memory of teaching is actually when I was in kindergarten. When there was a young boy who came to school and he did not speak any French (and that was in school in France). And for that reason the teacher decided that I should help him and guide him. So I didn’t actually know I was teaching at the time but sort of looking back I thought, oh this is probably my first teaching memory, my first teaching experience... So it wasn’t technically teaching but I was sort of mentoring which might have been a little premature at the time.

Yannick’s eyes light up and there’s real excitement in her voice as she enthusiastically goes on to talk about her love for teaching - an activity which she instinctively combined with her childhood play and imagination: “My next memory would be actually when I was again a little girl and I was teaching my dolls. I would put my dolls on one row and I would teach them.” This childhood awe and wonder would soon find a place in the classroom where it would be nurtured along with her love for second language learning which again goes way back. As Yannick fondly recalls “…I started my second language [English] in grade six and I absolutely loved it!”
Experiences in language learning

Having known from a very early age that she wanted to become a teacher – and in particular a language teacher – Yannick made it a point to learn several languages – English, Spanish, German and Russian. To Yannick, it is very important to engage in some form of immersion in order to really learn a language. She vividly recalls her own experience as an ESL student and her first visit to England – how terrified she was and that for two days she was paralyzed and could not speak a word of English. She spoke of how she overcame that fear and how this experience has greatly awakened her awareness of the challenges involved in learning a second language. This empathetic understanding has greatly influenced her attitude towards teaching. She recognises how important it is to have empathy for her own students during the language teaching and learning process...

An effective language learner. To Yannick, being an effective language learner is all about awareness and the willingness to experiment with and further explore a variety of strategies. She shares that:

An effective language learner is someone who is aware of his or her language learning strategies. He’s aware of what works, what doesn’t work and aware of other language learning strategies that they can experiment with and try to use to see if their learning becomes more effective.

Yannick’s Perspectives on Presence

“Presence has a lot to do with teacher identity”

Yannick believes that presence has a lot to do with teacher identity – a concept that she admits is “very intangible and difficult to put into words”. However she offers that although it may be something that’s innate, teacher identity / presence can also be acquired or developed through different channels by using various strategies, and by working on different communication skills on the road to becoming a better teacher.

To Yannick, context plays a very important role, when discussing the notion of presence. From the perspective of someone who has taught in both the high-school and postsecondary contexts, Yannick points out that being aware of the whole notion of presence seems to be a lot more crucial in elementary and high school contexts than in the post-secondary context especially when it comes to matters of discipline and respect. As Yannick notes:

The teaching conditions are a little easier, for me anyways, it is also important, but we basically know that when we walk into the [post-secondary] classroom, teaching happens. Whereas, you
know, in a grade 9 core French, teaching doesn’t necessarily happen. There is a lot more that sometimes needs to happen before teaching can take place.

Yannick has observed that she rarely has to discipline her students in university whereas in high school it was an on-going challenge. However she believes that regardless of the context, teachers need to have a strong teaching presence, which has a lot to do with one’s teacher identity, which to her is about “knowing who you are as a teacher”. She explains that this involves knowing, and establishing what kind of relationship she wants to have with her students, in terms of the level of comfort or proximity. Yannick gives the following example, almost contemplatively:

Knowing: ‘I seem to see a student struggling today; am I going to say something about it to the student after the class or send her an email at the end of the class, or do I decide that this is none of my business and I don’t want to have anything to do with it?’ So deciding what kind of teacher you’re going to be – how you want to interact with your students. If you see them in the hallway, do you just say “hi” or do you spend 5 minutes chatting with them?

To Yannick, the type of relationship that teachers establish with their students can manifest itself years later:

I think it’s great that students you may have had two or three years ago, take the time to stop and chat. They could just be saying “hi” or nothing, just ignore you completely. And that speaks to the kind of relationship that you developed during the course, or lack thereof.

Yannick also elaborates on the importance of setting expectations while at the same time caring for her students. As she explains, it is important for instructors to work out what their expectations for students are, “not only in terms of behaviour, but also in terms of what you want them to learn”. But she goes a step further and asks the question: “And if they reach these expectations, do I care, or do I not care?”

Summary

The portraits of the participants, gleaned from their own voices (i.e. interviews, guided conversations) were designed to get to know the participants in this study. Although like all individuals, these participants have their own unique style, there emerged quite a few similarities as well as some differences among the participants. Table 7 highlights some of the key characteristics across core participants. These relate specifically to their experiences as language learners and their teaching experiences prior to teaching in their current contexts:
Table 7

*Key Characteristics among Core Participants.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Alice</th>
<th>Amélie</th>
<th>Yannick</th>
<th>Louise</th>
<th>Pamela</th>
<th>Sitelle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Earliest teaching memories</strong></td>
<td>High school teacher</td>
<td>Age 10 (tutoring from age 18)</td>
<td>Childhood: Kindergarten</td>
<td>High school teacher</td>
<td>Grade school</td>
<td>University as TA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Decision to become a teacher</strong></td>
<td>Love for language and teaching</td>
<td>Love for French language</td>
<td>Love for language/teaching</td>
<td>Love for reading greats works of literature</td>
<td>Teach others critical thinking</td>
<td>Part of graduate program; love for language teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Experience learning language</strong></td>
<td>Immersion: Organic, intuitive, fun</td>
<td>Enjoyable; lots of memorization: “…it worked for me!”</td>
<td>Enjoyable</td>
<td>Learning to pay attention</td>
<td>Validating: easy; lots of points and feedback</td>
<td>Fun and exciting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Role as a teacher</strong></td>
<td>Example, model, facilitator</td>
<td>Transmit knowledge; professionalism; develop students’ thirst for knowledge</td>
<td>Facilitator Introduce skills, encourage critical thinkers</td>
<td>Coach, guide, build students’ cultural awareness</td>
<td>Model, “explainer”, mentor</td>
<td>Performer coach, facilitator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching presence</strong></td>
<td>“being who you are”</td>
<td>“being there for students”</td>
<td>“teacher identity”</td>
<td>“Respect”, “discipline”, “attention”</td>
<td>“being real, not fake”</td>
<td>“positive energy”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whereas some of the participants trace their earliest memories of teaching all the way back to their childhood (Yannick, Amélie), others such as Alice, Pamela and Louise recall having started off as high school teachers. Sitelle situates her earliest memories to when she became a TA during her French graduate studies; this is also the point at which many of the participants actually began their post-secondary teaching. The majority of the participants declared that their decision to become teachers stemmed from their love for teaching, love for the language, or both. This, in turn, fuelled their enthusiasm sharing their knowledge with their students. The salient themes of love and enthusiasm and their importance in the curriculum, teaching and learning enterprise have been well substantiated in the literature previously reviewed in this thesis (see Palmer, 1998; Emerson, 2003).
These portraits of the core participants paint a holistic picture of their personality structure and history, particularly in relation to language teaching and learning. Although gleaned primarily from their own personal narratives, it should be noted that much of the instructors’ accounts about their approach to teaching have been well substantiated by other sources of data, particularly through students’ surveys and focus groups. For the most part, students spoke highly about their instructors’ approach to teaching and shared the many ways in which this matched their learning styles. The various ways in which the core participants structure their classes and approach their teaching, along with how students perceived this process will be further shared and explored throughout the subsequent chapters of this thesis. Also used to triangulate some of the core participants’ data, are the narratives offered by the peripheral group of participants, whose portraits are highlighted in the following section.

Portraits of the Peripheral Group of Instructors

The voices of these participants join those of the focal participants and their students as a way of triangulating the data to uncover a sense of the whole in the L2 teaching and learning environment in the post-secondary context. Along with the three university instructors (Maigret, Dino, Patrice), this group also included two community college instructors (Jocelyn and Carmen).

Table 8

Background of Peripheral Group of Instructors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of participants</th>
<th>Educational background</th>
<th>Teaching experience</th>
<th>Language courses taught</th>
<th>Other experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maigret</strong></td>
<td>Retired Professor Emeritus</td>
<td>37 years FSL Instructor urban University (Central Canada); High school FSL teacher (US); Teacher Educator</td>
<td>FSL Methodologies; FSL Related Studies</td>
<td>Born in Switzerland; Textbook Writer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dino</strong></td>
<td>PhD University Professor</td>
<td>University Professor - Italian (25 years)</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>Writer; Musician;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Patrice</strong></td>
<td>PhD/Education University Professor</td>
<td>ESL (Adults) FSL Methodologies Teacher Educator</td>
<td>ESL to adult learners FSL Methodologies</td>
<td>Canadian born; studied and lived in Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Carmen</strong></td>
<td>MA Community</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Spanish Language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of participants</td>
<td>Educational background</td>
<td>Teaching experience</td>
<td>Language courses taught</td>
<td>Other experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
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<td>---------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jocelyn</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Community Instructor (14 years); private language consultant</td>
<td>Italian, Spanish</td>
<td>Consultant to Adults (Gov’t./corporations)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As depicted in Table 8, these participants have all had a number of years’ experience in the field, and they were thrilled to talk about a topic in which they had been engaged for so long, and which formed such an integral part of their lives. The flow of these lively and informative interviews provided for a very rich source of data collection, as this group of participants shared interesting stories about their lived experiences both as language learners and teachers, their approach to the curriculum, their views on teaching presence and how they try to foster relationships in their language teaching and learning environments.

**Maigret’s Portrait**

“You’ve got to have a sense of humour, and empathy, being able to relate...and having patience; that's key!”

Maigret was the first participant to be interviewed in this peripheral group. A retired university professor with over 37 years of experience in the language teaching, Maigret was thrilled to talk about a topic in which he had been engaged for so long. His warmth and enthusiasm spoke volumes about his effectiveness in creating a holistic language-learning classroom. In fact, to Maigret, showing enthusiasm for both the language and culture is key. Also, he believes that the importance of having a sense of humour, and not being afraid “to play the clown” while at the same time, demanding high standards from students cannot be under-estimated in language teaching.

Maigret’s journey as a second language educator is quite fascinating. He recalls that his first interest was diplomacy but for various and sundry reasons, he was led him down a different path. Instead, he found himself enrolling into a concurrent education program, which included Liberal Arts. It does seem as if Maigret was actually chosen by the teaching profession. Maigret admits that he was not sure whether he wanted to teach, but enthusiastically recalls his “aha!” moment, as follows:
Then I did the practicum and I got into a classroom, and I just loved it! I was like a fish in water, it just felt right! So and I had two excellent - what we called in those days - master teachers, and the education professors were also really excellent and so it was just really discovering that I was good at something. Or at least I thought I was good at something! [chuckles]

Maigret migrated from Europe to the United States where he resumed high school at the age of 16. Upon graduating from University - a qualified second language teacher (of French and Spanish), he proceeded to teach high school.

**A “model” for innovation.** From a very early stage in his career, Maigret literally became a “model” teacher on the “innovative” side of things. Maigret describes one of his earliest memories during his high school teaching years in Philadelphia where he had been teaching for two years; the school was selected to make teacher training films for an educational corporation which was developing a method with film or film strips. In many respects, Maigret literally served as one of the pioneers of language labs, taking a two-year break from teaching as he travelled around the US to model the use of films, filmstrips and tapes to teachers.

**Positive moments in teaching.** Maigret mentioned that what he enjoys most is seeing students get so engrossed in an activity (such as debates and discussions) that they seem to momentarily forget that they are actually learning to speak a second language. He adds that witnessing this level of engagement “brings tears to my eyes”. Throughout his many years as a university language instructor, Maigret also has kept abreast with the various research trends in second language learning and teaching, and has been involved in other initiatives involving second language instruction including textbook writing.

**Maigret’s Perspective on Teaching Presence**

“As your bearing. Presence is creating a positive and joyful environment.”

In articulation his understanding of the notion of presence, Maigret believes that he feels lucky enough to be a fairly positive person, who strives to have a joyful environment, and this really helps to enhance his presence in the classroom. However, as reiterated by many of the participants, he also acknowledges that there are times when he does need the support of his students to make it through a bad day. He elaborates as follows:

The only thing is that sometimes, you have a bad day, but it’s like show business; the cliché is – “the show must go on”. So you have to sort of overcome. Sometimes it can be difficult to do. But
you know, students are extremely supportive on the whole, and they’ll know, if you’re having a bad day, and they’ll be supportive. But that’s hard to overcome.

Dino and Patrice: Finding Resonance in Dialogue

Dino and Patrice had been teaching in the same department at a large urban university for a number of years. They welcomed the opportunity to dialogue together about language teaching and learning, and to willingly share their wealth of knowledge with others. Besides, as they indicated to me, this process of exchanging ideas, reflecting, and questioning with another colleague, was a form of collaboration. To Dan and Patrice, participation in this inquiry afforded them a rare opportunity for sharing ideas, practices, and pleasantries, discussing a topic, which had brought them together in professional partnership. They felt that teaching is a profession blessed with lots of memorable experiences, which have served to illuminated their paths as well as that of their students’ as together, they blazed the trails into the future. They both shared how much they enjoy learning and teaching languages and the pleasure they derive from sharing this love and enthusiasm with their students.

Dino’s Portrait

“*I learned everything about life, about learning, about scholarship. That was my favourite of all times, I just loved it!”*

Dino had been teaching Italian for most of his professorial career, before branching off to other disciplines at the university. He recalls that as a 4th-year university student, majoring in mathematics, he decided to take a course entitled “History of the Italian Language” (Although he could speak Italian, he did not know the grammar). As he enthusiastically declares, he discovered that: “Language is where my heart was!” Indeed, he followed his heart, and he eventually ended up teaching an undergraduate university course in Italian for 25 years. He shares that through this experience, he learned “everything about life, about learning, about scholarship. That was my favourite of all times, I just loved it!”

Dino recalls that his first memory of teaching – and his first job – dates back to the 1960s when he was 14 or 15 years old. He was being paid $2 for teaching Italian to kids in church basements; all he needed to quality was the fact that he could speak Italian. Dino recalls this experience as follows:

And there I was in the classroom, and all I could do is teach them to speak – you talk about holistic – there was no grammar that I could teach them because I did not know anything in grammar; so I would teach them how to speak. I would teach them how to draw a cat and I would say to them “*el gato*”; there was no other way. I really enjoyed it! In fact at the end of the year –
and these were Italian little kids—they would come with salamo, proccuto, fruit, to thank me and I would say, ‘there is no need to thank me, I’ve done my job’.

In terms of who he is as a teacher, Dino believes that he is the same person both inside and outside of the classroom. He compares language teaching to that of teaching music—which he considers both a science and an art. He shares that he enjoys bringing music into the classroom as, in addition to providing “an artistic thrill…I have to admit that music does bind people together.”

**Patrice’s Portrait**

“I don’t ever want to waste my students’ time. So I tried very hard to create lessons that would have some value for them and to get them involved...”

Having been involved in ESL and FSL teaching at the undergraduate level, as well as teacher educator in her department for a number of years, Patrice sees herself first and foremost as a teacher who is interested in relationships. She believes that the most important thing that she has to do as a teacher is to get to know her students. However, she recognises that in order to accomplish this goal, she must first get to know herself. This, she articulates as follows:

…that is so important to me; I want to know who my student is. So, before I can know who my student is, I need to know who I am. I need to know what is important to me, what my values are, what my beliefs are, and I need to bring that into the classroom with me, not in a fundamentalist way, but in a way that, ‘this is who I am; this is the kind of person that I am; these are the qualities that I have; these are the shortcomings that I have; this is what my goal and my values are and this is where I hope we’ll go together in this particular classroom situation’.

Patrice believes that language teaching and learning involves “all of you”- not just something that should be done “from the neck up”. To her, it’s about building community, by inspiring cooperation in class and by creating an atmosphere where students try to help one another and not compete against each other. Patrice describes herself as patient, caring, enthusiastic and fun-loving and shares that she has a sensitive, emotional side to her; she also thinks that she possesses a spiritual side which she believes needs to be nurtured, because, as she states, “if it’s not being nurtured, then I’m not having a good time – if you know what I mean. I’m not fully present; I’m not wholly engaged, so that part of me is very important”.

Patrice feels that one way of nurturing this spiritual side is by making sure that the material is meaningful to her and that she is able to relate it to her students’ daily lives, so that it becomes meaningful to them as well and as she explains: “not just stuff that they have to memorize and regurgitate.
Hence the importance of relationships in developing students’ trust so that they know that what she is presenting or portraying is authentic – something she really believes in.

**Patrice’s Perspective on Teaching Presence**

“Presence is...making a space for other people”

Patrice takes a few minutes to reflect on and to articulate her understanding of presence, and she seems to pick up momentum once she gets started. She shares that making space for the other person is a big part of presence. In particular, presence in the classroom is having the goodwill to meet students, making eye contact with them and making room for them. As a teacher educator, she also believes that she needs to model her way of being present in the classroom, “so that they experience it, because sometimes they need to experience it – someone being present for them, someone making space for them etc. in order to know how it feels and how to do it when they’re teaching.”

**Joining the Community College Conversation**

Jocelyn and Carmen, two instructors, who have been teaching at the same community college for the past 10 years, also opted to participate in a joint interview and were appreciative (thrilled) to have had the time together to share their experiences, as well as their thoughts, beliefs, joys and challenges of teaching second language. In addition to teaching at the community college level, both Jocelyn and Carmen also offer their expertise as second language instructors to corporations, government agencies, as well as private tutoring to individuals and families. Following is a brief portrait of Jocelyn and Carmen:

**Jocelyn’s Portrait**

“You have to try to get them to join you on stage and then let them have the stage.”

An experienced instructor of two languages - French and Italian – Jocelyn had a lot to share with regards to her experiences, thoughts and feelings as an additional language learner and how these have helped shape her own approach to teaching. She also shares her perception of how this practice might be experienced by learners. Jocelyn likens her approach to teaching to that of a performer whose main role is to initiate interaction and encourage her audience – the learners - to do the same. She sees her role as a teacher more or less like “a sage on stage”: “I don’t like to sit down and do something else. You have to be on stage the whole time and try to get them to join you on stage, and then back off and let them have the stage”. She also believes that teachers can accomplish a lot by actively engaging students with their
personality, and like Yannick, she makes it clear that there should also be some solid structural backup. She shares that:

I think I try to bring them out, by going out there… If you can get them to just try to relax enough to enjoy, and not be afraid to make mistakes...So I think engagement; you engage and you try to get them to speak and to engage back, with personality. But on the other side, there has to be a structural backup, and they have to do their part too. Because how far can you go with a little happiness, you know [she chuckles]; you can only go so far, but you [the student] have to do your part too, to go to the next step.

Carmen’s Portrait

“I hope that if I fire the up with culture, with personality, eventually it is going to produce some kind of desire to work a little bit.”

Like Jocelyn, Carmen emphasises the importance of engaging students through personality, as she affirms: “Kids love it when you show a little bit of yourself”. She adds that despite the limitations of the program offered at her college, she tries to motivate students by exposing them to the culture of the Spanish-speaking world, by sharing authentic material and raising their awareness of real current events: “I hope that if I fire them up with culture, with personality and so on, eventually it is going to produce some kind of desire to work a little bit”.

Born in the South American country of Argentina, Carmen immigrated to Canada as a mature woman, and her first order of business was to attend ESL classes:

When I came to Canada, the first thing I did is enrol in some programs from the immigration and citizenship ministry… We had about 6 hours a day learning English as a second/foreign language, so you came out and you have the opportunity to practice. Ideally, that’s what everybody should do, right?

With a mischievous sparkle in her eyes, Carmen pauses at this rhetorical question before bursting into laughter. Carmen admits that her quick progress in acquiring proficiency in ESL and eventually gaining access and graduating from university had been due to several factors. But to her, the most important is the opportunity to immediately apply what she was learning in an authentic context:

One of things that helped me a lot, is that most of the stuff that I learned, I used it. So the language usually was very relevant and I am the type that goes very fast through material that has no relevance that has no impact on my life. I tended to learn something and immediately apply it.
The various ways in which Carmen helps inspire her community college students to see the relevance of their language learning and to attain their goals constitute an interesting component in this study.

**Jocelyn and Carmen’s Perspective on Presence**

**Jocelyn:** “*It isn’t just about teaching French; it’s about the whole thing.*”  
**Carmen:** “*You cannot always be picture perfect, but I think you have to be authentic.*”

**Modelling “professionalism”**. Jocelyn and Carmen zeroed in on the more physical aspect of presence. For Jocelyn, along with being friendly, approachable and having a good sense of humour, it is very important to maintain a sense of professionalism and to model that for your students. To illustrate her point, Jocelyn shares one of her students’ remarks: “someday I’m going to become a professional and I want to dress as a professional because when you come to class dressed nice, it inspires me to where I want to go.”

Both instructors made the observation that given the relaxed dress code in the community college environment, not all instructors take the time to present themselves in a very professional manner, especially when it comes to their appearance and dress. Jocelyn concludes by saying: “it isn’t just about teaching French; it’s about the whole thing”

Carmen and Jocelyn feel that they sometimes have to rely on the support of students when they are having a bad day. As Jocelyn noted: “They hype you up, I think actually...if you’re not feeling well. Also showing that you’re human is not so bad either providing... you can say, ‘you guys, I am having a pretty bad day, help me out here’.”

Carmen agrees, stating that: “You cannot always be picture perfect, but I think you have to be authentic.”

**Finding Resonance: Integrating the Core and Peripheral Landscapes**

It was really interesting to include the perspectives of these “other” instructors in the research as this helped to provide a more holistic picture of the overall language teaching (and learning) landscape at the post-secondary level. Despite the fact that they hailed from different institutions and environments, there were also many similarities among instructors in this peripheral group and the core participants from City University, in terms of the various themes which emerged and in relation to their general approach to language teaching and learning. Furthermore, given my familiarity with this environment by virtue of my own experience as both as a former student and subsequently as an instructor, I found a lot of resonance
with their stories, particularly with Jocelyn and Carmen’s. For example, having been both a former student and instructor in the community college context allowed me to join in what became a professional dialogue among the three of us.

Jocelyn and Carmen brought to light a number of issues related to L2 teaching and learning in the community college environment particularly in relation to how it compares with their understanding of the university L2 context. They were particularly concerned with the new trend in developing “articulation” programs between the community colleges and universities and how that affects language instruction for college students. I found a lot of resonance with what they had to say... As Conley (2005) notes, “stories told in this spontaneous, but driven way hang together via metaphorical connections akin to those we made in everyday speech every time we tell stories to ourselves or one another” (p. 9). This discussion provided a number of perspectives, which, although beyond the scope of this current inquiry should constitute for some interesting areas for further research.

Framing the Portraits

Given that the portraits of the participants partly serve as a way of foreshadowing the rest of the data chapters, many of the themes which emerged from these portraits will resurface in the ensuing chapters. However, I will briefly summarize and discuss some of the most salient themes in conjunction with the literature previously reviewed in Chapter 2 as well as the integrated framework established in Chapter 3. The most salient themes which were captured in the participants’ narratives include: their expressions of love and enthusiasm for teaching and languages, which are closely tied to instructors’ perception of their role as teachers (and post-secondary language instructors), as well as their perceptions of teaching presence. This part of my data coincides with the various aspects of my integrated framework notably: the symbolism of the heart as being synonymous with love and the related theory of “love as pedagogy” as theorized by Loreman (2011). It also speaks to Csikszentmihalyi’s (1990, 1997, 2009) theory of flow.

Love and enthusiasm for teaching and language

As depicted in Figure 12, whether referring to their earliest memories of teaching, their reasons for becoming teachers, or what they enjoy most in their current post-secondary L2 classrooms, love and enthusiasm emerged as the major themes, from participants’ narratives / interviews: Love for the subject matter - languages - which, for the most part revolved around the language(s) that they have learned, taught or are currently teaching.
In many ways, the stories of my participants remind me of Alice Kaplan’s reflections on her teaching as related in Palmer (2007) in the section heading entitled “Subjects That Choose Us”. Palmer states the following:

Many of us were called to teach by encountering not only a mentor but also a particular field of study. We were drawn to a body of knowledge because it shed light on our identity as well as on the world. We did not merely find a subject to teach – the subject also found us. We may recover the heart to teach by remembering how that subject evoked a sense of self that was only dormant in us before we encountered the subject’s way of naming and framing life (p. 26).

It was quite an interesting co-incidence that to demonstrate his point, Palmer relates the story of Alice Kaplan, who happens to be a teacher of French Language and Literature. In French Lessons: A memoire, Kaplan (1993) describes her reflections on learning to speak another language, which to her was “…a chance for growth, for freedom, for liberation from the ugliness of our received ideas and mentalities” (p. 209). Kaplan (1993) also expressed how the process of reflecting on, and the retelling her stories relating to learning and teaching FSL helped her to gain self-knowledge and renew her teacher’s heart. Of the many stories related by the participants the following dialogue between Dino and Patrice (depicted in Figure 13) aptly captures this essence:

**Figure 12. Expressions of love and enthusiasm for teaching and language.**
Let’s Talk about Love - of Language

Dino: “In my 4th year at university, I ended up in this Italian Language course, and I loved it, really loved it… I said ‘I’m discovering through the language who I am and I really want this’… I remember to this day, this course convinced me that language is where my heart was…”

[Years later, Dino actually became an instructor of Italian]:

“For 25 years I taught 1st year Italian…and that taught me everything about life, about learning, about scholarship… That was my favourite of all times, I just loved it!”

Patrice: “When you said you discovered so much about yourself through language, that was also what I experienced with French…I thought I was a different person when I was taking French than when I was learning English. And it was a whole other side of me that came out: more risk-taking, more flamboyant, not so conservative, not so “good-girl”… it was really wonderful – it was a great experience!”

**Figure 13. A dialogue about love of language.**

**Figure 14. Decision to become a teacher.**

Love for teaching for its own sake, also emerged as another important theme revealed through the participants’ narratives. Their love of language combined with their enthusiasm for teaching it to others, joined to create a vivid portrait of who the instructors are and how they embody language teaching. For the most part, instructors reported that they derived a great sense of joy and enthusiasm from being in the classrooms and witnessing students’ interaction with them as teachers, with the language and also with
their classmates. Further, the term enthusiasm - which according to many of the participants is synonymous with passion - was another theme which accentuated the participants’ narratives. To them, passion and enthusiasm served as a source of energy to help them connect not only with their teaching, but also with the language itself and the learners. Participants’ expressions of love and enthusiasm for the teaching profession, for language(s) and / or for language teaching reflect many of the concepts contained in the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 (Palmer, 1998, Emerson, 2003, 1990). In particular, their appreciation of the teaching profession and the pleasure they derive from the act of language teaching are in keeping with the notions of intrinsic motivation and flow, as identified by Csikszentmihalyi (1990, 1996).

As the data reveal, participants share similar views with regards to their role as post-secondary instructors. It is clear that the idea of being a “facilitator” is the term that the majority of the participants used to identify this responsibility. Similar terms such as “guide”, “mentor”, “model”, “example” were also commonly used by the instructors. These findings reflect the role of the teacher in a holistic teaching and learning environment and in second language pedagogy particularly with the advent of new communicative approaches (See Gardner, 1999). While some teachers made mention of the traditional roles of transmitting knowledge and skills, it is noteworthy that these same participants also stressed the importance of helping students develop “critical thinking skills” as well as “a thirst for knowledge”. Based on these patterns of educators’ self-identified role definitions, it is strikingly evident that participants do not see themselves merely as “transmitters of knowledge” but rather as collaborators or partners with their students in this enterprise of teaching and learning. The data also connect to the pedagogical frameworks proposed by Miller and Seller (1985/1990) as well as Cummins (2001, 2009) and Kumaravadivelu (2003). Further, the incorporation of the hands prominently depicted in the theoretical framework is symbolic of the notion of responsibility which is synonymous with accountability, and speaks to instructors’ care and commitment to student learning (See Miller 2007 pp. 193-194).

Finally, the notion of teaching presence constituted a fundamental element of the participants’ portraits. The participants’ descriptions of presence in the classroom clearly bring forth several sub-themes, which speak to the importance of this notion in the holistic teaching and learning environment. Although the presence of the teacher will be explored more fully in Chapter 8, here, it would suffice to highlight some of the salient themes including: being and knowing who they are and having a sense of their teacher identity; being “there” for students and establishing rapport with them; cultivating mutual
trust and respect, positive energy, and acknowledgement of “that mysterious process”. These perceptions of teaching presence reflect many of the ideas advanced by Kessler (2005), Noddings (2003), Senge et. al. (2005) and Hart (2011), who all emphasized the importance of “openness” and a willingness to attend to the present moment. Further, Sharmer (2007) and Senge et al.’s (2005) conceptualization of theory U which emphasises the need for an open mind, an open will and an open heart served as useful lenses for analysing and interpreting these data findings. These thematic and theoretical connections will be revisited in the final chapter for a more in-depth analysis and interpretation, along with the implications of the overall findings in this research.

The objective of this chapter was to gain some knowledge about the participants in this study, their thoughts, feelings, and passions. The exploration of the language learning landscape in the post-secondary context continues in subsequent data chapters (6-8) as I delve more deeply into the various themes which emerged from the portraits of the participants such as, participants’ language learning experiences and their beliefs about language teaching and learning, their various approaches to language teaching as well as their perceptions of teaching presence and other mysteries.
CHAPTER 6

LANGUAGE LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND BELIEFS ABOUT LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING

It is imperative to attempt to understand the nature of teachers’ experiences in learning languages and of being proficient users of more than one language in an attempt to see where this knowledge and experience fit into their repertoire as teachers...

Ellis (2006)

Introduction

This chapter serves to further explore the lived experiences of the instructors, and is divided into three main parts. The first section features stories relating to participants’ experiences of language learning in various contexts, as well as a discussion of the insights that participants reported to have gained from these experiences. The second part focuses on participants’ beliefs about language teaching and learning and how these beliefs may have informed or influenced their teaching. In particular, their perceptions of the various language teaching methods, strategies and approaches are examined, paying particular attention to their experiences with or use of CLT. The final section of the chapter focuses on participants’ orientation to the curriculum, as gleaned from the data obtained from the Orientation Inventory, as well as the focus group discussions surrounding the 3Ts: transmission, transaction and transformation.

Participants’ Experiences of Language Learning

“Enseigner c’est apprendre deux fois”[To teach is to learn twice]

Joseph Joubert

All participating instructors had learned a second or an additional language at one point in their lives, and in many cases, they have become instructors of the foreign, second, or additional language, which they had acquired. Table 9 displays participants’ first language along with the FL or L2 that they learned as well as the languages that they have taught or were teaching during the data collection phase of the study.
Table 9
Summary of participants’ L1 and L2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>1st Language</th>
<th>Additional Languages</th>
<th>Languages Taught</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alice</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>French, Spanish, Hindi</td>
<td>French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amélie</td>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>English, French</td>
<td>French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louise</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>English, Arabic, Spanish, Italian</td>
<td>French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pamela</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sitelle</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>French, Spanish, German</td>
<td>French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yannick</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>English, Spanish, Russian</td>
<td>English, French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maigret</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>German, English, Spanish</td>
<td>French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Italian, French</td>
<td>Italian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrice</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>French, English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jocelyn</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>French, Italian</td>
<td>French, Italian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carmen</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stories of Language Learning: Reflections and Insights

Participants all shared a variety of stories, reflections and insights on their thoughts, feelings, processes, strategies etc., relating to their experiences learning an additional language. As has been glimpsed from their profiles, these experiences were quite similar and unique both in terms of their perceptions about the contexts in which they learned, how they felt, and the impact that these have had on their teaching. Context seems to have played a very significant role in how the participants perceived these experiences. While on the one hand some of the participants described their learning experience as exciting, rewarding, relevant, enjoyable, validating and fun, others, on the other hand, described it as rigorous, frustrating, not so pleasant, or even painful. Table 10 gives a summary of the contexts (whether formal or informal) in which they learned their second, additional or foreign language, the methods of instruction, what was emphasized as well as the participants’ perceptions of these experiences.
### Table 10

**Participants’ Language Learning Experiences**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Learning Context</th>
<th>Method of instruction</th>
<th>Emphasis</th>
<th>Perception of experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alice</td>
<td>Informal: Childhood environment</td>
<td>Immersion in environment (family and friends)</td>
<td>Speaking, listening</td>
<td>Fun! Organic, intuitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Formal: Primary School</td>
<td>Grammar-Translation</td>
<td>Grammar rules, Writing</td>
<td>Not fun, painful, rigorous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louise</td>
<td>ESL (primary to undergrad.)</td>
<td>Grammar-Translation</td>
<td>Reading, Writing</td>
<td>Often Distracted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anglophone environment</td>
<td>Immersion</td>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>Value in “Practical use” of L2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amélie</td>
<td>FSL (primary to University)</td>
<td>Grammar-Translation</td>
<td>Memorizing, Grammar rules, Writing</td>
<td>“It works!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yannick</td>
<td>Formal: Primary to University</td>
<td>Grammar-Translation</td>
<td>All skills Grammar, (memorizing)</td>
<td>“Loved it!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1st visit to Anglophone country</td>
<td>Immersion</td>
<td>Interacting w/Anglophones</td>
<td>Overcoming fear; risk-taking; language learning takes time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pamela</td>
<td>Lots; both formal and informal</td>
<td>“Different styles”</td>
<td>Validating…“easy feedback”; at times “frustrating”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sitelle</td>
<td>Informal Formal – primary</td>
<td>Travel; interaction</td>
<td>All skills (esp. speaking)</td>
<td>Fun, enjoyable, engaging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post-secondary (undergraduate)</td>
<td>Interacting in environment Grammar-translation</td>
<td>All skills</td>
<td>Fun, enjoyable, engaging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Memorization, Writing</td>
<td>Rigorous, effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carmen</td>
<td>Formal: ESL – university; adult ESL learning courses</td>
<td>Grammar-translation and other methods Immersion /Interaction</td>
<td>All skills</td>
<td>Practical and relevant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Informal: urban Anglophone environment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Immediate application of language skills in authentic context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maigret</td>
<td>German: formal/informal</td>
<td>School and immersion in the target language community</td>
<td>All skills</td>
<td>Challenging; hard work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English: US formal/informal</td>
<td>Immersion</td>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spanish: Mexico formal/informal</td>
<td></td>
<td>Speaking; learning vocab.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the next section, I present the various stories that participants shared about their language learning experiences.

Alice: Perseverance through Passion and Connectedness

We will begin with Alice, who vividly describes the different phases of learning an additional language in various contexts, notably, her experience of learning French informally through immersion in her early childhood environment as well as her formal instruction. Alice states that structured learning of FSL at both the primary and middle school levels proved to be quite “painful” when compared to that which she experienced in the more informal environment assisted by her family and friends. She found it was very helpful having learned to speak French in what she describes as an “organic” or “intuitive” way, without being forced to pay too much attention to grammatical structure or writing. In fact, she reports that with the exception of writing the occasional (greeting) card with the help of her mother, she did not actually write any French until the age of 12.

However, as Alice shares, the next phase of her FSL learning proved to be quite the opposite. She describes her experience as an elementary school student, and the 15 to 20 minutes a day of instruction, dispassionately transmitted by her “regular” classroom teacher. The lack of ample instructional time, coupled with the teacher’s own limitations in terms of her knowledge of, and lack of enthusiasm for teaching FSL, to her, resulted in little or no learning. Further, Alice recalls that when she got to junior high school, “things changed” but not necessarily for the better, as she was then subjected to a very rigorous style of instruction; this time by “qualified” teachers who placed significant emphasis on grammar rules which she was “painfully forced to learn…in a fairly short period of time.”

Lessons learned/insights gained. Alice admits to have learned a great deal from her experiences in these different contexts. Although she did not feel that deep sense of love and connection to her formal learning environment, Alice admits that this experience has greatly influenced her beliefs about language learning and subsequently her own approach to teaching. It was very instrumental in helping her define her goal as an FSL teacher, which is to ensure that her students would have a more enjoyable and rewarding language learning experience than she did:

But I realise that in order to learn to write and also to self-correct, I needed to understand why – you know, the rules, the logic behind it. So I have sort of made it my priority to understand how an Anglophone would see something in French or the sort of pitfalls that we can fall into in terms of French vs. English and vice versa. Yeah, so I find that’s really helped me.
Alice maintains that ultimately, it was through her love and passion for the language and culture as well as encouragement from her family that she persevered in her language learning and subsequently teaching:

I love French, and my passion for French and my mother and my grandparents and the attachment to the culture sort of help me to be passionate and enthusiastic and try to infuse a personal angle to my teaching. You know, I’m not so much into teaching French from a textbook because that’s not how I learned it, and that’s not French for me. That’s really not the reason for learning a language.

**Louise: The Art of Paying Attention**

Louise related some interesting stories about her early experiences as an elementary school student. She shared that although she was intrinsically motivated to learn a second or foreign language, she tended to have a very short attention span and became easily bored or distracted whenever she felt that an activity was “too repetitive, or took too long”.

**Lessons learned / insights gained.** Louise firmly believes that knowing who she was as a learner provided much insight into the way she approaches language teaching:

So, I would say being the student that I was really influenced my teaching ‘cause I pay attention to the students. I know that…you can lose a student very quickly by not following this change of activity, this variety in the classroom, and by using a method maybe that’s not an appropriate one for a certain group of students.

Therefore, as a teacher, Louise uses various strategies aimed at helping students focus their attention. Some of these strategies include: circulating in class, trying to vary activities, and by doing more group or peer work. Describing herself as “a whole language person”, Louise also tries to use a variety of creative activities aimed at encouraging students to think, reflect and apply their language skills through the integration of all four skills.

**Sitelle: Practice Makes Perfect**

Sitelle shared some stories about the wide range of experiences that she had had as a language learner. For example, she reminisced about her French learning experience, which began in Belgium at age 9, with a “fantastic” teacher: “She took me outside… just pointing at things – whatever was around us in the playground…so that was kind of French immersion, literally.” This contrasts with her German and Spanish instruction – a more formal, traditional approach within the confines of a classroom. With regards to her German learning, in particular, Sitelle reports to have experienced quite a rigorous
program, which placed a great deal of emphasis on memorization. Sitelle mentioned that the mode of instruction that stood out most to her was their use of authentic materials, such as having to read and discuss articles from *The Economist* in German – which, from her recollection was a very effective way of acquiring a rich vocabulary. “We used to memorise, I mean, pages and pages and pages of vocabulary. Now I’m not saying that ...I actually remembered all of it, but boy, I could speak pretty darn good German by the end of that second year…”

**Lessons learned / insights gained.** Sitelle shares that she has benefited tremendously from both these experiences and approaches. From her travels as well as from the “experiential” approach adopted by her French teacher, she learned that language learning (even in a formal context) could be fun and engaging. However, she also believes memorization as well as knowledge and practice of grammatical structures are also important in language learning, particularly at the post-secondary level.

**Amélie: When You Get, Give!**

Amélie learned French as a second language in elementary school in Greece, where she was instructed for two extra hours each day as part of the normal curriculum. In describing her experience as a second language learner, Amélie acknowledges that she was exposed to a very traditional approach, involving a fair amount of the grammar-translation, at all levels of her formal education – at the primary, secondary and university levels. In terms of its influence on her teaching, Amélie declares that: “Now that I’m thinking about it in a more conscious way, it has influenced me, in the sense that I really try to give a solid grammar bases / foundations to my students... my learning is back to haunt me, and my students” she laughs.

**Yannick: Overcoming Fear Through Empathy**

Yannick’s emphasis on helping students discover their learning styles and making them aware of the various learning strategies that could enable them to enhance their language learning stems from her own language learning experiences. She shared several stories about her own experience as an ESL learner. She explains that while she has no major complaints about her actual classroom learning experience and that she had been doing quite well academically, (i.e. getting good grades), she recalls the overwhelming anxiety that she felt when she suddenly found herself in an environment where she had to speak the language. Yannick describes this “totally devastating” experience as follows:

So I had been learning English for two years and I thought at that time that I mastered the language well enough because my grades were good in school. So I was going to England
thinking well that’s fine, you know, I can communicate in the classroom and I love speaking English so it should be a good experience. I can tell you that my first two days in England I was totally devastated because I realized how little I knew, and how difficult it was to actually converse with real Anglophones. So for two days I could not say a word and I was extremely frustrated, and again I experienced that anxiety where you realize, ‘oh I can’t say anything unless I say it perfectly.’ So I just didn’t say anything and it was really frustrating and I thought “No!” After two days I thought this is not what I’m here for and I sort of overcame my fears and decided, ‘I am just going to make mistakes…”

**Lessons learned / insights gained.** Yannick believes that she learned some valuable lessons from this experience. Having experienced first-hand the anxiety involved in trying to actually speak a second or foreign language, Yannick realizes how important it is for learners to be in touch with, or to spend some time in the context where the language is spoken. Therefore, she tries to encourage students to visit or spend time in the target language communities (e.g. Quebec or France), by going on exchange programs (see details in Chapter 7). “So contextualization is actually something that is important in my teaching and that’s what has informed my teaching”.

Yannick relates another story which aptly captures how the process of learning a second (or foreign) language as a mature, student-teacher helped raise her awareness for the need for empathy in L2 teaching:

And finally when I did my specialization to teach French as a second language, we had a very interesting experience which basically consisted of making us take a language course which we had never been exposed to before and we had to document the learning process, which I thought was extremely useful because as I had been teaching for ten years already. I think at one point you get to the stage where you forget how complicated it might be to learn a language. So being a student again, being a mature student and being able to reflect upon my own learning strategies and learning processes was really interesting because…it sort of reminds you how difficult it is for students in the classroom. And sometimes after a while we tend to say ‘Oh my gosh but, how come they still haven’t mastered this? You know I repeated it twenty times!’ Or, ‘this is so easy, how come you don’t get it?” But if you are in the situation yourself again, it just reminds you how tricky it can be.

Yannick indicates that she shares with her students the various challenges or even “personal threats” involved in language learning and, more particularly, speaking a language, as opposed to other disciplines such as mathematics:

I always try and tell them that speaking a language could be extremely threatening. Writing a mathematical formula on the board is one thing, but you could disconnect yourself from that formula; it’s not you. Whereas when you speak a language it’s really yourself that you’re putting at risk and it’s a lot more threatening to be actually saying something in French in front of your
peers or your teacher than it is to write a formula on the board that may not be correct; but there’s something that says this is a mathematical formula it’s not me but when I say something, what I’m saying is coming out of me and it is me.

Here, reference is made to the emotional aspect of language learning and the idea of language being embodied, and thus the other factors that are associated with this subject matter, should also be taken into consideration.

Maigret: Walking a Mile in Another Learner’s Shoes

From the peripheral group of participants, Maigret reminisced about his language learning adventures. Maigret’s account of his experience learning Spanish and English later on in life and how this has sensitized him to the plight of L2 learners connects well with that of many of the core participants’ stories (particularly Yannick’s). He shares that while some people (such as young children or even some of his colleagues) seem to “just absorb” languages, for most people, this could be quite a struggle. Humbly disclosing that he belongs in the latter group - because he “did not have a strong retaining memory” - Maigret acknowledges that language learning involves a tremendous amount of hard work and effort.

Lessons learned / insights gained: Through his own struggles, Maigret became aware of the need to understand his own learning process and has constantly tried to find, and experiment with various techniques, which he found were especially useful for memorizing, and for helping him retain words and expressions. Retrospectively, Maigret considers his own efforts in learning additional languages as having been quite beneficial to him and consequently, his students. The following quote aptly captures the essence of this understanding:

I almost felt grateful that I had to struggle to learn languages, because I think I understood my students. I think some language teachers just assume that, you know, that students are like them, and they probably were talented languages learners, and that’s why they got into language. And so I think it gave me quite a few insights into the actual learning process and the kinds of learning strategies that you should use to help. And I think especially empathy and you know, being able to relate; and having patience – that’s key.

Summary of Language Learning Experiences and Insights Gained

In this section, I will summarizesome of these insights, and ways in which they have served in framing participants’ approach to learners (see Ellis 2006). Figure 15 highlights some of the sub-themes
that emerged from participants’ narratives of their language learning experiences, what they learned from this process, and how this in turn has informed their teaching.

Figure 15. Insights gained about language teaching and learning

Making intuitive connections

Participants who had acquired their second language in a more informal or intuitive way - as a result of having been immersed in that linguistic/cultural environment during their childhood - reported to have had a much more positive experience, than those who learned within the confines of a classroom. For example, Alice’s account of the “organic” and “intuitive” way in which she learned French - through the close connections with her family, friends and others in the community – brought to the fore some very important themes, among them the idea of intuition and finding a sense of purpose for learning an additional language. As reviewed in the literature in Chapter 2, this “direct knowing” (Miller 2007, p. 90) is a fundamental notion in holistic education, as it speaks volumes about the need for fostering relationships by being immersed with others in the community who also speak the language. In addition,
Alice’s ability to develop communicative competence through interaction also coincides with the definition of CLT as advanced by Savignon (2006), Danesi (2003), Omaggio (2001). Further, the idea that the insights gained from this experience helped her “cultivate a sense of purpose”, is congruent with the main aims of holistic education (Miller, 2010); and serves to inspire a transformative approach to teaching (See Theoretical Framework: Miller & Seller, 1985/1990; Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Cummins, 2001, 2009).

Finding the right balance

Nevertheless, some of the participants reported to have learned their L2 in a formal educational setting (i.e. within the confines of a classroom). It is interesting to note that despite its limitations, some participants notably, Amélie and Sitelle perceived their experience quite differently from Alice, reporting that they actually thrived in their respective formal learning environments; they both expressed gratitude for having been afforded this opportunity. It is important to point out, however, that whereas Alice’s teacher seemed “dispassionate”, Sitelle described having had a “fantastic” teacher who helped her to connect with her language learning. This sense of connectedness to the subject and the learning environment is in keeping with the previously reviewed literature (Bache, 2008; Capra, 1996; Cummins, 2001, 2009; Miller, 2007; Senge et al. 2005; Weil, 1994; Wilber, 1997). Therefore, it appears that language learning could be equally meaningful or rewarding, given the right balance between intuitive and linear learning in the classroom environment in conjunction with the teacher’s willingness to engage students in communicative ways. (Germain, 1993; Leblanc, 1990; Hadley, 2001).

Overcoming fear: Taking risks and making mistakes

As we have seen, particularly in the case of Yannick, it is sometimes difficult for learners to fully immerse into the target (or “foreign”) language environment due to fear (especially when it comes to speaking). Yannick’s story demonstrates how she was able to overcome her fear by her willingness to take risks and make mistakes, and by listening to her inner voice: “…and I thought ‘No!’ After two days I thought this is not what I’m here for and I sort of overcame my fears and decided, ‘I’m just going to make mistakes...’”. These insights shared by Yannick are congruent with the ideas expressed by scholars (see Shelton-Colangelo, 2007; Miller, 1993; Morris, 2001; Mollica, 1998; Moskowitz, 1978; Palmer, 1998).

To a great extent the insights that Yannick has gained from her experiences inspire her to share her own stories with her students as a way of helping them overcome their fears, by not being afraid of making mistakes and taking risks. Yannick’s story also demonstrates that she aims to develop that...
“reciprocity” with students (hooks, 1994, 2001; Noddings, 2003, 2004; Sheldon-Colangelo, 2007), as well as empathy and patience two other important qualities that emerged in the narratives of the other participants in the study, and which will be highlight next.

**The need for empathy and patience**

The experiences of the participants, particularly Alice, Yannick and Maigret clearly illustrate the struggles and frustration that students may encounter in learning an L2. Based on their own experiences of language learning, these instructors have become sensitized to the feelings and needs in their own students, and have sought ways of helping students overcome their struggles. Further, the need for both instructors and students to cultivate the art of patience, when teaching or learning an L2 has been strongly emphasized. As Yannick has indicated, she often shares with her students that “language learning takes time” - an observation which has been well substantiated by research (Cummins, 2001). In addition, Maigret has observed that there is a lack of patience among FSL teachers and cautions that impatience or disapproval on the part of the instructor, while a student is trying to communicate in the foreign or second language can lead to feelings of frustration and humiliation to students. Furthermore, as Maigret indicated, this tends to render the whole endeavor counterproductive. These findings demonstrate the participants’ sensitivity to students’ feelings and needs are in keeping with the holistic principles as emphasized by many of the works of authors reviewed in the literature (Kessler, 2005; Miller, 1993, 2010; Palmer, 1998; Palmer & Zajonc, 2010).

**Attention and care**

Another important theme that emerged from participants’ reflection on their L2 learning process is the question of attentiveness – a trait, which is important for both learning and teaching. As illustrated by Louise’s story, her own struggles with focusing her attention as a learner, have sensitized her to the need to pay attention to her students by incorporating a number of strategies into her teaching such as circulating, varying activities etc. It is clear that Louise has learned the art of awareness and how important it is to be there with her students, by helping them to pay attention while at the same time maintaining the notion of “flow” in her classroom. As reviewed in the literature, Csikszentmihalyi (1990) refers to attention as “the most important tool in the task of improving the quality of life” (p. 34). Further, by paying attention to her students, Louise is showing them that she cares about them and their learning. (Cummins, 2001; Noddings, 2003, 2004; Miller, 2007, 2010).
Being mindful of contexts and offering variety

It is interesting to note that participants were mindful of the fact that the way they learned a second or additional language – even though it worked for them - may not be the most effective way to approach L2 teaching in their current post-secondary contexts. Both Sitelle and Amélie’s stories offered some interesting examples of this awareness. Consequently, they try to seek out more transformative or simply effective ways of facilitating students’ learning.

As we recall, Amélie regards the traditional, grammar-translation method as having worked for her. However, she recognizes that although she strives to give her students a “good grammar base”, in her own teaching, she acknowledges the need to draw on a variety of methods and strategies in order to engage the diversity of students in their particular context. Similarly, Sitelle recalls having to memorize “pages and pages of vocabulary” - a teaching method, which no doubt leans more towards the transmission approach. However, both Sitelle and Amélie have noted that while they admit to being quite content with this approach (which seemed to work for them), they do not “force” this on her students. They both recognize the importance of paying attention to students’ needs, and therefore try to offer a variety of approaches and activities in order to engage all their students in the learning process. These observations are congruent with the literature already reviewed and have been emphasized by a number of authors in both holistic and SLE (hooks, 1994; Cummins, 2001; Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Miller, 2007, 2010).

Beliefs about Language Teaching and Learning

Having explored participants’ experiences in L2 learning and the insights that they have gained from these experience, this section explores their beliefs and assumptions about language teaching. During their interviews, participants shared their beliefs about language teaching and learning, both in a general sense and bearing in mind their own teaching contexts – i.e. L2 teaching in higher-education. Table 11 displays a summary of these findings:
Table 11

Participants’ Beliefs about Language Teaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Beliefs about L2 Teaching and Learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alice</td>
<td>Use of “authentic material”; non-just grammar-based; fun; trial and error; “trusting instinct/intuition”; “students should appreciate and enjoy the teaching”; willing to take risk; no fear of making mistakes; sharing who you are (personal experiences) w/students; group/peer work;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amélie</td>
<td>“Be there, …be available” for students; encourage conversation (office hours); comfortable environment; provide resources/feedback; ensure student success; dynamic exchange (teacher/student); peer support;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maigret</td>
<td>Humour; “don’t be afraid to play the clown”; ability to identify problems; sensitivity; encouraging participation; showing interest; communication (verbal/nonverbal); enthusiasm; establishing rapport; students being supportive of each other; lots of collaborative/group work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yannick</td>
<td>Enthusiasm! create comfortable, non-threatening environment; importance of student interaction; offer encouragement; “preparation is the key”; flexibility; commitment to students; deep/active learning; variety and diversity; making connection to real-life, outside world; help students build confidence; try and build “emotional link”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louise</td>
<td>Try to understand students; teacher/student connection; develop students’ interest; involvement, not just class-room based - make it real; be supportive; empower students; help students become autonomous and successful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pamela</td>
<td>Fun; encouraging interaction, real-life situations, encourage questions, creativity; create supportive environment; encourage peer support/collaboration; requires group/peer work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sitelle</td>
<td>Fun, engaging, motivating: tailored to the group; variety; encouraging questions, making mistakes and taking risks; “…in a boat together”…everyone “on board”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Explicating and “Activating” Beliefs about L2 Teaching (and Learning)

Participants shared similar beliefs about language teaching in the post-secondary context. The data revealed that there is unanimous belief among participants that language teaching and learning should be fun and interesting. In order to achieve this goal, participants reported that they invest a great deal of time and effort in the preparation of their lessons, in their efforts to ensure that they provide students with a variety of activities and materials. They also try and find new and diverse ways of presenting these to their students. Being committed to their students and their students’ “deep learning” were also emphasized. Some participants expressed the view that there should be a great deal of sensitivity as to what is going on in their classrooms so that they will be able to identify and address the various problems
that may arise. As many of them pointed out, one of the most effective ways of achieving this is by getting to know their students, by being supportive to them, and by showing an interest in their lives, and, as one participant cautioned, without infringing on their personal space. According to one of the participants: “It’s all about communication”. Participants’ perceptions of the ways in which these beliefs influence their approach to language teaching, and how they are “activated” in the teaching-learning environment is the focus of the next section.

Connecting With Students Through Verbal and Non-verbal Communication

As the data revealed, communication is very important and participants shared their own unique ways of opening up the lines of communication with their students. For the most part, this boils down to the question of getting to know learners and developing rapport with them. Following are a few of the strategies that have been identified in the data:

*Faisons connaissance (Let’s get to know each other)*

*“Comment vous appelez-vous?” (What is your name?)* For some participants, getting to know their students meant starting with the simple first step of learning their names. As one participant shared, he tries to learn the names of all his students by the end of the first week of class. Another instructor indicated that not only would she ensure that she learns students’ names, she also ensures that students get to know their peers’ names as well and that they greet each other by their first names.

*“Tell me about yourself.”* Participants all shared other strategies that they employ for getting to know their students; some of them indicated that at the beginning of the course (usually on the first day) they ask each student to write a short paragraph or fill out what one instructor referred to as a “personal background form” (or index cards) on which students provide some basic information about themselves and/or their interests; others (e.g. Louise) would perform short “diagnostics tests” at the beginning of the semester. Some instructors shared that they encourage students to drop by during their office hours. Sitelle, for example, indicated that at the start of each semester, she invites each student to meet with her for approximately 10 minutes in her office.

The importance of active participation and interaction in the L2 classroom was also emphasized. These four major areas of interaction were identified: a) interaction with the teacher; b) interaction with the language; c) interaction with peers; d) connecting with the outside world.
As the data revealed, not only is it important for them, as teachers to interact with their students, they also pointed out the need for students to interact with, and get to know each other. With regards to their own interaction with students, instructors shared different ways in which they go about this inevitable process, which involved both verbal and non-verbal communication. For example, some instructors spoke about having frequent chats with their students, whenever the opportunity arose, both in class and during their office hours. Many of the participants emphasized the importance of smiling and making eye contact with students as being among the small, yet significant ways of establishing and maintaining rapport with their students. One participant articulately described this idea of developing rapport through non-verbal communication as “verbal warmth”.

**Making mistakes and taking risks: A question of acceptance**

This has been a recurring theme in the data concerning teachers’ insights and beliefs about L2 teaching and learning. The general consensus among participants was that the classroom should be a space where students should feel comfortable, engaged and motivated. Based on that belief, many of them also emphasized that students should not be afraid of making mistakes. Thus, participants repeatedly emphasized the idea that students should also be willing to take risks and to accept the fact that they are going to make mistakes in the language learning process. The question of acceptance immerged as instructors recognize how difficult this could be for some learners. The following words by Alice elucidate the views of many of the participants:

You have to be willing to accept that you may not know or understand the popular language. There are things that may identify you as an outsider. We all want to belong; and so those are the kind of the things that are really hard for teenagers or young adults because they so desperately want to belong. Actually, speaking another language is sort of being content with not necessarily completely belonging; not necessarily completely understanding the rules and the expectations, and the ways of doing things. So that’s very scary.

Although the idea of taking risks and accepting one’s mistakes was expressed from the point of view of facilitating student learning, the instructors also believed that they too, should be willing to take risks; this involves trying different ways of presenting material and organizing their lessons. Instructors shared that in order to minimize the fear of taking risks, they try as much as possible to have students work in small groups, as opposed to whole class activities; they also encourage them to ask questions and, as one professor cautioned: “Never, and I repeat, never make fun of students!”


Connecting with outside world

In addition to students’ active participation in classroom activities, instructors expressed the belief that language teaching involves getting students to make connections with the world outside. They therefore believe that their role as teachers is to facilitate this by providing guidance and various resources geared towards getting students fully involved in the learning process. They also believe that their ultimate goal is to inspire in their students the feeling of empowerment, a thirst for knowledge and lifelong learning.

Awareness and Use of Methods and Strategies in L2 Teaching

As we have seen from the data so far, some of the participants acknowledged that the method of instruction that their own teachers used during their L2 learning had been based, for the most part, on the traditional grammar-translation approach as well as the audio-lingual method. From the participants’ accounts and as confirmed in the literature (see Table 1, Chapter 2) some of these methods required a great deal of repetition and memorization of grammar rules and vocabulary. One participant shared his experience with the audio-lingual method, which at first appeared to be effective in getting students to speak the target language; however, it turned out to be quite “stilted”. In addition to having been aware of some of these methods as learners or earlier in their teaching careers, many of the participants reported to have used or experimented with some of these L2 methods, particularly at the beginning of their teaching career.

In the following section, the relationship between participants’ beliefs and their approach to language teaching is explored, in terms of their use of various methods or strategies in their teaching practice, and their reasons for doing so.

Intuition and Eclecticism: A Combination of Methods and Knowledge of Learners

Based on the findings gleaned from teachers’ personal accounts of their language learning experiences and their beliefs, coupled with what I observed in their classrooms, it is clear that a strict adherence to the grammar-translation approach to language teaching is certainly passé. So the question remains: how can instructors help their students acquire - as Amélie put it - “a solid grammar base” without boring them to death?

Many of the participants acknowledge that they use a variety or a combination of methods in their language teaching. In particular, they all recognize the importance of experiential and communicative
approaches, which, combined with their own intuition, innovative ideas and strategies create an effective language teaching and learning experience for themselves and their students. It was interesting to listen to, or observe, the different ways in which teachers adapted their lessons and activities according to the particular contexts in which they taught.

Despite the fact that she admits to having enjoyed learning FSL through the traditional method, Amélie acknowledges that she does not adhere to the same method of instruction in her post-secondary L2 classroom. Rather, to her “…it’s more of a trial and error, you know, you’re there at the front of the line and I think that what it comes down to is trying different things. If they don’t work you try other things.” Maigret makes a similar comment stating that: “I’ve never really had a strong ideology …except that a classroom should be effective, and it should be pleasant and it should be productive”. To him, this is an environment where “students have spent an hour and it seems like merely minutes”. This can be linked to the idea of flow.

The following comments by Sitelle capture the essence of the instructor-participants’ overall understanding of the notion of methods and its role in the post-secondary classroom:

Yes, method comes into it, but you know, really, I know we talk a lot about methods. I don’t know how much of an impact method has on the learning as opposed to the relationship between the teacher and the students, and, the willingness of the students to put in the work. Which is why I didn’t get into the how, because really, I mean every student is going to learn in a different way. So…‘the how’ might work for the group of students that I had last semester, and that same how, next semester might fall flat on its face, and not work. So the how is kind of difficult, but it’s about creating that buzz and that is based on the people in the room. It’s based on why they’re there, and what are they going to put into creating it. And everybody has to contribute otherwise it doesn’t work.

Sitelle’s comments are representative of the sentiments of many of the other participants who shared the belief that the important thing is to create and maintain positive energy or ambiance in the classroom, and that this energy should emanate from the efforts of teachers and students alike.

As such, I present the following vignette from Sitelle as she walks us through what could be considered as a vivid example of how a language instructor might combine the different methods, while making use of her knowledge of students as well as her own talents.
Sitelle: Variety is the Spice of Language Teaching

It’s a combination; it does add variety for sure, which makes it more interesting. But I also think they [the methods] talk to different areas of learning. So, the audio-lingual repeat-the-structure-fifty-times-you-just-change-the-verb, that is helpful for people who need to know: How does it work? Where does each piece go? And you can see it in action for every verb, so you know that the next verb that comes up would be the same structure. [T1 – Transmission; Teacher as technician].

Whereas there’d be some people who just want to say it; and so you’re going to do some sort of communicative exercise where they’re just going to say it, right? And then you can do the ones where it’s spontaneous you’re going to do the backward and forward kind of thing. [T2 – Transaction; Teacher as reflective practitioner, social constructivist]

And then there’s the one where I’m going to bring my guitar and we’re going to sing a song, and you’re going to figure out why this verse is in the imparfait (imperfect tense) and why this verse is in the passé compose , (past tense), which I did do. So why is this first verse in the imparfait and this second verse in the passé compose? What’s the difference? It was a French song, clearly, so you get the whole cultural thing. It’s the four competencies [T3 – Teacher as Transformative Intellectual].

I don’t think only one thing is good; you need go do various, you want go get in the cultural stuff... the communicative is not focussed on the grammar, the audio-lingual is only focussed on the grammar, but you need a bit of everything to get to hopefully, the final result...We have a goal: we want to speak better French and we want to write better French and we want to comprehend it.

Figure 16. Variety in language teaching.

As illustrated in the above example (Figure 16), there are several factors, which point to Sitelle’s awareness of the variety of methods that could potentially be employed to arrive at the same objective. Many factors have been identified that are quite in keeping with what can be described as a holistic approach as these can be further categorized and analyzed within the 3T framework. (See (Inter) Connected Pedagogical Framework, Chapter 3: Miller and Seller, 1985/1990; Cummins, 2001, 2009, Kumaravadivelu, 2003).

First of all, the instructor ensures that all four skills are integrated into her teaching: reading, writing, listening and speaking, as well as the cultural or artistic aspect. Secondly, she is willing to try a variety of methods and strategies in order to obtain and maintain students’ attention; in other words, to
reach or connect with all students. This is certainly a strong indication of her commitment, and patience - virtues that are characteristic of holistic educators (Miller 2006, 2007, 2010; Kessler, 2005; Palmer, 2010). Third, it is also clear that she recognizes the diversity in students’ learning styles and tries her best to reach all students by tailoring her teaching to these needs or feelings. The above anecdotal description also illustrates the different orientations to teaching presented in the theoretical framework: T1- Transmission: (“rote learning”; “repeating 50 times”); T2-Transaction: (“the back and forth thing”) and most importantly T3-Transformation: the idea of bringing in her guitar to sing a French song to the students, in an effort to help them learn and understand the passé compose, but also to help them gain an appreciation of the culture, not to mention the joy of being and singing together. Sitelle’s vignette not only shows the different L2 methods that are being employed, it also demonstrates the interconnectedness of communicative and integrative approaches in order to teach language holistically. In the following sections, I will present the different views of the participants with regards to the communicative language teaching approach (CLT) and the various challenges they encounter in their particular contexts.

Perceptions about the Communicative Language Teaching Approach

Participants unanimously reported to be quite familiar with CLT, which they cited as the one that best describes their approach to language teaching. Although many of them admitted that they tended to use the grammar-translation approach earlier on in their careers, participants were generally appreciative of CLT as an efficient and effective approach to language teaching overall.

Creating, Adapting and Supplementing Materials and Resources

The following story from Louise serves to shed some light on the issue and seems to speak to the overall experience described by the other participants. Louise reveals her awareness of CLT as an approach which affords her the freedom of supplementing her own material while integrating all the four skills (speaking, writing, listening and reading) in effective ways. This way, she further explains, she feels that she is catering to the diverse needs of the students who enrol in her courses. As highlighted in Figure 17, Louise believes that teachers should develop their own philosophy of how they want to teach.
Louise’s Integration of Material and Resources in CLT

You know sometimes you teach how you’ve been taught, right? At the beginning of my career, I believe I was trying to have a grammar translation [approach], or you know depending on the textbooks and whatever you’re given. That’s why I say the choice of material is very important. And it’s related to what method you’re using.

I mean if you want to use the communicative approach but if you do not have the materials or you do not know how to design or conceive them, it’s going to be very difficult, because at the end of the day you’ll be stuck with the textbook or materials that are there. And it’s easier to teach with what you have available, because maybe you won’t be able to buy textbooks for all your students that are using the method or the approach that you have.

But I think I always supplemented what I had in order to teach using a communicative approach and for me, it was always integration. I always thought that it was important to integrate all four skills. So I would use a short activity that would be oral and then try to introduce students to writing in FSL or using listening at some point, but I think for me it’s important…

**Figure 17. Integrating materials and resources.**

These sentiments expressed by Louise represent the general attitude of the other participants many of whom also made mention of the need for a) integrating the four skills, as well as the cultural aspect and b) knowing how to create, adapt and / or supplement materials or resources to their students’ needs - as being essential to a communicative approach to language teaching.

**Effort, Commitment and Collaboration**

Some of the instructors also made mention of the tremendous amount of effort and commitment required in this endeavour. However, as some of them shared, what keeps them motivated is their love for (teaching) language, their commitment to student learning, as well as the valuable help of mentors, and by extension, collaboration with, and advice from colleagues. Louise articulates this idea as follows:
I have good mentors, I had good people, but I also ask questions. I think for me, it was very important and I was very happy to follow advice. I never think that I know enough. I always try to look for new things or listen or try to improve what I do and I think that has helped. You know, when you don’t think you know everything, and you always want to improve – your techniques, your strategies and everything.

Following are some questions that some of the participants are asking or are seeking advice on, in their quest to continue teaching communicatively and in their constant search for improvement in their approach to language teaching.

**Attitudes towards Grammar Teaching, Textbook Use and Memorization**

Although most participants seem to have a thorough understanding of CLT, upon closer analysis of the data, there appears to be some confusion (or inconsistency) among some of them regarding this approach and what it entails. For example, while all participants acknowledged the effectiveness of CLT as an approach to language teaching which is aimed at helping students achieve their goals of actually communicating in the language - and ultimately speaking or interacting with other speakers - some of them expressed their concerns about its apparent de-emphasis of grammar. Maigret, for instance, gives a humorous example of his own sentiments when CLT was first adopted in his department. He observed that some of his colleagues seemed to welcome the idea of CLT as they thought that they would no longer be required to “teach grammar”: “They were jumping for joy, while I was crying in the corner”. A great part of Maigret’s chagrin was the fear (or concern) that given this misguided notion about CLT, the need to teach French grammar would gradually diminish and would eventually be eradicated, thus leaving students at a disadvantage when it comes to developing some vital communication skills, especially writing.

It appears that part of the confusion regarding attitudes towards CLT stems from the long-standing debate surrounding the teaching of grammar and vocabulary, as, for a long time, the teaching of grammar had also been the primary focus or emphasis in language classrooms. Given the shift in thinking about language teaching since the 1930s - notably with the advent of CTL (see Chapter 2) - language teachers at all levels have been asking themselves the following questions at one point or other: How should I go about teaching grammar? Should I teach grammar implicitly or explicitly? Should I, in fact teach grammar at all? It would be useful to acknowledge some of the concerns that participants expressed with regards to their own efforts in helping students attain what they consider as vital skills in terms of language communication, especially in the post-secondary context. Added to that are many interconnected themes which I will briefly touch upon in the following sections:
**The textbook question: “To book or not to book?”**

This catchy phrase has been borrowed from one of the participants to introduce the question of whether grammar should be explicitly taught, or whether memorization should play a role in helping students effectively learn a second language. In many ways, the grammar-translation method / approach is pretty much tied to the textbook and rote learning – hence the idea of learning grammar rules “by the book”. We will recall Alice’s comments about being unable to teach language by strictly adhering to what’s prescribed in a textbook, especially after having had the privilege of learning through immersion. Although, like many of her colleagues, Alice views the textbook as a valuable resource, she is also aware of the wide range of other resources that should be employed when trying to teach language holistically. These sentiments have been substantiated by the research. Darling-Hammond states that: “Ensuring that teachers understand who they are teaching and how they learn empowers teachers to organize their practice around the pursuit of learning rather than just covering the curriculum or getting through the book” (2006, p. 85).

**Don’t forget: The question of memorisation**

As many of the participants recognize, retention is a very important aspect of language learning, the question of memorization inevitably emerged as a very thought-provoking sub-theme in the research. In other words, the extent to which students are expected to memorize grammar rules and vocabulary constituted a major point of discussion. Sitelle and Amélie recalled their own language learning experience where they were required to do a great deal of memorisation (which seemed to work for them). Pamela underlines the need for “old school memorization” of vocabulary and grammatical structures (such as verb conjugations). All the instructors recognize that it is important for students to have a solid understanding of vocabulary and grammatical rules and structures in order to express their ideas and communicate effectively in the target language. However, in order to acquaint students with this vital aspect of their learning needs, many of the instructors indicated that they need to pay attention to their approach, which should include helping students develop effective learning strategies.

**Strategies for learning grammar rules and vocabulary**

Yannick, in particular, repeatedly emphasised the need for students to develop various strategies to help them learn and retain the necessary vocabulary. She shared her observation that international students who come from educational backgrounds where memorization is valued, generally tend to do much better in her language courses when compared to those from Canadian schools who had been taught
that memorization is “bad”. Like many of the other instructors, Yannick concludes that one strategy for getting students to learn the vocabulary is by using a variety of teaching methods and strategies. Yannick also stressed the importance of contextualizing the grammar and vocabulary, as it becomes even more difficult to learn a list of words (or grammatical rules) out of context. Based on her commitment to helping students understand the importance of learning strategies and for recognizing and/or developing their own, Yannick shared with me a document which she has designed to help her students acquaint themselves with the various learning strategies that are at their disposal (see Appendix K). This was developed based on Oxford’s (1990) work entitled: Language Learning Strategies: What Every Teacher Should Know, in which the author justifies the use of learning strategies in L2 classrooms as follows:

Language learning strategies are not restricted to cognitive functions, such as those dealing with mental processing and manipulation of the new language. Strategies also include metacognitive functions like planning, evaluating, and arranging one’s own learning; and emotional (affective), social and other functions as well. Unfortunately, many language learning strategy experts have not paid enough attention to affective and social strategies in the past. It is likely that the emphasis will eventually become more balanced, because language learning is undisputably an emotional and interpersonal process as well as a cognitive and metacognitive affair (p. 11).

As explicated in the above citation, developing learning strategies calls for a holistic/balanced approach which pays attention to all the various functions: cognitive, metacognitive, emotional, and social.

Notwithstanding the above, many of the participants maintain that although the traditional grammar-translation may not offer the best approach, students do need a solid grammar base in order to fulfill the requirements of their university language courses. However, many of them admit that grammar teaching and learning can be rather “dry” and can therefore contribute to boredom, disengagement, or even apathy among learners. Therefore, instructors have sought ways to make grammar teaching fun, interesting and engaging, by using humor, personal anecdotes, stories, improvisation and exaggeration to explain grammatical concepts and to help students retain vocabulary and grammar rules. Some of the participants, notably Maigret and Patrice shared how they would help students connect with the language even when teaching grammar and vocabulary, through stories which serve to contextualize the words and expressions which go along with the linguistic aspect (see Appendix M for an example of one of these stories).
Summary and Discussion of Beliefs and Assumptions

In this section, I presented some of the beliefs held by participants about language teaching and learning and the different influences of these beliefs on their teaching. A number of interrelated themes emerged as a result of the exploration of participants’ beliefs about language teaching and learning. Participants spoke candidly about their own feelings, their experiences and other factors which have contributed to their current beliefs and ways in which they are played out, or might be activated in their classrooms.

One of the dominant themes which emerged from participants’ expressed beliefs surrounded the need to connect with students through various opportunities for interactions involving both verbal and non-verbal communication. There is a rich body of literature in holistic as well as second language education which substantiates the effectiveness of this approach in bringing about connectedness in the learning environment (Cummins, 2001; Kessler, 2005; Miller, 2007, 2010; Palmer, 1998; hooks, 1994).

The idea of taking risks and making mistakes constituted a recurring theme in the data, and led to other interrelated considerations such as the importance of helping learners develop a sense of belonging and acceptance of the language learning process. Some of the participants stressed that this sense of belonging is necessary both inside and outside the classroom and aligns with the premises of holistic education, notably inclusiveness and connectedness (Miller, 2007, 2010; Miller, R. 1997, 2002, 2006; Forbes, 2003; hooks, 1994, 2001; Kessler, 2005, 2011). When the learning environment is one where students feel safe and comfortable, they will be more motivated, and willing to participate in classroom and other learning activities (Noddings, 2003, 2004; Miller, 2007, 2010).

Further, there was unanimous consensus among participants as to the usefulness of CLT as an effective approach to language teaching. Many of them shared their struggles with regards to some specific aspects of CLT and the various strategies that they use in making this approach work for them and their students. Some of these strategies include: creating, adapting and supplementing materials, the effective use of the textbook, various attitudes towards grammar teaching and vocabulary as well as the notion of memorization and its relationship to the important notion of retention. This has been addressed in the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, specifically with regards to CLT (See Savignon, 2007; Danesi, 2003; Littlewood, 1981; Mollica, 1998). Finally, what gained consensus among participants with regards to their beliefs and attitudes towards language teaching were the notions of intuition, eclecticism coupled
with a combination of methods. This connects with the works of many of the authors reviewed (Cummins, 2001, 2010; Kumaravadivelu, 2003, Miller, 2007, 2010).

**Apprenticeship of Observation Meets Personal Practical Knowledge**

In Chapter 2, we looked at the apprenticeship of observation, a concept which speaks to teachers’ ways of knowing by virtue of observing their own classroom teachers throughout their years as students (Borg, 2004; Lortie, 1975; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Ellis, 2006). From the accounts that participants have shared, there is no doubt that they too, have been exposed to this phenomenon, throughout their language learning journey. However, based on their responses with regards to the way they go about their L2 teaching in the post-secondary context, it appears that although some of them may have greatly admired and benefited from their second language instruction, they are aware of the tensions and dilemmas that result from this phenomenon. Therefore, it could be said that participants in this study seemed to have experimented with ways to overcome the effects of the apprenticeship of observation, opting instead, to pay attention to the needs and feelings of their students.

It is clear, that rather than imitating superficial aspects of teaching (Darling-Hammond 2006) all the participants in this study recognized the importance of making the necessary adjustments, depending on their context and by tailoring their teaching to their students’ needs (and feelings). Through their own lived experiences or personal practical knowledge (Clandinin & Connelly 1995, 1998; Ellis 2006), and their strong commitment to student learning, they have somewhat “unlearned” their old way of learning (and perhaps teaching) in favor of a more communicative approach. They are aware that language teaching does not only involve the transmission of grammar rules, but a great deal of transaction, with the ultimate goal aimed at a transformative approach. The need to focus more on the students in their context as opposed to methods and techniques has been advocated by many of the authors in both the holistic and SLE literature, and reflect the ideas presented in the integrated framework established in this research, notably the 3T Model (Miller & Seller, 1985) along with (Kumaravadivelu (2003) and Cummins (2001, 2009). In the next section, we will take a closer look at the participants’ orientation to curriculum and teaching, by drawing on the findings revealed from their responses to the orientation inventory, as well as focus group discussions.
The Orientation Inventory: Navigating the Landscape Together

All six of the core participants (and one peripheral instructor) completed the orientation inventory as part of the data collection instruments, which consisted of the following four categories: a) What students should learn; b) Instruction to maximise learning; c) Assessment and evaluation: How do you know that they know? d) Views about other teaching / learning aspects. Each of these categories consisted of five rows containing five statements which participants were to rank as follows: 1 for the statement they agree with most, 3 for the one they agree with least, and 2 for the remaining statement. As ties were not permitted, instructors were required to choose a different number (either: 1, 2 or 3) for each row or statement. (Please see Appendix H for a comprehensive inventory, in which each of the participants’ responses has been integrated under their number one-ranked statements). The scores were tabulated in accordance with the 3Ts as follows: TransMission - T1(M), TransAction – T2(A); TransFormation – T3(F). I have also included the particular orientation to which each of the statements can be most strongly identified.

From the tabulation of the scores, all the participants who completed the orientation inventory chose statements relating to all three of the orientations as priority 1 as they deemed appropriate. As displayed in Figure 18, participants’ individual scores for the most part, reflect a strong orientation towards the Transaction position – T2, closely followed by T3.

![Orientation Diagram](image)

Figure 18. Orientation inventory for all core participants.

This tendency to use all three positions (T1, T2 and T3) is already an indication of instructors’ flexibility and their willingness to employ a variety of methods of instruction. It also points to their
tendency towards “whole teaching” for, as Miller (2010) asserts, since “each approach uses a different part of the [student] they need to be used together in a way that nurtures wholeness” (p. 41). The strong orientation towards the transaction position could be accounted for by the fact that language teaching and learning - at all levels - does call for a fair amount of transaction in the most basic sense of the word, given that language learners are expected to constantly “give back” (especially when it comes to oral interaction; asking for clarification etc.), in their negotiation of meaning (Cummins, 2001). Further, at the lower (beginner) levels, instructors may need to make use of the “transmission” position, which is sometimes necessary for helping students acquire certain basic linguistic structures (grammar, syntax and vocabulary), in which case a fair amount of “transmitting” may be required.

**Tabulating Statements of Orientation**

In keeping with the qualitative nature of this inquiry, I found it equally, or even more useful to focus on the actual statements chosen (or not chosen) by participants rather than on the numerical scores. Therefore in this phase of analysis of the inventory, I have highlighted the various statements, which stand out, by virtue of being ranked as the number one priority by the majority of participants in each of the categories/rows. (These will also be triangulated with the other sources of data as appropriate).

Although it was a small sample of respondents, we can draw some remarkable conclusions. Some concrete examples will demonstrate how this inventory has been utilised in this research. Following, I present an example of this process by examining the very first set of statements in the first category / row of the inventory (which is displayed in Figure 19).

![Figure 19. Orientation Inventory Row 1 Category 1 Setting Expectations](image)

**Category 1 Setting expectations: What students should know**

**Transmission Statement - T1:** *We should teach knowledge and skills considered essential by society.* This is the statement, which is most closely associated with the transmission position. It is
interesting to note that this was the lowest ranked statement among all the participants. It is clear that this statement is the least “holistic” in that it speaks primarily to the traditional, hegemonic approach to the curriculum - specifically the “banking” concept - and the idea of depositing knowledge and skills into students’ memory banks (See Friere, 1972; Cummins, 2001, 2009; hooks, 1994, 2001; Miller 2007, 2010, Piccardo, 2010).

**Transaction Statement - T2:** *Learning to work as a member of a team is a key learning goal.* This statement was ranked number #1 by one of the participants. Although it fits more into the realm of T2 (or A -TransAction) this statement is equally promising when it comes to holistic teaching and learning. The idea of working together as a team suggests cooperative learning - one of the most effective strategies employed in holistic educational environments. Unlike the transmission position, which tends to encourage rivalry among learners, this T2 statement favours cooperation over competition or individualistic attitudes in the learning environment (Miller 2007, 2010; Johnson, & Johnson, 1994, 1999; Johnson, Johnson & Smith, 2006).

**Transformation Statement - T3:** *Schools/Education should help students develop a sense of self-worth.* This was the most highly ranked statement by six out of the seven participants. This is a very significant statement, in terms its implications for holistic teaching and learning and it speaks volumes particularly when it comes to the transformation position, the aim of which is “the development of the whole person” (Miller 2007, p. 7). Further, the idea of developing self-worth is very important in a holistic learning environment, and it is directly related to the inner life of the student. The fact that instructors ranked this statement so highly is a strong indication of the extent to which they care about students’ wellbeing; this collective voice certainly points to participants’ overall orientation to transformative teaching, and the positive vision that they hold for their students. These notions have been well substantiated by the literature previously reviewed (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, 1996; Noddings, 2003, 2004).

Further contemplation on the subject of self-worth, raises the following questions: Why is it so important to have students develop self-worth? Why do teachers find it a high priority particularly in second language pedagogy? How do they see helping students develop their self-worth, as their main goal?

A more in-depth analysis of the number one ranked statement is warranted in order to uncover its implications, and more specifically, its interconnectedness to both holistic and language teaching and
learning. As noted in Chapter 2, Maslow, in his hierarchy of needs places self-esteem at a significantly high level (just below self-actualization – the highest level). Synonymous with the terms ‘self-esteem’, “self-respect” or ‘self-image’, an individual’s self-worth greatly impacts his or her attitude towards learning and life in general. As Maslow notes: “Satisfaction of the self-esteem need leads to feelings of self-confidence, worth, strength, capability, and adequacy, of being useful and necessary in the world. But thwarting of these needs produces feelings of inferiority, of weakness, and of helplessness” (1970, p. 45).

Self-worth is particularly important in learning an additional language. Research has shown that second language students who have higher levels of self-worth tend to fair much better than their peers in various aspects of learning particularly speaking (Rubio, 2007; Oxford, 1990). The fear of making mistakes constitutes a major barrier to students, especially when it comes to oral communication. This affects their ability to participate fully in activities where they can practice this vital much-needed skill for interpersonal communication.

These issues also surfaced during the student focus group discussions. Some participants volunteered interesting anecdotes about their experiences in previous language classrooms with regards to feelings of fear and anxiety they experienced particularly when forced to speak in front of the whole class and how these feelings seemed to hinder their performance and progress. To demonstrate their point, they would often offer some vivid comparisons between their experiences in the classes of core participants and that of their prior language learning experiences (from previous semesters). (Students’ experiences in the language classes of the core participants in this study are explored in more detail in Chapter 8).

As noted earlier in this chapter, instructors repeatedly emphasized the importance of risk-taking (for both themselves and their students). But in order to accomplish this goal, instructors recognize the value of being attentive to the needs of their students and to create conditions where they feel comfortable enough to express themselves without fear of making mistakes. Further, as the data shows, instructors recognize that this can best be achieved by making a conscious and continuous effort to get to know their students and to develop positive relationships (Cummins, 2001; Miller, 2007, 2010). However, as one of the participants, Patrice reminds us, in order to get to know their students, teachers need to know who they are (Palmer, 1998). This has been the focus of the earlier part of this chapter which explored participants “inner landscapes” starting with experiences learning an additional language and the influences on their own beliefs and assumptions on their approach towards language teaching.
Based on this initial glimpse at their orientation to the curriculum, one gets a sense of the orientation of the participants; it is clear that the core participants in this study tend to gravitate more towards a transactional or transformational approach to the curriculum. I will now give a brief overview of the other categories of the inventory, focusing on the statements which gained consensus among participants, particularly those which coincide with the T3 position.

**Category 2: Assessing students’ learning**

In this category, 5 out of 7 participants chose the statement: *A lively classroom is clear evidence that learning is taking place* over the following: *Satisfied students are clear evidence that learning is taking place*. The former statement, classified as T2 (transaction), obviously draws on observable behaviours as opposed to the more abstract notion suggested by the latter which raises a number of questions: Who are satisfied students? What does a satisfied student look like? How can you tell that a student is satisfied? These questions became the catalyst for the discussion among the core participants in the focus group attended by Louise, Pamela and Alice. These participants unanimously agreed that it is not always possible to determine or interpret whether a student is satisfied, as opposed to whether the student is learning. They felt that “in a lively classroom”, there is more evidence that learning is taking place through students’ active participation in the various activities - such as role-play, for example - that the instructor facilitates.

**Category 3: How to maximize learning**

Although the T2 statements dominated in this category, there were quite a variety of responses among participants, in terms of their ranking. In other words, this was the category in which participants’ choices were most diverse in their ranking of the statements. This points to an indication of teachers’ flexibility and their willingness to facilitate the diversity of learning styles that usually exists among students. It also supports the notion that there is “no one best way” to teach or to learn (Pradhu, 1990, Kumaravadivelu, 2003). The statement which a majority of instructors (4 out of 7) ranked as number one in this category was the following: *Teachers must be facilitators to stimulate thinking and challenge perspectives*. In addition, 3 out of the 7 participants ranked the following as the number one statement: *Classroom activities must be experiential and student-centered*.

Both of these statements are equally indicative of what I actually observed during my classroom visits. These affirmations are also well in keeping with the portraits of the participants as presented in the previous chapter, and relate to how participants identify with their role as language instructors in the post-
secondary context. As we recall, many of the instructors used the term “facilitator” to describe their role. The various debates, discussions that the instructors (notably, Louise, Maigret, Alice, Amélie) encouraged in their upper-level undergraduate methodology courses (particularly with the teacher candidates) clearly demonstrate this orientation to critical thinking that instructors spoke about in their interviews.

**Category 4: Assessment**

In the category relating to “assessment” six out of seven participants ranked the following statement as priority one: “*Evaluation should be varied so that the whole student is assessed*”. There is no doubt that this statement addresses the idea of wholeness and fits into the realm of transformative teaching, where the goal is to cater to the “whole” student; thus the importance of an evaluation process which does not only consider the intellect, but also other aspects such as physical, emotional and spiritual.

In summary, given the focus on holistic interconnections, I present in Figure 20, the five statements (from all the different categories) which relate to the Transformation position (T3), and which gained the most consensus among participants in terms of their priority (i.e. number one ranking).

![Figure 20. Top-ranking T3 statements among participants.](image)

A great part of this research study involved exploring participants’ beliefs about approaches to teaching, and the 3Ts provided the lens for gaining insight into how teachers see the relationship between theory and practice. As observed through the analysis of the orientation inventory, instructors tend to
consider the 3Ts along a continuum, which includes all three of the positions at varying degrees or steps in the process. These results are in keeping with the ideas discussed in the pedagogical frameworks presented in Chapter 3, particularly the 3T integrated framework which draws from the works of Miller & Seller (1985/1990), Kumaravadivelu (2003) and Cummins (2001, 2009). In particular, as pointed out by both Miller (2007) and Cummins (2001) effective or whole teaching would require a merger or integration of the various orientations along a continuum or cycle. In addition to completing the orientation inventory, the core participants in this study also had the opportunity to discuss their views on the notions of transmission, transaction and transformation, which will be presented in the following section.

**Exploring the 3Ts Together: A Professional Dialogue Among Participants**

The focus group interviews provided an excellent opportunity for teachers to further explore these notions together, to exchange ideas, to reflect on what the 3Ts mean to them and how they consciously (or unconsciously) integrate them into their teaching practice. Having been given the time to complete the inventory during the first 15-20 minutes before the focus groups, the orientation inventory / questionnaire served as an excellent icebreaker in getting the conversation started. Two focus group interview sessions were held with core participants: Amélie and Yannick participated in the first session (June 2010) and Louise, Alice and Pamela attended the other session which was held in August, 2010. (See details in Chapter 4).

**Yannick and Amélie: On the 3Ts**

\*Transmission is Step 1…Transaction is huge!*

During their focus group discussion, both instructors (Yannick and Amélie) acknowledged the usefulness of the transmission position in the language learning process, especially for beginner level courses. They see the transmission position as being “step one” in a process which involves a fair amount of transaction along a continuum; the ultimate goal would be to eventually achieve transformation. They also acknowledged that latter is very important in developing independent learners, which is highly desirable when it comes to L2 teaching and learning. This idea has been articulately elaborated upon by Yannick as follows:

I think transaction is huge. Transmission is step one, because this is what you want to teach, which ultimately you want students to get away with. But you just can’t transmit, and hope that students can learn, it’s not going to happen. Transaction has to happen, transaction the way I see it, is when
students get involved with the knowledge, and play with it, and use it in different contexts: Try it, make errors, get corrected, try again and that’s what I see as being a transaction period and that’s what takes to the road towards ownership of the language, where they can become independent learners. I think that transaction period has to happen and everybody has to go through it at a different pace, using different tools and… different learning skills/strategies...

Amélie also recognises the importance of transaction, but goes one step further, adding that she believes that transformation is happening during this negotiation process (described by Yannick). She also believes that during various exchanges in the classroom where peer work is involved, there is no longer a one-way flow between teachers and students (as is usually the case in traditional, transmission-type classrooms). She believes that the simple act of allowing students to collaborate and interact with their peers and with the instructor/instruction constitutes an important step that can eventually lead to transformation.

**Transformation: Essential to language learning**

The idea of helping students become autonomous or independent learners has been recognised by participants as being of vital importance to transformative teaching. Amélie elucidates this notion by stating that:

Students, when they come to our classes, I hope they get something that transforms their life, anyway. So taking this a bit further, for me, trying to transform my students’ view of learning is a big part of this transformation. Because sometimes they come to language courses…considered as easy credit…For first year students, it’s something that they just have to complete, in order to satisfy the requirements of the program. To me, to be able to motivate them – course content, material is something that can really be transformative. So I also think that transforming the students’ view on learning is to have to them become independent learners, to develop a thirst for knowledge and interest in another language – their perception and their way of seeing their learning in general.

Yannick concurs, emphasising the need for students to become independent learners by taking ownership of the knowledge:

I think they have to go through that transformation process. So basically the information that we give them with the activity that we plan, that is to me, a transformative process whereby they can claim ownership of the knowledge itself and I think if that doesn't happen in the classroom. So by transformation, I don’t mean they will transform the knowledge, although sometimes they do, but they get it differently from the way it is delivered to the way they will use it or whatever they will do with this knowledge. Then there is this transformation process to me is necessary for each individual is able to claim ownership of the language and then to as you said, become an
independent learner who can use that knowledge in different contexts, so that transformation has to happen for the learning process to take place, I think.

**Giving students a voice**

Yannick and Amélie also spoke about what they perceive as the students’ role in this transformation process. Amélie shared that in her classes, she tries as much as possible to get students involved in the design of the curriculum, by inviting them to suggest readings, discussion and debate topics that they feel passionate about. She believes that this can be a motivational factor as it gives students a voice to express what engages them and further contributes to the overall dynamics of the class.

Although Yannick thinks that getting students involved in the actual curriculum planning is a great idea and one which would be a “nice experiment” for her to try, she expresses her reservations explaining that:

Depending on the level that they [students] are at, there are certain expectations. Like we know that they need to know certain things for them to be successful in the next year up. So what I tend to do is just to give students some kind of voice… within some activities: “Ok you choose what you want to do from these different topics, for example. You will select a topic among these, that you are interested in and that you want to talk about”. But I would be a little, I wouldn’t say that I’m a control freak, but I would want to know that what I need to cover I have covered and I like to have some flexibility, but within a framework… So I don’t think I would be comfortable saying “ok you decide what we’re going to be doing”. I would be a bit worried. But it would be a nice experiment for me to try...

Amélie agrees that students' level of proficiency in the language, which often coincides with the year of study (i.e. 1st, 2nd etc.) does make a difference to the extent of their involvement and gives the following example of how this is operationalized in her case:

In my advanced 4th year course, for example we talk about the how to develop these dissertation models, so I ask students to do research on a topic they liked, they felt passionate about, research on it, formulate in the context of a problématique (issue) post it on the course website and the class will add comments and to use the model of these arguments and syntheses to make the point. So I guess for more advanced classes, it would work. For beginners maybe not; I agree with [Yannick] that the level of the students would play a huge role.
Making curricular connections to high school

Due to her experience serving on various committees concerned with reviewing the FSL high school curriculum, Yannick also made the observation that in order to facilitate teaching geared more towards transformation, there should be increased collaboration between the high school and the post-secondary institutions with regards to curriculum development. She explains as follows:

At the university level, we probably have more freedom and more flexibility in terms of the curriculum and what we want to teach… there is a big jump with the curriculum and what is actually being taught in the classroom. I think we should also have more consultation […and] work more at the university or post-secondary level, anyway, with high school teachers in the designing of the curriculum in high school. I think it will be very helpful…if we could probably work out something that’s closer to what students could actually achieve.

Many of the other participants have made a similar observation. For example, Maigret, Louise, Pamela and Dino also spoke about the challenges encountered when students are only concerned with getting a mark.

Alice, Louise and Pamela: On Transformation

During their focus groups, Louise, Pamela and Alice also engaged in a discussion surrounding the 3Ts, focusing on transformative teaching and what it meant to them as post-secondary language instructors. These participants generally considered the idea of transformation as a way of bringing about personal and social change, as explained in the section which follows.

“Breaking some walls in communicating through transformation”

Louise spearheaded the discussion, by sharing that she views transformation “...in the sense of breaking some walls or barriers in communicating.” Alice and Pamela concurred.

The ensuing discussion focused on the notion that in every new course, post-secondary instructors encounter a new group of students who come from diverse backgrounds, and who bring with them different ideas and lived experiences; and at the end of the course through language and communication, students change and they also recognise the uniqueness of their instructors and their various teaching styles. Participants discussed the importance of making students understand the power of language as a tool for communication, raising students’ awareness of the varieties of language as well as the importance of using inclusive terms. So, as one of the participants put it: “it’s learning how to be a person in the world”. There ensued a discussion around the role of the humanities in the larger scheme of things and its
usefulness in fostering clear and effective communication. The participants ended the discussion by talking about the role of transformative approaches to language teaching which involves helping students to gain new knowledge, to cooperate with each other in order to break down barriers and free themselves from biases and prejudices. From the analysis of the inventory statements as well as the focus group discussions, there appears to be a natural correlation between language teaching and transaction; however, participants’ awareness of the value of orienting themselves towards the transformation position is quite promising from a holistic education perspective, especially as it relates to students’ experience of their language learning.

**Summary and Discussion**

The chapter began with an exploration of participants’ stories relating to their L2 learning, and how they perceived these experiences. This was followed by participants’ reflections on the insights gained from their language learning experiences and how these may have served to inform their approach to language teaching (and learning). Some of the themes that emerged from this analysis / discussion included such notions as balancing intuition and linear thinking, empathy, patience, overcoming fear, mindfulness of context, attention and care. The importance of varying instruction (through the use of resources, materials and ways of presenting information), and that language learning should be fun, pleasant, effective and engaging for learners, also emerged as dominant themes.

Participants’ beliefs and assumptions about language teaching (and learning) were then presented. In this attempt to make participants’ beliefs explicit (Ellis, 2006), there were several recurring themes that coincided with their learning experiences. Dominant among these, was the need to create a comfortable environment where students would not be fearful of taking risks and making mistakes. As further revealed by the data, participants shared similar beliefs about the importance of developing rapport and fostering good relationships with their students, along with the idea of encouraging interaction among them. Many of these findings reflect the works reviewed in Chapter 2 (see Cummins, 2001, 2009; Miller, 2007, 2010; Ron Miller, 2002; Forbes, 1996, 2003; hooks, 1994, 2001).

Further, participants’ views about the various approaches to language teaching - with a particular focus on CLT - were highlighted in this chapter. Most participants reported to have embraced CLT as their preferred approach to language teaching; many described their use of a combination of methods along with a variety of strategies in order to maintain students’ interest and to help them become fully engaged in the learning process. While there is consensus among participants that helping students
acquire solid grammar (especially writing) skills should be an essential objective of a university L2 (degree) program, the on-going debate regarding “the best way” to teach grammar and vocabulary constituted for some concern - and lively discussion. Themes arising from these discussions are well-reflected in the literature reviewed (Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Prabhu, 1990; Savignon, 1983, 2007; Spada, 2006).

Several of the findings presented in this chapter connect to the unified framework established in Chapter 3. Of particular relevance is the integrated pedagogical orientations model (see Figure 7) which consists of a blend of Miller and Seller’s (1985/1990) 3T model, Kumaravadivelu’s (2003) teacher-role conceptual framework as well as Cummins’ (2001, 2009) Nested Pedagogical Framework. The findings related to participants’ reflections on their L2 learning, the insights gained from these experiences and ways in which these have served to inform beliefs and assumptions. Moreover, their approach to teaching, relate to Cranton’s (2003) call for “critical self-reflection” and openness to alternatives, as key strategies in the pursuit of transformative teaching. Participants’ acknowledgement of having embraced CLT as their overall approach to language teaching, while incorporating a variety of other methods and strategies, culminate in a complex blend of eclecticism and intuition.

The complexities relating to this approach to curriculum, teaching and learning can be further analysed and interpreted through the lenses of the integrated pedagogical framework, particularly through the use of Kumaravadivelu’s (2003) teacher-role conceptual framework and Cummins’s Nested Pedagogical Framework (2001). Last but not least, the findings of the Orientation Inventory coupled with the rich discussion among participants focussing specifically on the 3Ts can be further examined through the lenses of the Integrated Pedagogical Framework. Moreover, other parts of the bigger framework - notably, the symbolism of the hand which depicts the three R’s: Responsibility, Relationships and Respect, along with the interrelated concept of teaching presence in fostering positive interdependence - also provide useful lenses for further analysis, discussion and interpretation of the data presented in this chapter.

The main purpose of this chapter was to get to know more about the participants by first gaining an understanding of the nature of their experiences in L2 learning and how this knowledge served to provide insights into their beliefs and assumptions about language teaching and learning. Participants’ orientation to the language teaching and learning curriculum (through the orientation inventory and focus group discussions) was also explored. The following chapter focuses on what participants actually do to facilitate student engagement in L2 learning.
CHAPTER 7

EXPERIENCING THE FLOW OF CONNECTEDNESS:
IN THE CLASSROOM AND BEYOND

“I hear and I forget, I see and I remember and I do and I understand”
Lau Tsu

Introduction

This chapter aims to provide a vivid description of what participants actually do to engage students and facilitate L2 teaching and learning in the post-secondary context. Gleaned primarily from classroom observations, the first part of the chapter focuses on the range of activities designed or adapted by instructors to facilitate active learning, participation and social interaction by encouraging a spirit of cooperation and interdependence. In addition, honourable mention will be made of participants’ views on the physical configuration, awareness of the natural environment as well as their attitudes with regards to the use of technology in the classroom.

I will then go beyond the classroom to describe various learning opportunities facilitated or otherwise encouraged by the core participants in the realm of experiential, community-based service-learning as well as regional / national exchange opportunities and study abroad programs. Of particular significance is the service-learning initiative undertaken by one of the participating instructors and her students. Finally, I have included a section on food, which turned out to be a very important ingredient in the language classroom and in this research. The ensuing discussion will focus on the interconnectedness of these various elements and their relationship to holistic teaching and learning in the post-secondary language context.

Joie de Vivre: Vignettes from the “Living Classroom”

Broadly defined as a place where one learns or gains experience, the classroom occupies a very central space in educational institutions and contexts. Regardless of its size or shape, the mere mention of school, college or university, conjures an image of the classroom – usually an enclosed space adorned with desks, chairs, black or white boards; in the modern classroom, computers and other audio-visual equipment have become part of the furniture and fixture. This is the reality of the university classrooms that I visited. Most importantly, the classroom is the place where teachers and students meet and interact.
Ideally, it should be a space where learners come together to intermingle with their peers, exchange and present their ideas, share experiences, write exams and much more.

In this section, I attempt to glean together glimpses of life in my core participants’ post-secondary L2 classrooms, by describing a wide range of activities that I observed during my classroom visits, as well as those that participants themselves (both teachers and students) so aptly described. Bearing in mind the focus on holistic teaching and learning, I have concentrated primarily on the more communicative-experiential, creative types of learning activities which engage the whole student - involving the arts, games, and other ‘soulful’ aspects of learning. In other words, these involve activities in which students are encouraged to actively participate by using and applying their language and communication skills, as well as their imagination, while at the same time having fun with their language learning. Towards the end of the section, I also describe the physical configuration of the classroom, and how instructors work with it, along with the use of technology (computers - Intranet, Internet; audio visual equipment, as well as other forms of media –such as movies, ads, music, etc.).

Class Time Rhythms: Creating Ambiance

Scheduled classes ranged in length from 50 minutes to two hours. I had the opportunity to witness several planned (and sometimes unplanned) activities, which took place in the classroom. In the majority of classes, I observed a sort of pattern which can be loosely categorised as follows: a) exercices de réchauffement (warm-up exercises); b) main lesson (which focused on a specific learning objective and related activities); c) exercices de fermeture (closing exercises).

Every class that I observed seemed to have its own distinctive ambiance as each instructor had a unique way of conducting her class. It became quite a thrill to discover what was on the “menu”, how it would be served, and to observe how both instructors and students would interact with it. The majority of participants had stressed the importance of being prepared and organized; they also emphasised the importance of having carefully planned lessons with clear objectives. While at first glance some classes appeared to be no different from the professional and academic design that is typical of the university environment, for the most part, there prevailed an atmosphere of warmth and a spirit of community.

The time of day of the classes also seemed to contribute to the overall atmosphere of the class and certain patterns seemed to emerge in that regard. It was quite an interesting coincidence, that my core participants’ courses were scheduled in such a way as to allow me to observe the classes at different times – in the morning (Yannick, Alice), mid-morning and early afternoon (Amélie, Louise, Pamela) as well as
in the evening (Sitelle). (See observation summary for details, Appendix J). It was also interesting to observe some slightly different patterns that seemed to fit with the instructor’s particular approach and with “rhythms” of their students.

*Bonjour!* The morning classes were particularly noted for what could be described as a “relaxed alertness”. For example, Yannick’s classes, which ran back to back from 9:10 to 10 am and from 10:10 to 11 am respectively, were particularly interesting. I vividly recall my first visit to Yannick’s class. I met with her in her office at 9 am and we walked over to the classroom together. Shortly afterwards, from about 9:05 am, students started strolling in, slowly but steadily. (I wondered how many of them might have entertained the idea of staying in bed on this cold winter morning). But here they were, knapsacks halfway suspended across their backs, some with books in one hand, while trying to balance a cup of freshly brewed Tim Horton’s coffee, or a water bottle in the other.

In between the process of getting settled, Yannick ensures that the material that she had prepared for the lesson was intact. She takes the time to greet the students by their first names, with a cheerful “bonjour!” and a warm smile as they enter the classroom. In turn the students respond: “Bonjour, Madame!” - extending similar greetings to their peers. Yannick occasionally nodded towards a pile of newspapers, which had been conspicuously placed on one of the desks at the front of the class. By 9:10 am, there were about 18 students in the class and most of them were flipping through copies of *L’Express*, one of the local francophone newspapers, while sipping on their coffee and talking to their neighbours. Before delving into the planned lesson of the day, Yannick highlights and draws students’ attention to one or two announcements. For example, with real excitement in her voice, she draws students’ attention to one of the big francophone events taking place in the city that week: “*Le salon du livre*” - a book festival celebrating various francophone authors. (My ears prick up at the mention of the *Salon du livre*. This brought back memories of one of my 3rd year undergraduate French courses. I remember the instructor bringing in brochures and informing us about the *Salon du livre* and encouraging us to go if we had the chance. This flash of déjà vu rekindled in me warm feelings of my own undergraduate language learning. Yannick then proceeded to engage the students in some *bavardage* (small talk) in French, before delving into the planned lesson. As Yannick explained to me afterwards, it is always a pleasure to make the bi-weekly newspaper available to students; she describes this as one of several strategies she uses to…ease them into the class… I give them the newspapers at the beginning of the class. Several reasons behind it… they get to read some French. It’s always a strategy on my part to show them that there is a francophone community and they are part of something; and that the newspaper is
one way of showing them that there is a community around the language, around the culture, or francophone culture and that they’re a part of it.

The above scenario describes the instructor’s strategy for “easing” the students into the lesson, by creating a relaxed atmosphere, (almost like home) while allowing students to “wake up” and gradually become more alert and ready to participate in the up-coming lesson and related activities. This can be likened to what has been described in holistic education as “relaxed alertness” (Miller 2010, p. 100). While the reading of an authentic newspaper helps to stimulate their intellect, it is clear that the instructor also makes an effort to be in tuned with the rhythms of her students. Further, this experience also serves to help them develop a sense of belonging not only within the classroom environment, but also within the larger francophone community. Hence Yannick’s approach demonstrates the notions of connectedness and inclusiveness, two major premises of holistic education.

**Ice Breakers and “Verbal Warmth”: Starting off on “a Warm Personal Note”**

Although they each had their own unique styles, and followed different schedules, I noticed that many of the instructors did in fact start their classes on a warm, personal note. As many of the participants indicated during their interviews, one way of connecting and developing rapport with their students is by initiating conversation. As was pointed out by one of the participants, in this age of political correctness where teachers need to maintain physical distance, it is important to make use of what he referred to as “verbal warmth” in order to connect with students. This could be as simple as a reassuring smile; asking them about their day or following up on something that they may be involved in. Moreover, as Alice noted: “Everyone likes to be acknowledged”

**Exercices de réchauffement (Warm-up exercises): “Le hook”**

Alice, who also conducts her classes in the morning, begins each class with what she refers to exercices de réchauffement (warm-up exercises). These are designed to get students mentally, physically or emotionally ready for their lesson, or simply to get them in the mood for (language) learning. Ideas for these exercices de réchauffement are actually generated by the students themselves, who work together in groups of two or three. It is always so exciting to witness the fun, creative 5 to 10 minute presentations which often include various games, puzzles, tongue twisters, songs, and the like. These allowed students to practice the target language and to participate actively.
Games in the Classroom

During the classroom visits, I observed a series of lively and exciting games which really brought the classroom to life, and which generated a great deal of participation and engagement on the part of both instructors and students. Sitelle and Alice were particularly noted for incorporating games into their language teaching. These included adaptations of popular games such as Jeopardy! and Bingo!

This is Jeopardy! In one of Alice’s classes, I witnessed a very exciting adaptation of the well-known television game “Jeopardy!” (which, by the way happens to be my favourite TV game show!) Assuming the role of “host”, and allowing the students to call her “Alexa”, Alice divided the class into two groups or teams, and students collaborated in choosing a name for their team. The objective was to review some linguistic structures that they had been learning, while maximising cognitive engagement. On the blackboard, Alice established a column for each team where the scores would be recorded. I readily accepted the invitation to be “the scorer” and proudly took my place at the board. Besides, that put me at a good vantage point to observe the whole activity. There was no doubt that students became fully engaged in the activity, huddling together to figure out the answers and entrusting that one person to “ring in” and answer on behalf of the team. In this spirit of fun and excitement, students also had an opportunity to clarify many elusive grammatical nuances; they were also thrilled to be able to score points for their team and to challenge their own individual abilities, while trying to come up with the correct response; and if they did, there was jubilant celebration by all their teammates. (See video clip).

Bingo! Sitelle is particularly fond of preparing similar types of activities - which she refers to as “mental gymnastics” - in order to teach difficult grammatical concepts. I was lucky enough to witness (and participate in) the game of Bingo! This activity was designed to help students learn, and spontaneously practice the use of reflexive adjectives, while at the same time getting to know each other. Sitelle notes that when formulating the sentences, she made sure to include “meaningful” statements that were related to the students’ particular interests - personal, professional or academic. So in the process of learning the grammatical structures, they also get to know each other better.

Integrating Drama: Role-play, Humorous Skits and Expressive Reading

Role-play: It was not surprising that role-play also formed a regular part of activities in the classes that I observed, especially in the 1st and 2nd year classes; in the methodologies courses, student teachers often incorporated it into their lesson plans as part of the “guided activity”. These included many task-based scenarios where students worked together in small groups or in pairs to
write up dialogues using the various linguistic structures and vocabulary that they had learned. In one of Sitelle’s classes, that I observed, students acted out scenes based on dialogues that they had written together in pairs. For example, one of these creative role-play activities involved a scenario at the grocery store: “Au supermarché” (“At the supermarket). Using the vocabulary provided in the textbook as well as the supplementary expressions provided by the instructor (such as mal bouffe (junk food), which they were quite thrilled to learn), students wrote up the dialogue, and practiced pronunciation, as well as intonation before performing in front of the class. I was thrilled that I was actually given the opportunity to participate, having been asked to pair-up with one of the students who did not have a partner.

Some of the instructors (especially in the beginner levels) also enjoyed creating their own original dialogues in the target language so that the students can practice together or “act them out” in front of their peers. As one participant enthusiastically explains: “They absolutely love it; to throw themselves into another character and to be somebody else – saying words and giving them permission to be somebody else, and they act out a story whereas if you ask them to just be themselves, they’re all shy”. This participant’s comments with regards to assuming another person’s name or characteristic suggests techniques and strategies borrowed from the L2 method developed by Lasarov called Suggestopedia (see details in Chapter 2).

**Humorous skits and poetry:** Similar to role-play, the sketch comique (humorous skit) is another type of activity, which often animated the classrooms of some of my participants. Those that I witnessed were done entirely by the students themselves, with little input from the teacher. Although the teacher does not usually assign this per se, the students often take the initiative by creating their own little “sketch” to begin their oral presentations (as I observed with Amélie’s students). These served as an ice breaker to grab and retain the attention of their peers while evoking lots of laughter; students seem to feel less “serious” thus more relaxed when trying to speak and interact in the foreign / second language. In Pamela’s class as well as Yannick’s, students were given time in class to write short poems in small groups and read them in front of the whole class.

**Reading with expression.** A regular practice that I observed in many of the classes was to have students “act out” or to use appropriate facial expressions and gesticulations while reading aloud the dialogues – which sometimes included those from their textbooks. I particularly remember a whole class activity (in Yannick’s class) where students were asked to volunteer by assuming the role of the characters in the story: mother, father and two rival siblings (teenage boy and girl). At first, some of the
students were hesitant about volunteering, but were encouraged by the instructor who herself guided them through, by enthusiastically “modelling” the role of some of the characters (even the father). Students quickly warmed up to the activity, and judging by the peals of laughter and eager volunteers, and overall high level of participation, there is no doubt that students were having fun in the learning process.

**Debates, Discussions and Conversations**

Among the participants, debates are celebrated as one of the most effective ways of inciting communication through oral interaction in the L2 classroom. Many of the participants / instructors spoke about how much they enjoy witnessing these interactions in their classes as a way of getting students to talk and discuss issues which are of interest to them or which they have an opinion about. Their passionate engagement in these debates in a language which they are trying to make their own, brings to the fore not only their motivation to speak, but their determination especially these fleeting moments when they temporarily forget their inhibitions and fears and delve into the discussion. This is a very vivid example of how students transform themselves into full-fledged “communicators” becoming so engrossed in the debates and discussions that they seem to “forget” that they were L2 learners.

**Le Colloque Interdisciplinaire. (Interdisciplinary Conference).** Louise’s *Colloque Interdisciplinaire* (Mock Interdisciplinary Conference) in her 4th-year FSL class was a striking example of an activity geared towards helping students to express themselves by sharing their interests and views while practicing effective language use. This was by far one of my most memorable classroom visits. It was fascinating to witness how students became fully engaged in their various roles as conference participants after having been instructed on the process of preparing for, and participating in a conference. This mock conference involved weeks of preparation, which included writing proposals and doing research on their chosen topic, before presenting their findings in front of an audience of their peers. It was also the first day of spring, and there was a feeling of joy, enthusiasm and celebration (aided by the light refreshments provided) as students presented and discussed ideas *en français* on a wide range of issues. One student began her presentation by saying how happy she felt about the arrival of spring, and actually sang a song before delving into her presentation. (See Appendix L for the “program” drawn up for this activity).

These types of activities seemed quite popular among the peripheral group of participants some of whom shared similar stories. For example, Maigret reported that one of his favourite activities involved organizing debates in his upper-year courses (3rd and 4th year), as these students were fairly fluent. To
him, witnessing these students – many of whom had never been to a francophone country or region – arguing, debating as if it was their own language: “…that is to me a great joy. That brings tears to my eyes. And I’ve seen some absolutely amazing debates in my classes, and that’s certainly, really certainly high moments.”

**Communicative-Experiential Learning Activities**

*Using authentic material in the classroom*

Instructors also try as much as possible to incorporate the use of authentic material in their classrooms. Following are some examples:

**“Les pommes bios /non bios” (Organic/non-organic apples).** One of the most engaging activities that I witnessed was Alice’s lesson *Les Pommes Bios/non bios* (organic and non-organic apples). Not only was this an excellent example of a well-designed lesson plan, it was also a great example of experiential-communicative learning in the classroom. The objective of the lesson was to get students to share their opinion and to listen to that of others on a particular topic – in this case, organic and non-organic foods. Alice begins the lesson with her usual “hook” which is meant to “accrocher” or grab students’ attention and interests, by trying to tap into their lived experience/prior knowledge as well as their imagination. First, she walks around the class with a bag and invites students to guess its content(s). With as much enthusiasm as she can muster, the instructor encourages students to asks a series of questions to which she responds “oui” [yes] or “non” [no] accompanied by the appropriate/exaggerated gestures (i.e. nodding or shaking her head). It so happens that Alice has brought in some organic and non-organic apples. She divides the class into small groups and provides each group with two apples (labelled 1 and 2), a knife (reminding them to use with caution) gloves, some writing paper. She advises the groups to assign various roles for its members (e.g. note-taker, reporter, moderator etc.). Their task is to: pay attention to the apples (appearance, shape, size, color); they were then required to taste the apples and finally, guess which of them was organic or non-organic, and to give reasons for their answers. Each group then presented its findings to the whole class… Alice ended the lesson with a closing activity where students would have a general discussion on the topic, based on their experience. *(See captioned pictures, video clip)*

**“Mi piace la Nutella!” (“I Love Nutella!”).** One of the peripheral participating instructors described a similar activity that he would regularly perform in his 1st year/beginner-level Italian courses, in order to teach vocabulary and mannerisms surrounding food in Italian language and culture. He would
bring in a jar of Nutella and some slices of bread to the classroom and have students volunteer to taste it and he would ask them in Italian: *Ti piace la nutella?*

**Une défile de mode (A fashion show).** Along with the various learning activities described above, there were some other activities that were quite unique – for example, Yannick’s *défilé de mode* (fashion show). At the end of the previous class, the instructor had made students aware of this activity and posted some of the relevant vocabulary on the Intranet to supplement the textbook. For this activity, everyone - students and instructor - stood in a semi-circle. The instructor also participated in the activity. Then students all took turns describing the clothing of someone in the group (in French, of course) and then others would try to identify who it was, based on that description. This was an interactive, authentic and fun way of getting students to apply and practice the use of the various grammatical structures as well as the related vocabulary (including colours, items of clothing…) that they had been learning. Based on the frequent bursts of laughter and the general atmosphere that prevailed during the activity (and throughout the whole lesson), it is clear that the students found this activity quite amusing, enjoyable, and useful too, for engaging in conversation about a subject which many of them found quite exciting – Parisian fashion.

**Integrating the Arts**

*Audio-visual recordings, movies, documentaries, music, poetry, ads*

Movies, songs, ads and audio-visual recordings of native speakers’ real conversations form part of the many resources that participants considered to be authentic material; these are generally accessible through the Internet or formed part of the instructors’ own collection of materials. For example, Amélie brought in some videos (featuring various francophone artists, performers, comedians etc.) that students were encouraged to borrow, and take home to view at their leisure. French movies are particularly popular as instructional tools for helping students get a real appreciation of the language and culture and five out of the six core participants reported that they try and fit in a movie in class during the course of the semester. Pamela and Sitelle both described a common practice where students are required to write down words / phrases or expressions that resonate with them or that stand out to them while viewing the movie. In addition to helping them make personal connections, this process helps students retain some of the vocabulary, and ultimately generate healthy whole class discussions afterwards. Yannick used songs, poetry and videos to introduce students to certain aspects of French culture and to help them grasp certain grammatical structures.
As I recall, Alice devoted her penultimate class to the viewing of a French language film through a process that was quite interesting and democratic. Having informed students of her intention to show a film in class, the instructor presented the titles and a brief summary of a few that she had in mind. She then asked students to suggest other films that they deemed suitable; a synopsis of all the films was posted on the Intranet (Blackboard); taking 5 to 10 minutes towards the end of a subsequent class, Alice asked students to “vote” for the film of their choice… Students took the whole activity quite seriously and did their utmost to encourage their peers to vote for a particular film (the one that they had suggested); this was all done in the spirit of fun and anticipation.

Dancing, singing and reciting poetry

In addition to using media, instructors also encourage students to showcase their own personal / cultural talent. In one of the classes, a student volunteered to instruct his peers (in French) how to do the bhangra – a traditional dance from India. Students delightfully participated in this activity, which involved lots of movement, fun and excitement. We will also recall Sitelle going to class with her guitar “to sing a song about the passé compose [past tense] to her students” and to demonstrate the use of, or difference between certain verb tenses. In their focus group, the students spoke about how much they appreciated this, and the other unique ways of acquiring a grammatical concept, which could sometimes be quite elusive.

Conférenciers invités: Guest speakers

Several participants also spoke about the relevance of inviting guest speakers to their classes, so that students can get to listen to and interact with “native” or functionally bilingual or competent speakers of the target language. Some instructors reported that they have invited francophones (authors, actors, fellow teachers) to speak to students and to do short presentations in their classes. Some instructors spoke enthusiastically about these special moments in their classes. For example, Yannick shared fond memories of having invited an author from Montreal to visit her class and the tremendous thrill this was for students. She reported that students became so engaged in the discussion and had so many questions for the author, that they decided to continue the conversation after class at a local restaurant. A year later it so happens that this particular author had suffered an untimely death and two of the students went to Montreal to interview his widow for their undergraduate research project.

Instructors also spoke about inviting former students who had graduated from the program to come to their classes to speak to their students. This was particularly common among instructors who
were involved in the teacher education program. For example, Alice invited a graduate of the program, who had been teaching core French at a high school for the past two years, to speak to the teacher-candidates who were just about to graduate. The guest, accompanied by her 6-month old baby gave an informal talk; everyone sat on the floor in a circle and listened while the guest told stories about her experiences as a teacher, offered some helpful advice and words of encouragement etc… the session was quite interactive as students repeatedly expressed their gratitude for her taking the time to talk to them and for the opportunity to get answers to some of their burning questions...

**Reflective Practice and Honouring Silence**

*The art of silence.* So far, I have presented a number of activities, which require some form of interaction in terms of physical movement, role-play, laughter, debates and other similar activities which involve engagement of the mind and body. However, amid the fun and games there were also periods of silence. Given that one of the main goals of CLT is to encourage students to speak and practice their language skills, one would wonder: Is there any space or time for silence? As some of the instructor-participants pointed out, it was sometimes necessary to allow spaces for silence where students could reflect, gather their thoughts and not always being expected to automatically “give back” all the time.

Yannick shared that she found moments of silence very important both from a linguistic and from a classroom management point of view. She explained that silence was useful in helping her “manage” large classes. I recall that after one of my observation visits, the instructor and I noticed that there always seemed to be a profound period of silence whenever students first get into groups to do an assigned activity.

Patrice also spoke about taking the time to remind her students, especially student-teachers to practice the art of reflection and honouring silence:

And I talk to the students about that all the time, especially during presentations. One of the things they will do initially is that they’ll ask the students a question and before the students have time to actually take in the question, and reflect on it and think of how it feels in here [pointing to her heart], they’re immediately jumping in to answer the question… And I’d say: ‘honour the silence! Let people have a chance to reflect on what it is that they’re actually feeling…as opposed to, from here up [from the neck up: the head]…

Indeed, Patrice tries to help her students understand that, as hooks affirms, “we may learn from spaces of silence as well as spaces of speech” (1994, 174).
Journal writing and language portfolios. In addition to keeping their own journals, some of the instructors also encourage their students to do journal writing and creative stories (Maigret, Patrice, Pamela). Instructors also encourage students to reflect on themselves by producing language portfolios which include a documentation of their experiences as learners as well as artefacts and other representations of who they are as learners, who they are becoming as learners (an in some cases teachers). In the focus groups, students spoke about the creative writing assignments that they were assigned in some of their courses as being a great learning experience and one which really helped them connect with the language, course content, and with themselves, on many different levels (see Carrasco & Piccardo, 2009; Piccardo, 2006).

Discussion and Summary

Many of the activities described so far in this chapter involved small group work and are in keeping with several of the concepts associated with holistic and communicative approaches to language teaching and learning. These include: positive interdependence, active learning, cooperation, joy (Johnson & Johnson, 1994, 1999; Johnson, Johnson & Holubec, 1998; Miller, 2007, 2010). These are just a few of the wide range of activities that take place in the classrooms on an on-going basis. Professors recognise that in order to fully engage in their learning, students must enjoy what they do and they make it their goal to facilitate this in every way that they can, notwithstanding the many other factors which may affect the flow. The following quotations attest to this notion:

But here, it’s really easy. And sometimes, what I find interesting, is some groups…are so much into it, they don’t realise that other groups are finished, and they are still talking, so we have to wait until they’re done, and we can move on to a different activity (Louise)

This idea of “forgetting” - i.e. being “so into it that they don’t realize that the other groups are finished” is an example of the characteristics of “flow” and what Csikszentmihalyi (1990) describes as a psychological state where there is such intense focus, that self-consciousness disappears. As Yannick notes,

I think it gives them self-confidence and it makes French a medium, a tool to get somewhere, which sometimes they only see as an end. But it has to become a tool to get somewhere; it has to become something that they need.
Physical Configuration of the Classroom

Along with the various activities described above, I also observed that the physical configuration of the classroom also plays an important role in helping facilitate engagement in the classroom. Some of the instructors spoke about their preference for having students sit in a circle, a horseshoe or at least an arc in the classroom, instead of the traditional rows. Both Amélie and Maigret for example, explain that a more flexible seating arrangement allows them to move to the students and listen to them more carefully. These participants also think it’s important to make sure students can turn their chairs around in order to facilitate movement and agility for getting into small groups. Amélie, in particular, made reference to the limitations with space and movement in many of the classrooms on her campus:

It’s hard when you have a classroom, where for example the chairs don’t move and we need to have a dialogue. It’s hard to look back and really interact with their classmates. So I think the physical environment needs to be one that invites this kind of interaction, so I try to as soon as my students come in, make them put a ‘U’ shape or at least have them face one another so that it can be more…

Also, in all the classes that I observed, there was always at least one activity which involved having students sit together in small groups or clusters. This, for many of the instructors, is important in order to encourage interaction, conversation and hence facilitate participation.

However, not all instructors paid the same level of attention to the physical layout or insisted upon any particular arrangement in their classrooms. As a matter of fact, in some of the classes - Pamela, Yannick, Sitelle, Louise, Alice - the students generally sat in the traditional rows / columns until it became time to get into groups for a particular activity. Some instructors maintain that although sitting arrangements may have a role to play, it is the atmosphere that the teacher establishes in the class that makes a difference. Alice captures the essence of this discussion as follows:

I really do think it’s what you make out of your situation, or how you perceive it, versus what it is. Because you can always say that there should be better air conditioning or the lighting is not good, or the chairs aren’t comfortable enough. If you start to rely on those kinds of things to make your situation better, I think that’s where you start on a slippery slope whereby you set expectations that can never be met. So I think that, you know, each class is different, some students might actually thrive sitting across from one another; some students might thrive sitting in a circle; some students might thrive sitting in rows. I think too, you can change it up. You can, depending on what activity you’re doing, you can also change the configuration of the class, if you so choose.

An important case in point is Yannick’s classroom. She teaches in what she jokingly referred to as her “ugly classroom”: a small, oddly-shaped classroom with no windows… however, she is happy that
she has somehow managed to make it work. To her, the important thing is that she did not complain about it to her students. She believes that if she had, the atmosphere in her classroom would have been a lot different…

**Instructors’ “spatial anchoring” and body language in the classroom**

In addition to the way they set up their classrooms to facilitate student learning, I also noticed that the instructors generally seemed quite comfortable in their classrooms; they were often smiling, making light jokes and laughing with their students. Instructors’ movement in the classroom (i.e. where / how they positioned themselves) was also interesting to observe. I noticed that although some of them moved around more than others, none of the instructors remained “anchored” at the front of the class. Many of them walked around, or actually moved towards students when they were speaking or asking a question. During the activities they tended to circulate around the class, stopping at the different groups, listening to the students, asking or answering questions or sometimes joining in the conversations. This “spatial anchoring”, according to Borg (2007) refers to instructors’ location in the teaching space and environment, and affirms that where instructors stand while teaching has an impact on learning.

Furthermore, how instructors choose to use the environment could also have an impact (Nixon et al., 2010). Sitelle’s example of the obstructing pole in the lecture hall and deciding to move the class to one side demonstrates instructors’ awareness of the effective use of space and the environment. Nixon et al. note that,

…both the teaching environment and the [instructors’] movement in and around the classroom can help or hinder student engagement and learning. Thus, factors such as spatial anchoring can be used to help students recognize what is expected of them at various points in a lecture, whilst we must also be aware that cluttered rooms with many distractions may work against maximising learning development (2010, p. 498)

**Reverence for the Natural Environment**

**A breath of fresh air?**

Some of the participants have also found alternative ways of dealing with constraints caused by the physical configuration of their classrooms. During the focus groups, Amélie’s students spoke with much delight about the few occasions when they were treated to a class outside of the regular classroom. I asked Amélie about this aspect of her teaching practice and she explained as follows:
Here in [the city] it’s hard, especially during the winter, but yes, a couple of instances, and when the weather was really nice, we had an interesting discussion topic, and I took my teaching outside of the classroom, so in nature we sat around a table, drinking a coffee and having our lunch and what we would have discussed in the classroom we did outside.

Amélie further expounds on the joys and challenges of taking her class outside:

Sometimes I’d take my students outside just for the oral part of the course. It’s harder to teach when you have to teach a specific grammar point when you need the board, you need the Power Point. But in an informal, discussion like that, nature could be a wonderful classroom setting, as also the community with the service-learning course. It was an opportunity for students exactly to see that learning happens at all times. It doesn’t have to be in the classroom.

Other core participants also expressed their views about the idea of taking their classes outside. Some of them felt that there are sometimes more challenges than joys involved in this endeavour. Sitelle, for example shared that inasmuch as she would like to, it would be quite difficult to “just pick up and go outside” even if it’s a nice day; as very often their lessons have been planned to incorporate the use of other pedagogical tools which are contained within the classroom; therefore, the idea of going outside would require a drastic change of plans, especially as many lessons are planned with the intention of using technology. In addition, some participants made reference to previous experiences (in primary/secondary school) and the tremendous amount of “red tape” involved in organizing field trips which involved taking students outside of a certain radius of the school compound implies much more – getting parental permission, etc. Nonetheless, some of the participants suggested that they could perhaps have “nice days” lesson plans which would allow them to take advantage of the great outdoors more often.

**The language of ecological literacy**

Quite apart from taking the students outside, some instructors have incorporated aspects of nature and the environment as part of their thematic exploration in their language courses. For example, in one of her classes, Yannick did a unit on the preservation of nature. She introduced this current issue by showing a video featuring an award winning song entitled “Il faut que tu respire” (breathe), which also served as an introduction to new grammatical structures – the subjunctive tense. She had the students work in small groups, followed by whole class discussions on the message in the song relating to environmental sustenance. Yannick described this experience as follows:

We just had a whole unit on nature and preserving the environment, so talking about what’s going on right now, and again, getting them, at one point to discuss in groups. “Why is it good? Why is it
bad? What should we do?” So, it’s a theme; we’re talking about the environment, but it’s also linked to something new in grammar that they need to use to talk about this particular theme…So the song was some kind of an introduction. So you see this little girl running around in the park and she is having a lot of fun – but then we realise that it’s actually a theme park, and she gets out of there, and the next kid, he awaits his turn, and nature has disappeared. That’s the message.

And although this message relating to the disappearance of nature may similarly describe the reality within the walls of the university, I found it important to at least make honourable mention of these references to nature, as described above. First of all, the mere act of taking the students outside for their language class introduces another interconnection between holistic education and language teaching that emerged in this research. Over the past two decades, scholars have increasingly made reference to the importance of reawakening our awareness to the natural world around us and making it an inclusive aspect of educational practice (Berry et al., 1991; Johnson, 2011; Merton, 1985; Moffett, 1994). More specifically, scholars such as Orr (1992, 1994) and Moffett (1994) make reference to the need to connect education to a wider context that includes the universe as the ultimate reference point. Orr further states that “all education in environmental education” (1994, p. 12); this is among the first of his six principles that he has outlined for rethinking education in alignment with nature. As demonstrated by the students’ expression of this sense of joy and delight for the simple act of going outside for a class, there seems to be a real yearning for this type of connection. This reflects Miller’s affirmation that “…for older students and ourselves, we reawaken the sense of awe that we tended to lose in our mechanistic world” (2007, p. 176).

Moreover, the brief description of Yannick’s lesson above indicates how she has incorporated an awareness of the language of the environment to her students – through grammar, song and dialogue. This brings to the fore Orr’s (1992) idea of ecological literacy, which advocates the need to raise students’ consciousness of the issues, raise relevant questions, and help them make connections that are integral with the environment.

**The Use of Technology and its Impact in the L2 Classroom**

As both Amélie and Sitelle attest in the above scenario with regards to conducting classes outside, we saw that if technology was deemed necessary for the lesson, then that would supersede the idea of going outside. Throughout the course of my data collection, I noticed that there was more and more reference being made to technology. The teachers, in their personal interviews discussed the use (or
usefulness) of technology. In the following sections, I present some of the participants’ reflections on the issue.

The Intranet

All the core participants made use of technology to varying degrees. As is the case with many university or post-secondary courses, FSL instructors utilized the Intranet (for example Blackboard), to provide students with a variety of course-related documents and resources. These basically include course outlines/descriptions, assignment details, homework, required or additional readings, links to relevant websites etc. that students are able to access and / or refer to as required. Instructors also used the Intranet on a regular basis for course administration purposes - for example for communicating with students on an individual basis and for disseminating information to all students enrolled in the course.

Along with this basic usage, some instructors, notably Pamela and Yannick, made it a regular (pedagogical) practice, to post test review information or a preview of the lesson to be covered in the next class, so that students have the choice of coming to class prepared.

In addition to the Intranet, I also witnessed the regular use of the Internet and other forms of technology in the language classrooms. The majority of the core participants considered PowerPoint to be quite useful as an instructional tool for preparing and delivering their lessons. For example, Yannick, Pamela and Sitelle share that along with the ability to visually display key concepts related to the topic being taught, also embedded in their presentations are relevant images such as audio or video clips and other media featuring songs, ads, and other imagery. These are in turn made available to students on the Intranet where they also post homework and assignments that students can access before and after class. Another noteworthy point that Yannick made about her appreciation of PowerPoint is that it helps to keep
her organized while at the same time allowing some flow and flexibility in that she can easily keep track of where she left off while answering students’ questions or if for any reason she needs to diverge.

Amélie, in addition to showing videos and films on a regular basis, spoke about how the use of I clickers in her class, renders the lessons more exciting and strongly believes that this tool helps to enhance student engagement. Pamela also started an experiential learning component in her class, through the use of technology. There is definitely a focus on students’ exploration of a different kind of landscape: the media. Through this experiential learning component of her course, she encourages students to do some independent learning through web-based research - by finding out more about (or for) themselves through interaction with various media such as Internet, TV etc. Unlike the other instructors Alice does not use PowerPoint; her use of technology seems to be on a strictly “as needed” basis: from the old-fashioned overhead projectors - for a quick demonstration of certain grammatical or linguistic constructs - to the use of the more sophisticated LCD projectors, for showing French language films and of course a French-version episode of Degrassi (her favourite TV show – reruns of which she still possesses on VHS Tapes).

**Virtual “authentic” connections?**

Louise, for example spoke at length about her use of technology (particularly the Internet) to virtually connect students with authentic resources and cultural artefacts (museums, monuments, historical landmarks, etc.). To her, this helps them acquire a better understanding of the culture, which goes hand in hand with language. She also mentioned using technology as a way of avoiding the monotony of doing repetitive grammar exercises during class. She explained that access to online activities and exercise could be quite useful for students who wish to improve their grammar-translation skills – or for the more “mechanical” aspect of language teaching as opposed to taking up the valuable class time to do so.

Not all the participants fully embrace the idea of using technology in the language classroom. Dino, one of the peripheral participants cautions against teachers’ over-reliance on this practice as follows:

In Athens, in the academy… there is an inscription there written by Socrates – in education, the end result is to know thyself… The Socrates dialogue is dying… in part because of technology, because more and more of the teaching load is done in secondary sources through machines and things of that nature.
In the above quotation, Dino suggests that too much dependence on technology can result in the loss of “dialogue” between teacher and student which is so important in the language teaching and learning environment. In the context of my research, from the participants’ narratives as well as my own observation, the teachers themselves tend to maintain the primary source in that a substantial amount of the teaching load was still being administered through them.

Summary

In this section, I highlighted another dimension of teaching in the post-secondary language classroom, featuring the use of information technology. There is no doubt that technology has become a part of our everyday reality and the language classroom is no exception. As has been demonstrated in this research, instructors have embraced technology and have found effective ways of integrating its use in their classrooms. Many of the instructors use PowerPoint as an instructional tool in their lessons; some of them also facilitate various computer-based activities which are meant to enhance students’ learning through further interaction with the language. One gets the sense that its use is geared primarily towards enhancing the learning process by making a variety of resources available to students. As most of the participants indicated, technology provides a great way of bringing the francophone world into the classroom. (See Huang’s (2000) study on computer simulation in multimedia lab). Some empirical research has been done on ways in which technology can enhance and not hinder holistic or communicative teaching and learning in educational settings. (Carrasco & Piccardo, 2009; Miller et. al. 2005). Of particular relevance is the work of Selia Karsen (2005), who sheds light on this on-going debate in her doctoral research, which focuses on the various ways in which holistic and innovative practices can be effectively integrated into teaching a computer course in the community college context. Carrasco and Piccardo (2009) and Freiesen (2011), while acknowledging the inevitable place of technology in today’s world - and learning environments - remind us of the need to pay attention to the idea of what Freiesen refers to as “embodied presence”. Freiesen affirms that:

The abstract, functional, and optimized spaces of the computer screen also have their place in education. The very interchangeability, renewability, and convenience of these spaces give them an educational value that is in many ways easy to recognize and affirm. However, they should not be foregrounded at the expense of places and experiences of the embodied, particular, and non-interchangeable. It is to these places and these experiences that we are repeatedly and unavoidably forced to return, by our own bodies and through our relations with others -- even as technological experience and terminology become even more pervasive. These embodied places and experiences by virtue of their elusive ambiguity, too often escape notice and attention…it is important to focus on mute and unobtrusive aspects of embodied presence (2011, p.166).
Beyond the classroom: Experiential and Community-Based Learning

Campus Community Connections

Along with the in-class activities, some instructors facilitated or encouraged their students to participate in a number of events on campus. The students themselves were also eager to talk about their involvement in these events during the focus groups. (Some also expressed their regrets for not being able to attend due to other commitments). I was fortunate to attend a few of these events, which took place during my data collection, which I find useful to highlight.

**Movie nights.** Usually organized by the students involved in the language social club, movie night is a regular feature at one of the campuses. Sitelle, for example encouraged her students to attend, as it was scheduled during her regularly class hours; given that I intended to observe that class anyway, I decided to attend the movie *La vie en rose* featuring the life of famous French singer Edith Piaf. This event was fairly well-attended; students nestled in the comfortable sofas in the lounge munching on the various snacks provided by the organizers, such as popcorn (feeling quite at home). This was an opportunity to participate in, as well as observe activities outside of the classroom. Besides, I really enjoyed the film, and later showed the same movie in my own class.

One of the Spanish instructors also organizes a weekly Spanish conversation club, where students enrolled in his course have the option of viewing a video or a movie in Spanish. I was invited to attend one of these sessions. Four students, their instructor and myself viewed the film which was entitled *Habana Blues* about two Cuban musicians. During the movie, the instructor would occasionally “pause” the film to explain certain words and expressions as well as their cultural significance. Following the film, there began conversation in Spanish on the various themes and (cultural) issues raised in the movie. In this warm friendly atmosphere, (again with the accompanying snacks such as popcorn), students get the opportunity to converse (with their peers and instructor) and practice their language skills in a more informal setting.

**Au theatre (to the theatre) – The Italian play:** I also witnessed a full-fledged theatrical production during the data collection period: an adaptation of the Italian play *Non titti I dadri vengono per nuocere* which was held at a large auditorium on one of the campuses (at City University). I had the privilege of being among the large audience made up of a microcosm of the community; along with students and professors, friends and family of the student actors, as well as several members of the Canadian-Italian community were also present. Staged three times throughout the semester, this annual production, which
has become a tradition of a 4th year Italian studies course, consists of a combination of comedy-performance as a tool for teaching language and culture. (See video footage).

**Francophone Community Connections**

One of the most exciting discoveries in this exploratory research inquiry into FSL teaching in the post-secondary context was the opportunity to document and describe some exciting initiatives relating to service and experiential learning. Apart from internships in schools, which usually form part of the requirements for candidates enrolled in the teacher education program, there is very little opportunity for post-secondary students (in a non-francophone city or environment) to practice their language skills or to interact with native francophone or other competent speakers of the language. Nevertheless, many of the instructors also found creative ways of facilitating students’ involvement beyond the classroom setting.

*Amélie’s service-learning course: The first of its kind*

I recruited Amélie as a participant in the study after having heard (through snowballing effect) that she had started this wonderful initiative in her advanced fourth year oral French course, in which she adopted a holistic approach to her teaching; this involved service-learning. It was the first one of its kind at the university and I felt that I had discovered a gold mine! During her first interview, Amélie spoke passionately about the service-learning course that she had developed. Amélie describes the course as follows:

So students spend three hours [at a francophone organisation in the community], they offer their services; they are fully immersed in the Francophone environment, no English is allowed there and the most important part actually where learning happens is when they- after those experiences- critically reflect on them. Ok? So reflection is a key part in every service-learning course. And this is actually the first - the only one from what I know, it’s the only language course in all three campuses at [City University]. So this is I think, another method or approach, or strategy to teaching where students actually live French. They’re not taught French, they live French, every week whether they want it or not, and they love it. They love it!

During the follow-up interview with Amélie, she mentioned that in their respective papers at the end of the course, some students described this experience of going out into the community and being actively engaged in that activity, as a “spiritual and moral fulfilment”. She went on to give examples of the benefits of service-learning, its impact on students, and how it can make a difference to the lives of others in the community:
They really felt engaged…not only as students but as citizens. So this was an extension and it was about going out in the community and helping for example, newly arriving [immigrants] to find work, or women victims of abuse helping how to regain control of their lives through focus groups and discussions and workshops. It was a way for students to be engaged as students, as citizens, as persons, as individuals who are contributing to the community. It’s saying my service-learning course was maybe the best illustration of this.

Sharing the service-learning experience

One of the components of the service-learning course included a 30-minute oral presentation, during which students reported on their service-learning experience before an audience of their peers, their professor, and the representatives of the francophone community organizations, with which they had been affiliated. Much to my delight, I was also invited join in this exciting classroom event that in itself was a real celebration, complete with food. After having listened to the exciting stories that students shared regarding their experiences, the conversation continued over a potluck where everyone brought something to share. In the next section, I present a review of this event.

![Student presents on service learning]

Figure 21. Students’ oral presentations on service-learning experience

In their oral presentations, students described their experiences with the service-learning: their anxiety or feelings of insecurities, overcoming their fears, the joys that come with actually being made to feel welcome as a part of the community, while at the same time improving their linguistic and communicative competence. During their service-learning, students reported to have experienced a variety of emotions. First, they spoke about their enthusiasm for having the opportunity to interact with Francophones and improving their French language skills in the process. However, they felt anxious about what this experience was going to be like; they feared that they would find themselves in a very stiff, professional environment. However, they were all pleased to report that for the most part, « l’atmosphère était beaucoup plus différente… très ouverte, détendue… » (the environment was much different… very open and relaxed). Students were paired up to do their service-learning at four different
francophone organizations across the city, and were involved in a variety of different tasks. These included: working with young Francophone children, volunteering at women’s shelters, helping new comers to Canada, as well as an organization involved in environmental sustenance. Over a period of three months, students spent three hours a week helping out at the organizations to which they were assigned.

During their oral presentations on the last day of the course, students described some of these activities which, in themselves could be considered holistic in many ways. For example one group described an activity which involved helping raise young children’s awareness of the natural environment, to understand and practice the three R’s (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle), as well as the importance of eating balanced meals. One of the activities was quite experiential in that they actually cooked « une soupe saine » (a healthy soup) with the help of the children. The service-learning students described how these activities helped them connect with the young children, as at first it was a bit difficult communicating with them in their native language; this required that they listen very carefully to the children, but eventually, through patience and perseverance, they were able to overcome the various barriers to communication, and ended up understanding each other very well.

Other Experiential or Community-based Learning

In addition to the service-learning course experience described above, many of the participants spoke about various other initiatives through which they facilitate/encourage experiential learning and community involvement for students enrolled in their courses. They all repeatedly stressed the importance of immersion in the community and made a lot of reference to adopting a teaching approach that is conducive to these activities. As a matter of fact, many of them had, to varying degrees, facilitated similar components in their courses or have encouraged students to pursue similar paths in their language learning. In order to encourage active learning, instructors try to keep students abreast with the current events or activities which are taking place on campus and in the larger francophone community. They try to connect language to the way it’s really used, by talking about the news, about possibilities for language enrichment, about Franco-Ontarians. If they know of people who have been to explore and discovery programs, they would ask them about that and make students aware that those are available. Occasionally, they provide students with the relevant links to find out more about how they can take part in these activities. They also share with students, information relating to their own interactions with the Francophone community.
The following scenarios describe how instructors have facilitated various undertakings through which students could find relevance to their language learning and make it a much more authentic and meaningful experience.

**Louise’s campus-wide curricular activities**

Louise spoke extensively about her involvement in helping to organize and secure funding for various curricula initiatives relating to experiential learning. These involve getting students engaged in various events on campus. These events were designed not only for students enrolled in FSL courses, but also other students from arts and science or other programs at the university who already spoke French. These students were invited to come and talk about a variety of topics of interest to them in French. Louise further explains:

There will be a few events on campus… We will invite speakers who work closely with the consulates - because we have very good relationships with the French consulates, Belgian, Bureau de Québec - and we’re trying to get people to come on campus and discuss francophone literatures. You know, we want a lot of diversity so that they [the students] are aware of the francophone milieu.

Louise also encourages students in her classes to get involved in other activities outside of the classroom, through the sharing of their various experiences in the course and French learning in general. One such event is an orientation for high school students, which is held on campus every year, where she makes use of the opportunity to invite her upper-year undergraduate students to “help with guiding the students, sitting down and talking about their experience in French at the University…”

**Yannick’s affiliation with the TFT**

Yannick is also a strong advocate of community-based learning, and believes in the idea of giving students a sense of belonging in the community. Following is of the one the ways in which she goes about facilitating this:

I always, if I can, pick a play that [the French theatre] is offering in their program, and I make it part of the curriculum where students, to get 5% of their grades, have to go see a play in French. And originally, again the idea is to show them that there’s a French theatre [...in town], that there are actors, who actually make a living being actors, in French... and there are people who actually go and see the play. You’re not the only ones learning French, but there’s a whole community out there. Always this idea of making them realise that they are part of a community of people in the city who speak French, and then it goes beyond [the City] of course, but here at the local level, there is a community that’s out there.
Incorporating these initiatives into the curriculum is not always an easy process: It required a fair amount of negotiation and commitment. Yannick explains that the first time she had instituted this option of going to see a play at the local French theatre into the curriculum, only three students went, much to her disappointment. Therefore, in order to encourage students to make use of this unique opportunity, she decided to make it 5% of their grade as an added incentive to students so that it would be “worth their while”. In order to make the experience even more relevant and meaningful, she would actually pick for her curriculum, a play that was being offered at the theatre; she had also negotiated with theatre and there was an agreement in place whereby the students would get a special rate, whenever it was convenient for them to go and see the play.

Yannick reports that for the last few years it has worked very well and has actually transformed students’ attitude towards the whole idea. She reported that although at first some students would express their hesitation and adopt the “well-I’ll-go-because-I-have-to” attitude, they would usually come away with a much different attitude once they had seen the play. As Yannick explains:

I have students who sometimes say to me, ‘ok well, I’ll go, because I have to’. And then they come back and they say, “I loved it – it was fabulous! I have never seen a play in French before, or I had never [even] seen a play before! And I didn’t realize that’s what it was and I actually understood. And I went with my boyfriend who doesn’t speak French, and there were subtitles when we went, and he actually liked it! And you know what, it was the anniversary of our being together for one year!

The above excerpt clearly demonstrates how this teacher seeks to transform students’ appreciation for the practical use of the language; it also shows how these experiences inspire in them that awe and wonder that is often spoken about in holistic education - something that we freely express as children, but lose as we get older. These sorts of activities serve to rekindle that childlike interest in young adults, and help them find new purpose in their lives and in their surroundings.

Like Louise and the other participants, Yannick also tries to get students involved in various events on campus where the target language is used. For example, during the data collection period, Yannick helped organise a symposium that was being held (on behalf of a francophone country) where French was the main language of communication. This event was covered by local media and an article was to appear in the local francophone newspapers. Yannick made her students aware of the symposium in her classes and encouraged them to attend. Some students in her upper classes also volunteered to assist in the proceedings. As Yannick explained:
So it’s one way of showing them that French is – first of all, for those that were at the symposium – one of the languages of communication during the symposium, and that it’s something that’s going to be related in the news. So that what’s happening on our campus is not totally separated from what happens in real life, because that’s being written about in the news. And for that particular class, I think it is important because they are at a level where it is very difficult to read, but we do reading comprehension in class, and this is an exercise that I want them to be doing – reading in French regularly. So not only is it a way of improving their skills, it is also way for them to realise that they are part of a community and that things are being written about this community in the language of communication; it’s not something artificial, it’s something that exists outside of the classroom.

In his upper-level university French courses, Maigret also incorporated into the curriculum various components in which the goal was “pour se lancer dans le milieu francophone” [to encourage students to immerse themselves into their local francophone community]. This was facilitated by raising students’ awareness of the number of events (related to arts and culture) taking place in the community. Over the years, there have been some exciting projects undertaken by students based on these opportunities. These include interviews with prominent members of the francophone community such as writers, university administrators, entrepreneurs, musicians, and the like. Students were then expected to prepare a “compte rendu” [report] which they would later share in class through oral presentations. One year, a group of students proudly presented a documentary film featuring the first francophone daycare, which had been opened in their city in the late 1960s.

**Experiential Learning Through Peer Sharing**

In an effort to alleviate some of the challenges associated with field trips, participants have found other pedagogically valuable ways of helping students engage in authentic situations where they can maximise their chances of successfully developing their language skills. For example, Pamela also worked collaboratively with other FSL instructors on campus to initiate experiential-learning projects which involved peer sharing; students from 1st and 2nd year courses were teamed with students from the upper-year FSL courses (3rd and 4th year) to practice their language communication skills and to exchange ideas about their experiences…This process allowed students to learn from each other, about each other and about themselves. In addition to encouraging real communication, these activities serve to motivate students while allowing them to gain confidence and autonomy with the language; it is also useful in helping them to actively reflect upon their language learning process.
Some Challenges

Despite the benefits of field trips and other related activities, some participants spoke of obstacles, which hinder their (or their students’) full engagement. One participant in particular argued that despite their many benefits, integrating these activities in her FSL courses may not always be appropriate; she expressed her concerns about various factors – mostly related to time constraints – both in terms of instructional as well as students’ own “real-life” commitments. As she explained, students in the lower-level courses - that she currently teaches - are more in need of in-class exposure to the communicative aspect of the language (for which they are really being tested), rather than being “dragged off somewhere… They’re desperate for time anyway in the classroom and contextualizing them for things like that is often difficult”. She further notes that although field trips may be interesting:

…that would depend on how the students felt about it… what they thought was more important. Sometimes also, those can be great experiences but not as good learning experiences. And what they need the most is one-on-one time here in French, communicating and having their own chance to do, so it depends very much how the activity is set up.

In addition, some participants also made reference to the problem of proximity as many of the places of interest may not be in the immediate vicinity of the campus. (As noted above, even the students engaged in service-learning found that their placements were too far away). Another participant also cited lack of funding for French cultural programs noting that, “there is also not as much cultural money in the French program as there is in the Italian program at [her campus] for example. They get money from the Italian government and a number of consulates and they’re able to do a bit more.”

Facilitation of Exchange and Study-abroad Programs

Many universities offer exchange or study abroad programs where students spend time in an environment in which they can immerse themselves and/or gain experience in their area of interest. In particular, students in language programs are encouraged to take advantage of the opportunity to visit, and spend time in a community / country where the target language is spoken. Participants in my research spoke passionately about the great benefits that can be derived from this experience, which they felt should constitute an essential component of language learning programs. As many of the participants noted, not only are they useful in helping students acquire and maintain their language skills, these exchange or study abroad programs are also great for social interaction and lifelong learning. Throughout the semester, instructors highly recommend and actively promote exchange programs by providing students with the various resources where they can find information about these programs. They also
facilitate the process by offering students assistance in the application process, by helping them obtain any required documentation such as updating their resumes (in French), providing letters of recommendation and by helping students prepare in various ways.

Participants reported to have had some form of involvement in exchange or study abroad programs either in the capacity as teachers, or even as coordinators. Instructors encourage students to participate, if possible, in the Summer Abroad Program offered by the university. As a matter of fact, several of the instructors were pleased to report that a number of their students had applied, and were accepted to participate in one of these programs. This, to them, demonstrates students’ interest beyond simply getting a credit. In order to facilitate this process, at least financially, students have the option of applying for financial assistance (through the Ontario Student Assistance Program - OSAP) or various scholarships that are made available for this purpose. However, the summer abroad program is not open to all students. Yannick, for example lamented the fact that international students were not eligible to apply to the study abroad programs at her university, although they had the option of pursuing this type of learning opportunities on their own.

Apart from the summer abroad program, instructors also encourage their students to take advantage of Explore, a federally-funded program which offers bursaries to students in order to learn French in Quebec and other regions in Canada. These bursaries go a long way in facilitating students’ travel and accommodation to French-speaking communities within Canada, for a five-week immersion. (Having been a participant in this program, I have also raised awareness of this opportunity in my language classrooms and over the years, many students have benefited from this language and cultural learning experience). Some participants explained that they often encourage students to stay with families rather than at residence, as again this allows for a more “authentic” experience. For those students who, for various sundry reasons are unable to attend the summer abroad program or exchange programs, instructors also ensure that they are aware of other alternatives, including the conversation courses offered by the university, during the summer.

Instructors from both the core and peripheral groups emphasised the importance of immersion in helping students identify things that they can do especially in terms of maintaining a language. Maigret offers himself as an example: “And that’s why I go back to France and Quebec all the time, at least it’s a good pretext: ‘I’ve got to maintain my language skills’ [chuckle]. But indeed, you have to identify the fact that the maintenance is going to be important otherwise, you know, it’s not going to be there”. Like many of the other participants, Maigret cites music, movies, theatres and travel as effective ways in which
language and culture can be appreciated and maintained. He adds that he encourages his students to try, if they can, to maintain the “social aspect of things” by keeping in touch with each other and by making French their language of choice when they speak to each other:

That’s happened. I have students who have told me, ‘I’m still in touch with so-and-so and we speak French whenever we get a chance...’ and so this is wonderful, when we hear that. But it is not always possible... people get into their careers and you know, it is not always possible to do this maintenance work, but it should be encouraged, certainly.

**Manger et Parler en Français (Eat and Speak in French)**

*Figure 22. Sharing food in classroom.*

*La bonne bouffe (Good food): Is the way to students’ hearts through their stomachs?*

It has been said that the way to a person’s heart is through the stomach. My research tends to give some credence to this dictum, as food played quite a significant role in the post-secondary language teaching-learning environment (see Figures 22 and 23). As Patrice noted: “I would also bring in food; that was very typical of the things I associated with French. I would bring in certain quiches and croissants and things like that and the kids would love that because it was something that they weren’t having in their other classes.”

For each of the focus groups, I made use of the opportunity to celebrate being together by providing participants’ with a light meal or refreshments, as a token of my appreciation for their participation. Whenever possible, I would take much pleasure in preparing some Caribbean style French-Creole food which was always well-received.

For Amélie’s last class, during the students’ final presentation of the service-learning experience, the ambiance was particularly festive: a potluck had been organized and everyone - students, the
instructor and representatives from the community organization and myself - contributed some treats that we all shared.

At her *colloque interdisciplinaire*, the aroma of fresh coffee filled the air in Louise’s 4th-year language classroom, as we were all treated to accompanying treats such as bagels, muffins, croissants, and éclairs.

For the last class, Alice organised a field trip during which students had breakfast at a local French restaurant in the vicinity, which specialised in French crepes. At the restaurant, students took pleasure in ordering from an appetizing menu featuring a mouth-watering selection of crepes. They also had the opportunity to interact with the restaurant staff, who all spoke French with the students. The following images captured the essence of this joyful event.

![Figure 23. Images of students eating and interacting.](image1.png)

Jocelyn also spoke about making it a regular feature in her class to include in the curriculum a “soirée” to a French restaurant where students could have the opportunity to “vivre en français” (live in French).

The place of food as an important element in French language and culture was also felt in some of the classrooms that I visited. Many of the textbooks feature a section on food from various francophone countries. Pamela described a very interesting scenario in her class where students became so engaged in the novel that they were studying (*Retournant de la faim* by Le Clézio), that they decided to have a sort of “cultural feast” at the end of the year, by bringing to the classroom and sharing together different food described in the novel that had typically been served to soldiers in the immediate aftermath of WWII: spam on white bread; rice cakes, chips *au poulet rôti et une pointe de thym* (roast chicken flavour with a hint of thyme), gingko nuts and muffins.

The above scenarios clearly demonstrate the extent to which students were allowed to become...
engaged and make connections to their learning. There is no doubt that food is an essential part of every culture – and French culture is no exception. (In fact, this could be said to be one of the attractions of the French culture: the fine cuisine). As Csikszentmihalyi notes: “Eating… is one of the basic pleasures built into our nervous system…people still feel most happy and relaxed at mealtimes...In every culture, the simple process of ingesting calories has been transformed with time into an art form that provides enjoyment as well as pleasure” (1990, p. 113). In addition to stimulating our taste buds and providing nourishment, the idea of food can be linked with many concepts associated with holism including fellowship, communion, community, sharing, etc. Csikszentmihalyi (1990) also makes reference to Gioacchino Rossini, composer of William Tell who is quoted as saying: “What love is to the heart, appetite is to the stomach. The stomach is the conductor that leads and livens up the great orchestra of our emotions” (p. 113). Further, in her article entitled “Eating as a Pedagogical Act: Food as a catalyst for Adult Education for Sustainability” Sumner (2008) affirms that: “Food is both central to sustainability and a catalyst for change. Eating can become a transformative learning experience by opening up the possibility of more inclusive, and more sustainable ways of life” (p. 1). Food certainly contributes to the whole experience in the FSL classroom; it goes a long way in uplifting the spirit and opening students’ minds to the different cuisine (and cultural diversity) of the Francophonie. These experiences also serve to show the premise of connectedness in holistic teaching and learning - that of engaging the whole student: mind, body, and spirit.

**Chapter Summary and Discussion**

In this chapter, I examined the various pedagogical tools that teachers employ – including techniques and strategies - in order to facilitate student learning in the post-secondary language environment. As Figure 24 demonstrates, although they may be concentrated in the classroom, these endeavours are likely to extend to other dimensions thereby exposing students to numerous other learning opportunities including: The campus-wide community; the local francophone community; regional / national exchange programs; as well as study abroad programs. This pattern brings to the fore one of the most important premises of holistic education particularly that which relates to community connections (Miller 2007, 2010). Embedded within these community connections are several interconnections, which I discovered and which have been documented and presented in this chapter. I will briefly summarize the chapter based on the activities, which had been facilitated in language courses of the core participants in this study.
The classroom is the central space where teachers and students meet and interact on a regular basis. In the first part of the chapter I tried to capture the *joie de vivre* of this vital space by presenting vignettes, which describe the various activities that teachers facilitate in order to engage students. Although each class had its own unique ambiance, I presented what I observed as a basic structure of the classes, a pattern loosely followed by the majority of participants – a warm up segment (exchanging greetings), a “main lesson” (with a specific objective in mind) and a form of “cloture” or closing exercise (leave-taking, announcements re. assignments etc.). Yannick’s newspaper reading and Alice’s *Exercices de réchauffement* illustrated ways in which teachers tried to adapt to their students’ rhythms. In an effort to break the ice and “ease” student into the lesson, instructors start their class on a warm personal note through various warm up exercises, and most importantly, what Maigret has referred to as “verbal warmth”. This attention to the way they conduct their classes by creating a space where students feel comfortable and “cared for” (Noddings, 2003, 2004) is quite congruent with holistic practices. In particular, the idea of ensuring “relaxed alertness” (Miller, 2007), coupled with this care and attention further demonstrate the importance that they place on establishing and / or maintaining rapport with their students.

I then presented the various other activities, which form the core of the lessons, and which were generally designed to help students learn in holistic ways.

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**Figure 24. From local to global: (inter)connecting the learning zones.**

The *classroom* is the central space where teachers and students meet and interact on a regular basis. In the first part of the chapter I tried to capture the *joie de vivre* of this vital space by presenting vignettes, which describe the various activities that teachers facilitate in order to engage students. Although each class had its own unique ambiance, I presented what I observed as a basic structure of the classes, a pattern loosely followed by the majority of participants – a warm up segment (exchanging greetings), a “main lesson” (with a specific objective in mind) and a form of “cloture” or closing exercise (leave-taking, announcements re. assignments etc.). Yannick’s newspaper reading and Alice’s *Exercices de réchauffement* illustrated ways in which teachers tried to adapt to their students’ rhythms. In an effort to break the ice and “ease” student into the lesson, instructors start their class on a warm personal note through various warm up exercises, and most importantly, what Maigret has referred to as “verbal warmth”. This attention to the way they conduct their classes by creating a space where students feel comfortable and “cared for” (Noddings, 2003, 2004) is quite congruent with holistic practices. In particular, the idea of ensuring “relaxed alertness” (Miller, 2007), coupled with this care and attention further demonstrate the importance that they place on establishing and / or maintaining rapport with their students.

I then presented the various other activities, which form the core of the lessons, and which were generally designed to help students learn in holistic ways.
**Games.** Alice’s and Sitelle’s adaptation of *Jeopardy* and *Bingo* are just two of the many activities which exemplify how the use of popular games can help engage students, while at the same time stimulate learning. There is a lot of research which supports the use of games in the classroom. Moffett (1994) states that: “Games… are an ancient folk form of education” (p. 87). As Danesi and Mollica (2008) note: “the use of puzzles and games in second-language classrooms have now become intrinsic components of many approaches, and the choice of many teachers, as formats for students to review and reinforce grammar, vocabulary and communication skills” (p. 366). Further, Kessler (2005) asserts that “games help students become fully focused, relax, and become a team through laughter and cooperation” (p. 102).

**Drama.** I also highlighted some of the aesthetic uses of language through drama education such as role-play, *sketch comique* (humorous skit), expressive reading and the like. Whether planned or unplanned (Parkay et al., 1996), these activities allowed for students to work together in pairs or in small groups and involved a fair amount of team-work, face-to-face interaction and co-operation among learners. Cooperative learning is considered one of the most helpful learning strategies and is aimed at promoting positive interdependence in an integrated teaching environment (Miller, 2007, 2010; Johnson & Johnson, 1994, 1999, Gagné, 1992). Further, these activities were very instrumental in creating a lively environment, involving the use of humour and in inciting laughter, gestures, and movement.

As Kessler asserts, “In play, our wildness and our humanity can safely meet. Play is the source of much of our learning and a reservoir of creativity” (2000, p. 87). Kessler (2000) also makes reference to rhythm and movement and the experience of “losing yourself in play, a timelessness, a stepping out of ordinary concerns that often unleashes the sense of joy” (p. 87). She observes that: “Particularly for older students who have had to become so serious, the sense of total immersion that often comes with play can transport them into a state of rapture” (Kessler, 2000, p. 87). Kessler specifically highlights role-play, describing it as:

> [A] strategy at the heart of social and emotional learning, invites the spirit of playfulness into a classroom by allowing students to step out of ordinary reality to pretend, to risk new behaviour while protected by the mask of illusion. The word “illusion,” which frees us to practice new skills in role-play, comes from the words “in play” (2000, p.87).

While the use of activities such as role-play and drama demonstrate the aesthetic use of language (Bräuer, 2002), they also speak to the commitment on the part of instructors to vary their instruction, and help inspire in students, an appreciation for the inseparable link between language and culture through the
integration of the arts (i.e. audio-visual recordings, film, music, poetry, ads, etc.) by all the participants at various points in time. This cultural appreciation was accentuated by helping to showcase students’ own diverse talents in the classroom, through activities involving dance, song, as well as recitation of poetry.

**Other communicative-experiential activities.** These were also featured in this section, especially those involving the use of authentic materials in the classroom (Alice’s “Pommes bios/non-bios”, Yannick’s fashion show). This inclination to create opportunities for authentic language use is quite in keeping with the guiding principles of CLT (See Littlewood, 1981; Savignon, 2007; Celce-Murcia & Dornyei, 1997). Further, the idea of inviting guest speakers to the classroom also opens up a space for social interaction with “real people” (i.e. people who are native speakers or functionally bilingual). This also fosters a sense of connectedness to the francophone community. (Miller, 2007, 2010).

**Silence and reflection.** Amid all the activities, there was the need to pause and listen…and I discovered that there is also a space in the post-secondary classroom - as some instructors demonstrated - for silence and reflective practice to allow various ideas and insights to “cook over a period of time” (Nachmanovitch, 1990, p. 157). This reflective practice also manifested itself through such activities as journal writing and language portfolios, which are designed to help students (and teachers themselves) connect more deeply with both teaching and learning (Miller, 2007, 2010; Palmer, 2003; Kessler, 2005; Carrasco & Piccardo, 2009; Piccardo, 2006). Further, as Kessler (2005) asserts, “silence becomes a comfortable ally as we pause to digest one story and wait for the other to form, when teachers call for moments of reflection or when the room fills with feeling at the end of a class” (p. 102).

**Classroom configuration, nature and use of technology.** I also presented glimpses of the physical layout of the classroom and ways in which this may hinder or enhance language teaching and learning. While some of the participants expressed indifference as to the physical configuration, others seemed to favour flexible seating arrangements (preferably in a circle or a horseshoe) to allow for more agility and movement in the classroom - a practice, which is promoted in holistic teaching and learning environments (Miller, 2000, 2006, 2007, 2010). There was also some consideration for stepping outside for “a breath of fresh air” as one of the participants did with her class. Although it is not a common practice among participants, honourable mention was made of the importance of having reverence for nature and the idea of developing a sense for ecological literacy in the language classroom (Miller, 2007; Orr, 1992, 1994; Johnson & Neagley, 2011).
Last but not least, this brought up the question of the use of technology, which, as the research revealed, can sometimes be in opposition with nature. While I recognize that this is quite a vast topic which goes beyond the scope of this thesis, instructors’ use of technology in the classroom did emerge as an interconnecting theme. As Turnbull et al note: “Where educators have no easy access to the target language environment, they can strive to incorporate a quasi-experiential dimension in their classrooms by invoking potential real-life contexts and using authentic materials, including virtual resources available on the World Wide Web” (p. 2). To a great extent, this reflects what many of the participants tried to integrate into their L2 classrooms.

**Campus community.** Participants encourage their students to participate in events taking place on campus (e.g. movie nights and conversation cafés) as these provide students with the opportunity for linguistic, social and cultural interaction with others. Sitelle’s movie night and Pamela’s experiential learning through peer sharing present examples of how participants facilitate these interactions. The campus community is also a wider space of connectivity where students can interact with and gain an appreciation of other languages, for example the “Italian Play” staged by the 4th-year undergraduate students and which had the support of the wider cross-section of the community (i.e. students, teachers, family and friends). According to Turnbull, Bell and Lapkin (2002), an activity is considered experiential if it involves “authentic language used in real-life contexts” (p. 2). Considering the fact that participants were not teaching within a target language community, they were able to re-create this dimension by bringing together an authentic community of speakers of the language in real-life context. (Allen, 1983; Luckmann, 1996).

**Service and Community-based learning:** The discovery of Amélie’s service-learning initiative in her 4th-year FSL course was the jewel in the crown. Similarly, the efforts of the other participants – notably Yannick’s affiliation with the local French theatre company and Louise’s campus-wide curricular / francophone activities - in exposing their students to community-based learning, have also been well-documented in this study. This facilitation of “engaged service” (Donnelly, 2002) or experiential learning (Kolb, 1984) where students shared with others in the community (Arguelles, 2002; Miller, 2007; Dallaire, 2011; Morris, 2001; Tilley-Lubbs, 2006; Palmer & Zajonc, 2010) contains many interconnections to holistic education and goes a long way in transforming students’ appreciation of the practical use of their language learning.

**Regional/ National exchange programs:** Participants in this study recognize the advantages of exchange programs as a way for students to contextualize their language learning. They actively promote
these opportunities for immersion in their classes by raising students’ awareness of the benefits of this type of “real-life” experience (Danesi, 2003). Popular among these, is the program called Explore which affords students the opportunity to immerse themselves in the French language and culture in various francophone regions or universities in different towns in their own provinces, and across Canada.

**Study abroad programs:** As we have seen, the study abroad programs, like the exchange programs, again provide opportunities for immersion and experiencing the culture. Participants actively promote exchange and study abroad programs as a great way of enhancing their language / communication skills, social interaction, and as a rich cultural or “soulful” experience, and overall lifelong learning. These views are substantiated by recent reports on the subject (see Bond, 2009).

**Frames of activities: peering through multiple lenses**

The findings presented in this chapter can be analyzed, discussed and interpreted from multiple lenses presented in my integrated framework. Again, the integrated pedagogical framework (see Figure 9) might serve as suitable lenses for making sense of much of the data related to activities teachers actually facilitated within and outside of the classroom. It is clear that a great majority of the activities described in this chapter illustrate connections to what may be considered holistic and communicative approaches to language teaching (Cummins, 2001, 2009, Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Miller & Seller, 1985/1990). In addition, Csikszentmihalyi’s (1990) Flow Theory also provides another frame of reference suitable for the deeper discussions of these data findings, given that the expressed goal of many of the participants was to provide students with a language learning experience which was rewarding, and fun, and enjoyable.

More specifically, the range of activities undertaken by participants demonstrate the value that they place on a number of communicative / experiential-type activities as a way of facilitating active learning and participation. The classroom is indeed a “zone of proximal development” (Vygotsky, 1978) or an interpersonal space (Cummins, 2001) where meaning is constructed and where learning is solidified. The data show that this zone of meaning-construction and learning extends well beyond the classroom and involves diverse learning contexts (see Figure 23). Further, Kolb’s experiential learning cycle provides a conceptual framework for many of the service-learning and other community-based learning initiatives undertaken by the participants. Last but not least, the responsibility of the teacher in facilitating all these diverse relationships brings to the fore the symbolism of the hands bearing the three R’s – Responsibility, Relationships and Respect, another part of my integrated framework which serves to connect theory and practice. Having explored the wide range of these activities and endeavours that
instructors facilitate within and beyond their classrooms, we will now turn to the next chapter, which examines how one fundamental ingredient makes it all come together: teaching presence (and other mysteries).
CHAPTER 8
TEACHING PRESENCE AND OTHER, MYSTERIES:
CONNECTING MIND BODY AND SOUL

The job is to seek mystery, evoke mystery, plant a garden in which strange plants grow and mysteries bloom. The need for mystery is greater than the need for an answer.
Ken Kesey

Introduction

This study was aimed at discovering and describing how holistic education is operationalized in the post-secondary language teaching context. In the previous chapter, I described a variety of ways in which teachers facilitate student engagement in their language learning, through their day-to-day activities in the classroom, on campus, and the wider community. However, there remain other aspects of classroom life which are not as easy to articulate, yet these make up the essence of holistic education. This will be the focus of this chapter, which seeks to pay attention to teaching presence and the other “mysteries” which constitute the “invisible” link or that je ne sais quoi which somehow contributes to flow experiences in the classroom. The data collected and analysed from the various sources have been used to glean together some of these interconnecting concepts such as presence, soul / spirit, or transformation.

In the first part of the chapter, I present a summary of the instructors-participants’ perspectives on presence, followed by a cross-case analysis of the participants’ perspectives. This is followed by students’ comments in relation how they perceive their instructor’s presence and its impact on the various forms of relationships in their learning environment. I will then present a cross-case examination of the findings from participating instructors as well as students. The ensuing discussion and summary at the end of the chapter highlight the major themes relating to the properties of presence from the perspectives of all the participant groups, as well as the literature on teaching presence, which are in keeping with the theories presented in the integrated framework. The chapter concludes with a presentation of participants’ views about engaging the body in the classroom, as well as what they believe constitutes a “soulful” language teaching and learning environment and how it might contribute to a holistic experience.
Revisiting Participants’ Perspectives on Presence

Participants’ views on presence were first introduced as part of their individual portraits in Chapter 5. In this section, I expound on the individual narratives of the core participants as well as the peripheral group of instructors. As summarised in Table 12, participating instructors shared their different perspectives on the nature of teaching presence and how they seek to cultivate their own presence in their classrooms.

Table 12
Summary of Participants’ Perspectives on Presence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Perspectives on Teaching Presence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core participant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alice</td>
<td>Being who you are; teaching who you are; not dominating; sharing humanness with students; facilitating students’ learning and success; recognizing difference.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amélie</td>
<td>Aim to “diminish” physical dominance; acknowledging students’ presence; “being there” for students; frequent feedback, communicating with and keeping students informed; providing “personalised” feedback and advice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yannick</td>
<td>“…teacher identity”; something that’s innate; importance of context; discipline; establishing relationships with students; setting expectations for learning; caring for students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louise</td>
<td>Developing style/persona; acting; being on stage – playing / drama; awareness of students’ needs/abilities; establishing rapport/lines of communication; mutual respect; being the best that you can be; awareness of mood; developing trust/credibility; paying attention; following through; non-threatening;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pamela</td>
<td>Awareness of mood; attitude towards teaching; self-presentation; connecting with self/personality; openness to students; awareness of students; honesty; act of will; willingness to help; acceptance; being in the “zone”; “that mysterious process”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sitelle</td>
<td>Positive energy - enthusiasm, passion, interest in topic; being in the moment; connecting to “exaggerated” personality; awareness of tone; keeping students alert recognizing difference; sharing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peripheral Group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maigret</td>
<td>Being positive; creating joyful learning environment; awareness of mood; sharing (humanness) with students; mutual understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrice</td>
<td>Making a space for students; having goodwill; non-verbal communication (e.g. eye contact); modeling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jocelyn</td>
<td>Modeling professionalism; awareness of the whole (physical appearance, mood etc.); sharing “humanness” with students; being friendly, approachable; sense of humour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carmen</td>
<td>Professionalism; awareness of mood; being authentic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The participants’ narratives bring forth several themes, which help us understand what presence means to them, particularly in their teaching and learning contexts. Although there were many commonalities among them, some participants emphasized certain aspects more than others. For example, Alice and Amélie began by making reference to the physical aspect of presence and emphasized the importance of not “dominating” but rather, maintaining a learner-centered environment. Jocelyn and Carmen also zeroed in on another physical component in their discussion about modelling professionalism through physical appearance in the classroom. However, in addition to the physical aspect, there emerged a much deeper discussion surrounding the metaphysical aspect of teaching presence. Figure 25 presents a synthesis of this discussion and highlights some salient elements which together constitute “the essence of presence”.

Figure 25. The essence of presence.
Inter-connecting Perspectives on the Essence of Teaching Presence

**Presence is “Being…”**

*Being who you are*: Many of the participants (both students and instructors) seemed to zero in on the idea of “being who you are”, “being real” and “not being fake or phoney” in order to be fully present in the classroom. To the majority of the participants, these seem to be the most important qualities of presence. Patrice seemed to have captured the essence of this collective voice, articulating as follows:

Before I can know who my student is, I need to know who I am. I need to know what is important to me, what my values are, what my beliefs are and I need to bring that into the classroom with me, not in a fundamentalist way, but in a way that says: ‘This is who I am.’

These words are congruent with Palmer’s insightful reminder that we teach who we are. By this, he meant that teachers should nourish their own souls – i.e. pay attention to their inner lives and know who they are inside and outside in order to be fully present to their students. Here again, the idea of self-knowledge surfaced as one of the major themes which emerged from the data findings, which are congruent to the literature previously discussed (Booth, 2006; Goleman, 1995; Miller, 2000, 2007, 2010; Palmer, 1998, 2004; Palmer & Zajonc, 2010).

*Being in the “here and now”.* As we have seen, “being in the moment” constituted a major theme, which emerged from the reflections of many of the participants with regards to teaching presence. Sitelle articulates this well by stating that: “You’ve got to be in the moment; you can’t be thinking: ‘Oh my God, I have 50000 things to do…’” This definitely coincides with the fundamental understanding of holistic educators, theorists and scholars, who recognize the value of presence in helping to foster strong connections between teachers and students. The other two qualities – being (or knowing) who you are, as well as “being in the here and now” – reflect the perceptions of authors previously reviewed in this research (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, 2009; Hart, 2011; Kessler, 2005; Noddings, 2003, 2004).

*A sage on stage?* Other terms that participants used to describe teaching presence include: “having a certain persona” or “being on stage” or “performing”, which all relate to the idea of acting or “putting on an act”. Although it may seem to contradict the idea of “being yourself” and “being real or authentic”, this speaks primarily to the notions of intuition and improvisation, and as Pamela so aptly put it, “it’s the you that you become in order to teach.” Similar comparisons have been made between the teacher’s presence in the classroom to that of an actor on stage, notably, Nachmanovitch (1990) and
Runtz-Christian (2000). This also serves to remind us of the rational and irrational nature of presence, as suggested by Runtz-Christian (2000).

**Awareness, Attention and Acceptance**

The majority of participants (Maigret, Jocelyn, Carmen, Pamela, Alice, Louise) emphasized the importance of being aware of, and paying attention one’s mood and tone (van Menen, 1986), which can influence their teaching presence. These properties of presence are often synonymous with the universal notions of mindfulness and awareness. As Jon Kabat-Zinn (1995) explains:

> Strictly speaking, the application of mindfulness gives rise to awareness. The greater and the more stable the mindfulness, the greater the awareness and penetrative insight that may stem from it. But in communicative parlance, mindfulness and awareness are often used synonymously and, for simplification, we will adhere to that convention as well. And since there is nothing particularly Buddhist about paying attention or about awareness, nor anything particularly Eastern or Western, or Northern or Southern for that matter, the essence of mindfulness is truly universal (p. 110).

Some of the participants acknowledged that although their preference, for the most part, would be to display a cheerful and positive demeanour, there are times when they may be “having a bad day” and that this is part of being human. For many of them, this boils down to a question of being honest about one’s own feelings. Many of them indicated that they can count on students to be understanding. As Maigret indicated: “Students are extremely supportive on the whole; they’ll know if you’re having a bad day, and they’ll be supportive”.

**Communication: Building Rapport, Mutual Trust and Respect**

Respectful discipline. The role that context plays in determining awareness of one’s presence was another theme which emerged from the data. Louise affirms that “everything has to do with respect”. Notably, Yannick’s comparison between the high school and post-secondary contexts underscores the question of both respect and discipline – qualities, which many of the other instructors have emphasized as being imperative to effective teaching presence. As a matter of fact, Kessler has amalgamated the strength of these two words to create what she refers to as “respectful discipline” which she presents as one of the core qualities of teaching presence (see details in Chapters 2 and 3). There were many other sub-themes, which emerged in the data relating to the broader theme of effective communication among participants, including awareness of our humanness, being honest and open, having a sense of humour as well as positive energy.
“That positive energy!” The question of having a positive attitude was highly emphasized by all participants as being fundamental to effective teaching presence. In particular, Sitelle’s reference to presence as bringing “that positive energy” in the classroom conveys the general sentiments of the other participants, expressed in other terms such as passion, enthusiasm, positive attitude, and the like. Further, this reference to teaching presence as positive energy coincides with the definition of soul, which has been similarly defined as “a vital energy” and connects to one of the fundamental aspects of holistic education as seen in the literature previously reviewed (Miller, 2000, 2006, 2007; Peabody, 1935; Schiller, 2005; Moore, 1992).

“That mysterious process...” Pamela goes a step further by talking about that “mysterious process” which may ironically serve to capture the sentiments of many of the other participants. This “mysterious process” described by Pamela has been addressed in the works of various theorists, educators and scholars, in the field of holistic education. Of particular relevance is the work of Chris Bache (2005) which features several narratives from his university classroom. The dominant themes revealed through these narratives suggest an acknowledgement of other forces of energy beyond the immediate temporal and spatial confines of the individuals and the classroom, but alludes to a greater consciousness or connectedness to the cosmos. Hart (2011) helps illuminate this relationship through the description of what he refers to as an intimate knowing: “Such knowledge by presence reveals the intersection of our individual depth with a more universal depth. The universe lies not only outside of us, but also within us; the outside can reveal the inside, and vice versa” (p. 16).

So far in this chapter, I have examined participants’ perspectives on the notion of teaching presence, and what it means to them, and the various ways in which they try to cultivate it in their daily lives and in their teaching. There emerged a number of inter-connected themes which were summarized in Table 12 and Figure 25. Some of the participants (Alice and Amélie) referred to the physical aspects of presence and made it clear that their role as teachers is to create a learner-centered environment, and thus the need sometimes to “diminish” their presence rather than “dominate” the classroom. Jocelyn and Carmen also made mention of maintaining a “professional” appearance and being model to their students. All the participants expressed ideas relating to the more abstract properties of presence, by making reference to the idea of being: “Being yourself”, “being who you are”, “being there for the students” and “not being fake or phoney” as fundamental to their presence in the language classroom. These are all congruent with the ideas raised by some of the authors presented in the literature review (Kessler, 2005; Miller, 2007; Noddings, 2003, 2004; Palmer 1998). In addition, awareness of mood and tone (van Menen,
1986), of their own humanness (hooks, 1994, 2001), paying attention to (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990), and accepting their students (Palmer, 1998) were also dominant themes among participants. The importance of opening up clear lines of communication in order to create and maintain an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect in the classroom were also ideas discussed by participants and coincide with what Kessler (2005) refers to respectful discipline. Finally, other themes such as positive energy and the acknowledgement of an overall “mysterious process” were also recognized as essential to teaching presence.

**Students’ Perceptions of their Teachers’ Presence**

Having explored the core and peripheral perspectives on the notion of teaching presence, in the following sections, I present the perceptions of the student participants, in terms of their experience of the presence of their instructors in the language classroom. These findings derive from the data collected from focus group discussions as well as student surveys.

**Perspectives from Student-teacher Participants**

One of the focus groups comprised of four student-teacher participants. In addition to speaking specifically to their own perception of teaching presence, they also shared how they perceived their instructors’ presence. Following are some of their comments / perspectives:

Similar to Patrice’s affirmation, Kay -one of Alice’s students - views presence as “getting in touch with who you are”, and believes that individuals (teachers) are responsible for taking care of themselves so that they can be there for others. She articulated that being present is “an inter-dynamic journey” through which instructors need to be honest in recognizing themselves in relation to others. She stated that:

I think we have been lucky to have run into some professors this year, who are pretty open about their own process, and I think are modelling that kind of honest, mindful kind of way of being; I don’t think kids would use that language, but they know that and they can take a quick read of a teacher...

Maria enthusiastically agrees with Kay, and offers these words of wisdom inspired as a result of her experience in Alice’s classroom:

That’s why [Alice] is such a good instructor because she, to me seems like she is in a good place in her life; honest with her identity and she is very fair with people... So just to be honest with yourself, and recognize that we are humans and that we’re all going to make mistakes and we are
all going through a journey. Being physically present, but also present emotionally, but not crossing that line – you have to maintain some sort of distance – but being present, being there for your students.

Students also spoke about their own intuition and their ability to “feel” whether their teachers are genuinely present. Similarly, as shared by some of the instructors in the study, students also pointed out the need for honesty and for mutual understanding. As one student put it: “I think everyone has bad days and if you’re honest and open about maybe you’re having a bad day - and everyone goes through that - but not to take it out on your students – just like: [tsk, tsk, tsk] “no!”

As pointed out in the findings presented from the core and peripheral group of instructors, student teacher participants acknowledged that teachers need to be true to themselves by knowing what their own needs are and “practice what they preach”, or “walk the talk”, in order to have an authentic teaching presence. Another student also brought up the idea that instructors should be aware of what their own needs are, “otherwise, you might not know you’re projecting it on other people; if you don’t know what you’re hungry for, you’d think everybody else is hungry for it; so I think it’s important to be aware of it”.

This comment was met with resounding resonance by the others in the group, prompting the following responses:

Maria: Like I said, we teach who we are so we’re obviously going to fall back on things that we’re strong in, in order to teach, so you’re going have your own style which is personal to you, and I don’t think you’re ever going to be able to reach every kids’ needs. There’s going to be some kid who is not engaged, because he has issues that go far beyond what you can do; you can help, certainly, but you’re going have kids who disengage no matter how hard you try. And there’s going to be this kid that you can’t reach. I think it’s very theoretical, you know – like: “differentiate instruction, reach every student”, it’s idealistic and it’s good to strive for that, but we are human, we’re not super people.

Fay: I think like to try to be the perfect teacher or ideal teacher, means realising that you can’t be a super hero and you can’t do everything and being ok with good enough and instead of focusing on what you should be doing all the time, focusing more on your students and your interaction with them.

Susan: “Yes...and being in the moment!”

There emerged quite a few themes which connect to those brought out by the core and peripheral participants with regards to the notion of teaching presence. Salient among these was the question of authenticity – “being real”–which was highly emphasized by both groups as the most important element of presence. Moreover, many of the student-teachers expressed feelings of gratitude for having had
instructors who seemed “open about their own process”, and who modelled what they perceived as an “honest, mindful way of being”.

**Perspectives from Undergraduate FSL Students**

This section focuses on students’ perceptions with regards to their overall experiences in their language undergraduate FSL courses. Gleaned from focus groups as well as surveys, these findings can be linked to how these students perceived or connected to the presence of their respective instructors. A textbox has been created to capture the voices of the students of each of the core participants.

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**Comments from Alice’s Students**

“[Alice] generally cares about her students and strikes a balance between being close with them and then remaining professional…” (Maria)

“…very flexible and she always followed through… Things had a purpose…also taught us life lessons…she has a wholesome spirit…and passes it on to us” (Kay)

“I liked Alice’s personality…she has a good sense of humour, very playful” (Susan)

“She’s pretty open about what her values are and politics and things like that; I also liked grammar course with her…getting right down with brass tacks” (Fay)

“I like [Alice’s] personality too … and also I like the fact that she encourages you to look at things very, very critically” (Kay)

“She’s come to a point in her life where she is comfortable in her skin and happy with the work that she is doing and finds it rewarding…that transfers to us” (Maria)

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**Figure 26. Students’ perception of Alice’s teaching presence.**

Maria, Kay, Susan and Fay are four of Alice’s students who participated in the focus group. As depicted in Figure 26, there are several emergent themes, which point both to Alice’s disposition and how that contributes to her teaching presence. These include: honesty, flexibility, having a sense of humour and a sense of purpose, and most importantly, the whole idea of caring. These comments from the students are quite congruent with Alice’s own account of what constitutes teaching presence. Alice repeatedly stressed the importance of “being who you are” and not being afraid to show and share her humanness with her students. And it is clear that students were able to feel this authentic presence in Alice. As one of the students commented: “She’s come to a point in her life where she is comfortable in her skin and happy with the work that she is doing and finds it rewarding…that transfers to us” (Maria).
As evidenced by the words of her students, Alice’s affirmation that “you teach who you are” did resonate well with them.

**Comments from Amélie’s Students**

“She would also ask about our personal lives too—like our application processes, like other things that were going on—she would like follow-up. So it shows that she is paying attention, not just in through one ear and out through the other” (Fareeha)

“I think another good component with our class, is that we had the same prof. going from fall session to the winter session, and I think that’s really important because she can kind of see your progression and which areas that you need to focus on... [Amélie] was really encouraging and she could actually see the difference in our oral French and like by her just stating that, you just feel more comfortable...” (Fareeha)

“In a way [Amélie] was like our peer, almost...” (Sylma)

“...she was like an older sister”(Fareeha)

“Yeah, we respected her like she was our prof., but she is very close with us; like we’d come out here and a little potluck on the last day...like a little family” (Sylma)

**Figure 27. Students’ perception of Amélie’s teaching presence.**

In Figure 27 the comments from Fareeha and Sylma, two of Amélie’s students (who had just completed from her service-learning course) illustrate Amélie’s nature as a caring individual who showed genuine interest in their lives. Students expressed their respect for Amélie and her deep commitment to “being there” for them. As Amélie stressed during her reflection, “it is their presence that counts!” By highlighting that “a good component with our class is that we had the same prof. going from fall session to the winter session...” this student is making a very important connection to holistic education. In many holistic schools such as Waldorf and Montessori, it is customary to have students stay with the same teacher for a number of years (Miller, 2007, 2010). As her student commented, not only was Amélie able to see their progression, and guide them along the way, but it is clear that Amélie managed to establish some very strong bonds with her students as evidenced by these comments: “…Yeah, we respected her like she was our prof., but she is very close with us”, “like a peer”, “like an older sister”. This clearly demonstrates the sense of community which had been established and their yearning to continue these strong bonds of friendship (and kinship).
Comments from Yannick’s Students

“She made a point to ask everyday how our day was; whether it was good or bad, and how was the weekend. That shows that the teacher notices you and knows that you exist, and just not another student… She was treating us like real people.” (Geeta)

“So what [Yannick] would do, she would make the classroom a whole lot better; she would actively engage all the students; she would make sure that everyone is happy and that everyone was having a good time and most of all that they were improving; she didn’t care where your level was, so long as you made an improvement along the way.” (Marlon)

“…she was always there in her office hours every single time; she would always reply to your emails as soon as possible... and like always available if you need extra help” (Adowa)

Figure 28. Students’ perception of Yannick’s teaching presence.

These comments displayed in Figure 28 from Yannick’s students – Geeta, Marlon and Adowa - clearly illustrate the positive feelings and sense of overall well-being that they felt from being in Yannick’s presence, and coincide with some of the perspectives that Yannick stressed as being important to teaching presence, such as caring for students, building relationships with them and setting expectations for their learning. One of the students actually stated that Yannick “would make sure that everyone is happy and that everyone is having a good time”. These words clearly demonstrate / speak directly to the notion of holistic education, which seeks to instil joy in the teaching-learning environment. Another aspect of holistic teaching which is evident from the students’ comments is the focus on learning rather than grades or rote learning: “She did not care what your level was, as long as you made an improvement along the way”.

We will recall that while sharing her perceptions on presence, Yannick ended her reflections with the following (almost rhetorical) question: “And if they reach these expectations, do I care, or do I not care?” It is quite evident from the students’ comments that, indeed, Yannick did care about their overall well-being - not only as students but, as one of the students articulated, she treated them as “real people”.
Comments from Pamela’s Students’

“I found it very interesting; usually I’m very shy, I barely speak, but I wasn’t scared; I enjoyed going to class” (Bopha).

“I don’t think there was one time that I didn’t enjoy it;” (Angela)

***“The professor actually knows who you are – like your name – that’s when you really feel, like I’m involved in this course; I actually am something” (Nikita)

“The professor is very theatrical; with that tone, I enjoyed her!” (Elpedio)

“I was comfortable...so I get excited when I go to class, so that spirit thing, I know it’s there, you know, when I listen to my professor speak, I get the sense of well-being, like I feel good about it. So for me, it’s a very comfortable place to be... so I have a wholesome experience with languages, definitely”. (Nikita)

Figure 29. Students’ perception of Pamela’s teaching presence.

The comments in Figure 29 from Pamela’s students – Bopha, Angela and Nikita – who attended the focus group, help us to catch a glimpse of Pamela’s presence in the classroom. Overcoming fear, having a sense of belonging, well-being and joy are some of the sub-themes which emerged from the students’ data. There is no doubt that students felt a strong connection to Pamela and were very comfortable being in her presence. In particular, Pamela’s idea of acknowledging “that mysterious process” seemed to have also been captured by her students notably Nikita, who stated that “…that spirit thing, I know it’s there...when I listen to my professor speak, I get the sense of well-being, like I feel good about it. So for me, it’s a very comfortable place to be….” The words of the other students are equally compelling and go a long way in demonstrating Pamela’s awareness of her students as well as her commitment to connecting with them and being in tuned to their needs and feelings.
Comments from Sitelle’s students

“It was never boring” Jamal

“She cared for the class, she cared that everyone was happy in class...she cared like us learning the thing, learning everything. And I respect that so much…” (Qiong)

“Well, when I think of what the professor said: ‘I’m in my office you can come and talk to me, even if you want to stop by and say hello!’ nothing that has to do with anything in the language, or with whatever we’re studying, right; you stop you say hello that makes you very closer to the teacher; you’re making a real connection to the teacher; later on, you will never be shy to ask a question; you will never be shy to make a mistake” (Jamal)

“[Sitelle] has a lot of imagination!...She would try to exaggerate some things a bit, so she makes it more active, kind of” (Qiong).

Figure 30. Students’ perception of Sitelle’s teaching presence

The comments from Jamal and Qiong in Figure 30 reflect “that positive energy” that Sitelle brings to the classroom, as well as the exaggeration of the personality that she believes is part of teaching presence. Students also made reference to Sitelle’s sense of humour and imagination and how, according to Qiong, she “made everything active”. Based on these comments, it is clear that students recognized and respected the way Sitelle cared about them as individuals and for their learning; they also appreciated her accessibility and approachability, and felt “a real connection” to her as a person and as a teacher. Students were therefore more willing to take risks and make mistakes. As Jamal so emphatically declared, not only did Sitelle care about their learning, “she cared that everyone was happy in class”. It is clear that Sitelle’s passion, enthusiasm and deep commitment to her students, in ensuring that “everyone was there”, constituted for deep sense of joy in her classroom.

Summary

This section focused on student participants’ perceptions of their professors’ teaching presence and revealed a lot about the instructors (core participants). Whereas the student-teachers addressed the question of teaching presence in a more direct way, the comments from the undergraduate students were more implicit, and were gleaned from various statements about their overall learning experiences as per the data collected from the surveys and focus groups. However, collectively, the students’ voices clearly corroborate much of what the teachers themselves had said about how they perceive teaching presence and the ways in which they try to be fully present to
their students. The following section focuses on other interconnected themes relating to students’ experiences in the L2 classes.

Making Inter-connections to L2 Learning Through Students’ Voices

This section is designed to tease out the various themes which emerged from incidences of connectedness as supported by students’ comments with regards to the forms of relationships fostered in their classroom. These interconnecting themes include: students’ personal connection to their instructors, their subject (FSL), their peers, as well as other relevant experiences in their language courses. Gleaned primarily from the focus group discussions as well as the surveys, these emergent themes are presented through various summary tables which capture the voices of the students. Table 13 summarizes the various forms of connection fostered in the post-secondary language courses.

Table 13
Summary of Students’ Experiences of Interconnectedness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forms of Connection</th>
<th>Themes Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intra-personal</td>
<td>Feeling comfortable; not fearful; feeling acknowledged; treated like “real person”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter-personal</td>
<td>Establishing rapport; building positive relationships with instructor and peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecting to Instructors’ Personalities</td>
<td>Qualities: patient, enthusiastic, caring, imaginative, friendly, empathetic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communication: Accessible (office hours), approachable, organized, prepared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching style</td>
<td>Great way of “transforming” information; balanced integration of variety of activities; simultaneous development of skills through use of humor, great appreciation of culture; “not just grammar”; encouraged resource sharing; facilitated high level of engagement (“never boring”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student-student connection</td>
<td>Friends both inside and outside of classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Environment</td>
<td>Class size: small (compared to other university courses); lots of group work and interaction;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spirit of inclusiveness and togetherness (“like a family”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical configuration of classroom, natural environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connections to other forms of learning</td>
<td>Opportunity to practice skills and interact in community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Service-learning; Experiential Learning; Exchange programs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the following sections, I present various summary tables highlighting quotes from students relating to their perceptions of their experiences in light of the various themes outlined above.
**Intrapersonal Connections: Connecting to the Emotions**

Students generally reported that they felt very comfortable, and excited in the FSL classes of the core participants. Some students in particular, shared that they were able to overcome many of their fears and anxiety associated with language learning. For example, one student in Pamela’s class intimated: “I love languages, but I am scared at the same time. The professor was very encouraging; so that made me not afraid”. Similarly, one of Yannick’s students shared that although she considered herself a very shy person who barely spoke, she felt comfortable enough in the class and actually enjoyed every class that she attended. In addition, many students made mention of the fact that their FSL instructors actually knew their names; this simple act of recognition, no doubt gave them a feeling of belonging and self-worth. As one of Louise’s students indicated, because of that, she felt “…involved in this course; I actually am something”.

In addition, other students spoke about how much they cherished the fact that their instructors seemed to show genuine interest in their lives by making it a point to inquire about how their day / weekend was, or about their various endeavours such as applications for jobs, scholarships, bursaries or other related projects. One of Yannick’s students offered: “That shows that the teacher notices you and knows that you exist, and just not another student…she was treating us like real people.” The other students in the focus group vehemently agreed. The general consensus among students is that they felt appreciated and acknowledged, and that their instructors paid attention to them, displayed a genuine interest in their well-being.

**Connecting to teachers’ personalities**

One of the dominant themes, which emerged in the data relates to students’ sense of connectedness to their FSL instructors, with whom they reported to have developed positive relationships. Several students commented upon the disposition of their instructors, which they felt contributed to their language learning and overall experience. Students indicated that their instructors were patient, caring, flexible, approachable, imaginative, friendly, empathetic and charismatic. Students also shared that their language instructors displayed a great sense of purpose, and a wholesome spirit. In addition, many of the students expressed their appreciation of the fact that their instructors were always available for consultation through office hours, and seemed always willing to provide high quality assistance and encouragement to them. In Table 14, I present some of the students’ comments related to the virtues
indicated above and the ways in which these helped foster positive relationships and enhance their language learning.

Table 14

*Students’ comments about connecting to instructors’ personalities*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes Qualities</th>
<th>Connecting to Instructors’ Personalities</th>
<th>Students’ Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patient</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ “If someone was struggling, the professor [Louise] had enough patience to wait for them to come up with the answer” (Donald).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ “[Pamela] would go over it again and again and would look at you and try and see “did you get it?” without making you feel you cannot continue to ask questions if you didn’t get it” (Nikita).</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Caring</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ “[Yannick] cared about making sure that we understood what it was she was trying to convey to us and she was willing to take the time for all of us slower people to make sure that each and every person got it and that was really important” (Marlon).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ “[Alice] cares about her students and strikes a balance between being close with them and then remaining professional…” (Maria).</td>
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<td></td>
<td>➢ “[Sitelle] cared for the class, she cared that everyone was happy in class...but cared like us learning the thing, learning everything. And I respect that so much…” (Qiong).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friendly and Flexible</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ “[Sitelle] made me feel like she’s not just a teacher to me; she was a friend when you want her to be a friend and more than a friend when you want her to be” (Jamal).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ “In a way [Amélie] was like our peer, almost…” (Sylma) “…She was like an older sister…” (Fareeha).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ “…yeah, we respected her [Amélie] like she was our prof., but she is very close with us; like we’d come out here and a little potluck on the last day… (Sylma) “...like a little family” (Fareeha).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ “[Amélie] she treats you like her friend or something, that’s really good in that sense”. (Sylma).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ “[Yannick] would say ‘how was your week… and how are you?’ She would just come and say hi to you if she was passing through” (Geeta).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ “[Alice] is very flexible and she always followed through… things had a purpose…also taught us life lessons… (Kay).</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sense of Humour</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ “I liked [Alice’s] personality…she has a good sense of humour, very playful”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ “[Alice] is pretty open about what her values are and politics and things like that”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ “The teacher [Sitelle] would make everything funny ... she’d try to exaggerate some things a bit, so she makes it more active, kind of” (Qiong)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Themes Qualities</td>
<td>Connecting to Instructors’ Personalities</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students’ Comments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students’ Comments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Sense of Purpose / Imagination | ➢ “[Sitelle] has a lot of imagination (Qiong)  
➢ “[Alice] has a wholesome spirit…and passes it on to us” (Kay)  
➢ “I like [Alice’s] personality too … and also I like the fact that she encourages you to look at things very, very critically” (Maria) |
| Accessible, Approachable | ➢ “…for example, office hours, they’re there and they’re eager to talk to you about whatever issues you might have” [Nikita]  
➢ “[Yannick] was always there in her office hours every single time; she would always reply your emails as soon as possible… like if you need extra help” (Adwoa).  
➢ “If you have questions and you need help, you go to office hours, and you know that they are there for you; it’s so much like a relief for you; you actually try like hard for the all the help that they’re giving to you; you want to give back” (Angela). |
| Empathetic, Charismatic | “I think, not only yes, she [Pamela] is a professor, but it’s the person she is. Generally, I think she is a good person… like she wants you to succeed. And I remember when we first got our tests back, I didn’t do very well at all, and I was: “Oh, my God what do I do, do I drop it? No I can’t!” And she was like “don’t worry, we still have the next test, come to my office and we can look at it together.” And it was just great! I felt happy after that. (Angela).  
➢ “If I speak French one day, it’s going to be thanks to her [Sitelle]; I love our teacher!” (Jamal) |

**Connecting teaching and learning styles**

In addition to their personalities, students also talked about their instructors’ teaching styles and how they [students] perceived that these connected to their own learning styles and that of their peers. Not only did they feel that their instructors were very organized, students also felt that instructors took the time to prepare a variety of materials and resources and felt that their instructors found some interesting ways of “transforming” the information so that it was “never boring”. Table 15 features some of the students’ comments regarding their instructors’ approach to teaching in their language classes.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching Style</th>
<th>Students’ Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organized Prepared</td>
<td>“The course was very organized... made going to class a real pleasure.” (Elpedio; these sentiments were also echoed many other students)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“The professor is amazing! She [Louise] is really organized and understands our needs” (Donald)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“The prof. [Pamela] isn’t just coming into the class, opening the textbook and following it, but has actually organized in a way that they’re paying attention to the way that the students are learning in the classroom – and organizing so that the material is better understood by the students” (Nikita).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrates variety (instruction, material)</td>
<td>I respected my language teachers for French proficiency; [Louise] had different ways of doing things; dictée, solving detective stories; games; variety – that’s part of learning styles too” (Donald)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Well, I am a visual learner, so whenever I would see [Yannick] put up a little picture, it always amuse me because that’s just how I was; it appealed to me... it definitely make the class a lot more light-hearted.” (Marlon).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I think the professor [Pamela] is really good... resourceful and versatile. She used internet for pronunciations...overheads for supplementary examples...textbook for cultural aspects...videos. When I was reading the book, I had trouble understanding; but when she actually showed the video clip, I actually understood it” (Nikita).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“the prof. [Alice] makes material interesting and encourages conversation” (Susan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses Humour, Drama; Transforms information.</td>
<td>“The prof. [Louise] showed us Le diner des cons – it was very funny...students enjoyed that” (Donald).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“It was never boring” (Jamal).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“The teacher [Sitelle] would make everything funny ... she would try to exaggerate some things a bit, so she makes it more active, kind of” (Qiong).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“What I enjoyed the most is how the professor [Pamela] delivered the course material. The professor very theatrical; with that tone, I enjoyed her; I enjoyed the course itself and because of that I learned a lot when it comes to learning the basics, the grammar, and French culture as well” (Elpedio).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I’ve really enjoyed the way that our course was taught by our professor. [Pamela] always used great examples with a lot of humour to try to connect the grammar that we learned to everyday situations…” (Bopha).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Teaching Style | Students’ Comments
--- | ---
Balance and Inclusiveness | ➢ “In terms of learning styles it completely matched up; because I know for me I would have more problems understanding French than being able to speak it so we used a lot of audio comprehension through the internet and stuff, so she [Amélie] played a lot of clips of people speaking” (Sylma).
 ➢ “I think our professor [Pamela] had a very good balance to accommodate all the different learning styles; for people who learned better by listening, she always had a slide up; had always done her homework: had summary of the grammar aspect… big slide on the screen with examples and summary; there was the visual part that she had come up with…and the textbook was right there to reference back to. Also listening – I feel like everything was covered; but if any clarification was required, you could simply raise your hand and she would attend right away to what you were asking” (Nikita).
 ➢ I liked the fact that with [Louise] we are not only learning the language but the culture as well (Donald).

Connecting with peers through interactive and small group activities

Some of the major aspects of interconnection emphasised by students include the relationships that they developed not only with their instructors but also with their peers. For example, many students indicated that their instructors’ facilitation of activities allowed for a great deal of interaction, which in turn helped them to develop lasting bonds of friendship with their peers. As many of the students indicated, the opportunities to make friends, and interact with their peers (both inside and outside of class) constituted for a tremendous sense of joy and connectedness. Students also spoke at great length about their appreciation of the fact the various activities assigned by their instructors involved a great deal of group work. Students overwhelmingly felt that this greatly contributed to the spirit of relationship building that prevailed in their language classes.

Table 16

Students’ Comments on Relationship and Sense of Community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Participant</th>
<th>Relationship Building and Sense of Community</th>
<th>Students’ Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alice</td>
<td>➢ “In my other classes, I was friends with about four other people for the entire year! But in French class, although there are some people I don’t know that well, but you know a little bit about everyone” (Fay) ➢ “There is something that’s kind of vulnerable about language that speeds rapport building” (Karen) ➢ “There was so much interaction through group work!” (Sara) ➢ “The community aspect of that class was really great... like a lot of times I didn’t want to come in the morning, but I would come because I was like “yeah, I get to...”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core Participant</td>
<td>Relationship Building and Sense of Community</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Students’ Comments</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hang out with whoever – which I guess is secondary to French learning or whatever...” (Fay)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sitelle</strong></td>
<td>“People when they take language courses, they tend to be friendly, I don’t know why. Like they come to class to make friends, to laugh, to have a good time. It’s not like taking a math course and then everybody just separate doing their math…language, they participate together” (Jamal)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Pamela</strong></td>
<td>“Because you’re such a smaller number, you get to know people as well, just as the professors; you get to know peers…on a 1-on-1 level…If we get there 5 minutes early in class, we would all be chatting…unlike the other classes with 500 students…And then you become friends…and the presentations also give you that opportunity to become even more friends because you’re working together as a group. So most of my friends are from the language classes” (Nikita)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“The constant interaction between the class and professor that made this French course most useful. Oral presentations and interviews” (Survey respondent)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“The group projects that Pamela gave us to do were creative and allowed us to input our own ideas into the project. It also gave the opportunity to meet people in the class on a more personal level than just sitting next to them”. (Nikita)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Yannick</strong></td>
<td>“People always seat at the same seat, so you get to know them more and say hi...it’s just fun… We kind of joked in French outside the French class too. Like we text each other in French; in daily conversations we would say something in French, it’s fun! Definitely, you do interact more with your peers that way”.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I think a big part of it is that we would always do group work; so she would always pair us off; she always make sure that we were actively using our French” (Adwoa).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Louise</strong></td>
<td>“I liked getting to know all my classmates and all the group work that we did…” (Donald)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Amélie</strong></td>
<td>“I think that in learning a language it does help to have a small number of people, because you could form a relationship with someone and you’ll feel more comfortable just seeing them outside of the classroom being able to speak in French and not reverting quickly to English. Like I find with my friend [Mona], who’s in the class, I’ve known her the longest and I’ll speak French with her the most” (Fareeha)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“In the classroom, everyone is kind of struggling together; but it’s still encouraging. It’s a different kind of struggle…when you’re struggling together” (Sylma)</td>
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</table>

**Small classes and small group interaction.** Furthermore, many of the participants commented that the fact that the language classes tended to be smaller than their other university courses (such as math and science), made it much easier for them to interact with, and get to know their professors (and vice versa) as well as developing friendship ties with their peers. They also felt that their engagement in collaborative work on projects and presentations, in turn contributed to a spirit of camaraderie and a sense
of community that was established in the classroom and which continued outside of the classroom. Table 17 captures the essence of these experiences as articulated through the students’ own voices.

Table 17

Students’ Comments Regarding Small Group Activities and Peer Interaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Students’ Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small Class Size</td>
<td>“Everybody was involved, working in small groups… each of us had to talk and interact with other students; nobody was left out” (Nikita)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“And I kind of take science courses too, and I’m not saying like science professors are different, but some professors they are at a way advanced level that they can’t really look at what level we are at. If they’re too ahead of us, they don’t understand where we’re coming from. Like in terms of the level of difficulty and sometimes they make you feel really bad… like you don’t get it; like you’re dumb, like you’re stupid. That’s what I feel like sometimes and you get really discouraged to do well. But if they really kind of help you or pull you together and say, oh, we can do this together, yeah, you want to put all the effort that you have, right?” (Bopha).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Group Interaction</td>
<td>“I found in huge classes…you actually don’t get to know anybody; all the [language] classes are really small, so I got to know some people” (Fay).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I worked alone in the other courses…but interacted more in the language classes” (Jamal).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“The people in the class were not that much; it was like nice, because everybody talked to everybody” (Qiong).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Connecting to Other Learning Contexts

Students also shared stories about being encouraged to pursue various opportunities to interact and to practice their skills outside of the classroom. As we have seen, many students mentioned that they cherished the opportunity for interacting with their classmates outside of the classroom as a result of having made friends in their FSL classes; this allowed them to continue the social interaction while encouraging each other to speak in French, thus helping them maintain and improve their language skills and gain confidence in communicating in the language.

A few of the participants made mention of their participation in exchange or study abroad programs, which they described as very memorable. In their surveys, some students also wrote comments about various other experiences (such as travel and interacting with francophones or competent speakers
of the language). Some of them also expressed appreciation for the various ways in which their instructors encouraged them to continue their learning experiences through the promotion of community-based, exchange, as well as study abroad and other experiential learning opportunities, whereby they could continue their language learning in more authentic ways during, or even after their program had ended.

While some of the students reported that they had taken advantage of the Explore program, others --especially those in the 1st and 2nd years--reported to have had little experience outside of the classroom. The major contribution in regard to language learning beyond the classroom came from the two 4th year students from Amélie’s class, who had just completed their service-learning course. Students’ perception of this valuable, holistic interconnection discovered in the course of this research study is highlighted in the following section.

“A Sense of Joy” Through Community Service-learning

In Chapter 7, I described the oral in-class presentation that I observed in Amélie’s class, where students reported on their service-learning experiences before an audience of their peers, their professor, as well as representatives of the francophone organizations, which had afforded them this opportunity. The focus groups also presented another opportunity to learn more about students’ service-learning experience, as two students from Amélie’s service-learning class - Fareeha and Sylma - participated in a focus group interview, along with three other participants from their campus. Fareeha and Sylma enthusiastically spoke about the positive experience that they had had during their service-learning course. They emphatically stated that their participation in the service-learning program was such a worthwhile and fulfilling experience, that they think that this should become a regular feature in FSL courses, at all levels. Excerpts from this dialogue are presented in Figure 31.
Fareeha and Sylma reflect on service-learning experience

Fareeha: ...And I did service learning, as you know, that was a really good component of the course; it got us to practice our oral French and actually get that real-life experience with French speakers that don’t really speak English. Because every other time, like whenever we’re conversing with our fellow classmates, we always have the opportunity of switching back into English if we don’t know the word, but in French we had to force ourselves to come up with the way of expressing ourselves. It was a really good opportunity to also get a hold of the different accents for instance people from Cameron, Senegal, and even Fort de France ... so it was a really good opportunity

Sylma concurs, adding that the classroom instruction really helps prepare them well for their service learning experience:

Yes... sometimes you tend to lose that joy in learning if - like some of the earlier courses that I took - you didn’t really get to practice it. So like [Fareeha] was saying, you can tend to get discouraged if you were to just get thrown from say your first year into a French speaking environment and you find that you can’t speak, really, or even understand, which could be kind of depressing. But in this way [service learning], we’re actually put into that environment when we are more ready for it, I guess... so it really does help increase that sense of joy or happiness you have surrounding the language because you find that you can deal with it and being in the classroom setting helps you have the support.

Fareeha: ...and it was kind of reassuring; before we didn’t really know if we could kind of speak if we were thrown into a... situation, we didn’t actually know that we could speak...if push-come-to-shove.

Despite the initial anxiety (uncertainty) involved and having to travel 1 1/2 hours to the downtown core to their placements, and that the students highly recommend a service learning component for all levels of FSL programs, and their willingness to serve as ambassadors to reassure other students.

Sylma: I mean, having started the service learning, it just goes to show you how different the real world is from the classroom.

Fareeha: I think that the drawback from earlier [FSL] courses is that they don’t have service learning. And I think that these students are missing out...

Sylma: Yeah...I highly recommend service learning; it could be nerve-wracking at the beginning, but that gives you that adrenaline rush kind of, to just go for it!”

Figure 31. Students’ dialogue about their service-learning experience
Summary

This section explored various perspectives from students with regards to their experience in the core participants’ FSL courses. In the first instance, I presented students’ perceptions about their teachers’ presence in the classroom; these were gleaned from the voices of the students as per their comments in the focus groups and surveys. Several themes emerged from the findings, which corroborated the instructor-participants’ own narratives about what they understand by teaching presence and how they seek to cultivate this into their teaching practice. This allowed for the analysis and synthesis of their collective voices as well as an overall understanding of the essence of teaching presence (as presented in Figure 25). It is clear that the findings from all the participants (core and peripheral group of instructors, as well as the undergraduate students and student-teachers) connect with the literature previously reviewed in chapter 2 (Hart, 2011; hooks, 1994, 2003; Kessler, 2000, 2005; Miller, 1993, 2000; 2007, 2010; Noddings, 2003, 2004; Palmer, 1998, 2004, Palmer & Zajonc, 2010; van Menen, 1986).

Having explored the notion of teaching presence, I then presented the findings regarding students’ overall experiences in their FSL classrooms, paying particular attention to various forms of connections fostered in their language learning environments. The data collected from students’ surveys and focus groups revealed many interconnecting themes which emerged in relation to students’ feelings about their own personal connectedness to their instructors, their peers, the subject (FSL) and other forms of learning in their immediate campus environment, the larger community and beyond. These findings reveal that students felt a deep sense of connectedness on all these levels. In particular, at the classroom level, the students highly attributed this sense of connectedness to their instructors, who showed a deep commitment not only to facilitating students’ learning, but genuinely cared about them as “real people”. In addition, students felt that the fact that language classes were generally small, coupled with their instructors’ facilitation of small group work and collaboration allowed them to get to know and develop friendships with their peers both inside and outside of the classroom. In particular, students who were involved in service-learning were appreciative of the support that they received in the classroom while experiencing what Fareeha described as “a sense of joy and happiness surrounding the language” in the “real world”.
Engaging the Body

Participants reported that there are several ways in which they organize their lessons such that the body is engaged in their classrooms. Some of the instructors indicated that to a great extent, they design their lessons by integrating activities which allow for sufficient movement at various levels or phases: either in-between (i.e. through the process of actually “getting into” these activities); during the activity itself, and afterwards. For example, several of the participants assign a variety of activities where students walk around the class asking each other questions. Many of these communicative and experiential-type of activities were described in Chapter 7 (for example, see descriptions of games, fashion show, role play, dance, etc.).

Many of the participants also indicated that they consider regularly scheduled breaks - at reasonable intervals - as another way to physically engage students.

One participant is of the view that through various acts or expressions (such as “laughter, giggling, getting excited”), the body is being engaged. The following comments by Alice point to the vital link between the mind and body, and are representative of the views shared by some of the core participants in this study with regards to engaging the whole student, particularly the body:

I think the reality is that mental and physical health are so linked. So if a person is feeling good mentally, chances are they’re going to be feeling good physically, and vice versa. So, it’s amazing how we separate the two; but you know, even if you’re exploring something and you’re getting excited about it, I mean that’s also engaging the body, because there’re all sorts of emotions that come with exploring something or being happy about it or discovering something new. I mean laughter, and giggling and you know, infusing your voice with enthusiasm, those are all physical. I don’t know why we always say well, because you’re not running around the track you’re not engaging the body, so whenever a student is enthusiastic and having fun, and that sort of thing, the body is engaged as well.

Further, some participants pointed out that another way of involving the body is by engaging in conversation about the body. For example as Pamela shared: “We talk about food, clothes, fashion… making sure not to offend those who may not fit into the current cultural beauty standards blah, of what is a good body”. Again, this shows participants’ sensitivity to diversity among students, while at the same time, raising students’ awareness of individual, ethic and cultural stereotypes relating to the body.
**Section summary**

In this section, I presented a number of ways in which the body is engaged in the language classroom. The activities that instructors facilitate frequently require group work, and hence movement for getting into these groups is one form of engaging the body. Further, regularly scheduled breaks were also seen as opportunities for teachers and students to literally “take a break”. Movement in the classroom is considered an important aspect of holistic teaching and learning, as movement and dance are considered “another vehicle for connecting body and mind” (Miller 2007, p. 123). Even the idea of laughter, giggling, getting excited were also identified by some of the participants, as ways of engaging the body. And from what I observed, there was indeed a lot of laughter and other forms of emotional expression in all of the classes that I visited. However, neither in their individual interviews nor in the focus groups did instructors mention other aspects of movement or meditation frequently associated with holistic education such as yoga or other forms of movement or dance as ways in which they “consciously” try to connect students’ mind and body.

**Defining a “Soulful” L2 Teaching and Learning Experience**

While some of the participants had difficulty in finding the right words to verbalize their thoughts on this seemingly “abstract” notion, others enthusiastically delved right in, offering a variety of words, expressions and metaphors to articulate their thoughts on what they might consider a “soulful” language learning environment. These are conveyed in the following sections.

**Positive, fulfilling and soothing: That buzz in the air!**

Some of the participants described a soulful language learning environment as one that is positive or fulfilling, and at the same time soothing. We will recall Sitelle’s reference to “that buzz in the air” which ties in with another notion that she associates with the positive energy that prevails in the classroom, “when students are engaged, and they are learning and having fun at the same time…” This is quite similar to the way Maigret describes it:

Having positive vibes, to me that would be the key. You know, the positive vibes that you get when you’re singing with other people, you know, that’s a very positive, and as far as I’m concerned, a soulful moment. The same thing can happen in a classroom; you’re happy to participate, you really like it; and you like the people around you and so forth and so on.

Maigret also thinks that a soulful learning environment is one where there is acceptance of each other. He notes that we are very privileged to live and learn in a context where there is such a
multicultural student body and surrounding population, so people bring all kinds of wonderful cultural insights that they can share with others. Maigret takes this opportunity to point out the importance of patience and tolerance in a language classroom. He explains that tolerance entails “just – tolerating another student’s difficulties…struggles; so if somebody makes a mistake… maybe you want to be patient…”

Maigret’s description of a soulful language learning environment also coincides with the following comment by Amélie, which serves as an example of the more soothing side of a soulful environment for students: “It means touching the students’ spirits through specific topics, or uplifting the soul with a song that they hear, and cry… I’m thinking of “Les vieux”. Every time I play that song to my students, there is someone – you always see a little tear”. She adds that a soulful experience is: “When they’re sharing very personal moments, sometimes difficult moments for them to verbalize, but they still do”.

Pamela makes a similar observation, adding that a soulful learning environment to her, is one where students know that their values and opinions are either being stimulated or that they could bring them up if they wanted to. Like Amélie, Pamela also feels that in such an environment, students and teachers can “engage their humour and their creativity… one where they are actively enjoying themselves”. She also sees it is a space where they had “a personal or an interpersonal experience”.

For Yannick, soul is what adds life or energy to the language, or in other words, it’s that element which makes the language come alive. She also offered that: “it would be that personal connection you make with the language, almost like what it is that makes you fall in love the language, or how you fall in love with a person…”

For Louise, a soulful language-learning environment is one, which provides a direct connection to the cultural and other artistic representations, which are intrinsically linked to the language. She emphasised how important it is for students to know and experience the culture which is attached to the language that they are learning. For example, she felt that it is important to “touch students with language” by inspiring in them an appreciation of the culture of the various francophone communities of the world, might constitute for a soulful language learning experience. She further explains as follows:

So soulful would be when it touches them. You have to sort of touch students with language. That could be done, I mean, by having an aesthetic experience. You start looking at a statue or reading a poem or appreciating some art and you go beyond the text, you go beyond talking about
grammar or exercises that have to be done, but you understand it in the context of the culture where it was created.

Like many of the other participants, Louise is of the view that a soulful environment also allows students to start seeing the connections, become knowledgeable and able to discuss significant aspects of the various cultures. Furthermore, as the other participants have observed, a soulful language learning environment is one where there is a certain connection among students so as to allow them to express their opinions on various topics that could even be controversial, while being conscious of using the appropriate language.

Is There A Space for Spirituality in the Language Classroom?

On the question of engagement of the spirit/soul in their language teaching, participants offered a variety of responses. On the one hand, there were some participants who chose not to engage too deeply into the discussion, and as one of them stated, “…at university level, I have to leave the spirit aside, except in the sense that the experience should be rewarding, joyful and pleasant”. Another participant expressed the view that given the diverse multicultural nature of our classrooms today, it is better to, like her colleague suggested, “leave spirit aside”. She offered the following explanation: “Well, I try not to deal with their souls and spirits because we have a very multi-cultural, multi-religious campus and it’s none of my damn beeswax which of them believe in things that are metaphysical”.

The participant further stated that there are students who have set certain boundaries and being adults, they have a right to do so. In other words, she feels that instructors need to respect the fact that some students may only wish to engage at an intellectual level, and that trying to push beyond that might be counterproductive, in the sense that it may “shut them down…” On the question of knowing when students might be willing to engage on a “spirit” level, she offered that it was through “eye contact, body language” – in other words - the nonverbal.

However, not all participants were of the view that the spirit should be “left aside”. In fact, another participant shared the view that both religion and spirituality should have a place in the classroom. She explains as follows:

I do I think that it is important to recognise that people are spiritual and religious. I think, to me, it’s a sharing; it’s an opportunity to say look: ‘Your religion and religious practices are part of who you are and I’m interested in who you are and we respect who you are and it’s really important that you feel comfortable sharing those things’. It’s not about being dogmatic, it’s not about preaching, it’s just about sharing.
The participant further demonstrates her point by using yoga as an example of a spiritual practice, which is becoming increasingly accepted in educational settings however she points out that:

I mean yoga is a part of a religion – yoga was originally part of Hinduism and Hinduism is a religion and it can be just as dogmatic and it can be used for discriminatory purposes just as Islam or Christianity or Taoism, or whatever. So, I just think for me, what’s really important is to understand that everybody comes to the table with a very complex set of identities and characteristics and experiences, and that it’s not about good and bad. It’s about: ‘we’re all who we are, and that’s what makes it interesting and it’s an opportunity to share’. So like I said, I would not favour one over the other, I would just open up that avenue if students wish to share that sort of thing.

The above citations stress the importance of having an open heart and the willingness to accept who our students are, and this includes their religion which is an important part of one’s identity. As another instructor participant noted: “Really, the spirit is all about feeling acknowledged. So if you try your best to acknowledge your students, recognize who they are – as a teacher that is probably the most important thing.”

There are many interconnections that can be made between what participating instructors say and what they do and the notion of spirituality. For example, by observing the ways in which the core participants interacted with their students and what the students themselves had to say about their experiences, much can be said about the notion of spirituality and how it is manifested in the language classroom. In particular, reference to the words “joy”, “happiness”, “love”, the high level of enthusiasm and creativity with which they approached their teaching, as well as their display of compassion and empathy towards their students, clearly reflect the virtues often associated to this vital aspect of holistic teaching (Cook, 2006; hooks, 1994, 2003; Johnson & Neagley, 2011; Kessler, 2000, 2005; Miller, 1993, 2000, 2006, 2007, 2010; Palmer, 1993, 2004; Palmer & Zajonc, 2010). As Nachmanovitch (1990) reminds us, “the word enthusiasm is Greek for “filled with theos – filled with God” (p. 50). Nachmanovitch further affirms that “the creative process is a spiritual path” (p. 13).

Further, participating instructors displayed a genuine, heart-felt concern for their students, which can be described as “love”; there is definitely a lot of love in the classrooms. I could not help but notice that students, in particular, seemed to welcome the opportunity to express how they felt about being in that space that their instructors facilitated. It was not uncommon during the focus groups to hear students say how much they loved their instructors, their peers and their French classes. There was no mistaking the genuine manifestation of student-teacher relationship that came through in the following words
uttered by one of the students: “I love my teacher! If ever I get to speak French one day it will be because of her!”

**Summary of Chapter**

This chapter revisited the notion of teaching presence, initially presented as part of the core and peripheral participants’ portraits in Chapter 5. A deeper analysis of the data revealed many salient themes surrounding the participants’ perceptions of the meaning of presence and how it is manifested in their language teaching practice. An integration of these data inspired a collective understanding of “the essence of presence” presented in Figure 25, which depicts the following salient themes: a) various states of “being”; b) the importance of awareness, attention and acceptance; c) communication and rapport building; d) positive energy; and e) “that mysterious process”. This was followed by the perceptions of the students enrolled in the classes of the core participants. These were featured a series of text boxes which highlighted the comments made by students through direct quotations expressing their thoughts and feelings with regards to their experiences in their FSL classes. Based on their feelings of gratitude for having had instructors who seemed open about their own process, and who modelled what some students described as this “honest, mindful way of being”, it is evident that their instructors’ presence impacted students in many positive ways.

Having examined the notion of presence from both the instructors and students’ perspectives, I then presented students’ perceptions of the other experiences that they have had in their language classes, paying attention to the various relationships fostered in the classroom as well as in other learning contexts, and their connectedness to holistic teaching and learning. Overall, students reported to have developed positive relationships with their instructors and peers. Students also described their experiences of community-based service-learning as being joyful and rewarding.

At the close of the chapter, I briefly presented participants’ views about engaging the body, the role of spirituality in a post-secondary language classroom, what might constitute a “soulful” language learning experience and how this can be fostered in the classroom. The data revealed that although participants did not consciously engage in activities such as yoga and meditation, they considered an awareness of movement through small group activities, and regular breaks, as an active way of engaging the body in the classroom. Essentially, on the question of soulful learning, participants view this experience as one where students find a certain connection with their language learning; one that goes beyond just the linguistic aspect, to one that is positive, soothing and fulfilling, or one that lends to “that
buzz in the air”. The latter, as the data revealed, is fuelled by an energy which allows students and teachers alike, to feel connected to the culture and other artistic connections that animate the language. These ideas are quite congruent well with those discussed in the literature (Miller, 2000, 2007, 2010; Kates & Harvey, 2010; Kessler, 2005).

As we have seen in the previous chapter, there is a great deal of overlap among the theories contained in the integrated framework adopted in this study, allowing for multiple layers of analysis / interpretation of the findings which also contain interconnecting themes. First, given that this chapter focused primarily on teaching presence, the various themes which emerged in the findings connect directly with the part of the framework depicted as the “U”, adapted from Senge et al.’s (2005) “Theory of the U” and Sharmer’s (2007) “Theory U”. The notion of presence as theorized by these authors comprises of three basic aspects including an open mind, an open heart and an open will. When combined with the conceptual framework advanced by Kessler (2005), this represents a valuable tool for a deeper analysis and interpretation of many of the interconnecting themes derived from the findings (as summarized above).

Another interconnecting theme in this chapter centers on the question relationships, which ties in with the part of the integrated framework depicted in the symbolism of the hands. In particular, this relates to the instructor’s role in fostering / facilitating various forms of human and learning relationships in the classroom. Related to this is the facilitation of cooperative learning as per Johnson & Johnson’s (1994) theory of positive interdependence (also depicted by the arrows around the heart). Further, the facilitation of students’ community-based service-learning is another important theme which is linked to Kolb’s (1984) Experiential Learning Cycle.

Last but not least, in the latter part of the chapter, the emergent themes relating to spirituality and “soulful” language teaching-learning experiences are linked to the image of the heart and hence the symbolism of the “heart and soul”. This speaks to the various conceptual frameworks advanced by authors such as Miller (2000), Moore (1992), Kessler (2000, 2005), and Palmer (1998, 2010), which speak to the life-sustaining source that seeks to bring balance between the inner and outer lives of teachers and students alike.

Moreover, the foregoing discussion points to the various discourses relating the relationship between spirituality and education reviewed in the literature. In particular, it is clear that the instructors tapped into their different human capacities which can be linked to many of the dimensions of spirituality
identified by Johnson and Neagley (2011). For example, it is evident that the ways in which instructors related to their students “with intuition, presence and awareness” coincide with that which Johnson identifies as the contemplative dimension (2011, p. 4). Further, instructor’s willingness to support students’ quest for meaning and purpose, through the various creative activities which they designed, and generally their way of being with students clearly demonstrate other pertinent dimensions of spirituality such as meaning-making, as well as the ethical, emotional and creative considerations (Johnson & Neagley, 2011).

In the following concluding chapter, I will summarise the findings from this research study and discuss the various implications that these may have on language teaching and learning in the post-secondary context, and beyond.
CHAPTER 9

MEANING-MAKING:
SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

*Love is at the centre of the universe, and likewise, it should be at the heart of teaching.*

(Miller 2010, p. 8)

This chapter summarizes the key findings and themes that emerged in this study. A unified model for holistic approaches to language teaching is outlined followed by various pedagogical implications for teaching and learning in language programs particularly in the post-secondary context. I then present a mandate for how holistic education can be operationalized in the L2 classroom. Following a brief discussion on future research directions and an epilogue of participant feedback, the chapter concludes with some final thoughts / reflections on this journey of investigation.

**Summary of Key Findings**

In the following sections, I summarise the findings and themes that emerged from all the data sources in this narrative case study. I followed the sequence of my research questions, bearing in mind the overarching question relating to the various ways in which holistic education might be operationalized in the post-secondary language classroom. The main questions driving this study are as follows: How is holistic education operationalized in the post-secondary language classroom?

Sub-questions:

1) Who are the post-secondary language teachers (i.e. what are their educational backgrounds, learning and teaching experiences, insights, beliefs and assumptions about language teaching and learning)?

2) In what ways do post-secondary language teachers seek to facilitate / transform students’ language learning experiences and engage the whole student – body, mind and spirit - both inside and outside the classroom?

3) What do post-secondary language teachers understand by teaching presence and how it might contribute to relationship-building and interconnectedness in the language classroom?

4) What are students’ perceptions of their instructors’ teaching presence and its impact on their language learning experience?
This research inquiry was aimed at gaining a comprehensive understanding of the ways in which holistic education is operationalized in the L2 post-secondary context. The cases chosen in this qualitative study allowed for an investigation of the language teaching and learning landscape, focusing primarily on FSL instruction in a large urban university context. Multiple sources of data served to inform this study; these included: interviews, classroom observations, surveys, documents / artefacts, photographs and video footage. The core participants in the study consisted of six university FSL instructors with whom I conducted face-to-face interviews (both one-on-one and focus groups), and whose classes I observed during the data collection period. I surveyed and conducted focus groups with students of these core participants. There was also a peripheral group of participants consisting of other L2 instructors who had been (or were currently) involved in L2 teaching in the university or community college contexts. This [rich] collection of data was analysed through a process involving the creation of a series of summary tables and figures, descriptive writing and rewriting to discover and document the findings, which were presented throughout Chapters 5 to 8. Following is a summary of the data in these chapters.

**Summary of Themes**

In Chapter 5, I presented portraits which painted a holistic picture of the personality structure and histories of the core and peripheral group of participants in relation to their language teaching and learning. The most salient themes included: participants’ expression of love and enthusiasm for languages, teaching and language teaching, their description of their role as post-secondary language teachers, as well as their perspectives on teaching presence. In Chapter 6, I presented findings relating to participants’ beliefs about language teaching and learning and then examined how these beliefs have influenced their approach to teaching, paying attention to their use of various L2 teaching methods and approaches, notably communicative language teaching. In Chapter 7, I provided a summary of the instructors’ overall approach to day-to-day language teaching and what they actually did (i.e. the wide range of activities that are undertaken in their classrooms and the strategies that they used), in order to engage students and facilitate holistic teaching and learning, within and beyond the classroom.

The notion of teaching presence was revisited in Chapter 8, so as to allow for a deeper discussion of participants’ perspectives on what it means to be “present”, and how they perceived its contribution to the experience of flow in the post-secondary language classroom. I integrated the voices of the students who provided feedback about their experiences in the language classrooms, focusing primarily on their experiences of the presence of their teachers as well as the various other (inter)connections to teaching
and learning in the classroom; other learning opportunities facilitated by their instructors (such as service-learning, and other related community-based activities) were also highlighted. Finally, participants’ ideas on what constitutes a “soulful” language learning environment and the question of whether there is a space for spirituality in the L2 classroom were presented and discussed. By making connections with my theoretical framework, I engaged in a deeper discussion and interpretation which extend beyond the data chapters.

**Connecting Theory and Practice: Revisiting the Framework**

In Chapter 3, I presented the various theories and concepts which were considered as suitable lenses for analysing, interpreting and understanding how holistic education is operationalized in the post-secondary language teaching and learning context. These were then blended together into a unified framework which was in turn used to integrate all the pertinent bits of data into a coherent whole. I therefore proposed a model to illustrate these interconnected processes involving holistic approaches to language teaching (see Figure 9). As demonstrated at the end of the data chapters (5 to 8), connections were made between the various themes which emerged in the data findings to each relevant part (or parts) of the framework. It would be appropriate at this time, to revisit my integrated framework, with a view to presenting a unified understanding of the overall research findings.

The themes which emerged from the findings presented in Chapter 5, related to the quest of getting to know the participants. As such, the correlation of the information gleaned from their individual interviews resulted in a series of brief portraits which integrated not only the participants’ educational backgrounds and teaching experiences, but also their thoughts, feelings, actions, ideas and musings. The portraits also depicted aspects of their teacher identity, relating to how participants self-identify in terms of their roles as post-secondary / language teachers, and their most memorable or positive moments of teaching in their current contexts. This served to foreshadow the rest of the data chapters which delved into further details revealing more and more of the participants’ philosophy with regards to teaching in general, and language pedagogy in particular.

The retelling of their narratives clearly revealed that the core and peripheral participant groups in this study seemed to have recovered “the heart to teach” and “a sense of self” (Palmer 1998, p. 26). Love and enthusiasm for languages, for teaching and more specifically, language teaching emerged as the most salient theme from the findings. Many of the participants reported to have fallen in love with language and / or teaching ever since childhood (see Figures 12 and 13). Such vivid expressions of their love and
enthusiasm / passion for what they do, and the way in which they so wholeheartedly embrace L2 teaching, speak volumes about participants’ intrinsic motivation and their commitment to student learning (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, 1996).

These themes of love, enthusiasm and other positive emotions connect well with many of the theories represented in the unified framework. Specifically, the symbol of the heart depicted at the centre along with the word “love” in close proximity, are important components of the unified framework representing holistic teaching and learning. The works of several theorists inform this part of the framework (King, 1968; Miller, 2000, 2007, 2010; Palmer, 1998; hooks, 1994, 2003; Loreman, 2011). In particular, Loreman’s framework for theorizing love as pedagogy which culminates in the affirmation that “passion infuses all aspects of love” (2011, p. 14) clearly served as powerful lenses for understanding the findings.

Furthermore, this passion displayed by the participants reflects the idea of eros as a motivating force (hooks, 1994; Miller, 2007, 2010) which enhances their efforts to be “self-actualizing… and provides epistemological grounding” (hooks, 1994), as well as an invigorating energy for themselves and their students in the classroom. Similarly, the findings relating to participants’ sharing of who they are - notably, their appreciation of their role as language instructors, the joy that they derive from this activity as well as the overall quality of their experience - can be tied to the notion of “optimal experience” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, 2009). This, coupled with the fact that the participants seemed intrinsically motivated to fully engage in their teaching connects directly to Csikszentmihalyi’s (1990) theory of flow, which formed an integral part of the framework (depicted by the arrows in the model).

Moreover, participants’ description of their role as “facilitator”, “mentor”, “coach”, “guide”, “champion of the language” reflects their deep commitment to their students’ learning. It is clear that they do not see themselves merely as “transmitters” of knowledge and skills, but also as partners with their students in helping them to develop critical thinking skills and a “thirst for knowledge”. This brought into focus another set of lenses used in the framework: namely the (inter)connected pedagogical orientations model (see Figure 7) which consisted of a blend of Miller and Seller’s (1990) 3T Model, as well as Kumaravadivelu’s (2003) teacher-role conceptual framework and Cummins’ Nested Pedagogical Framework (2001, 2009). In addition, the conceptual framework proposed by Schön (1983) pertaining to reflective teachers, as well as Cranton’s (2003) suggestions for “critical self-reflection” and openness to alternatives as key strategies in the pursuit of transformative teaching, were also useful in understanding these findings.
These also served as suitable lenses for interpreting the findings in Chapter 6 which related primarily to participants’ reflections on their L2 learning, the insights gained from these experiences, ways in which these have served to inform beliefs and assumptions, and subsequently their approach or orientation to teaching. The insights that participants reported to have gained from their L2 learning include: the need for patience and empathy, the need to pay attention to, and care for students, making intuitive connections, being aware of context and offering variety, as well as overcoming fear by taking risks and learning from their mistakes (see Figure 15). These findings clearly demonstrate “an openness to alternatives” (Cranton, 2003) and are directly related to transformative approaches to teaching - thoroughly explained in the (inter)connected pedagogical orientations framework (the word “transformation” has been mentioned and prominently placed within the image of the heart in the unified framework).

In addition, the findings also revealed participants’ acknowledgement of having embraced CLT as their preferred approach to language teaching, while incorporating a variety of methods and strategies; this effort culminated in a complex blend of eclecticism and intuition on the part of participants. The complexities involved in the participants’ endeavour to “cross the threshold” and venture “beyond methods” in their approach to the language teaching and learning curriculum were further analysed and interpreted specifically through the use of Cummins’s Nested Pedagogical Framework (2001) and Kumaravadivelu’s (2003) teacher-role conceptual framework. The instructors’ commitment to facilitating students’ learning (and motivation to learn) inspired the use / combination of several different methods and an overall communicative approach to teaching in order to attend to the various needs of their students. This revealed a number of interconnections with holistic concepts and practices, which could be identified through the various conceptual frameworks. In particular, the pedagogical framework established by Miller and Seller, notably the 3T Model, served as some very useful lenses for further identifying and understanding participants’ approach to teaching.

Furthermore, this (inter)connected pedagogical orientations framework, indubitably provided some suitable lenses for understanding and interpreting the findings derived from the orientation inventory coupled with the rich discussion / professional dialogue among core participants regarding their beliefs about a variety of curricular-related topics which served to further explore their orientation to the curriculum. Moreover, participants’ responses manifested that their orientation to the curriculum involved not only the mere transmission of the grammar rules but also their facilitation of a fair amount of transaction in their classrooms. Although the Orientation Inventory revealed that instructors generally
displayed a greater propensity towards the transaction position (T2), ultimately, the professors’ commitment to transforming their students’ learning experiences both inside and outside of the classroom was quite evident through the variety of activities which involved engagement of the whole student – intellectually, physically, emotionally, aesthetically and spiritually.

**Framing the Activities: Peering Through Multiple Lenses**

Having explored in Chapter 6, the various theories related to participants’ beliefs about language teaching and learning as well as their orientation to the curriculum, the question of how participants go about putting these theories into practice became the focus of the data findings as presented in Chapter 7. Hence, participants’ classroom practices along with their facilitation of other activities related to language learning in various contexts, were examined, analyzed, discussed and interpreted through the use of multiple lenses presented in my integrated framework. First of all, the (Inter) Connected Pedagogical Framework (see Figure 9) proved to be suitable lenses for making sense of much of the data related to the range of activities teachers actually facilitated within and outside of the classroom. A great majority of the activities, particularly those involving social interaction through small group or pair work, clearly connect to the theories and perspectives related to holistic and communicative approaches to language teaching (Cummins, 2001, 2009; Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Miller & Seller, 1985/1990).

Further, as the data revealed, participants valued active learning and participation among their students, as evidenced by the care and attention, as well as the time they were willing to invest in creating and preparing communicative-experiential types of activities. In addition to honouring individual learning styles, they strived to affirm students’ identities and their lived experiences. The theoretical lenses provided by Vygotsky’s (1978) conceptualization of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) which forms part of the integrated framework (represented by the arrows) help to further deconstruct the teaching / learning processes observed in this study. Described as “essentially holistic” (William & Burden, 1997), ZPD is not only crucial in the development of language and thought; it also stresses mediation between the learners and their environments. In addition, the goals that participants sought to achieve in their language classrooms connect to Cummins’ (2001) description of ZPD as this “interpersonal space where minds meet and new understandings can arise through collaborative interaction and inquiry” (p. 30). Furthermore, the data show that this zone of meaning-construction and learning (Newman, Griffin and Cole, 1989) extends to diverse learning contexts and includes the community (see Figure 23). This is where Kolb’s (1984) Experiential Learning Cycle becomes useful, as it provides a frame of reference for many of the service and community-based learning initiatives.
undertaken or facilitated by the participants. This commitment to providing students with a language learning experience which was rewarding, fun, and enjoyable, coincides with Csikszentmihalyi’s (1990) Flow Theory - another lens for gaining a deeper understanding of the findings.

Finally, the process of facilitating these diverse / multifaceted relationships necessitates a great deal of responsibility or accountability on the part of the teacher. The hands symbolize this in the integrated theoretical framework. It is quite evident that while fulfilling the academic requirements / objectives of their language courses at City University, participants in this study have ventured to create what Palmer and Zajonc (2010) call an “integrative, transformative and humane environment for teaching and learning” (p. 75). Last but not least, in addition to being accountable to the community - through facilitation of campus-wide and various other activities involving the wider francophone community, the participants did not lose sight of what they considered as their most important area of accountability: being present to the whole student.

**Frames of Reference for Teaching Presence and Other Mysteries**

Teaching presence re-emerged as the focus of Chapter 8. The findings related to the instructors’ perspectives as well as the students’ voices with regards to teaching presence were examined in the quest to uncover the essence of presence. Salient among the emergent themes were: the notion of “being”, awareness of each other’s humanness, attention to and acceptance of students, communication and rapport building as well as the notions of having positive energy and being open to that mysterious process (see Figure 25). Although they interconnected with various parts of the integrated framework, to a great extent, a number of these themes were directly linked to the part of the framework depicted as the “U” - an adaptation of Senge et al.’s (2005) “Theory of the U” and Sharmer’s (2007) “Theory U”. As theorised by these authors, the notion of presence comprises of three basic principles: an open mind, an open heart and an open will. The incorporation of Kessler’s (2005) conceptualization of teaching presence into this frame of reference added the element of respectful discipline which, according to the data findings, is paramount to teaching presence. In addition to the direct correlation between the Theory U and the emergent themes relating to teaching presence, there are other aspects of the framework which may help illuminate some of the findings. Notably, the symbol of the heart is interconnected to the Theory U as, according to Senge et al., the “open heart” is where “presencing” - the state of becoming fully present - takes place. Moreover, Hart’s (2011) notion of this knowledge by presence, speaks to both the theoretical

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and practical applications involving an opening unto ourselves and to the universe, which lies both within and outside of us.

The question of relationships also emerged as a major theme which in turn interconnects with several of the findings throughout the research. Tied to the notion of (inter)connectedness, there exist various types or levels of relationships which have been identified from the multiple sources of data. These relationships revolve mainly around the participants’ role in fostering / facilitating various degrees of connectedness with, and among students in the classrooms and other learning contexts. The student data also provided insights about the impact of some of these relationships on their learning and on their lives in general. Likewise, given this spirit of interconnectedness, different parts of the integrated framework have been useful in understanding the various types of relationships. First of all, as explained in Chapter 3, “Relationship” is one of the Three R’s represented by the symbol of the hands. One of the theories which is directly linked to the notion of interconnectedness - especially at the classroom level - is Johnson and Johnson’s (1994) theory of positive interdependence (as depicted by the arrows around the heart). Positive interdependence falls under the wider umbrella of cooperative learning which is described as “the heart of problem-based learning” (Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 2006).

As the data revealed, there are many interconnections between the participants’ approach to their language teaching and the principles of positive interdependence. For example, the “sink-or-swim” attitude – which calls for cooperation among students by encouraging them to work together as a team or community of learners – is similar to that which participants tried to achieve in their classrooms. (Sitelle’s analogy of being in the boat together is a vivid example of this). Instructors as well as students stressed the importance of small group and pair work as a way of fostering this spirit of positive interdependence in the classroom. As the students themselves reported, not only did these interactions allow for rapport building with their instructors, they also allowed them to get to know and develop strong bonds of friendships with their peers.

Finally, amid the various holistic interconnections which have been the focus of this research, the idea of what constitutes a soulful language teaching and learning environment was also examined through the use of the integrated theoretical framework. Given the close connection between the heart and the soul, the symbolism of the heart provided the most appropriate set of lenses for understanding this important aspect of holistic teaching and learning. The various conceptual frameworks proposed speak to that life-sustaining source which helps to bring balance to the inner and outer lives of both teachers and students (Miller, 2000; Moore, 1992; Kessler, 2000). The findings of this research reveal that the wide
variety of aesthetic practices that the participants facilitated provided the conditions which allowed students to fully engage in the learning experience. This involves making meaningful connections not only to the intellect, but also to their inner selves, others in the learning environment, as well as the cultural and other artistic representations, which are intrinsically linked to the language. As Kates and Harvey (2011) note in their book *The Wheels of Soul: An Inspiring International Dynamic*: “Aesthetic practices such as art, writing, music and singing invite the imagination and the heart to feel and express the range of human emotions and develop intuition and modes of interconnectedness” (p. 8).

**Re-visioning Wholeness Through Teaching Presence and Love**

As demonstrated by this review, there is a great deal of overlap among the theories included in the integrated framework adopted in this study. These allow for multiple layers of analysis and interpretation of the findings leading to several interconnecting themes. Having revisited my integrated framework, *vis-à-vis* the research findings, I found it necessary to refine the model in order to present a more unified vision which illustrates more clearly, the significance of teaching presence and love and their role in bringing about wholeness in teaching and learning relationships.

![Diagram of Teaching Presence](image)

**Figure 32. Properties of presence.**

Based on the findings derived from this study, it is clear that teaching presence is a fundamental tool for helping teachers maintain flow and connectedness in the classroom and goes a long way in fostering transformative teaching in the language classroom. The various properties of presence identified in this research, and as depicted in Figure 32, coincide with those outlined in the integrated theoretical and conceptual frameworks examined in this study.
Furthermore, as previously noted: “Holistic education is rooted in the presence of the teacher” (Miller, 2007, p. 190). This affirmation reawakened me to the importance of the notion of presence which led me to a new and deeper level of reflection and contemplation on its significance: What is presence and what does it mean to be rooted? I then focused on trying to make that connection between “root” and “presence”. From the infinite choice of words, why “rooted” in particular? It dawned on me that first of all the word “root” is very significant, on many levels: practical / physical, metaphorical / symbolic, even spiritual. This naturally led to a deeper awareness of the tree – the image most often associated with roots, which provide a vital source of support and sustenance. The roots keep the tree grounded, allowing it to grow, to flourish, and to give back, while drawing on the total richness of the other environmental sources which all work together as a connected whole.

Nonetheless, one cannot help but notice that the roots of a tree – oftentimes out of sight, discretely submerged beneath the surface of the earth – are unseen yet active, sometimes extending far outward in their search for vital resources: water, oxygen, minerals. Yet, although they may not be immediately exposed, we are aware of their existence; the strength of this presence eternally manifested through the rest of the tree – its trunk, its leaves, its flowers, its fruit. Sustained and nurtured by the roots, through their rich supply of nourishment, the tree is entrusted to the other forces of nature, like sunlight, which provides the vital energy for this complex system of growth. From the rich supply of oxygen to the immediate source of food that this process provides, human beings also become beneficiaries of this powerful manifestation of coexistence and survival. The fruit may in turn shrivel and fall to the ground; eventually offering a seed, waiting to be planted, to grow new roots, to begin anew and continue the cycle of sustenance, of growth, of renewal…

In many ways, the presence of the teacher in the classroom (and beyond) conjures similar imagery. The roots of the tree can be likened to the supportive hands of the teacher: planting a seed, providing care and nourishment, creating a space and time for learners. Under these conditions, students, in turn, would become increasingly engaged in their learning as they flourish and grow physically, emotionally and intellectually, thus continuing the cycle of giving, nurturing, renewing.
Therefore, the revised visual representation of the framework - as depicted in Figure 33 - is meant to capture the essence of the wide range of possibilities afforded by teaching presence and its interconnectedness to nature. It also illuminates the various niches that instructors can tap into in order to optimise their teaching presence – this endearing and important quality in the teaching and learning environment. The themes generated by teachers’ narratives also highlight a myriad of interconnected concepts identified by some prominent holistic educators and scholars as being closely linked to the notion of presence; these all come together to make it a “whole” experience. Although certain aspects may seem more central or pressing than others, there is one that is common to them all: It is the need to connect with students (and others) at a place where all human beings can be reached – at the heart.

Having an open heart constitutes one of the three vital qualities, which can potentially animate the full experience of teaching presence. The ability to tap into this space paves the way for continued growth and development – indeed, lifelong learning. By being truly present to the here and now, having an open heart and embracing that respectful discipline, we are not relegated to institutional and other constraints,
which often tend to dominate in the absence of presence. Through positive energy and deep awareness, teachers are able to tap into, cultivate and share this authentic presence, which constitutes the roots – and the fruits – of holistic education.

When examined within the context of my research, the findings from the various data point to this important question and reveal how post-secondary language instructors – through their presence – have made these connections in their own lives and practice. More importantly (at least for the instructors), the research reveals how they focused on helping students examine these relationships. It also reveals how they have managed to raise their students’ awareness as well as skills necessary to transform these relationships where appropriate.

Another small, but significant change in the refined model, is the inclusion of the word “love”. Although in the previous model it was linked to the symbolism of the heart, I felt that it needed to be emphasized (in words) given the fact that this notion permeates through all the different levels of relationships revealed in the data. We have already seen the power of **eros, philia** and **agape** as a motivating energy among the core participants who unanimously professed their love for teaching and languages. In addition, the notion of **ubuntu** – which refers to achieving self-actualization in interaction with others, is also an important notion of love which can greatly assist in the process of building community in the teaching-learning environment and beyond. Following is a discussion of some of the various implications of the research findings.
Implications

Growing New Roots and Planting New Seeds

In keeping with the purpose of this study, there were several distinct themes which emerged through the exploration of the (inter)connections between holistic education and second language teaching and learning in higher education. Despite various limitations such as those relating to space and time, as well as institutional constraints, instructors displayed a strong orientation towards holistic / transformative teaching. FSL and L2 classrooms can indeed provide a space where students feel engaged, and where they can build meaningful relationships. In other words, it is important to create a space where students feel connected to themselves, the language, their peers, the faculty and their communities.

Mandate for Operationalizing Holistic Education in the L2 Classroom

Based on my interpretation of the findings and the participant voices in my research, I have developed seven key interconnected components which support holistic teaching in post-secondary second language teaching-learning. By incorporating these components into the philosophy and practice of these programs, educators and teachers can promote a deeper, engaging and participatory approach to language learning.

Cultivating and Practicing Teaching Presence

It is clear that the presence of the teacher is of paramount importance in fostering transformative teaching by creating an atmosphere of mutual respect, cooperation and attitudes of overall well-being in their language classrooms. Similar qualities were suggested by both the teachers and their students with regards to their understanding of teaching presence and how it will contribute to relationship-building and interconnectedness in the language classroom. These include:

- Being present in the “here and now” (both physically and emotionally)
- Being authentic, friendly and approachable
- Being aware, attentive and accepting each other’s humanness
- Fostering positive communication though respectful discipline and mutual trust
- Having positive energy and acknowledging “that mysterious process”
As has been validated by the relevant literature (Kessler, 2000, 2005; Miller, 2007, 2010, Hart, 2011; Johnson & Neagley, 2011; Senge et al., 2005; Sharmar, 2007; van Menen, 1986) teaching presence is a fundamental tool for teachers in helping them maintain flow and connectedness in the classroom. As Nell Noddings asserts: “What I must do is to be totally and non-selectively present to the student – to each student as he addresses me. The time interval may be brief, but the encounter is total” (1980, p. 180). Furthermore, given that it constitutes the “root of holistic education” (Miller, 2007, p. 190), the presence of the teacher provides a vital source of support and sustenance for teachers and their students and creates a space where they can all grow and flourish emotionally, intellectually and spiritually.

**Fostering Mind / Body Connections**

As reiterated in this study, language is embodied, and this should be reflected in its teaching and learning. Awareness of this phenomenon will help motivate teachers to find creative ways of engaging both the mind and the body in the classroom. In order to engage learners’ minds, post-secondary L2 teachers need to ensure that their students acquire a strong grammar base, as well as develop their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. Although this has traditionally been done through the transmission approach involving rote learning and memorization, activities such as debates, discussions, guided conversations, games, and integrating drama (role-play, humorous skits, expressive reading etc.) can orient teachers more towards transformation.

Along with honouring the various requirements of their courses and programs, teachers must also make use of their own intuition. In the pursuit of wholeness, the role of intuition cannot be underestimated. Understanding the relationship between linear thinking and intuition can help teachers bridge these two elements of teaching and learning, which form an important distinguishing feature of holistic education (Miller, 2000, 2006, 2007). Whereas the traditional approaches tend to focus more on the head (i.e. intellectual thought, cognition), holistic teaching-learning recognizes the need to pay attention to other aspects of learning such as the heart and hands, thus incorporating the emotional, aesthetic, and spiritual components. Several holistic theorists have emphasised the need to cultivate this important notion in order to see more clearly the interconnectedness of reality (Emerson, 2003; Gandhi, 1988; Huxley, 1970; Miller, 1993, 2007). Achieved through various contemplative practices (notably meditation, body work, loving service) or simply through deep listening or paying attention to their surroundings, this
awareness also helps bring about balance in the lives of teachers and learners and enhances their ability to discern and make decisions in the learning environment. These ideas are congruent to what some scholars have referred to as being synonymous with wisdom, or the “thinking heart”.

It is also important for instructors to ensure that the body is engaged in the L2 classroom. This can be achieved by incorporating a variety of activities involving movement, dance, and other experiential-communicative activities. Although some instructors may not opt to directly engage in practices typically considered holistic - such as yoga and meditation - the instructors need to be aware of, and pay attention to students’ biological rhythms. For example, they should attempt to ensure that students are given regularly scheduled breaks, encourage conversation surrounding food, clothes, fashion, show sensitivity to diversity among students while at the same time raising awareness of individual, ethic and cultural stereotypes relating to the body. Furthermore, through their own spatial anchoring and through the variety of activities that they create, a great deal of movement / circulation can be facilitated in the classrooms.

**Developing a Sense of Belonging: Communication and Positive Interdependence**

As we have seen in the research, the importance of building and sustaining meaningful relationships proved to be both a source and a topic of education (Forbes, 1996). As reiterated by all the participant groups, we must engender an ambiance which encourages rapport amongst teachers and their students. There are a number of strategies that instructors can use in order to facilitate this endeavour. Some of these include: connecting with students and establishing open lines of communication (both verbal and non-verbal); getting to know their students (e.g. beginning with the simple, yet important first step of learning their names and conducting - and following through - on various diagnostic tests at the beginning of the semester); and taking a personal interest in their lives.

Not only is it important for teachers to develop rapport with their students, it is also important for them to encourage their students to develop respect for, and camaraderie with each other. We will recall Sitelle’s analogy of “being in the boat together” – the idea of helping each other and working as a team. This coincides with the sink-or-swim attitude promoted in cooperative learning environments and can be accomplished through the facilitation of various activities both inside and outside the classroom.

Furthermore, I believe that the L2 classroom should be considered as a space where students are able to interact and forge great friendships. Quite apart from being encouraged to work together
for the various assignments mandated by the course, students can greatly benefit from the ability to interact and maintain contact with their friends outside of the classroom. As the students themselves reported, the opportunity to establish friendship ties with their peers in their language classes engenders feelings of inclusion and motivates them to attend and actively participate in class. It is clear that this sense of belonging leads to full engagement and joy in the learning environment. Ornish states that: "The desire for love and intimacy is a basic human need as fundamental as eating, breathing, or sleeping – and the consequences of ignoring that need are just as dire" (cited in Hunt, 2010, p. 17).

It has become clear from this research study, that not only is it necessary for instructors to develop and maintain good relations with their students, it is also important that the students themselves get to know and interact with their peers. Through various creative activities facilitated by their instructors, students can be encouraged to work collaboratively in small groups or pairs (Johnson, 2004, 2006; Johnson & Johnson, 1994, 1999; Johnson, Johnson & Smith, 1993; Miller, 2007), thereby fostering the spirit of cooperation and positive interdependence (Johnson & Johnson, 1994, 1999; Miller, 2007).

These approaches will be advantageous to all parties, as some students will feel less self-conscious and thus more willing to work together with their peers in smaller groups. Creating an atmosphere of trust where students feel psychologically safe is a key factor in building community in the classroom. This idea of cooperative learning is highly valued in holistic as well as second language teaching and learning contexts. As highlighted in my integrated theoretical framework, it is in this zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978) where teachers and learners share this interpersonal space (Cummins, 2001). Johnson and Johnson’s theory of interdependence along with Gibb’s (1987) notion of tribes confirm the many reasons why instructors and students alike can all benefit from this spirit of cooperation, which extends well beyond the classroom. Apart from these human relationships, it is also important to foster a sense of connectedness to the language itself as well as the related cultural representations – on an intellectual as well as on a more personal / emotional level.

**Constructing Knowledge of Language, Culture and Soulful Learning**

Like the participants in this study, post-secondary language instructors can celebrate their role as language instructors and the freedom that this affords them to introduce and explore a wide range of topics in their classrooms. Through discussions, debates, mock conferences, and the like, they are able to help students tap into their prior knowledge and other areas of interest and open their minds
to the realities of the world around them. By encouraging students to participate in the other forms of art or media such as theatre, movies, music, instructors can demonstrate their commitment to helping students connect with the language itself at many different levels. This will go a long way in fostering whole teaching and learning in the language classroom. To this end, instructors need to create activities designed to help students connect with the language emotionally, physically, and aesthetically. With the intention of raising students’ awareness of the inseparable link between language and culture, teachers can actively facilitate various cultural lessons involving activities, which will allow students to gain an appreciation of various parts of the francophone world.

Raising awareness of the intrinsic link between language and culture, can further contribute to a soulful language learning experience: One where students find a sense of connectedness beyond just the linguistic aspect to one that is positive, soothing and fulfilling. Aptly described by one of the participants as “that buzz in the air”, soulful learning is fuelled by an energy which allows students and teachers alike, to feel connected to the culture and other artistic connections that animate the language. This can be fostered in the following ways:

- accepting each other in the learning environment
- sharing cultural insights
- encouraging students’ free expression of values and opinions
- stimulating students’ sense of humour and creativity
- adding life or energy that allows students to “fall in love” with the language
- “touching” students with the language through various aesthetic experiences

Integrating these elements into their teaching will help instructors to infuse this sense of joy into the learning process, foster active participation, learner autonomy and ultimately, lifelong learning.

**Facilitating Experiential/Community-based Service Learning**

This study taught me so much about the other prospects for learning that can be made available to students, and the world of possibilities that exist for language learners. There are many ways in which instructors can raise awareness of the various activities / events on campus, and other programs offered on a regional, national and international level. When instructors encourage students to participate in the various activities on campus, they help their students to feel a sense of belonging to university life. Secretan (1996) makes reference to certain
educational institutions as being a sanctuary, offering that “it’s not a collection of parts, but an integrated system of souls – not so much a place but a state of mind in which they may flourish” (p. 38). Helping students develop a sense of community extends beyond the classroom or the university or college campus. As hooks observed:

    Engaged pedagogy not only compels me to constantly be creative in the classroom, it also sanctions involvement with students beyond that setting. I journey with students as they progress in their lives beyond our classroom experience. In many ways, I continue to teach them, even as they become more capable of teaching me. The important lesson that we learn together, the lessons that allow us to move together within and beyond the classroom, is one of mutual engagement. (1994, p. 205).

As evidenced by the findings in this research, this reflects the type of engaged pedagogy which can be operationalized in the post-secondary language classrooms.

**Demonstrating Love and Enthusiasm for Teaching**

    One of the most striking revelations of this research is the sheer love and enthusiasm that the participating teachers expressed either for the language(s) that they had learned and were subsequently teaching or for the act of teaching itself (or both). There is no doubt that this expressed love of the language shows the deep connection that teachers need to have to what they actually do in the classroom, and the extent to which students stand to benefit from this.

    The process of reflecting on, and relating stories about their own journey as language learners and subsequently as teachers did not constitute merely a walk down memory lane, but also provided an opportunity to for self-discovery. In many cases, this process helps to rekindle the awe and wonder of their childhood language learning (or teaching) as well as their past and present experiences as teachers in their own classrooms. Whether consciously or unconsciously, this process of “core reflection” can also help teachers make connections to their inner-selves and align their professional identities with [their] sense of purpose, passion, and teaching ideals” (Kim & Greene, 2010, p. 109). It allows them to tap into their own human capacities and access various spiritual dimensions (Johnson, 2011). Self-knowledge is perhaps one of the most important aspects of holistic teaching and learning. “Know thyself!” These famous words uttered by Socrates centuries ago, have graced the pages of many philosophers’ writings and can also be found in contemporary publications concerned with improving the quality of life. As Socrates further noted, “an unexamined life is not worth living.”
In his book *Emotional Intelligence*, Goleman (1995/2005) devotes an entire chapter entitled “Know Thyself” to the exploration of self-awareness, which he cites as one of the most important ways of gaining insight into the true meaning of intelligence. Holistic education theorists also stress the importance of self-knowledge in helping teachers and students alike develop self-worth, self-respect and self-love. These are all interconnecting nodes in the process of ultimately reaching self-actualization (hooks, 1994, 2000; Maslow, 1970). This process of reflection constitutes an important aspect of teaching and teacher development. (Cranton, 2003; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Dominicé, 2000; Goodson, 1992; Goodson & Sikes, 2001; Josso, 2000; Piccardo, 2010b; Pineau, 1983; Pineau & Le Grand, 2002; ; Schön, 1983).

On the question of language teaching in particular, the various themes which emerged in their narratives resulted from instructors’ reflection on several aspects of language teaching (and learning) and helped them to connect to their own process. As reiterated by many scholars (Gardner, 1985; Gardner and Lambert, 1972; Norton, 2000), these moments of self-reflection can serve to provide teachers with the opportunity to share insights gained from their experiences and to identify ways in which these can be used to inform their teaching.

As we have seen, several sub-themes emerged from the participants’ self-exploration, notably empathy “that great thing” (Cook, 2003). Instructors can become more empathetic to the plight of their students, through their common experiences. According to theorists and researchers this process of reflecting on their own lived experiences as learners and subsequently as teachers, constitutes an important aspect of teaching, and teacher development (Cook, 2003; Palmer, 1998; Greene, 1973; Ellis, 2006). Ultimately, this all ties in with the notion of love. Shelton-Colangelo et al. (2007, p. 2) refer to teachers’ “reciprocity”, with students citing other modern educational theorists (Noddings, Miller, hooks, Palmer) who have recognized the need to embrace the role of love and to cultivate an environment of freedom, and not fear in the teaching-learning environment. Krishnamurti (1981) asserts that:

> The right kind of education must take into consideration this question of fear because fear wraps our whole outlook on life. To be without fear is the beginning of wisdom, and only the right kind of education can bring about the freedom from fear in which alone there is deep and creative intelligence  (p. 34).

It was primarily from the comments of students that we can fully appreciate this “creative intelligence” which instructors model and encourage in the learning environment.
In *Teaching Community*, bell hooks (2003) discusses the question of love in her chapter entitled “Heart to heart: teaching with love”. She laments that this important ingredient in fostering human relationships is almost taboo in education. hooks points out that while teachers’ declaration of love for the subject that they are teaching is usually appreciated and encouraged by colleagues and administrators, such declaration of love for their students may on the contrary, be viewed with scepticism and even caution. hooks articulates as follows:

Professors are expected to publish, but no one really expects or demands of us that we really care about teaching in uniquely passionate and different ways. Teachers who love students and are loved by them are still “suspect” in the academy. Some of the suspicion is that the presence of feelings, of passions, may not allow for objective consideration of each student’s merit.… In reality special bonds between professors and students have always existed, but traditionally they have been exclusive rather than inclusive (1994, p. 19).

Like hooks, Palmer (1998), suggests that the emphasis on “objectivity” may hinder teachers’ inclination to attend to emotions and feelings in their practice. In many ways, the abovementioned observations are relevant to the implications of the findings in this research. Teachers’ love and passion (for teaching and languages) also involves intimacy and bonding with their students. Moreover, as was observed, and affirmed - primarily through the students’ narratives - there is no doubt as to the love which existed between teachers and students and that passionate teaching and learning is alive and well in post-secondary language classrooms.

**Implications for Program Administrators**

In order to promote a deeper, engaging and participatory approach to teaching-learning, it would be advisable for administrators in the language programs to work more closely with instructors and to encourage such endeavours. Teachers need to be supported in their efforts to facilitate various initiatives aimed at engaging the whole student – mind, body and spirit - in the learning process. Further, maintaining awareness of class size in designing language programs is also very important. Classes should be kept small in order to sustain the spirit of connectedness, inclusion and balance which is essential in building meaningful learning communities in the classroom, on campus, within the community as a whole. As hooks notes: “If classes become so full that it is impossible to know students’ names, to spend quality time with each of them, then the effort to build a learning community fails…” (1994, p. 204).
**Limitations of the Study**

First, I would like to acknowledge that a qualitative study -- which was the approach chosen in this inquiry -- is not typically considered generalizable (Merriam, 1998; Creswell, 2005). My research is no exception, particularly given its focus on six core post-secondary FSL instructors and a peripheral group of five other L2 educators. The various issues relating to general or specific limitations were interwoven throughout the chapter on methodology (Chapter 4), as appropriate. In particular, I discussed the legitimation of the study, by drawing on the work of methodologists Muholland and Wallace (2003). While acknowledging that “no set of criteria can guarantee truth in a postmodern world” (p. 3), Muholland and Wallace (2003) have identified strength, service and sharing as three sets of criteria for enhancing the legitimation of narrative study. As Creswell (2005) affirms: “Qualitative researchers strive for “understanding,” that deep structure of knowledge that comes from visiting personally with participants, spending extensive time in the field, and probing to obtain detailed meanings” (p. 201). My study sought to gain a deeper understanding of holistic education practices in the post-secondary language context and, in many ways reflect the ideas expressed in the above citation, given the fact that this investigation involved spending time in the field, conversing with teachers, students and others in the environment about their thoughts, feelings, actions etc. with regards to L2 teaching-learning. Additionally, the triangulated methods - including interviews, observations and questionnaires with teachers, surveys and focus groups with students - serve to substantiate the “validity” of my findings. Although this study focused on cases in a particular context (i.e. the post-secondary L2 / FSL), I believe that many L2 teachers in all language teaching contexts can find resonance with the deep descriptions of the findings generated by the various data sets informed by the voices of the participants in this research.

**Concluding Comments**

Although L2, especially FSL courses are promoted on the basis of the importance of French-English bilingualism and its benefits in Canadian society, it has been found that students who are intrinsically motivated generally find French language learning experience much more rewarding. This means that because of their love of language learning (for its own sake) or their desire to speak for reasons other than finding a good job, they are more likely to become fully engaged in their language learning as a lifelong activity; thus the idea of timeless learning advocated in holistic education (Miller, 2006).
From this research, I have learned that language teaching and learning requires a process of constant negotiation, because the question of relationships is so important in this endeavour. Building and maintaining relationships require negotiation. It calls for teachers and students alike to be aware of the everyday struggles of life and willing to open their minds and hearts to these struggles. Language teachers are equipped with the very tool that is needed to communicate ideas, feelings, emotions and find creative ways of using the language itself to take action and to bring about change in their communities. Furthermore, as noted in previous discussions in this thesis, the ultimate purpose in life is to be happy. The findings in this research are proof that there could be joy in the teaching and learning environment, that teachers and students can develop healthy, meaningful relationships built on love for themselves and each other and not fear or anxiety; that there could be mutual respect of each other, and that, as David Phillips commented in a community college graduation ceremony: While students and teachers may come together as strangers, they could “leave as friends” and continue the process of lifelong learning and discovery through a medium that could further equip them to achieve self-actualization and make meaningful change to their own lives and that of those around them.

Martin Luther King Jr. envisioned the “beloved community” built upon respect for individual and community consciousness, acceptance of cultural diversity, passion for justice and love. These qualities are congruent with the fundamental principles of holistic education, which seeks to take education from its traditionally fragmented state, to one where there is wholeness. This research helped me gain a deeper understanding of how a beloved community might be operationalized in our educational institutions. By exploring some of these interconnected concepts within a holistic education framework, there is little doubt that through consciously cultivating their teaching presence, participants succeeded in creating this “beloved community” in their language classrooms.

Generally speaking, community can be simply defined as “a place where two or more people have learned how to transcend their differences to successfully complete a common goal” (Wells, 2008, p. 157). An essential ingredient of a learning community is inclusiveness, which, along with connectedness and balance, constitutes the fundamental principles of holistic teaching and learning. An inclusive learning community requires an acceptance of members “for who they are and not what they wish they were” (Wells, 2008, p. 157) or for that matter, what we wish they were. As research shows, a fully inclusive educational approach is not only conducive to academic performance (Cole, Waldron & Majd, 2004; Fisher, Roach & Frey, 2002) but also strives for social and communication skill development (Fisher et al., 2002) and most importantly, social justice (Booth, 1996). Participants’ willingness to accept
differences and allow emotions in the classroom brought about mutual respect for the beautiful uniqueness of each member and this permeated the learning community. Therefore in a beloved community, all members need to be fully human, fully engaged in the learning experience, i.e., we all need to be present not only physically, but also emotionally, in order to create a safe space for self-awareness, personal growth, and most importantly, for spiritual growth.

This research has shown that fostering engagement in the language classroom can largely contribute to the broader spirit of connectedness which can, in turn, help overcome many of the problems associated with apathy, boredom, anxiety and fear. And as hooks (1994) reminds us: “Any classroom that employs a holistic model of learning will also be a place where teachers grow, and are empowered by the process” (p. 21). Through an awareness of the interconnectedness of all things, having an open heart, and being present to the whole student – mind, body and soul – post-secondary instructors (and their students) can help bring about transformation in the classrooms, the wider community and the world.

**Future Research Directions: Continuing the Conversation**

Based on the findings revealed in this study, it would be interesting to explore future research relating to various aspects of holistic approaches in the post-secondary, as well as other learning contexts and subject areas. In particular, more research is needed on the implementation of initiatives such as community-based service-learning in language programs at different levels of education.

As one of the students commented during the focus groups, “*the drawback from earlier [FSL] courses is that they don’t have service-learning. And I think that these students are missing out…*” It is clear that service-learning does provide a valuable learning experience for language learners and that it should be integrated into the languages courses offered in undergraduate programs. In addition to service-learning, study abroad programs should be made more accessible to all students enrolled in the language programs (including international students). In that way, all students might benefit from a soulful experience – which allows not only for language proficiency development, but also the cultural experiences which are intrinsically linked to language.

In addition, given its importance in fostering holistic interconnections, I strongly believe that more research is needed on the notion of teaching presence and how it can be integrated in teacher education programs for future language teachers, and for all teachers.
Epilogue

“We shall not cease from exploration. And at the end of our exploring, we will arrive where we started and know that place for the first time”

TS Eliot.

As I invited participants to share feedback on the impact of having participated in the research, I have included a brief outline of these reflections as an epilogue of sorts:

On overall teaching practice:

It certainly made me think more about my practices, and being more aware of what I was doing, why I was doing it and why I wasn’t doing some of the things that maybe I should be doing, that I knew were good but didn’t do because I didn’t have the time… All these things that after a while, you think I’ll just do it this way because it’s faster, I don’t have time to implement this. But it sort of made you think about things that you don’t do, or that you really should be doing or about certain aspects of your pedagogy … or assumptions that you had about your teaching, too. It made me want to go back to some of my books on pedagogy and sort of read about different things that I hadn’t read about...

On awareness of holistic teaching:

…I’m actually working on my course that I was going to teach in [France]... during the summer, definitely it’s making me think outside the box when I’m framing my course, because a lot of it has to do with being there and experiencing what’s out there. I’m a lot more flexible in terms of saying: OK, well maybe this particular course, instead of teaching it in the classroom, if I could take my students to city hall or a museum and teach the course there. There’s one course – I was actually working on it yesterday - that I’m teaching on food and wine in Touraine, so I was trying to think: Ok, what are we going to do? I though first about the transmission part that’s going to be “you know this” and then these are the specialities in the area and the course is from 10-1 and the second part be “ok one group is going to be responsible for getting appetizers, one group is going to be responsible for getting drinks, you know... divide them into four groups and then I want you to get local specialities, I’ve told you what/where the specialities are, when we come back, each group with whatever you’ve found, and we’re going to have lunch together.

On having a researcher in the classroom:

It’s always interesting to have someone in the classroom that would be interesting to actually talk with you and hear what you have to say from your perspective in the
classroom. And not just to hear the good things, but hear the bad things, like what are the things that you found absolutely unbearable when you came to my classroom and you thought of “God, I would never do that”, and somehow make me think about the things that I do.

**On collaboration with fellow instructors:**

And also, what I find with me, because it’s been a long time since I’ve been teaching, so I guess you get to a level of comfort where if you don’t have anybody coming to your classroom, it could be just doing things because you’ve always done them, this way. But then when you have someone challenge – or make you think about things, it makes you think maybe of other ways of doing things. Or even having this conversation, you know, it’s quite interesting, because we don’t do that enough, we should probably do it more regularly or talk about our teaching practices...

We unfortunately don’t take the time, and I see this as an opportunity, and I would be very interested to, and you know, I’ve seen [my colleagues] talk once, and maybe I’ll see them teach again, but see how you do things… and it doesn’t mean that I’m going to do it exactly the same way, but *oh, how does she do this?* Or: *This is a good idea; I’d like to do that!*

**On exploring other types of holistic teaching-learning**

For me it was interesting to put a name to what you do. Sometimes you do things instinctively, and then you say: *Oh, I did holistic teaching this year.* So from in this sense it definitely did…It makes me actually want to explore other types of holistic teaching as well. Service-learning is definitely one of them, but maybe there are more interesting, other types of holistic teaching, for example when my students mentioned to you that I took them outside to do a class over a cup of coffee, you said oh my God… but to me it was all so natural, just to, you know it was a beautiful day; maybe explore other teaching methods.

Some students also offered comments about their participation in the focus groups, generally citing it at a “cool” opportunity for conversing and airing their views with other students in that forum…
Merlin’s Final Thoughts

This research exploration has provided a window of opportunity to shed light upon, connect and synthesise the component parts of a vision into a coherent whole. Moreover, as I continue to reflect and progress upon this exploratory journey, I am reminded of the notion of *orientating*\(^{12}\), a concept proposed and described by Stephen Hall as follows:

Orientating begins with geography, but it reflects a need for the conscious self-aware organism for a kind of transcendent orientation that asks not just where am I, but where do I fit in this landscape? Where have I been and where shall I go and what values will I pack for the trip? …What culture of knowledge allows me to know what I know, and what grid of wisdom can I impose on my accumulated, idiosyncratic geographies? To orientate is to hop back and forth between landscape and time, geography and emotion, knowledge and behaviour (2004, p. 15).

This description fits well with the nature of my inquiry and the process of conscious reflection and contemplation which has characterized several of the interconnected questions that have helped to shape this current research. Indubitably, this journey of reflection and contemplation has served to strengthen my own philosophy on education as a lifelong activity and the key to providing leadership, equity and access. It has also incited a strong awareness of my own orientation and the recognition of multiple roles in the curriculum, teaching and learning relationship. As part of my current responsibilities as a community college language instructor, I continue to have the privilege to learn and grow.

This research has inspired me to continue my exploration of holistic education and in particular to become more aware of my presence in the post-secondary language classroom and consider its impact on my students…It has been a great joy and sometimes a challenge to try and implement some of what I had learned from the participants - both instructors and students - in my practice. As I write these words, I am reminded of the words of Maya Angelou: “When you learn, teach; when you get, give”. It is with this renewed spirit of academic humility that I approach my work.

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\(^{12}\) I first came across this term in June, 2009 at a preconference workshop conducted by Karen Twotrees, entitled “Dynamic Regeneration; Rebuilding Sacred Relationship” presented at the 2\(^{nd}\) Annual Conference Decolonizing the Spirit: Spirituality. Healing and Renewal, OISE, University of Toronto, Ontario, Canada.
References


Appendix A

Core Participants' Information Letter and Consent

Dear [FSL Instructor]

My name is Merlin Charles and I am a doctoral candidate in the Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning/Second Language Education Program at the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education, University of Toronto. The purpose of this letter is to request your formal permission to participate in my doctoral thesis research entitled: *The Heart and Soul of Language Teaching: Making (Inter)Connections between Second Language and Holistic Education in the Post-Secondary Context.*

The aim of this doctoral research study is to gain a deeper understanding of second language teaching in the post-secondary context. Focusing particularly on FSL instruction, the study is further aimed at developing a comprehensive understanding of what teachers do to promote student engagement and joy in language learning. While the theories and assumptions underlying teachers’ approaches and strategies will constitute an important aspect of the investigation, significant emphasis will be placed on the ‘presence’ of the teacher participants and how they seek to engage the “whole student” – body, mind and spirit. You have been selected for this study based on the recommendations of key stakeholders and experts in the field and your self-identification as a holistic instructor.

The field work for this research study will take place over a period of six months (January, 2010 to August, 2010). Your participation in my research would involve the following:

1) completing a pre-interview inventory/questionnaire;
2) three interviews (two individual interviews and one focus group with three other FSL instructors who form part of my core participant group);
3) a maximum of six classroom observations
4) making course documents available (course outlines, lesson plans, past journal entries or any other documents/artefacts that you deem relevant to the research study)

Although the focus will be primarily on the teachers’ stories, it would be useful to do a brief content analysis of the course material (whether already present in the research setting, or generated during the research study), in order to identify the orientation to curriculum.

Each individual interview session will be approximately 60-90 minutes long and will be scheduled at a mutually agreed time and location. You will be encouraged to share your stories and experiences during the interviews. Your sharing can be in any form of representation, oral or written. The focus group interview will be approximately 90 minutes to 2 hours long. All interviews will be audio-recorded with your permission and subsequently transcribed. I would also like to video-tape the focus group interview as a back-up for transcription purposes in order to adequately identify participants’ contributions.
**Classroom observations** will potentially provide information on how teachers’ beliefs translate into practice in the classroom. The initial set of observations will be scheduled toward the beginning of the semester for one full week; subsequent visits will be scheduled once a month for the remainder of the semester. If permission is granted by yourself and some of your students, I would like to photograph or video-tape segments of planned activities such as concerts, plays, skits and other arts-based performances in order to capture the unique characteristics of holistic FSL teaching for further analysis.

I will respect the wishes of students who do not want to be photographed or video-taped. Students who grant their consent to be video-taped, will have the opportunity to view the tapes before they are published and may withdraw their consent at any time without penalty. If upon viewing the video, consent is withdrawn, anonymity will be ensured by blurring faces such that recognition will be impossible. Based on field notes, transcripts of interviews and audio-visual tapes and any other materials that you provide, I will develop a description of your experience. This description will be shared with you (in writing) and you may add details, correct inaccuracies or make deletions. You will receive an executive summary of the study.

Like all participants in this study, be assured that your involvement in this research will not pose any risks to you. The raw data gathered through this study will be kept confidential, known only to me and the members of my thesis committee. Confidentiality will be maintained at all times and pseudonyms will be used. Your participation is completely voluntary. You may choose to ignore any question when being interviewed. You have the right to withdraw at any phase of the study without any penalty or consequences. Upon completion of the research, the PhD thesis preparation and oral defence, all raw data collected will be stored in a secured location for five years and then destroyed or returned to you. You will also receive a gift certificate to Chapters/Indigo at the conclusion of the data collection process.

The data collected from this study will be analysed and incorporated into my doctoral research study, and may subsequently be used to write scholarly papers on second language teaching and learning and presentations may be made to relevant conferences. Although confidentiality cannot be guaranteed through focus groups the confidentiality of participants will be protected through the use of pseudonyms at all times, whether this data is utilized for doctoral research or for related papers or presentations.

By participating in this study, I believe that you will be helping to increase the knowledge base of the second language as well as holistic educational research community. It will also contribute a deeper understanding of the relationship between the teachers’ language teaching practices and practical knowledge. I would like to expand my understanding and to invite you to share your valuable experiences with others.

In order to go forward with your participation, please sign and return the attached consent form. There are two copies; keep one copy for your records. If you would like to discuss this opportunity in more depth, or wish any further clarification, please call me at (416) 288-8052 or
email me at xxxxxxx@xxxxxxxxx.xx. My supervisor is Professor Antoinette Gagné from the Modern Language Centre, Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning and you can contact her at (xxx) xxx-xxxx or email at xxxxxxxx@xxxxxxxxx.xx. If you would like to get further information regarding your rights as a participant, you can contact the Ethics Review Office at (xxx) xxx-xxxx or email at xxxxxxxx@xxxxxxxxx.xx.

Thank you for your cooperation. I look forward to working with you on this research.

Yours Sincerely,

Merlin Charles
CONSENT FORM

(To be signed by Core Participant - Post-Secondary/FSL Instructor)

Title of the Research: The Heart and Soul of Language: Making (Inter)Connections between Second Language Learning and Holistic Education in the Post-Secondary Context

Name of the Researcher: Merlin Charles

Address of Researcher: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx-xxxxxxxxxxxxx

Institutional Affiliation: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto

Please complete, sign and return to the researcher to participate in the study.

Please use the self-addressed stamped envelope when mailing.

Please check the appropriate box for each line.

I consent:

[ ] To complete an inventory/questionnaire for this study.
[ ] To be interviewed twice for this study.
[ ] To participate in one focus group interview for this study.
[ ] To be observed a maximum of 6 times for this study.
[ ] To be audio/video-recorded for this study.

Signature of participant: _____________________________________________

Name (please print): _________________________________________________

Date: _______________________________

Email (please print clearly): ___________________________________________
Appendix B

Administrative Heads' Information Letter and Consent

Dear [Administrative Head],

My name is Merlin Charles and I am a doctoral candidate in the Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning/Second Language Education Program at the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education, University of Toronto. The purpose of this letter is to request your formal permission to participate in my doctoral thesis research entitled: The Heart and Soul of Language Teaching: Making (Inter)Connections between Second Language and Holistic Education in the Post-Secondary Context.

The aim of this doctoral research study is to gain a deeper understanding of second language teaching in the post-secondary context. Focusing particularly on FSL instruction, the study is further aimed at developing a comprehensive understanding of what teachers do to promote student engagement and joy in language learning. While the theories and assumptions underlying teachers’ approaches and strategies will constitute an important aspect of the investigation, significant emphasis will be placed on the ‘presence’ of the teacher participants and how they seek to engage the “whole student” – body, mind and spirit.

I would like the instructor, [name], in your program to be a core participant in my research from January, 2009 to August, 2010. This will involve: 1) completing a pre-interview inventory; 2) three interviews (two individual and one focus group interview with three other post-secondary instructors) 3) a maximum of six classroom observations; and 4) making course documents available (course outlines, lesson plans, or any other documents/artefacts relevant to the study).

Each individual interview will be approximately 60 to 90 minutes long (the focus group interview will last approximately 2 hours) and will be held at a mutually agreed time and location. Classroom observations will potentially provide information on how teachers’ beliefs translate into practice in the classroom. The initial set of observations will be done for one full week, toward the beginning of scheduled classes; subsequent visits will be scheduled once a month for the remainder of the semester.

Toward the end of the observation period, data will also be gathered by inviting students to participate in a survey or focus group interview in order to find out their perceptions about their FSL teaching and learning experiences. Students (18 years and over) will be invited to volunteer their participation in a focus group interview with other classmates. Each focus group interview will be approximately two hours in length and will be scheduled at a place and time convenient to the group. Further, qualitative questionnaires will also be distributed to all students for the purposes of eliciting feedback on their learning experiences in their FSL classroom that they might be more open to sharing via this more private medium.
If permission is granted by the instructor and some students, I would like to photograph or video-tape segments of planned activities such as concerts, plays, skits and other arts-based performances in order to capture the unique characteristics of holistic FSL teaching for further analysis. I will respect the wishes of students who do not wish to be photographed or video-taped. Students who grant their consent to be video-taped, will have the opportunity to view the tapes before they are published and may withdraw their consent at any time without penalty. If upon viewing the video, consent is withdrawn, anonymity will be ensured by blurring faces such that recognition will be impossible.

I will also request permission to use audio-visual recordings for all focus group interviews in order to properly identify participants’ contributions and to transcribe and obtain the verbal data as text (Rasmussen et al. 2006). Based on audio-visual tapes and any other materials provided, I will develop a description of participants’ experiences. Instructors will be given the opportunity to add details, correct inaccuracies or make deletions to the analyzed data pertaining to them. An executive summary of the study will be made available to your department, instructor, as well as all participants if requested.

Involvement in this research will not pose any risks for you, the instructor, students, and your department/program/university (or college). Participation is totally voluntary, and no one is under any obligation to participate in this research study. Participating instructors and students can choose to ignore any question when being interviewed (or on the survey/inventory). Confidentiality will be maintained at all times and pseudonyms will be used. The university/college and the instructor will not be identified in any way. The raw data gathered through this study will be kept confidential, known only to me and the members of my thesis committee.

Participants have the right to withdraw at any phase of the study without any penalty or consequences. If a participant decides to withdraw from the study, I will destroy all data pertaining to him/her at the time of withdrawal. Upon completion of the research, the PhD thesis preparation and oral defence, all raw data collected (audio-visual tapes, transcripts, portraits and copied material) will be stored in a secured location for five years and then destroyed or returned to the participant. Core participating instructors will receive a $40 gift certificate to Chapters/Indigo at the conclusion of the data collection process, and a light meal or refreshments will be provided during the focus group interviews.

The data collected from this study will be analysed and incorporated into my doctoral research study, and may subsequently be used to write scholarly papers on second language teaching and learning and presentations may be made to relevant conferences. Although confidentiality cannot be guaranteed through focus groups the confidentiality of participants will be protected through the use of pseudonyms at all times, whether this data is utilized for doctoral research or for related papers or presentations.
By participating in this study, I believe that your department, the instructors and the students can potentially help the second language/FSL as well as holistic educational research community increase their understanding of the relationship between teachers’ reflective practice and practical knowledge. I would like to expand my understanding and to invite the instructors and students to share their valuable experiences with others. I would be happy to provide you with a summary or a complete report of the results of the research and present them to all the participants involved in the research.

In order to conduct the session of classroom observation in your department, please sign and return the attached consent forms to me. There are two copies; please keep one copy for your records. If you would like to discuss this opportunity in more depth, or wish any further clarification, please call me at 416-288-8052 or email me at xxxxxxx@xxxxxxxxx.xx. My supervisor is Professor Antoinette Gagné from the Modern Language Center, Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning at OISE/UT and you can contact her at (xxx)xxx-xxxx or email at xxxxxxx@xxxxxxxxx.xx. If you would like to get further information regarding the rights of a participant, you can contact the Ethics Review Office at (xxx)xxx-xxxx or email at xxxxxxx@xxxxxxxxx.xx.

Thank you for your cooperation. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Merlin Charles
CONSENT FORM

(To be signed by Administrative Head – University/College Language Department)

Title of the Research: The Heart and Soul of Language: Making (Inter)Connections between Holistic and Second Language Learning Education in the Post-secondary Context

Name of the Researcher: Merlin Charles

Address of Researcher: xxxxx-xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx-xxxxxxxxxxxxx

Institutional Affiliation: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto

Please complete, sign and return to the researcher to participate in the study.

Please use the self-addressed stamped envelope when mailing.

I, ______________________________, give permission for the study described in the attached letter to be carried out at ________________________________ [campus].

Signature of representative:__________________________________________________________

Name (please print):___________________________________________________________

Date: _________________________________
Appendix C

Students' Information Letter and Consent

Dear Students:

My name is Merlin Charles and I am a doctoral candidate in the Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning/Second Language Education Program at the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education, University of Toronto. The purpose of this letter is to request your formal permission to participate in my doctoral thesis research entitled: The Heart and Soul of Language Teaching: Making (Inter)Connections between Holistic and Second Language Education in the Post-Secondary Context.

The aim of this doctoral research study is to gain a deeper understanding of second language teaching in the post-secondary context. Focusing particularly on French as a second language (FSL) instruction, the study is further aimed at developing a comprehensive understanding of what teachers do to promote student engagement and joy in language learning. On the one hand, the theories and assumptions underlying teachers’ approaches and the strategies that they employ will constitute an important aspect of the investigation. However, on the other hand, significant emphasis will be placed on the ‘presence’ of the teacher participants and how they seek to engage the “whole student” – body, mind and spirit.

The field work for this research study will take place over a period of one semester (from January to April, 2010 or from May to August, 2010). Your participation in my research would involve:

1) completing a brief questionnaire;
2) participating in a focus group interview.

The purpose of the questionnaire – which will be distributed to all students in your class toward the end of the semester - is to obtain feedback on your learning experiences in your post-secondary FSL program/classroom. I hope that as many students as possible will participate in this questionnaire. I am also looking for some volunteers to take part in a focus group. Each focus group interview will comprise of up to six students in a post-secondary FSL program. The group interview will be approximately 90 minutes to two hours long and will take place on campus or at a mutually agreed place and time. The interview will be audio-recorded with your permission and subsequently transcribed. I would also like to video-tape the focus group interview as a back-up for transcription purposes in order to adequately identify participants’ contributions. I will provide a light meal / refreshments during the focus group interview.

Further, I will be visiting your class four to six times throughout the semester to observe how your instructor teaches French. During some of these visits, I would like to photograph or videotape segments of planned activities such as concerts, plays, skits and musical performances and other arts-based activities, in order to capture the unique characteristics of holistic FSL teaching.
This will be used exclusively for my research as a backup for my field notes and for further analysis. I will respect the wishes of students who do not want to be photographed or video-taped. Students who grant their consent to be video-taped, will have the opportunity to view the tapes before they are published and may withdraw their consent at any time without penalty or recourse. If upon viewing the video, consent is withdrawn, anonymity will be ensured by blurring faces such that recognition will be impossible.

Like all participants in this study, be assured that your involvement in this research will not pose any risks to you. The raw data gathered through this study will be kept confidential, known only to me and the members of my thesis committee. Although confidentiality cannot be guaranteed through focus groups, the confidentiality of participants will be protected through the use of pseudonyms at all times. Your participation is completely voluntary. You may choose to ignore any question on the survey.

The data collected from this study will be analysed and incorporated into my doctoral research study, and may subsequently be used to write scholarly papers on second language teaching and learning and presentations may be made to relevant conferences. Whether this data is utilized for doctoral research or for related papers or presentations, the confidentiality of the participant will be protected through the use of pseudonyms at all times.

By participating in this study, I believe that you will be helping to increase the knowledge base of the second language as well as holistic educational research community. It will also help us gain a better understanding of the relationship between the teachers’ language teaching practices and practical knowledge. I would like to expand my understanding and to invite you to share your valuable experiences with others.

In order to go forward with your participation, please sign and return the attached consent form. There are two copies; keep one copy for your records. If you would like to discuss this opportunity in more depth, or wish any further clarification, please call me at (416) 288-8052 or email me at xxxxxxx@xxxxxxxxxx.xx. My supervisor is Professor Antoinette Gagné from the Modern Language Centre, Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning and you can contact her at (xxx) xxx-xxxx or email at xxxxxxx@xxxxxxxxxx.xx. If you would like to get further information regarding your rights as a participant, you can contact the Ethics Review Office at (xxx) xxx-xxxx or email at xxxxxxx@xxxxxxxxxx.xx.

Thank you for your cooperation. I look forward to working with you on this research.

Yours Sincerely,

Merlin Charles
CONSENT FORM
(to be signed by FSL/Post-Secondary Student)

Title of the Research: The Heart and Soul of Language: Making (Inter)Connections between Second Language Learning and Holistic Education in the Post-Secondary Context

Name of the Researcher: Merlin Charles

Address of Researcher: xxxxx-xxxxx-xxxxx

Institutional Affiliation: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto

Please complete, sign and return to the researcher to participate in the study.

Please use the self-addressed stamped envelope when mailing.

Please check the appropriate box for each line.

I consent:

[ ] To complete a survey/questionnaire for this study.
[ ] To participate in one focus group interview for this study.
[ ] To be observed for this study.
[ ] To be audio/video-recorded for this study.
Appendix D

Peripheral Group of L2 Instructors' Information Letter and Consent

Dear [L2 Instructor],

My name is Merlin Charles and I am a doctoral candidate in the Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning/Second Language Education Program at the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education, University of Toronto. The purpose of this letter is to request your formal permission to participate in my doctoral thesis research entitled: *The Heart and Soul of Language Teaching: Making (Inter) Connections between Holistic and Second Language Education in the Post-Secondary Context.*

The aim of this doctoral research study is to gain a deeper understanding of second language teaching in the post-secondary context. The study is further aimed at developing a comprehensive understanding of what teachers do to promote student engagement and joy in language learning. On the one hand, the theories and assumptions underlying teachers’ approaches and the strategies that they employ will constitute an important aspect of the investigation. However, on the other hand, significant emphasis will be placed on the ‘presence’ of the teacher participants and how they seek to engage the “whole student” – body, mind and spirit. You have been selected for this study based on the recommendations of key stakeholders and experts in the field, and your self-identification as a holistic instructor.

Your participation in my research would involve an individual interview and/or one focus group interview with four to six other second language post-secondary instructors. The focus group interview will be approximately 2 hours long and will be scheduled at the convenience of the group. All interviews will be audio-recorded with your permission and subsequently transcribed. I would also like to video-tape the focus group interview as a back-up for transcription purposes in order to adequately identify participants’ contributions. You will be encouraged to share your stories and experiences during the interviews. Your sharing can be in any form of representation, oral or written. I will provide a light meal or refreshments during the focus group interview.

Based on the transcripts of audio-visual tapes and any other materials that you provide, I will develop a description of your experience. This description will be shared with you (in writing) and you may add details, correct inaccuracies or make deletions. You will receive an executive summary of the study if you wish.

Like all participants in this study, be assured that your involvement in this research will not pose any risks to you. The raw data gathered through this study will be kept confidential, known only to me and the members of my thesis committee. Although confidentiality cannot be guaranteed through focus groups, the confidentiality of participants will be protected through the use of pseudonyms at all times. Your participation is completely voluntary. You may choose to ignore any question when being interviewed. You have the right to withdraw at any phase of the study without any penalty or consequences. Upon completion of the research, the PhD thesis
preparation and oral defence, all raw data collected (audio tapes, transcripts, portraits and copied material) will be stored in a secured location for five years and then destroyed or returned to you.

The data collected from this study will be analysed and incorporated into my doctoral research study, and may subsequently be used to write scholarly papers on second language teaching and learning and presentations may be made to relevant conferences. Whether this data is utilized for doctoral research or for related papers or presentations, the confidentiality of the participant will be protected through the use of pseudonyms at all times.

By participating in this study, I believe that you will be helping to increase the knowledge base of the second language as well as holistic educational research community. It will also help up gain a better understanding of the relationship between the teachers’ language teaching practices and practical knowledge. I would like to expand my understanding and to invite you to share your valuable experiences with others.

In order to go forward with your participation, please sign and return the attached consent form. There are two copies; keep one copy for your records. If you would like to discuss this opportunity in more depth, or wish any further clarification, please call me at (416) 288-8052 or email me at xxxxxxx@xxxxxxxxx.xx. My supervisor is Professor Antoinette Gagné from the Modern Language Centre, Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning and you can contact her at (xxx) xxx-xxxx or email at xxxxxxx@xxxxxxxxx.xx. If you would like to get further information regarding your rights as a participant, you can contact the Ethics Review Office at (xxx) xxx-xxx-xxxx or email at xxxxxxx@xxxxxxxxx.xx.

Thank you for your cooperation. I look forward to working with you on this research.

Yours Sincerely,

Merlin Charles
CONSENT FORM

(To be signed by Second Language/Post-Secondary Instructor)

Title of the Research: The Heart and Soul of Language: Making (Inter)Connections between Second Language Learning and Holistic Education in the Post-Secondary Context

Name of the Researcher: Merlin Charles

Address of Researcher: xxxxx-xxxxxx-xxxxxx

Institutional Affiliation: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto

Please complete, sign and return to the researcher to participate in the study.

Please use the self-addressed stamped envelope when mailing.

Please check the appropriate box for each line.

I consent:

[  ] To be interviewed for this study.
[  ] To participate in one focus group interview for this study.
[  ] To be audio/video-recorded for this study.

Signature of participant: ____________________________________________________

Name (please print):_________________________________________________________

Date: _______________________________

Email (please print clearly): ________________________________________________
Appendix E

Instructors’ Individual Interview Protocol

**Research Title:** “The Heart and Soul of Language: Making (Inter) Connections between Second Language Learning and Holistic Education in a Post-secondary Context”

**Time of interview:** _______________________

**Date:** __________________________________

**Place:** __________________________________

**Interviewer:** ______________________________________________________________

**Interviewee (Pseudonym):** ________________________________________________________

**Brief description of project:**

*These interviews are being conducted as part of a qualitative research study using a narrative/case study approach. This thesis dissertation work is aimed at discovering and describing how post-secondary FSL teachers adopt or implement holistic practices in their classrooms.*

*There will be two individual and one focus group interview; each will be geared towards a particular theme (or themes), and will be guided by the following themes/questions:*

**Individual Interview Phase One**

*Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. Today, I would like to ask you a few questions related to beliefs and assumptions about FSL instruction as well as methods and strategies that teachers employ in order to engage students. Please keep in mind the post-secondary context when answering these questions, as your teaching experience in that context is most relevant to this study.*

**Participant/Background information:**

- How long have you been teaching?
- What made you decide to teach second language/FSL?
- Where did you attend primary/secondary school; college or university?
- Do you have any experience as a Second language/FSL teacher elsewhere? If yes, how long?
- What was your experience like learning a second language* (if applicable)
- How has this experience influenced your teaching?
Beliefs and Assumptions about Second Language/FSL teaching and learning

- Who are you… as a teacher?
- What are your beliefs about Second language/FSL teaching, and how has this influenced your teaching?
- How do you see your role as a teacher in a post-secondary language classroom?
- What is the role of the student in the classroom?
- What, in your opinion, are the most important elements in an effective language learning program?
- To what extent is your teaching based on students’ needs? (How do you assess students’ needs?)
- How would you describe a “good language learner”?
- What is your attitude towards assessment in a language program?

Methods and Strategies

- How useful do you think instructional objectives are in teaching?
- Do you, or have you used any language teaching methods? OR
- What method of teaching do you use and why?
- Which ones have worked or not worked?

Individual Interview Phase II

*Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. Today, I would like to ask you a few questions related to the ‘presence’ of the teacher in the FSL classroom and its effectiveness in enhancing student engagement and lifelong learning. Please keep in mind the post-secondary context when answering these questions, as your teaching experience in that context is most relevant to this study.*

Beyond Methods… teacher presence

- What aspects of teaching do you enjoy the most/least?
- What activities do you enjoy doing most with your students?
- What do you enjoy most about (second) language/FSL teaching?
- Can you share any stories which would demonstrate your best experiences in the language classroom?
- How would you describe a happy/joyful (language) learning environment and how can it be facilitated in the post-secondary context?
- What conditions need to be in place so that students can experience joy in FSL learning?
- How do you as a teacher seek to enhance/ cultivate your presence in the classroom?

“Soulful” language learning

- How do you engage the “whole student” – body, mind and spirit?
o How do you foster active learning and collaboration among students in your classroom?
o How do you help students develop respect of diverse talents?
o What do you think is the role of spirituality in the language classroom?
o How would you describe a “soulful” (language) learning environment?
o How do you encourage students to become lifelong learners?

Other
  o How well are we preparing our students/teachers to face the reality of our classroom for the 21st century?
o What challenges do you face as a college/university teacher?
Appendix F

Students’ Focus Group Interview Questions

Research Title: The heart and soul of language teaching: Making (Inter)connections between second language and holistic education in the post-secondary context

Duration: 1 ½ to 2 hours

Date:________________________________________________________

Time of Interview: ___________________________________________

Location: ____________________________________________________

Interviewer: _________________________________________________

Student Names: (pseudonyms)

In keeping with the objectives of this study, please share your experience of engagement of “the whole student” (i.e. mind, body and spirit/soul) in your language class?

What was your experience of second language (FSL) like before taking this course?

What have you enjoyed the most about your language class/course? OR

What aspects of your language class do you find most engaging?

What did you enjoy the least? OR:

What aspects of your language class do you find least engaging?

Discuss any experiences of learning/practicing your second language outside of the classroom?

What are your perceptions of how well the class’ learning preferences matched the teaching strategies that your instructor employed?

How would describe the “ideal” second language teacher? OR What would you say is your metaphor for a good language teacher?

How would you describe the “good” language learner?

How would you describe your relationship or level of interaction with your peers in your language course as compared to the other courses?

What changes would like to see in your French class?
Appendix G

Classroom Observation Protocol

Teaching|Classroom Observation Chart

Instructor/Participant (Pseudonym):

Course: 
Programme: 
Module: 

Observer:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Observations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General observations:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Attendance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Setting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Classroom layout</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patterns of Interaction:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Instructor/Student</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Student/student</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Specific learning objectives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>planned for the session...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- nature of activities (small</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>group; whole class)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructor’s general teaching</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>practice during session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify how participant:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A) Maintains student interest</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;engagement&quot; to end of the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B) Choice, use (interpretation)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of material</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C) Encourages students to</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>think critically during the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D)</strong> Encourages student to relate what he or she has seen or heard to their own experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E)</strong> Encourages student to offer own knowledge and opinion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>F)</strong> Communicates effectively</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>G)</strong> Leaves the student stimulated to think, feel and learn more about the subject or session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Innovative activities**

**Non-Verbal Communication**

**Reflection/Inquiry**
- What am I thinking?
- What am I feeling?
- What connections am I making?
- What patterns do I see?
- What anomalies do I perceive?

**Theory-Interpretation/Reflection**
- How would I interpret this info?
- What does the data mean?
- How does the data fit with the framework of the study?
APPENDIX G (Part II)
Classroom Observation Sample of Field Notes

Teaching/Classroom Observation Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Observations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>General observations:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Attendance</td>
<td>All 12 students present; male/female ratio: 5 males (quite uncommon in a French class!); students were all sitting together, occupying three rows;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Setting</td>
<td>Large auditorium style room (find out full capacity!!). Classroom much too big for the number of students; Sitelle tells me that on first day of class she had students move to one side due to vastness of room and obstructing podium; she said that the lab is better setup for language oral practice (see video tapes where she explains layout an merit of the lab...); Small windows at the top</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Classroom layout</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Patterns of Interaction:     |                                                                                                                                              |
| - Instructor/Student         | - greets students warmly, with a lot of enthusiasm. All students were already present in class, waiting! (See focus group interview – Student declares that they enjoy the class so much they did not mind being there early and waiting or her!!) She introduced me with ease ...Sitelle is not confined to podium – walks around the classroom, through the isles; encouraging students to ask questions; willingness to answer questions; during break continued to converse with students; field |
| - Student/student            |                                                                                                                                              |
many questions from students; at end of session, said farewell to students individually on their way out...

Students Tone: cheerful and bright

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of session</th>
<th>Hook: Introducing the word “Gargouiller” – to gaggle – brought bottles of water so that students could practice “r” sound in French.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Specific learning objectives planned for the session...</td>
<td>Funny!! Great “warm-up” exercise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- nature of activities (small group; whole class)</td>
<td>Small group work – students put into groups of two to practice demonstrative adjectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Other</td>
<td>Whole class</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructor’s general teaching practice during session</th>
<th>Maintained student interest and engagement to the end of the session (example of an expression that one student asked about in class “bruin de muquet”/“lady of the valley”; led to discussion about the flower; made connection with student’s life; one student said how much she loved the smell of that flower. In continuing her explanation of the reflexive verbs used that as example to differentiate between “sentir”[to smell] and “se sentir” [to feel] and again referred to the flower, much to the student’s delight!)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify how participant:</td>
<td>Game of Bingo! Great activity; students seemed to enjoy the thrill of the competition; (see game with instructions attached; Sitelle also talks about it during interview… gives rationale for introducing this game instead of doing a “dry “grammar exercise… certainly more fun and I got to play too!)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H) Maintains student interest “engagement” to end of the session</td>
<td>During the water gagging game not all students were willing to try it; but they all seemed really amused by it; at the end of the class, they left with their bottles of water and they all thanked her in French for the water.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I) Choice, use (interpretation) of material</td>
<td>At the end of the class, Sitelle congratulated students of having done “du très bon travail!” [great work!]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J) Encourages students to think critically during the class</td>
<td>- she made reference to the next class where they were to hand in a composition… she said with a lot of enthusiasm: “J’ai hâte de lire vos compositions!”[I look forward to reading your compositions!!]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K) Encourages student to relate what he or she has seen or heard to their own experience</td>
<td>- she also wished them good luck in a test that they would be having in another course/subject : “bonne chance, ceux qui ont un test demain – le dernier – woo ouu!!” (This shows how well she is cognisant of who her students are and what’s going on in their lives – beyond just FSL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L) Encourages student to offer own knowledge and opinion</td>
<td>I noticed that students did not rush out of the class…some students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M) Communicates effectively</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
lingered, taking turns to individually say goodbye and have a word with the instructor.

### Innovative activities

**Game of BINGO**! To practice oral communication; use of adjectives; moving around, asking each other questions. Students are very enthusiastic. (I was also asked to participate!)

**Gargling (and giggling) with water** (Instructor brought in bottles of water and invited students to take one. Purpose: to help with the pronunciation of the “r” sound in French)

The instructor modelled the activity, by first taking a sip and gargling herself! The student were quite amused; some of the students tried to participate amid the laughter;

### Non-Verbal Communication

Lots of enthusiasm!! Lots of smiles, laughter in the classroom

### Reflection/Inquiry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What am I thinking?</th>
<th>Felt included; asked me to pair up and practice with the students as there was an odd number of students; BINGO game was fun (already getting to know the students…)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What am I feeling?</td>
<td>Anomalies: should students be coached into pronouncing the “r” à la française (— i.e. as done in France) Some would argue that this may tend to exclude other francophone communities; a question of accent, and not necessarily pronunciation…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What connections am I making?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What patterns do I see?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What anomalies do I perceive?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Theory-Interpretation/Reflection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How would I interpret this info?</th>
<th>Varying instruction by integrating games in the classroom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What does the data mean?</td>
<td>Good spirit of community – great relationship between teacher and students and among students themselves; instructor takes interest in students’ lives;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does the data fit with the framework of the study?</td>
<td>Small classes – lots of time for each student to participate; everyone had a chance to practice oral / get feedback; a lot of interaction and “feeding off” each other…</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix H Part I

Three T’s Orientation Inventory

This survey has been adapted from John Myers, Professor in the Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning at OISE/UT. Instructors will be asked to complete this inventory in order to get an idea of their orientation to curriculum based on Miller and Seller’s (1985/1990) 3T Model: Transmission, Transaction and Transformation. This will help to triangulate the data from teacher interviews.

SETTING EXPECTATIONS: WHAT STUDENTS SHOULD LEARN

Rank the statements in each row- 1 for the statement you agree with most, 3 for the one you agree with least, and 2 for the remaining statement. Ties are NOT permitted. Put the numbers in the spaces provided.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Row 1</th>
<th>Row 2</th>
<th>Row 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning to work as a member of a team is a key learning goal.</td>
<td>A course should stress key knowledge, concepts, and skills in a subject discipline.</td>
<td>My course should primarily focus on content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row 4</td>
<td>Row 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaning outcomes and standards should connect to the abilities of the learner.</td>
<td>Schools should prepare students to understand the world in which they live.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Row 1</th>
<th>Row 2</th>
<th>Row 3</th>
<th>Row 4</th>
<th>Row 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schools should help students develop a sense of self-worth.</td>
<td>Good courses stress themes integrating many disciplines.</td>
<td>I want to teach my students how to learn as well as what to learn.</td>
<td>Leaning outcomes and standards should be as specific as possible, best stated in behavioral terms.</td>
<td>Students need to learn how best to participate as citizens in a democracy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We should teach knowledge and skills considered essential by society.</td>
<td>Curriculum should stress process and focus on developing critical thinking.</td>
<td>I want to make my course personally relevant to students.</td>
<td>Students should have an important say to setting leaning outcomes and standards.</td>
<td>Teachers should help students effect social, political, and/or economic change.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### INSTRUCTION TO MAXIMIZE LEARNING

Rank the statements in each row- **1** for the statement you agree with most, **3** for the one to agree with least, and **2** for the remaining statement. Ties are NOT permitted. Put the numbers in the spaces provided.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Row 1</th>
<th>Row 1</th>
<th>Row 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A good lecture presenting basic information is a key teaching strategy.</td>
<td>Teachers must be facilitators to stimulate thinking and challenge perspectives.</td>
<td>Classroom activities should be experiential and student centered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row 2</td>
<td>Row 2</td>
<td>Row 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A rich program should involve community resources and experiences.</td>
<td>Instruction should begin at a student’s current level of understanding</td>
<td>Teachers should give strong direction if they want learning to occur.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row 3</td>
<td>Row 3</td>
<td>Row 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group work is important so that students can look at a problem or issue from a variety of perspectives.</td>
<td>Group work can work in moderation but it can get in the way of real learning if overused.</td>
<td>Group work is important so that students can take ownership in their learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row 4</td>
<td>Row 4</td>
<td>Row 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning a skill is like playing golf. You must get used to the whole action. Otherwise, you just mess up.</td>
<td>Skills are best taught by breaking them down into sub-skills in a logical sequence from simple to complex.</td>
<td>Although skills may be broken down for purposes of analysis, it’s the entire thinking process that counts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row 5</td>
<td>Row 5</td>
<td>Row 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written work should be preceded by student discussion so that the nature of the inquiry is clear.</td>
<td>A vital goal for written work is to prepare students for more formal writing in the next grade.</td>
<td>Writing in class should be personal and creative.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ASSESSMENT & EVALUATION: HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT THEY KNOW?

Rank the statements in each row- 1 for the statement you agree with most, 3 for the one to agree with least, and 2 for the remaining statement. Ties are NOT permitted. Put the numbers in the spaces provided.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Row 1 _____</th>
<th>Row 1 _____</th>
<th>Row 1 _____</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The primary aim of evaluation is to determine student mastery of content and / or skills.</td>
<td>Assessing growth in students’ thoughtful behaviours (habits of mind) is vital for further learning.</td>
<td>Evaluation should be varied so that the whole student is assessed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row 2 _____</td>
<td>Row 2 _____</td>
<td>Row 2 _____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sound assessment includes student input, including self and peer assessment.</td>
<td>Assessment should be based on specific criteria and standards that all students must attain.</td>
<td>My assessment should consider the knowledge, skills, and habits of mind students bring to class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row 3 _____</td>
<td>Row 3 _____</td>
<td>Row 3 _____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student should help in constructing rubrics for grading work.</td>
<td>Teacher marking schemes as the best tools for grading.</td>
<td>I think that looking at number or letter grades hinders real learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row 4 _____</td>
<td>Row 4 _____</td>
<td>Row 4 _____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied students are clear evidence that learning is taking place.</td>
<td>A lively class discussion is clear evidence that learning is taking place.</td>
<td>Students attentively listening to the teacher prove that learning is taking place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row 5 _____</td>
<td>Row 5 _____</td>
<td>Row 5 _____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you want to find out what students have learned, test them.</td>
<td>If you want to find out what students have learned, ask them.</td>
<td>Give students a real-life problem or task and watch them work at it to find out what they have learned.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VIEWS ABOUT OTHER TEACHING / LEARNING ASPECTS

Rank the statements in each row- 1 for the statement you agree with most, 3 for the one to agree with least, and 2 for the remaining statement. Ties are NOT permitted. Put the numbers in the spaces provided.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Row 1</th>
<th>Row 1</th>
<th>Row 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I like hands-on PD so I can apply my learning to my work.</td>
<td>I like PD sessions when I can discuss issues with my colleagues.</td>
<td>Good professional development happens when I hear an engaging speaker.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row 2</td>
<td>Row 2</td>
<td>Row 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My most important resource is a good textbook.</td>
<td>I strive to use a wide variety of resources in my classes.</td>
<td>I prefer students’ own experiences and community resources for my classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row 3</td>
<td>Row 3</td>
<td>Row 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The internet is a place where people can wrestle with issues through collaboration.</td>
<td>The internet is best used when students can surf for ideas that interest them.</td>
<td>The internet is a great place for getting lesson ideas and information for upcoming topics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row 4</td>
<td>Row 4</td>
<td>Row 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students should be primarily viewed as individuals.</td>
<td>I treat my students as equals who can achieve the stated standards and learning goals.</td>
<td>Differences among my students such as learning styles need to be considered in a sound program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row 5</td>
<td>Row 5</td>
<td>Row 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools should be seen as places where teachers and students work together to develop a shared meaning of the world.</td>
<td>Schools should be inviting places In which students can work things out for themselves.</td>
<td>Schools should be places where teachers teach students what they need to know.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**SCORING**

This is a two-step process.

Step 1. Transpose the numbers into the right cells.

- E.G., If your order for Row 1 of the Expectations section was 1 3 2, that is what you put in the appropriate cells.

Step 2. Add up the numbers according to category and total as indicated.

- Add all “M” statements together, then “A”, then “F”.
- Your score for each section should be between 5 and 15.

**SETTING EXPECTATIONS: WHAT STUDENTS SHOULD LEARN**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Row 1</th>
<th>Row 1</th>
<th>Row 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Section Score (All numbers when totaled should add up 30)**

M statements= A statements= F statements=

**INSTRUCTION TO MAXIMIZE LEARNING**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Row 1</th>
<th>Row 1</th>
<th>Row 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Section Score**

M statements= A statements= F statements= 
ASSESSMENT & EVALUATION: HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT THEY KNOW?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Row 1 M</th>
<th>Row 1 A</th>
<th>Row 1 F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Row 2 F</td>
<td>Row 2 M</td>
<td>Row 2 A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row 3 A</td>
<td>Row 3 M</td>
<td>Row 3 F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row 4 F</td>
<td>Row 4 A</td>
<td>Row 4 M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row 5 M</td>
<td>Row 5 F</td>
<td>Row 5 A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section Score

M statements= A statements= F statements=

VIEWS ABOUT OTHER TEACHING / LEARNING ASPECTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Row 1 F</th>
<th>Row 1 A</th>
<th>Row 1 M</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Row 2 M</td>
<td>Row 2 A</td>
<td>Row 2 F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row 3 A</td>
<td>Row 3 F</td>
<td>Row 3 M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row 4 F</td>
<td>Row 4 M</td>
<td>Row 4 A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row 5 A</td>
<td>Row 5 F</td>
<td>Row 5 M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section Score

M statements= A statements= F statements=

TOTAL SCORE (all numbers when totaled should add up to 120)

M statements=
A statements=
F statements=

THE LOWER THE SCORE, THE MORE DOMINANT THE ORIENTATION.

*Spelling is in Canadian English*
Appendix H – Part II

Three Ts Orientation Inventory Part II

**SETTING EXPECTATIONS: WHAT STUDENTS SHOULD LEARN**

**Row 1** Schools [Education] should help students develop a sense of self-worth.

*Cameron, Amélie, Pamela, Alice, Maigret, Sitelle*

**Row 1** Evaluation should be varied so that the whole student is assessed. Louise, Amélie, Cameron, Maigret, Alice, Sitelle

**Row 1** Teachers must be facilitators to stimulate thinking and challenge perspectives. Cameron, Alice, Louise, Amélie;

**ASSESSMENT & EVALUATION: HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT THEY KNOW?**

**Row 5** Give students a real-life problem or task and watch them work at it to find out what they have learned.

Alice, Louise, Pamela, Cameron, Maigret, Amélie, Sitelle

**Row 4** A lively class discussion is clear evidence that learning is taking place.

Louise, Maigret, Alice, Amélie, Cameron, Pamela, Sitelle

**Row 2** I strive to use a wide variety of resources in my classes.

Amélie, Maigret, Cameron, Pamela, Alice Louise

**VIEWS ABOUT OTHER TEACHING / LEARNING ASPECTS**

**Row 5** Schools should be seen as places where teachers and students work together to develop a shared meaning of the world.

Amélie, Louise, Pamela, Cameron[Alice’s comment: “why shared”?]
Appendix I

Students' Survey

The Heart and Soul of Language: Making (Inter)Connections between Second Language and Holistic Education in the Post-secondary Context

Student Survey

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. Today, I would like you to answer the following questions concerning second language (particularly FSL) learning. This survey is being conducted to better understand students' experiences of their language teaching and learning in the post-secondary context. There are no right or wrong answers. I am interested in your personal opinion. Please give your answers sincerely as only this will guarantee the success of the investigation. Thank you very much for your help.

1. Please state whether you are

Please select one of the following:

Male  female

2. Please select your home campus. Please select one of the following:

Campus: A  Campus: B  Campus: C  Other

3. What is your first language? Please select all that apply:

English  French  Other

4. What other language(s) do you speak or have studied at the college or university level? Please select all that apply:

English  French  Spanish  German  Italian  Portuguese  Other

5. How long have you been learning French? Please select one of the following:

0 to 3 months  3 to 6 months  6 to 9 months  9 months to 1 year  1 to 2 years  2 to 3 years  3 to 4 years  over 4 years

6. In what context(s) have you previously learned French? Please select all that apply:

Primary School  High School  French Emersion  Extended French  Community College  University  French speaking country  Other

7. What year of University/college are you in? Please select one of the following:

1st year  2nd year  3rd year  4th year
Please share your reason(s) for enrolling in this course

8. Graduation requirement: Please select one of the following:
   Yes   No

9. Personal Interest (please explain)

10. Other (please specify)

11. What have you enjoyed the most about your language course?

12. What aspects of this course did you find the most useful?

13. What did you enjoy the least in your language course this semester?

14. What changes would you like to see in your language class?

15. Will you continue to learn French after this course is over?
   Yes   No

16. If yes, how?

17. If no, why not?

18. Have you ever had any experience of learning/practicing your French language skills outside of the classroom? Please select one of the following:
   Yes   No

19. If yes, what did this experience entail and what was it like?

20. If no, why not?

The following questions relate to your overall experience and language learning outcomes:

On a scale of 1 to 4 (where 4 = strongly agree and 1 = strongly disagree), please rate the following statements by clicking in the appropriate box.

21. I improved my oral skills. Please select one of the following:
   1  2  3  4

22. I improved my written skills. Please select one of the following:
   1  2  3  4

23. I improved my reading skills
   1  2  3  4

24. I improved my listening skills. Please select one of the following:
25. I improved my social skills. Please select one of the following:

26. I improved my overall communication skills. Please select one of the following:

27. I improved my cultural awareness. Please select one of the following:

On a scale of 1 to 4 (where 4 = Strongly Agree and 1 = Strongly Disagree), please rate the following statements by clicking the appropriate box.

28. I enjoyed working in groups. Please select one of the following:

29. I developed a good relationship with other students in the class. Please select one of the following:

30. I enjoyed the presentations of my peers. Please select one of the following:

31. I liked the instructor's teaching style. Please select one of the following:

32. The instructor was available for individual consultation and feedback where appropriate. Please select one of the following:

33. The instructor related what she teaches to everyday life. Please select one of the following:

34. The instructor conducted the class sessions in an organized, well-planned manner. Please select one of the following:

35. I developed a good relationship with the instructor. Please select one of the following:

36. The resources used in this class were very helpful. Please select one of the following:
37. The materials used were presented in interesting ways. Please select one of the following:

1 2 3 4

38. I liked the physical layout of the classroom. Please select one of the following:

1 2 3 4

39. I liked the physical layout of the labs (or other language learning facilities). Please select one of the following:

1 2 3 4

On a scale of 1 to 4 (where 4 = Strongly Agree and 1 = Strongly Disagree), please rate the following statements by clicking in the appropriate box.

40. I felt included in this class. Please select one of the following:

1 2 3 4

41. Overall, I found that the learning environment was supportive. Please select one of the following:

1 2 3 4

42. I feel motivated to increase my knowledge and competence in the language.

1 2 3 4

43. I would recommend this course to other students. Please select one of the following:

1 2 3 4

44. Please feel free to share any other/additional comments.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Language(s)</th>
<th>Orientation Inventory</th>
<th>Individual Interview</th>
<th>Focus Group Interview</th>
<th>Classroom observations</th>
<th>Focus group w/students</th>
<th>Student Questionnaire</th>
<th>Documents/artifacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stelie</td>
<td>French (teach), Other L2: German, Spanish</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>The interviews with Stelie covered three sessions; 1 in February and two in May (at end of semester)</td>
<td>Could not participate; followed up with participant</td>
<td>6 visits from Feb - April 2010; attended last class; brought in food!</td>
<td>2 students attended; June, 2010.</td>
<td>Consent 10; completed 4</td>
<td>Course outline; lesson plans; copy of &quot;BINGO&quot; activity; invited to attend &quot;movie night&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pamela</td>
<td>French (teach), Other L2: German, Spanish</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>Int. 1 - Feb. (office) 2010; Int. 2 (office)</td>
<td>Participated Aug., 24 2010</td>
<td>4 visits; 2x each class</td>
<td>4 students attended - 1 on April 30, 3 on May 26, 2010</td>
<td>completed 18 (Yr 1 = 12; Yr 2 = 6)</td>
<td>Obtain course outline; experiential learning documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amelie</td>
<td>French (teach), Other L2: Greek</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>Int. 1 - Feb. (office)</td>
<td>Participated w/Yannick Jun. 2010</td>
<td>5 visits; video footage; brought in food on last day of class; celebration; student presentations re: service learning experiences</td>
<td>2 of Amelie’s students and 3 of Yannick’s class - May 5th, 2010</td>
<td>completed 6</td>
<td>Pictures; video footage; course outline and other handouts; participated in class discussions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yannick</td>
<td>French (1st Language, teach)</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>Total of three individual Interviews; Interview #1 - Feb, 2010 (office); Int. #2 (office) and Int. #3 (office)</td>
<td>Participated w/Amelie Yannick’s office</td>
<td>6 visits to each of two classes, Yannick had back-to-back classes 9-10AM; 10-11AM (Tues., Wed., Thurs.)</td>
<td>2 of Amelie’s and 3 of Yannick’s students - May 5th, 2010</td>
<td>completed 20 (Yr 1: 12; Yr 2: 8)</td>
<td>Pictures; video footage; course outline and other handouts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louise</td>
<td>French (11, teach); Other L2</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>Two interviews</td>
<td>Aug, 24, 2010- Participated w/2 other instructors (Pamela, Louise) @ UQ</td>
<td>3 visits / 2 classes *colloque interdisciplinaire;</td>
<td>1 of Louise’s student attended focus group interview with two others (Alice and Pamela) on April 30, 2010</td>
<td>completed 11</td>
<td>Access to website; few photos; no video footage during classroom observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alice</td>
<td>French (teach) Other L2: Hindi, Spanish</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>1 interview covering all questions</td>
<td>Aug, 24, 2010- Participated w/2 other instructors (Pamela, Louise) @ UQ</td>
<td>6 visits; field trip (French restaurant); watched movie in class; video footage</td>
<td>4 students attended focus group; Very informative</td>
<td>completed 15 (Gr 1-7; Gr 2-8)</td>
<td>Video footage; pictures; course documents (outline, lesson plans etc...)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix K

Language Learning Strategies

LES STRATÉGIES D'APPRENTISSAGE DES LANGUES
[LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES]

Learning Strategies account for an average of 25% of a person's power to learn and succeed. Most people forget most of what they learn. Would you like to retain almost everything you decide is important?

Quelques exemples...

A- LES STRATÉGIES DIRECTES:

- les stratégies mémorielles :
  
  When learning a new word …
  1- I create associations between new material and what I already know.
  2- I place the new word in a group with other words that are similar in some way (e.g. words related to clothing, words that are masculine, etc)
  3- I remember the word by making a clear mental picture or by drawing a picture.
  4- I remember where the new word is located on the page, or where I first saw or heard it.
  5- I use flashcards with the new word on one side and the definition or other information on the other.
  6- Generally speaking, when learning new material, I review often.

- les stratégies cognitives :
  
  7- I say or write new expressions repeatedly to practise them.
  8- I imitate the way native speakers talk.
  9- I read a story or dialogue several times until I understand it.
  10- I initiate conversations in French.
  11- I watch T.V. shows or movies or listen to the radio in French.
  12- I try to think in French.
13- I attend and participate in out-of-class events where French is spoken.
14- I skim the reading passage first to get the main idea, then I go back and read it more carefully.
15- I use reference materials such as glossaries or dictionaries to help me learn French.
16- I make summaries of new material learned in French.
17- I try to understand what I have heard or read without translating it word-for-word into my own language.

- les stratégies compensatoires :

18- When I do not understand all the words I hear, I guess the general meaning by using any clue I can find, for example, clues from the context or situation.
19- In a conversation, I anticipate what the other person is going to say based on what has been said so far.
20- I ask the other person to tell me the word I’m looking for if I cannot think of it in a conversation.
21- When I cannot think of the correct word or expression to say or write, I find a different way to express the idea: for example, I use a synonym or describe the idea.

B- LES STRATEGIES INDIRECTES

- les stratégies métacognitives :

22- I preview the language lesson to get an idea of what it is all about, how it is organised and how it relates to what I already know.
23- I decide in advance to pay special attention to specific language aspects: for example I focus on the way native people pronounce certain sounds.
24- I arrange my schedule to study and practice the new language consistently, not just when there is the pressure of a test.
25- I arrange my physical environment to promote learning: for instance, I find a quiet comfortable place to study.
26- I organise my language notebook to record important information.
27- I actively look for people with whom I can speak French.
28- I try and notice my language errors and find out the reasons for them.

- les stratégies affectives:

29- I try to relax whenever I feel anxious about using French.
30- I make encouraging statements to myself so that I will continue to try hard and do my best in French.
31- I actively encourage myself to take wise risks in language learning, such as guessing meanings or trying to speak, even though I might make some mistakes.
32- I give myself a reward whenever I feel I have done something well in French.
- les stratégies sociales:

33- If I do not understand, I ask the speaker to slow down, repeat or clarify what was said.
34- I ask other people to correct me.
35- I work with other language learners to practice, review or share information.
36- I try to learn about the culture(s) where French is spoken.

(based on Oxford, 1990, pp. 283-288)
Appendix L

Sample of Program for Student (in-class) Conference

Colloque Interdisplinaire

Les chefs d’œuvre de la littérature française

le mardi 23 mars, 2010

André Hall, 203

10-12

Préparation et organisation : (Louise)

10h00-10h15  Petit déjeuner

10h15-10h30  Le tour du monde « en dix minutes »

10h30-10h45  Le Horla de Maupassant

10h45-11h00  Huis clos de Jean Paul Sartre

11h00-11h15  Le développement du thème « l'enfer c'est les autres » dans Huis clos

11h15-11h30  La cousine Bette par Honoré de Balzac

11h30-11h45  Comparaison des adultes et des enfants dans Le Petit Prince

10h45-12h00  Remarques générales
Appendix M

Sample of Vignette Relating to the Use of Anecdotal Storytelling in Grammar Teaching

One of the participants related the following story regarding how his post-secondary instructors helped to bring grammar alive through anecdotal storytelling:

In one of my third-year undergraduate French courses, I will always remember the wonderful way in which the instructor would make words come alive by telling humorous little stories about his own experiences. For example I will never forget that lesson, where we were just routinely going over some homework exercises which involved some grammar exercises, definitions of words...students would volunteer or were called upon to read aloud the definitions that they had copied from the dictionary. Imagine a word like “hachoir” – some meat-cutting device used in a kitchen – (almost insignificant), which many of us had never used, or had no use for. Yet the passionate little story the instructor told about remembering that his grandmother had a hachoir, and about his own struggles in learning to use one, but persevered in that quest because of the wonderful memories of his grandmother and the way she so lovingly prepared the delicious meals with the aid of this hachoir. We never forgot the word hachoir. In fact, I witnessed one of the rare occasions in an undergraduate university course. Students, at the end of the course, decided to pull their resources together and present the professor with a gift – it was a hachoir that they had found in one of the specialty stores in the east end of the city. It was a very touching moment. When he opened the gift, he exclaimed in disbelief “un hachoir!” Amid the smiles and laughter from students who eagerly awaited his reaction, the moist teary eyes of the professor did not go unnoticed.
Copyright Acknowledgement

Search Results: Re: Permission to Use Copyright Material in a Doctoral Thesis (1 of 1)

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Delete | Reply | Forward | Redirect | Blocklist | Whitelist | Message Source | Resume | Save as | Print

Date: Fri, 2 Dec 2011 10:13:00 -0000 (EST)
From: Andrew Furco <afurco@umich.edu>
To: merlin.charles@utoronto.ca
Subject: Re: Permission to Use Copyright Material in a Doctoral Thesis
Part(s): Download All Attachments (in .zip file)

Headers: Show All Headers

Dear Merlin,

Thank you for your interest in the continuum. You have my full approval to use the pictorial and the information that surrounds it for your thesis.

Best wish with you work and congratulations on finishing up the thesis.

Best,

Andy

On Fri, Dec 2, 2011 at 8:17 AM, <merlin.charles@utoronto.ca> wrote:
On Fri, Dec 2, 2011 at 8:17 AM, <merlin.charles@utoronto.ca> wrote:

Dear Andrew Furco:

I am a university of Toronto doctoral student completing a doctoral thesis titled "The heart and soul of language: Making interconnections between holistic and second language teaching in the post-secondary context". My thesis will be available via the U of T libraries in digital format, for reference, study and or copy for scholarly purposes. I will be granting ProQuest UMI a non-exclusive licence to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell single copies of my thesis by any means and in any form or format. These rights will in no way restrict republication of the material in any form by you or by others authorized by you.

I would like permission to allow inclusion of the attached material in my thesis:

Diagram: Experiential education continuum (Furco 1996)

Please confirm in writing or by email that these arrangements meet with your approval.

Sincerely,

Merlin Charles
-------- Forwarded message --------
From: Merlin Charles <merlincharles1@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Dec 5, 2011 at 2:18 PM
Subject: Permission for use of Model
To: Jim Cummins <jcummins320@gmail.com>

Dear Jim,

Hope this email finds you well.
I am in the process of preparing the final draft of my thesis entitled "The heart and soul of language teaching: Manking (inter)connections between holistic and second language teaching in the post-secondary context". My thesis will be available via the U of T libraries in digital format, for reference, study and or copy for scholarly purposes. I would be granting ProQuest UMI a non-exclusive licence to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell single copies of my thesis by any means and in any form or format. These rights will in no way restrict republication of the material in any form by you or by others authorised by you. I would like permission to allow inclusion of the attached material in my thesis: "Nested Pedagogical Orientations" model, on page 5 of your (2009) article entitled Multiple voices.

Please confirm in writing or by email that these arrangements meet with your approval.

Sincerely,

Merlin Charles

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Jim Cummins jcummins320@gmail.com  Apr 2 (5 days ago)  to me
Hi Merlin:

Congratulations on your successful Senate Oral -- I hadn’t realized it was actually happening until I saw the signs.

There is no problem in using the pedagogical orientations diagram. You could use the same permission language that I used in the article attributing it to Vasilia Kourtis Kazoullis. The “nested” concept is mine but Vasilia came up with the diagram. She has given me and those working with me a blanket permission to use it.

Best wishes