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**Stage Fright: Perception and Experiences of Pre-Service Teachers in Performing Arts-Based
Education in a Inclusive Setting**

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STAGE FRIGHT: PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS
IN PERFORMING ARTS-BASED EDUCATION IN AN INCLUSIVE SETTING

Lisa A. Brankley

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Abstract

Approaches such as arts-based education optimize the goals of inclusive education, an emergent educational philosophy in Canada. However there is tension between this research, current classroom practice, and education policies. This study explores the perceptions of three primary/junior pre-service teachers as they engaged in the implementation of inclusion of students with exceptionalities using an arts-based approach. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with the participants (following Seidman's [2006] method) at three points during their teacher education experiences. Central findings and cross-case analysis focused on their contextual histories, teacher education experiences, and culminating reflections. Childhood events and environments influenced pre-service attitudes, while past engagement in the arts facilitated their implementation of an arts-based approach particularly in the absence of guidance from teacher education courses and their associate teacher. Participants cited academic, social, and personal benefits of implementing inclusion through the arts for students with exceptionalities. Implications for practice are discussed.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

“Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once we grow up.”

-Pablo Picasso

Inclusion is an educational philosophy related to the purpose of schools. The past two decades have realized the transformation from segregated classrooms to integration within the existing system to the practice of *inclusion* – an approach built upon structuring the school system to embrace the diversity of its student community (Avramidis, Bayliss, & Burden, 2000).

The emerging Canadian construction of *inclusive education* aims to include all students in the general classroom with the ultimate goal of empowerment and autonomy for all, with appreciation and provision for the diverse needs, challenges, and strengths of each individual student (Regulation 181/98 in Education Act, as cited in Ontario Ministry of Education, 2001; Smith et al., 2006).

The inherent goal of inclusive education is to engage every student, to identify and dissolve the obstacles that block their access and engagement, and to reflect each student within their educational environment and the greater curriculum (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009). Published in 2009, *Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy* draws on leadership at the ministry, board, and school levels to accomplish this goal. It aims to do so through recognition of the strength in our provincial diversity and an understanding of inclusion that encompasses,

the presence of a wide range of human qualities and attributes within a group, organization, or society...which could include, but are not limited to, ancestry, culture, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, language, physical and intellectual ability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009, p.4)

With recognition of this broad—and essential—understanding of inclusion, this thesis has narrowed its field of research and focus to the inclusion of students with exceptionalities.

Therefore, reference to inclusive education will relate to the establishment of a culture of belonging and difference rather than to the creation of space and resources for students requiring special educational needs within an existing system (Avramidis et al., 2000).

Ontario's *Education Act*, which forms the basis for educational legislation in Ontario, defines an *exceptional student* as "a pupil whose behavioural, communicational, intellectual, physical or multiple exceptionalities are such that he or she is considered to need placement in a special education program" (Subsection 1[1] in Education Act, as cited in Ontario Ministry of Education, 2001, p.A3).

However, as both educators and students adjust to the inclusive classroom model, there is a growing need for approaches to teaching and learning that optimize the goals of inclusive education. One such approach is focused on how students interpret and respond to what they learn in the classroom. *Sign systems* is a term used to describe the ways that individuals make meaning and share of themselves through mediums such as dance, music, visual art, language, and drama (Short, Kauffman, & Kahn, 2000). Through an approach known as *arts-based education*, sign systems are designed to explore the ways that students interpret and respond to what they learn in the classroom. This approach encourages students to construct their own meaning from drama, art, music, language and mathematics communication systems, each with its own elements (Berghoff, 1998, 2000; Short et al., 2000).

Studies such as those conducted by Leland and Harste (1994), Marlett and Gordon (2004), and Seigal (2006) show the effectiveness of using arts techniques in classroom and educational activities as a means of improving what Rosenblatt (1986) referred to as an aesthetic and efferent understanding and engagement across the curriculum. There is substantial evidence to indicate that the arts must be viewed as a valued, integral area of the

curriculum—that is, as an entity designed to discover new meanings within the greater curriculum, rather than an “accessory” to the educational experience (Polloway, Patton, & Serna, 2005; Albers, 2001). Siegel (1995) explains that, as we progress in educational attainment, we increasingly rely on language to learn. We break away from the roots of our kindergarten experiences in which language and learning are woven together with music, movement, and art to assist us in organizing and understanding our experiences. However, as the research and practice pertaining to the arts-based approach purports, this need not be. By accessing alternative ways of making meaning, students can take their understandings from one sign system (such as literature) and use another sign system (such as drama) to respond to and transform this understanding (Short et al., 2000).

Despite these recommendations for the use of arts-based education, there remains a tension between this research and the methods that are actually practiced and encouraged through board policies, teacher education programs, and classroom practice (Carroll, 1993). Such evidence-based practice is overruled while literacy and numeracy programs gain funding momentum and rank in the curriculum hierarchy; their instructional approach and content constrained by large scale testing and the practice guidelines encouraged by teacher education programs. At the moment, the prioritization on specific subjects, the pressure imposed by testing outcomes and the demand for programs such as balanced literacy –so often manifested as commercial, linear vehicles - greatly outweighs a focus on an arts-based approach to education. When the arts-based approach is fully appreciated by the greater educational community, as the research suggests it should be, questions related to the definition of art and what is needed (and by whom) to teach arts-based education within the inclusive classroom can best be addressed.

Amid these tensions, inclusive classrooms gain momentum and increase their presence within Canadian school systems. Pre-service educators¹ will continue to be placed in such contexts during their practicums, and an arts-based approach to education can be practiced and explored within this arena. Determining the perceptions that create meaning within—and are created by—performing an arts-based approach within an inclusive setting is beneficial towards understanding how to approach teacher education. This enhanced understanding will minimize the concerns, yet maximize the self-efficacy, of pre-service teachers entering the inclusive classroom. To access these perceptions of pre-service teachers, the context of their personal history and culminating reflections of teacher education in regards to inclusivity and the arts must be unearthed. As Fuller's (1969) model of teacher development explains, the concerns of pre-service teachers alter in relation to their self-perceptions, and the illumination of these concerns lends insight to their pre-service approaches within the classroom. These insights effectually impact the pre-service teachers' exercise of inclusivity and arts-based practice. The purpose of this study is to examine the perceptions and experiences of pre-service teachers in performing arts-based education in an inclusive primary and/ or junior classroom setting.

¹ In the context of this thesis, the use of term *pre-service educator/teacher* is synonymous with *student teacher*, *teacher candidate*, and *student intern*.

CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

**“Music is your own experience, your thoughts, your wisdom. If you
don't live it, it won't come out of your horn.”**

- *Charlie Parker*

The following chapter details a review of the literature pertaining to the perceptions and experiences of pre-service teachers in performing arts-based education in an inclusive primary and/ or junior classroom setting. To begin, the thematic areas of inclusive education, arts-based approaches to education and implementing inclusion using an arts-based approach to curriculum are explored in the context of an educational paradigm, as well as in connection to the pre-service experience. Secondly, it explains Fuller's (1969) model of teacher development, which will guide this study through its conceptualization of the essence of pre-service teacher concerns. Thirdly, the perceived need for this research study is identified and the present study's purpose and research questions are revisited.

This study is informed by the research and theoretical frameworks that have proposed fresh understandings of inclusive education, arts-based education, the pre-service experience, and stages of concern for pre-service educators. The emerging educational philosophy within Canadian elementary schools is anchored in the belief that the classroom should be a centre of multiple understandings among its learners (Smith et al., 2006). We are also informed by current research that an arts-based approach to the curriculum provides a forum for students to both access meaning and demonstrate learning through their preferred way of knowing (Short et al., 2000). As pre-service teachers graduate and enter inclusive classrooms, their use of teaching/learning approaches (such as arts-based education) will depend on their access to contextualized experiences and influences (Buell, Hallam, Gamel-McCormick & Scheer, 1999). Such perceptions will ultimately affect their students' educational experiences and work towards "support(ing) their development of confidence and competence" (Avramidis et al., 2000, p.291).

Human perception is used to navigate the senses that pervade our lives, and such processes “provide the extra layers of interpretation that enable you to navigate successfully through your environment” (Zimbardo & Gerrig, 1999, p.141). The result is a *percept*—the constant, phenomenological derivative of perception that manifests itself in the concerns, beliefs, and attitudes we form, and that is organized by our perceptions of the world (Zimbardo & Gerrig, 1999). Therefore, references to the *perception* of a pre-service teacher within the context of this study are provided as representations of their concerns, beliefs, attitudes, and values.

Inclusive Education and Pre-Service Teachers

Canadian researcher Snow (1992) established what has become one of the fundamental beliefs that grounds inclusive education. She proposes that “whatever needs we may have, we all have gifts to offer each other” (Snow, 1992, as cited in Bunch & Finnegan, 2008, p.182). Inclusive education refers to the philosophy that all students “have the right to education together in community settings” (Bunch & Valeo, 2008, p.2), and it is through this understanding that individuals with exceptionalities are seen as being capable of success within regular classrooms. Furthermore, this understanding advocates that the educational model should be shifted towards a model of social justice and the dissolution of difference (Bunch & Valeo, 2008).

Although Canada holds the distinction of being the first nation with an entirely inclusive school system, the history of inclusion in Canadian schools is unique to the policies determined and implemented by each province (Bunch & Valeo, 2008). Following an educational period during which students with exceptionalities were placed in segregated classrooms or schools, integration became the norm and in the late 1960s, Ontario attracted

global attention when the Hamilton-Wentworth District Catholic School Board (HWCDSB) legislated that all students, with limited exception, be enrolled into regular classrooms (Bunch & Finnegan, 2008). Meanwhile, in the Atlantic Provinces, Halifax required that all pre-service teachers take at least one unit in special education in 1971 and New Brunswick amended its educational laws in 1986 to establish integrated education as the status quo for students with exceptionalities, several years before this became common practice within the country (Rioux & Underwood, 2008). In 1981, Forest conducted a pivotal study through Toronto's York University which documented a pilot study that brought students with and without exceptionalities together in an educational and social capacity. This research fuelled opposition to both segregation and integration by many advocacy groups (Bunch & Finnegan). In the Western Provinces, an equal rights movement saw education systems shift from segregation to integration, while the Northwest Territories modified their 1986 legislation of integration to one of inclusion by 1993 (Persaud & Bunch, 2008). In 1999, the Ministry of Education in Quebec modified their policy such that it continued to advocate mainstreaming students with exceptionalities while creating more stringent guidelines on the exclusion of a student from the regular classroom (Dore, Wagner & Dore, 2008). School boards were requested to then provide supports for full inclusion as well as special education staff, additional resources, and specialized schools (Dore et al.). Currently, the province of New Brunswick, along with Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut, hold inclusion policies, while the nine remaining provinces maintain a special education configuration that comprises of inclusion and both full- and part-time integration (Bunch & Valeo).

Within Ontario, the philosophy of inclusion is embraced, yet there is still resistance among the majority of legislators and educators against the actual practice of inclusion (as

defined by one classroom for all students) (Bunch & Finnegan, 2008). Hence, a system of special education alternatives remains, coupled with the belief that inclusion must not entail a shared environment (although it still exists as a reference to educational opportunities for all). Research continues to focus on inclusion and the means of its achievement within Ontario (Bunch & Finnegan).

Historically, it has been suggested that the attitudes of educators who facilitate the practice of inclusion wield tremendous influence over its success or failure (Avramidis et al., 2000; Buell et al., 1999; Center & Ward, 1987; Forlin, Douglas & Hattie, 1996; Williams & Algozine, 1977). In a qualitative study of 71 general and special education pre-service teachers, researchers found that a belief in knowledge as an ever-changing entity (that is, created by many people and ascertained through many means) can be linked with positive attitudes towards inclusion of students with exceptionalities in classrooms (Silverman, 2007).

Expressing attitudes similar to those of practicing educators, pre-service teachers report concurrence with the philosophy of inclusive education. However, they are concerned with the actual implementation of inclusivity (Avramidis et al., 2000; Proctor & Niemeyer, 2001; Tait & Purdie, 2000). These concerns are largely influenced by the types of exceptionalities represented within a classroom, the resources available, their own education, and their personal history related to individuals with exceptionalities (Avramidis et al. 2000; Proctor & Niemeyer, 2001; Tait & Purdie, 2000).

Various research findings suggest that pre-service teachers are more concerned with how classroom students, teachers, and the school community are affected by students with behavioural exceptionalities than by students with intellectual disabilities. Consequently, views on inclusion vary depending on the perceived severity of the exceptionality (Avramidis

et al., 2000; Cook, 2002; Forlin et al., 1996; Hastings & Oakford, 2003). Such reports also reference the influence that this variable holds over the ultimate attitude of the pre-service teacher and the degree of favourability or concern with which they perceive inclusive education (Cook, 2002). Rose (2002) asserts:

What we decide to implement in the classroom can either include or exclude our students. As teachers we can often be the decisive element in our classroom. It is our personal approach that creates the climate. We need to examine issues, biases, prejudices and assumptions we carry into the classroom and how these inform and influence our classroom curriculum. In fact, we must constantly engage in a process of examining and critiquing our own perspective. (Rose, 2002, as cited in Saggars, 2008, p.42)

Past research has focused on the link between the attitudes of pre-service teachers towards individuals with exceptionalities and the learning opportunities that are ultimately perceived by the students and facilitated by the teacher. Studies suggest a need to place an increased focus on the developing perceptions and attitudes of pre-service teachers towards inclusion, rather than on the provision of information related to specific responses to various student needs (Avramidis et al., 2000; Forlin et al., 1999; Tait & Purdie, 2000). Indeed, attitudes towards exceptional students in their classroom may be either hindered or encouraged through the education that pre-service teachers receive.

Practicing teachers suggest that the education system does not facilitate the changes that are needed in order to optimize the opportunities for success within an inclusive approach to education (Avramidis et al., 2000). Within this context, the otherwise positive anticipation of many pre-service teachers prior to their practicum experiences may be affected by their concerns for adequate provision of resources to support an inclusive program (Avramidis et al.; Stella, Forlin & Lan, 2007). Pre-service teachers' concerns about the curriculum and the amount of time needed to teach classroom students with exceptionalities, coupled with the

worry that differentiated strategies detract from the curricular needs of the other students in the classroom, counter optimal special education programming (Tait & Purdie, 2000). Studies reveal that educators who feel capable of achieving inclusive educational practices through teaching methods, time management, and curricular and environmental accommodations generally report a more positive disposition towards the idea of inclusion (Avramidis et al., 2000; Buell et al., 1999).

Research published in the mid-1980s suggests that pre-service teachers may not have been equipped by their educational experiences to teach an inclusive classroom (Curtis, 1985; Leyser & Abrams, 1986). While much has changed in this arena, recent studies are divided as to whether teacher education courses related to exceptionalities result in an outcome of area knowledge (Forlin et al., 1999; Tait & Purdie, 2000). However, research suggests that such teacher education does result in a more favourable attitude towards inclusive education (Shade & Stewart, 2001; Shippen, Crites, Houchins, Ramsey & Simon, 2005).

It is also reported that coupling such courses with interaction between pre-service educators and individuals with exceptionalities results in more positive perceptions towards these persons (Ford, Pugach & Otis-Wilborn, 2001; Rademacher, Wilhem, Hildreth, Bridges & Cowart, 1998). This approach has been supported through a qualitative study performed by Campbell, Gilmore and Cuskelly (2003) which indicated that of the 274 pre-service teachers surveyed, those who had experienced fieldwork with individuals with Down Syndrome demonstrated an increased perception of actual ability. Furthermore, these pre-service educators exhibited a decrease in stereotypical associations related to individuals with this exceptionality, and had a more positive attitude towards individuals with special needs—and ultimately, inclusion. Sobel, Taylor, and Anderson (2003) recommend that associate teachers

in practicum experiences and courses within teacher education programs focus on issues related to diversity and encourage self evaluation amongst pre-service teachers as a means of critically examining their teaching and learning practice and attitudes within an inclusive setting.

Various studies report on the alternatives that certain pre-service education institutions are beginning to implement as a means to meet the needs of the current inclusive educational paradigm. Collaborative teaching efforts, particularly with community organizations and special educators, have been recommended as one strategy that facilitates inclusive practice and interaction with individuals with exceptionalities (Carey, 1997; Hobbs & Westling, 2002). A successful example of this strategy is presented through the service-learning reflection logs completed by 43 pre-service teachers during a qualitative study about their connection to a service-learning programme with inclusive organizations in their broader community (Carrington & Saggars, 2008). Through these reflections, the students indicated a shift in their beliefs towards valuing difference within their broader community, and exhibited an increased commitment to initiatives such as inclusion within their educational experiences (Carrington & Saggars, 2008).

Course content and practicum experiences may prove to be irrelevant and overwhelming for pre-service teachers (Lancaster & Bain, 2007). However, it is generally recommended that faculties of education need to provide opportunities for would-be teachers to engage with students with exceptionalities through a field-based experience (Avramidis et al., 2000; Hamre & Oyster, 2004; Loreman & Earle, 2007; Maushak, Kelley & Blodgett, 2001; Stella et al., 2007). Research suggests that lecture-style or online courses may not be as effective as experiential opportunities. Indeed, experiential opportunities have been lauded for

their ability to boost self efficacy by addressing the concerns of pre-service teachers in the areas of curriculum planning, implementation, and assessment for students with exceptionalities (Loreman & Earle, 2007; Stella et al., 2007; Woloshyn, Bennett & Berrill, 2003).

In summary, the literature related to inclusive education relates that, despite their concordance with the philosophy of inclusive education, pre-service teachers are markedly concerned by the type of exceptionalities they might face in a classroom, the availability and capability of resources, and their own history with inclusion and individuals with exceptionalities. Several studies suggest that an increase in pre-service teacher confidence can be yielded through field-based and/or experiential opportunities in a practicum environment that provides opportunities to engage in collaborative teaching and practice inclusion or interact with individuals with exceptionalities. These experiences also enhance pre-service teachers' perceptions of the demographics of an inclusive classroom and increase their ability to facilitate the curricular and assessment needs it requires.

Arts-Based Approach to Education

Arts-based education is constructed within the ideology that the arts (drama, dance, music, and visual art) are vital to creating meaning and managing life experiences (Cornett, 2006; Siegal, 1995; Wright & Kowalczy, 2000). Though they are taught as individual subjects, an arts-based approach to the curriculum within education denotes that any one of the aforementioned forms of art can be used as a means of teaching, learning, or responding to another subject within the school curriculum.

The benefits of arts-based education as an approach to the curriculum continuum include academic, social, and personal advancement. Academically, arts-based education

results in the improvement of cognition, language skills, literacy, verbal and non-verbal communication skills, critical thinking abilities, and the ability to draw connections between knowledge gathered from two or more subjects (Polloway, Patton & Sema, 2005). Socially, the outcomes remain positive in the development of classroom trust, opportunities for peer mediation and cooperative learning, and play experiences that can reveal their understanding of events and relationships in the students' worlds (Peter, 2003). Perhaps most significantly, self-discipline, confidence, and recognition of diversity are developed through interactions in the arts, and opportunities are granted to the students when they engage in artistic endeavours either for art's sake or as a means of accessing and responding to cross-curricular subjects (Polloway et al., 2005).

Vygotsky proposes that "learning is more than the acquisition of the ability to think; it is the acquisition of many specialised abilities for thinking about a variety of things" (Vygotsky, 1978, p.83). The theoretical links behind arts-based education are evident in his suggestion that exposure to a variety of cognitive tools (such as math, music, or art) facilitates developmental, social, and academic growth (Beliavsky, 2006; Vygotsky, 1978); These links are also made clear through his focus on what Wetz refers to as "emotional literacy" (Wetz, 2004, p. 67). This belief in the power of the arts and in the ability to access understanding of the world through a myriad of lenses compliments Gardner's (2006) theory of multiple intelligences. Gardner's (2006) theory proposed an alternative to the types of strengths measured through IQ tests, the standard of assessment of intelligence that became popularized in the early 1900s and is still used today. Gardner (2006) proposed an understanding of the definition of *intelligence* as any number of skills, qualities, and abilities that humans generally have, rather than to the ability to correctly answer questions on a test. He contends

that intelligence is a biological and psychological ability to process a particular type of information through problem solving or the creation of products that are of consequence within a certain genre or population. These intelligences, or frames of mind, frequently manifest themselves in combination and call for a less linear interpretation of intelligence assessment and acknowledgement; indeed, Gardner theorizes that answers to any given problem can be solved through any number of intelligences.

The value placed on this definition of intelligence remains a theoretical construct. Eisner (2005) suggests that the educational system has placed the arts at the bottom of a hierarchy topped by subjects that are dominated by verbal ability and logical reasoning represented through language and math. He cites a number of examples as evidence of this: the small amount of time arts-based programs are granted in relation to other subjects within a student's school career; the grades and non-arts subjects cited in the identification of intelligence and giftedness; and the rarely-utilized role of the arts as a screening device when applying to college and university programs. For educators, lending value to the arts as a vehicle for student understanding and attainment of knowledge and discovery requires an expansion of the way assessment is perceived and expected by many layers within the educational foreground (Simons & Hicks, 2006).

The suggestions within Gardner's multiple intelligences are supportive of utilizing the arts to generate meaning in other curricular areas (Gardner, 1983; Smith et al., 2006; Stuht & Gates, 2007). Several studies present the positive outcomes associated with using the arts to respond to curriculum, engage in self-evaluation, and obtain new knowledge through diagnostic, formative, and summative means (Hickman, 2007; Marlett & Gordon, 2004). Physical education may not be a subject that is typically considered as a source of creative

and language-based opportunities; however, through their study, Marlett and Gordon explore some of the various ways that the creative arts can be utilized through phys-ed when learning new skills, using movement, and pursuing kinaesthetic, cognitive, and creative exercises. Further use of the arts is demonstrated in the emergent concept of digital storytelling— a combination of audio, video, and digital text with visual elements to produce a computer-generated story (Chung, 2007). This is a medium that, according to Chung,

Not only addresses art education's current concerns with visual culture, computer technology and interdisciplinary pedagogy, but also allows learners to cultivate and apply their multiple literacy, artistic, and critical skills to give voice to greater issues of importance to a worldwide audience. (Chung, 2007, p.17)

While such academic links relate to arts-based education, social outcomes are also possible. Bickley-Green's (2007) study demonstrated the positive outcomes of utilizing visual arts to consider, depict, and discern both social and transformative behaviour within bullying situations by enabling students to visualize positive possibilities related to peace and their social landscape at school. The arts have the ability to generate understanding of our social skills and their development and Thompson (1997) maintains that the benefits of seeing the arts as an enriching component of the curriculum, capable of fostering self discovery cannot be underemphasized (Abril & Gault, 2007; Darvell, 1999; Lynch, 2007; Wilkinson, 2000).

Adler's research suggests that having visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic access to knowledge grants students the opportunity to learn within their preference and will augment their ability to succeed academically, while at the same time helping students to experience an increase in their general self-perception (Adler, 1929; LaFountain, Garner & Miedema, 2003). The creative arts introduce individuals to new aspects of identity, grant greater autonomy over learning experiences, and oftentimes increase self-confidence (Lynch, 2007;

Simons & Hicks, 2006). Theatre can be used not only as a tool to engage creative components of our being, but also as a reflective, insightful instrument capable of bringing stories or scenarios to life through accessible and site-specific modules (Kaplan, Cook & Steiger, 2006). “It seems likely that when we either create something ourselves, or contemplate the creations of others, we are attempting to integrate and reorganize our own inner experience” (Storr, 1993, p.192, as cited in Simons & Hicks, 2006). Such construction of meaning is typical of arts-based education and is facilitated through communication systems which can be non-verbal (such as dance or visual art) or verbal (such as theatre) (Cornett, 2006). Eisner credits the need for a value placed on the arts as an irreplaceable literacy:

The ability to create or understand sociology, psychology, or economics depends on the ability to perceive qualitative nuances in the social world, the ability to conceptualize patterns from which to share what has been experienced, and the ability to write about them in a form that is compelling. Without such perceptivity, the content of writing will be shallow. Without the ability to manipulate conceptions of the world imaginatively, the work is likely to be uninspired. Without an ear for the melody, cadence, and tempo of language, the tale is likely to be unconvincing. (Eisner, 2005, p.83)

Greene (2000) makes a case for the use of the arts within educational capacities of teaching and assessment through her argument that the arts are a stimulus for growth among students. She suggests that, through aesthetic experiences, students can be given an opportunity to discover their abilities as problem solvers and meaning makers. The arts can help students to experience a pluralistic perception of the world in which they respond not only to technology but also to each other constantly creating and recreating realities and renewing possibilities (Greene, 2000).

Qualitative research conducted by Green et al. (1998) focuses on the perceptions of pre-service teachers in regards to the primary-level arts preparation they received through teacher

education courses and mentor/classroom teacher practice and guidance. Data were collected through questionnaires completed by 106 pre-service teachers and interviews with 16 pre-service teachers following their first teaching practice experience, and questionnaires completed by 99 pre-service teachers and interviews with 15 pre-service teachers from the same group following their final teaching practice experience. The results indicated a general feeling of effectiveness in emphasizing the value of the arts resulting from their university courses, especially amongst pre-service educators who lacked confidence in teaching the arts. Still, assessment remained an area of concern for the pre-service educators upon entering practicum. The research of Green et al. (1998) suggests that standards and curriculum expectations infer—and often directly articulate—a desire to control the outcomes and connotations drawn from students' engagement with art. While teaching towards generating understanding and appreciation within art forms, educators need to couple this with their students' freedom to discern what is meaningful to them (Green et al., 1998; Greene, 2000).

Greene writes:

Aesthetic experiences require conscious participation in a work, a going out of energy, an ability to notice what is there to be noticed in the play, the poem, the quartet. Knowing 'about,' even in the most formal academic manner, is entirely different from constituting a fictive world imaginatively and entering it perceptually, affectively, and cognitively. (p.125)

While most of the pre-service teachers in the research study conducted by Green et al. (1998) had an opportunity to teach visual arts in their practicum experience, many did not have the chance to teach drama, music, or dance. Instead, they only bore witness to the instruction of these arts subjects when and if they were modelled by their associate teacher in the classroom. They left their practicum – and the teacher education program – with doubts about

their own competency in the instruction of the arts (Green et al, 1998). Questions related to who is responsible for arts education within the teacher education experience, and what level of skill should be expected among practicing teachers, remain inconclusive within the literature (Alter, Hays & O'Hara, 2009; Green et al., 1998).

The findings from a qualitative study involving in-depth interviews with 19 elementary teachers reference arts training and education as being influential towards their attitude, confidence, and level of ability within their teaching practice (Alter et al., 2009). These results reflect a need for greater training opportunities in every arts division through both pre-service teaching programs and in-service or classroom training opportunities. However, the study also suggests that those teachers with prior involvement in the arts approached such training with a higher awareness of their abilities to learn and teach the arts. These teachers were also more likely to provide challenging arts opportunities for students and to teach outside of their arts area of greatest comfort (Alter et al., 2009). Educating pre-service teachers about arts instruction is a necessary component of their preparation. Pre-service arts education should not only include exposure to every artistic medium, but also be geared towards fostering opportunities to conquer the fears, poor associations, and elements of 'punishment and reward' that many pre-service teachers connect with their own elementary creative art experiences (Abril & Gault, 2007; Thompson, 1997).

Eisner (2005) suggests that the perception of the arts as a 'talent,' rather than a universal ability, has been at the root of programs and teaching practices which undervalue or even eliminate arts programming. This mindset has resulted in missed opportunities for students to discover, explore, or expand their development through aesthetic experiences. While teachers report positive attitudes towards the use of drama within elementary schools

(Hundert, 1996), it oftentimes requires the influence of artists-in-the-classroom programs or the intervention of fellow staff members to engage those teachers who may lack experience or feel reluctant to implement such creative initiatives (Fogg & Smith, 2001). Teachers with a background in art or music have an opportunity to expose students to unique curriculums while collaborating with general educators in order to enrich their own art initiatives. Furthermore, it enables experienced arts teachers to expand on the preference of many general teachers to integrate their art lessons with other curriculum subjects by encouraging additional opportunities to bring value to the arts as separate expressions of meaning (Abril & Gault, 2007).

It is important to create opportunities for pre-service teachers to understand the learning transfer between the creative arts and the development of skills in other arenas of life (Abril & Gault, 2007). Morawski (2008) intimates the significance of a pre-service teacher's knowledge of self and the history that fuels their artistic and educational makeup. She explains that, within her language arts instruction for teacher candidates, her reflections on her past influences, coupled with an ongoing assessment of her current educational approach, enable her to be "more present" in supporting her students as they draw their own links to arts-based education (Morawski, 2008,p.19).

To summarize, the literature related to arts-based education suggests that arts-based educational approaches to classroom students are academically and socially beneficially in their scope. Teacher education courses in the arts are seen as positive contributions to pre-service efficacy; yet, as many pre-service educators will not have the opportunity to practice arts-specific teaching during their practicum experience, greater exposure to (and immersion in) the arts through these courses is considered lacking. Pre-service teachers' poor self-

perceptions suppress their confidence related to implementing arts-based initiatives. Thus, drawing on external resources, internal reflections, and previous experiences are recommended.

Performing Arts-based Education in an Inclusive Setting

As is implicit in the principles of arts-based education, Adler purported that a variety of strategies and intelligences have merit and credibility. Furthermore, students will feel empowered and motivated when they are aware of how they learn best, and in this way, the role or presence of ‘difference’ will be diminished (LaFountain et al., 2003; Simons & Hicks, 2006).

Perselli (2005) questions the rhetoric and historical influences of procedure and practice that shape our current approach to both education and inclusion. In consideration of the multiple ways of knowing that are inherent in an inclusive classroom, it is important to note that students with a variety of challenges and strengths experience their highest rates of retention when knowledge is drawn from lessons that include movement, dance, music, art, and/or drama (Polloway et al., 2005). Lynch (2007) supports these claims and explains that an arts-based approach to education—and its inherent creativity—is inclusive in its establishment of learning opportunities through which students may benefit by accessing their own approach to making meaning through one of our many sign systems. The multiple sign systems allows us to construct our own meaning from sign systems such as drama, art, music, language, and mathematics-communication systems, each with its own elements (Berghoff, 2000, 1998). For example, music uses elements of tempo, rhythm, and pitch; painting uses the elements of colour, line, and shape. Both of these sign systems are proficient in communicating a certain way (Berghoff, 2000, 1998).

Wright and Kowalczyk emphasize the pivotal part the arts can play in “stimulating creativity, provoking thought, transcending disciplines, and building bridges between people and cultures” (Wright & Kowalczyk, 2000, p.62). By their very nature, the arts have great potential to incite an openness that results in a certain vulnerability. Still, positive experiences emerge from sharing stories and ways of knowing, and students should be given a myriad of opportunities to showcase their own artistic expressions, understandings, and accomplishments (Abril & Gault, 2007). Catterall and Peppler (2007) draw insights related to the confidence and creativity derived from their study pertaining to the effects of visual arts on student paradigms:

We argue that original thinking and self-efficacy may go hand-in-hand, and perhaps just as important that tendencies toward original thinking spawned by artistic learning may spill over or transfer to original thinking more generally. Confidence about the ability to generate novel solutions to problems or conceiving original pathways when facing a roadblock is a workable definition of self efficacy. Original thinkers might be thought to have expansive as opposed to restrictive views of the world ahead. (p.559)

When coupled with school activities devoted to the arts and student initiatives executed through the arts, a school community where students use alternative voices to make themselves heard, to listen, and to grow may develop (Wetz, 2004).

Yet, education is largely governed by principles representative of a logical, linguistic, and mathematical approach to learning and expression. This is evidenced by a focus on specific outcomes, standards, and a style of learning that favour conventional (rather than multiple) sites of learning (Abril & Gault, 2007; Simons & Hicks, 2006). Such an emphasis creates challenges for students who are stimulated by, or who have an affinity for, other ways of learning (Simon & Hicks, 2006). For individuals with or without exceptionality, the opportunity to identify and nurture their strengths through arts-based approaches can heighten

feelings of self-worth, create bridges of understanding to areas that pose learning difficulties, and allow teachers and others in their lives to provide opportunities that will develop this ability (Gardner, 2006; Oreck, 2006). Gardner notes that, like their peers in an inclusive classroom, individuals with exceptionalities have a set of intelligences—some or all of which allow them to meet the challenges they may face. These intelligences need to be unearthed and mobilized. Eisner (2005) argues for a reform in the value allotted to (and therefore, opportunities granted to) ways of knowing that involve emotional, artistic, and bodily interactions with the world. He further suggests that we have constructed a hierarchical set of associations with human abilities that pervade the way we label, assess, and approach knowledge as something to be discovered rather than experienced.

Greene (2000) describes the arts as something that frequently balances between conformity and morality, and they have the ability to unearth that which is otherwise not perceived. Therefore, the educational outcomes of art are not to provide alternatives to what are perceived as *actual* cognitive challenges, but to provide an opportunity to engage with imagination and connect to our own experiences and possibilities with consciousness and reflection. Simons and Hicks (2006) also propose the use of creative arts in education as a means of providing learning alternatives and developing natural, undervalued creativity. The Artists in Residence Program described through Wetz's (2004) case study is one example of how the creative arts can combine dance with physics, or theatre with English studies, in a way that at-risk youth can engage in the experience and demonstrate improvement in content understanding:

Integrating creative styles of teaching and learning in our educational practices is not only timely, then, but is also necessary if all students are to be offered opportunities to explore

their creativity and come to 'know' without the pressure of formal modes of learning and assessment. (Simons & Hicks, 2006, p.80)

Through his research, Gardner (2006) suggests that any idea worth being taught can have multiple points of entry (including narrational, logical, quantitative, existential, aesthetic, experimental, and collaborative). Students will have a personal inclination towards—and comfort with—certain ways of approaching and understanding an idea while developing familiarity and appreciation for the understandings of others. By presenting information through such a rich buffet of meaning making opportunities, students are given the opportunity to not only broaden their point of view, but also to distinguish their areas of greatest proficiency and pursue knowledge, problems, and skills by the route most likely to result in their success and achievement (Gardner, 2006). Eisner refers to the need for students to be “purposely introduced” to the aesthetic aspects of curricular subjects (Eisner, 2005, p.102). His argument lies in the belief that knowledge is achieved through art as well as through science, and that through the windows of aesthetic ways of knowing, we invite stimulation, exploration, sensory experiences, and the realization of the student’s capacity for discovery (Eisner, 2005).

Our knowledge and identity is crafted through our bodies and language, as well as through the social interplay with our experience of the world always in flux (Linds, 2004). Engaging in the arts permits students to take an alternative route towards learning that is not measured in words alone but in the discovery, expression, and language that is offered through movement, drama, music, and art (Simons & Hicks, 2006).

Dewey’s (1944) belief in the need to meet the social and intellectual needs of every child was proposed through the argument that education should focus on an attitude towards

critical thinking and knowledge seeking, as opposed to skill development. This can be achieved through the appreciation of the multiple perspectives inherent in semiotic perspectives. Inclusive education theory is captured within this mode, and suggests the call for diversity which is the essence of this philosophy (Cowan & Albers, 2006; Dewey, 1994). Accessing semiotic meaning, students are aware of and able to use systems of communication such as drama, music, art, and dance—approaches that researchers support as literacies through which students perceive the world from different angles and retrieve its various components in a way that honours their difference (Cowan & Albers, 2006; Tierney, Bond & Bresler, 2006).

In summary, an arts-based approach is lauded throughout the literature for its potential and researched ability to access meaning making opportunities among learners. It is presented as an alternative to the challenge of relying on linguistic, logical, and mathematical means of communication and knowledge sharing. While arts-related endeavours can be linear in nature, they access a broad range of teaching and learning possibilities; by utilizing the full spectrum of our capabilities and drawing on a preferred way of relating to the world, the outcomes are inclusive and supportive.

Fuller's (1969) Model of Teacher Development

Fuller's (1969) model of teacher development will provide the theoretical framework to this study. It provides a means of maintaining focus on the pre-service teacher's response to implementing inclusion through arts. Her research conceptualizing the essence of pre-service teachers' concerns especially as they compare what is taught through their teacher education courses with what is experienced through practicums. She found that the concerns of the participating pre-service students, as well as their self-perceptions, transformed and shifted in

focus throughout the various stages of the teaching experience—through pre-teaching, early teaching and late teaching (Fuller, 1969). Within this framework, the pre-teaching phase is characterized by a lack of concern with teaching and vague ideas referenced by their own experience as a student or by hearsay. The actual concerns of the early teaching phase are associated with worries related to boundaries and responsibilities within their position as a pre-service teacher, as well as with their abilities to manage a classroom, model teaching strategies, make decisions based on evidence and judgment, and handle subject content with competency. The focus of the late teaching phase – associated with that of experienced teachers - shifts from their completion of tasks to their ability to foster positive learning outcomes within the classroom and to assess and strengthen student abilities and evaluate their own capabilities as an educator (Fuller, 1969).

While the phases of concern can each be regarded as a developmental experience, it should be noted that the phases can be experienced in a different order or simultaneously. Duquette's (2003) qualitative study focused on recent graduates from an Aboriginal teacher education program and gathered recollections of their experience as pre-service teachers. From the reflections of 22 participants who responded to open-ended questions in a survey, as well as responses from a focus group of four participants, the new teachers revealed that their concerns included mastery of classroom management, developing lesson planning skills, and fostering positive relationships with other staff. They also reported their concern for understanding and utilizing rubrics, which denotes both a focus on the self as well as the students. Conway and Clark (2003) present another viewpoint regarding Fuller's framework, and argue that new understandings within this model showcase pre-service teachers as transitioning from concerns about tasks to concerns about students, while at the same time

striving to improve their classroom management abilities and their capability to grow in their profession. This shift to understand the conceptualized framework of concern as it relates to such phases is reflective of internal development and growth, and transcends what is reflected in the original triad of phases (Conway & Clark, 2003).

Literature related to pre-service music educators pursuing either elementary or secondary instruction has produced mixed results, with secondary bound pre-service teachers relating fewer concerns (Campbell & Thompson, 2007). This qualitative research cites a unique link to the phases of concern in that it suggests that concern about student impact was far greater than concern about technical ability or issues related to the self. Additional studies related to pre-service music education have produced a more typical progression through the phases within which skill-related concerns superseded the import placed on the ultimate student experience (Slevanson, 2005, as cited in Campbell & Thompson, 2007; Yourn, 2000).

Fuller's model of teacher development and the pre-service experience is linked to several studies which chart the role of change within this context. Ralph (2004) utilized Fuller's model to study the role of classroom cooperating teachers (CCT) in addition to their pre-service teachers. Results were collected through pre- and post-practicum surveys completed by nine cohorts (totalling 82 pre-service teachers) and the CCTs associated with five of these cohorts. The CCTs identified their own experiences of concern regarding their role as a mentor to beginning educators, and acknowledged the phase of their pre-service teachers who, like the CCTs, evaluated their apprehension before and after their practicum experience. The study reflected Fuller's conceptualization of the characteristics of each phase. While CCTs generally fell within Fuller's early and late teaching phases, pre-service teachers were most often reported as being in the pre teaching or early teaching phase, and rarely

transcended to the same ability to look outward as the experienced educators (Ralph, 2004). This study recommends a need for CCTs to establish their assignments and approach to their pre-service teachers based on an appreciation for their likely phase of concern. McCann and Johannessen (2004) expressed a similar sentiment through their qualitative research study, responding to pre-service teachers whose concerns upon transitioning from pre-service teaching to practicing teaching were reported to be affected by the understanding showed by staff mentors and administrators.

The qualitative study of McKinney, Sexton, and Meyerson (1999) suggest that the phases of concern also relate to perceptions of competency and self-confidence. Reports on teachers in a graduate program working to carry out whole language practices revealed that those pre-service individuals who entered the experience with low self-efficacy embodied characteristics found in the early teaching phase, and developed from self-doubting to a task driven approach. Those individuals who began the task with a high level of self-efficacy began their work focused on tasks and were soon able to focus on the outcome as it would impact their students, suggesting that the greatest potential for impact accompanies individuals in Fuller's phase of late concern (Fuller, 1969; McKinney et al., 1999). In regards to the influential nature of personal history and self-confidence on pre-service teachers, in addition to their perceptions of their own possibilities for success and willingness to attempt new tasks, Morawski reflects, "The main goal is always to query the past of where we are now to the possibilities of where we can be" (Morawski, 2008, p.20).

In conclusion, the experience of concern within pre-service teachers is documented within the research, and while not specifically linked with Fuller's conceptualized model, its relationship to inclusive education is well represented. However, as inclusive education

bridges the reality of the pre-service experience, research has yet to be conducted on the pre-service experience from Fuller's model of teacher development as it relates to performing arts-based education within the context of an inclusive classroom.

Identification of Research Needs

The philosophy of inclusivity is currently transforming the paradigm within which educators establish curriculums, assess learning opportunities, and approach the classroom environment (Smith et al., 2006). To address these changes, educational research has the potential to explore the factors that both impede and optimize the various components of (and participants within) the experience of inclusive education that will ultimately provide the environmental and instructional means of facilitating this approach. As educators redesign the climate of the classroom to embrace diversity, philosophies such as arts-based education are being researched and implemented as methodologies that can augment the overall success of students who possess a multitude of learning needs and strengths (Short et al., 2000; Simons & Hicks, 2006).

Utilizing the learning opportunities present during the pre-service educational experience, it is possible to explore knowledge, present experiences, and transform methodologies that will meet the concerns of future teachers. Such an undertaking would contribute to the formation of pre-educators' attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions about inclusive education and the approaches (such as arts-based education) which can best facilitate it (Avramidis et al., 2000; Buell et al., 1999). Indeed, there is an evident gap in the research that informs the current pre-service teacher experience and related attitudes. Therefore, this experience needs to be unpacked if the system which educates future teachers is to adapt to and provide for the educators that will inherit—and ultimately lead—it.

Purpose of the Study

In response to this gap in the research related to the experiences of pre-service teachers, the purpose of this study is to access the essence of the perceptions and experiences of three pre-service teachers in the primary/junior Integrated Arts cohort in the teacher education program at a university in Ontario as they engage in performing arts-based education in an inclusive setting.

Research Questions

The following questions will guide this research:

- 1) *Focused Life History: Within each participant's history, what are the educational, professional, and/or personal experiences that have shaped their perceptions related to inclusive education, arts-based education, and the performance of arts-based education in an inclusive setting?*
- 2) *Details of Experience: What are each participant's current experiences related to inclusive education, arts-based education, and the performance of arts-based education in an inclusive setting?*
- 3) *Reflection on the Meaning: What are each participant's reflections and revelations connected to their perceptions related to inclusive education, arts-based education, and the performance of arts-based education in an inclusive setting?? What impact do these reflections and revelations have on their expectations for their projected professional and/or educational future, if any?*
- 4) *What is the nature of their journey through Fuller's (1969) stages of concern?*

Through Seidman's (2006) three-interview structure, participants will share experiences, the contexts of these experiences, and reflections on their meaning, ultimately uncovering the

thematic and contextual influences that will inform this study's central question: *What are the perceptions and experiences of pre-service teachers in performing arts-based education in an inclusive primary and / or junior classroom setting?*

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

“The artist is the opposite of the politically minded individual, the opposite of the reformer, the opposite of the idealist. The artist does not tinker with the universe, he recreates it out of his own experience and understanding of life.”

- Henry Miller

This chapter describes the methodology structuring this study of perceptions and experiences of pre-service teachers in performing arts-based education in an inclusive primary and / or junior classroom setting. The governing reasons and assumptions in choosing a phenomenological case study design as it applies to qualitative research are justified, while the elements of participant recruitment, the researcher's perspective, data collection, trustworthiness and data analysis are described.

Qualitative Approach

The design of this phenomenological study identifies a concern for the *experiences* of the participants, as well as an interest in deciphering the *meaning* of these experiences. It also applied the *purposeful selection of participants* designed to give the research meaning (Schram, 2006). Given the assumptions which underlie both qualitative and quantitative approaches to inquiry, the aforementioned choices within this research study have resulted in a qualitative design.

From an ontological position, the researcher has taken the approach that reality is subjective, and that a constructivist perspective provides the essence of an experience of reality (Creswell, 2007). From an epistemological position, the researcher will meet with the participants outside of their practicum classrooms (Creswell, 2007). This research is based in a belief that knowledge of the world is a product of numerous viewpoints (Schram, 2006). From an axiological position, the researcher strives to acknowledge how participants' personal values and past experiences related to inclusive education, arts-based approaches to education, and the pre-service experience will impact the data (Creswell, 2007). From a rhetorical position, the researcher uses first person narrative and references *meaning* and *lived experience* (Creswell, 2007). From a methodological position, the researcher considers the

context of the study and its participants, and allows for the possibility of an emergent design (including an openness to reformulate questions during the process) (Creswell, 2007; Schram, 2006). A case study method is used and facilitated through Seidman's (2006) technique, drawing on a combination of both life histories and focused in-depth interviewing strategies.

Participants

Following official approval by University of Ottawa's Research Ethics Board (REB) through University of Ottawa Research Grants and Ethics Services (RGES), data collection was approached through the engagement of the purposeful sampling and selection of three volunteer participants. For the purposes of this study, the research participants were recruited from a group of pre-service teachers in the primary/junior Integrated Arts cohort in the teacher education program at a university in Ontario (See Appendix A: Timeline for Research Study). Pre-service teachers in this teacher education program are divided into cohorts of approximately 30 to 40 students each. These cohorts separate students according to primary/junior, junior/intermediate, and intermediate/senior streams. The Integrated Arts cohort was an initiative that was introduced into this teacher education program in September 2008 as an option to which registering students could apply. The philosophy of this cohort is to instruct the students in an arts-based approach to education, which they can then implement during their practicum experiences and professional teaching practices. The central focus within this inquiry is the essence of the perceptions and experiences of pre-service teachers in performing arts-based education in an inclusive primary and/ or junior classroom setting.

To recruit participants, the researcher made a presentation in November 2008 to the pre-service teachers in the primary/junior Integrated Arts cohort. The researcher familiarized them with the study, established its purpose, and explained the role of the study participants.

To participate, the pre-service teachers had to be both (a) enrolled in the primary/junior Integrated Arts cohort (through which they would also take a course focused on the education of exceptional students in their fall semester); and (b) experience inclusive classroom settings during both their fall and winter practicum placements, which would be preferably located in the local area. The pre-service teacher participants also needed to commit to three individual recorded interviews, during which they would answer several open-ended questions related to the themes and contexts relevant to this research project. Following the classroom presentation, questions were addressed and the "Participant Recruitment Text" (see Appendix G) was distributed. Interested students were asked to contact the researcher.

After the initial recruitment presentation, two pre-service teachers volunteered. One volunteer was accepted into the study immediately. The other had committed to completing both practicums outside of the municipality in which the faculty is located, and so was asked to be a spare participant. In order to garner additional volunteers, a second presentation was made to the primary/junior Integrated Arts cohort and an additional pre-service teacher volunteered and was accepted into the study. In order to broaden the scope of the study, the spare volunteer was asked to become a full study participant. Therefore, three students were interested and accepted following confirmation that every participant had been placed in an inclusive setting for their fall semester practicum placement.

Researcher's Perspective

Within a constructivist paradigm, the researcher's role is to understand and decipher the meanings that others have about the world, and the researcher is an intrinsic part of the process (Creswell, 2007; Seidman, 2006). The need to bracket the present researcher's phenomenological experiences is essential due to her inherent involvement in the methods

related to the study approach and analysis (Creswell, 2007; Schram, 2006). Given the interactive characteristics of this qualitative research study, the perspective of the researcher must be clarified through a narrative of her personal and professional history in the areas of inclusion, arts, and personal pre-service experience (Creswell, 2007; Schram, 2006). Subjectivity characterizes the analysis and construal of the findings (Schram, 2006) and the researcher will aim to revisit and question the alternative understandings that could account for the experience of the participants.

This research study follows Seidman's (2006) structure for in-depth phenomenological interviewing as a governing format. The researcher's previous experiences in the role of an interviewer have been guided differently in their design and purpose. As a research assistant with the Public Health School Asthma Pilot Project, she conducted phone interviews with parents and in-person interviews with children related to asthma characteristics, treatment plans, and quality of life. She conducted interviews with pre-service teacher education students as part of a University of Ottawa research study within the Faculty of Education regarding pre-service students in the teacher education program who had taken the PED 3115: *English as a Second Language for Ontario Classrooms* elective. The interviews focused on how the participants' life histories and their educational, professional, and volunteer experiences related to their conceptualizations of ELL and the field of ESL.

The researcher's interest in the field of inclusive education has been growing since secondary school, and since that time she has pursued work and volunteer experiences which have each afforded opportunities to engage with individuals with exceptionalities. She became involved in community theatre at age 11 and pursued an arts-based education by enrolling in a Performing Arts Program in secondary school, during which she continued to

benefit from the influences of an arts-based method of instruction. She has also since enjoyed directing a summer camp devoted to supporting the empowerment of young people through the arts. Her personal connection to the arts has intrinsically motivated a desire to fuse visual art, music, drama and dance with her work as a student throughout every stage of her educational experience; her recollections of anticipation, enjoyment, and confidence that accompanied creation and arts-based learning remain strong even today. Through her own pre-service experience, she can appreciate Fuller's (1969) phases of teacher development as she experienced her own transitions and change; furthermore, she can attest to the significant role that her past and present teacher education experiences have in shaping her perceptions towards inclusion and arts-based education.

Data Collection

The framework for the collection of data was guided by Seidman's structure for in-depth phenomenological interviewing, which strives to enable participants to "reconstruct their experience" (Seidman, 2006, p.15). This was followed over the course of three distinct, individual interviews for a total of nine interviews. Due to the schedule of courses and practicum experiences, the length of time in between each interview session differed from Seidman's original model. However, participants were nonetheless able to reflect on their experiences within their appropriate contexts (Seidman, 2006). The data from each recorded interview were transcribed by the researcher, and participants reviewed these transcriptions to validate that the content reflected their lived experiences, thoughts, and perceptions. Anonymity was protected through the use of a pseudonym contributed by each participant, and identifiable information has been either omitted or altered.

Each of the three participants was interviewed three times during their 2008/ 2009 enrollments as pre-service teachers in the primary/junior Integrated Arts cohort in the teacher education program at the university's Faculty of Education. The timing of these interviews was structured in response to coursework and practicum experiences, which lead to a reflection of the essence of their experiences (Schram, 2006).

Each of the recorded interviews was between 60 and 180 minutes in length, and each round of interviews was completed before the next round began. Two participants were interviewed face-to-face for all three interviews, as their practicum placements were held in the same city in which the Faculty of Education is located. The place, date, and time of each interview was chosen to provide maximum participant comfort. One participant undertook placements outside of the city, and thus their first and last interviews were both held via the telephone over a secure line to preserve participant anonymity. While these interviews enabled participant reflections to occur; a lack of face-to-face interaction incurred challenges related to reading participant cues, responding most definitively to a pause in participant speech and developing optimal rapport. The second interview with this participant was conducted face-to-face. Informed consent was obtained from every participant utilizing a Participant Consent Form (see Appendix F) ("University of Ottawa Research Grants and Ethics Services," 2007).

The interviews followed a semi-structured interview format. The contributions initiated by the participants encouraged a natural conversation that explored their life histories, current education, and reflections on the meaning of these experiences related to inclusive education and arts-based approaches to education. The stories and reflections that emerged provoked

alterations and additions to the interview questions that followed, thereby allowing each set of interviews to influence the next. Transcriptions were verified by the participants via email.

The first interview was scheduled in November 2008, prior to the students' fall practicum experience. The aim of this interview was to engage the participants in an exploration of their life histories, while placing their experiences with inclusive education, arts-based education, and performing arts-based education in an inclusive setting within the context of their life up to the present (Seidman, 2006). (See Appendix C: Interview One Protocol).

The second interview was scheduled in December 2008, near the end of the students' fall semester practicum experience. The aim of this interview was to explore the participants' current educational experiences following their first practicum as they relate to inclusive education, arts-based education, and the performance of arts-based education in an inclusive classroom setting. This second interview series aimed to unearth details which acknowledged their perceptions within this context (Seidman, 2006). (See Appendix D: Interview Two Protocol).

The third interview was scheduled in April 2009, near the end of the students' winter practicum experience. The aim of this interview was both a) to explore the participants' current educational experiences following their second practicum as they relate to inclusive education, arts-based education, and the performance of arts-based education in an inclusive classroom setting, while at the same time exploring their perceptions within this context (Seidman, 2006) (See Appendix D: Interview Two Protocol); and b) to engage the participants' in reflection on the meaning of their educational experiences related to inclusive education, arts-based education, and the performance of arts-based education in an inclusive

classroom setting, and identifying how these reflections impact their expectations for their projected professional and/or educational future (Seidman, 2006) (See Appendix E: Interview Three Protocol). As Seidman suggests, the perceptions and experiences unearthed during the two previous interview sessions, along with participants' consideration of their second practicum experiences, enhance their culminating reflections and call on the participants to derive their own meaning from them (Seidman, 2006).

During the final interview session, participants were asked to complete a Participant Information Form (See Appendix G) that provided general information related to the study's focus. They also had the opportunity to share any additional data samples they felt would serve to elaborate on their past or current experiences of the phenomenon.

Trustworthiness

In-depth phenomenological interviewing is an area within qualitative research that is interactive. Therefore, data analysis requires explicit definition of how the researcher will approach their interactive and analytical role within the inquiry. Peshkin (1992, as cited in Schram, 2006) encourages the researcher to avoid partiality and emotional inclination by looking for contradictions and continually probing for what they may not otherwise be seeing, asking, or considering. Following these principles, the researcher made every reasonable effort to transcribe and analyze the findings based on noted remembrances of the participants' vocal and physical cues; their perceived intentions within the dialogue; and acknowledgement of the multiplicity of the possible interpretations of the participant experiences (Creswell, 2007). Participants in the study reviewed the transcriptions and the researcher noted her own responses to the interview data as a way of understanding her connection and reactions to the ideas that she would ultimately be analysing and interacting with.

It is when you feel angry, irritable, gleeful, excited, or sad that you can be sure that your subjectivity is at work. The goal is to explore such feelings to learn what they are telling you about who you are in relationship to what you are learning and to what you may be keeping yourself from learning (Glesne, 1999, p.105, as cited in Schram, 2006).

Seidman's (2006) three-interview structure revisits participant experiences and contextualizes them within the applicable historical, classroom, or practicum scenarios that influenced their perceptions related to performing arts-based education in an inclusive classroom setting. Through these interviews, an in-depth portrait of each individual was established. Seidman suggests that participant reactions and uninterrupted reflections over the course the interviews provides evidence for validity, derived from the way they are making meaning out of their lived experience during the time the interview was held. Participants also had the occasion to engage in member checking transcripts from each of their interviews by May 2009 in order to review, comment on, question, and approve the content for researcher use. This process enabled the participants to "check for the internal consistency" of what they discussed in their interviews (Seidman, 2006, p.24).

Data Analysis

The data collected from the nine interviews yielded approximately 300 pages of double-spaced transcriptions. From these transcriptions, initial profiles of each participant in his or her own voice were developed and expanded following each interview. Statements of significance were drawn from each interview, selected by for their relevance to the study and their revelations related to their own experiences of these topics (Creswell, 2007). The need for contextualizing the participant's experience of the phenomena is significant within phenomenological research, and analysis should involve the exploration of life stages and experiences which provoke key stories and epiphanies (Creswell, 2007). The profiles detailed

relevant information regarding life influences that are significant to the present study— from early family, social, and educational experiences to their current role as pre-service teacher education students. Their relationships to, experiences with, and reflections on the meaning of their educational experiences form the ongoing threads that weave the tapestry of each participant's story related to their experiences with inclusive education, an arts-based approach to education, and performing arts-based education in an inclusive setting.

The thematic statements that ultimately established the preliminary participant profiles held significance for the research focus, and were considered for their meaning (Creswell, 2007). The researcher used these preliminary profiles to identify emergent themes that resulted in alterations of the questions and were repetitious among the participants (Creswell, 2003). While profiles evolved and emerging themes were noted during the interview process, final analysis of the data and the study of the participants as they related to one another and to the literature did not begin until the data collection process was complete.

From these statements and themes, textual descriptions of the participant experiences and the context of these experiences culminated in an understanding of pre-service perceptions related to their engagement with the performance of arts-based education in an inclusive classroom setting (Creswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1994) (See Appendix H: Timeline for Interviews, Transcripts, and Analysis).

Implementing cross-case analysis, the participants were compared to one another in relation to their relevant ideas and experiences. Then, they were thematically categorized into 'clusters' as the defining thesis questions were addressed within this comparative analysis (Creswell, 2007). Further discussion explores the relationship of the literature to the results of the cross-case analysis, unearthing potential themes, research findings, and further questions.

Conclusion

This chapter detailed the methodological approach that structured the initiation and implementation of this research study. Participant recruitment and involvement were defined; was discussed, and the method of data collection and analysis was outlined.

The following three chapters introduce the participants through profiles that have evolved from an exploration of their personal histories and experiences in teacher education. Ultimately, they present cumulative reflections related to participants' perceptions of inclusive education, an arts-based approach to education, and performing arts-based education in an inclusive classroom setting. The concerns, beliefs, and values that are shared through their stories and experiences track the evolution of each individual to reveal a rich, contextual understanding of how these perceptions have manifested themselves in each participant—and what it will mean for their future as educators. Let us now set the stage with the introduction of our cast of players.

CHAPTER FOUR
FINDINGS – CARRIE’S PROFILE

“When my daughter was about seven years old, she asked me one day what I did at work. I told her I worked at the college—that my job was to teach people how to draw. She stared at me, incredulous, and said, “You mean they forget?””

– Howard Ikemoto

Carrie's Profile

Early Years and Educational Experiences

Born in 1984, Carrie grew up in a stable, nuclear family in Eastern Canada. She did not have much exposure to students with exceptionalities as a child. She oftentimes felt excluded by other children during her elementary days at a private religious school, where the standards were high and the academic rewards were great. Carrie suspects that the rigorous demands and additional classes at her elementary school contributed to the lack of arts instruction. However she infused her home life with creative pursuits and interests. Carrie began to gain confidence in high school where she was placed in the enriched stream of academics, joined the improv team and used drama classes to explore her identity and develop friendships. She had particularly influential high school English teachers who modeled a love for arts-based teaching and learning within the curriculum. After completing a Bachelor in Science degree in environmental studies, she decided to pursue a Master's degree in the field of education following positive experiences as a volunteer with an environmental education group during her undergraduate years and through her work at science centre.

Experiences with Individuals with Exceptionalities

While Carrie recollects one student with an auditory exceptionality in her elementary school, as well as an awareness of a program for at-risk youth in her high school, her first vivid experience with an individual with an exceptionality stems from her time spent in high school acting as a child and youth athletics coach within a community program:

There was one girl specifically, who really didn't focus. Who, during activities she was always walking away....well, not walking away, but couldn't get her to work and all those things and so, I don't know if there was an actual issue there.... But her parents would tell me, "Oh, you know, how was she today?" So, there was a lot of concern there.

Carrie didn't focus on this girl's athletic abilities and instead placed value on other aspects of the young girl's experiential outcomes:

It's more important that she learns how to make friends with other people in the group, and enjoy herself and focus when I ask her—you know, those skills are what she, I hoped she gained more from that—and she had fun, usually.

During high school, Carrie had a job shadowing a child with autism at a summer camp and a March Break camp. This was a difficult experience for Carrie, and the March Break camp proved to be the most challenging. She resigned after she felt the child's safety was put in jeopardy during a field trip. With that being her only experience working with a “really special, exceptional student,” she believes it “probably gave [her] a really bad impression.”

Arts Opportunities in Work, School or Personal Life

Carrie joined her high school improv team and decided to pursue drama electives for three years, during which she thrived. She explained:

I took drama because it was fun. I loved it....Teacher would give you some tasks or you had to make up skits and act stuff out. And it was different crowds so I was able to...it was funny...it was a different crowd so I was able to do different things. I wasn't the same student as I was with all my other classes. It was people I barely knew or, you know I didn't have to live up to other class's expectations; it was good.

Her exposure to drama and the arts via the cross-curricular approach of her English classes in high school was paramount to her personal growth. It helped her transition into an instructor for young people through her involvement in an environmental education group in university where she fused science projects with cross-curricular links and hands-on opportunities:

One time I went to this school and we helped all the grade 4s with their science—they had a science fair but it was everything. And so, with one group we made rainmakers. Because they wanted arts—they wanted something they could show at this exhibit. So with one group we made rainmakers; it was sort of a lower-ability group...grade 3s, 4s;

and so we weren't going to do something 'hard sciency.' The other group was a bit more able to take on that challenge, so we actually made weather instruments with that group. And the other group we made some food chain mobiles.

Involvement with Young People

Carrie's volunteer role in recreational gymnastics instruction beginning in grade 12 introduced her to youth leadership, where she employed accommodations in order to meet the athletes' needs:

It was great. So some people are quick at learning the physical stuff, some weren't. Some needed to be shown. Some people needed to be told. Some people needed to be given special tricks like, you know, "Imagine you're leaping over a puddle" —and that would be a split leap or a stride leap.

Carrie's experiences during her time as a volunteer with her undergraduate faculty's environmental education group were fulfilling yet challenging. She assisted in preparing the lessons and learning approaches for each student group. More recently, her role as a teaching assistant during her Master's in Education degree brought her together with an outdoor and experiential learning course offered to teacher education students. This experience catalyzed her interest in alternative approaches to curricular learning: "So it was amazing. I learned so much over the last two years, and I have a new passion for outdoors stuff and the importance of experiential, hands-on learning."

Decision Related to Teacher's College

Following her undergraduate studies in science, Carrie enrolled in a Master's of Education program because she "loved the environment and wanted to explore that realm of education." Over the course of those two years of exposure to the activities of the teacher education program, she began to envision herself teaching elementary school more so than being involved in further research:

It's not...looking at elementary education was somewhere where I could do some things I like and probably help students develop as people, as responsible citizens able to deal with the future. All those good things about making a difference, and at the same time having fun myself—why not?

Perceptions Related to Inclusive Education—Prior to Practicum One Experience

As she didn't identify her own elementary school experience as being inclusive, the concept of inclusion was new to Carrie. Her care giving experience at the summer and March Break camps were her closest identification to what such a class would feel like. While she had some idea of how to differentiate her teaching and learning approach to meet the needs of students in an inclusive classroom, Carrie still perceived the task to be challenging. She asserts:

I see it as being a huge challenge. I do see it as being...I would try and make lessons in a way that any student could choose to do them...like using the choice boards and stuff like that....I think I am a little nervous about teaching in ways that are inclusive but for the setting I'm in I feel the most...because ESL is probably the biggest and the most huge part of it. I feel like doing as much visually and as much with my hands and facial expressions as possible to get them to understand.

Perceptions Related to Arts-Based Education—Prior to Practicum One Experience

While considering an arts-based approach to education, Carrie related an exciting opportunity that arose during her teacher education science course:

We did this dance thing and we learned about adapting this B.Ed. science course I'm doing now—gears; but learning it through a dance where you hold out your hands and you choose circles outwards facing. Everyone has their hands out and so they're two gears, basically, and you rotate and one goes one way and one goes the other. So that kind of stuff is experiential and art and learning about science and.... After doing an environment undergrad, just the importance of how everything is interconnected and how

everything impacts one thing after another...synergistic effect...that can be applied to education.

Carrie understood her upcoming placement in a kindergarten class as being in an environment where developmental and social skills form the foundation of the curriculum, providing space for fresh possibilities and windows for the use of the arts as an instructional guide. She elaborated:

It's a kindergarten and it's a very high ESL population I guess, so very multilingual and so a lot of kids just learning English. So that adds this whole level, so a lot of stuff is done through song as a lot of the kindergarten curriculum seems to be...and a lot of visual....So there has to be all these elements brought in. So there's enough opportunity to bring in song; to bring in dance. I'm doing a unit on patterning so I've brought in.... I don't know anything about music but we're going to use musical instruments to make patterns. And I love dance and drama—so I don't know how I could use those yet... I'm not very good at dance or drama either...but it doesn't stop me from using them. [sic]

Perceptions Related to Performing Arts-based Education in an Inclusive Classroom — Prior to Practicum One Experience

Carrie asserted her belief that the arts act as a point of access for many students, and specifically as a skill development tool in kindergarten:

Well, I guess if you, if the inclusion is basically making sure that different...students with different abilities can access the contents of what they're learning and you're teaching, I guess. That's accommodation. And if one of the ways is to make sure the kids are acting, doing kinaesthetic type things...so acting it out, moving, and doing drama, than that's how it can be done. And if it means having them see things, so by doing different types of visual displays, like using art and having them create things, then that's another way it can be done.... I see how art has a place in developing us as human beings and our perspective.

Practicum One Experience

Carrie's first practicum took place in two classes: a morning and an afternoon junior kindergarten/senior kindergarten (JK/SK) split class of 18 to 20 students each, in a large public school in Eastern Canada in which approximately 80 percent of the student population are English Language Learners (ELL).

Development of oral communication is a kindergarten expectation, and Carrie noted that the JK students struggled with this. She wasn't sure if it was shyness or lack of English language skills, but most of the JK's were very quiet and drawing out their verbal communication was a struggle. Some SK students also exhibited the same challenges while others were exploding with language. Carrie therefore relied heavily on visual strategies and discovered that the identification of exceptionalities changes in an environment in which so many children are learning a new language:

So they have students who are exceptional, obviously; but they have...it's a bit of an added challenge to identify them because of the English language barrier. Especially for testing.... If you're looking for a psychologist or someone who speaks Arabic.... So there might be someone, but you know, it's going to take a lot longer to get him to see your so and so child. So there's added delays on that. [sic]

None of the students in her practicum class had an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) yet. However, the teacher still needed to (informally) accommodate in order for every student to manage the kindergarten curriculum. The special education program at Carrie's practicum school is host to a team of seven teachers whose role is to support and facilitate the needs of ELL students and students with exceptionalities in the school. The team does this through the creation of literacy groups, classroom assistance, IEP development, and identification of student language levels:

So it's not that, "Oh, this child is ESL and this child is exceptional." It's sort of, this continuum that they work with. And so students who...they try and wait a few years when students are new to English: give them a few years to pick up and improve their ELL level—or ESL level. And then, if there's continued problems and they're not progressing like they're expected to progress when learning English, then they'll investigate more.
[sic]

Carrie enjoyed a professional relationship with her associate teacher, which enabled consistent communication and daily feedback. "So she was very helpful and a great example to watch and observe. Her classroom, I thought, ran really smoothly and really well, and she was very accommodating for the high proportion of ESL students."

With respect to the use of arts in the classroom, Carrie regularly witnessed music being utilized. The children sang songs along with a CD, engaged in free dance (and sometimes structured dances like the Hokey Pokey), and many instructions given by the teacher were provided through ritualized song. Carrie felt that, while her associate teacher wasn't a 'Go Arts!' person in the sense of total advocacy, Carrie appreciated the way she exposed the classroom children to the arts through community field trips and the daily inclusion of various arts components. She reflected:

It was just part of it, and also because the children don't read yet. Some of them don't really speak yet, and obviously the writing is not quite developed yet, so really art is the way they can show...you know, express their knowledge through art by colouring or drawing stuff in certain colours or showing us they understand stuff.... So it was important that those things all be integrated. And it's kindergarten—you want them to be creative.

Perceptions Related to Inclusive Education—Following Practicum One Experience

Carrie was originally concerned about how inclusion would work. Following her practicum experience, she was pleased to see that it was possible. Due to the activity centres

and play times in the kindergarten classroom, she and her associate teacher were able to utilize one-on-one time and work on certain skills with certain students. However, Carrie felt that as a classroom teacher working alone, balancing one-on-one time with general classroom management would be overwhelming, and as a result centre activities would likely need to require less supervision.

Still maintaining her consistent belief in the feasibility of inclusion, Carrie's original perceptions were altered following her first practicum experience. This change was due in large part to a situation taking place at the time within her school:

There was one student and he was sort of a...an extreme that he couldn't be in a regular classroom yet, so he would have two EA's working with him—alone—in his own room. And they wanted to put him in the special education school for the board but there was no space, and then he only came two hours a day and so it was sort of this scenario. So there was one sort of exception to the inclusive rule in the school. And he wouldn't have been able to be in a regular classroom right yet, so that was sort of interesting. So my idea of inclusion is it works....From my experience at this school, it seems that it works to a point, but then there are some exceptions to the rule.

Perceptions Related to Arts-Based Education—Following Practicum One Experience

As a student teacher in the classroom, Carrie found herself struggling with finding an appropriate balance between structured direction and creative freedom in the artistic endeavours her students pursued:

“This is how we draw a rainbow.” And there's a picture of a rainbow. The teacher painted the rainbow.... So, very structured and ordered, and at the same time I was like, “Do we really need to be structuring their creativity that much?” But then a lot of them didn't follow the extreme—the order, necessarily. Some of them needed that because...if they don't know what a conventional rainbow looks like, how can they extend beyond conventional if they don't even know what the base convention is? But at the same time, I'm like, “We're destroying...we're making them think a rainbow looks like this as opposed to what it could look like and being original.”

However within this scenario, there remained students who went their own way:

One student...he did a rainbow, and he coloured everything else in a different colour. So he made his own rainbow, and I was like, "Oh, you didn't do the rainbow like we did?" And he's like, "I know...but it's still a rainbow!" So I'm like—he went past. He could probably copy the rainbow from the picture but he decided to go further and take it a different route, a little.

While the arts were naturally integrated into the kindergarten day and curriculum, Carrie expressed the concern that once students enter grade 1 and beyond, art is not always used in a cross-curricular manner or as a method of assessment. She worried that the students who rely on these learning strategies may fall behind or struggle. A further concern involved the copious use of arts materials (particularly paper) in the classroom.

Despite these concerns, Carrie found that alternatives and balance existed and she genuinely enjoyed her experience utilizing an arts-based approach in the classroom. She felt that this approach kept the students happy while fulfilling the requirements of the kindergarten curriculum:

So it was really, it was appropriate for their kindergarten curriculum. It was, just made so much sense and it was part of the curriculum and...is part of...developing their fine motor skills which they need if they're going to be printing out letters any time soon. So it was really critical, and it made it fun, and most of the girls were pretty excited about the visual arts—and some of the boys, too.

Carrie clearly recalled a particular lesson during which an occasional teacher was attempting to draw Barney the Dinosaur as part of a lesson. While so doing, the students demonstrated the beginnings of a belief that there is an artist in everyone:

She was like, "I don't know if I can draw Barney!" And the students were like, "Well why don't you just try?" And then of course you can't back down from that, so she drew...so she drew her best Barney. And she's like, "It doesn't matter what he looks like.

It's just...I tried." And she had a decent-looking dinosaur up there, so the children, you know, learning important lessons that it's not 'only certain people do art.' It's 'everyone draws and everyone tries.' So it was great.

*Perceptions Related to Performing Arts-based Education in an Inclusive Classroom —
Following Practicum One Experience*

Carrie drew connections between the ability to establish learning outcomes for students who were ELL (or in the beginning stages of speech development) with an arts-based approach to education:

I think arts-based learning, in terms of bringing in those hands-on activities of painting and singing or...all of these things made it possible for students who have very little English to participate..... And at this level those aren't requirements for them yet; they're working towards those.... It's working on those skills that will eventually lead to numeracy and literacy skills. They did work on numbers and letters and stuff like that too. But it allowed them to actually partake and interact and produce material that if you ask them, "Write an essay," you're going to have twenty blank pages. So this has allowed them to actually produce material related to what we were learning.

Carrie explained her perception of using the arts to facilitate inclusion within her practicum class:

I didn't even think of the classroom as a particularly inclusive classroom because it's just the way it was...the classroom wasn't an arts classroom or anything like that, so it was just learning through art or with art.... So I never really...I knew there were arts incorporated through it, but it just felt like it was part of it. I didn't feel like, "We're creating an inclusive classroom here." [sic]

Her perceptions related to teaching through an arts-based approach had transformed, and Carrie recalled how song was used to direct the students in various tasks and routines

throughout their school day. Her initial trepidation over her lack of musical experience was quickly replaced with unexpected comfort. She recounted:

I'm not doing classroom management; I'm singing at the same time. So it's very much an integrated approach—I like that. I really like that. Because I don't think of myself overly as a— ... I know I can be an artist. But I think of myself as someone who wants to teach and do that thing, and I'm not a vocal singer but I will sing in front of kindergarten children as part of the curriculum.

Teacher Education Courses—First Term

Carrie felt that the teacher education courses she was enrolled in during her first term introduced her to areas she might have otherwise been apprehensive about, and that the material established definitive links between her practicum and classroom learning opportunities. While the majority of her classes inspired these outcomes, Carrie preferred in-class courses to those conducted online because, despite the content from the required readings and the blog experience, there was no 'real' discussion taking place.

Carrie described the online exceptionalities course as a read-and-response-based class, and she felt she missed out on valuable learning experiences:

I feel I lost an opportunity to really learn about how to work with children with exceptionalities in the classroom....I've learnt a lot of theory about different exceptionalities, about the causes of different exceptionalities.... But there's been no opportunity to see what that would look like, how that could actually be implemented, or hear anyone's stories about how they ever did those things.

She felt there was a conflict between the focus of the course and the way it was taught:

And the irony of course being that this is for a...we're actually saying about exceptional students, "Make sure that there's choice for them."....If they have preferences for kinaesthetic learning or preferences for visual or auditory...obviously, we can all—at

university level we can all definitely learn from a book but we would probably prefer learning through different methods as well.

Her teacher education cohort was characterized by a focus on the Integrated Arts, and Carrie was introduced to new ways of perceiving the role and potential of the arts. She appreciated the teachers' efforts and their exposure to community resources:

For example, in our science class we had someone come from *Learning Through the Arts* and we did an entire three-hour class (or something like that), learning through dance about water and gears. And simple machines (or something like that), and it was really like, "Wow! Where did that come from?" And it was amazing, putting dance and science together and those are two things I love! The other teachers tried to give us resources: how to bring in stories or artwork into math.... So that happened in math and our language teacher tried to bring in arts as well for drama—reader's theatre, stuff like that. And for professional development, well, we just talked about arts and the city.... MASC [Multicultural Arts for Schools and Communities] came in to talk to us, which is some organization that sends artists to schools.

Overall, Carrie felt that her first term in teacher education connected to her experience of implementing inclusion through the arts:

It's all contributed to framing my philosophy and my view of how to bring things in. I love making things more kinaesthetic, I would say, just because that's something I enjoy—bringing movement into learning and actually touching things. So, hands-on stuff. But, I also realize that other people really want a picture here so I better go and print off a picture. And other people probably really would benefit if we did this by singing better so I'll go with the routine and sing, and do that. So I understand that those things are all a part because it helps everyone learn together in some way.

Practicum Two Experience

Carrie's second practicum took place in an Anglophone grade 4/5 split classroom in an Ontario public school principally composed of French immersion classes from kindergarten

to grade 6. She noted that, unlike her first practicum experience, the student population is a middle- to upper-class demographic and the majority of the children are native English speakers.

In addition to teaching every subject (with the exception of social studies and physical education), Carrie also conducted literature circles for grade 4 students and mathematics for the grade 5 students in her class as well as those from another classroom. Carrie related that planning for a split classroom was “horrendous.” She also recalled that facilitating assessment had been a new experience, and contrasted her previous kindergarten practicum experience where checklists and observation were the norm.

A learning support teacher spent two periods each morning in the classroom coordinating activities with Carrie’s associate teacher as she circulated among all of the students (seven of whom were on IEP’s for learning disabilities or as ELL students). However, her primary focus was on two students: one with Down syndrome working at a kindergarten level, and a second student diagnosed with an Autism spectrum disorder working at a grade 1 level. These two students were supported by an educational assistant every afternoon and were working within academic modifications:

They’re completely modified. Completely. But at the same time, they’re doing the same activities. So for example, the grades 4s are doing science as rocks; they’re still doing rocks, but their objectives are different, modified from those. It’s basically just to learn the three kinds of rocks and that’s it. So, they have completely different work but it’s on the same subject as the rest of the grade 4s.

While these two students were a part of the class and treated respectfully by their peers, they were friends solely with one another. Carrie was unsure if this was a result of the way inclusion had developed in the classroom, or simply a matter of being unable to experience a

genuine friendship with the other students in their class. While they studied within a modified curriculum, it was being strongly whether or not both students should enroll in a school for students with exceptionalities in the following year. She explained:

There is the idea that these two students...even though they're being included to the most possible... it's such a struggle to ensure that they're really getting the level of attention and level of modifications that are optimal. The teacher's doing her very best. It's very clear. And they're putting in the support as needed, but still...there's concerns that they might be better serviced... receive a better educational experience in more of an alternate setting. [sic]

Carrie enjoyed a supportive relationship with her associate teacher who, using her background in visual arts, implemented an arts-based approach to her classroom curriculum. Her approach benefited the inclusion of the classroom and both complimented Carrie's own implementation of the arts within her classroom instruction. Carrie described her associate teacher as being accommodating and tolerant in her approach. The students benefited from the various teaching strategies she utilized, including her ability to sense the needs and moods of her students—especially those with an exceptionality:

She has an understanding of what can be sort of expected and what's tolerable. And the difference between students acting up for no reason...and of course, there's regular students in the room who... and even students with exceptionalities, sometimes, they just act up and really, you could have helped that. And then the difference sometimes between 'he's just walking around the classroom' or 'he really can't focus'...you just have to accept that and try and help him out in some other way. [sic]

Perceptions Related to Inclusive Education—Following Practicum Two Experience

Being part of this classroom scenario stimulated questions in Carrie's mind related to inclusion and its effect on both the teacher and the students involved. She worried about the strain placed on a teacher designing literature circles and lessons to diversify the experiences

of students who require different approaches (or levels) of inquiry to succeed. Several students also spent time with a learning support teacher in order to address subject-specific learning needs. Still, in Carrie's understanding of the situation, the inclusive model ultimately allows many students to be socially accepted by their peers by remaining a part of the general classroom network:

And I see how, for them, if they were... for them, inclusion seems to be working more or less, in that they're very much... they're accepted by their peers as part of the class. Even though they're not as I say... academically, they're not really at the same level, but at the social level they're at the same sort (more or less) social maturity level. Which I think is more the key for getting along in the classroom and becoming friends.

However, she expressed concern that the two students learning with extensively modified academic plans may not have been receiving the optimal academic or social benefits that they could have been receiving had they been attending a school that may not be inclusive, but would address their specific needs:

So my concerns would be if, at this...inclusion, I see how even some of the students with what I believe might be ADHD...I see how they have difficulty in the class and then there's this other level of where you might wonder what they're really getting out of the class? When they're working with their individual support teacher or their EA.... And they are seated a little bit separately from the other students because half the time they're speaking with their EA or learning support teacher about their own tasks. So, they are in the classroom, they are included; but they are at the same time separate, within the classroom. So my concern is, how inclusive can inclusion get?

An additional concern of Carrie's is that students working at grade level might be accepting a disservice. She suggested:

Because this classroom is sort of—has such a high, interesting group of students, rates of students with exceptionalities—the few students who are working at grade level are probably being disserved because so much has been accommodated or modified in this

classroom, you might wonder if they're really getting....Had they been in the French Immersion program they might have been additionally challenged and they might have really gotten more out of it, if they had been in a class where everyone was working at grade level.

Carrie explained that this practicum was her first genuine exposure to a situation in which accommodations and modifications were being implemented in relation to exceptionalities (aside from the English language learning needs present her kindergarten placement). Not only did she learn about individuals with exceptionalities, but her confidence in her own potential to work within the inclusive approach increased through an experience that demonstrated at least one manifestation of inclusion and the positive outcomes that can result from it:

And seeing a classroom that's so fluid and so... and everyone's going and coming... it's almost... chaotic, but there's pattern to the chaos, I can say. It's created my impression. And I didn't really know what to expect and I can see how it can work.

Perceptions Related to Arts-Based Education—Following Practicum Two Experience

Carrie appreciated the way that her associate teacher made the arts a priority and established daily opportunities for the students to engage with the arts either as their own activity or as a means of facilitating cross-curricular opportunities:

My perceptions are it's really important to make the time for them. I really like how my associate scheduled it in....She calls them integrated arts—and that's right. We try and integrate different art forms together...so music and drawing. Or...visual arts with science. Or literature with drama, like the reader's theatre. So she really does integrate them together and she makes time for them. They're scheduled into the day and kids expect them once a week—each art form.

The volume and breadth of supplies used to facilitate the arts-based initiatives in the classroom caused Carrie to speculate about the amount of resources that were gathered by her associate teacher beyond the budget provided by the school. Finding the space within the school to truly engage in dance and drama activities was also a concern.

The class period used frequently for drama and dance was also the sole part of the day during which neither the learning support teacher nor the EA were present in the room; at this time, every student in the class—including both of the students on modified curriculums—took part in the same learning activities. Carrie felt this was extremely positive, especially since rather than being asked to write or read, “It’s very much speaking or acting and they both have those skills to a certain extent,” which seemed to ensure greater participation:

So that’s been good because dancing and drama are really activities where the students have been able to participate to the most of their ability. So even though our student with Autism really has some trouble...but the other student really.... She was excited and participated and the other students were accommodating. You know, like giving her a role and making sure she was part of it in some way. So that was good to see.

Beyond their own modified lessons, Carrie saw inclusion take place in the involvement of these two students in arts-based initiatives. She recalled an exercise in which the students were asked to listen to music and respond to how it made them feel through a drawing. They each joined a small group of their classroom peers and were able to integrate into the class with the assistance of the EA through their ability to listen, respond orally and visually, and share their feelings. Recalling its success, she explained:

So it’s an activity where your reading level and your writing level aren’t really factored in as much....And so that’s probably more than any other part of the class; this is the part where they’re able to join the whole group. Because all the other times they’re at their desk and they’re separate. And arts—they’re standing up and moving around for drama and dance at least...and they’re just one of the other students, even though they might

need a bit more assistance. So it's probably the only time I've really seen them integrate more with the others.

Now, Carrie perceives that, despite her concern that she doesn't have the experience or knowledge to adequately implement certain areas of the arts (such as music); there are other ways of providing an arts-based curriculum for the students, as her own associate teacher has done:

Even though I'm not an arts expert, other people are. They can provide curriculum; you can use it for your classroom's purposes and then bring them to a show...like, there's a way to get around the fact that I'm not a music major. And so that was kind of nice to see. And I'm more confident now with a bit of the visual and...well, less...still need more confidence in visual arts, but dance and drama I'm feeling great about.

Perceptions Related to Performing Arts-based Education in an Inclusive Classroom —

Following Practicum Two Experience

Carrie felt that establishing an approach to teaching and learning that involves the arts within an inclusive classroom could be overlooked due to the emphasis on other subjects and curriculum requirements. She also noted that utilizing the skills or resources of other places and people is important—especially when, as an educator, you don't possess confidence or knowledge in a specific arts-related area. Making the time and effort to find a place for it is important. She suggested that designating certain periods for art (as was the case in her practicum) that did not involve external support staff could be tempting to forgo, due to potential challenges of designing whole-class activities. However, she holds that it can be incredibly beneficial for every student:

It's probably one of the most valuable elements of the curriculum in terms of developing social skills, people skills, and thinking even. You know different forms of thinking... perspective and visual—I don't know much about visual!—or music knowledge, which I

clearly never gained as a child and clearly still lack. So you know, it helps you think in different ways just like math and English help you think in different ways.

Though she appreciates arts-specific activities, Carrie's experiences in this classroom (coupled with her own preferences as a student) reinforced that a cross-curricular, arts-based approach is both engaging for the students and provides diverse and accessible learning opportunities:

An integrated approach works best because if you just say, "Now is art, and we're doing art now," and then art is over and then you don't touch it for a week, it's not really part of it. Whereas, we're working on our posters now but then we're doing dance tomorrow and we're reading about science and then acting—oh! I acted out the circulatory system and the digestive system with them. So they passed a chicken through the digestive system. So they were red blood cells and we exchanged them in the lungs; so it's drama but it's also just taking a kinaesthetic approach to help you remember it. And personally, I love movement, so that's how I learn best.

Considering her practicum classroom, Carrie valued the arts-based approach a means to truly connect students with the subject matter and hold their attention. However, she acknowledged that for the most part, the students were taught using an integrated approach, and yet they are predominantly assessed through written tests:

They need so much change, these kids. And as anyone, they can get bored—and these kids probably easier than others. They could not, under any circumstances, read the whole day and listen to lectures all day. They are not at that level of work or independent work at all. So they need, you need to fill that time with something that's going to be meaningful, on the curriculum, and I feel probably one of the best ways to do that is to have them draw it out...having them act it out....Although to be fair, the assessments are mostly written tests and there are performance assessments as well though.

This practicum class was a whirlwind of activity, and Carrie felt both challenged and empowered by the observation of her associate teacher and her own involvement in a situation where she witnessed inclusiveness within an arts-based approach:

There's a lot going on, sure. But basically the big key idea is just that arts have been a huge part of it because she made a point of it. Accommodations, modifications have been huge because of it—the needs of the students. And using the arts has been part of those modifications....So far I've made it so I'll feel more confident once I'm through this knowing how a bit of...how arts curriculum, integration can happen and how inclusiveness can work. To a certain extent. Or to the best of a teacher's ability.

Teacher Education Courses—Second Term

Carrie had a positive response to her second term courses within the teacher education program. In many cases, there was a relationship between the ideas and skills that were introduced in class and those she exercised in her practicum.

As an athlete, Carrie enjoyed her cohort's physical education course. Although she didn't teach this area during her second practicum, she felt she had benefited from instruction related to assessment, healthy living, and the introduction to dances. She explained, "Knowing that there's quick, fun dances you can do with the class—that's kind of been good to know." Carrie felt there was a strong connection between the modeling and lessons facilitated by her social studies teacher (who had been her previous term's math professor):

The teacher I had for social studies was very much "Bring in hands-on things, bring in pictures, bring in books"—very integrated social sciences, and that's similar to what I'm seeing in this classroom. And similarly, our professor went all out making sure she brought in all these extra hands-on manipulatives: different cultural elements, arts activities, cutting things out, making different food-based activities even—creating things from food and then eating it. So the same amount of effort and energy and really pushing the envelope so the kids really get the most from it.

Other courses were not as effective in linking content that was presented to its perceived applicability in education. Meanwhile, she thrived on the theoretical and social areas uncovered in the sociology of education course, which related to topics such as race relations, racism in the classroom, sexism in the classroom, and the history of education. She connected these ideas to issues related to her earlier practicum experience, such as identification and power dynamics. The English as a Second Language elective harkened Carrie back to her first practicum experience, which assisted her during the second term in an identification and understanding of English Language Learners. Through this course, she came to understand that “There is a difference between spoken level of English and academic level of English.” Given the strong arts focus in her practicum during second term, Carrie valued the number of applicable lessons and resources presented.

Carrie felt that being part of the Integrated Arts cohort enabled her to share lessons and resources which had been developed prior to practicum among her peers. She valued the interaction with her peers within the Integrated Arts cohort, as well as the efforts and knowledge of several professors who provided examples of using the arts to demonstrate student understanding in a cross-curricular way (particularly in math, social sciences, and language arts). Indeed, “Many of the teachers were aware we were the arts cohort and made efforts to give us assignments that had art components in them to connect the curriculum content of that subject area.”

Carrie went on to explain that she had connected these lessons to her practicum instruction. Once, she used story books during math, which she had “read aloud to the class to introduce like concepts like perimeter and area;” another time, she used a dramatic representation of the body to study the digestive system during science. She also has plans to

incorporate ideas that were suggested through the language arts course, such as character portraits and collages.

Culminating Relationship to Inclusion

Carrie felt that her experiences during her teacher education practicums have provided a starting point for her understanding of inclusion. Through her immersion in this environment, and her engagement in the teaching and learning practices that were created, she has become more aware of what is possible, what must be accomplished, and what exactly is involved in an inclusive classroom—all areas that were initially unfamiliar to her:

I didn't know very much about...I knew the theory about what an inclusive classroom was supposed to be about and I was somewhat hesitant because I'd never had any experience really working with students with exceptionalities that were severe—severe. I don't know if that's right? Sort of noticeable exceptionalities, I should say. Or requiring a lot more effort. I didn't know much about it. I hadn't worked with it so I was very concerned that I wouldn't be ready or wouldn't know what to do.

Her experiences in planning and facilitating lessons, engaging with the students, and immersing herself in the reality behind the theory culminated to strengthen her belief in inclusive education:

I think before I sort of believed in it and that it should work, and it could work. And I liked the idea of including kids and not...being excluded is not fun. Especially for something that really... If a teacher just made a bit of an extra effort, they could have a different worksheet, then why should they be in a whole new classroom if all they needed was a new worksheet and a little bit of extra time with the teacher? Or an educational assistant or another adult even just taking them out to read more? A volunteer perhaps? So when it's an issue of these students just getting that bit of extra.... To a certain point, just having that extra help with the academics and still socially integrating with the rest of their class, I think it's a really viable system.... Except now, I see there might be a cut-off point after which I question whether...how effective inclusion is, and whether it's even happening or can happen at a certain level.

Though she has concerns about the inclusion of children in a classroom where she fears their best outcomes for learning may not be met, she has witnessed a universal acceptance of others within the class:

And at no point have people made fun of others in my whole five weeks or four weeks there; no one's made fun of someone else due to their academic abilities or their inabilities or whatever. So they accept each other that way and they're really not judgemental on that.

For Carrie, inclusion means many things, including involving students who would otherwise need more help due to their exceptionalities or their English language skills:

And inclusion is a definition...its fluid as a definition. As I said, my other kindergarten classroom everyone was an English Language Learner so the whole class was "inclusion" in that, you know, we were including the native—you know, regular English language learners so...that could be sort of the reverse, right? So what is the norm and then including others who aren't part of the norm? Of course the norm is variable. Either way, I think it's just a way of saying, "Have everyone in the classroom do as much as possible. Giving assistance when needed."

Carrie felt that she is ultimately more confident in her ability to meet the needs of an inclusive classroom, as she has had a challenging experience that provided a solid base of opportunities and exposure. Prior to her practicum experiences, Carrie struggled to understand how it would function. Now, she sees the value in an inclusive classroom and perceives it as the norm:

At first I was very nervous about coming into a classroom where two children were on such modified curriculums. I was like, "Do they really do that?" I was unsure that that level of inclusiveness really even happened. Now I know it can function to some degree with additional support; however, it might not be ideal. So it's affected my beliefs. So

now being in an inclusive classroom is something I sort of expect to be in and it would affect my future that way.

Carrie reflected that, as an educator, her concerns and perceptions related to inclusive education might be reflected in her informed, open-minded, and flexible approach:

I really try to learn about something before I make a judgement, and since I know there's always more to learn.... So I try and stay open as much as I can. Especially in teaching, where the theories are always being re-named and opinions shift with the tide and in 20 years...this is like, you know, inclusion's the shift right now. I wonder how it's going to go in the future? There are tides in education and things change and come and go. It might leave for a while; it might come back later. So I know this happens and so its fluid.

Though her high school experience as a care giver for a boy with an Autism spectrum disorder gave her one impression of this exceptionality, Carrie acknowledged that her practicum experiences introduced her to the unique nature of every child, and of every exceptionality:

And you know, when you say a child has autism...well, it's a whole spectrum. How does he communicate? He still writes. He's at a grade 1 level; but he can still write fairly accurately and orally. He can give you some answers when you ask him a question. So really, just seeing that you really need to get to know the children—which you can't do well enough in four weeks.....So this has changed it so now I'm a bit—a lot more positive about it and seeing how there are...there should be enough support. And in this classroom, even though there could always be more, there is some and there's some really dedicated people who are trying to help these children. So it's working out. It could probably be better; it could be a lot of worse. [sic]

Carrie felt that, in addition to the opportunities and observations provided by both practicums, she would also bring her personal experiences from her youth as she engages in inclusive education:

I bring my background of knowing what it's like to be excluded sometimes. I've mentioned my elementary experience where I was pretty much excluded and for more social reasons than academic...and so I know that's not fun and so I'd try to change that.

Culminating Relationship with Arts-Based Approaches to Education

Carrie was initially concerned about teaching elementary school arts due to her limited background in the field. However, since her practicum experiences, these concerns have dissipated as she gains a firmer understanding of her own skills and the resources available (although she still perceives her own shortcomings):

So I now feel I do have a bit of a drama, dance background. I realize that now a bit more...I brought it out like, "Oh, I did do that in high school!" And I realized I did know more than I thought I did in those domains at least. So that's helped me realize it....I've had some opportunities to see more art in different formats as well as being part of this cohort—seeing other people's presentations and ideas and them being specialists in various of these areas have helped a lot. So now my concerns are more, still with visual arts and music....I can always just make sure I don't short-change students out of those subjects just because I might be a bit more nervous—especially about music—and just make sure that I can somehow bring it in some other format or get some other specialist in at some point.

Carrie sees an arts-based approach as part of a larger educational picture. She believes that educators should approach teaching and learning in a manner that honours how the arts are the means through which we understand and make sense of our world:

Just integrating all the subjects together, realizing life is part of all the subjects...subject divisions are artificial. Separating the arts from writing and reading is artificial as well. So really, it's just all integrated. People express themselves in different ways, whether it be orally or writing or reading or through visual or dance or through movement or sound or music. So, it's just different ways of expressing and communicating your thoughts and you can do so relevant to different content areas which are relative to different parts of our world. [sic]

Carrie accounted for a change in her original concerns about arts-based education, explaining that “The other thing that’s changed about my perceptions is that when I thought about art, I thought about waste a lot because of my environment background.” Through a greater exposure to different arts-related areas and opportunities to plan for such activities, she has experienced and facilitated lessons which meet her environmental sensibilities while providing creative work for the students and asking the question: “How can we do this in a more efficient, less time-consuming and less resource-intensive way?” She goes on:

And so now I see that... Well, obviously dance and drama, you can definitely avoid waste; and then music the same. And then for visual arts, even with very little—like even with pencil crayons and one sheet of paper, you can do so much in the arts....And so these huge, extensive collages and such that require a lot of resources don’t need to happen. You can still teach a lot of art curriculum using minimalist resources, but still exciting and interesting ones.

Her personal preference for arts-based activities within her own educational experiences has further encouraged her to establish this approach in a classroom:

My most memorable experiences were things that were you know, arts-based...visual stuff....And doing various drama presentations in high school or visual mobiles in high school we did from the ceiling, as well as slide shows. So those projects are the ones I remember the most and really have the fondest memories of. And so, those are the ones I feel personally would have the greatest impact on future students....So if I just remember to include bigger projects that are arts-based, the other stuff will probably be there anyways...and include pictures more...so visual stuff. It’s just a matter of remembering my own experiences and what I liked best and seeing and learning in teacher’s college and my Master’s....So experimental education.

Culminating Relationship with Performing Arts-based Approach to Curriculum in an Inclusive Classroom

Though her experiences related to performing an arts-based education in an inclusive classroom are limited, Carrie felt that she has witnessed its success and possibility through her practicum experiences:

I've seen some [success] in my practicums that, using visual arts, drawing and pictures to demonstrate ideas, can really help cross boundaries created by language or by an exceptionality...really help communicate information which otherwise couldn't be done orally and then drama and dance. I've really been able to include some students with exceptionalities or even English Language Learners who don't want to speak out loud but they can move through dance. So, seeing that it's really an opportunity for people to participate regardless of their academic skills.

Her concerns lie in both identifying simple ways to facilitate this approach and in accepting that using the arts in a cross-curricular manner (or as its own entity) won't necessarily mean that the activity will reach every student or guarantee inclusion. Carrie recalled a specific case involving one of the students on modified curriculum within her practicum class:

Even though sure, it's great they can participate, the boy with autism really didn't participate with one of the drama activities. For some reason he just didn't want to be with the students; he just secluded himself more. So, I tried to encourage him...and they were accepting of him, they were trying to call him over and he just didn't want to. So at that point what do you say? "Well, okay you can just sit down on this chair and wait until the end"? You're put on the spot because you have the rest of the class...and if this child really isn't willing to integrate...and that happens. What do you do? You just accept that that's it for today and then we'll try again another time.

To summarize, Carrie identified many positive links between her course work and practicums, and valued the influential association that the Integrated Arts cohort had on her developing educational philosophy. Carrie experienced two positive practicums during which

she was introduced to classrooms dominant in both English Language Learners and individuals with exceptionalities, respectively. Her learning was supported by associate teachers who practiced and encouraged an arts-based approach to the curriculum. Carrie's belief in inclusion now includes appreciation for its ability to draw people together and establish a worldview that will mirror and honour the many types of people within a community. However, her concern is that an inclusive education format may be more beneficial for students in need of accommodations than for those on a severely modified curriculum who experience challenges with social integration. In philosophy and practice, she is supportive of the arts and their ability to facilitate positive interpersonal, social, and academic outcomes. She witnessed the manner in which the arts provided optimal communication and knowledge-building opportunities among diverse learners with a myriad of skills and abilities.

CHAPTER FIVE
FINDINGS – SOPHIE’S PROFILE

“Anyone who says you can't see a thought simply doesn't know art.”
- *Wynetka Ann Reynolds*

Sophie's Profile

Early Years and Educational Experiences

Born in 1973, Sophie lived for almost 30 years in Eastern Europe where she grew up as an only child during the time when the communist regime was in power. Her educational experiences in elementary and high school were rigid and lacked access to the kinaesthetic learning opportunities that suited her learning needs, while art was limited in lieu of subjects such as math and language. She recalls that individuals with exceptionalities attended specialized schools and though she feels she is gifted in visual art she was never identified. Following her pursuit of puppetry at a government sponsored community centre during elementary school, art was no longer part of her formal activities or education. She attended a high school that specialized in sciences and did not offer courses in the arts. Sophie then taught at a school for boys with exceptionalities for one year following graduation. Although she would have like to pursue this career path at that time, the low standard of living afforded to teachers stirred her towards a degree and career in finance instead.

Experiences with Individuals with Exceptionalities

Sophie believes that she was gifted in design and drawing, though she was not identified as such and does not remember tests or assessments related to giftedness. Her experience as an occasional teacher for language arts at a school for boys with exceptionalities introduced her to a career she was motivated to pursue; however, she decided not to because of the financial associations with this path in her country at the time.

Arts opportunities in Work, School, or Personal Life

Unfortunately, Sophie's exposure to art following elementary school was limited. Still, her engagement with puppetry through the community centre she attended as a child was met

with enthusiasm, and she believes her love of geometry and mathematics was derived from her natural inclination towards art. She mused, “I like my math teacher, because he allows us to find different solution for different type of problem. So I love geometry...because I love art.” [sic]

Involvement with Young People

While waiting to retry her university entrance examinations at 18 years of age, Sophie worked as an occasional teacher for language at a school for boys in grade 5 to grade 8 with exceptionalities. This was an experience she greatly enjoyed.

Decision Related to Teacher’s College

Sophie’s newfound fulfillment through this occasional teaching was a meaningful experience for her that precipitated a shift in her interests and focus:

By this time I want to be a teacher, however the salary was very bad. Actually, it’s horrible. The teacher doesn’t have a good salary. I could not sustain myself, so I have to go back to finance and apply the next year and go in finance in university, economic university. Because I loved the experience, working with kids, so that’s why, right now, I’m changing my career from finance back to teaching. [sic]

Perceptions Related to Inclusive Education—Prior to Practicum One Experience

Sophie’s feelings related to inclusivity were positive prior to her first practicum, drawing on her own elementary school experience:

I think it’s a good idea because I remember when I was teaching back home in my country that children, some of the children were quite talented in different stuff. So they didn’t have the chance to go to normal school because they were somehow isolated, isolated in these particular special schools. So some of them I’ve noticed they can be a successful student in other type of school; they don’t have to go in a special school so I think it’s a good idea.

Perceptions Related to Arts-Based Education—Prior to Practicum One Experience

Sophie perceives the arts as an important tool which should be infused into the students' cross-curricular experiences:

Because they can learn using the arts, they can learn different stuff. It can be related to art; it can be related to geometry...drawing different type of lines, and also can be related to, let's say, music...playing different kinds of songs, and repeating them. It can be related to language and...at Ottawa University, someone...came in and showed us how music and dance can be related to science and I think it's very important to integrate art in school and correlate it to the other subjects. [sic]

Perceptions Related to Performing Arts-based Education in an Inclusive Classroom — Prior to Practicum One Experience

Considering her own capacity as a student teacher implementing arts-based initiatives in an inclusive setting, Sophie has considered approaches and techniques that would facilitate such a goal:

I can use music; so learn them different songs so they have parts so they can repeat somewhat and so in this way they can learn the words. And also, I can think probably I'll include exactly like I watch show in the science class at University of Ottawa. I can invite someone who can dance and can combine dance with science for example, to show them how different mechanisms working. [sic]

Citing her own life experience, Sophie is determined to provide the kind of opportunities for students that she was not afforded in her own youth:

That's probably because back in my home country I wasn't encouraged too much to go to the arts very much so I will do this here as a teacher, so I enjoy, I encourage them to....So they encourage more mathematics and science and language instead of arts. So definitely I will not do this or I will try and integrate more art in the classroom...because I know what happened to me so I don't want that to happen to others. [sic]

Practicum One Experience

Sophie completed her first practicum in a public school in Southern Ontario where she was placed with a grade 2 class of approximately 20 students. She explained that her practicum school was in a poor neighbourhood and most of the students in her classroom were born outside of Canada:

Not very good students. Not because they were born—I was born outside; this is not related. So the area was a very poor area in the city. The school was on the lowest level of... 30 percent of the students were special students. They have behaviour problems, learning problems, and so on. [sic]

Due to the inclusive nature of the classroom, several students were identified with exceptionalities, and this meant that Sophie's lesson preparation required accommodations to meet the needs of every pupil:

Two of them were gifted student. One in math and one in visual art; they are very good. And 30 percent who are low....At the beginning I didn't know, and after I discovered—she let me discover and I discover—every day my lessons actually...one lesson was three lessons because the handouts were for gifted students, 1 handout for middle students....And for exceptional students, other sets of handouts. Otherwise the gifted students were finished right away and the other would take forever so I...everything was modified, especially math. [sic]

In her own understanding of differentiated teaching and learning, Sophie taught shared reading to the entire class using the same style. However, she modified her math lessons upon the suggestion of her associate teacher, and was guided by her knowledge of the classroom:

“So go in practice and see what it works and make...your lesson plans based on what is actually in the classroom and so in the end I did this and I took ideas only from the guide.”
[sic]

She described her practicum school as being challenging, but ultimately helpful:

Because I've learned many things. Right now I know how to accommodate the students. I know how to give feedback because I didn't know from the beginning what kind of stuff I have to do. Because probably if I went to a very good school and afterwards as a teacher I would go to a very bad school it be a very different point. But right now I know what to expect at least. [sic]

Though her associate teacher's firm approach wasn't Sophie's preferred leadership style, she nevertheless was appreciative of the resources and feedback that she was provided. They also shared a similar approach to organization, and Sophie explained that her own background in finances complimented her need for "everything to be controlled and organized....Step one, two, three, four..."

Neither Sophie nor her associate teacher drew on the arts as a cross-curricular approach to teaching and learning within the classroom. However, Sophie reported that visual arts activities were occasionally included by her associate as part of student assignments:

When we started, let's say, new stories or something like this...or when she taught social studies, she asked people to draw pictures of the celebrations when they understood and studied about celebrations in different countries....Or when she read a book, a new book...storytelling...this kind of stuff; she asked them to draw the picture of the story or this kind of thing.

The special education resource teacher at Sophie's practicum school visited classrooms, providing assistance where required. However, Sophie understood that in the coming months she would begin taking children out of the classroom to work with them individually for a few hours throughout the week. Sophie felt that this would benefit the students left in the classroom: "And the other students who are gifted can do more challenging work because....They pulled the class a little bit back and they don't, how can I say? Cannot do everything." [sic]

Perceptions Related to Inclusive Education— Following Practicum One Experience

Following this first practicum, Sophie felt conflicted in relation to the way that inclusion affected both the teacher's role and the experience of all the pupils in the classroom:

Because I have, let's say, many students...30 percent from 20 who are special needs students. So you have to spend much time with them: not only one student, many. So you have to try to spend...and you don't have any time left for the others so the only thing you can do for the others is creating challenging handout works. [sic]

Sophie believed that extra supports—beyond the classroom teacher—were needed:

I think the special needs student need the extra help. Decide what the teacher can do because the teacher is only...there's only one teacher, so the teacher has to work with the other students as well so...it's good to have an inclusive classroom. But also, it's better when the special education teacher come in and helps them, gives them extra support or better when they are withdrawn a bit and given more support....Because they definitely need more help than the other kids and cannot get it in the class because the curriculum has to go on...and that's all right. [sic]

She also felt that class size makes a significant impact on the success and possibilities for inclusion:

So I think inclusion would work better in a small size classes because otherwise, the bigger is the class, the teacher has the less time to spend with each student particularly. So I had 20 students, so was approximately impossible to spend the time that they needed for everybody. So in this way, in the bigger classes, the teacher's...become a jack of all trades and master of none. [sic]

She saw the role of her associate teacher transformed following conferences with parents in which it was decided that an IEP would be created for a child who would be taught at a grade 1 level within the grade 2 class.

Related to inclusivity, Sophie was apprehensive about the qualifications of a typical teacher to teach students with exceptionalities and had further concerns related the division of time within the classroom by the teacher among the students, and how this affected gifted pupils:

The teacher has to spend most of the time with these kids and the teacher doesn't have time for the other kids at all. So you've... Let's say one kid who is considered very good...an A student in this school, will go to a school that is better and definitely will be at the bottom of the class. So this is not fair as well for the other kids. Because you don't have time for the gifted.

Though she expressed an ongoing commitment to inclusive education, Sophie's practicum experience also catalyzed a belief that additional supports are needed to achieve the best outcomes for classroom children with exceptionalities:

The student is in the classroom with his colleagues, he's playing together, he's doing stuff together and he's not excluded at all but he needs help from an academic point of view. But it's not...the point to stay in the inclusive class and have D -, D -, D -. And you don't learn anything, what is the....? You are in the inclusive class, like what did you learn?
[sic]

Perceptions Related to Arts-Based Education—Following Practicum One Experience

Sophie identified positively with the use of arts-based education and incorporated manipulatives into her mathematical instruction during her first practicum experience because they connected students to the 'real world'. Identifying her desire to connect with kinaesthetic, auditory, and linguistic learners, she used money, toys, thermometers, and coins in her instruction—she even created personalized clocks for students.

Perceptions Related to Performing Arts-based Education in an Inclusive Classroom —

Following Practicum One Experience

Following her practicum, Sophie still felt confident that arts-based practice could structure an inclusive classroom effectively:

I think that that way will make an effect in the sense there are multiple intelligences and some people learn when they practice something; many students are visual learner or kinaesthetic learner, more than linguistics so the arts can make a difference in this sense...they cannot read or write...so they can express themselves better in drawing. There are people who can express better in music—they are auditory learner....So in this way, this kind of people who are special needs student can enhance their chances to learn through art because art means visual art, art means music, art means dance, so...you have to find the way that can enhance their way of learning using different components of art because art is a definition who includes many—it's a wide area. [sic]

Teacher Education Courses—First Term

Sophie felt that many associations existed between her teacher education courses and practicum experience, particularly through the experiential approach of the mathematics, language arts and science courses. Mathematics reaffirmed her intention to incorporate manipulatives into her lessons as a consistent resource for teaching and learning. She felt that there was a kinaesthetic component to their language arts assignments. As well as an opportunity to practice arts-based opportunities (such as through a reader's theatre scenario). Sophie found the science course particularly valuable, as the instructor had been a teacher and therefore drew on a 'real world' understanding of the classroom. He also provided them with an opportunity to weave a science lesson together with the arts: "He invite someone from the Royal Conservatory to do a dance with us and show how science can be mixed with the....How art can be incorporated in the science unit. This kind of practical stuff." [sic] It was

also from this science class experience that Sophie felt she could better prepare for what was to be expected and experienced in an actual classroom:

So he put us to pretend to be a teacher and our colleagues to be the students and we have to teach a lesson in the class. So learn from others and we learn from our mistakes as well because he gave us a chance that our literature teacher didn't give us: to redo the assignment because he said the point of learning is to learn—it's not the grade. [sic]

Material from the curriculum and evaluation course was applied by Sophie in her practicum, even though as an on-line course she felt it was only for "linguistic learners." She particularly drew from the planning lessons that were introduced.

Sophie was disappointed in the ability of the exceptionalities course to adequately prepare her for the realities of the inclusive classroom scenario she was facing:

So she taught us about how to be—the collective professor—how to be adapted to multiple intelligences. How to be an inclusive about special education...but didn't apply this. The course was totally directed to linguistic learners so this is not fair because the higher need...most of the class in the arts cohort, we are a visual and kinaesthetic and auditory learner—not linguistic. [sic]

Though the textbook contained worthwhile material, Sophie explained that it wasn't until she requested strategies from her associate teacher and implemented them that she "connected a little bit with the book. I'm the one who learn from concrete to abstract...not the other way." [sic]

As for her enrollment in the Integrated Arts cohort, her attraction to art ultimately guided her towards this teacher education experience:

I love visual arts; I always love visual arts but I did not have chance to practise. That's why I decided to do something that I like, so I choose the arts cohort. I love design since I was in grade two or three. [sic]

Practicum Two Experience

For her second practicum experience, Sophie was placed in a grade 6 classroom in a southern Ontario public school board that provided education for students from kindergarten to grade 8. She cited that her relationships with the staff members were positive, and she appreciated the assistance of a fellow teacher education practicum student at the school: “She gave me some lesson plans and some ideas in science so I use her ideas and I start to improve more my teaching for this class.” [sic]

Describing it as an ‘arts-based school,’ Sophie felt it was very liberal, explaining “It’s a lot of freedom in the school. There is not a structure in organized school which...I find it challenging.” [sic] Many courses were offered in arts subjects, and classes in music were taught daily, as well as lessons in visual arts and drama. The structure and discipline of the school (influenced by its identity as a performing arts high school) was in stark contrast to her previous practicum experience. Sophie found it to be a difficult adjustment from what she was accustomed to from her own educational history and previous practicum:

Not too many rules and...lack of rules and lack of discipline. Was the total opposite of my previous practicum school that was extremely organized and extreme with rules. This was exactly the opposite. Very loose and everybody just do whatever they want....I’m not to say very structural or organized; I think it’s best somewhere in the middle. [sic]

Sophie’s associate teacher spent half her day teaching instrumental music to various classes in the school, and the other half teaching her own grade 6 class language arts, math, social studies, and science. This arrangement affected Sophie’s ability to teach: “Because I am not a music person, at the beginning I decided to go and teach French in order to meet 100 percent... but was difficult so I almost failed the practicum.” [sic] After a second week spending half of her day with the French as a Second Language teacher, Sophie began finding

it “impossible,” and so taught solely in the grade 6 class for half of the day. During the other half of her day she created lessons and completed her marking.

Sophie felt challenged by the demographic profile of the grade 6 students in the classroom, as she perceived that approximately 20 (out of 35) students had an exceptionality, and several were on an IEP.

Her associate teacher had a very warm connection with her students, and Sophie suggested that “This was her personality for she talks a lot and she is very friendly...she is like a friend of the students.” However, Sophie felt distant from her associate with whom she only spent half the day and who did not have the time to discuss Sophie’s lessons nor offer constructive feedback. She explained that her associate teacher’s approach to both Sophie and her classroom students was an auditory one with a linguistic style, whereas she explained that she is a math-logical learner. This difference made it difficult for Sophie:

She was a musician so I’m coming from finance. We have different points of view and different style. I am creative but to a point....Because I’m a visual learning. She an auditive one. So she gave me many instructions orally so I forget them right away. [sic]

She went on to explain that her associate teacher had never hosted a student teacher, nor had she read the practicum handbook. Thus, she expected Sophie to be at the level of an experienced teacher. Sophie’s low interim mark three weeks into her practicum precipitated a visit by a practicum supervisor from the teacher education program, and this catalyzed a change in her associate teacher as “She made time to look over [her] lesson plans and give [her] some feedback.”

Although her associate teacher was a pianist who had an extensive musical background, Sophie did not believe the classroom was one in which an arts-based approach to the

curriculum was facilitated. However, she described a poetry cafe initiated by her associate teacher that she was asked to lead:

Each person has to write a poem and then group with another person or present by him or herself and associate this poem with art. Visual art, drama (acting out) or music....They combine and then they'll act it out in different ways, their poems, and they use figurative speech. And I told them what figurative speech is and I give them many examples from the internet, and I watched them—how they present in groups. I gave them marks. Like...was kind of facilitator for this poetry cafe. [sic]

Other than the poetry cafe, Sophie was unable to integrate the arts into her cross-curricular instruction (though she identified her use of manipulatives during math class as being arts-based). She related that “Because I cannot teach the visual art, was teach by another teacher. Drama by another teacher, media by another teacher, and so on. And music by another—by her and one another teacher.” [sic]

A special education resource teacher visited the classroom throughout Sophie's practicum, and select students would leave during class time to work with her. Sophie felt that this teacher was overwhelmed by the class as well. Sophie was not aware of the exceptionalities of specific students, nor had she seen their IEPs (although she did meet with several parents who provided insight into their child's learning needs). She felt there were many extremes in the classroom population, including students who were gifted in one area but struggled in another, as there were “people who are very good in science and math and people who are very good in languages.” Sophie described the classroom's demographic profile as including students who “were very slow....Some of (whom) are very intelligent.”

She felt that, especially in the case of a particular student who was mathematically ‘gifted’ but disliked writing, “The grade doesn't reflect his intelligence.” Yet accommodations didn't seem to be in place, which Sophie attributed to her associate teacher's

split focus between her grade 6 class and music instruction: “I asked the teacher but probably...in my opinion, because she was busy teaching music as well, she said that they don’t like to change the content. So practically the only thing that she gave them was extra time.”

This student left a particular impression on Sophie as a representative example of the need for an alternative system of evaluation that honours the preference for hands-on, kinaesthetic learning of some children:

I was amazed by one kid. Actually he was my favourite one who is, how can I say? He’s very intelligent, he’s...a computer wizard but he doesn’t like to write things down. This is his problem. This is a gifted child. I think he’s a gifted too because when I wrote something on the board, he catch it right away. He has a very, very large mathematical mind. He understand everything right away. But he has low grades because of writing.
[sic]

Sophie felt that she would assess students orally (or ask this of the resource teacher) in her future as an educator, although she felt that in a class of 35 students, classroom management made it impossible for her to carry out such initiatives.

Perceptions Related to Inclusive Education—Following Practicum Two Experience

Sophie reported that the students in need of the most assistance in the classroom refused help from the special education teacher visiting their class. As they told Sophie, they were concerned that they would look ‘stupid.’ Furthermore, Sophie herself could not provide students with accommodated work because they didn’t want to appear to be different from their peers:

They don’t want—they say they don’t need help. So the only strategy that can I apply, they are always work in group. So some weak students are grouped with the good students so they help on each other. This is the only strategy that I can use with them.
[sic]

Her belief was that about 20 students is a reasonable number in an integrated classroom, “because otherwise the teacher cannot handle all the students.” Sophie’s beliefs relative to inclusive education indicated acceptance of the philosophy, but concerns for its actual implementation. She indicated that she would draw on external resources if necessary to facilitate inclusive education. She had previously talked to one of the school resource teachers:

She told me that you have always to be creative. And she told me the special needs kids have a very short attention span. She recommended different books. I didn’t have a chance to go over and look, but right now because I’m going to the school, when I meet her I’m going to ask for more details. [sic]

Although Sophie had reservations about teaching in an inclusive classroom, she identified certain parameters within which she felt it could work. Additionally, she believes that even the students don’t like it as is, citing:

We have to teach them the same concepts but would have to teach the same concepts differently. More likely I will adapt the lesson plan to different intelligences and to different styles, skills. So it doesn’t...let’s say I would teach them the multiplication tables. For the kids who are very good, I give them ten exercises; for the kids who are very low, I give them one exercise. The same concept in different way. If they don’t like it, this is the best way – to adapt the lesson plans – and also I would try to make them accept help from the resource teacher because it is necessary to allow that teacher to, to help them otherwise they will go to another grade and they will experience the same difficulties from the academic point of view. [sic]

Perceptions Related to Arts-Based Education—Following Practicum Two Experience

Though she felt it was essential to integrate creativity and variety into the lessons she created, Sophie struggled with implementing an arts-based approach to the curriculum. She

“was exhausted because every day [she had] to come up with something new” in this particular practicum classroom:

I think that is great idea to integrate art in the learning but like I said there are different, for example, this class majority of the students were boys. So very active. And so what kind of art I integrate? Because some of them love art but some of them don't. It depends. Also, one part you can use it for special needs kids is the creativity. So use different creative way to teach science or creative way to teach math, or this kind of stuff. To create, to make it in every day make different. They don't like routine. [sic]

*Perceptions Related to Performing Arts-based Education in an Inclusive Classroom —
Following Practicum Two Experience*

In her perception of facilitating inclusivity through an arts-based approach to the curriculum, Sophie related:

I think art is very important. But it's important, like I see creativity as a part of art. It's important and using creative ways in order to make them understand. And also what I think, what I've noticed, the most troubled kids in this class love science. So they love tangible things....they are amazing in science...the people who struggle with writing or struggle with math, they are amazing in science. They don't love to write down but I was amazed—like I said, they love the practical stuff. Probably math or language, they are too abstract. So things have to be used through their creativity for math and make them tangible, make them concrete, make them...real. Connect them with the real world. So practically, special needs kids need a lot of connections to the real world. [sic]

She felt “really pleased when [she] noticed that actually they are very good and very intelligent when they see the real stuff.” She discovered that, while the students were visual and auditory learners, the majority were kinaesthetic in their style, as demonstrated by their enjoyment of the hands-on activities found in the science lessons.

She went on to explain that when she started to teach science, she “made the connection right away. They started to like [her] and everything was different.” Sophie felt that the class

as a whole was more engaged in these science lessons than in the poetry cafe: “Because poetry cafe, some of them get it, some of them not; but the science, all of them were excited and they love it and they like it and...they are doing great. They understand right away.” [sic]

Teacher Education Courses—Second Term

Although Sophie felt that her term two teacher education courses in the Integrated Arts cohort failed to properly prepare her for the rigors of classroom management, she felt that explicit connections between the classroom and her second term courses were garnered from the physical education and social studies classes, since the teachers brought lived classroom experience to their curriculum and instruction.

Sophie enjoyed the arts course that was part of her pre-service teacher education—though she explained she “didn’t have chance to apply the arts because [she] didn’t teach art.” She was enthused by the applicability of her English as a Second Language elective textbook and the interactive approach of her global education elective. Still, she felt that the majority of the courses were focused on a theoretical approach to teaching, leaving her feeling unprepared for the applicability of their content. She felt that the intangible links to classroom education were lost on her in large part due to her nature: “So probably because I am more a kinaesthetic learner, if someone keeps talking and talking to me, is very, very boring so I have to do stuff. That’s why I kept connected with this kids doing science.” [sic]

Sophie believed that the Integrated Arts focus of her cohort was most readily experienced in her language arts and arts courses in which they did “little theatres or different songs” and engaged in hands-on activities (unlike other courses in which there was principally discussion instead of projects). Through her language arts course, she learned

about reader's theatre—an idea that was similar to the poetry cafe in her practicum experience.

Culminating Relationship to Inclusion

Sophie believes that inclusivity is viable given certain conditions:

I agree with inclusive but I think there are some modifications necessary that have to come together with this inclusive education. You cannot keep the same structure of the class or the same size of the class and expect everything to work when it's an inclusive education. It has to be together with the inclusive education, some modification. That's all. It has to be different. [sic]

Sophie's personal history has been particularly influential in the way that she perceives the necessity of inclusive education:

Okay, so in the past...back in Eastern Europe, I taught in the school only for special education. Is for kids who had behaviour problems and everything was a modified curriculum...and as for the size of the class, there were only ten in one class. And I think this is not okay because...how can I say? To stay isolated and everybody to consider that they are stupid and they are not capable and they weren't given the chance to go to university or other school. This is not good thing. But the attention they get and the extra help they get was okay and the size of the class...they have extra help in the afternoon. Someone stay with them and help them with their homework, with everything. They have extra teacher. [sic]

Sophie perceives inclusion as a shared system that provides equal opportunities:

Inclusion means that everybody has the same right to be in the same class. Okay to be in the same classroom. To be...to have the same assignments, to be taught the same concept up to a point. And to have friends and to be accepted and to be...how can I say? To be helped if it is necessary. And don't be excluded from anything. [sic]

In order to overcome these concerns which may affect her future role as an educator in an inclusive classroom, Sophie plans to gather experiences with various groups of students

through volunteering in classrooms, speaking with educators who are trained as resource teachers, and seeking out resources in order to increase her confidence in and knowledge of the area.

She felt that she must develop a greater focus on the social aspect of the integration of her students in an inclusive classroom, and felt her concerns and beliefs reflected her holistic focus of education in general:

I'm trying to be as helpful as I can to treat everybody equally and to be good facilitator and do everything I can in order to facilitate everybody learning and to enhance the learning, and the academic achievement and also their social skills. Because as a teacher, not only the academic point are important, but also the social skill are important. [sic]

Sophie is concerned about what she perceives to be a disconnect between the philosophy of inclusivity and the use of *large scale* testing as a measurement of knowledge (which she understands to be a form of exclusion):

I don't understand why they have this standard in the inclusive classrooms because again, they made the classroom inclusive but they didn't change the standard for math or languages. I don't understand why. For those kids who are special needs and they have big problems with memorization and they give them such difficult question for *Education Quality and Accountability Office* (EQAO) testing, I don't understand how it's possible to measure the academic achievement at that level. Because if in the school they have so many special needs kids, that school—the EQAO scores go down... [sic]

Culminating Relationship with Arts-Based Approach to Education

Sophie felt that “art is a wonderful tool to use for integration,” and that creativity in any classroom is effective in keeping students motivated. She garnered these beliefs from a discussion with a resource teacher in her second practicum school “who was very experienced and she told [her] that art and creativity was very important.” Sophie doesn't have many concerns related to using an arts-based approach to the curriculum, though she struggles with

a belief that the arts are not valued as an assessment tool in the measurement of intelligence or career orientated testing:

Why the EQAO is only for math and language? Why in the university they are only based only on math and language? I came back and my favourite kid in that school was amazing at math and especially at science, let's say. But he doesn't like to write down so this kid will not get chance to get to university and I've seen him at this stage is able to repair computer or create a computer. He was amazing at science. So because we tested only math and language, he has no chance to get into a university accordingly with his skills because we don't test science or we don't give chance for the kids to, to go on their way. We have seen another kid; he is amazing artist. He can write amazing poetry but he is not able to...he does not know multiplication tables. So I see him like an artist, like a musician, but again, if he apply to the Conservatory or whatever he doesn't have high marks or he cannot pursue his dream. [sic]

Ultimately, she considered herself to be a creative person who supports art and thereby believes that an arts-based approach reflects an 'intelligence' that links people with reality.

She explained:

Arts-based means like I said: creativity. Creativity in everything, in every subject including math, languages and everything else. So connection with the real world and try to create different stuff with different...Try and find creative ways to connect the real world with the abstract world from the books. I think this is a kind of art approach. [sic]

Culminating Relationship with Performing Arts-based Approach to Curriculum in an Inclusive Classroom

Considering her past and present experiences, perceptions, beliefs, and concerns related to performing arts-based education in an inclusive classroom, Sophie was confident that art "is a great tool in order to facilitate integration in the classroom" for "special needs kids and other kids." Indeed, she felt that all students could benefit from such an approach:

Because of creative part. The special education kids...they don't like routine. They get bored very, very quickly. They don't understand things. It's difficult. So that's why using creativity and making things more interesting, making them more tangible, making them more appealing. They have their chance to get more attention and to understand stuff—different concepts. [sic]

As Sophie understands it, performing arts-based education in an inclusive setting means “using creativity and using those tools from arts in order to facilitate the learning process for kids and socialization.” She explained that art reflects an educational paradigm that will be part of her future as a teacher: “My beliefs are as an artist and I always choose those kinds of tools to facilitate integration of different students in the classroom—I use tools from art.” And though Sophie doesn't have any particular concerns, she does feel she needs “more experience to better understand this process.”

She cites that her belief in the ability to perform an arts-based approach to education within an inclusive classroom stems principally from “the resource teacher that I discussed with and the other student teacher that I discussed with. Mainly those people create those beliefs in me.” [sic] Additionally, she believed that “in that second practicum I thought that those art tools helped me keep their attention...to make things interesting.”

To summarize, Sophie positively reflected upon her teacher education courses that enabled her to ascertain direct links to classroom applicability, while she identified courses with a theoretical basis as useless. Her practicum experiences were challenging, and though she rarely utilized arts-based means of working with the curriculum, these practicums proved very influential to her beliefs that inclusive education can only be successful given the presence of staff resources and within a small class.

CHAPTER SIX
FINDINGS—ANDREW’S PROFILE

“An artist cannot fail; it is a success to be one.”
-Charles Horton Cooley

Andrew's Profile

Early Years and Educational Experiences

Andrew was adopted on the day of his birth in 1969 and grew up as an only child, travelling around Canada as a child before settling with his parents in the Canadian prairies where his education took place. From a young age, Andrew identified himself as an artist. His most cherished early memories stem from the imaginative, creative play he pursued with his social network. Able to achieve relative success without much effort, Andrew has little recollection of his academic experiences in elementary school or high school (though in the latter he thrived in the eclectic environment of the art room and was involved in athletic and artistic endeavours). As a young adult, he suffered some familial stress when his father lost his job and his mother passed away. Following high school, Andrew's parents encouraged him to apply to a Canadian military school but he wasn't accepted. He pursued an undergraduate degree in science due to his aptitude for (and enjoyment of) physics, chemistry, and biology during high school, but felt disengaged and left after first year. After travelling in Europe, Andrew went to work for several months and enrolled in an introductory fine arts course at his home town university, which led him to successfully pursue a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree that engaged his bodily, communicative approach to learning.

Experiences with Individuals with Exceptionalities

Andrew cannot recall children with exceptionalities in his elementary school experience:

I can't...it's funny. I'll have to...I can even see the photographs of my classes through the years—you know, that traditional shot of everyone one? And isn't it strange to think that there wasn't anybody that had any disabilities?

He doesn't recall a segregated classroom or resource room in his elementary school, although he has other recollections: "I'm sure—and obviously not a nice way to say it—there was something called the 'rubber room,' where kids who couldn't really keep up were sent. But I don't know where that was."

Through his university volunteer experience in a Latin American community drop-in centre where he provided art and musical opportunities for the village's children, Andrew concedes that he wasn't aware of any young people with diagnosed or undiagnosed exceptionalities. However, he recalled some children with physical exceptionalities:

There was some physical abnormalities. There was a young boy that had breasts. I can't tell you why....But nobody treated him different, he was just another kid. And he ran around without his shirt off and they played soccer and nobody seemed to bat an eyelid. So, and because of...you know, teachers are to treat every student equally. And not to draw attention to any kind of disability or, or exceptionality in any way. And I guess because the community seemed to just accept it and not try and focus on it I just, went, "Oh, that's the way it is. Okay, fine." I noted it and then forgot. [sic]

After returning from Latin America, Andrew acted as an occasional teacher at a school for children with exceptionalities. The experience was positive:

It was great. It's school—it's fun; it's engaging. The students are amazing. Kids are fantastic. They're so, it's so, wonderfully imaginative and creative and fun and full of energy and it's infectious and regardless of their needs, they're just on this planet to bring us joy.

Arts Opportunities in Work, School or Personal Life

Beyond his high school experiences with visual art, band, and musical theatre productions, it was Andrew's friendships that truly inspired the greatest opportunities for pursuing the arts:

I had bizarre and wonderful friends who were constantly creating things and they, they were reflected—more in our social life than in our school I think...uh-m, we did participate in a few musicals and what have you but again they, for whatever reason, they just weren't enough. And they, they were too small a scope for our imaginations.

As an adult, Andrew's personal and professional lives have been linked to a variety of artistic experiences: "I have been involved in theatre, both amateur and professional. I've been a set designer, lighting designer. I was the technical director of a professional theatre. I've been an actor."

Involvement with Young People

Since his volunteer experience in Latin America, Andrew has participated in a multitude of settings through volunteer and work endeavours which have afforded him a role in the leadership of young people: "I did a lot of theatrical teaching within schools and outside of them in theatre and public spaces. I've worked for community organizations teaching anti-violence programs to teenagers in school settings."

Decision Related to Teacher's College

It was his experience in Latin America that first introduced Andrew to the joy he found in educating, and in the years that followed he enjoyed informally mentoring students during his undergraduate degree. In addition, he acted as an occasional teacher and sought out instructional positions with youth and through theatre. Reflecting on these experiences, he asserts, "It's surprising that it would take me so long to get to this program but, I guess because I've been teaching all the way, all along the way. No matter what I've been doing, it's always been a component."

As life became more expensive, Andrew tried different jobs in construction, carpentry, and as a technical director with a theatre. After completing occasional teaching positions over

the years, he received a 50 percent contract with an elementary school and had decided that finances, family, and lifestyle would be afforded stability through a permanent teaching job. The personal satisfaction he had always derived from leadership and education was also a deciding factor, as “Teaching always, I’ve always had my foot in it. So I’m just stepping through the doorway.”

Perceptions Related to Inclusive Education—Prior to Practicum One Experience

Considering how he would implement inclusivity in a classroom, Andrew drew on an idea introduced by one of his current teacher education instructors in asserting that “What I take as really, the most important is to develop a really intimate and solid relationship with each and every student in your classroom and to have that connection.” [sic]

Andrew went on to emphasize the significance he places on recognizing what is significant in each student’s life and using this knowledge to relate to them:

To him or her and their life, what makes them who they are? And so with that knowledge and with that connection and relationship, you treat them not as a student sitting at that desk but as a person, as someone who you have invested some of yourself into, and they’re going to invest some time into you as their teacher. And through that, it will inherently be inclusive....And it says in a lot of our things: there’s no real disabilities—there’s abilities and you have to investigate every student’s abilities. So if you start from there, it becomes inclusive because you’re using what they possess. [sic]

Perceptions Related to Arts-Based Education—Prior to Practicum One Experience

Andrew finds it easy to support an approach to teaching and learning that is rooted in the arts. From the time he was young, he has experienced and facilitated the type of engagements that have arisen from art and have created some of his richest educational experiences. He provided an example by recounting, “Well art, say visual art is a wonderful way. It’s a window into the imagination of a child.”

Andrew sees the arts not only as an academic path but as a chance to widen a child's frame of reference, and as a means of developing a greater understanding of self and others within a classroom:

So for arts, other than what I mentioned....there's so many opportunities. Music too! Just, you know, "What's your favourite song? Bring it in. Let's listen to it. Why?" And you know, it could be a song in another language. "Listen to the rhythm of that language...let's learn some of that language!" The thing that often happens, I think, with children...maybe not so much anymore, but we feel like our community is the world and we forget that there's this immense, this crazy thing going on all over the planet and so to somehow connect kids with that world....Because the world is blending together so much—we should be walking all over and understanding more and more....We need to see the world from other's perspectives and so through all the music, arts, dance, whatever! It, it can all bring fresh perspectives for kids to understand each other.

Perceptions Related to Performing Arts-based Education in an Inclusive Classroom — Prior to Practicum One Experience

Andrew looks back on previous experiences instructing young people with certain regrets about his approach related to inclusion. However, knowing that he will have the guidance of his associate teacher during the upcoming practicum was a reassurance, though the prospect was still seen as a challenge:

I guess there's always some aspect of nervousness or some hesitation that—what if it doesn't work out? What if you don't have the skills? What if you find that it's too overwhelming? And I'm sure that anybody going into something new has these kinds of concerns....But I have, you know, some concern but as far as bringing...I have enough experience travelling the world and learning languages and learning about cultures and people, and relationships with all kinds of different people...I guess, I'm at such an age, that I've have this wealth of experience that I can bring into the classroom. And I think that will support me very well.

However his belief in the ability of art to promote inclusion is sincere:

Well art, say visual art, is a wonderful way. It's a window into the imagination of a child. So allowing them to.... Give them a topic—family. And they draw it for you and put them up and the kids look at them. There's going to be such a beautiful mosaic of families and what family is to each child and they can describe it and engage and it can lead to so many other understandings so that there are no barriers, there are—or differences; they're all similarities. That there's a huge spectrum of similarities!

As a teacher in an inclusive environment, Andrew felt that his own life experiences and the natural inclination of his character would support and guide a classroom dynamic in which students with exceptionalities are rooted in the classroom community:

Bringing kids in with special needs and exceptionalities is another wonderful thing. In our community there are, is a support network...and they, it helps young adults and adults with physical and mental disabilities to integrate into mainstream society. So they get jobs. They participate in community organizations. They're out there eating dinner and it's just a part of our, our culture of our small town. And I'm happy that some of them are my friends and you know, we hang out and have good times together. And, that, just because someone has an, an obvious exceptionality, it doesn't mean they aren't an enjoyable, interesting, fun person. So, I've worked a lot with kids on the street and people with all kinds of disabilities and so that, I tend to think that I'm a very accepting person. A very understanding person. A very loving person that has no barriers, you know? I understand them and hopefully they understand me and, and there's no reason why we shouldn't.

Practicum One Experience

Andrew's first practicum took place in a grade 3/4 split class of 14 children at an Ontario public school. Following his placement, he held this school in high regard due to the school space itself as well as the staff and its diverse student body. He felt as though the culture of the school promoted both routine and creativity. He appreciated the school's constant focus on the student experience, saying "It was nice to be in a school where kids were first and they were really doing everything they could do to really include everyone."

Many languages, cultures, and religions were represented in his practicum classroom, and there were students who were working through an IEP as an ELL student or as a student having been identified with an exceptionality. One student with an auditory impairment was supported through a cochlear implant and FM audio system. Andrew identified his interactions with these students as being enriching:

You can read about autism, you can read about cerebral palsy, but until you work with somebody or have them in your life, you don't truly understand. And then, beyond that, not having cerebral palsy—you can never really understand. Never. So, but it does open a door to, you know, to understand on some kind of level that makes you effective in your teaching though.

He described his associate teacher as being compassionate, caring, and dynamic. Andrew explained her creation of a cooperative classroom environment:

Well, in our class anyway, there, and in the school, we were dealing with the idea of character development and being respectful and being cooperative and being sensitive to other people's needs and emotions. So it was something that we often stop learning—say science or math or whatever—because there was an issue that had to do with these students on a more personal level that had to be dealt with. And it tied into respect.

His associate teacher carried out an arts program in the classroom that separated the instruction of arts subjects from other curricular areas. Still, Andrew recalled a character-development situation in the classroom that was facilitated by visual arts:

Everything stopped. And now we're going to talk about this and, and there was a moment when they—lining up wasn't going well. So, "Okay we're going to take the next half an hour and everybody's going to draw a picture of respect. And what is respect to you? What does it mean to you? And write a sentence." So...and then everybody held theirs up and spoke about it—grade 3 and 4. They said, you know, "Respect is saying thank you." Okay, and then you'd ask the child to elaborate some more. And hopefully through that

they were starting to not only understand themselves better, but understand their classmates better.

The special education teacher in Andrew's practicum school had previously been its principal and now acted as a resource person, instructing students with exceptionalities in her office, developing IEP's in collaboration with classroom teachers, and serving as additional support for both teachers and students when needed.

Andrew noted that, while differentiated learning was purported through his teacher education courses, his associate teacher kept things roughly similar for every student—although she allowed students to move at their own pace, exercising both modelling and repetition (something Andrew struggled with). He further explained:

I got bored. I guess at times I thought she's not giving them their due. They're smarter than that. They have more intelligence and more creative power than you're giving them credit and that's I felt like, oh, you should raise the bar, you should....At the same time, I thought, they need this support. They need to go over this again. These are foundation skills that they need in life. But at the same time, they have to have avenues to go, "Wow, what is that?" and have their curiosity sparked by things that are more difficult than they would normally be engaged with.

Perceptions Related to Inclusive Education—Following Practicum One Experience

Andrew confided that he always seeks out the human element in students:

It is about teaching, but it's about that life, that person, and doing everything you can to support them. So if they have an exceptionality, are from a different culture...you have to develop a relationship with that child, so in depth, that you can provide them with the best education possible because you know them that well...because you're so intimate with their selves, their family, where they've come from, what challenges they have.

Following his first practicum experience, Andrew wasn't concerned with teaching in an inclusive classroom, saying he felt that it was just another role for the teacher:

So, to teach to an inclusive classroom gives...and everybody sees it as this great challenge, “Oh! I’ve got to change everything for this student, compared to that student, compared to this student, wow!” They keep telling us that being a teacher, you know, it isn’t nine to five, it isn’t that kind of a job. You take it home with you; you think about it, you come up with strategies to help these kids. I see that as a good thing, I think it’s really fun. It’s a challenge—and hopefully one that I’m up for!

Perceptions Related to Arts-Based Education—Following Practicum One Experience

Andrew was enchanted with a video presentation by Sir Ken Robinson that he accessed through a teacher education course, in which the arts are described as being in the bottom echelon of educational priorities worldwide with the development of language and math at the forefront:

So all the learning that happens throws out the other extraneous subjects and learning and focuses it all on becoming that brain. Not a body; not a creative, flowing, beautiful dancer, artistic person—but everything above the shoulders and a little to the right. And using and squashing in a sense creativity, and we’re moving into a time where creativity is what’s going to save us because all the thinking that we’ve been pursuing in the last hundred and fifty years in industry, business, and everything has got us into quite a pickle as we look at the global situation...So people are going to have to, as the phrase goes, ‘think outside the box’ and use their creativity, more than ever, to find solutions to the place that we’ve put ourselves as a human race.

Identifying himself as an artist and musician, Andrew admits he was fuelled by a need to infuse his first practicum experience with an array of arts-based opportunities, including the student-assisted composition of a song about four kind words for a school assembly on respect. He incorporated both art and literacy in the creation of posters and the song’s composition:

And so they learned. They wrote all those lyrics. With democracy we chose okay, these are the best ones. They rhyme, they work, the syllables flow with the song, what have you. So there was all different kinds of literacy going on there. [sic]

The grade 4 science unit was about pulleys and gears, and Andrew had written and taught them a song to introduce how these systems function. In preparation of the forthcoming school assembly, he had the students design and create pulley systems to lift the posters up above the class while they performed the song:

So it was great to incorporate all that science and literacy and music and art and everything in this one project; so it was nice that I was given that opportunity and it was great that the kids responded so well and performed with gusto. It was cool.

Andrew thrived on such hands-on opportunities. He perceived a natural association between geometry and visual art, and he used this as a primary teaching resource during math lessons, incorporating both the creation of new objects and the identification of shapes through his own art:

We took nets and then they folded them up into these cubes and tried to get them into prisms and tetrahedrons and stuff. And then we...For the last couple of classes we did origami which again, which is all very much connected to geometry but then the final result is art. So it's a nice fit for these kids. I showed them on my lap top images of my art too. Within my art, there's a lot of geometry. Said "Okay! What do you see here? What, what shapes do you see here?" "Oh there's a triangle! There's a this...there's a that."

This infusion of his own work into the classroom was motivated by Andrew's belief that it is the teacher's responsibility to bring enthusiasm to their instruction as a model of someone having interests and passions—and being life-long learners themselves.

Perceptions Related to Performing Arts-based Education in an Inclusive Classroom —

Following Practicum One Experience

Andrew identifies as an artist, and he believes that this gives him confidence when creating art in a classroom setting. He mused that, by a certain grade, some students have decided that they are not artists or get frustrated with arts-related activities, so he felt that it could be challenging to make the arts inclusive:

And so, because also for me, I can draw anything, more or less....So I have to...it's a challenge for me to go, "Okay, step-by-step. First you draw a square." Some kids can't even draw a square...okay! (*Laughs*)....And that could be frustrating for me that I want to take off and do this elaborate three dimensional drawing and kids can't even draw a square.

Despite his acknowledgement of a need to develop this understanding, Andrew considered strategies to work towards a more inclusive approach to teaching the curriculum through the arts-based means, which he believes in:

Yeah, I would have to develop. I would have to gauge them and know how to give them the confidence. How to start small, you know. And with lots of positive feedback, you know: "Excellent! Fantastic! I can't believe....are you an artist? Are you an actual artist?" And hopefully, you find with differentiated learning...just connect with that kid and just, this is how you have to do it, and this is the way you need to learn. I know this is how you learn and so you're going to be successful if you grow this way. But by developing relationships with the students, I would be able to see this. I would be able to, to facilitate their success. And, you know, I'm going to try to include lots of art because it's what I enjoy.

Teacher Education Courses—First Term

Andrew expressed a connection between his teacher education courses and his first term practicum experience. He appreciated the creative freedom encouraged in language arts

assignments, the ideas and resources provided by his math instructor, and the organization of their educational theories course instructor. Andrew went on to describe the tremendous value of his science instructor's approach to the subject and his engagement of students:

My teacher is super passionate, he loves it and it's infectious. People in my class here, who previously hated science or had no connection to it, came out of his course thinking, "Science is awesome! I can't wait to teach science!" It was really good. And I had, I had a good time teaching science. It was more challenging for me than math because geometry is so closely linked to the kind of art I like.

Andrew explained that he became quickly disengaged with the online courses that focused on curriculum and evaluation related to exceptionalities:

If it was in a classroom environment, at least there would be the interaction with the teacher, the discussion, you know—the teacher could bring in people who've have real classroom experience dealing with learning disabled children or exceptional children of one way or another. For curriculum design, as far as assessment tools, I think we did one thing and it was a group project. So you didn't even necessarily do the assessment right? So we lost a bit in those two online courses.

In relation to the connection between the exceptionalities course and his practicum experience in an inclusive classroom, Andrew explained,

Sitting, doing an online course...I'm sorry, they're not helping us...teaching students with exceptionalities by reading articles and saying, "Well, I think this" really has little impact. Because it isn't until you're really confronted with this child who isn't out of a textbook. Who really has this variety of attitudes, and movements, and bizarre things going on that you finally have to... I don't think you're going to go back to a textbook and say, "Okay, which category that he fit in too?" It's not going to happen that way...and I was saying, for a lot of the things I've worked at, I always grow from the human side. Being in the practicum, teaching kids—real human beings—is far more engaging. So I guess for me to not have that connection, turned something off in me.

In his consideration of the Integrated Arts cohort within the teacher education program, Andrew felt that they were being taught the curriculum—not how to bring art into it. He recalled only one teacher who acknowledged the arts focus of their class:

I was expecting more, definitely; and so I've done what I can to bring art into the classroom. Everything...I've written songs, we did a rap—so I read a lot of books, so everything I do has a lot of drawings and different things that are a component of whatever I'm handing in.

However, Andrew believed in the responsibility of the individual to bring the arts-based approach into teaching:

I don't know how the other students felt—but I always felt like it was up to me, like I had to bring it. I had to include the arts in our assignments. It wasn't, it wasn't a necessary component when creating a lesson plan, which was part of all our courses: you had to come up with a lesson plan, a unit plan, what have you. They didn't, in any of their criteria, say "It has to include an artistic approach." Or arts-based learning. So as far as including arts in this cohort—it, it was very loose. It's the first time they tried it, and I don't think that it had necessarily the kind of support that it should have. [sic]

Practicum Two Experience

Andrew's second practicum took place in a grade 1 classroom in an Ontario public school that serviced over 800 children from kindergarten to grade 6. He was impressed with the teachers: "There seems to be a young, dynamic quality to the staff and they have a lot of energy and you can see that, just from them walking down the halls. The kids love them."

Andrew's personal goal within this practicum was to fulfill his philosophy and personal mandate as an educator: to greet students with daily opportunities to be enthusiastically involved in their own learning:

I guess whenever I step into a classroom and I work with kids, I want to see their faces light up. I want to see a spark in their eye. I want to see them run up to me and say, "Can

we do that again? That was amazing!” I really want them to love learning and I try to say that a lot. Just say, “Oh, I love this. I love to learn. I love to do math!” And the more I say it...hopefully it rubs off on them....And I think having that infectious attitude about learning can only enhance the educational experience for a kid. You have to have a passionate side. You have to give them the opportunity to go, “Woo-hoo!” and dance around the room and really engage with their whole body...their mind...everything with their learning. And celebrate those successes so that they see that learning is fun because there’s celebration involved with it.

Children from many cultures, histories, and home dynamics made up his second practicum class and Andrew expressed particular concern for several students who had left and re-entered the classroom many times during the school year as a result of chaotic personal lives: “Some have difficult lives outside of school and are not always loved as much as they should be. And so when they get to school, they should receive that attention and that love and that support so that they can realize their potential.”

Andrew’s associate teacher was one year from retirement, and he admired and valued her determined efforts to introduce him to the organizational aspects of education (such as planning field trips, documentation, and helping students maintain agendas). Her ability to juggle teaching, planning, and the “the layers and layers and layers that are what it is to be a teacher” impressed him, in addition to the relationship she had forged with her students:

At the heart of it, she cares so deeply about them. And she’s a mother and she is so concerned with their well being and little kids—especially these kids—are six- and seven-years-old. Daily, they’re having these huge, traumatic events that only six- and seven-year-olds can go through. And she deals with them in a beautiful way, and so I’m learning from that.

Andrew explained that in grade 1, art is significant and his personal fulfillment in creating lessons happens through the arts:

So arts, it's just there. And everybody says, "Don't reinvent the wheel." And I said to my associate teacher, "But I like to reinvent the wheel!" So all my worksheets, I draw everything. So if it's...we were doing vocabulary for *Where the Wild Things Are*, like 'gnashed:' "They gnashed their terrible teeth, rolled their terrible eyes."....So I took out some of these words and then I drew the corresponding picture so they could draw the lines connecting them. And I drew all the wild things on paper so that they could write down some interesting vocabulary and write a sentence or two about them.

The special education resource teacher in the school would visit classrooms and meet with students in his own workspace. There were students in the classroom who were slightly behind some of their peers, either academically or socially, but Andrew attributed it to possibly growing up in the context of gender and familial influence. His perspective of children who require greater faculty effort seems focused on finding opportunities rather than differences:

There are a few problem students that even I know, and it's like "There's so and so." You know? You just know. And they are often the most fun—outside [the classroom]. They're creative, they're bizarre, and they're full of energy. But inside the classroom, it's too much for them; they need more of an outlet. And I said to one of the teachers as they were tearing around the play structure and jumping over it, I said, "If you could teach that guy math while he was climbing, he would be a genius." And I'm sure there's a way...

Andrew's associations with a working classroom were of noise, activity, and a palpable liveliness and enjoyment in learning that mirrors his own. As he worked within this practicum, his creativity and vigour formed the direction of his lessons, his approach to learning and to his students, as was evident through his lesson plan preparation. He reflected on his approach:

I can be during the day thinking about, "Oh, what am I going to do in class?" and have something planned and then go, "Wow! That's a way better idea!" and quickly draw something and get it all ready and photocopy it and bring it back and have it done in time

for class. And it always works way better, because the inspiration of that moment gives me the energy to really focus and get something great. I suppose with time I will get better at seeing it more long term, and seeing the steps to ensure that there's a good assessment tool, a rubric and what have you. And I do that, but I enjoy the moment and, and seeing what the kids are into that day...seeing where they're at and knowing where we have come from in our studies and then jumping off from there.

Perceptions Related to Inclusive Education—Following Practicum Two Experience

Whether it is related to culture, exceptionalities, or the varied experiences of the students' home and social lives, Andrew believed in the necessity of inclusion:

I think it's necessary—it's inevitable first of all—but it's also necessary because that's the way the world is. Especially Canada is....We are a blended world now. It's very difficult to go to any community anywhere and not see a variety of people, and so it's important for kids to embrace that and what better way than to be raised within their school....It's all relevant to life experience and kids have to understand that.

Andrew's concern with inclusion lay mostly in the effects of external influences on the paradigm of the students in the classroom—whether these are drawn from cultural upbringing, media influences, or family patterns of prejudice and behaviour. Yet despite the multitude of concerns, he saw diversity as a challenge that can (and must) be met through another kind of focus.

Perceptions Related to Arts-Based Education—Following Practicum Two Experience

Andrew believed that an arts-based approach encompasses beneficial, engaging, and intrinsic properties. As a teacher, he could imagine no other route:

I am an artistic person. I want to incorporate that into my life, first of all. And if my life is going to have the employment of teaching, then it's definitely going to have a huge component of it. So it will just...if it enhances my experience, and if it elevates what I'm attempting to do, I see it as nothing but beneficial for the students. If I'm interested and

engaged through art, and learning, and teaching with that, then they're going to learn as well, because of it.

*Perceptions Related to Performing Arts-based Education in an Inclusive Classroom —
Following Practicum Two Experience*

While his grade 1 practicum experience was rich in integrated arts, he was concerned that children in an inclusive classroom are disadvantaged by what he viewed as a movement towards the arts being removed from the cross-curricular lens as students move into the older grade levels in school:

And at some point it starts to disappear and it starts to become, "Now, we're doing art. Now, we're doing L.A." And it's nice when it's all integrated....And there's a whole school of thought about that where you don't divide all the subjects. They are one. And if you can come up with a central theme that they can all tie to... then they all blend together.

Andrew only saw potential in an inherently inclusive approach:

I think all kids are artistic. They don't seem to...that doesn't seem to affect exceptionalities...Okay, physically; maybe they're not as adept because of their physical disability. Mentally, as I said, in every class there are kids who are very low and ones that are very high—they can all still colour. It might not be within the lines, but maybe that's not the point that day. They can all participate in art and through that art, gain confidence in their other disciplines, their other curriculum requirements. If the child is no good at using the actual physical description of numbers—five plus five—well, you give them five beautiful flowers and five stems. Okay. Build these flowers, you know? How many pieces do you have? That's off the top of my head, but you can use beautiful objects and beautiful creations to encourage their learning. And if they created them, they have that much more meaning. So if a child has coloured ten beautiful flowers, wow—and then you cut them up into twos, or into two fives, then all of a sudden—their beautiful flowers are their math problem and they can learn from that. There's got to be a way!

Teacher Education Courses—Second Term

Andrew's experience during his second term teacher education courses was a mixture of engaging experiences and of disappointment and dissociation.

He appreciated his physical education course for the infusion of information related to documentation, support, and protecting oneself as a teacher that was included in that instruction. Andrew met his arts class with his innate enthusiasm for the subject. His social studies teacher (who was his math instructor from the first term) delighted Andrew by advocating for an arts-based, hands-on approach to teaching and learning. In this class, he and his peers were able to establish in their own learning what Andrew described as "relevant things that we could take into an elementary classroom." Despite these highlights, in Andrew's point of view, several courses lacked clear direction, valuable curriculum, and teaching leadership.

Andrew drew a connection between these second term course experiences and his practicum, and affirmed that "It was me who brought art into it more than a teacher offering it to us," as he consistently created songs, pictures, and structures to accompany his assignments. He felt this ownership to establish his own engagement with the arts was also part of his experience in the Integrated Arts cohort:

It was up to the individual to bring the art. They might have suggested, "Well, you know, do something artistic," but really, often it was us who were elevating the homework to an artistic level. So I guess the difference is that the professors were accepting of that. But some more than others were encouraging it; maybe...a couple of them? Others just said, "Oh, you're the arts cohort? Oh, I didn't know." Or, "What does that mean?" They didn't even know. So it was the first year. It was a pilot project and I'm sure for some it was marvellous and for others, they would not do it again.

Yet by being a part of this cohort, Andrew felt that it likely made his teacher's college experience more meaningful as it established a focus that heightened his engagement in the learning, and perhaps provided his cohort with "an opportunity for us to explore ourselves a little more." His teacher education courses ultimately influenced his practicum experience, as he often found himself in class "stepping up and doing something crazy, whether it be dancing with my teacher or writing a song." Hence, the teacher education courses reinforced who he was and who he would be as an educator:

Regardless of the context, I'm comfortable to lead people...to hopefully educate them, to engage them, and to make their learning a type of celebration—whether they're other adults in the classroom, or on the stage, or whatever. Including going into a classroom of 6-year-olds or 10-year-olds that—just being who I am, and with my life experiences and knowledge and the affirmation that what I was learning at school received high marks, everything was pointing in the direction of success when I got into a classroom.

Culminating Relationship with Inclusion

Andrew acknowledged there will be students in an inclusive classroom who will be especially challenging. Still, he felt that these moments should be met with support and acknowledgement of the student's struggle. He felt confident in his facilitation of his strategy of support:

So far I've been able to deal with any student that's come my way, and find a way through that personal connection, knowing that student and therefore being able to find that twist, that turn that brings them into understanding.

The only concern that he felt in relation to the inclusive classroom was the potential inability to connect with a student or assist in their feelings of comfort and acceptance. This concerned him because he perceived the students' daily enjoyment of learning to be part of his

obligations as a teacher. He drew on his experiences working in the theatre as a model for how this could be possible:

Any play that I would direct, again—you have all these personalities and needs and they have to find their place, that balance. They may not be a leading role—maybe they’re just an actor who comes on three times in the show and says one line each time. But they’re just as important to the whole makeup of the play. I couldn’t do the play without that person, nor could you do it without the star or all the other players: the stage manager, the lighting designer, the usher, the box office person. You can’t do the show without everybody participating and so in our classroom, I feel the same.

He felt that an inclusive classroom of students with varied learning abilities is no different than what has always been the norm, despite the shift from segregation to inclusion:

From the days of the one room school house to today, when you put people together in a learning environment, some are motivated, some aren’t; some have what it takes, some don’t. And as a teacher, you have to find a way that they can reach their potential whether that is being an engineer or an artist or a...or a whatever kind of professional. To someone who maybe just works a blue collar job but has a consistent life and enjoys it. The point of getting through school isn’t necessarily to get all A’s and to be that ideal job; it’s too have the skills to live a life that’s fulfilling and brings you happiness. And so if I can give that to my students, then I’ve done my job. [sic]

In Andrew’s view, inclusion meant that a student “can go out and meet the world,” suggesting that “The classroom is a mini-world that needs to open the door to the rest of the world so they feel comfortable and they feel like they can participate in a meaningful way.” Although he felt confident in the beliefs he espoused, Andrew reflected that his perceptions of inclusion may have been optimistic and accepted that there might be challenges that require outside resources. Still, he viewed these challenges as positive trials in the work of a teacher.

Andrew believed that he brought his travel, teaching, theatrical, working, and interpersonal experiences to his inclusive classrooms. In addition, he felt he had a good

rapport with and acceptance of students and faculty. Understanding inclusion as being unafraid, he felt comfortable creating an environment where students enjoyed their time because of “what’s being created by them, with them, and with [him]” as a teacher. He felt that this could be achieved through an enjoyment of self and others:

Inclusion is natural to me. I just...I enjoy people. And because of their differences. Because they are all so incredibly bizarre in their makeup and their responses to things can be not what you expect. All those surprises, I want in my life. And as a teacher you get them on a daily basis. Why wouldn’t you want to include everybody? Because without that variety, there is no spice.

Culminating Relationship with Arts-Based Approach to Education

Andrew’s extensive background in the arts gave him confidence in his own artistic sensibilities and in his ability to draw enthusiasm for (and ability through) the arts out of his students:

I have little concern because I can draw anything, I can paint anything, I can get the kids to respond to that artistically as well. And writing is such a beautiful thing to do and if they see me writing songs every week and writing letters to them and writing, writing, writing than they’re going to think, “Wow! Writing rocks! Let’s write!” And I can get them writing songs and writing letters and writing wanted posters and whatever else, however you address balanced literacy. And then, with anything else, like a song...well, where do you see songs mostly? Well on a DVD...or CD. Okay, do they have a cover? Well, yes they do. Well let’s draw that! Oh, there’s art connecting the music...the lyrics to visual arts. Or with a wanted poster, well...okay. Let’s get the digital camera. Oh, let’s change to a sepia tone, let’s...put that into the wanted poster, you can draw that. So I don’t think there’s any way that you can restrict bringing art into the curriculum. No.

Wondering aloud about the reach of the influence that a teacher’s personality has on the classroom approach, he declared “My personality is art.” As such, it will be part of his educational approach as he intended to “celebrate it every day” and share it with the students.

He did see the potential to ‘lose’ himself in art (to the detriment of the curriculum), but felt that provincial expectations would keep these needs in focus. However, he wondered at the freedom he would have to immerse the students in art, citing his ultimate dream as an educator:

What would I like to do with my class? I would like to have them put on a play, and that’s my theme. They write it; they act it; they sing it; they do the set design; they do the lighting; they do the promotion; they do the box office. They do everything and that totally touches all the curriculum. They bring in the community...it just nails everything in one. So if I could do that in the classroom—I would. My concern is that maybe the school wouldn’t dig that and they wouldn’t allow that.

Andrew’s lifelong immersion in art and identification as an artist made up just part of his identity, and he understood this connection as a means of interacting with the students to their ultimate benefit:

The evolution of art is so easy to embrace and to see and to experience. And it’s something that will only infiltrate children’s lives for the betterment of their experiences. They will connect beauty with learning. So hopefully art and inclusion and all the other things that I am—and that all the students that will come into my life are—will be able to create some beautiful experience that we will enjoy together.

Culminating Relationship with Performing Arts-based Approach to Curriculum in an Inclusive Classroom

Establishing a sense of his feelings related to performing arts-based education in an inclusive classroom was a difficult endeavour for Andrew. He explained that he is a very consistent person who experiences a range of emotions without any need to understand them:

And so when they’re connected to teaching arts-based, inclusive education, I don’t think that I take stock of that. I just am doing. And I would analyze rather how I’m feeling about it whether or not the lesson was effective; whether or not the kids connected with it. I don’t have to be emotionally connected to my lessons too much, other than having fun

creating it. But I do want there to be a connection for the kids and if they're reading a story that's sad, I want them to feel that sadness, and the power of their words in that story, or the happiness in that story. And I, as an actor, can engage those reactions with my voice, with my body movements. But I wouldn't then sit back and think, "Okay...how do I understand what I just did?" My goal is every moment, with those children, to make their learning awesome. That's the only goal there is.

To summarize, volunteering in Latin America during university was Andrew's first exposure to teaching, and from that point his life intertwined with young people through occasional teaching, anti-bullying workshop facilitation, and theatre. He went on to pursue a myriad of careers in construction, carpentry, teaching, and the arts. As steady finances became a concern (Andrew is married with three children), he turned to teacher education as the next natural step in a lifetime of experiences where elements of teaching were peppered throughout. Though Andrew's review of the impact of his teacher education courses on his practicum and future reflected positive and negative responses, both practicum experiences granted him access to excellent associate teachers and opportunities to fully engage in leading his classrooms through their curriculum via the arts. His ultimate conceptualizations of inclusion and the arts are that they are complementary entities, and that they have a natural association which he planned to exercise in his own practice fuelled by rapport and passion.

CHAPTER SEVEN
CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS

“Dancing in all its forms cannot be excluded from the curriculum of all noble education; dancing with the feet, with ideas, with words, and, need I add that one must also be able to dance with the pen?”
- *Friedrich Nietzsche*

Through establishment of the historical, classroom, and practicum scenarios that influenced their perceptions related to implementing inclusion of students with exceptionalities through an arts-based approach to education, Seidman's (2006) three-interview structure set the stage for analysis of the participants' shared perceptions. An analytical process followed each set of interviews and revealed patterns among the participants. Both these similarities and the contrasts between the experiences and perceptions of the participants will be compared through a cross-case analysis of their stories and reflections.

Early Years and Educational Experiences

As a child, Andrew moved several times before settling down in the Canadian prairies, where he attended elementary and secondary school. Sophie and Carrie were both raised and schooled in one location (Sophie in Eastern Europe and Carrie in Eastern Canada). Andrew experienced the loss of his mother during his early 20s, while Sophie and Carrie's parents still reside in the locations where they raised their children.

Carrie attended a private, religious elementary school in Eastern Canada while Andrew grew up in the public system of the Canadian prairies. Sophie was educated at a public school in Eastern Europe during the communist regime. Carrie and Sophie both recall that their respective schools and teachers held high expectations for their academic success. None of the participants had any recollection of differentiated learning or programs for individuals with exceptionalities during their own elementary experiences. Sophie felt that in general, exceptional students' learning needs were not met by the instruction style they received, and that teachers were unreceptive to students' attempts to learn in a hands-on fashion. Andrew shared a similar viewpoint.

Andrew could not recall any arts-related endeavours that took place in his elementary classrooms. Both Carrie and Sophie acknowledged that their school systems placed art at the bottom of the learning hierarchy, and cross-curricular links were non-existent. While no participant had an abundance of school-related artistic recollections, each actively pursued creativity and art of some variation within their community or social network. Carrie particularly enjoyed secondary school teachers who presented their subjects through experiential or arts-based approaches instead of through memorization. Sophie's high school did not provide experiences in the arts, although both Andrew and Carrie enjoyed subject-specific classes and extra-curricular engagement with the arts.

Each participant originally pursued undergraduate studies in science, and their paths eventually led to enrollment in the teacher education program. Carrie focused on environmental science within her undergraduate program before pursuing a Master's in education. Sophie taught in a school for boys with exceptionalities; afterwards, she went on to study finances. Andrew spent a year in an undergraduate science program prior to completing a fine arts degree, which led to several opportunities in the fields of construction, carpentry, and the theatre.

Experiences with Individuals with Exceptionalities

None of the participants were formally identified with an exceptionality themselves. They held only vague recollections of individuals in elementary and high school with exceptionalities. They knew of specialized programs that were in existence, yet they had no association with them. While reflecting on their respective educational histories, none could identify any of their own classroom communities as having been inclusive in nature.

Carrie was given a small amount of language resource assistance as a young child, and both she and Sophie (who believes she was gifted in drawing) were given opportunities to be involved in occasional enrichment endeavours offered in their respective elementary schools.

Both Sophie and Andrew spent time as occasional teachers at schools for young people with exceptionalities. These encounters were met with an enjoyment of both the children and their newfound roles as teachers. Carrie's experience as a caregiver for a young man with an Autism spectrum disorder during her high school days resulted in concern related to her ability to teach individuals with exceptionalities, especially within an inclusive arena.

Art Opportunities in Work, School, or Personal Life

While their elementary school exposure to arts-related approaches to education and arts endeavours was limited, each participant was naturally drawn to artistic hobbies or 'play.' Carrie was preoccupied with musical theatre and the imaginary world she and her sister established; Andrew crafted and staged creations and dramatics with his peers; and Sophie developed skills as a puppeteer during her time at a community centre in her home town.

Once in high school, both Carrie and Andrew became involved in extra-curricular arts activities, and chose drama and visual arts electives respectively. These courses released them from the expectations of others, linked them to artistic peers, fuelled confidence (in terms of Carrie's shyness), and presented new possibilities (in terms of Andrew's disengagement in school). These experiences led to a future interwoven with the arts.

Carrie's appreciation for a cross-curricular use of the arts translated into the development of rainmakers, weather instruments, and food mobiles as science projects for elementary children within her environmental education group during her undergraduate degree. In Andrew's case, his personal and professional life had been an ongoing journey

through arts venues, occupations, and experiences. In contrast, though Sophie had artistic affinity and great affection for curricular subjects fused with art (such as geometry), her high school years and career in finances were void of artistic endeavours.

Involvement with Young People

The participants could vividly recollect their first encounters in a leadership role with young people. In each case, these took place in their young adult years and involved a substantial instructional component, such as Carrie's job as a children's gymnastics coach; Sophie's position as an occasional teacher; and Andrew's volunteer engagement in Latin America. Carrie and Andrew continued their involvement with young people through a myriad of pursuits, and both found themselves being drawn towards program development and teaching roles, which they met with excitement and satisfaction.

Decision Related to Teacher's College

Involvement with young people fuelled each participant's choice to pursue a teaching career. The participants' spoke of the fulfillment they found in leadership roles through which they could impact the well-being and confidence of children.

Carrie's interaction with the teacher education program she was involved with during her Master's degree was the final push towards a career in classroom education, which she saw as the challenging, ever-changing career opportunity she craved. Andrew cited that balancing jobs in carpentry, construction, and theatre was becoming financially difficult, and teacher education seemed like a logical opportunity to pursue a degree that would provide steady employment and build upon his history of teaching roles. Sophie's life experience was the opposite, having chosen a career in finance over education in a country where teaching

meant financial instability. It wasn't until arriving in Canada that she pursued her long-time desire to become an elementary school teacher.

Perceptions Related to Inclusive Education—Prior to Practicum One Experience

Drawing on their own life histories as a guide, the participants each felt inclined towards a belief that inclusive education was a positive classroom approach. Carrie and Sophie both anticipated that there would be challenges in its implementation. Andrew was more optimistic in his belief that inclusion could actually be implemented. He drew confidence in this belief from his past experiences in teaching roles and interactions with individuals identified with exceptionalities. In contrast, Carrie's difficult teenage experience as a caregiver for a young person with an Autism spectrum disorder left her feeling concerned about managing the needs of several children within a classroom that were identified with an exceptionality.

Perceptions Related to Arts-Based Education—Prior to Practicum One Experience

The participants were universally inclined towards learning styles that engaged them artistically. They became excited when presented with opportunities to fuse visual art, dance, music, or drama with another subject. Their own enthusiasm predisposed them to a belief in an arts-based approach to education, and they all identified approaches and arts-related initiatives they had witnessed.

Perceptions Related to Performing Arts-based Education in an Inclusive Classroom — Prior to Practicum One Experience

The three participants believed in the ability of the arts to foster inclusion within the classroom environment and access the curriculum in an optimal way. Carrie perceived the arts as an effective tool to accomplish this and was confident in its capacity to guide the

social, motor, and academic arenas of a child's educational experience. Sophie also perceived an arts-based approach to be an opportunity for struggling students to be successfully reintroduced to the curriculum, and was motivated by the effects of her own inability to access or experience the arts during her educational history.

Practicum One Experience

The participants were placed inside the Ontario public school system during their first practicum experience. Here, they encountered a mosaic of languages, cultures, challenges, and strengths. Carrie was placed in a JK/SK scenario in which she taught two different split classes of approximately 18 students each: one in the morning and one in the afternoon. Sophie was placed in a classroom of 20 grade 2 students, and Andrew was placed in a grade 3/4 split class of 14 students.

Andrew and Carrie both respected the teaching and learning dynamic established by their associate teachers, and enjoyed relationships in which they felt mentored and supported. Sophie was not as comfortable with the strict nature of her associate teacher, although she too felt as though she was given valuable feedback.

Carrie relied on the arts as her means of communication, and visual art, music, and dance played a daily role in the activities of the children and the classroom's management. Like Carrie, Andrew found that the arts were of great benefit in facilitating the classroom learning experiences for every individual. Just as he observed his associate teacher model the infusion of the arts into character development exercises, so too did he engage the arts as a teaching and learning approach that encompassed the entire curriculum. While the arts were not as evident in the daily activities of Sophie's classroom, her associate teacher did occasionally weave cross-curricular links with artistic endeavours.

However, unlike Carrie and Andrew (who drew on arts-based approaches to facilitate inclusivity in their practicum classrooms), Sophie's method of accommodating students was guided by her associate teacher who encouraged Sophie to practice differentiated learning by creating daily handouts for the gifted children, children with exceptionalities, and other children in the class that reflected their specific abilities. The age and language level of her students restricted the identification of exceptionalities within particular students, and this meant that class-wide accommodations and differentiated instruction were key. In addition to the supports offered by the special education teacher on staff, Andrew's associate teacher practiced differentiated instruction by allowing flexibility in the pace at which students worked, and through constant modelling and repetition.

Perceptions Related to Inclusive Education—Following Practicum One Experience

Andrew's feelings remained largely unchanged following his first practicum experience, and he maintained his belief that forging solid relationships with—and knowledge of—the students was the key to achieving inclusion. He embraced the challenges that were presented and, similar to Carrie, felt that an inclusive environment was achieved through the work of his associate teacher and supported by his own contributions during practicum. All three participants concurred that including every student into the fabric of the classroom was beneficial in granting opportunities for the students to learn and play together.

Carrie further developed new perceptions of inclusion that resulted in some trepidation in its ability to consistently succeed. Both she and Sophie felt that beyond differentiated instruction, resources such as additional support staff and a moderate classroom size were necessary in order to manage a classroom and facilitate inclusivity. Sophie's concerns extended to her consideration that the classroom students in general (and particularly the

gifted students) were pulled back by the students with exceptionalities due to their high demands for the teacher's time.

Perceptions Related to Arts-Based Education—Following Practicum One Experience

Andrew reported that there is a need to pursue creativity and re-orientate students to prioritize their artistic inclinations by reassessing the arts' value as being equal to math or language. He confessed a general desire to bring arts to every capacity of his life as well as to this practicum. He, like Carrie and Sophie, led his students in lessons that provided a variety of means to accessing the material they were learning. Moreover, Andrew went further, bringing in his own art and writing songs for students to learn as a way of not only accessing the curriculum, but also modelling the importance of being a lifelong learner. Carrie also enjoyed the opportunity to weave the arts into her lessons and classroom management strategies. Yet, she struggled with the proper amount of creative freedom to grant a student and how to guide their artistic endeavours.

Carrie worried further that students who thrived within the arts-based approach of kindergarten classes—particularly ELL students—would find the adjustment to grade 1 and onward to be difficult. But in relation to her practicum, an association to the arts made sense to her, and she saw her students believing that everyone can create art: a gratifying and happy moment for Carrie. Both she and Sophie felt that the arts should be used with purpose, as a way of making the classroom a holistic environment for the benefit of every student.

*Perceptions Related to Performing Arts-based Education in an Inclusive Classroom —
Following Practicum One Experience*

Andrew felt that he had the confidence in himself to both teach and create various kinds of art—something that many students decide they cannot do by an early age. However,

guided by a cross-curricular engagement of the arts and his steadfast belief in knowledge of the student as a guide, Andrew intended to continue using arts-based approaches to education as a means of implementing inclusion. He felt that the biggest challenge would be to remind himself to accommodate activities that come naturally to him in recognition of the needs of his students. Considering the developmental level of her students, Carrie felt that the arts were a way of fostering their young skill sets and allowing them to participate in classroom activities without losing confidence in themselves, while producing outcomes which demonstrate that growth and learning is taking place. Carrie confessed that it didn't feel distinctively 'inclusive' to be using arts in so many ways; rather, the arts were simply part of how things were successfully achieved. Both Carrie and Sophie felt that accessing the arts meets students where they are and creates a means for learners with a propensity towards artistic expression to call on that skill set and access the material and their own knowledge in an optimal way.

Teacher Education Courses—First Term

The participants' perceptions and learning outcomes following their first term teacher education courses were practically indistinguishable. Each felt that the courses and their instructors created valuable links between their courses and practicum experiences. Carrie and Sophie both felt that their teacher education experiences had introduced the arts in new ways, and all three concurred that language arts provided particular arts integration opportunities. Every participant cited enthusiasm for the practical strategies and dynamic opportunities provided by a particular science instructor who was able to elicit enthusiasm for the subject throughout the cohort.

All three participants expressed that they had not gained confidence in their ability to create lesson or unit plans following completion of their online curriculum and evaluation course. The concept of online courses was not met with enthusiasm by the participants, who felt it was a design suited best to linguistic learners. Even with the blog component, the online format failed to establish a community of learning, and teaching and learning were not truly achieved.

The reflections of the participants on their exceptionalities course (which was also facilitated online) garnered a similar response. While the theories and definitions were helpful in an abstract sense, the participants felt this course provided them with relevant information only following their practicum experiences. They cited the need for increased support, collaboration, and interaction in this area prior to entering their inclusive practicum classes. They felt it was ironic that a classroom of Integrated Arts students inclined towards human connections and kinaesthetic, visual, and auditory learning opportunities were being taught about implementing inclusion without actually living it themselves.

In relation to their capacity as students in the Integrated Arts cohort, the participants had differing views. Andrew believed that, overall, they were being taught the curriculum and not the integration of arts-based methods into that curriculum, and cited that arts integration was rarely encouraged or called for in their assignments. Meanwhile, Carrie and Sophie felt that most of the teachers were trying to integrate some component of the arts into their instruction or curriculum. While these participants were looking forward to a richer experience in the following term, they were ultimately pursuing a means to contribute to their philosophy of arts education.

Practicum Two Experience

The participants were placed within the Ontario elementary public school system during their second practicum, where they accessed fresh teaching and learning opportunities through different grade levels, student demographics, and school communities. Carrie was assigned to a grade 4/5 split classroom of 21 students; Andrew's second practicum was spent with 19 grade 1 students; and Sophie experienced her placement in a grade 6 classroom of 35 students.

While Sophie taught for half the day and spent the other half marking and preparing lessons, Carrie and Andrew taught 100 percent of the school day. They also shared a common admiration for the accommodating and compassionate approaches of their associate teachers, drawn from their knowledge of and concern for the students. Her associate teacher's dual role as both a classroom teacher and school-wide instrumental music teacher meant that Sophie spent half as much time under her observation. Sophie explained that a lack of feedback and incongruous methods of communication led to Sophie having an experience that was characterized by feelings of inadequate support and a failed opportunity for mentorship.

The participants' responses to their placements in inclusive classrooms was an interesting study in contrast, as Carrie referred to the hectic nature of her classroom as being exciting and Andrew thrived in the noisy, dynamic atmosphere of his practicum classroom. On the other hand, Sophie felt that the dynamics of her practicum school were too liberal and lacking in a culture of discipline. The large class size generated challenges in classroom management for Sophie, and she felt challenged by their short attention spans. Carrie appreciated the opportunity that her practicum classroom presented to observe and instruct within a teaching and learning environment where academic learning was facilitated through

accommodated and modified approaches for students identified with particular exceptionalities. Though Sophie too was placed in a practicum experience where a high number of the classroom students were on an IEP, the only accommodation instituted was the provision of extra class time to complete work.

Both Carrie and Sophie's associate teachers had backgrounds in the arts (visual arts and instrumental music, respectively) and in Carrie's case, her associate's passion for the arts translated into an arts-based approach to the curriculum, as well as modifications that Carrie appreciated and adapted into her own instructional strategy. Andrew initiated arts activities as soon as possible and thrived on granting the students opportunities to engage with their whole bodies. For her part, Sophie facilitated a poetry cafe (as was suggested by her teacher), yet otherwise did not bring arts into her instruction as she believed that her students didn't react with universal appreciation to those subjects or an arts-based approach to education, in the same way that they did while studying science. Sophie felt the diversity of the class made it difficult to establish a cross-curricular approach to the arts. Carrie, on the other hand, felt that when the arts were instructed as their own entity, it was the most inclusive time in the classroom. Similarly, Andrew purported in the very nature of the arts as being inherently inclusive.

Perceptions Related to Inclusive Education—Following Practicum Two Experience

Carrie and Sophie's classrooms included the involvement of support staff and required differentiated educational strategies. However, even within this structure, both reported concern. Carrie's associate teacher (with the assistance of the learning support teacher) aimed to create accommodated and modified lessons. Carrie was worried that students working at grade level weren't being challenged enough by the curriculum, nor were they being asked to

rise to greater expectations. At the same time, she worried that those students with a modified curriculum might benefit from academic or social skills tailored to their needs in a more specific way. Unlike Carrie, Sophie felt that she could not differentiate student learning because her students didn't want their differences noted; those in need of assistance would refuse the help of the visiting special education resource teacher because they didn't want to look stupid in front of their peers.

Carrie and Andrew both expressed a belief in the power of inclusion to develop a paradigm of acceptance among the students in their classrooms. Carrie felt that inclusion benefited all students in the classroom through exposing them to diversity, in concurrence with Andrew's proposal that a blended world necessitates an inclusive classroom—a classroom that will be more likely to create students who are positively engaged within their community.

Perceptions Related to Arts-Based Education—Following Practicum Two Experience

Andrew explained that he could imagine no other way of interacting within his own life (or the lives of his students) than through an arts-based approach to academics and social interactions. Such confidence and comfort in the arts meant that he infused such strategies into his practicum immediately. Carrie, who also espoused a prioritization on the arts within the classroom, was more hesitant due to her perceived knowledge gaps in areas such as music, and over the course of her practicum was relieved to discover that such areas could be supplemented through other resources and people.

Sophie expressed a belief in the need for creativity and the infusion of a variety of instructional strategies within a classroom. However, in her own practice she felt overwhelmed by the requirement that students have a fresh approach each day, and was

reluctant to integrate art because only some classroom students enjoyed it. She preferred to teach science in a more creative way instead. Carrie, meanwhile, appreciated and learned from her associate teacher's practice of an arts-based approach to the curriculum and felt that her students' engagement with the arts related to their optimal achievement and inclusion.

*Perceptions Related to Performing Arts-based Education in an Inclusive Classroom —
Following Practicum Two Experience*

Carrie and Andrew's belief in the capacity for the arts to implement inclusion was matched by a concern that such an approach could be overshadowed by other subject or curriculum requirements. Andrew expressed concerns that as children progress through the grade levels, the cross-curricular approach to arts-based education might be disengaged from their experience and replaced by something less inclusive in its ability to meet the learning needs of a diverse student body. Carrie was inspired by her associate teacher's prioritization of the arts and the manner in which she wove it into the curriculum and called on a myriad of resources to support this practice.

Sophie regarded creativity to be part of art, and felt that understanding could be achieved through incorporating creativity into lessons. Carrie proposed a similar perspective to the arts as being one of the most valuable curriculum components due to its ability to develop a multitude of skills related to social and academic arenas, as well as its ability to assist in the development of different forms of intelligence.

Yet, Carrie and Andrew responded differently in their perception of the capability of the arts to make things meaningful for students. As a result of both her practicum and her own childhood experience, Carrie believed in an integrated approach to the arts and inclusion, citing the arts as a natural response to the curriculum and a memorable means of truly

connecting students with the subject matter. Andrew believed that all students are artistic, and suggests that there are always methods of teaching and learning through the arts. Sophie felt that math and language might be too abstract for her classroom students, and noted that the students with the greatest exceptionalities adored science. She proposed that this was due to the way that it connected to the 'real' world in a manner that the arts did not achieve to the same degree.

Teacher Education Courses—Second Term

The participants expressed similar perceptions of their second term of teacher education courses. Although the classes were not wholly beneficial, certain connections could be drawn to either their practicum or their future as educators. Sophie was the least enthusiastic in emphasizing this connection, explaining that she felt less prepared than the pre-service teacher from another university whom she encountered at her second practicum. She identified that the resources and skills that were cited within the expectations of their placements were not taught within her teacher education experience.

The participants highlighted their social sciences course as an effective model for integrating kinaesthetic opportunities and the arts. Andrew's description of the relevance of the course was complemented by Sophie's espousal that it was of greater assistance than the theoretical underpinnings of education discussed in other classes (which she felt were unrelated to the real world). Many of the electives and theory-based courses were poorly received by the participants, who were unable to establish relevancy or focus through the course. Other courses, such as the arts course, were appreciated for their content, direction, and the proficiency of the instruction.

Carrie was enthusiastic in the contributions of the Integrated Arts cohort as a means by which she learned, shared, and gained applicable cross-curricular links to the arts. Sophie's perceived value of the overall cohort experience was limited to courses that included activities and discussion that did not continually focus on theoretical knowledge. Andrew felt the Integrated Arts cohort ultimately reinforced his enthusiasm and commitment to education and to approaching it through his passion for the arts.

Culminating Relationship with Inclusion

The culminating relationship with inclusivity among the participants manifested itself in diverse ways, with their teacher education practicum experiences and personal histories proving highly influential.

Following their practicum experiences, Carrie and Sophie reflected a concern in the universal applicability of the inclusion of every student. Carrie questions if there is a cut-off point at which inclusion is no longer beneficial for certain students. Sophie felt that only through small class sizes, the presence of support staff, and additional resources could inclusion be viable. Both Carrie and Andrew recognized how differentiated educational strategies could encourage academic success and noted the level of social acceptance that was present among classroom peers.

Carrie's initial concerns related to inclusion stemmed from her limited experience with individuals with exceptionalities and a negative experience in her teenage years that coloured her ultimate perceptions. As Sophie was growing up in Eastern Europe, students with exceptionalities were placed in a separate school. Her exposure to this system solidified Sophie's belief in inclusion, and defined inclusion as a means of everyone accessing the same rights and acceptance. Carrie's perception of inclusion will be shaped by her own experience

of knowing what it feels like to be excluded, as she underwent bullying experiences in elementary school. Although he never dealt with exclusion or prejudice, Andrew felt that his experiences as a student, parent, and actor have introduced him to the emotional scope of such exclusionary experiences.

Sophie considers the inclusive classroom with trepidation, and plans to seek assistance and advice from staff and resources to improve her approach and understanding—particularly in relation to the social components of inclusion. Carrie and Andrew felt confident in their ability to embrace the inclusive classroom. Likening the inclusive classroom to any one of the theatre productions from his past, Andrew emphasized that the collective is truly essential to making a show run, and participation in the classroom is the same way. He perceived that this successful participation means that students leave the classroom environment and enter the world with confidence and a history of skills and acceptance that prepares them for engaging in the world in a meaningful way. He believes that, by modelling acceptance and enthusiasm, a culture of inclusion will develop.

Culminating Relationship with Arts-Based Approach to Education

The confidence of the participants in manifesting arts-based lessons and connections within the curriculum was directly related to their past experiences and outcomes.

Andrew's substantial background in the arts has given him confidence in his ability to instigate artistic response in children, and his own capacity to merge art into the curriculum in an endless array of ways. Unlike Andrew, Carrie felt an initial trepidation about teaching the arts and due to her perceived lack of experiences and knowledge. However, this was much alleviated through her practicum with the realization that she knew more than she initially thought she did, and that there are resources available to ensure that she does not 'short-

change' her students out of learning opportunities because of her own fears. Both Carrie and Andrew have been impacted by their personal interactions with the arts and felt that their gusto was among the assets that they bring to an arts-based approach to the curriculum. Carrie's most memorable projects during her own education were arts-based, and she felt that this positive impact would translate to her own students. While Andrew mused with uncertainty over the response to his arts-based approach by schools and administration, he was ultimately optimistic that his life experiences in the arts and identification as an 'actor-musician-teacher-artist-lover of learning' can only be conceived as an asset.

This inherent enthusiasm and confidence have become part of Carrie and Andrew's educational paradigm. On the other hand, Sophie's belief in the academic and social capabilities of the arts-based approach was drawn chiefly from an encounter with a special education teacher during her practicum; hence, her appreciation for the arts and their role in the inclusive classroom was inherited rather than inherent. However, Sophie had come to feel strongly about such a need and experiences frustration that in her estimation, the arts are perceived as being of lesser value when it comes to assessing students' entrance into post-secondary education and large scale testing.

As they developed their own philosophies, Carrie felt that "Separating the arts from writing and reading is artificial," and that the myriad of means of expression that human beings use to communicate can be translated through the arts. Sophie considered art to be a link to reality and that an arts-based approach ultimately means introducing creativity into every subject that facilitates a greater association with the world. Andrew's identity and interaction with the world is interconnected with art, and he was adamant that his arts-based

approach to the education of the students in his classroom would be met with the celebration and enthusiasm that he felt in its creation and implementation.

Culminating Relationship with Performing Arts-based Approach to Curriculum in an Inclusive Classroom

Carrie explained that through her practicums she witnessed the capabilities and victories that are possible within an arts-based approach to the curriculum as a means of implementing inclusion. Sophie was inspired by other educators that the arts can indeed facilitate the learning process with their ability to make lessons come alive, yet unlike Carrie and Andrew, she rarely engaged in the practice.

Carrie viewed the use of visual arts as a means to communicate information which could not be communicated orally, and as a way to foster the inclusion of students who are ELL and who have exceptionalities via drama and dance. Carrie's overall perception of the arts was that it transcends limitations that other academic arenas place on learning and expression. Sophie also proposed her belief that art can facilitate integration, particularly among students with exceptionalities who don't like routine and who need tangible lessons and opportunities. Yet, as Carrie experienced firsthand, the success of an arts-based approach is not guaranteed, and like any other approach to teaching and learning, students may be reluctant or experience difficulties. Sophie believed that, as an artist herself, she will always select this route as the method to approach education and facilitate inclusion; however, she felt that she needed additional practice and resources in order to truly understand its implementation.

Andrew shared both Carrie and Sophie's perspective relative to the potential of the arts, yet explained that he did not analyze his feelings related to education or classroom lessons as

much as he took stock of a lesson's ability to connect the students with the power of learning and to make them feel immersed in their own experiences. Like Carrie, his practicum and community experiences have left Andrew with a belief in the capability of the arts to draw people together, learn from connections to the world, and access modes of expression and understanding unique to drama, dance, music, and visual art.

CHAPTER EIGHT
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

**“There is no surer method of evading the world than by following Art,
and no surer method of linking oneself to it than by Art.”**
- *Johann Wolfgang von Goethe*

Discussion

Profiles and a cross-case analysis of the study participants were prepared and shared in the preceding chapter as a means of summarizing, contextualizing, reflecting on, and comparing their lived experiences. Following a brief review of this study, the thematic areas that have surfaced will be considered in relation to the literature review, and a collective journey of these three pre-service educators will emerge. Implications for practice and future research will follow the discussion.

This qualitative study was designed to explore the perceptions of three pre-service teachers in the primary/junior Integrated Arts cohort in the teacher education program at a university in Ontario as they engaged in performing arts-based education in an inclusive classroom setting. Using Seidman's (2006) three-interview structure as a guide, each interview focused on one of the following research questions:

1. Within the participant's history, what are the educational, professional, and/or personal experiences that have shaped their perceptions related to inclusive education, arts-based education, and the performance of arts-based education in an inclusive setting?
2. What are the participant's current experiences related to inclusive education, arts-based education, and the performance of arts-based education in an inclusive setting?
3. What are the participant's reflections and revelations connected to their perceptions related to inclusive education, arts-based education, and the performance of arts-based education in an inclusive setting? What impact do these reflections and

revelations have on their expectations for their projected professional and/or educational future, if any?

The third interview also examined the second research question in relation to the participants' second practicum experience. In addition, each interview maintained a focus on the conceptual framework guiding this study, as noted in the fourth research question restated below:

4. What is the nature of the participants' journey through Fuller's (1969) stages of concern?

Through the reflective experience of these interviews, the participants shed light on the people, moments, events, opportunities, and decisions that have shaped their perceptions about arts-based and inclusive educational practices.

The answers to the research questions follow:

- 1. Focused Life History: Within the participant's history, what are the educational, professional, and/or personal experiences that have shaped their perceptions related to inclusive education, arts-based education, and the performance of arts-based education in an inclusive setting?**

School System

The structure of the school system in which the participants grew up shaped their perceptions of inclusive education and an arts-based approach to education. Despite provincial differences and their enrollment in either public or private education, their attendance at a Canadian school exposed Carrie and Andrew to a culture, philosophy of

education, and political climate that was likely more similar to the their teacher education practicum scenarios than Sophie's upbringing in the school system of communist Eastern Europe. This early experience influenced participants' expectations of their practicum experiences and their responses to inclusion.

For example, Sophie struggled with the arts-based structure of her second practicum school, which she felt lacked the sort of discipline and order she was comfortable with. She also expressed discomfort with the kind of 'chaos' and student behaviour that she faced. Tom Russell explains that a teacher's personal experiences—and eventually their practicum and pre-service course experiences—are very influential on what have “inadvertently but successfully taught us to focus on what we teach” (Russell, 2007, p.190). Through their research study, Jarvis-Selinger, Collins and Pratt (2007) suggest that the undergraduate disciplines of pre-service teachers are influential on their perceptions of teaching, and on the focus and values that manifest themselves in their educational practice. Thus, Sophie's personal experiences as a student shaped her views of education. They also influenced her preference for an educational structure that is reflective of her post-secondary studies (and subsequent career) in finance. As she asserted, she prefers “Everything to be controlled and organized.....step one, two, three, four...”

Engagement of Learning Preference and Internal Motivation

Carrie's family had a history of high achievement and academic expectations. Her own enjoyment of learning and internal desire to succeed stimulated the development of strong work habits and a connection to her subject learning. Sophie was aware of the societal ramifications of poor academic performance and the importance placed by her family and community on attending post-secondary education. Andrew experienced fewer challenges

related to subject-specific learning than did either Carrie or Sophie, but this led him to feel that he could ‘coast’ through education and do relatively well without setting goals or focusing. Despite these different motivational patterns associated with their general schooling experiences, all participants felt that when granted access to opportunities that permitted or established arts-based projects, they not only did their best work, but also felt the greatest connection to the material and their outcomes. Such an impact is aligned with the findings of several research studies that propose the arts as a valuable entity within the curriculum, fuelling both reflections and connection to one’s identity. Additionally, it has been found to be a means of enriching academic opportunities and broadening the ways that students can connect with any subject (Abril & Gault, 2007; Darvell, 1999; Lynch, 2007; Marlett & Gordon, 2004; Thompson, 1997; Wilkinson, 2000).

Motivation for Initial Post-Secondary and Career Decisions

As Andrew didn’t have a secure sense of his own direction, he followed the advice of his parents and applied (though was not accepted) to a military college before attending one year at university, where he initially enrolled in sciences. After completing one year of study, he left school and eventually returned to complete a degree in fine arts. Though Sophie was interested in the arts, attending an arts high school would have meant boarding in another community and would ultimately have led to a future that was uncertain (and not ‘practical’), and so she committed to the sciences and to the finance degree she ultimately completed. Eisner (2005) suggests that the arts have long been placed at the bottom of a hierarchy dominated by areas such as science, language, and math, which are revered for their perceived cognitive dominance.

Experience of Connection to the Arts and Perception of Personal Outcomes

Andrew's inclination towards the arts was founded in his own belief in the natural association it forms with the world and in a desire to expose children to the knowledge and understanding of other students and of themselves. Indeed, the ability to access and appreciate the stories and knowledge experienced and developed by others is a respected component of the arts (Abril & Gault, 2007; Simon & Hicks, 2006). Through his definition of the arts as a form of literacy, Andrew addresses the way that art is subjectively perceived by pre-service teachers and how this manifests itself in the classroom.

Carrie felt trepidation in using an arts-based approach to education within the context of an actual classroom. Still, she was determined to engage in this approach, particularly among the kindergarten group in her first practicum where she felt an inherent association between drawing on multiple intelligences through the arts and the facilitation of a kindergarten classroom. This finding would concur with other results that propose an increase in both self-confidence and the development of greater independence in matters concerning our own learning through the use of the arts in a classroom (Lynch, 2007; Simons & Hicks, 2006) and it has been recognized that such goals are within the scope of kindergarten-level expectations.

Involvement With, and Knowledge of, Individuals with Exceptionalities

Interestingly, none of the participants recalled elementary school experiences involving children with exceptionalities. However, Sophie's recollection of schools for individuals with exceptionalities in her native country is a motivating factor that fuels her belief in inclusion. Every participant supported the philosophy on which the practice of inclusion is based. However, despite Sophie's belief that children should not be excluded in the way she witnessed within the segregated schools in her own youth, she (and Carrie) admitted to having reservations about how it could be practiced within an actual classroom. Such

concerns are reflected in research that links the attitudes of pre-service teachers to those of practicing teachers in relation to their struggle in balancing concordance with the philosophy of inclusion with the worry about the actual representation of certain exceptionalities and how their own training and experience will affect its ultimate manifestation (Avramidis et al., 2000; Proctor & Niemeyer, 2001; Tait & Purdie, 2000).

Campbell, Gilmore and Cuskelly's (2003) qualitative study of 274 pre-service teachers revealed a link between working with individuals with Down syndrome and their increased beliefs surrounding the capabilities of individuals with this exceptionality, as well as a decrease in stereotypical associations and a more favourable perception of inclusion. There is a need to recognize a teacher's experiences as more than an influential event; rather, they should be considered as a means of creating knowledge that is of value, as it informs and benefits their practice (Clandinin, 1986; Kyles & Olafson, 2008). Within this assumption, Andrew and Sophie demonstrate the manifestation of their values related to difference: Sophie's categorization of student intelligence based on identification of those with a proficiency in science and the "slow learners" in the classroom; and Andrew's expectations of success for all his students: "There's no real disabilities – there's abilities." Through the findings of their research on the reflective practice of pre-service teachers in a diverse, multicultural setting, Kyles and Olafson, (2008) suggest that previous life experiences with diversity result in more favourable attitudes towards the diversity they encounter in the classroom. Unlike Sophie, Andrew's life was woven with several experiences in various roles and environments in which he shared positive interactions with individuals who were identified with an exceptionality or preferred a different approach to learning.

2. Details of Experience: What are the participant's current experiences related to inclusive education, arts-based education, and the performance of arts-based education in an inclusive setting?

Demographics of Student Populations in Practicum Classrooms

Several studies reference concerns over students with behavioural exceptionalities, and pre-service teachers are particularly preoccupied by students with an intellectual exceptionality (Avramidis et al., 2000; Cook, 2002; Forlin et al., 1996; Hastings & Oakford, 2003). During her first practicum, Sophie recalled a student who moved around the class constantly and was frequently redirected to his seat and forced to complete his work by her associate teacher. Due to the challenges he experienced focusing in class; Sophie often spent time outside of classroom hours assisting him with the completion of his work. She was concerned that during class, his movement and distractions had a negative effect on the other classroom children within this inclusive environment. She had likely not seen such behaviour before and may have been discomforted by it. Moreover, she didn't recall any lectures or classroom readings on classroom management within the teacher education courses. Her own previous educational experiences may have led her to believe that learning—not behaviour—would be the challenge. Sophie's concern over classroom size and the ability to adequately provide differentiated instruction are reflective of the concerns purported by Avramidis et al. (2000), who cite a concern among practicing teachers over the structure of the school system and its influence on the ability to practice inclusivity.

Observation and Implementation of Differentiated Instruction in the Inclusive Classroom

Sophie appeared to perceive intelligence in very specific terms: those who responded well to her style of teaching and learning were the ‘gifted,’ while other students were described as ‘slow.’ Such objective distinctions fail to speak to the recognition (and understanding) of exceptionalities—an identification that does not equal a lack of capability or of intelligence. When discussing large scale testing and her recollections of the segregated schools that were in place during her youth in Eastern Europe, she acknowledged a discrepancy in the type of message being sent to students who learned differently than the instructor teaches. Yet, in her own practice, she was not able to make this same connection, and she could not implement strategies that engaged multiple intelligences. Such rigid beliefs are in accordance with Rose’s proposition that “As teachers we can often be the decisive element in our classroom” (Rose, 2002, as cited in Carrington & Saggars, p.42). The influence that teachers can wield through their attitudes towards individuals with certain exceptionalities is staggering in its effect on the learning accomplished and the climate of the classroom (Avramidis et al., 2000; Forlin et al., 1999; Tait & Purdie, 2000).

Andrew’s belief in establishing a rapport is instrumental in his positive perception of inclusive education and its ability to prove successful. These beliefs are in accordance with the assertions of Greene (2000) regarding the arts as a way to draw meaning from the world in ways that honour and respond to many perspectives, as well as a tool to re-examine (and ultimately re-establish) personal perceptions of reality.

Andrew thrived on the challenges he perceived to be opportunities within the inclusive classroom. This approach resonates with literature that suggests that educators who feel confident in manoeuvring accommodations and management of an inclusive classroom report more favourable feelings towards the philosophy and practice of inclusive education

(Avramidis et al., 2000; Buell et al., 1999). Moreover, Andrew's recognition of his own lack of engagement in the educational design that governed his own school experiences as a young person appear to have motivated his predisposition to address his students' needs and interests. Just as Sophie identified with those students who are gifted or who have the mathematical or scientific strengths that she possessed, so too did Andrew demonstrate particular affinity for children who thrive on the opportunities that a differentiated educational approach provides.

Observation of and Implementation of an Arts-Based Approach to Curriculum

Cowan and Albers (2006) suggest that, although the goals of practicing teachers should provide students with opportunities to learn in ways that are reflective of their learning style and preferences, many of their own classrooms function through lessons and expectations that stifle self-expression. This finding of discrepancy between theory and practice is supported by Thompson's (1997) study, and also reflected in Sophie's comments. She maintains that her own philosophy and learning style is kinaesthetic, yet she does not seem to be able to provide examples of her own initiative of such opportunities for her classroom students.

Andrew used the arts as a way of bringing passion to the elementary classroom. His enthusiasm was ignited by creating arts-driven opportunities and facilitating them in a way that reflected his belief in their ability to connect students with knowledge and skills relative to their social spheres and academic proficiencies. Linds (2004) proposes that knowledge and definition of self are drawn from our interplay with—and understanding of—our bodies, while Simons and Hicks (2006) suggest that the arts connect us to various ways of accessing knowledge, including the findings and feelings that are brought to light through drama, dance, music, and visual art.

By giving credence to the arts as a means of both creating and demonstrating understanding, Simons and Hicks (2006) recommend that we expand the educational landscape. This is in accordance with Carrie and Andrew's reference to the positive influence of the arts on student engagement and establishing opportunities for students to increase their confidence and redefine the way we think about intelligence (Eisner, 2005).

Perceptions of Influence of an Arts-Based Approach to Curriculum on Classroom Students

By defining math and language as being too abstract for the students in her classroom, Sophie felt they were better served by hands-on experiences offered through science class. However, she did not seem to feel that this same approach could be drawn into other subjects in order to facilitate inclusion. While honouring the meaning making potential of scientific endeavours, Eisner's (2005) findings suggest that students should experience the aesthetic facets of school subjects during their development of knowledge, for by inviting such ways of knowing into the scientific, artistic, and practical ways of understanding, curiosity and innovation are aroused and discoveries are pursued.

The participants felt that their practicum students were given an opportunity to develop social and academic skills through an engagement with the arts. Carrie and Andrew's life experiences and practicums were approached with the cross-curricular engagement of the arts they felt a natural connection to. In contrast, Sophie felt that the arts did not pose the same opportunities for hands-on opportunities as science did. Unlike Carrie and Andrew, Sophie had cited no true artistic pursuits since childhood, and this ultimately relates with Morawski's (2008) emphasis on an understanding of one's personal history as a recurring force that shapes the design of their arts-based approach within education.

Perceptions of Self Related to Arts and Ability to Perform Arts-based Education in an Inclusive Classroom Setting

Learning within the context of one's preferred learning style is both conducive to greater academic success and helpful to improving one's definition and belief in self (Adler, 1929). It has been argued that education places greater focus on instruction, practice, and assessment based on linguistic and logical approaches to knowledge and self-expression than it does on the engagement of other forms of intelligence such as musical, bodily, or interpersonal (Abril & Gault, 2007; Gardner, 1999 as cited in Simons & Hicks, 2006).

Andrew was keen to emphasize to his students that their artistic intelligences were of equal value. Both Carrie and Andrew saw a natural association between their instruction and the arts; they shared a perception that learning through the arts complemented the way that students interacted with their world (when granted the chance). Eisner (2005) discusses the way that the arts is devalued and can become almost obsolete when seen as an innate talent, for this is when students are no longer exposed—or no longer allow themselves to be exposed—to the kind of aesthetic opportunities, encouragement, and practice that provide development and confidence-building exercises.

Carrie found it hard to reconcile the balance between granting children artistic freedom and acquainting them with the fundamental elements of an artistic principle or arena of knowledge. Green et al.'s (1998) qualitative study on the perceptions of pre-service teachers related to their teacher education courses and practicum experiences in the arts presented findings that mirror Carrie's concerns about the curricular expectations used to measure student achievement in the arts. Greene (2000) suggests that limits and controls must be established in order to develop a recognition and understanding of artistic principles. She

furthermore insists that students must also be able to draw their own meaning from this exposure.

The participants created lessons that enabled students to understand the material from various points of entry. They saw an arts-based approach to the curriculum as a means of providing opportunities for the whole student to be accessed—to give students purposeful means of understanding their world and their own selves in a holistic way. Gardner (2000) recommends that any idea can be approached from at least eight points of entry and that in so doing; students are exposed to and become familiarized with multiple ways of understanding, while concurrently discovering their own strategies of best fit.

Perceptions of Self Related to Individuals with Exceptionalities and Ability to Implement Inclusion

Andrew's relationship with inclusion involved a desire to make a difference with students that do not receive the affection and attention they need from other sources. Sophie identified a greater connection to the students in seeming concordance with her own abilities—those identified or perceived as being gifted—than to those with exceptionalities that manifest themselves in emotional or behavioural challenges. The outcome of this attitude resonates with the body of research that suggests that the attitude of pre-service teachers towards individuals with exceptionalities will reinforce their learning opportunities, and that there is a need to examine pre-service philosophies about inclusion as a superseding influence on student outcomes (Avramidis et al., 2000; Forlin et al., 1999; Tait & Purdie, 2000).

Following her first practicum, Sophie was worried that students with exceptionalities in the class demanded too much of the teacher's time and that as a result the classroom students—particularly those she identified as gifted—were being 'pulled back.' Carrie shared

a similar concern following her second practicum, citing that the numerous accommodations and modifications in her classroom may have decreased the level of expectations and challenges for students working at grade level. These worries are similar to research findings indicating that pre-service teachers are concerned that inclusion means that attention to and curriculum opportunities for students are weakened (Tait & Purdie, 2000).

Perceived Knowledge Outcomes from Teacher Education Courses

The participants responded best to the courses that were taught by teachers who they felt associated their instruction and the knowledge that guided course work with a firm history in and recognition of the “realities” of education and a holistic, arts-based approach to the curriculum. Though courses with little perceived relevance were met with disappointment, Sophie found it challenging to draw any meaning from ideas which extended beyond activities that were tangibly applicable to her practicum:

Pre-service teachers have a tendency to judge the quality of everything encountered on grounds of perceived practicality. They are drawn powerfully to the discrete and utilitarian – things unencumbered by whatever intellectual roots once nourished them. (Goodlad, 1990, p.214, as cited in Stuart and Thurlow, 2000).

Such was the case with Sophie, who could draw nor apply the value of self exploration or theoretical understanding into her educational paradigm or practice.

The two online courses were in opposition to the participants’ preference for a learning community that took place in a shared, interactive environment with opportunities for accessing the material in multiple ways, discussing the curriculum with the teacher and their peers, and exploring the content through examples and kinaesthetic means. The perceived lack of collaboration the pre-service students within this study felt was coupled with a disengagement from the course. Furthermore, in the case of the curriculum and evaluation

course, the participants didn't feel capable of creating lesson or unit plans in their practicums although they had successfully completed the course. Through their study on the association between the beliefs and classroom practice of pre-service teachers, Stuart & Thurlow (2000) used the ongoing reflections of teacher education students within their mathematics course to create each lesson, and class time was used to share these recurring ideas and revelations about their attitudes towards math as their experience both their practicum and course work. One of the most significant contributions to the development of the students' consciousness about their own beliefs was the presence of a classroom teacher and environment that facilitated support, discussion and access to a network of communal growth (Stuart & Thurlow).

Carrie and Sophie felt as though some effort had been made to create arts-related opportunities for the cohort, and they voiced an increase in their own confidence in the arts as an outcome. Oreck's (2006) study reported that teachers were more likely to engage in independent arts practices within their classrooms if they were first exposed to professional development opportunities followed by collaboration with artists and teaching colleagues. This exposure would establish greater confidence in and commitment to the practice. Further, this study suggests that directed focus on one area of the arts in a concentrated way (such as intensive course) can build the self-efficacy of an educator in the implementation of all areas of the arts through providing opportunities for risk taking, creation, experimentation, and experiences of success.

Andrew's perception of the Integrated Arts cohort was that it served more as a reminder to infuse the arts into his own work than as a means of regularly engaging in arts-based educational ideas or theories proposed by the course instructors. He felt that implementing

arts-based initiatives was ultimately up to his own motivation. The findings in the literature are ambiguous in regards to this issue, as studies respond to the question of who is ultimately responsible for the facilitation of arts education when comparing the practicum and course experiences (Alter et al., 2009; Green et al., 1998). Green and her colleagues (1998) propose that teacher education courses that emphasize art do indeed increase the confidence of pre-service teachers who have fewer arts-related experiences in their background. Still, assessment of the arts remains a concern in their minds despite its presence in such courses.

3. Reflection on the Meaning: What are the participants' reflections and revelations connected to their perceptions related to inclusive education, arts-based education, and the performance of arts-based education in an inclusive setting? What impact do these reflections and revelations have on their expectations for their projected professional and/or educational future, if any?

Understanding and Expression of 'Meaning'

Carrie and Andrew's descriptions of their lived experiences, concerns, and reflections were vastly different than the nature of the dialogue and recollections governing Sophie's transactions. Carrie's self-awareness was notable, and in her consideration of past and present events and feelings, she was able to characterize the way that she and others interacted with the world and appeared to have a grasp on her own journey and reflections that led to thoughtful, textural descriptions. Andrew's mode of expression was built of the moment, reliving interactions with others and between others. He identified his own perceptions and

experiences with detailed examples and insight, weaving together his philosophies related to inclusion, the arts, and education with confidence and detail. His reflections and revelations provided the same witness to his own beliefs as Carrie's. Andrew's reflections took the approach of a journey—describing the people, events, and experiences in his life in the manner of storyteller. Sophie's manner of interaction and disclosure created an entirely different portrait of her life and beliefs. Far less personal than either Carrie or Andrew, her descriptions were action-based and did not contain the stories, emotional connection, or in-depth reflection that established the profile of a self-aware participant or journey. The difference could lie in any number of factors, such as personality, promoted modes of sharing and interacting established in youth, or approaches to (and practice of) self-reflection and critical appraisal. Carrington and Sagers identify that educators need to continually revisit their own “issues, biases, prejudices and assumptions” (Carrington & Sagers, 2008, p.803) as key factors that influence the teaching approach and environment that is established.

Carrie suggested that her recognition of the constant flux and shift in educational theories and practice was a reflection of her approach to teaching and her flexibility and open-mindedness. Silverman's (2007) study of 71 general and special education pre-service teachers whose recognition that knowledge is an ever-changing entity equated this philosophy with a favourable attitude towards inclusive education.

Conceptualization of Art

One of the fundamental questions that emerged from this research study relates to the conceptualization of the arts. Namely, *What is art?* The arts are considered by some definitions to include activities where one creates something or that one observes. Others, such as Dewey and Vygotsky (1978) define it through the aesthetics of the experience rather

than by the product that may result (Oreck, 2006). Dewey applied this to the educational sphere, citing the “ability to foster the attitude of the artist in those who study with him” (Dewey, 1933, p.288, as cited in Oreck, 2006, p.3) as being the measurement of the teacher as an artist. However, such a definition leaves room for many questions and interpretations.

Carrie raised the question *Can everyone create art?* She was pleased by the belief espoused by her practicum kindergarten students, who asserted that everyone could create art. This idea that can relate to how teachers see themselves as artists and teachers of art, and how they relate to their students as artists.

Sophie’s definition of creativity within math as opposed to the arts would appear to be defined by connecting the subject to real-world materials and examples, rather than through an aesthetic experience. As she created the clocks and collected other manipulatives for her mathematics class, she associated such tools with an engagement in arts-based education. Sophie’s definition of ‘art’ shaped the construction of her classroom, as she perceived a greater affinity for the realities of science and suggested that language arts was too abstract for her students. Balanced literacy is the current practice being promoted by the Ministry of Education in Ontario, and reflective in board policies and curricular standards that govern classroom practice. This, in turn, is reflected in teacher education programs by guiding their approach to literacy so that students emerge into practice with the tools that are valued in the job market. Yet, balanced literacy can be practiced in a myriad of ways, and as Andrew understands it, the arts are part of the literacy continuum. On the other hand, Sophie placed greater value on the building blocks of literacy in their teacher education language arts course than on the kinaesthetic components of literacy, such as reader’s theatre. Slomp (2005) identified this tension in the field of language arts in his assessment that teachers and students

are currently forced to decide between language testing, the language arts curriculum, and evidence-based language research—each of which contradicts the others in definition and determination of value. Slomp (2005) proposed that if testing scores are the determinant in post-secondary enrollment or academic grading systems, it is likely that the approach to subject teaching and learning will reflect what is needed to be successful on this test.

Teacher education programs can influence this understanding of the arts and may be the most concentrated exposure to these ideas and practices for some pre-service teachers. While external forces influence the understanding of the arts in education, so too does the personal history of the educator. Andrew's early recollections of his high school art teacher and art room were positive, and inspired reflections about his current perceptions of himself as artist and as someone who responds to the arts and artistic spaces with comfort and confidence. To discern what teachers need to become arts educators who are willing to (and capable of) establishing effective arts programs, an understanding of what affects their own feelings about the arts and motivates their desire for an arts-based approach to the classroom is essential (Oreck, 2006). Thus the question becomes, What is art as seen through the paradigm of each pre-service teacher?

Value of the Arts in Education

Although Andrew felt that his artistic experiences would benefit any classroom, he expressed concern that in order to be hired as a teacher, he would be asked to sacrifice his desire to pursue the kind of arts-based practice that might not support the expected mode of instruction that is demanded by the outcome-based values of tests and limiting definitions of the curriculum. Indeed, Ricci (2004) concedes that controlling the curriculum and focusing on

an education governed by testing outcomes reduces the potential for teachers to create flexible, creative learning communities.

Large scale testing also places limitations on the kind of practice that is possible in a classroom. The format of such tests discourages differentiated learning, and classroom teaching and learning methods involving group work or an arts-based approach to the curriculum may actually impede the students' outcomes, forcing teachers to follow uniform test-taking practices. Sophie expressed concern for the future success and ability of a student who demonstrated tremendous academic proficiencies, yet struggled in writing exercises. Her fear was that by teaching to the test and structuring classroom teaching towards these experiences, the student's ability to gain acceptance into post-secondary institutions upon graduation would be jeopardized. Sophie identified this practice as one of exclusion and as a tangible example of the value of test scores over substantive, beneficial, evidence-based classroom practices. Slomp (2005) suggests that standardized language tests not only place value, time restraints, and limitations on the critical and creative phases of the writing process, but they are also inflexible for students who do not work optimally within a testing scenario or within the rigid confines of the test format.

Although her second associate teacher ran an arts-based approach to the education of her students, Carrie noted that assessment was typically achieved through written tests that, if not reflective of actual learning, produced the type of evaluation associated with easily definable, measured outcomes. The participants' experiences showed that testing forces teachers towards a type of educational practice that can "inhibit their use of creative, open-ended explorations" (Oreck, 2006, p.2) and drive them to conform their curricular choices towards those which cover testing material.

The hierarchy of the arts within the education schema permeates the perceptions of pre-service teachers before they enter practice. Seeing art as a substantial area challenges their previous beliefs. Behind her articulated respect for the arts and its place in the classroom, Sophie's actual practice denotes a belief in the greater consequence of science and its connection to reality and intelligence. Similarly, when Carrie explains her use of the arts in a university environmental educational group as part of a science education program, she cited that the lower-ability students were not expected to complete a challenging science problem and were instead given the project of making rainmakers. Without intention, the legitimization of the arts is often called into question.

Influence of Lived Experiences on Attitudes and Implementation of Performing Arts-based Education in an Inclusive Classroom Setting

Carrie and Andrew were influenced by their own experiential opportunities with individuals with exceptionalities, and these personal experiences were represented within their concerns as pre-service teachers in an inclusive setting. Carrie's relationship to inclusion transitioned through her course work and practicum experiences. Her initial concerns corresponded to being bullied during elementary school and a lack of experience with individuals with exceptionalities. On the other hand, analyzing his experience with the inclusive arena of theatre, Andrew explained that his lived experiences have resulted in a comfort level with, and natural affinity for, the diverse contributions of a population that includes individuals with exceptionalities. Several studies cite experiential opportunities for their ability to positively address the concerns of pre-service teachers prior to entering an inclusive environment (Loreman & Earle, 2007; Stella et al., 2007; Woloshyn et al., 2003). Experiential opportunities can also be associated with Fuller's (1969) phases of concern due

to their ultimate influence on the perceptions that pre-service teachers have regarding their ability to facilitate a classroom and yield positive outcomes.

The theme of experience is paramount in the participants' response to facilitating an arts-based approach to the curriculum. However, each individual reflected that the relationship between the arts and the human experience was unavoidable. This notion was reflected in the study of Fogg and Smith (2001) in which staff support and external resources augmented participants' confidence in their ability to provide arts-related opportunities for their students. Ultimately, the participants were all convinced of the potential of the arts to contribute to the development of an inclusive classroom through what Lynch (2007) supports as the ability to utilize skills and means of communication that enable success in a myriad of ways, as well as to ensure that students can both access and respond to the curriculum in preferential and meaningful ways.

Morawski's (2008) focus on the awareness of our own personal, subjective history as a basis for our relationship with arts-based practices may have proved beneficial in Sophie's understanding and implementation of her own educational approach. Although Andrew and Carrie drew on their own positive associations as students interacting with the world through art and engaging in an arts-based approach to the curriculum, Sophie's perceptions of art and its relationship to inclusion came chiefly from the recommendations of a special education resource teacher within her practicum (as opposed to being founded in personal experience).

Reflections and revelations connected to their perceptions of inclusive education, arts-based education, and the performance of arts-based education in an inclusive setting lent the participants a certain understanding and expression of 'meaning'. Through the participants' modes of expression and, more significantly, the way they understood and examined their

own journeys, they were able to recognize their own development and meaning. The theme of experience (whether in connection to individuals with exceptionalities or to the arts) was a principle factor that generated their response and initiative within their lived experience. Yet, despite differences in the manifestation of the arts in the classroom, the participants universally agreed that the arts have immeasurable potential (which some call a ‘natural ability’) to implement inclusion.

4. Stages of Concern: What is the nature of the participants’ journeys through Fuller’s (1969) stages of concern?

Influences on Self-Efficacy, Focus, and Pace Throughout the Phases of Concern

Through Fuller’s (1969) model of teacher development, the concerns of pre-service educators are explored through the three phases of pre-teaching, early teaching, and late teaching. The participants’ focus and perception of their abilities and roles within this context placed them at different starting points along this continuum and at varying paces of evolution within it as well. As the research by both Conway and Clark (2003) and Duquette (2003) suggest, Fuller’s work can be seen in an evolving frame of understanding that reflects a more personal journey within which pre-service teacher’s experience. This framework represents different phases at any given time and has extended to perceptions and concerns about issues beyond the original model.

The experience of the participants in Duquette’s study resembles those of Carrie in which she focused on her own behaviour and student learning simultaneously. She began her first practicum with the intention of maintaining the classroom culture established by her

associate teacher, however her goal shifted to becoming more familiar with classroom management techniques and developing her ability to lead activities and centres within the kindergarten classroom. During her second practicum, she spoke to these concerns as well as to those related to properly assessing student work, observing and facilitating student responses during lessons, and identifying her abilities in areas such as the arts and environmental responsibility within the class (both individually and in partnership with her mentor teacher).

The study conducted by McKinney, Sexton, and Meyerson (1999) on teachers in a graduate program complements what was reflected in the outcomes discerned from the experiences of Carrie, Andrew, and Sophie. The findings of that study suggested a link between the self efficacy with which individuals entered the experience, and their focus and subsequent stage of concern. Sophie and Andrew seemed to transition within the phases at different rates and with different concerns, beginning with their initial classroom observations during the first term to the completion of their second practicum experience.

Sophie was driven to achieve positive student reactions to her lessons and was pleased at their response to both her instructions and lessons as part of their science classes. However, her transition between the pre-teaching and early teaching phases seemed to move at a slow pace, and her concerns did not extend into the late teaching phase associated with an experienced teacher.

Andrew's history of experience with arts and youth-related endeavours and arenas (including being an occasional teacher) appeared to almost transcend the pre-teaching phase, as he had a strong reference to youth and the school system from which to draw. These experiences leant him confidence in his ability and a firm sense of focus as an educator. This

connects with research suggesting that pre-service teachers who have a history of involvement in the arts are more likely to be confident in their ability to instruct the arts, and will likely teach within a greater array of arts than their less-experienced counterparts (Alter et al., 2009). When he entered his first practicum, Andrew immediately initiated activities, focused on creating enjoyable learning opportunities, and accessed the students' proficiencies in order to create lessons tailored specifically for them. The findings of a study by McKinney et al. (1999) suggest that individuals who begin in the late teaching phase are focused on the impact of the task's outcome, rather than on the task itself, thereby suggesting that pre-service educators like Andrew have the greatest potential for influencing the students in the practicum classroom.

Influence of Associate Teacher

Both Carrie and Andrew enjoyed a comfortable, professional relationship with their associate teachers, from whom they reported learning new skills such as how to integrate the arts into the curriculum, how to perform administrative duties in the classroom, or ways to manage a differentiated classroom. They felt mentored, yet were granted autonomy and received feedback that supported, guided, and confirmed their progress within their role as pre-service teachers. McCann and Johannessen's (2004) qualitative study suggests that this type of support and understanding granted to pre-service teachers by their associate teachers will affect their concerns as they move towards becoming practicing teachers. Sophie's less-positive experiences also seem to support these findings. During her second practicum, she felt like an intruder in the classroom and received little feedback since her associate teacher seemed to treat her as an experienced teacher. In the findings of a study that included 82 pre-service teachers and five associate teachers, Ralph (2004) notes that associate teachers should

be careful to link their expectations of the pre-service teachers to the pre-teaching and early teaching phases, where the majority of pre-service educators will fall within during their placement.

Previous Experiences in the Arts

There are certain variations within the literature on phases of concern and the experience of arts education among pre-service educators. Much of the research suggests that concerns related to self-concept and task proficiency initially outweigh concerns about their impact on students. However, studies such as that performed with pre-service music educators by Campbell and Thompson (2007) propose that the outcomes and ultimate learning experience of their classroom students supersede pre-service concerns about the concepts they are teaching or how they are doing as educators. Although Carrie was concerned about her musical knowledge and ability to teach in this area, she realized that encouraging the students musically and participating herself (with the assistance of various resources) was acceptable. Indeed, she became less concerned with her own sense of inadequacy and complimented suggestions that artist in the classroom programs, along with the resources, support, and positive attitudes of fellow staff members, are often needed to encourage educators to teach arts subjects when they are inexperienced or inadequate in their own arts knowledge or skill (Fogg & Smith, 2001; Hundert, 1996).

Sophie did not teach an arts-specific class during either practicum and did not elect to implement much arts-based learning in a cross-curricular way (except for the poetry cafe initiated by her associate teacher). She explained that the student population in her second-term classroom was inclined towards the sciences, and she didn't see how she could implement the arts if the classroom students were not universally enthusiastic. While this

denotes a focus on the students and their ultimate outcome, the skills and tasks themselves were not practiced, and therefore, the transition within Fuller's (1969) phases of concern could not be truly assessed. Andrew measured the success of his artistic initiatives by the degree of engagement and connection that was palpable among the students. He explained that on many occasions he would revise a lesson in response to the mood and interest of the students. Such an approach revealed not only confidence in the area of the arts, but also a stronger focus on the student impact than on the creation and implementation of a specific task.

Conclusion

Essence of the Experiences

Through this research study, the perceptions of pre-service teachers related to performing arts-based education in an inclusive classroom setting were accessed, and the hope is that the culminating essence of these reflections reveals a lived experience that will contribute to the educational landscape of inclusion and the fundamental role of the arts within it.

Unpacking the diverse concerns, reflections, and past experiences of the study participants creates a challenging task in establishing the core understanding of this phenomenon. However, the complexity and range of their perceptions ultimately paint a portrait of multiplicity inherent among pre-service teachers. Even within these differences, there emerged thematic roots that shaped their perceptions.

Prior to their initial practicum experiences, the participants cited an enthusiasm for an arts-based approach to education drawn heavily from their inclination towards learning opportunities that stimulated their artistic sensibilities. They also expressed a positive history

in experiential education or cross-curricular use of the arts which heightened their enthusiasm for learning. Identifying examples of the means they would use to facilitate this approach, the participants felt optimistic in the ability of the arts to provide better access to the curriculum, and to ultimately contribute to universal learning within the student body. Drawing on their past—whether through interactions with individuals with exceptionalities, a gap they witnessed or experienced, or their own learning through such an approach—the participants considered their own histories as substantial grounds for their belief in inclusive classroom environments.

Through their first practicum experience, the participants made efforts to infuse their instruction with opportunities for students to access subject knowledge by way of various means. Overwhelmingly, however, it seemed that prior experiences in the arts yielded tremendous impact on the confidence of the participants to implement an arts-based approach to the curriculum. This practicum yielded further recognition of inclusion as a means to broaden the worldview of the classroom students through interactions with, and deeper understanding of, the many people who form their community.

Within their second practicum experience, the perceptions of the participants related to inclusion were affected by the presence (or lack of) additional staff support within the class. The presence of such supports, coupled with the response of the students, weighed greatly on the way that participants exercised differentiated education and related to inclusion. During one or both of their practicum experiences, the participants' classroom environments included an educational assistant or special education resource teacher who helped to provide accommodations or modifications. During these occasions, the participants reported feeling more confident in their practice within an inclusive environment likely because they felt

supported in their efforts to meet the needs of all the students. This same sense of support and confidence was affected by the degree and manner in which their associate teacher practiced and encouraged an arts-based approach to the curriculum within their classroom.

Following their practicum experiences, the participants agreed that an arts-based approach could provide academic, social, and emotional benefits to every student in the classroom; regardless of the degree to which each participant actually exercised these beliefs in his or her own practice. However their perceptions of their ability to exercise arts-based practice in their own future were affected by the tensions that exist in the diminished value of art within various areas of education. Their common perception was that inclusion prevents social isolation and a sense of ineptitude, while establishing a community of young people who understand and interact with a myriad of individuals, just as they would and will in the society beyond the school walls. However, two of the participants remained concerned that the academic outcomes for students who have certain abilities and needs may not be as well served through the staff, resources, and environment of the inclusive classroom as they would be in another educational arena.

Contributions to the Field and Implications for Practice

The findings of this study make several substantive contributions to pre-service education and arts-based education.

The participants' childhood educational experiences emerged as a factor that influenced their practicum experiences. The reflections of the participants suggest that their expectations may have been coloured by the type of educational environment within which they grew up.

Therefore, courses in the pre-service teachers program should have student teachers evoke the type of instruction and school culture they are accustomed to from their youth.

Such an exercise may prove beneficial in identifying attitudes and expectations related to both inclusion and the arts among pre-service students and in determining what needs to be taught within their courses in order to better prepare them for the educational contexts they will meet, both within their practicum's and throughout their educational futures.

Within Fuller's (1969) phases of concern, it becomes apparent that experience in the arts prior to the pre-service practicum is linked to a swifter movement through the foci typical of each phase. Perhaps more importantly, previous artistic engagement facilitates the implementation of arts-based approaches during their practicums—especially when such practice is not supported by their associate teachers.

Hence, this research study suggests that previous experience in teaching and/or engagement in the arts, coupled with instruction on how to implement an arts-based curriculum and an associate teacher who is supportive of the arts, can facilitate a faster movement through Fuller's (1969) stages of concern among pre-service teachers.

These considerations offer three fundamental implications for practice. First, they suggest that pre-service teachers who enroll in a cohort focused on the arts benefit substantially from previous experience in the arts. This criterion should serve as a recommendation to the Faculty of Education when this cohort is initially selected from within the pre-service applicants. Secondly, these findings imply that course content and instructors should provide both theoretical and practical strategies for implementing an arts-based approach to the teacher education curriculum. Thirdly, the Faculty of Education should ensure that students in a cohort focused on the arts be granted practicum placements where they will be mentored by associate teachers who have been identified as being supportive of (and regularly engage in) an arts-based approach to the classroom.

Limitations

The Integrated Arts cohort was in its first year and one acknowledged limitation relates to the reality that this initiative was in development. Judging from the experience of the participants, at no time did the instructors who would be teaching the Integrated Arts cohort collectively establish and collaborate on the organization of the program, nor did they develop a shared understanding of arts-based education and what their approach would be in the various courses within this teaching-learning paradigm. This omission manifested itself in the classroom. For example, Andrew explained that he perceived that arts integration into class activities and course assignments was instigated by the students themselves, as professors typically set no such criteria. While Andrew understood that the Integrated Arts cohort was a pilot project and may not have had the support it needed, he also noted that several of his professors indicated that they had not realized they were instructing an arts-based cohort until classes commenced; other professors asked, “What does that mean?” As a result, the strategies associated with arts-based education may not have been discussed and demonstrated by professors as fully as possible. Similarly, because the pre-service teachers in the Integrated Arts cohort were not placed specifically in arts-based classrooms, their opportunities for practicing and being mentored within such an approach was limited.

In order to engage participants in this experience through the context of the teacher education program at this university, it was necessary to alter Seidman’s (2006) quintessential interviewing approach. To facilitate this modification, the intervals of time between the interviews were lengthened in order to coincide with course and practicum schedules. Therefore, it should be understood that rather than interviewing participants over the span of several weeks, their experiences and reflections were garnered over the course of their teacher

education year. Still, reflections regarding their practicum experiences were ascertained directly following their completion, with the goal of accessing their current perceptions. Considering the space between the interviews, the participants may have forgotten what had previously been said. This study may then have benefited from the use of journaling by the participants as a means of accessing ongoing reflections throughout their coursework and practicum's.

Future Research

In connection to the inclusive classroom, there is ambiguity in the research surrounding the responsibility of educating pre-service teachers in artistic relationships to the curriculum. Though arts courses are fundamental to the teacher education program, experience with, and exposure to, implementing arts lessons as pure or cross-curricular endeavours varies depending on the pre-service teachers' practicum classrooms and course instructors. Given their variable backgrounds in the arts, inexperience or a lack of knowledge is demonstrated in the literature as fuelling both greater instructional concerns among pre-service teachers and a decrease in the likelihood of its implementation. Who is responsible for determining how pre-service teachers' are exposed to (and experience) visual arts, drama, dance, and music as a way of optimizing the potential manifestation of an arts-based approach within the inclusive classroom?

The question may be asked, Should pre-service teachers be assessed in order to gauge their confidence and experience in the arts as a means of a) garnering their teacher education arts course experiences accordingly; and b) increasing their own awareness of their relationship to the arts? Furthermore, What is the responsibility of teacher education arts courses in their provision of knowledge and experience in each of the arts? What are the

benefits of experiential opportunities in the arts prior to practicum experiences? How do teacher education programs negotiate the responsibility of associate educators in providing pre-service teachers with arts-based experiences in their practicums?

Building on the outcomes of this research, a study of who should teach the arts emerges as a worthy and significant query. Are there fundamental areas of knowledge, experiences, and aesthetic proficiencies that are required to teach art and establish an arts-based approach to education? Can such an approach be established by someone who identifies as a non-artist? Should a pre-service teacher be expected to use the arts with confidence and proficiency in the classroom following their teacher education arts course, like is expected with the other curricular areas? Who decides how the arts should be taught and what it should include?

The value that is placed on art is uniformly low—from board of education policies, to funding, to the practice of what is taught and encouraged by teacher education programs. There is much evidence pointing to a hierarchy in the educational system that gives priority to other curriculum areas, including the pressure of large scale testing, as well as administrative pressures at the school and board levels which prohibit, dissuade, and ultimately create a climate in which the practice and teaching of the arts is challenged. What is the impact of standardized testing on the ability to construct an arts-based classroom? How does standardized testing relate to the inclusive classroom and the teaching-learning strategies, such as group learning, use of alternative materials, and differentiated instruction that optimize this approach? How can the testing, curriculum, and research-related areas of education work in simpatico to define educational goals? What is the influence of arts education in teacher education programs in forming pre-service attitudes related to the hierarchy of the arts?

In addition, both the breadth and type of exposure needed to implement inclusive education and an understanding of students with exceptionalities during teacher education merits further study. The manner through which pre-service students will accumulate the type of knowledge and experience that will best serve the students in their inclusive classrooms is of great relevance. Given that, Are interactions with community organizations associated with individuals with exceptionalities needed? What approach to course facilitation and what type of knowledge is needed to prepare pre-service educators? What is the role of associate teachers in mentoring pre-service students in differentiated learning?

Concluding Remarks

The Canadian perception and adoption of inclusion is in constant motion. As research and external influences weigh in on its implications and implementation, pre-service teachers need to be equipped to provide the best education possible within this environment.

Economist Amartya Sen's describes an inclusive society as:

One in which members participate meaningfully and actively, enjoy equality, share social experiences, and attain fundamental well-being. Therefore, inclusion is an active process—it goes beyond remediation of deficits and reduction of risk. It promotes human development and ensures that opportunities are not missed – not just for some, but for all children. (Sen, as cited in Hanvey, 2003 p.3)

Depending on the way the arts are utilized, they have great capacity to create a classroom that engages the learning styles, multiple intelligences, and varied backgrounds of its students. Ultimately, their power is reflected through an enhancement in students' academic accomplishments and social development (Purnell, Ali, Begum, and Carter, 2007).

As Fuller's (1969) stages of concern suggest, pre-service focuses shift and change—and a little 'stage fright' is natural. Through their development as teachers, these educators move

through the influential waters of teacher education courses and practicums, equipped with their past experiences and the tools they receive during that pivotal year. This study provided access to the perceptions of three such pre-service teachers throughout their own experiences performing arts-based education in an inclusive classroom setting. The intention was to garner insights that contribute to the cultivation of teacher education programs that understand, plan for, and facilitate educational opportunities related to inclusion, the arts, and the concerns that pre-service students will face before the curtain rises on their teaching career.

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Appendix A: Timeline for Research Study

TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITIES & ACTIONS
June – July 2008	• Review of Draft by Research Supervisor & Revisions by Student Researcher • Review of Draft by Research Committee & Revisions by Student Researcher • Completion of Thesis Proposal
By August 1 st at 5:00 pm	• Application for Ethical Approval submitted to REB
September 2008	• Proposal revisions following REB review • Recruit Participants and Spare (if possible) • Recruit Participant for Pilot Interview Experience • Pilot 1st Interview and make necessary changes to Interview One Protocol
October 2008	• Data Collection (1st Interview & Collection of Volunteered Data): <i>Perceptions of Teaching Before Practicum Experiences</i> • Transcribe interviews following each interview experience and share with participants • Verify inclusive practicum placements after Observation Week October 20th – 24th
November – December 2008	• Data Analysis: ✓ Create profile of each participant ✓ Identify clarification questions for Interview Two ✓ Begin cross-case analysis and development of themes
December 2008	• Data Collection (2nd Interview & Collection of Volunteered Data): <i>Practicum 1: Experience in Classroom</i> • Transcribe interviews following each interview experience and share with participants
January – February 2009	• Data Analysis:

	✓ Create profile of each participant ✓ Identify clarification questions for Interview Three ✓ Continue cross-case analysis and development of themes
April 2009	• Data Collection (3rd Interview & Collection of Volunteered Data): <i>Practicum 2: Experience in Classroom and; reflections on the meaning of their educational experiences related to inclusive education, arts-based education, and the implementation of inclusion through the arts, and the impact these reflections have on their expectations for their projected professional and/or educational future</i> • Transcribe interviews following each interview experience and share with participants
May – June 2009	• Data Analysis: ✓ Create profile of each participant ✓ Continue cross-case analysis and development of themes
June – August 2009	• Review of Chapter Drafts by Research Supervisor & Revisions by Student Researcher • Review of Thesis First Draft to Research Supervisor & Revisions by Student Researcher • Review of Thesis First Draft to Research Committee & Revisions by Student Researcher • Defence of Thesis: August 2009
September 2009	• Deposit Completed Thesis
Fall 2009	• Thesis Defence

Appendix B: Participant Recruitment Text

Participant Recruitment Text

My name is Lisa Brankley, and I am a M.A. (Ed) student in the Faculty of Education at University of Ottawa. I am conducting a study on the perceptions and experiences of pre-service teachers in the context of performing arts-based education in an inclusive primary and/ or junior classroom setting. I am recruiting pre-service teachers in the primary/junior Integrated Arts cohort in the teacher education program at a university in Ontario as they engage in the implementation of an inclusive approach to classroom teaching and learning through the utilization of the arts as a cross curricular tool, take a course focused on the education of exceptional students in their first semester, and experience an inclusive classroom setting during both fall and winter practicum placements in Ontario. (Additional recruitment criteria will be utilized should volunteers exceed the number of participants required for this research study.)

Pre-service teacher volunteers will be asked to participate in three 60-minute interviews. The interview sessions will focus on the following:

- a) an exploration of their life history, while placing their experiences with inclusive education, arts-based education, and performing arts-based education in an inclusive setting within the context of their life up to the present;
- b) current educational experiences following their first practicum as they relate to inclusive education, arts-based education, and performing arts-based education in an inclusive setting - while aiming to unearth details which will acknowledge their perceptions within this context;
- c) reflection on the meaning of their educational experiences related to inclusive education, arts-based education, and performing arts-based education in an inclusive setting; and the impact these reflections and revelations have on their expectations for their projected professional and/or educational future, if any;
- d) the nature of their journey through Fuller's (1969) stages of concern.

The specific place, date, and time of each interview session will be mutually decided upon to optimize participant comfort, and informed consent will be obtained utilizing a Participant Consent Form. Interviews will be recorded on audiotape, and type transcripts will be sent to each participant to be edited and approved.

The data collected will be used towards compilation of a Master's thesis, which may result in being cited as a research study, submitted for publication in an academic journal, or used within a presentation or symposium. Anonymity will be protected through the use of a pseudonym for each participant involved in the culminating Master's thesis, and identifiable information will be omitted or altered.

If you have any further questions or if you would like to participate in this research study, please contact me via email at lbran041@uottawa.ca or by telephone at (613) 562- 5800 ext. 4040 (the office of Principal Investigator Dr. Duquette). I will bring a copy of the consent form to our first interview session. Thank you.

Appendix C: Interview One Protocol

Title of Statement: Stage fright: Perceptions and experiences of pre-service teachers in performing arts-based education in an inclusive setting

Student Researcher: Lisa Brankley Research Supervisor: Dr. Cheryll Duquette

Name of Faculty & Institution: Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa

Interview Time:

Interview Date:

Interview Setting:

Interviewer: Lisa Brankley, B.ScN., B.Ed., (M.A. [Ed]) Candidate

Interviewee: _____, Pre-service Teacher, Teacher Education Program: P/J
Integrated Arts

- ✓ Introductions, Settling into Physical Setting (Quiet)
- ✓ Explain Recording Process, Interview Format, Use of Pseudonym in Transcript
- ✓ Set up Watch and Turn on Recorder
- ✓ Sign Consent Forms (x 2)
- ✓ Collect additional data from participant, if volunteered

Central Research Questions:

- 1) Focused Life History: Within each participant's history, what are the educational, professional, and/or personal experiences that have shaped their perceptions related to inclusive education, arts-based education, and the performance of arts-based education in an inclusive setting?*
- 2) Details of Experience: What are each participant's current experiences related to inclusive education, arts-based education, and the performance of arts-based education in an inclusive setting?*
- 3) Reflection on the Meaning: What are each participant's reflections and revelations connected to their perceptions related to inclusive education, arts-based education, and the performance of arts-based education in an inclusive setting? What impact do these reflections and revelations have on their expectations for their projected professional and/or educational future, if any?*
- 4) What is the nature of their journey through Fuller's (1969) stages of concern?*

The following is the Interview One Protocol:

Interview Question	Related Research Study Question	Supportive Literature
Tell me when and where you were born.	#1	
Tell me about your early family experiences. • Members of family? • Relationships with members of family? • Perception of your role in family?	#1	
What was your elementary school experience like? • Academics? • Favourite teacher? • Least favourite teacher? • Favourite subject? • Least favourite subject? • Academic successes or challenges? • Learning experiences? • Personal experiences with resource assistance? Identified with an exceptionality? • Did you have any experiences with individuals with exceptionalities in your school setting or personal life? If so, tell me about these experiences. • Tell me about your experiences with inclusive education. • Health Issues or Diagnosis? • Arts opportunities at school – special class, arts-based curriculum, extra curriculum? Were you involved? How did you feel? • Extra-curricular Activities? • Family relationships? • Friendships? • Relationships? • Issues related to identity? • Social challenges or difficulties?	#1	Avramidis et al.(2000); Proctor & Niemeyer (2001); Tait & Purdie (2000); Carrington & Saggars (2008); Hamre & Oyler (2004); Avramidis, Bayliss & Burden (2000); Siegel (2006)

• Do any stories come to mind when you consider elementary school? • How did you feel about elementary school?		
What was your high school experience like? • <i>Same as elementary school</i>; also • How did you decide what to do after high school? • What and/or who influenced your decision? • What did you decide to do after high school? • How did you feel about graduating? • How did you feel about high school? • Any involvement with young people? In what capacity? How did you feel?	#1	Avramidis et al. (2000);
What were your post-secondary experiences, prior to Teacher Education Program?	#1	
What were your post-secondary experiences like, prior to Teacher Education Program? • <i>Same as elementary school</i>; also • Did you have any experiences with individuals with exceptionalities in your workplace/school setting/personal life? Tell me about these experiences. • Arts opportunities in work, school or personal life? Were you involved? How did you feel? • Any involvement with young people? In what capacity? How did you feel?	#1	Avramidis et al. (2000);
Why and how did you make the decision to come to teacher's college? Influences? Any stories that come to mind concerning why and how you made this decision? A particular experience or individual?	#1	
When did you make the decision to come to teacher's college?	#1	

What were your aspirations when you applied for teacher's college?	#1	
Tell me about your decision to enrol in the Integrated Arts cohort?	#1	
Tell me about your concerns related to inclusive education. Tell me about your perceptions related to inclusive education. • Tell me how you feel about <i>teaching</i> in an inclusive classroom.	#1	Avramidis et al.(2000); Proctor & Niemeyer (2001); Tait & Purdie (2000); Fuller (1969)
Tell me about your concerns related to arts-based education. Tell me about your perceptions related to arts-based education. • Tell me how you feel about <i>teaching</i> through an arts-based approach to curriculum.	#1	Smith et al. (2006); Simons & Hicks (2006); Abril & Gault (2007); Darvell (1999); Lynch (2007); Wilkinson (2000); Fuller (1969)
Tell me about your concerns related to performing arts-based education in an inclusive setting. Tell me about your perceptions related to performing arts-based education in an inclusive setting. • Tell me how you feel about performing <i>arts-based education</i> in an <i>inclusive</i> setting.	#1	Avramidis et al. (2000); Stella, Forlin and Lan (2007); Tait & Purdie (2000); Buell et al.(1999); Stuht & Gates (2007); Smith et al. (2006); Fuller (1969)

Appendix D: Interview Two Protocol

Title of Statement: Stage fright: Perceptions and experiences of pre-service teachers in performing arts-based education in an inclusive setting

Student Researcher: Lisa Brankley Research Supervisor: Dr. Cheryll Duquette

Name of Faculty & Institution: Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa

Interview Time: Interview Date: Interview Setting: I

Interviewer: Lisa Brankley, B.ScN., B.Ed., (M.A. [Ed]) Candidate

Interviewee: _____, Pre-service Teacher, Teacher Education Program: P/J
Integrated Arts

- ✓ Set up Watch and Turn on Recorder
- ✓ Review Consent Form
- ✓ Collect additional data from participant, if volunteered

Central Research Questions:

- 1) *Focused Life History: Within each participant's history, what are the educational, professional, and/or personal experiences that have shaped their perceptions related to inclusive education, arts-based education, and the performance of arts-based education in an inclusive setting?*
- 2) *Details of Experience: What are each participant's current experiences related to inclusive education, arts-based education, and the performance of arts-based education in an inclusive setting?*
- 3) *Reflection on the Meaning: What are each participant's reflections and revelations connected to their perceptions related to inclusive education, arts-based education, and the performance of arts-based education in an inclusive setting? What impact do these reflections and revelations have on their expectations for their projected professional and/or educational future, if any?*
- 4) *What is the nature of their journey through Fuller's (1969) stages of concern?*

The following is the Interview Two Protocol:

NOTE: *Interview Two Protocol* is repeated during the third interview experience following the participant's second practicum experience (prior to answering questions related to central research question #3).

Interview Question	Related Research Study Question	Supportive Literature
Tell me about your practicum experience. • What are your instructional goals within this practicum experience? • What are your personal goals within this experience? • How do you feel about your practicum school?	#2	Wetz (2004); Fuller (1969)
Tell me about the leadership of your mentor teacher. Tell me about the teaching style of your mentor teacher. Tell me about your relationship with your mentor teacher.	#2	Abril & Gault (2007); Simons & Hicks (2006); Hundert (1996); Abril & Gault (2007); Carey (1997); Hobbs & Westling (2002); Thompson (1997); Ralph (2004)
Tell me about your relationships with other staff members in practicum school.	#2	Abril & Gault (2007); Thompson (1997) Fuller (1969)
Is there a special education teacher in the school? What is your relationship with this teacher?	#2	
Tell me about collaboration with mentor teacher and other staff members?	#2	Carey, (1997); Hobbs & Westling (2002); Carrington & Sagers (2008); Abril & Gault (2007); Thompson (1997); Fogg & Smith (2001)
Tell me about your inclusive, practicum class. • Tell me about the students in your class. • Tell me about the exceptionalities which are present amongst classroom students. • Tell me about your concerns related to inclusive education. • Tell me about your perceptions related to inclusive education.	#2	Avramidis et al., (2000); Cook (2002); Forlin et al. (1996); Hastings & Oakford (2003) ; Ford, Pugach & Otis-Wilborn (2001); Rademacher et al., (1998); Proctor & Niemeyer (2001); Tait & Purdie (2000); Campbell, Gilmore & Cuskelly (2003); Loreman &

• Tell me how you feel about <i>teaching</i> in an inclusive classroom. • Tell me about the resources you used. Were they helpful?		Earle (2007); Maushak, Kelley & Blodgett (2001); Stella, Forlin & Lan (2007); McKinney, Sexton & Meyerson (1999)
Tell me about the arts program at your school. • Tell me about the arts program in your practicum class. • How does your mentor teacher use and / or teach the arts? • Tell me about your concerns related to arts-based education. • Tell me about your perceptions related to arts-based education. • Tell me about your experiences utilizing the creative arts and/or teaching them.	#2	Leland & Harste (1994); Marlett & Gordon (2004) Perselli (2005); Thompson (1997); Cowan & Albers (2006) Polloway, Patton, & Serna (2005); Albers (2001)
Tell me about the way you use the arts to facilitate inclusion. • Tell me how you feel about <i>teaching</i> through an arts-based approach to curriculum. • How do students react to these experiences? • What is feedback of mentor teacher during these experiences?	#2	Hickman (2007); Marlett & Gordon (2004) LaFountain, Garner, & Miedema (2003); Lynch (2007); Simons & Hicks (2006)
Tell me about the courses you are currently enrolled in through Teacher Education. • Is there a connection between your Teacher Education courses and practicum experience? Tell me about this connection. • Tell me about PED 3106: <i>Education of Exceptional Students</i>. • Tell me about the connection between PED 3106 and your inclusive practicum experience. • Tell me about the Integrated Arts focus of your cohort. • Tell me about the connection between the Integrated Arts focus of your cohort and your experience performing arts-based education in	#2	Berghoff, 2000 & 1998 Sobel, Taylor, & Anderson (2003); Loreman & Earle (2007); Stella, Forlin & Lan (2007); Woloshyn, Bennett & Berrill (2003)

an inclusive setting.		
Tell me about your concerns related to performing arts-based education in an inclusive setting. Tell me about your perceptions related to performing arts-based education in an inclusive setting. • Tell me how you feel about performing <i>arts-based education</i> in an <i>inclusive</i> setting.	#2	LaFountain, Garner, & Miedema (2003); Simons & Hicks (2006) Fuller (1969)

Appendix E: Interview Three Protocol

Title of Statement: Stage fright: Perceptions and experiences of pre-service teachers in performing arts-based education in an inclusive setting

Student Researcher: Lisa Brankley Research Supervisor: Dr. Cheryll Duquette

Name of Faculty & Institution: Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa

Interview Time: Interview Date: Interview Setting: I

Interviewer: Lisa Brankley, B.ScN., B.Ed., (M.A. [Ed]) Candidate

Interviewee: _____, Pre-service Teacher, Teacher Education Program: P/J
Integrated Arts

- ✓ Set up Watch and Turn on Recorder
- ✓ Review Consent Form
- ✓ Collect additional data from participant, if volunteered

Central Research Questions:

- 1) *Focused Life History: Within each participant's history, what are the educational, professional, and/or personal experiences that have shaped their perceptions related to inclusive education, arts-based education, and the performance of arts-based education in an inclusive setting?*
- 2) *Details of Experience: What are each participant's current experiences related to inclusive education, arts-based education, and the performance of arts-based education in an inclusive setting?*
- 3) *Reflection on the Meaning: What are each participant's reflections and revelations connected to their perceptions related to inclusive education, arts-based education, and the performance of arts-based education in an inclusive setting? What impact do these reflections and revelations have on their expectations for their projected professional and/or educational future, if any?*
- 4) *What is the nature of their journey through Fuller's (1969) stages of concern?*

The following is the Interview Three Protocol:

NOTE: Prior to researching the interview questions below (which relate to central research question #3), *Interview Two Protocol* was repeated following the participant's second practicum experience.

Interview Question	Related Research Study Question	Supportive Literature
Considering your past and present concerns related to <i>inclusive education</i>, how do you understand your feelings? Considering your past and present perceptions related to <i>inclusive education</i>, how do you understand your feelings? What does <i>inclusion</i> mean to you? What do these concerns mean for your future? - How would you address these concerns? What do these perceptions mean for your future? - How would you address these perceptions? What do these concerns reflect about you as a person? As an educator? What do these perceptions reflect about you as a person? As an educator? Who are the people and what are the experiences that precipitated these feelings?	#3	Avramidis, Bayliss & Burden (2000); Smith et al., (2006); Buell, Hallam, Gamel-McCormick & Scheer (1999) Fuller (1969) Conway & Clark (2003) Fuller (1969); Ralph (2004)
Considering your past and present concerns related to an <i>arts-based approach</i> to curriculum, how do you understand your feelings? Considering your past and present		Buell, Hallam, Gamel-McCormick & Scheer

perceptions related to an <i>arts-based approach</i> to curriculum, how do you understand your feelings? What does an <i>arts-based approach</i> mean to you? What do these concerns mean for your future? • How would you address these concerns? What do these perceptions mean for your future? • How would you address these perceptions? What do these concerns reflect about you as a person? As an educator? What do these perceptions reflect about you as a person? As an educator? Who are the people and what are the experiences that precipitated these feelings?	#3	(1999); Beliaevsky (2006); Wetz (2004); Fuller (1969) Cornett (2006) Conway & Clark (2003) Fuller (1969)
Considering your past and present concerns related to performing arts-based education in an inclusive setting, how do you understand your feelings? Considering your past and present perceptions related to performing arts-based education in an inclusive setting, how do you understand your feelings? What does performing arts-based education in an inclusive setting mean to you? What do these concerns mean for your future? • How would you address these		Avramidis, et al. (2000); Buell, Hallam, Center & Ward (1987); Forlin, Douglas & Hattie (1996); Gamel-McCormick & Scheer (1999); Williams & Algozine (1977); Abril & Gault (2007); Simons & Hicks (2006); Duquette (2003) Lynch (2007); Simons & Hicks (2006); Cowan & Albers (2006); Tierney, Bond & Bresler (2006) Conway & Clark (2003) Fuller (1969)

concerns? What do these perceptions mean for your future? How would you address these perceptions? What do these concerns reflect about you as a person? As an educator? What do these perceptions reflect about you as a person? As an educator? Who are the people and what are the experiences that precipitated these feelings?		Cowan & Albers (2006)
Tell me about the preparation you received from your Teacher Education courses prior to practicum. How do you think they affected your experience?		Avramidis, Bayliss, & Burden (2000); Forlin et al. (1999); Tait & Purdie (2000); Shade & Stewart (2001); Shippen, Crites, Houchins, Ramsey & Simon (2005); Lancaster & Bain (2007); Green et al. (1998);
What do you bring to inclusion? What do you bring to arts-based education?	#3	
Were you able to carry out your instructional goals? - What impeded your ability to meet your instructional goals? - What enabled your ability to meet your instructional goals?	#3	

Appendix F: Participant Consent Form

Participant Consent Form

Title of the Study: Stage fright: Perceptions and experiences of pre-service teachers in performing arts-based education in an inclusive setting

Institution: Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa

Student Researcher: Lisa Brankley, B.ScN., B.Ed., (M.A. [Ed]) Candidate,
Student, Faculty of Education lbran041@uottawa.ca

Research Supervisor: Dr. Cheryll Duquette, B.A. (History), M.Ed, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Faculty of Education
(613) 562-5800 ext.4040 cduquett@uottawa.ca

Invitation to Participate: I am invited to participate in the research study entitled: *Stage fright: Perceptions and experiences of pre-service teachers in performing arts-based education in an inclusive setting* by Lisa Brankley and supervised by Dr. Cheryll Duquette, and am encouraged to ask the researcher about any component of the research study.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this phenomenological research study is to understand the perceptions and experiences of three pre-service teachers in the primary/junior “Integrated Arts” cohort in the teacher education program at a university in Ontario as they engage in performing arts-based education in an inclusive setting.

Role of Participant: My participation will be three-fold:

1. I will participate in 3 individual, recorded interviews, approximately 60 minutes in length each during which I will be asked several open-ended questions related to the themes and contexts relevant to this research project. The interview sessions will be scheduled:
 - a) In October 2008, prior to fall semester practicum experience
 - b) In December 2008, near the end of my fall semester practicum experience
 - c) In April 2009, near the end of my winter semester practicum experience

The specific place, date and time of each interview session will be decided between myself and the researcher.

2. I will be asked to read the transcripts of my interviews to make sure the content reflects my lived experience.
3. I will also be asked if data samples are available to include in analysis that relate to my historical or current experiences and contribute to the understanding of this area; though any contributions made are completely up to my discretion.

My participation will further consist of completing a ‘Participant Information Form’ which provides contact information utilized to arrange times, dates and locations of interviews, and additional data relevant to the focus of the research study.

Risks to Participant: Through my participation in this research study, I will be asked to reflect on and voluntarily share information related to my perceptions as they relate to inclusive education, arts-based education and the implementation of inclusion through the arts in an inclusive primary or junior classroom. I will be asked for this information as it relates to my historical experiences and feelings prior to practicum experiences, after my fall semester practicum experience and winter semester practicum experience. The researcher has assured me that the information I choose to share and my participation in the research study are voluntary, and during the process, every effort will be made to limit any discomfort which could emerge from considering and divulging personal information and reflections related to the study's area of focus.

Benefits and / or Compensation as a Result of Participation: The high proportion of inclusive primary and junior classrooms in the Canadian educational system suggests that during their teacher education experience, pre-service teachers will likely be exposed to this classroom situation and may be encouraged, required, or decide to use arts-based approach. My participation will contribute to this significant area, for by accessing their perceptions related to implementing inclusion through the arts, teacher education programs; faculty and students can plan for and facilitate educational opportunities with consideration of the pre-service experience.

Confidentiality: I have received assurance from the researcher that the information I will share will remain strictly confidential. I understand that the contents will be used towards compilation of a Master's thesis, which may result in being cited as a research study, submitted for publication in an academic journal or used within a presentation or symposium.

Anonymity: Anonymity will be protected through the use of a pseudonym for each participant involved in the culminating Master's thesis and important information that could identify me - such as the name of practicum site mentioned in an interview session- will be omitted or altered.

Conservation of Data: Access to this information will be limited to the student researcher and research supervisor. The data collected through written records, documents, transcripts, and audiotapes will be kept in a locked filing cabinet that will be securely stored on University grounds in the office of the supervisor for five years following study completion, and will include an electronic and hard copy of the data. An electronic copy of the data files will also be kept by the co-investigator on a password protected USB key for five years following study completion. All data will be destroyed five years after the completion of the research study.

Voluntary Participation: I am under no obligation to participate and if I choose to participate, I may withdraw from the study at any time and/or refuse to answer any questions, without suffering any negative consequences. If I choose to withdraw, all data gathered until the time of withdrawal will be destroyed.

Acceptance: I, _____ (*Name of participant*), agree to participate in the above research study conducted by Lisa Brankley of the Faculty of Education at University of Ottawa, under the supervision of Dr. Cheryll Duquette. I

understand that by accepting to participate I am in no way waiving my right to withdraw from the study.

If I have any questions about the study, I may contact the researcher or her supervisor at the email address mentioned herein.

If I have any ethical concerns regarding my participation in this study, I may contact the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, University of Ottawa, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 159, (613) 562-5841 or ethics@uottawa.ca.

There are two copies of the consent form, one of which is mine to keep.

Participant's signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix G: Participant Information Form

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Educational Experiences (*Degree, Diploma, Certificate, Specialized Training, etc.*):

_____**First Term Courses:** _____

_____**First Term Practicum:** (*If you taught two or more different classes, please base information below on one class which you feel connects with the focus of this study*).

Grade:	Number of Students:
Number of Students with Individualized Education Plans (IEP):	Subject Areas Pre-service Teacher Taught:
Special Education Teacher On-Site?:	Collaboration with Special Education Dept?:

Second Term Courses: _____

_____**Second Term Practicum:** (*If you taught two or more different classes, please base information below on one class which you feel connects with the focus of this study*).

Grade:	Number of Students:
Number of Students with Individualized Education Plans (IEP):	Subject Areas Pre-service Teacher Taught:
Special Education Teacher On-Site?:	Collaboration with Special Education Dept?:

Appendix H: Timeline for Interviews, Transcripts and Analysis

Interview One: October 2008

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3 +
Participant 1	• Interview One (date to be determined) • Begin Interview Transcription	• Complete Interview Transcription • Share transcription with participant	• Analysis: ✓ Begin Profile of Participant ✓ Identify Clarification Questions for Interview Two ✓ Begin Cross-Case Analysis and Development of Themes
Participant 2	• Interview One (date to be determined) • Begin Interview Transcription	• Complete Interview Transcription • Share transcription with participant	• Analysis: ✓ Begin Profile of Participant ✓ Identify Clarification Questions for Interview Two ✓ Begin Cross-Case Analysis and Development of Themes
Participant 3	• Interview One (date to be determined) • Begin Interview Transcription	• Complete Interview Transcription • Share transcription with participant	• Analysis: ✓ Begin Profile of Participant ✓ Identify Clarification Questions for Interview Two ✓ Begin Cross-Case Analysis and Development of Themes

Interview Two: December 2008

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3 +
Participant 1	• Interview Two (date to be determined) • Begin Interview Transcription	• Complete Interview Transcription • Share transcription with participant	• Analysis: ✓ Continue Profile of Participant ✓ Identify Clarification Questions for Interview Three ✓ Continue Cross-Case Analysis and Development of Themes
Participant 2	• Interview Two (date to be determined) • Begin Interview Transcription	• Complete Interview Transcription • Share transcription with participant	• Analysis: ✓ Continue Profile of Participant ✓ Identify Clarification Questions for Interview Three ✓ Continue Cross-Case Analysis and Development of Themes
Participant 3	• Interview Two (date to be determined) • Begin Interview Transcription	• Complete Interview Transcription • Share transcription with participant	• Analysis: ✓ Continue Profile of Participant ✓ Identify Clarification Questions for Interview Three ✓ Continue Cross-Case Analysis and Development of Themes

Interview Three: April 2009

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3 +
Participant 1	• Interview Three (date to be determined) • Begin Interview Transcription	• Complete Interview Transcription • Share transcription with participant	• Analysis: ✓ Continue Profile of Participant ✓ Continue Cross-Case Analysis and Development of Themes
Participant 2	• Interview Three (date to be determined) • Begin Interview Transcription	• Complete Interview Transcription • Share transcription with participant	• Analysis: ✓ Continue Profile of Participant ✓ Continue Cross-Case Analysis and Development of Themes
Participant 3	• Interview Three (date to be determined) • Begin Interview Transcription	• Complete Interview Transcription • Share transcription with participant	• Analysis: ✓ Continue Profile of Participant ✓ Continue Cross-Case Analysis and Development of Themes

Appendix I: Principle Ideas within Cross-Case Analysis

MAIN IDEA, EXPERIENCE and/or REFLECTION	PARTICIPANT CONTRIBUTIONS
Family and Early Life	Carrie: Two parent household with younger sibling. Close familial relationships. Grew up in and currently based with family in Eastern Canada. Sophie: Only child in a two parent household. Grew up in Eastern Europe where she lived for 33 years. Andrew: Adopted at birth. Moved many times before family established residency in Central Canada where he remembers growing up. Currently married with 3 children.
Elementary School Experiences	Carrie: Attended a private, religious school with high academic expectations, including study in four languages. Parents assisted with schoolwork often. Experienced social difficulties related to bullying. Limited arts experiences provided. Time spent on creative activities with sibling. Sophie: Regimented school structure with teachers who taught principally through memorization and rarely through Sophie's preferred kinaesthetic learning style. Learned puppetry through community centre. Spent summers with grandparents where she played and completed mandatory homework with neighbourhood children. Andrew: Achieved decent scholastic outcomes with a great deal of effort and has little memory of elementary school academics or art projects. Recalled that his desk was frequently placed in the hall during a particular junior grade without remembering why. Best memories of childhood involve the imaginative, artistic world established by himself and his peers outside of school.
High School Experiences	Carrie: Carrie's decision to attend public school—followed by CGEP—was positive and she enjoyed the enriched stream where she was placed, thrived in her drama class electives, was involved in extra-curricular activities in the arts and athletics, had a strong social group, and was given opportunities to engage in arts-based learning through curricular areas such as English. Sophie: The manifestation of the school system in Eastern

	Europe meant that Sophie had to select a high school based on the focus of her future career; she chose sciences due to local job possibilities in engineering. Her favourite and best subjects were math and science. Arts classes were not offered through her high school. Andrew: Academic memories of high school were scarce except for his affection for the art room and teacher. Was involved in athletics and the arts through extra-curricular pursuits.
Post-Secondary School Experiences	Carrie: Carrie attended undergraduate university for a degree in science and specialized in the study of the environment. Obtained her Master's in Education. Sophie: Following an unsuccessful first exam attempt for admission to the university sciences program of her choice, Sophie spent the year as a teacher at a school for boys with exceptionalities and delighted in the experience. Following year decided to pursue finances instead of teaching and education in Eastern Europe due to poor salary. Andrew: Following refusal to a military college recommended by his parents and one year in an undergraduate sciences program, he travelled in Europe before obtaining his undergraduate degree in fine arts through which he flourished.
Experiences with Individuals with Exceptionalities	Carrie: Experience with coaching young people, one of who had trouble focusing during her first year of CGEP. Also had a negative experience supervising a boy with Autism at a summer camp and March Break camp during high school. Sophie: At 18 years of age taught at a school for boys with exceptionalities; a very positive experience. Andrew: Briefly served as an occasional teacher at school for children with exceptionalities.
Art Opportunities in Work, School, or Personal Life	Carrie: Pursued activities related to creativity and the imagination with her sibling during elementary school years. In high school, chose drama electives for three years and was a member of school improv team. High school English teachers frequently used an arts-based approach to their subject and Carrie later used this same cross-curricular approach to the arts through her volunteer work with an environmental education group during university.

	Sophie: Although she identified herself as being gifted in art and engaged in puppetry as a child through a community centre, Sophie did not have any further association with the arts. Andrew: As a child was consistently pursuing arts-related games and activities with his peer group, and in high school he took art class and participated in the musicals and band. As a young adult he has maintained participation in theatre, including through work as a technical director.
Involvement with Young People	Carrie: She determined that she most enjoyed finding ways for young people to development confidence through the benefits of athletics while coaching community gymnastics. During her university years she again sought out involvement with children through her role as a volunteer environmental educator in elementary schools. During her Master's in Education, she acted as a TA in an outdoor and experiential learning course for teacher education students. Sophie: Enjoyed her role as a teacher for boys with exceptionalities at the age of 18 years. Andrew: Served as an occasional teacher on and off for many years. First experience with youth involvement was at a community centre in Latin America where he served as an arts instructor through the international organization with which he was volunteering. Served as a theatrical teacher in elementary schools and theatre, and as a facilitator for teen anti-violence programs.
Decision Related to Teacher's College	Carrie: Had enjoyed coaching gymnastics, the environmental education group she volunteered with during undergraduate university, her work at a science centre, and ultimately her experience in her Master's degree in education. Sophie: Having decided on a career in finance over education in a country where teaching meant financial instability, she finally pursued her long-time wish to be a teacher once she was established in Canada. Andrew: Balancing jobs in carpentry, construction, and theatre was becoming financially difficult and the lifestyle had an impact on his family life. Teacher education seemed like a logical place to seek both an opportunity to garner a

	degree that would provide steady occupation, as well as to continue in his pattern of selecting teaching related roles.
Perceptions Related to Inclusive Education–Prior to Practicum One Experience	Carrie: Felt as though it is a positive approach, yet foresees that there may be challenges in the way that it manifests itself in the classroom. Did not experience inclusion within her own school and is concerned about her interaction with young children who are ELLs. Sophie: In concordance with the philosophy, yet concerned about the teaching and learning challenges it carries. Her own observation of the segregated schools that students attended in her home country fuelled her belief that this approach is preferable. Andrew: Believed that inclusion arises from knowledge of the children and using who and what they are to build an environment that is committed to ability.
Perceptions Related to Arts-Based Education–Prior to Practicum One Experience	Carrie: Recalled life and learning experiences that called on the arts as being memorable and engaging. Though determined to facilitate arts-based opportunities in relation to the curriculum, she was cautious about the realities she will face in a classroom setting—especially one that is similar to her associate teacher’s. Sophie: Identified as a kinaesthetic learner and felt most comfortable with the belief that students are excited when learning through the arts. Andrew: Had always found refuge and excitement through the arts and felt that it encourages awareness of self and others.
Perceptions Related to Performing Arts-based Education in an Inclusive Setting–Prior to Practicum One Experience	Carrie: Carrie saw her role within inclusion as making it possible for everybody to learn and access the curriculum in an optimal way. Seeing art as an effective tool through which to accomplish this, she was confident in its ability to be a positive developmental guide in the social, motor, and academic arenas of her upcoming practicum. Sophie: Sophie saw the opportunity for students who may struggle with an area of the curriculum to be successfully reintroduced to it if strategies (such as some aspect of the arts) are used as the tool that they utilize in their learning journey. She further grounded her point of view in her own life history, citing that unlike her own past, she wanted every

	student in her class to have the opportunity to be exposed to, and work with, the arts. Andrew: Concerned about his ability to properly facilitate inclusion through arts-related means as he reviewed some of his past educational endeavours with censure. However, he was confident with the support of his associate teacher and felt that his own life experiences and the relationships—especially those in his home community—which he had forged with individuals with exceptionalities and his lifelong history with the arts have helped him evolve into a loving and accepting person who will bring these qualities to his role as a teacher.
PRACTICUM ONE EXPERIENCE	Carrie: Placement in a JK/SK class in which 80 percent of students were ELLs. Communication was challenging and she called frequently on use of visuals to assess, teach, and access their own knowledge and feelings. Difficult to ascertain exceptionalities due to language barrier and young developmental age. The arts played a daily role in the classroom management and activities of that environment. Sophie: Placed in a grade 2 classroom. Though the arts were not evident in the daily classroom activities, her associate teacher did occasionally weave cross-curricular links to art endeavours. Sophie's method of accommodating the students was guided by her associate teacher who encouraged her to achieve differentiated learning by creating daily handouts for the gifted children, children with exceptionalities, and other children in the class that reflected their specific abilities. Sophie was in a low-income neighbourhood and cited that 30 percent of her students had been identified with exceptionalities related to learning and behavioural challenges. Was given skill-related ideas by special education resource teacher who occasionally visited the classroom. Andrew: Practicum experience in a grade 3/4 split classroom. Felt that both teacher and school as a whole prioritized students and their character education. Contributed to assembly on respect through a song written with and sung by his students. Four of his pupils were currently on an IEP. He also found that the arts was of great benefit in facilitating the classroom learning experiences for every individual, and his associate teacher infused the arts into character-development exercises and held regular art and music classes, and hosted a guest drama instructor. In addition to the supports offered by

	the special education teacher on staff, his associate teacher practiced differentiated education through flexibility in the pace of the students' work. Andrew found it challenging to consider the balance in providing accommodations and challenging opportunities to awaken their curiosity.
Perceptions Related to Inclusive Education—Following Practicum One Experience	Carrie: Emerged with questions related to full inclusion; however, she felt that she had lived through a practicum that demonstrated its potential for success within the environment of the kindergarten class. However, the opportunities to work one-on-one or provide special accommodations are difficult for her to imagine when coupled with classroom management. She felt that this would govern the type and difficulty of activities she would create for the students. There was a student in her practicum school unable to enter a regular classroom, yet unable to access a special school due to capacity limits. Carrie mused that perhaps additional human resources or such accommodations will always be needed if inclusion is to truly work. Sophie: Sophie's beliefs in inclusion changed substantially following her initial practicum experience. While she felt that integrating students so they often learn and play together was important, she also felt that the classroom students in general – and particularly those who are gifted—were being 'pulled back' by the students with exceptionalities. Expressed concerns related to limited teacher time for other students, qualifications of every teacher to meet the needs of so many different students, the need for special education staff presence, and need for small class sizes. Andrew: Andrew's feelings remained largely unchanged following his first practicum experience, maintaining his belief that forging solid relationships with and knowledge of the students was the key to achieving inclusion. Through his practicum he felt that being in the classroom introduced him to new things as a teacher. He saw kids exposed to new points of view, and he believed that it's just one of the many interesting roles and challenges that a teacher is asked to manoeuvre.
Perceptions Related to Arts-Based Education—Following Practicum One Experience	Carrie: Enjoyed the opportunity to weave the arts into her lessons and classroom management strategies. Yet she struggled with how much creative freedom to grant a student and how much their artistic endeavours should be guided by the labels we have associated with the focuses of their

	projects and the demands of time and the teacher. Carrie's additional concerns lay the environmental ramifications of art resources, and in the worry that students who thrived in the arts-based approach of so many kindergarten classes—as ELLs do especially—would find the adjustment to grade 1 and onward quite difficult. But in relation to her practicum, an association to the arts made sense to her and she saw her students believing that everyone can create art. Sophie: Felt that the best way to bring arts into the classroom was through a cross-curricular means that established holistic links within the classroom. She enjoyed teaching mathematics through the use of manipulatives which connected students to 'real world' examples and ideas. Andrew: Reported that there was a need to pursue creativity and re-orientate students to prioritize their artistic, creative selves, assessing their value as being equal to ability in math or language. In general, confessed a desire to bring arts to every capacity of his life (this practicum being no exception) and led his students in lessons that provided a variety of means to accessing the material they were learning. Andrew also went further, bringing in his own art and writing songs for them to learn as a way of not only accessing the curriculum but also modelling that being a life-long learner is something to strive for.
Perceptions Related to Performing Arts-based Education in an Inclusive Setting—Following Practicum One Experience	Carrie: Considering the developmental level of her students, Carrie felt that the arts was a way of fostering their young skill sets and allowing them to participate in classroom activities without losing confidence in themselves, while producing outcomes which demonstrate that growth and learning is taking place. Carrie confessed that it didn't feel distinctively 'inclusive' to be using arts in so many ways; rather it was just part of how things were done and were successful. Sophie: Felt that accessing the arts meets students where they are, and creates a means for learners with a propensity towards an artistic sense of expression to call on that skill set and access the material or their own knowledge in an optimal way. Andrew: Felt that by identifying as an artist himself, he had the confidence to both teach and create various kinds of art — something that many students decide they cannot do by an

	early age. However, guided by a cross-curricular engagement of the arts and his steadfast belief in knowledge of the student being the guide, Andrew intended to continue the use of arts-based approaches to education as a means of implementing inclusion, and felt that the biggest challenge will be to remind himself to accommodate activities that come naturally to him, in recognition of the needs of all his students.
Teacher Education Courses – First Term	Carrie: Though she perceived great value in her first term courses, Carrie felt that she would ultimately use much of this knowledge at another time, since her kindergarten placement wasn't well-covered territory within the coursework. She felt that the Integrated Arts approach of the cohort enabled her to see art in new ways. Science course seen as dynamic and insightful. Though she felt that she did garner knowledge from the course, the lack of discussion and immersion in the ideas was difficult, and she felt the course should have respect the multiplicity of learning styles within the classroom as it proposed for inclusion. Sophie: Appreciated the Integrated Arts focus that certain teachers wielded as being beneficial in its introduction to new ways of understanding art within education—particularly within language arts, despite the fact that it did not provide the building blocks necessary to understanding language development. Science class was enjoyed for its connection to classroom realities. In consideration of the online courses, she missed the interaction and support of a face-to-face class and felt that they did not support her ability to learn and she remembers no theory from this class. Andrew: Believed that overall, they were being taught the curriculum and not the integration of arts-based methods into that curriculum, as it was rarely encouraged or called for in their assignments. However, his reason for joining this cohort was to remind himself to consistently infuse his teaching with art and that ultimately, while he has generally initiated these activities himself, that is part of the motivation he felt was necessary. Science class was seen as relevant and exciting, and was lead by an enthusiastic teacher. Relative to the online exceptionalities course, Andrew confessed that while he initially began the readings and work with diligence, he soon let the calibre of his contributions and work slide in a way he felt would not have happened had the learning taken place in an environment of collaboration and interaction.

PRACTICUM TWO EXPERIENCE	Carrie: Was placed in a grade 4/5 split classroom which called for differentiated teaching methods to accommodate and modify the curriculum for seven students on IEPs and two students on modified approaches to the content of the classroom. She found the planning challenging. Admired and implemented the same arts-based approach to the curriculum—and to inclusion—as her associate teacher and valued her associate’s collaboration with an EA and learning support teacher, both of whom spent daily time in the class environment. Sophie: Experienced a challenging practicum within a large grade 6 classroom in which 30 percent of the students were identified with exceptionalities, and in which she spent only 50 percent of her day teaching as her associate teacher taught intermediate music for the rest of the day. Sophie’s experience was characterized by feelings of inadequate support and mentorship, as her associate teacher originally believed that Sophie was at a higher level than she should have been assessed at. She also explained that as a musician, her associate teacher’s style of instruction was more auditory and manifested itself in oral directives. Emerging from her background in finance, Sophie saw her own approach as visual-kinaesthetic and struggled with communicating to and learning from her associate teacher because of their different points of view. Explaining that the only accommodation was the provision of extra class time to complete work, she felt that the gifted students in the class were assessed in a manner that didn’t reflect their actual subject knowledge, and she felt challenged by the short attention span of the class as a whole. She did not use the arts in a cross curricular way or as a means to implement inclusion. Andrew: Was placed in a grade 1 classroom. Andrew’s associate teacher was one year away from retirement, and he felt that he collaborated well with her approach to the classroom while benefiting from her instruction related to the administrative role of a teacher. Andrew meanwhile initiated arts activities as soon as possible and thrived on granting the students opportunities to learn through and engage with their whole body, suggesting that the students responded well and it meant that he too was able to enjoy teaching by incorporating the arts wherever possible.
Perceptions Related to Inclusive Education—	Carrie: Carrie’s practicum classroom included preparation of accommodated and modified lesson plans. Her concerns

Following Practicum Two Experience	within inclusion included: additional pressure on the classroom teacher in her creation of differentiated academic opportunities for the students; the potential loss to students working at grade level who might not be motivated to greater benefit; and that while the curricular knowledge modified for the two students was beneficial, she wondered if those students could potentially obtain other kinds of benefits from an academic or social skills focus that was tailored to their needs in a more specific way. Could see the generation of understanding and respect that could form within an inclusive environment. Sophie: Explained that her second practicum experience was not situated in a 'bad' school; however, her classroom was extremely challenging and the students in need of assistance would refuse the help of the visiting special education resource teacher because they didn't want to look 'stupid' in front of their peers. She felt that she could not differentiate their learning because they didn't want their differences noted, and she felt limited in what she could do. She explained that some students required an extended amount of time to complete a test and that things became difficult to juggle in a classroom so large. She felt that a class of 20 students would be a more ideal size for an inclusive environment. She felt she would need to draw on external resources in the future to help her. Andrew: Felt that inclusivity increased the acceptance of diversity. Proposed that a blended world means there is necessity and sense behind the philosophy of an inclusive classroom and the exposure of kids to the reality of this diversity in the classroom makes them citizens that are more likely to engage positively within their community. Andrew recognized that external forces can challenge the classroom dynamic but felt that these challenges are part of their character education taking place in a classroom, and are an accurate depiction of shared humanity. His belief that 'kids can teach you so much' was established through his experiences in theatre and other youth related work, and he had come to believe that fostering inclusion meant extending beyond academics and as a teacher, listening with humility and granting respect to one's students.
Perceptions Related to Arts-Based Education—Following Practicum Two	Carrie: Espoused a prioritization on the arts within the classroom, yet was more hesitant about her perceived knowledge gaps in areas such as music. Over the course of

Experience	her practicum, was relieved to note that such areas could be met through other resources and people. Carrie appreciated and learned from her associate teacher's practice of an arts-based approach to the curriculum, and felt that her students' engagement of the arts was linked with their optimal achievement of inclusion. Sophie: Expressed belief in the need for creativity and the infusion of a variety of instructional strategies within a classroom. However, in her own practice she felt overwhelmed by the need for the students to have something new each day and was reluctant to integrate art because only some classroom students enjoyed art. She preferred to teach science differently or in a creative way instead. Andrew: Explained that he could imagine no other way of interacting within his own life—or the lives of his students—than through an arts-based approach to academic and social arenas. Such confidence and comfort in the arts meant that he infused such strategies into his practicum immediately
Perceptions Related to Performing Arts-based Education in an Inclusive Setting—Following Practicum Two Experience	Carrie: Concerned by the myriad of expectations and curricular expectations within in a classroom and their effect on the ability to infuse the arts. Carrie was inspired by her associate teacher's prioritization of the arts and the manner in which she wove it into the curriculum and called on a myriad of resources to support this practice. Carrie proposes the arts as one of the most valuable curriculum areas in its ability to develop a multitude of skills related to social and academic arenas and the development of different forms of intelligence. Resulting from both her practicum and her own childhood experience; Carrie believed in an “integrated” approach to the arts and inclusion, citing the arts as a natural response to the curriculum and a memorable means of truly connecting students with the subject matter. Sophie: Saw creativity as being part of art and felt understanding can be achieved through incorporating creativity into lessons. Sophie felt that math or language were probably too abstract for her classroom students, and noted that the most ‘troubled’ children adored science and she proposed this was due to the way that it connected to the ‘real’ world in a manner that the arts did not achieve to the same degree. Andrew: Worried about the competition of additional

	educational priorities over the arts, and expressed concerns that as children age and move up in grade levels, the cross-curricular approach of arts-based education is disengaged from their experience and replaced by something less-inclusive in its ability to meet the learning needs of a diverse student body. Andrew proposed his belief that all children are artistic, and suggests that there's always a way of teaching and learning if it is directed through the arts.
Teacher Education Courses–Second Term	Carrie: Felt as though many of the teacher education courses contributed positively to her practicum experience. Physical education and social studies were seen as being particularly accessible and beneficial. Carrie drew links from the sociology of education course to her past and present practicum dynamic with the students. Did not perceive the value within the counselling course. The English as a Second Language elective was appreciated by the participants for its beneficial textbook, and Carrie felt that this course was especially helpful in identifying and understanding the spoken and academic English differences she was witnessing within her practicum experiences. Carrie was enthusiastic over the lesson plans she derived from both her own work and that of peers in the arts classroom that had served and would continue to prove beneficial in her practice. Sophie: Was not particularly enthusiastic regarding the connection between her teacher education courses and practicum, explaining that she felt less prepared than the pre-service teacher from another university whom she encountered at her second practicum. She identified that the resources and skills cited within the expectations of their placement were not taught within her teacher education experience. Physical education and social studies were seen as being particularly accessible and beneficial. Sophie felt disengaged from her other courses as she clarified that if she doesn't apply it, she will forget it, and suggested that this explained her enthusiasm for the interactive pursuits in her global education elective. She found that the auditory approach of many of these courses meant they were 'boring' due to her kinaesthetic learning style, and she explained that she will likely attempt to associate subject learning with 'reality' in order to connect with her own students. Though she enjoyed it, Sophie felt she could not implement the arts class into her practicum as she was not teaching an arts-specific course.

	Andrew: Identified a relationship between what he learned in his course work and how it was manifested in his practicum. Physical education and social studies were seen as being particularly accessible and beneficial. The counselling elective was a poorly received, as Andrew could not establish its relevancy or focus from the course, and he expressed a similar lack of direction in relation to the educational theories course and educational psychology course. He appreciated their course in the arts and its instructor. Andrew felt it was ultimately up to him to instil arts into his lessons and that it was his responsibility as a student to take ownership for this. In his belief, being part of the Integrated Arts cohort maintained a focus on the arts in the forefront of his experience and academic pursuits while reinforcing who he was: an individual comfortable with leadership, self-expression, and celebrating learning.
Culminating Relationship to Inclusion	Carrie: Carrie's concerns related to inclusion were linked to a lack of diverse and plentiful experiences related to individuals with exceptionalities (except for a negative experience in her teenage years which she believed affected her ultimate paradigm of individuals with special needs and the feasibility of an inclusive class). Yet, after completing both teacher education practicum experiences, she felt as though she gained knowledge that will allow her to commence as a teacher in a place beyond the theoretical. As she initially learned about the philosophy and theory through her exceptionalities course, she felt as though it was something she hoped would work and could see the way that accommodations could be built into the curricular or instructional fabric that would differentiate learning experiences and yield positive results. Yet, following her second practicum, Carrie questioned if there should be a 'cut-off' point at which inclusion is no longer beneficial for certain students. Despite these concerns, she has witnessed a high level of social acceptance in a diverse classroom and has not witnessed mockery or teasing related to academic abilities (or inabilities). She perceives inclusion as fluid, as something that is dependent on the established norm in the class—which is ultimately variable. Her concerns and perceptions were a reflection of her reservation of judgement and her flexibility, particularly within her acknowledgement of the shifting tides of education that accompany changes in literature, policy, and educational best practices. In addition to the accompanying influence of her past experiences in practicum and her previous work history, Carrie's perception of inclusion within

her present and future will be impacted by her own background of knowing what it felt like to be excluded through being bullied in elementary school.

Sophie: As she considered inclusive education following the culmination of her practicum experiences and life experiences, Sophie felt that inclusion is viable within a set of parameters that most particularly involve a smaller class size. As she was growing up in communist Eastern Europe, students with exceptionalities were placed in a separate school within classes of approximately 10 students each, and she felt that this system deprived many students of the chance to pursue a future in post-secondary education and that they were made “to stay isolated and everybody to consider that they are stupid.” Yet, within this structure, she felt that there were students that benefited from more attention and support, something she felt was lacking within her practicum classrooms. Sophie believed that inclusion means that students have access to the same rights and to an environment within which everyone is accepted. However, to facilitate inclusion within this philosophy, she felt that she required more experience, and plans to seek assistance and guidance from resources and through volunteering and discussions with special education resource staff—particularly in relation to the social components of inclusion that are reflective of her belief in the role of the teacher to engage skills set beyond academics and help students in the development of their social relationships. She was most concerned by her perceived disconnection between the structure of an inclusive education and the framework of *Education Quality and Accountability Office* (EQAO) testing, which seems designed without regard for students with various approaches to learning and who require specific resources or accommodations that have become part of their strategies for success.

Andrew: Was unconcerned by the moments and students who may be frustrating within his educational future, as he perceived them as opportunities to offer support and help students through challenging times based upon their established rapport. Likening the inclusive classroom to any one of his theatre productions from his past, he emphasized that the collective is truly needed to make a show run, and participation and in the classroom is the same way. He perceived that this successful participation means that students leave the classroom environment and enter the world with confidence and a history of skills and acceptance that

	readies them for engaging with the world in a meaningful way. Andrew believed that the point of school is to build a skill set that prepares a person to live a life that is fulfilling and brings happiness in whatever work or area this may be, and within the inclusive classroom it is the teacher's role to seek out what these areas might be in each student and tap this potential. He believed that, by modelling acceptance and enthusiasm, a culture of inclusion based on communication and respect for difference and many modes of expression would develop in the class and within the student's world view. Though he himself has never dealt with exclusion or a sense that he has been treated with prejudice, he felt that his experiences as a student, parent, and actor have introduced him to the emotional scope of such experiences. Coupled with a genuine acceptance of others, he felt confident that, despite a propensity for optimism (that may at times be too much to hope for within the classroom), inclusion came naturally to him and he welcomed the challenges and surprises that children bring into his life and the variety that inclusion will guarantee.
Culminating Relationship to Arts-Based Approach to Education	Carrie: Felt an initial trepidation about teaching the arts or integrated arts due to her perceived lack of experiences or knowledge. However, this was much alleviated through her practicum with the realization that she knew more than (she) thought she did, and that there were several resources available to ensure that she would not 'short-change' her students out of learning opportunities because of her own fears. In the meantime, Carrie was placing effort into the arts and felt that separating the arts from writing and reading is artificial, and that the myriad of means of expression which human beings use to communicate are translated through the arts, which are an essential way to express knowledge and personal voice. Carrie's primary focus remained environmental education, and yet her original concerns about the waste she felt was inherent to using artistic methodologies in a classroom were alleviated through an understanding that various areas of art do not utilize additional resources, and those that do can be modified and used in a more efficient manner that she originally presumed. Though she intended to take this approach, she acknowledged her natural inclination to focus on too many things at once and worried that she may try and incorporate so much that her focus will be split into many directions. Carrie's most memorable projects in school were arts-based, and she felt that this positive impact would translate to her own students—especially when met with the

enthusiasm and humility she felt she will bring to the classroom as a 'co-learner' and keen proponent of the arts.

Sophie: In her belief that she was a creative person, Sophie considered art as a link to 'reality' and that an arts-based approach ultimately means creativity in every subject that moves away from the abstract towards a greater association to the world. Sophie identified that her belief in an arts-based approach to education was not as intrinsic, as it was only introduced by key players in the second practicum of her teacher education experience. Sophie came to perceive creativity as a great motivator—particularly for students with exceptionalities—following a discussion with a special education resource teacher at her second practicum school. From this conversation she garnered that art was important in the area of inclusion, and had no concerns about integrating them into her future practice. However, Sophie experienced frustration that, in her estimation, the arts are perceived as being of lesser value when it comes to assessing students' entrance into post-secondary education and testing through EQAO. She felt that within this limited evaluation, students with artistic gifts are being dismissed and disenfranchised. She explained that, in her own school system growing up in Eastern Europe, select high schools had an arts focus which enabled students with such interests and aptitudes to pursue this area with a greater array of future options in a way that she felt is less possible in Canada through the current system.

Andrew: Andrew's substantial background within the arts had given him confidence in his ability to encourage students to respond artistically and in his own capacity to merge art into the curriculum in an endless array of ways. Andrew had many ideas and goals for his classroom and mused over the response to such an approach by schools and administration. Though he felt some uncertainty connected with the acceptance of his teaching strategies, he was ultimately optimistic that his life experiences in the arts and identification as an 'actor-musician-teacher-artist-lover of learning' could only be conceived as an asset. He credited this confidence to many years spent in theatre communities and their positive reception. He believed that such a world has gifted him with the chance to foster the same belief in self among his students through the world of the arts. Andrew's personality and interaction with life was interconnected with art, and he was adamant that his arts-based approach to the education of the students in his classroom would be met with

	the celebration and enthusiasm he felt in its creation and implementation.
Culminating Relationship to Performing Arts-based Education in an Inclusive Setting	Carrie: Felt that she witnessed the capabilities and victories that are possible through performing arts-based education in an inclusive setting. Viewing the use of visual arts as a branch of communication that helps communicate information in ways which could not be accomplished orally, as well as the inclusion of students who are ELL and with exceptionalities via drama and dance, Carrie's perception of the arts was that it transcends limitations that other academic arenas place on learning and expression. Yet, as Carrie experienced first-hand, the success of an arts-based approach is not guaranteed and, like any other approach to teacher and learning, students will be reluctant or experience difficulties. She was therefore prepared to seek additional advice and resources whenever necessary, acting as a conscientious educator just as she has put forth her best effort throughout her life endeavours as encouraged by both familial influence and her intrinsic motivations. Sophie: Was inspired by the special education resource teacher and pre-service teacher from another university in her second practicum school in the belief that the arts can facilitate the learning process. She identified that these tools helped maintain the attention of her students and made lessons come alive. Sophie proposed her belief that art can facilitate integration, particularly among students with exceptionalities who don't like routine and require tangible lessons and opportunities. She believed that, as an artist, she will always select this route as the method to approach education and facilitate inclusion, though she felt that she needed additional practice and resources in order to truly understand its implementation. Andrew: Believed in the academic, social, and interpersonal potential of the arts, yet explained that he does not analyze his feelings related to education or classroom lessons as much as he takes stock of the lesson's ability to connect the students with the power of the material they are studying and make them feel immersed in their own reactions and involvement in it. Throughout his life, he encountered emotions that "were not in control and were destructive," and he felt that his reaction to this was to be an even-tempered person who does not focus and reflect on his emotions as much as he understands his enjoyment of the moment—including arts-

	based endeavours. He observed that the arts unequivocally lead to inclusion and the most positive of outcomes and potential for students with exceptionalities.
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