Music as a Bridge to Literacy and Multiliteracies Development for Second Language Learners

Siyu Chen

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Music as A Bridge to Literacy and Multiliteracies Development for Second Language Learners

By

Siyu Chen

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
through the Faculty of Education
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Education
at the University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

2023

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Music as A Bridge to Literacy and Multiliteracies Development

for Second Language Learners

By

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to explore the learning and teaching of adult learners for second language acquisition and multiliteracies advancement when music is a primary mode of instruction in the second language learning setting. This qualitative research examines the progression of language proficiency with adult English language learners (ELLs) in the language learning environment where music is used as a learning tool and delves into learners’ multiliteracies expansion when different multimodal modes combine with music in the course of English learning. Data collected from face-to-face interviews, field observations, document analysis, and original film footage are analyzed using case studies and constructive grounded theory. The multiliteracies, multimodality, and sociocultural perspectives are utilized to articulate how learners’ language literacy and multiliteracies skills develop in a learning situation that incorporates music and which multimodal modes of integration with music positively affect teaching and learning. Findings from the research suggest that learners’ exposure to music while learning English not only stimulates their enthusiasm and inspiration to invest in language learning but also fosters their capacity to embrace social diversity. Simultaneously, the range of multimodal combinations has the potential to cultivate the learners’ competence in meaning-making and communication in contemporary social life. The research offers evidence that multiliteracies and multimodality nurture the teaching and learning foundations of the second language and provide practical and effective ways in which learners can master multiple skills to adapt to the ever-changing era.

Key Words: Music, Second language teaching and learning, Multiliteracies and literacy, Multimodality, Diversity
DEDICATION

“Music is the universal language of mankind.”

Longfellow, 1835

To all learners who wish to become proficient in a second or target language, no matter what that language is. Music is infinitely fascinating, it makes ordinary language learning enlivened, iridescent, and hopeful!
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Thanks to the serendipity that appears in our lives!
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CHAPTER 1
Introduction

This Master’s research aims to explore sociocultural approaches to language acquisition used by adult educators and learners in English as a second language settings that embed music as a pedagogical tool, and which draw upon theories of multiliteracies and multimodalities. More specifically, this research takes music as an important tool in the process of second language learning and investigates the evolution of adult learners’ literacy and multiliteracies competencies when music serves as an independent mode and/or combines with multiple modalities. Furthermore, this research also observes the pedagogies embodied by educators in creating English as a second language teaching classrooms responsive to music as a learning mode. This research prioritizes how music affects second language education and literacy acquisition shaped by the multiliteracies and multimodalities, although it also to a lesser extent considers second language acquisition theory that tends to focus more so on cognitive theories regarding how new target languages are acquired effectively. It should be noted that although the terms “English as a second language” is used throughout the thesis, this term here refers to all target languages. So, it may be that learners are actually learning English as their third or fifth language, or that the target language is French or Urdu rather than English. This research study confirms music’s interactive role in second language learning from a sociocultural perspective, which guides the adaptation of teaching strategies and enables learners to experience the diversity that music brings in the English learning environment.

Background

As a potent human cultural artifact, language governs our perception of the world, our interactions with others, and our capacity to reflect and regulate ourselves (Cores-Bilbao et al., 2019). Language is the beginning of reaching out to a nation, a group, or an individual. The
evolution of language shares commonalities with the “exchange-friendly institution—money” (Reksulak et al., 2004, p. 233) because both “emerged spontaneously as rational individuals searched for mutually acceptable ways of communicating and of acting on their natural propensities” (Reksulak et al., 2004, p. 233). The development of English as a global language confirms this notion in several ways. At the level of the international environment, English as a language plays a beneficial role in international affairs, such as diplomacy, sports competitions, and international conferences, providing a convenient and efficient communication channel between countries involved in international activities.

At the level of economic settings, “English is seen as a major economic asset” (Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1996, p. 438) since “English for business is business for English” (Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1996, p. 439). In the internationalization phase, English and its education provide language learning opportunities for non-native speakers, where “TESOL comes in” (Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1996, p. 439). Indeed, with English, economists can jointly analyze political markets, and businesspeople can trade across borders. At the labor market level, English is viewed as “a passport” to the workplace (Pang et al., 2002, p. 203), and those with higher English proficiency are associated with more benefits from the “sector of the globalized economy” (Ricento, 2015, p. 4), especially in “jobs that involve trade, inward and outward foreign investment and any engagement with individuals from other countries” (Wang et al., 2017, p. 92).

At the level of multicultural interaction, “one of the most emblematic makers of globalization today is the use of English in public spaces, linguistic repertoires, and advertising discourse all over the world” (Vandenbroucke, 2016, p. 87). Nevertheless, English serves different purposes among places because local socioeconomic market dynamics in countries worldwide significantly impact the value allocation to English (Vandenbroucke, 2016). Although
differences exist among English practices worldwide, “the local importance of English will only continue to increase” (Vandenbroucke, 2016, p. 104) since “different forms of globalization imply variability in English language use” (Vandenbroucke, 2016, p. 104).

The varying attributions exhibited by English language in different domains indicate that “English as a glocalization index as a hybrid phenomenon, impacting the societal, commercial and linguistic fabric of the global city in divergent ways” (Vandenbroucke, 2016, p. 104). These phenomena echo the “hybridization” and “third space” proposed by Homi Bhabha, which described colonial and postcolonial theories (Shumar, 2010, p. 497). According to these theories, the meaning and characteristics of two cultures interact to create “new social spaces for new discourses and new forms of subjectivities that potentially can be liberatory” (Shumar, 2010, p. 498). Shumar and Bhabha recognize that the English language has played a large role in the colonization of many countries historically which reverberates today as well. There needs to a conscious critique of the role of English in contemporary societies that it be used to build citizenship in positive ways that help to decolonize. The socio-political side of the English language as a tool of colonizers learning needs to be acknowledged.

Smith (1976) defines an international language as “used by people of different nations to communicate with one another” (p. 38). As it turns out, the widespread use of English in global international affairs, socio-political interactions, economics, employment market, and cultural exchanges has fully confirmed its status as an international language, as it allows nations, groups, communities, and individuals across the world to interact. The variety of cultural information this international language carries provides a rich cultural resource for English-based linguistic education. Yet, as recognition of the teaching and learning of English becomes more widely accepted, it becomes clear that “the language belongs to no one culture but, rather, provides the basis for promoting cross-cultural understanding in an increasingly global village”
Understanding and mastering English as an international language is crucial today. What is more important, English language education should highlight a critical awareness of various cultural contexts and social structures. More specifically, it “involves students in learning about and engaging with diverse cultures in ways that recognize commonalities and differences, create connections with others and cultivate mutual respect” (Kalantzis et al., 2016, p. 53).

My Language Experiences in Relation to Second Language Acquisition Theory

Cummins and Davison (2007) point out that “language teaching research and theory have traditionally focused on issues of effectiveness and efficiency” (p. 3) such as what are the optimal methods to improve English performance? When I read this statement in the process of researching this thesis, I thought back to my experience of learning English.

I began learning English in the third grade in the elementary school when it was the compulsory curriculum for school-age students in China around 2006. Learning English was a very new thing for me as a young girl. As a native Chinese learner with English as a second language, I remember learning English was challenging. Chinese and English are two completely different language systems. For example, Chinese characters versus English words in terms of language character representation; Chinese is a tonal language, whereas English has a rhyme system. When faced with an unfamiliar language, the English teacher used “traditional activities,” including “dictation and recitation” (Pica, 2000, p. 12).

Specifically, as a second language learner, I was asked to memorize correct pronunciation and English words in alphabetical order. Subsequently, the teacher evaluated my mastery of the basic knowledge by checking the error rate of the dictated words or phrases. To consolidate my capacity to retain English words, teachers advocated me copying the words from the daily vocabulary list to reinforce their impressions of English words. This approach is based on the old
Chinese proverb that “the palest ink is better than the best memory” (Schwartz et al., 2014, p. 997), namely, that a good memory can be trained through the accumulation of writing. In addition, the teacher continued the “traditional grammar-translation method” (Wang, 2007. p. 92). This method is “teacher-centered, and the main objective is to learn grammar rules and lists of vocabulary,” and it is “focused on reading and writing skills since the communicative aspect [is] not considered important” (Renau, 2016, p. 85). “The sentence is the basic unit of teaching and language practice” for traditional grammar-translation method (Richards & Rodgers, 2014, p. 6). I remember that the teachers imparted the grammar rules, tenses, and irregular forms of verbs through verbal instruction in a single way. The main goal of this course was “devoted to translating sentences into or out of the target language” (Richards & Rodgers, 2014, p. 6).

The teacher emphasized accumulating sentences by asking students to memorize short texts and passages during the grammar learning process. At the same time, I was required to copy English sentences and translate the corresponding Chinese or translate Chinese sentences into English with the correct tense. The teacher assessed whether I had digested the grammar rules by reviewing the accuracy of the sentence translation. Moreover, the objective of a reading course was to figure out the meaning of texts or, more precisely, to infer the author’s intentions. Successful language acquisition was judged by the learner selecting the correct answer on a multiple-choice comprehension test (Kalantzis et al., 2016). The constant cycle of spelling, memorization, translation, and comprehension helped me accumulate a lot of vocabulary and sentences in the beginner stage as a second language learner. However, this process was time-consuming and tedious, and my language acquisition was developing slowly with limited scope for advancement.

With the reform of teaching methods in China, traditional teaching methods are gradually being replaced by the pattern of “more functional-structure, more practice-focused and learner-
centered” (Wang, 2007, p. 92). Unlike my elementary school years, my secondary school years were much more enjoyable and interesting in terms of learning English. The teaching approach at this time was more focused on language learning in a meaningful environment, and English teachers created a variety of classroom activities using different materials. For example, group discussions allowed me and my classmates to share ideas or to discuss a topic through a debate. Then, we engaged in role-playing, an activity in which we simulated real-life language scenarios. This activity not only allowed me to experience and use English in real life, but also immersed me into the atmosphere of life in an English-speaking country. Using mini-presentations, my peers and I could introduce our favorite English movies, songs or celebrities. As a learner, I was asked to speak English when participating in these activities, and the teacher consciously “suppress[ed]” the use of the “native language” in communicative activities (Pica, 2000, p. 5). Meanwhile, my fellow classmates and I were encouraged to express and articulate the difficulties we faced, and educators helped alleviate the problems by guiding and adapting the mode of conversation or interaction between us.

The involvement of “the activities, materials and strategies of communicative methodology have modified the language classroom and shifted its focus from form to function and from teacher to learner” (Pica, 2000, p. 4). Although, as a second language learner, I still needed to capture aspects of the English language through dictation and memorization, these methods are not the main strategies in communicative language learning environments. As Pica (2000) proposed with regards to the communicative method, “linguistic forms and rules are made available to learners in indirect way, through reading and listening to meaningful, comprehensible second language input” (p. 4).

More importantly, contemporary pedagogies like the communicative method construct contextualized language learning environments in which learners obtain a specified level of
linguistic skills, build awareness of the target language, nurture the ability to use English for real conversation, and discover the mystery of different cultures through in-person experiences (Wang, 2007). Simultaneously, the communicative language teaching method emphasizes the development of integrative skills, motivating learners’ interest, exercising their problem-solving skills, collaborative learning, and shaping positive attitudes and personalities (Wang, 2007). This method has faced criticism as well though for not preparing language learners sufficiently through explicit teaching devoted to grammatical foundations.

As the way English is used around the world continues to diversify, English learners are learning this language for a wide range of reasons such as participating in English speech contests, passing English language exams, attending summer school abroad, applying for a degree at an overseas university, or speaking English while travelling or for employment purposes. In the face of this wide range of English learning needs, educational policy and the new curriculum expect English language educators to become “a multi-role educator” (Wang, 2007, p. 101). While educators are constantly innovating and contributing to English language education, time for learning in schools is limited. Thus, it is impossible to support learners’ success in achieving their goals simply by completing the daily classroom tasks and homework.

In my experience in China, with the finite classroom time and learning resources in the school, participating in cram schools and extracurricular English training classes became my auxiliary tool. From my memory and personal experience, the English course out of the school responded more to the requirements of the “new curriculum” (Wang, 2007, p. 100) enacted by Chinese “Ministry of Education” (Wang, 2007, p. 96), which emphasized “teachers’ ability to make good use of modern educational resources and expand the use of multimedia technology in teaching” (Wang, 2007, p. 100). With this approach, the teachers’ teaching philosophy was more integrated with multimedia devices. As an illustration, radio media was used as listening
materials, listening to English songs to practice oral pronunciation, and TED videos as a resource to grasp vocabulary from contexts while expanding learners’ knowledge of different fields. Also, reading English-language magazines and newspapers like *The Economist*, *The New York Times*, and *The Atlantic* offered learners the latest news and a better sense of English-speaking countries’ culture and social life. At the same time, teachers also recommended that learners embrace online learning modes, including e-books, e-version of dictionaries, and online learning software, which enabled learning anytime and anywhere and developed learners’ digital skills.

In other words, my English learning experience represented a shift from educator-centered to learner-centered, singularity to plurality, and uniformity to individualization in language teaching. It is the evolution of literacy pedagogy from traditional to modern.

**The Dynamic Role of Being a Researcher**

In the wake of updated educational systems and curriculum standards, the distinctive cultures, rich texts, compelling videos, and portable online learning software that I had been exposed to during my previous English language learning journeys all fell within the realm of a term: multiliteracies. I was introduced to the notion of multiliteracies for the first time when I enrolled in the master’s course Language, Culture, and Society taught by Dr. Holloway in the second semester. Learning multiliteracies theory through this course, I realized that my English learning journey was a continual multiliteracies learning state.

At present, I am still learning English as a second language. As a master’s student, studying and living in Canada allowed me to enter an unprecedented pattern of immersing myself in the diversity of the English language and using multiple learning ways in the most authentic English settings. This adventure has inspired me to explore the mysteries of the relationship between English language learning and multiliteracies.

This Master’s research is ingrained into The Multiliteracies Project. The title of this larger
The research project is “Multiliteracies for adolescents and adults: Teaching and learning literacy in the 21st century” initiated by Dr. Susan Holloway from the University of Windsor, and Dr. Patricia Gouthro from the Mount Saint Vincent University. The Multiliteracies Project emphasizes applying diversity and multimodality into literacy teaching and learning, advances the use of different modalities in language teaching and learning, promotes the concept of multimedia technology in teaching and learning practices, focuses on the facilitation of language educators’ teaching philosophy to learners, and underlines the comprehensive skill development of learner.

The data for my Master’s study draws upon the data collected by Dr. Holloway and Dr. Gouthro. As a graduate research assistant for Dr. Holloway, I am involved in the Multiliteracies Project. As a research assistant, I had access to several the research sites within The Multiliteracies Project, both traditional classrooms and informal learning spaces. My main responsibilities in The Multiliteracies Project has involved attending interviews, coding interview transcripts, taking field notes, updating information on the Multiliteracies Project web platform, and assisting the entire research team in developing and perfecting the official web platform at https://multiliteraciesproject.com/.

The experience of being a research assistant is committed to active learning and working. My research skills took a quantum leap as I completed my tasks as a novice researcher. As one member of the whole research team, I have witnessed innovative pedagogies in different learning spaces and the intersection of diverse cultures and social ideologies in an inclusive learning environment. As the research project proceeded, I obtained a wealth of knowledge and hands-on experience from the instructors and language educators. Everything I learned as a research assistant helped me conduct this Master’s research and write this thesis with a critical lens and a broad perspective.
In terms of my own positionality, my identity as a graduate student and research assistant during my overseas study period in Canada thus far have greatly influenced my personal English learning journey, which continues moving forward into a broader dimension and a more diverse context. The concept of multiliteracies still occupies an essential role in my ongoing English language learning. Therefore, I wish to explore the connections between multiliteracies and second language learning through this Master’s research.

**Multiliteracies and Language Acquisition**

Literacy has been redefined as a social practice from its past as reading and writing skills (Janks, 2010; Lotherington, 2007). With the advent of the industrial revolution, economic progress, and the information age, complex and dynamic social patterns have overturned the basics of traditional literacy. What is necessary for the era of “multicultural,” “multilingual,” and “digitally infused communities” is “multiple literacies” (Lotherington, 2007, pp. 891-892).

Nevertheless, literacy should not be only viewed as “the accumulation of skills necessary for acceptable test performance or job preparation” (Grant et al., 2007, p. 600). As Janks (2010) asserts, “ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity are now the norm in communities and classrooms across the world” (p. 11). The conditions closely related to access to diversity are identity and power, which are central to the issue of literacy (Janks, 2010). Educators of literacy in the twenty-first century are confronted with students from diverse geographies and backgrounds. Peers may introduce their communities to one another, communicating information about the other’s race, religion, and character. In this case, it is time to consider critical literacy (Grant et al., 2007; Janks, 2010; Lotherington, 2007). Critical literacy, a theory that is closely related to multiliteracies, embeds individuals and teachers in social and cultural contexts and dialogues, allowing individuals involved in educational activities to construct their knowledge base through ongoing reflection during the contextualized learning process. Critical literacy has a
very strong focus on social justice and equity, and the need for literacy and dialogue to give more agency to learners to bring about social justice action that substantially changes the status quo that oppresses them in their daily lives. Multiliteracies is distinct from critical literacies in that it does not insist that some kind of action (writing letters to politicians, taking trips to a marginalized community to beautify a part of the neighbourhood) must occur beyond the classroom walls for students to be engaged in learning about social justice perspectives.

Additionally, variations of language are everywhere in contemporary society. With rapid economic and social development, new languages have entered our working, public, and personal lives (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000). For example, writing memos has been replaced by the email language; new vocabulary emerging with social networking is being included in the dictionary; individuals speak certain phrases on certain occasions. Adapting and learning the variants of a language for communication and creating meaning have become central to literacy education today.

The term “multiliteracies” was coined by the New London Group in 1996, and it pointed the way to adapting to the challenges posed by the changing modes of communication and meaning making. It also established a framework for critical language teaching and learning across a broader range of modes. Multiliteracies refer to two aspects of meaning-making: diversity and multimodality. The New London Group (1996) emphasizes extending the concept and vision of literacy pedagogy to linguistic and cultural diversity. In terms of language diversity, Cope and Kalantzis (2009), original members of the New London Group, challenge the notion that the standard English form should be valued over the plurality of “Englishes” (p. 166) that continue to evolve as a reflection of rich and varied cultural heritages that use a plethora of accents, dialects, and colloquialisms, which point to the vitality of English. According to Kang and Williamson (2014), “learning a second language is a highly valued skill in many cultures,
societies and business environments” (p. 728). With globalization, English, as a universal language, is gradually becoming the dominant choice in second language learning. In tracing its history, Cope and Kalantzis (2009) note that despite the numerous indications that English was becoming a global language, it was also diversifying into multiple Engishes. Likewise, Smith indicated in 1976 that “there is a single English language but many varieties” (p. 38). This means that the language is English, including the “orthography, lexicology, semantics, syntax, [and] the grammar” (Smith, 1976, p. 38). However, people from different regions speak English differently through certain accents, tones, or habits.

The colorful aspects of culture are portrayed through the application and interaction of language. Obviously, everyone’s English utterance is imbued with the tonality and dialect of their native tongue. Sometimes, new words are coined that do not originate from the English-based culture but present certain cultural and social aspects. From a sociocultural perspective, academic and common everyday activities related to the use of language take place in “a cultural, historical, and institutional context” (Díaz-Rico, 2020, p. 62). “Acting appropriately and understanding cultural norms is an important part of the sense of mastery and enjoyment of a language” (Díaz-Rico, 2020, p. 72). Mckay (2000) emphasizes that “teaching culture as difference is also central” in English language education (p. 8). Language learning environments and spaces, “as institutions of learning and socialization, represent the large culture” (Díaz-Rico, 2020, p. 60), in which learning the second or target language “establishes a sphere of interculturality” (Mckay, 2000, p. 8). “Knowledge of the deeper elements of culture—beyond superficial aspects such as food, clothing, holidays, and celebrations—can give teachers a cross-cultural perspective that allows them to educate students to the greatest extent possible” (Díaz-Rico, 2020, p. 60). In a complex and diversified domain, language teaching philosophy should focus on cultivating learners’ critical awareness of distinctions between cultures and fostering
their ability to respect and appreciate various cultures rather than requiring learners to passively “accept the values of another culture” (Mckay, 2000, p. 8).

Furthermore, emerging textual representations and multimedia technologies involve multimodality, which is a key principle of multiliteracies theory (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000). In response to the challenges of increasingly diverse globalization processes to literacy pedagogy, multiliteracies theory expands the traditional forms of written and spoken language “to connect with the culturally and linguistically diverse landscapes and the multimodal texts that are mobilized and circulate across these landscapes” (Jewitt, 2008, p. 245). Kress (2010) claims that multimodality goes beyond language itself and reveals multiple modes of communication and meaning making. The pedagogy of multimodality is designed to engage educators and learners to construct and present meaning using the wide range of “available designs or multiple linguistic and semiotic meaning-making resources” (Ware, 2008, p. 39), “including the symbolic resources of multiple cultures and contexts inside and outside the school” (Ware, 2008, p. 39), in the context of “communicative practices” (Stein & Newfield, 2007, p. 920). “As organized sets of semiotic resources for meaning making” (Jewitt, 2008, p. 246), “image, writing, layout, music, gesture, speech, moving image, soundtrack and 3D objects” are “socially shaped and culturally given” that can be used in “representation and communication” (Kress, 2010, p. 79). Social semiotics analyze communication practices that move beyond focusing solely on the linguistic mode.

The role of the musical modality in literacy is increasingly apparent as well. As a stand-alone modality, it can be used in collaboration with other modalities or as a repository for building musical conversations and creating meaning. Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) stated that musicology is a language that conveys the meaning of music through its terminology and symbols. Music and language have similar characteristics in terms of the materiality of sound.
such as stress, rhythm, timbre, pitch, tense, breath, texture, volume, and vibrato (van Leeuwen, 1999). Similarly, identifying the “pronunciation, intonation, stress, rhythm, and some vocabulary items” could distinguish “American English” or “Singapore English speakers” (Smith, 1976, p. 38).

Subsequently, the close relationship between music and literacy has been detected more widely. Renau (2016) recounted that “intonation and rhythm are the basis” that could help learners “achieve advanced conversational proficiency” (p. 84). This phenomenon could be viewed as a kind of “intermodal” format, which means “elements which link between modes” or “within modes” (Kress, 2010, p. 157). Also, in music improvisation activities in the classroom, students can use different modalities to create new works to achieve “transmodal redesign” (Tomlinson, 2015, p. 553), which means “elements and processes [that] link and reach across modes” (Kress, 2010, p. 157). Moreover, Fonseca-Mora et al. (2011) stated that “music and songs have been shown to be instruments which increase sensibility, aid memory, improve concentration, help develop reading and writing abilities, favour physical development, and give rise to enjoyment when learning” (Melodies in foreign language learning, para. 1).

All in all, from today’s point of view, the old literacy basics of cultivating individuals in a certain sense and for a particular society are narrowly focused in many aspects (Kalantzis et al., 2016). The contemporary needs that already exist in second language teaching and learning can be more widely perceived and witnessed under the guidance of multiliteracies.

**Purpose Statement**

The New London Group coined the term “multiliteracies” in 1996 in relation to the fact, as they argued, our changing lifeworld, changing words, and changing demands require people to “engage with the multiplicity of communication channels and media” (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000, p. 5), and to create meaning through increasingly multimodal channels (Cope & Kalantzis,
This term “multiliteracies” aims to create a learner-oriented, inclusive, and participatory learning atmosphere where learners can realize the “salience” (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000, p. 5) of change and diversity of cultural and the “globalization connectedness” (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000, p. 6). Therefore, understanding the impact of music on literacy and multiliteracies in English as a second language learning environments is vital for at least three reasons.

First, “diversity is pivotal in today’s lifeworld” (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009, p. 173). The differences in texts vary enormously depending on the social context in which we interact in our daily lives and make and participate in meanings (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000). Language and music allow us to experience these differences. Specifically, language provides cultural insights into music, including the stories, myths, and customs of different societies; music works as a window into the target language’s culture, and its content and style reflect specific cultural values and ideologies. In a society with mobility, complexity, and connections to different backgrounds, attention to language learners’ communication flexibility and cross-cultural understanding is crucial to second language teaching and learning.

Second, meaningful communication is a multimodal construct with a substantial musical component (Stansell, 2005). In daily communication, conversation and interaction involve verbal language, messages conveyed through body language, music-related pronunciation, and intonation. In relation to literacy, learning no longer relies on written mode but places more emphasis on the learner’s acquiring extra or unfamiliar knowledge by designing a combination of different modes, like lyrics to a song or oral-written-visual texts of famous orchestral music. In a dynamic language environment, examining learners’ abilities as meaning “makers and remakers of signs and transformers of meaning” is crucial (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009, p. 175).

Third, “if we are to have ‘new learners,’ we need nothing less than ‘new teachers’” (Kalantzis et al., 2016, p. 10). To be specific, the new teachers are designers of learning
environments for engaged students, professionals with authoritative sources of knowledge, pioneers adapting to Internet design and delivery platforms, and tutors to offer individualized strategies to those in need. Educators are the guides of language learning and multiliteracies; thus, scrutinizing educators’ instructional design is one of the goals of this research.

The purpose of this thesis is to explore whether learners’ literacy and multiliteracies can be positively facilitated when music is used in English as a second language teaching and learning settings. Through observation, investigation, and analysis at different research sites, the Master’s study also focuses on how to enrich language teaching through music and what inspirations music as a modality brings to second language learning.

**Research Questions**

In order to expound upon multiliteracies and multimodality theories, this Master’s study will examine the development of learners’ language acquisition and multiliteracies competence from three dimensions: language educators, learners, and modes of music. These questions are a subset of the main questions that have shaped the larger SSHRC research study.

In the educator’s dimension:

1. How do educators select musical works to meet learners’ language learning needs and accommodate their music literacy?

2. When music is used in language classrooms, how can teachers critically address important questions about the link between culture, language, and identity?

In the learners’ dimension:

1. Does music as a learning tool in second language learning improve the learner’s ability to solve problems independently, be creative, collaborate with others, think critically, and have excellent oral and written skills?
2. Can students use the skills and knowledge they learn in class to keep learning the language outside classrooms and apply it into their everyday lives?

From the musical dimension (considered internally and externally):

1. Which modes are popular with learners when used with musical works?
2. What role does multimodality of musical works play in language learning and multiliteracies?

**Thesis Structure**

The first chapter, which is the Introduction, clarifies the background, purpose, and specific research questions of this Master’s study. The following is a brief overview of the remaining chapters of this Master’s thesis:

Chapter 2 is the Literature Review. In this chapter, the search engines for searching literature are listed. In addition, this chapter overviews the past and current worldwide research on the relationship between music and language, the multimodal forms of both, and the role of music in the acquisition of a second language, organized according to three themes.

Chapter 3 is the Theoretical Framework. The development of multiliteracies theory and its pedagogy, the representations of multimodality from a social semiotic perspective, and sociocultural theory are introduced in this chapter, laying the framework for the forthcoming research and analysis.

Chapter 4 is the Methodology. This chapter describes the parameters of The Multiliteracies Project and then identifies the parameters involved in this Master’s research. The research methods, data collection, coding, and analysis used in this small study are also presented.

Chapter 5 is the Findings and Discussion. The chapter presents the phenomena observed at several research sites. It also scrutinizes educators’ pedagogical philosophies and learners’ learning performances when working with musical modalities from the perspectives of
multiliteracies, multimodality, and sociocultural theories.

Chapter 6 is the Conclusion. Here the research intentions of the Master’s study will be reiterated, and the implications of the research are summed up. Some insights for the future practice of teaching and learning English as a second language combined with music will be brought to light.
CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

Music has been integral to human life from ancient times to the present, facilitating emotional, spiritual, and cultural exchanges. With the development and establishment of the multiliteracies theory, literacy education has emphasized incorporating a wider variety of teaching and learning approaches. Educational pioneers and educators have considered music as a mode of instruction and implemented it in language classrooms. A substantial body of research has also started to investigate the impacts of music as a learning tool on learners’ language development and the implications for language instruction in second-language learning environments.

This literature review studies international research on the potential contribution and positive influence of musical modality on English as a second language education and learning across three themes. To be more specific, I will first examine the relationship between language and music and make connections to illustrate that there is a firm empirical basis for music as an aid to language acquisition to justify the research theme from an academic point of view. Second, I will analyze how a wealth of research and practice supports music’s contribution to multiliteracies. Third, some of the specific dimension of multimodality in music and its integration with other modalities to construct meaning and communication will be outlined.

Literature Search and Selection

Through the lens of multiliteracies and multimodality, the thesis examines how to teach and learn English as a second language. This research defines music as a pedagogical tool in language education contexts and focuses on music’s internal and external modalities. Exploring these correlations brings out complex relationships among music, English teaching and learning, literacy, and multiliteracies. Therefore, the search in databases involved looking for peer
reviewed articles and books, distinguishing and considering the relationship between different parameters that were focused on, such as music and English language education, the relationship between music and literacy, the relationship between music and multiliteracies in English language settings, and the various modalities of music in the English classroom.

The articles and books were searched through several databases, including Google Scholar, Leddy Library of the University of Windsor, Google Books, Educational Resources Information (ERIC), Wiley Online Library, Journal Storage (JSTOR), and ProQuest. These databases provided a platform to find relevant sources, and they were easily accessible and contained a variety of reliable resources. ERIC is a centre dedicated to literature related to the field of education, which aligns with the direction of this Master’s research and thesis preparation. Other databases contained research and resources from a variety of disciplines, providing a solid foundation for the interdisciplinary composition of this thesis. As an explanation, research on music for language acquisition and instruction is not restricted to education; it can also be conducted and studied in the fields of musicology and music therapy, which encompass expertise from psychology and medicine. These extended searches proved fruitful in explaining the positive benefits of music to individuals with special needs, such as those with autism, dyslexia, traumatic brain injury, or other neurological disorders. Clinical practice has uncovered that music provides potent and effective support in language learning and development, cognitive construction, maintenance of personal memory, emotional regulation, treatment and rehabilitation of diseases, and interpersonal skill building (Clements-Cortès, 2012; Ettlinger et al., 2011; Haase, 2012; Kraus & Slater, 2015). Insights and implications from the application of music in clinical contexts provide a valuable reference for the progression and data analysis of this Master’s research.

After identifying the above search engines, the literature search relied on several keywords
and phrases, such as “music and multiliteracies,” “music and English language learning,” “music and literacy,” “music and multimodality.” These keywords did help find some relevant literature. However, from the perspective of my own research, the problem was that some literature had been studied in music classrooms or music learning contexts rather than in language learning environments or English classrooms. Some writing had looked at music and the development of minority languages, which ostensibly had nothing to do with learning English. Subsequently, the keywords were adjusted through Boolean operators, such as “AND” and “OR” which were used to refine, filter, and narrow the search scope for more specific literature. For example, firstly, for AND, the term “multiliteracies” was used with AND “English learning” AND “music,” while “multimodality” was used with AND “music” AND “second language learning.” Secondly, for OR, the term “English language learning” was used with OR “second language classrooms,” “the use of music” was used with OR “music as a learning tool,” and “multimodality” was used with OR “multimodal approaches.” Additionally, the “NOT” of the Boolean operators might be used to emphasize one aspect. For example, it emphasized “English language learning settings” instead of “music education.”

The articles and books were reviewed again after locating the relevant resources. Reading abstracts, keywords, and subheadings was the primary method for reviewing articles. Book reviews involved reading the preface or introduction and the table of contents. Indexes in books were used to retrieve keywords and terms to locate specific pages. In the review of the selected literature, the following questions were considered.

1. Whether the research is conducted in an English or second language educational setting?

2. How the framework of multiliteracies theory is referred to balance the relationship between music and language teaching and learning?
3. Which elements and modalities pertain to musicality were described as influential in language teaching and learning?

When the above questions were answered and matched, the resources appropriate for the literature review could be determined.

All selected literature covered the support of multiliteracies theory for language teaching and learning, exploring the potential influence of music for language education from a social semiotic perspective. As aforementioned, this literature review defined three themes to describe previous and contemporary research on music in English as a second language education from an international perspective.

**Relationship Between Music and Language**

The evolution and development of music and language have been inextricably linked for thousands of years. The ancient Greeks believed that music implied language, and Plato, the ancient Greek philosopher, himself considered tunes without words to be a sign of a lack of true artistic taste (Stansell, 2005). Hence, the ancient Greeks recognized the close relationship between language and music. From a social anthropological point of view, music, like language, is a universal human phenomenon that non-humans do not possess (Jackendoff, 2009; Patel, 2003).

A significant number of scholars have tried to figure out the mystery of music and language (Fonseca-Mora et al., 2011; Jackendoff, 2009, 2011; Patel, 2003). The connections and disconnections between music and language can be known from the following aspects. To begin with, “both language and music require substantial memory capacity for storing representation” (Jackendoff, 2009, p. 196). Language representation consists of thousands of words, phrases, slang, and some languages and dialects from minority groups. The basic characteristics of the language underlie the creation of advanced representations, such as literary works, magazines,
news, and information on advertisements. Similarly, musical vocabulary includes the various clefs, key signatures, notes, rests, and performance marks such as sharp or flat, arpeggio, trill, and tempo marks. The essential musical elements provide the composer with rich materials to arrange melodies that can be presented in various genres, such as Sonata, Canon, Toccata, Nocturne, and a series of others.

Meanwhile, Patel in 2003 indicated that the “combinatorial principles” of language and music “operate at multiple levels” instead of “creat[ing] by the haphazard juxtaposition of basic elements” (p. 674). For instance, a linguistic sequence consists of words, phrases, and sentences, and syntax in language refers to the notion of reference and predication inside the sentences (Patel, 2003). The chords, chord progressions, and keys in music are necessary to form a musical sequence. Syntax in music means “the pattern of tension and resolution experienced as the music unfolds in time” (Patel, 2003, p. 674).

In addition, both language and music need the “ability to integrate stored representations combinatorially in working memory by means of a system of rules or structural schemata” (Jackendoff, 2009, p. 196). Firstly, the representational concept of pitch exists both in language and music, but they have individual pitch structures. Sounds in language construct a structured space of timbres regulated by how vowels and consonants are uttered in the vocal tract (Jackendoff, 2009; Jackendoff, 2011). Unlike language, “the organization of sound is built around a tonal pitch space, a fixed collection of pitches whose stability is determined in relation to a tonic pitch” (Jackendoff, 2011, p. 106). Additionally, language and music “are both structured rhythmically by similar metrical systems” (Jackendoff, 2011, p. 107). However, there are some nuances. In language, the “minimal metrical unit is syllables, a sequence of speech sounds which corresponds to a beat in the metrical grid” (Jackendoff, 2011, p. 107). In music, “a single note in music can subtend multiple beats, and a beat can be subdivided by multiple notes”
Subsequently, music and language adhere to a predetermined pattern by using words or musical notes to compose a sentence or melody (Fonseca-Mora et al., 2011). To be specific, “linguistic utterances are built up from words and syntax,” and sentences consist entirely of words and grammatical rules (Jackendoff, 2009, p. 200). For music, “pieces of music are built up from individual tones,” “conventionalized sound patterns,” “standard forms of cadences,” and “prolongational structure” (Jackendoff, 2009, p. 200).

Moreover, language and music convey thoughts and affect (Jackendoff, 2009; Jackendoff & Lerdahl, 2006). In terms of music, different kinds of music are correlated with particular sentiments. For example, “lullabies convey a sense of soothing intimacy;” “religious music conveys transcendence and spirituality;” and “songs that are sung in collective situations such as around a campfire or in a bar” are “to instill a sense of fellowship” (Jackendoff, 2009, pp. 197-198). Music also involves a broader type of affective experience such as admiration for the virtuosity of the musician or performer, and familiar melodies evoke nostalgic feelings (Jackendoff & Lerdahl, 2006). In terms of language, expressions can directly convey feelings, like “I love you” conveys a sense of love (Jackendoff, 2011, p. 105); I feel you, which conveys a sense of empathy.

Furthermore, “music and language both involve creating expectations of what is to come” (Jackendoff, 2009, p. 196). From the linguistic aspect, listeners’ expectations will decline as the speaker’s pitch and frequency decrease (Patel, 2008). From the musical aspect, “when a musical melody is stopped at a point at which it sounds incomplete, listeners typically have expectations for what the next note will be, even when the melody is unfamiliar” (Patel, 2008, p. 196). Expectations arise from “learning of style-specific aspects of music” and “from piece-specific musical regularities” (Patel, 2008, p. 306). Either expectation is an internal conversation of the ego and the interaction between the individual and the external linguistic or musical qualities;
thus, the expectation has been regarded as “an important process in creating formal meaning” (Petal, 2008, p. 306).

Furthermore, the “combinations of music and language are ubiquitous” (Jackendoff, 2011, p. 105). Take poetry as the first example, “poetic and musical meter may appropriately be regarded as formally and cognitively equivalent” (Lerdahl, 2001, p. 340). Meanwhile, linguistic utterances closer to the metrical character of music could be linked by using isochrony and strict rhythm (Jackendoff, 2009). “Poetry project[s] its common heritage with music,” such as “duration patterns, prosodic hierarchy, and stress,” and “through the addition to ordinary speech of metrical and timbral patterning” (Lerdahl, 2001, pp. 352-353). Second, “the odes of praise and stories of the tribe were passed on through song so that the texts would not be forgotten before the written word developed” (Engh, 2013, p. 114). Third, language lays the literary foundation for the composition of musical works. For example, “some operas were stories based on historic events, like Tosca” (Kao & Oxford, 2014, p. 116). “Some musical works were adapted from existing poems, like one of the most famous musicals of the twentieth century, Cats” (Kao & Oxford, 2014, p. 116).

In addition to the relationship between music and human language development, the connection with the language development of the individual is also noteworthy. The mother tongue is an indispensable skill for every human being, and the acquisition of the mother tongue begins at conception and grows with everyone. Fonseca-Mora et al. (2011) indicated that “it is only through prosody that a language becomes accessible to a child” (Melodies in L1 acquisition, para. 1). The reason is that, as one of the most basic prosodic characteristics, intonation “provides the key to the perception of word stress and the recognition of sentence structure,” which is “particularly evident in the early phases of L1[first language] acquisition” (Fonseca-Mora et al., 2011, Melodies in L1 acquisition, para. 1).
In fact, studies that explore the melodies in first language acquisition by taking infants as subjects have been conducted by many researchers (Kisilevsky et al., 2004; Lecanuet et al., 1993, 2000; Trehub et al., 1993; Winkler et al., 2009). Lecanuet et al., in 1993, conducted a quantitative experiment to “investigate whether near-term human fetuses (36–39 weeks gestational age) can discriminate between a male and a female voice uttering the same short sentence” (p. 218). There were 96 women with uncomplicated pregnancies were involved in this study and directed to sit in a reclining armchair. “A loudspeaker” was “placed 20 cm above the maternal abdomen” to play the male and female utterances recorded in advance; simultaneously, “the transducer of a Doppler cardiotocography was located on the abdomen so as to pick up the best quality fetal heart rate without missing data” (Lecanuet et al., 1993, p. 219). Fetal heart rate changes were observed by playing the voices of the same gender or different gender to the experimental and control groups, respectively (Lecanuet et al., 1993). The study detected that the fetus “exposed to the voice change showed mostly decelerative heart rate modifications” (Lecanuet et al., 1993, p. 224). By contrast, “the no voice change subjects mostly displayed HR (heart rate) accelerations and no HR (heart rate) modification” (Lecanuet et al., 1993, p. 224). Hence, this investigation confirms that fetuses can differentiate between male and female voices (Lecanuet et al., 1993).

Following the framework, methodology, and study procedures in 1993, Lecanuet et al. implemented a new experiment in 2000 to examine whether term fetuses could distinguish between two low-pitched piano notes, D4 and C5, working with 138 healthy fetuses between 35 and 39 weeks of gestation. The experiment was conducted on four randomly divided groups of fetuses with two sound stimuli, including D5 to C4, C4 to D5, twice D5, and twice C4 (Lecanuet et al., 2000). The loudspeaker and Doppler cardiotocograph placement are the same as in 1993. Quantitative analysis of the data manifested that “90% of the fetuses who had responded to the
initial onset of a musical note with a heart rate deceleration responded with another heart rate
deceleration when the note changed” (Lecanuet et al., 2000, p. 35). In contrast, fetal heart rates
that heard the same notes did not show a decrease in response (Lecanuet et al., 2000). Therefore,
the experiment answers the question of this study that the fetus can distinguish the musical notes
D4 and C5 (Lecanuet et al., 2000).

Subsequently, Kisilevsky et al. (2004) studied the maturation of the fetal response to music
through an experiment in which 122 low-risk pregnant women with fetuses between 28 and 38
weeks were recruited for the study. The musical stimulus, “a 5-minute piano recording of
Brahms’ lullaby” (Kisilevsky et al., 2004, p. 550), was played “at an average sound level of 95
dB, 100 dB, 105 dB, or 110 dB through a loudspeaker located about 10 or 20 centimetres above
the maternal abdomen” (Kisilevsky et al., 2004, p. 553). Based on a quantitative analysis of the
study results, Kisilevsky et al. (2004) concluded that “fetuses in all age groups showed some
heart rate response to the music stimulus” and “term fetuses responded with an increase in heart
rate over a 2-minute period to their mothers’ voices and a similar decrease to a stranger’s voice,
both delivered at 95 dB” (p. 556). Simultaneously, this experiment also illustrates that “near-term
fetuses can show an increase in body movements when hearing music” (Kisilevsky et al., 2004,
p. 556), and “fetuses were aware that the music was different from the ongoing background
uterine sounds that have a rhythmic quality” (Kisilevsky et al., 2004, p. 557). Thus, the response
of the fetus toward music in the external maternal environment was substantiated in this
experiment.

Fetal awareness of melody during first language acquisition following birth has also
attracted the interest of researchers. Trehub et al. (1993) advised that “speech and music
processing may be linked in infancy in ways that go beyond the obvious sharing of reception and
production channels” (p. 2). To illustrate this point, Trehub (1993) noticed that most of the
maternal vocal behavior is musical or melodic from the infant’s perspective, e.g., pitch, intonation, accent, and rhythm. In the meantime, Trebub (1993) detected that “emotion could be regarded as a quality that permeates music and speech” (p. 3), and through simulated pitch contour tests, infants were found to have “exhibited more positive affect when listening to approving than to prohibiting utterances” (p. 16). After that, in 2009, Winkler et al. tested a sound sequence on 14 healthy sleeping neonates to understand the “perceptual capabilities” of infants (p. 2468). The sound stimulus is “based on a typical 2-measure rock drum accompaniment pattern composed of snare, bass, and hi-hat” (Winkler et al., 2009, p. 2468). After analysis of the data, the researcher extrapolated that “it is possible that neonates form a detailed representation of the base pattern” and “segregated the sounds delivered by the 3 instruments” (Winkler et al., 2009, p. 2469). Accordingly, this quantitative research verified that “violating the beat of rhythmic sound sequence is detected by the brain of newborn infants” (Winkler et al., 2009, p. 2470). In the same period, Fonseca-Mora (2000) observed the “highly repetitive” nature of “mother talk, also called parental or caretaker talk” (p. 149). In the same way, Engh (2013) provided a view that songs sung by mothers and other caregivers, nursery rhymes, and lullabies are the primary resources for first language input to encourage memorization and language acquisition when sufficient repetition occurs.

Language and music have always been connected. This has been true since the beginning of human society. This linkage has inspired scholars to explore how human language learning and music interact. Prior research and analyses have revealed that humans, from fetuses to toddlers, can perceive music throughout the first stages of language acquisition.

**Music Contributes to Language Literacy and Multiliteracies**

Acquiring a first language is the initial step in human development and growth. The path of globalization reflects the substantial demand for languages. The communication and knowledge
economies of the 21st century have imposed new expectations on the educational system. “Literacy is increasingly pluralized in educational discourse” (Jewitt, 2008, p. 244). One of the current foci of literacy education is acquiring a second language and comprehending diverse linguistic varieties and representations.

A large body of previous studies has focused on the bidirectional relationship of music and language, which drives the rise of literacy and multiliteracies in second language learners (Froehlich, 1985; Kang & Williamson, 2014; Murphey, 1990; Tremblay-Beaton, 2015). From the initial acquisition dimension, music effectively taps into learners’ memory capacity, directing them to basic language skills. Through analysis of the voices that wander through the minds of English language learners after listening, Murphey (1990) concluded that many “song lyrics have a similar discourse structure to that of internal speech” (p. 59). This phenomenon is a hook that our minds grab onto to repeat linguistic elements and “allows us to use them more advantageously for things we want to stick in our minds” (Murphey, 1990, p. 61). Failoni conducted similar research on music in target language learning in 1993 and noted that “folksongs and children’s songs often will contain the desired grammar point and vocabulary and include many repetitive phrases” (p. 99). From an analysis of music clips used in language teaching, Failoni (1993) uncovered that “pitches and melodies, rhymes, and beats and measured phrases” in music “may help students remember vocabulary or grammatical structures and aid in comprehending the general meaning” (p. 101). Further explanation was given by Failoni (1993), that is, “many people often remember rhyme, rhythm or melody better than ordinary speech” (p. 98). In addition, Failoni (1993) advised that “it may be helpful to use songs written expressly for teaching” since the “vocabulary is controlled and usually categorized” in teaching music and that such songs are “suitable for older as well as younger students” (pp. 99-100). Regarding finding the musical materials, Failoni (1993) pointed out that “a few publishers and individuals have
created music tapes with texts and activities or suggestions” (p. 99). These materials could be referred to as teaching music, as textbooks do not always include music resources in language practice (Failoni, 1993).

Two Years later, Wilcox (1995) investigated the influences of classroom singing and music cues on target language pronunciation memory of 50 adult second language learners in second language acquisition. Through a treatment-control experiment, pronunciation clarity was found to improve in both groups post-test compared to the pre-test, indicating that musical cues assist pronunciation memory (Wilcox, 1995). In another study, Fonseca-Mora (2000) proposed that “each language has its own intonation and its own tonal and rhythmic properties” (p. 149). These elements are important for acquiring a language through interaction since learners can obtain “not only the musicality of each language but also the necessary communication skills” (Fonseca-Mora, 2000, p. 149). During this period, Fonseca-Mora (2000) suggested that language students can “improve their pronunciation skills while singing, but at the same time the repetitive lyrics in songs have a positive impact on students’ language acquisition levels” (p. 151).

From the dimension of language proficiency development, music facilitates learners’ advancement and mastery of language abilities (Failoni, 1993; Holck, 2004; Tomlinson, 2015). In a quantitative experiment, Kang and Williamson (2014) tested second language learners’ ability to recall words and phrases and found that learners who received music CDs performed better than learners whose CDs did not have background music. The “rhythmic flow of music” they indicated “can help in developing a temporal structure to aid linguistic processing” (Kang & Williamson, 2014, p. 738). Kraus and Slater (2015) explained, “rhythm provides a “temporal map” with signposts to the most likely locations of meaningful input” when natural speech is given a musical rhythm (p. 209). Our brain can use temporal patterns to extract the desired information from speech cues. Moreover, Froehlich (1985) has confirmed that aural
comprehension and spelling can be improved through a modified cloze procedure using songs, such as “popular songs,” “Christmas songs, national anthems, operettas, and selections from classical pieces” (p. 51). Froehlich (1985) used “the cloze procedure as a teaching device,” requiring students to fill in the space with words by listening to the recording after reading the unaltered and altered versions (p. 50). The test yielded that “students can improve their pronunciation through the mastery of sound-symbol correspondence” by hearing and reading while enhancing “their ability to comprehend the spoken language as well as their reading proficiency” through “the interaction of sight and sound” (Froehlich, 1985, p. 50). Fonseca-Mora et al. (2011) commented that over time learners might have difficulty mastering a second language when they are unable “to distinguish between the phonemes and intonation which differentiate the target language from the mother tongue” (Songs, para. 2). In this case, Fonseca-Mora et al. (2011) also recommended a necessary exercise in learning a new language, namely, “listening to songs and singing them improves listening skills in a foreign language” (Songs, para. 2). Brewer and Campbell’s (1991) findings resonate with this approach, saying that the experience of listening to music in a learning context is different from that in a concert or home entertainment environment. An explanation is that, in the learning situation, “the music is used for its ability to assist the flow of information and to entrain the learner into a positive learning state” and “educates the learners in listening skills and the refined architecture of sound” (Brewer & Campbell, 1991, p. 231).

When it comes to cultivating a “new learner” (Kalantzis et al., 2016, p. 10) in line with multiliteracies pedagogy, music’s social bonding effect reflects that musical activities promote social interaction in the language learning environment and that music reinforces what is shared among individuals (Kraus & Slater, 2015). Cores-Bilbao et al. (2019) elucidated that melody and rhythm help create an engaging and delightful learning environment that encourages language
learners to participate and elevate expression and communication sensitivity (Tomlinson, 2015). In response to the above views, Cores-Bilbao et al. (2019) demonstrated through qualitative experiments that in a language classroom with music, students showed motivation in teamwork, and they were able to demonstrate flexibility by overcoming obstacles, as well as realize the importance of listening to and respecting each other’s opinions and providing feedback on their work to peers to fulfill the role of agency. Indeed, healthy interaction between individuals benefits from the pleasant atmosphere created by music. On the role of music in achieving learning goals, Brewer & Campbell (1991) indicated that:

Music can be used to relax the body and mind yet activate attention, so there is more ease and trust in the learning process. Music assists in the focus, concentration, and ability to learn new words, sounds, and meanings. (p. 231)

The inclusion of music in the second language classroom is a valuable tool for enhancing linguistic competence (Fonseca-Mora et al., 2011). Therefore, music can be integrated into every language teaching practice and learning space (Fonseca-Mora et al., 2011; Tomlinson, 2015).

Additionally, the profound relationship between music and language enables creative teachers and therapists to use them concurrently to improve language learning outcomes (Stansell, 2005). Music therapy is recognized as an effective treatment method for individuals who suffer from communication disabilities (Holck, 2004; Wigram & Gold, 2006). “Language and communicative difficulties are of central importance in autism spectrum disorders” (Eigsti et al., 2011, p. 682). Research and real-life cases show that individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) can benefit from music therapy. In 2010, Lim experimented with 50 children with ASD, aged 3 to 5. A total of three types of training were designed for this experiment, and participants were randomly assigned to one of three: “music training, speech training and no-training” (Lim, 2010, p. 2). The materials used in the experiment were 36 functional vocabularies
used by 3-year-old children in daily interactions. The music stimulus was watching “a music video containing 6 songs and pictures of the 36 target words” (Lim, 2010, p. 2). “The same texts for the six songs used in the music stimuli were used for the six stories in the speech stimuli,” which had been recorded and would be presented through television (Lim, 2010, p. 12). Participants assigned to no training received no treatment (Lim, 2010). After three days of tests, the researchers did a quantitative analysis of the data and then reached a conclusion. Lim (2010) clarified that “music and speech training are effective for enhancing speech production, including semantics, phonology, pragmatics, and prosody in children with ASD” (p. 18). Still, the findings illustrated that music helps children with ASD acquire functional vocabulary (Lim, 2010). Most importantly, Lim found that “music training resulted in greater improvement in speech production compared to speech training, in particular for low functioning children with ASD” (p. 20). This study also detected that “3- to 5-year-old children with ASD perceived the organized musical patterns in songs,” thus, they “are able to transform the information perceived with musical pattern into speech patterns” (Lim, 2010, pp. 19-20).

An additional attention-grabbing case is about United States Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords’ recovery through music therapy. Gabrielle Giffords “had serious damage to the left hemisphere of her brain being shot in an attempted assassination” (Holmes, 2012, p. 486). However, “most language functions take place” in the left hemisphere of the brain (Clements-Cortès, 2012, p. 38). According to reports from ABC News, Giffords suffered from aphasia because of this gunshot wound (Moisse et al., 2011). “By layering the words on the melody and rhythm,” Giffords’ brain was trained (Moisse et al., 2011, para. 2), and Giffords gradually built an alternative route to language through some “ditties,” such as “Happy Birthday,” “American Pie,” and her favorite “Brown Eyed Girl” (Moisse et al., 2011, para. 21). Eventually, Giffords “regained her speaking ability” (Clements-Cortès, 2012, p. 38) and could “sing ordinary
phrases,” and “eventually come to articulate with the natural rhythm of speech” (Holmes, 2012, p. 486). As Giffords’ music therapist, Meaghan Morrow, stated, “music is that other road to get back to language” (Moisse et al., 2011, para. 3). Meanwhile, Kraus and Slater (2015) summarized that “auditory expertise with music and language can strengthen many of the same aspects of neural sound encoding” through analysis of clinical practice (p. 216). They also concluded that patients with dyslexia showed “improved language processing following short-term training,” providing evidence that “music-based interventions may also be effective in the treatment of language disorders” (Kraus & Slater, 2015, p. 216).

Moreover, in response to the importance attributed to multimodality and linguistic and cultural diversity embedded within multiliteracies pedagogy, music is a potentially rich resource for language classrooms because “music lies at the intersection of cultural, historical, social, and linguistic studies” (Campbell, 2016, p. 100). Jackendoff (2009) declared that “every culture has a local variant of language, and every culture has a local variant of music” (p. 196). He also believed that “in every culture, language and music can be combined in song” (Jackendoff, 2009, p. 196). In other words, linguistic diversity is deeply sensed when individuals are exposed to musical activities due to “linguistic differences appear in regional variations and dialects in songs from different countries” (Failoni, 1993, p. 102).

To explain further, non-native speakers listening to English songs may stimulate their investment in English learning. “Not only can students imitate singers to achieve native-like pronunciation,” but also can become familiar with various “accents and regional dialects” (Kennedy, 2014, p. 296), like modern English-language pop songs in which British singers sing with distinctly British pronunciation. In the same way, “rap and hip-hop songs are often recorded in authentic dialects, complete with idioms, colloquialisms, and slang, sparking an interest in other cultures” (Kennedy, 2014, p. 297). Additionally, both language and music include invented
signals and terms. For instance, free musical dynamics could be presented in more precise notation, such as *mp* and *mf*, in the musical scores (van Leeuwen, 1999). These notations are essentially Italian abbreviations, yet they serve as a musical language cueing the musicians to control the instrument’s volume. Further, songs “represent a literary genre in themselves” (Abrate, 1983, p. 11). Listening to and experiencing musical works composed on the theme of *Romeo and Juliet*, individuals can appreciate the artistic conception and charm of Shakespeare’s dramatic works while knowing “the idea of love in the Western tradition” (Cheung, 1999, p. 480).

Furthermore, music is a culture-bond phenomenon as “culture and cultural elements are often present” in musical works (Fonseca-Mora et al., 2011, Songs, para. 3). Earlier findings from a study of infants’ speech processing revealed that, in addition to similar prosodic form and emotional resonance between language and song, songs functionally engage listeners’ perception “across cultures” (Trehub et al., 1993, p. 11). Besides, musical works are “products of the socio-cultural context from within which they were conceived” (Walker, 2001, p. 15), and the process of music-making reflects varied cultural and societal perspectives on music’s meaning (Barton & Riddle, 2022). “Musical style from other countries is a good point of departure to explore another culture” (Failoni, 1993, p. 103). In the meantime, the messages conveyed by the melody and the “lyrics” can help learners understand its culture (Kennedy, 2014, p. 296). For example, when second language learners listen to the song from Disney’s movie “Mulan” (Kennedy, 2014, p. 301), they can build a sense of Chinese culture through the feelings of melodies and reading lyrics. When educators play music composed by Indigenous peoples in the language classroom, learners can better understand Indigenous groups’ culture and history, including conventions, religions, and rituals. Most importantly, musical compositions can connect learners to cultures they are unfamiliar with, which is essential for developing learners’ intercultural
competence and foundational skills and motivation to become successful in second language learning. For instance, “experiences that underscore music from cultures with painful histories,” including “the music practices of war-torn cultures” (Campbell, 2016, p. 108). Music from different countries and cultures enhances learners’ “awareness of different ways of thinking” (Kennedy, 2014, p. 296), connects them to various cultures, and leads them to respect the cultural value systems expressed in music on a global scale. In this sense, music juxtaposed in relation to second language learning contributes in important ways to the exploration of one of the multiliteracies theoretical framework’s primary tenets: recognizing the importance of cultural and linguistic diversity in societies through conscious, inclusive pedagogical choices.

Several contemporary studies have explored the role of multiliteracies and multimodality in literacy development. Using urban South African children’s musical games as the subject of a study, Harrop-Allin (2017) explored “children’s musicality” in terms of “the concept of multimodality” and how this musicality can be a formal learning resource through the lens of multimodality and multiliteracies (p. 25). The qualitative study was conducted in three elementary schools in Soweto with students between 9 and 13 who spoke multiple South African languages. Harrop-Allin (2017) collected data during a six-month field study using “visual, aural, and written documentation,” “observations,” and “informal interviews with teachers and unstructured, informal interviews with children in focus groups” (p. 30). Through analysis of the data, the researcher found that “children capitalize on the aptness of language and movement for creating rhythmic chants, clapping patterns, and playing the “freeze” game” (Harrop-Allin, 2017, p. 33). For example, the rhyme of the word “Chocolatey” corresponds to the syncopated rhythm of South Africa, while the “children make a range of body sculptures, clap the beat, and chant word rhythms that produce a kwaiito rhythm in cross-rhythm with their dance steps” (Harrop-Allin, 2017, p. 40). Also, when the rhythmic pattern of “Tiny Thukhutela” is chanted, one child
dances in the middle of the circle, and other children clap while chanting the rhythm. In the meantime, children demonstrated the meaning of this rhythm “by rolling [their] hands and arms around each other” (Harrop-Allin, 2017, p. 35). From the study, the researcher concluded that “combining gesture, clapping, and rhythmic chanting relates closely to children’s cooperative musicality” (Harrop-Allin, 2017, p. 38) and that language, gesture, and dance as semiotic resources support the children’s multimodal musicality.

Although Harrop-Allin’s (2017) study was conducted in a multilingual South African context, the association between language and rhythm and the match between rhythm and gesture and dance have demonstrated the multimodal musicality characteristic of the child and the correlation between language and musicality elements. With the findings and inspiration of this study, musical games are also helpful in English-based learning environments since “multiliteracies pedagogy provides a way of accessing and utilizing children’s musical practices and abilities to create new learning in new artistic or musical contexts” (Harrop-Allin, 2017, p. 43). It is worthwhile to explore and discover the valuable gestures and dances that match certain English words during language learning to facilitate the dynamic of English language teaching and learning, as English has distinct rhythmic patterns.

Later, in 2019, Drewry et al. designed a qualitative case study to explore the impact of a 6th-grade student named Hannah’s demonstrated “extensive engagement with multiliteracies at home” on traditional print-based literacy learning in the classroom (p. 61). The study used semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and work samples to gather data about Hannah’s literacy experiences. After communicating with Hannah’s teacher, the researchers knew Hannah had a mild intellectual disability. From the interview with Hannah, the study explained that Hannah was aware of her reading, spelling, and writing difficulties. The researchers found during the interview that although Hannah had trouble comprehending the story of reading materials,
she was able to apply “the Internet for search and assistance,” such as “us[ing] Google to facilitate her comprehension when navigating difficult texts” (Drewry et al., 2019, p. 66).

Besides, there were several multiliteracies phenomena that Hannah preferred. First, Hannah “liked to use technology to write,” for example, “Pages and Keynotes” on the iPad (Drewry et al., 2019, p. 66). Second, she used the iPad to draw through the art app “Paper by WeTransfer” (Drewry et al., 2019, p. 66) and “read the romance books published on Wattpad” on the iPad (Drewry et al., 2019, p. 67) while enjoying the “interaction with an online community of writers” on this app (Drewry et al., 2019, p. 67). Third, music is a pursuit for Hannah. Even if she dislikes the handwriting, researchers observed that she writes “these songs she longhand in a “special book,”” where the songwriting is rooted in the social and cultural context, memorizing “friends, life, and school” (Drewry et al., 2019, p. 67). Fourth, Hannah liked to write on her iPad because she finds it easier and neater. Next, Hannah liked to play games on the iPad, such as “High School Story and Minecraft” (Drewry et al., 2019, p. 66). The researchers further elaborated that Hannah realized that online games require a lot of reading because “players could progress through the quests and decide on a response to different scenarios” after reading the stories (Drewry et al., 2019, p. 66). When confused about playing the game, Hannah would look for tutorials on YouTube, seek help from her friends, or participate in “online communities for support, ideas and friendship” (Drewry et al., 2019, p. 66).

When getting familiar with Hannah’s multiliteracies competencies that she used at home, the researchers designed a procedure to explore whether these competencies act on traditional classroom learning. This experiment consisted of three steps, listening to the audiobook read and discussing each chapter of “The Bad Beginnings” (Drewry et al., 2019, p. 64); creating a storyboard outline using the app Kid’s Book Report on the iPad for iMovie book reviews (Drewry et al., 2019); and making a book review of The Bad Beginnings using the iMovie iPad.
app (Drewry et al., 2019). When Hannah entered this multimodal classroom literacy activity, the researchers concluded from observing her classroom performance and work that Hannah enjoyed the audio reading and was good at active listening. “Reading an audiobook allowed her [Hannah] to conjure images in her mind of the novel’s events” (Drewry et al., 2019, p. 71). “Clues and cues” in the audiobooks, such as “music, sound effects and intonation in the actors’ voices,” help her “experience a plot structure, themes, and vocabulary of a complex text” (Drewry et al., 2019, p. 71). Also, Hannah’s ability to interact with online social media also allowed her to learn how to use iMovie through interactive learning with her peers. Different app functions constructed a scaffold for Hannah to enable her to comprehend the text of The Bad Beginning and develop the “ability to critically analyze the text” (Drewry et al., 2019, p. 72). Through this study, Drewry et al. (2019) have proved that Hannah’s multiliteracies skills at home and her expertise with digital devices can be applied to new classroom learning situations. The pedagogy of “transformed practice” from the multiliteracies theory and transferable skills are critical in English language learning (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009, p. 187).

From the early stages of language development to the upward spiral, language acquisition is supported by music. During the learning process, language learners are guided and aided by music, and the uneasiness in the face of challenges is alleviated and consoled by music. The variety and diversity of cultures and languages are introduced through music. Hence, “music is a potent and beneficial instrument for language learning” (Fonseca-Mora et al., 2011, Melodies in foreign language learning, para. 1), and “the use of music and songs in the English language-learning classroom is not new” (Engh, 2013, p. 113).

**Music and Language Learning are Inherently Multimodal**

Multimodality focuses on employing various symbols and representational and communicational resources to make, distribute, interpret, and restructure meaning (Kress & van
Leeuwen, 2001). Music is a communication resource often under-utilized in sociocultural approaches to second language acquisition theory. The involvement of music as a pedagogical tool in language literacy has had a considerable impact on language education through the multiplicity of forms it brings and the meaningful expressions it constructs.

Historically, the word “mousikas” in Greek signifies “from the muses” (Stansell, 2005, “Music pervades life,” para. 2). In ancient Greek mythology, Jupiter and Mnemosyne gave birth to the Muses (Bullfinch, 1855). The nine Muses “presided over song, promoted memory,” and they “were assigned to reign over particular departments of literature, art, and science” (Bullfinch, 1855, p. 19). Seven of these divine beings utilized their music to create language, including the spoken genres of epic poetry, history, lyric poetry, tragedy, love poetry, sacred poetry, and comedy (Bullfinch, 1855; Stansell, 2005). “The last Muse did something different; through her “music,” mortals became inspired not only to the choral song but also to dance” (Stansell, 2005, “Music pervades life,” para. 3). Obviously, the ancient Greeks were already aware of the potential of music to interplay with different modalities, as demonstrated by the combination of music and dance to provide a new multimodal form of meaning-making.

Extensive recent studies have indicated that the dual process of language learning and music is multimodal (Tomlinson, 2015; Way & McKerrell, 2017; Yeh, 2018). In contemporary research, Campbell (2016) analyzed and discovered, from the perspective of world music pedagogy, that various pedagogical approaches from around the world can help educators refresh their teaching philosophies and that multiple modalities, such as aural, visual, and kinesthetic, in music practices are prevalent in world musical cultures, like the classical theories of Dalcroze, Orff, Suzuki, and Kodaly. Since then, many educators have praised and advocated the appreciation and understanding of music through “deep and continued listening, participatory, performance, and creative experiences” (Campbell, 2016, p. 96). The inherent modes of music, which are oral and
aural, have great value in and of themselves. Meanwhile, Campbell (2016) pointed out that the adoption and incorporation of meaningful teaching strategies can project a “multicultural” phenomenon (p. 95), which is beneficial to expand learners’ sensitivity to “cultural and musical diversity” (p. 109) and “provide students with an understanding of music as a culturally differentiated human expression” (p. 95).

A common feature of both language and music is the ability of individuals “to imitate others’ vocal production” (Jackendoff, 2009, p. 197). Fonseca-Mora et al. (2011) also referred to the fact that “children generally love music, singing, and imitating” (Melodies in foreign language learning, para. 1). Nonetheless, in 2005, Pinker and Jackendoff expressed that “humans are not notably talented at vocal imitation in general, only at imitating speech sounds and perhaps melodies” (p. 209). In this regard, they explained that adults also showed poor performance in imitating foreign languages and regional accents (Pinker & Jackendoff, 2005). Therefore, they redefine the “capacity for vocal imitation” as the “capacity to learn to produce speech” (Pinker & Jackendoff, 2005, p. 209). In response to this idea, Fonseca-Mora et al. analyzed in 2011 that the “specific phoneme” that needed to be grasped in the song is easy to locate, and “divisions of four beats in the majority of songs coincide with the stress and non-stressed syllables of utterances” (Effects of singing songs, para. 2). Singing activities have many imitation exercises. These imitations cover the auditory and oral modalities of the language learners, effectively improving their pronunciation and phonological skills (Fonseca-Mora et al., 2011). Besides, when the usual modalities are combined with other modes, such as visual, gestural, and spatial, they expand the possibilities of creating new meaning. Music and dance are used as an example to illustrate this principle.

According to Jackendoff and Lerdahl (2006), dancing as one kind of posture and gesture can be seen as an “empathic effect” of music (p. 66), and the movements of dancing are designed
based on the beat of the music. When language learners “listen to songs, they sing, dance and learn the lyrics in an unconscious manner” (Fonseca-Mora et al., 2011, Songs, para. 2). In this activity, singing is “incorporating both hemispheres of the brain throughout the corpus callosum, which strengthens the transmission of messages” (Fonseca-Mora et al., 2011, Effects of singing songs, para. 1), and movements subliminally hint at the linguistic perception conveyed by the music (Jackendoff & Lerdahl, 2006).

Additionally, language itself cannot develop solely, as language learning is a multidimensional and multifaceted process (Kao & Oxford, 2014). As early as Froehlich (1985) concluded that “learning sessions which are dull can frequently be transformed into exciting, stimulating learning experiences” (p. 51) after the test employed reading texts to probe the aural comprehension and spelling of second language learners. Thereafter, with the innovation of technology, the elements of “semiotic resources” (Jewitt, 2009, p. 246) are presented in more diverse forms, such as “songs could be illustrated or dramatized, and perhaps videotaped” (Failoni, 1993, p. 99). The above studies show that language learning through visuals is becoming a trend in language learning. This tendency also mirrors the impact of technologies in the current era, which rely heavily on visual modes to aid in meaning-making.

In a similar way, Rice et al. in 1990 used “Sesame Street” as a learning material to question whether watching “Sesame Street” benefits children’s vocabulary acquisition aged 3 to 7 years (p. 421). “Television viewing diaries” from the parents of each family were the main data source for this research (Rice et al., 1990, p. 422). In total, the researchers received diaries from 326 children and their families during the two-year longitudinal study. Through quantitative analysis of the data, the researchers concluded that “Sesame Street viewing contributes to preschool children’s vocabulary development” (Rice et al., 1990, p. 426). In particular, Rice et al. manifested that “vocabulary levels” (p. 426) in this “broadcast program” are ideally suited to
children at the age of 3 to 5 (p. 421), and children “are able to incorporate new words into their lexicon as a consequence of viewing” (p. 426). Simultaneously, they suggested “the feasibility of tutorial uses of the video medium” (Rice et al., 1990, p. 421). This research revealed that attractive tutorial resources presented visually and aurally are motivating for the enlightenment and prospective progression of target language learning.

Current research has a growing tendency to explore the potential impact of combining music and technology on language acquisition. Bell (2021) introduced the online music space created during Covid-19. During the epidemic, many musicians held online concerts through Zoom software, in which musicians remotely dealt with the time and sound delays caused by the software to improve communication and collaboration. At the same time, online music was presented to listeners with different themes. This form of musical performance combined with technology alleviated the negative emotions generated by the epidemic and enabled individuals to build connections during the lockdown. Also, in the study of the benefits of multimodal work on the literacy skills of English language learners with immigrant status, Pandya (2012) suggested that second language learners record their voices and listen back to improve their oral expression. Meanwhile, Pandya (2012) also found that learners enjoyed digital video that combines visual, auditory, and written modes compared to “just writing” (p. 184). The functions of both technology and music not only provide the “positive emotional settings” (Díaz-Rico, 2020, p. 194) that students need but also allow learners to acquire language knowledge and enhance digital skills through multimodal representational forms.

The modality of music individually, along with the integration of music with other modalities, enables language learning to engage with “the multiple and multimodal texts and wide range of literacy practices,” thereby proactively responding to “the pedagogic aim of multiliteracies” (Jewitt, 2009, p. 245).
Conclusion

The phenomenon of diversity is a product of the times. In response to these complex and dynamic settings, the New London Group (1996) initiated and advocated the multiliteracies theory, creating an inspiring framework for educating a new generation in a new era. The multiliteracies theory emphasizes the linguistic and cultural diversity of contemporary contexts, the vital role of technology in teaching and learning, the exploration of modalities that can develop in tandem with education within the current social contexts, and the promotion of an inclusive and innovative learning environment.

This review of the literature looked for international resources on music used in literacy education in English or a second language. The influence of music on language acquisition is analyzed and discussed via three themes. According to a review of past and present research, music and language have interacted extensively since the beginning of time. Scholars have also confirmed that music is frequently utilized in second language learning settings and actively contributes to target language acquisition (Engh, 2013; Fonseca-Mora et al., 2011). Nevertheless, the majority of the study has concentrated on newborns and young learners of school age, with adult learners’ learning performance receiving very little attention. However, adults actively engage in second language learning in the current society for different reasons. This Master’s research sets up adult learners as a vital parameter to explore how multiliteracies affect language learning from the point of view of adult learners.

Additionally, a great deal of literature has revealed through experiments that music has a positive impact on the development of language learners’ literacy and multiliteracies competence and dispositions at different stages of language learning. However, the question of whether music as a learning material in second language classrooms can simultaneously promote literacy and multiliteracies is an area of research that has not been investigated extensively and will be
addressed in this research. Of significance, although researchers have mentioned the multimodal nature of music and language, the effects of synesthesia and transduction brought by music modalities, across modalities, and switching between modalities on second language learners needs to be discussed more, which is the target of the research. What is more, one common limitation in studies of music-based language learning is whether teachers’ choices of musical works and curriculum design may influence language learning, which is less known, and this is also an area of this research that will be indirectly examined.

This literature review locates the direction and scope of this Master’s research in three dimensions based on the theory of multiliteracies and multimodality in terms of seminal and contemporary studies in the field. The following chapter, the Theoretical Framework, will further explain the three theories and analyze how the Master’s study bridges related theories with the research topic to construct a framework to support the conduct and process of this study.
CHAPTER 3

Theoretical Framework

Traditional literacy with a didactic, mechanical, and passive accepted approach that focuses on students’ compliance with rules and the teacher as the centre of all knowledge no longer meets the needs of language teaching and learning as a singular and dominant way of engaging students. The new pedagogy of “multiliteracies” was coined by the New London Group (1996), offering creative insight into teaching and learning language. The term “multiliteracies” encompasses two key concepts: “the first is the variability of meaning-making in different cultural, social, or professional contexts” (Cope & Kalantzis, 2006, p. 23); the second is “increasingly multimodal” in meaning making because of “the nature of new communications technologies” (Cope & Kalantzis, 2006, p. 23).

While multiliteracies as a theory did not initially focus on the idea of it being used as a complementary theory to develop how we conceptualize English as a Second Language learning, in recent years, there has been a growing interest in this area. Music is also a somewhat under-researched field in terms of multimodality aiding in developing language learning. This chapter will serve to explore some of these connections in more depth.

“Music invention or redesign is syncretic literacy” (Tomlinson, 2015, pp. 538-539). As a pedagogical aid, it creates “an interactive moment” (Tomlinson, 2015, p. 539). At this moment, language learners can participate in multiple interactive activities initiated by music. They can use all available resources to incorporate past experiences and imaginations of the future into musical modalities, or music contributing to the combination of various modalities, innovating a new way of communication and form of meaningful representation.

This Master’s research explores the extension of second language literacy and the advancement of multiliteracies competency in English as a second language learning in settings
that feature music as a mode within multiliteracies, multimodality, and sociocultural perspectives of language learning.

The Pedagogy of Multiliteracies

“Literacy teaching is not about skills and competence; it is aimed at creating a kind of person, an active designer of meaning, with a sensibility open to differences, change and innovation” (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009, p. 175). Multiliteracies as a field argues that language learning no longer benefits from a didactic literacy learning approach that believes the old pedagogical philosophy of passively receiving knowledge, recognizing its correctness, and following the standardization in a specific and uniform context. It should be noted, this is not to say that learning principles of grammar, devoting some time to rote memorization, or giving a lecture can never have value. Instead, the New London Group and contemporary theorists in multiliteracies contend that educators need to use their professional judgement regarding when didactic literacy teaching in small doses has its place and can maximize a students’ learning potential. Indeed Kalantzis et al. (2016) examine in depth the importance of drawing up long traditions of literacy that include didactic literacy pedagogy; authentic literacy pedagogy; functional literacy pedagogy; critical literacies pedagogy.

In a fluid and complex contemporary world, language teaching and learning have captured a broader and more diverse range of approaches, which encourages language learners and educators to actively engage in practices that perceive the changes and diversity of the world by celebrating different societies, cultures, and languages. Meanwhile, the universality of music as a representative of language and culture in language acquisition activities inspires educators and learners to continually work with it to make language learning more creative and meaningful. To adapt to the evolving learning conditions and requirements, the New London Group (1996) proposed the original pedagogical framework consisting of four angles: situated practice, overt
instruction, critical framing, and transformed practice. The New London Group wanted to offer a conceptual model for educators to think through how to move the theory of multiliteracies into practice.

More specifically, *situated practice* means immersion in multiple experiences and the utilization of Available Design derived from their lifeworlds or public lives. Educators should be absorbed in *situated practice* aiming to guide learners, “serving as mentors and designers of their learning process” (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000, p. 33). *Over instruction* covers “systematic, analytic, and conscious understanding of Design of meaning and Design process” (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000, p. 35). One of the prominent features is the use of metalanguage. *Overt instruction* “makes implicit patterns of meaning explicit” (Cope & Kalantzis, 2006, p. 41), in which learners can describe and interpret the elements, processes, and patterns of Design in a meaningful way (Cope & Kalantzis, 2006). Overt instruction requires educators “must help learners denaturalize and make strange again what they have learned and mastered” (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000, p. 34).

*Critical framing* aims to assist students in situating their growing mastery of practice, conscious control, and comprehension concerning the particular structure of knowledge and social practice (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000). *Critical framing* allows learners to take a step back from the meanings they are studying and examine them critically in light of their context (Cope & Kalantzis, 2006). *Transformed practice* indicates a “transfer in meaning-making, which puts the transformed meaning to work in other contexts or cultural sites” (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000, p. 35).

Intertextuality and hybridity are major properties of transformed practice. Cope and Kalantzis (2006) suggest that *transformed practice* takes meaning and subjectivity into new and less familiar domains.

In order to adapt to the ever-changing educational needs and ideas, the original multiliteracies pedagogy has been reframed into more recognizable acts, called the "*Knowledge"
Processes,” referring to experiencing, conceptualizing, analyzing, and applying (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009; Kalantzis et al., 2016); please see Figure 3.1. Thus, Kalantzis and Cope, original members of the New London Group, alongside other researchers developed a newer version of situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing, and transformative practice to add further nuance to this model under the overarching theoretical title of “Learning by Design” which encompasses the “Knowledge Processes.”

**Figure 3.1**

*Work-Oriented Learning: The Knowledge Processes*

To be specific, experiencing contains *experiencing the known* and *experiencing the new* in this new model are shown to further develop what was previously called by the New London Group *situated practice*. First, *experiencing the known* implies “reflecting [on one’s] own experiences, interests, perspectives, familiar forms of expression, and ways of representing the
world in understanding” (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009, p. 185). Second, *experiencing the new* occurs by observing or reading the unfamiliar, immersion in new situations and texts, reading new texts, or collecting new data; simultaneously, an intelligible and safe zone for *experiencing the new* should be considered (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009).

What was previously identified as overt instruction in the older model presented by the New London Group becomes *conceptualizing by classifying* and *conceptualizing with theory*. *Conceptualizing by classifying* uses deductive and inductive reasoning, and entails “making generalizations by putting concepts together into the interpretative framework” (Kalantzis et al., 2016, p. 78). This concept requires that learners be active concept and theory-makers, capable of bridging the experiential and the conceptual.

Analyzing comprises *analyzing functionally* and *analyzing critically* replaces *critical framing* from the older New London Group’s model. For *analyzing functionally*, learners need to be occupied with the ability to “explore causes and effects, develop chains of reasoning, and explain patterns in text” (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009, p. 186). *Analyzing critically* pushes “evaluation of the perspective, interest, and motives of those involved in knowledge-making, cultural creation, or communication” (Kalantzis et al., 2016, p. 79). This concept operates in both directions between known and new experiences and between previous and new concepts. (Cope and Kalantzis, 2009; Kalantzis et al., 2016).

*Applying appropriately* and *applying creatively* replace *transformed practice* from the older model developed by the New London Group. *Applying appropriately* means “the application of knowledge and understanding in a predictable or ‘correct’ way” (Cope & Kalantzis, 2016, p. 80). More so, *applying creatively* presents “a more innovative application of knowledge” (Cope & Kalantzis, 2016, p. 80).

The “*Knowledge Processes*” were intended to provide educators to help them shape their
everyday pedagogical practice based on the principles of multiliteracies. To illustrate the reformed pedagogy further, let us consider a hypothetical situation in the classroom to help illuminate how these concepts might be applied to real teaching. Educators set up a lesson that proposes that learners tell their experiences of learning English in an English language learning classroom by creating digital storytelling. First, the educator asks the learners to bring in familiar texts, such as a personal story script they have written themselves for learning English, to ensure they can work with something relevant to their identity (experiencing the known). In the meantime, learners are also guided to think about what kind of digital story they want to make (experiencing the new). The educator might introduce them to different types of software for this purpose as resources. Second, learners will come up with ideas by describing multimodal elements in digital storytelling, for example, symbols, pictures, and music (conceptualizing by naming). After that, learners are able to gradually develop a theory to apply to their digital storytelling as they interact with educators and peers, for instance, to discuss and articulate aloud and in explicit ways their thinking behind the layout of pictures and text in videos and the designs that attract the audience (conceptualizing with theory). In addition, learners can also analyze and choose images and music through looking at an array of resources that will then fit their stories (analyzing functionally). When they see the work of their peers, they can also evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of that work, ideally taking their analysis deeper by contextualizing peers’ work in relation to larger ideas such as power relations in gender or critiques of technology being used for disinformation purposes (analyzing critically). Lastly, students apply the skills they have learned in digital storytelling to create web pages or edit vlogs to share on social media like Instagram (applying appropriately and applying creatively). In doing so, the students will hopefully perceive through social interactions how language learning is multimodal and socially situated. The educator will use a broader repertoire of pedagogical
tools by using all of these dimensions in the “Knowledge Processes” model to guide the students to think more widely and more deeply.

Overall, the pedagogy of multiliteracies provides access to effective learning for a broad range of students in a society where diversity is becoming increasingly vital. In a similar manner, the “Knowledge Processes” are the pedagogical orientation that serve as a map of the variety of instructional strategies that can encourage teachers to expand their pedagogical repertoires. Therefore, this model initially developed by the New London Group and further developed over time by various leading researchers in the field of multiliteracies will be used as a framework in this Master’s study to help explore teaching and learning in a music-based English as a second language learning settings.

**Multimodality**

Gunther Kress (2010), a member of the original New London Group, is credited with conceptualizing a newer strand within the field of linguistics referred to as social semiotics, and his work has greatly developed the field of multimodality. Kress would acknowledge that he cannot take sole credit for developing social semiotics; he has worked very closely over the years with other theorists such as Robert Hodge and Theo van Leeuwen. Kress contends that multimodal representations always have elements of social meaning that shape discourse. For example, Kress (2010) has argued that a child’s drawings reveal a great deal about the society that the child has grown up in through visual depictions that communicate the child’s immersed experiences within their given society. He also states that “representational and communicational practices are constantly altered, modified, as is all of culture, in line with and as an effect of social changes” (Kress, 2010, p. 7). As an illustration of Kress’s point, English learning books have gradually evolved from the black-and-white paper editions of the past to the mode with color pictures and audio CDs, and have been developed into today’s paperless learning modes,
such as electronic books, interactive fan fiction, graphic novels, and online learning videos. Because of social communication and meaning-making progress, various methods and strategies for learning English have appeared.

One of the most important elements of multiliteracies pedagogy is helping students understand and grasp multimodality in the ever-changing global environment through language acquisition. As a cultural carrier and language representation, music reflects how different learning and communication modes change and interact over time, providing up-to-date information and resources for language teaching and learning that simultaneously infer important characteristics of a particular society.

Additionally, language alone can no longer give us full access to the meanings of most contemporary messages, which must be constituted in several modes to convey the meaning (Kress & Mavers, 2005). Compared with the old literacy, the increasing multimodality of meaning is evident in the current dynamic meaning-design environment. Indeed, “in the contemporary communications environment,” the ways of acquiring knowledge and making meaning are no longer limited to the “traditional approaches to reading and writing” (Kalantzis et al., 2016, p. 1). Kalantzis et al. (2016) do not dismiss the importance of reading and writing as modes, but rather argue that these modes can be aided through being used in relation to other modalities as well. Or put another way, “attaining literacy capabilities may be enhanced through teaching opportunities that engage learners through drama, video, music, or dance” (Holloway & Qaisi, 2022, p. 86).

Multimodality means “using more than one mode in a text or a meaning-making event” (Kalantzis et al., 2016, p. 229). “Different modes offer different approaches to multimodal meaning” (Kress, 2010, p. 79). The theory of multimodality refers to “how these modes of meaning are interconnected in our practices of representation and communication” (Kalantzis et
Kalantzis et al. (2016) identify seven modes of meaning: written, visual, spatial, tactile, gestural, audio, and oral. The “contents and scope” of the modes (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009, p. 178) are as follows:

- Written language: writing and reading, including, handwriting, the printed page, the screen.
- Oral language: live or recorded speech and listening.
- Visual representation: still or moving image, sculpture, craft, view, vista, scene, and perspective.
- Audio representation: music, ambient sounds, noises, alerts, hearing, and listening.
- Tactile representation: forms of tactile representation include touch, smell and taste, kinesthesia, physical contact, skin sensations (temperature, texture, pressure), grasp, manipulable objects, artefacts, cooking and eating, aromas.
- Gestural representation: movements of the hands and arms, expressions of the face, eye movements and gaze, clothing and fashion, hairstyle, dance, action sequences, timing, frequency, ceremony, and ritual.
- Spatial representation: proximity, spacing, layout, interpersonal distance, territoriality, architecture, streetscape, cityscape, landscape.

Additionally, social semiotic multimodality has taken the embodied mode of music, treating it as just as valid for communicating meaning (Kress, 2010). “Musical experience is very often multimodal,” which “inspires a wide range of semiotics,” and “much of the discourse of multimodal semiotics has until recently, relied upon linguistic of musical meaning” (Way & Mckerrell, 2017, p. 8). Meanwhile, music and language systems development come from a common source because both contain sound qualities, frequency, intensity, duration, tempo, intonation, pitch, and rhythm (van Leeuwen, 1999). Extending the conceptual field of social
semiotics, Way and Mckerrell (2017) suggest realizing “musical sounds as one of larger multimodal texts” (p. 8). They simultaneously state that “rhythm, instrumentation, pitch, tonality, and melody” are “semiotic resources” and recommend exploring the “interacting meaning potential of semiotic resources” and “their interrelationship with lyrics, written texts, image, colour, and other modes of communication” (Way & Mckerrell, 2017, p. 8). These elements will be considered as the internal multimodal structure of the music.

Learning by Design purports, “different subjectivities, interests, intentions, commitments, and purposes” influence the selection of modes (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000, p. 18), which affords some potential for personal meaning redesign beyond the sequence and configuration of musical modality. As Kress (2010) suggests, “it is possible to link the means for representation with the bodyliness of humans,” for example, hearing and feeling or touching and tasting (Kress, 2010, p. 83). Indeed, combinations of music with other modes of embodiment that exceed its own are widespread, such as music with spatial, gestural, and visual modes. It is reasonable to “include combinations of modes of meaning and shifts across modes of meaning within the dynamic movements” in the meaning-creating (Kress, 2000, p. 168). In this way, the language of music is situated within the broader discourses of societal identity and changes. Kress (2010) argues that in addition to embodiment, multimodality is a reflection of the social environments and cultures that we live in. All of our choices from clothing to music to architecture “say” something about our cultural viewpoints (Kress, 2010, p. 41).

Consequently, this Master’s study will explore the effects of music as important learning material to advance language teaching and learning, both externally and internally. External is the combination of musical works with other modalities. The internal aims of music itself include the musical work’s style, characteristics, and content. The New London Group (1996) identified multimodality as one of the two key tenets of the theory of multiliteracies. They
recognized that moving forward, education across the globe, especially in the current era of rapid technological change, would need to better theorize and utilize multimodality to enhance pedagogy. The role of music as a mode that can effectively combine with other modes merits further exploration in relation to its role to engage second language learners in acquiring a new language.

**Sociocultural Theory’s Explanations of Language Learning**

Sociocultural theory acts as an ideal bridge between multiliteracies theory and sociocultural approaches to language learning, which is why I will now expand on Vygotsky’s work. In Vygotsky’s social development theory “the notion of development as growing out of the interactions of human beings with one other, especially the interaction of adults and children” (Beliavsky, 2006, p. 2) is important to thinking about the social nature of human communication. The significance of social interaction in developing cognition and learning is the focus of Vygotsky’s theory. Vygotsky (1978) asserted that cognitive development is not independent, as “during joint social interaction, cognitive development emerges through accommodation of new ideas or points of view into one’s own present cognitive framework” (Nyikos & Hashimoto, 1997, p. 509). Vygotsky highlights children experimenting with new cultural practices in interaction (Zukerman, 2003); as he wrote in 1978, “every function in the child’s cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological), and then inside the children (interapsychological)” (p. 57). In practice, these functions can be presented “in the “outer” world as the interaction between the child and the people around him or her” (Haenen et al., 2003, p. 251), while “children elaborate socially available skills and knowledge that they will come to internalize” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 130). In other words, “interaction with others and with the cultural environment contributes to human cognitive development” (Nyikos & Hashimoto, 1997, p. 507).
The impact of social interaction was reinforced by the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), framed by Vygotsky in 1978. The notion of ZPD is that “it is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). The actual developmental level is the first level of the ZPD, which means learners’ “mental functions that have been established as a result of certain completed developmental cycles” (Beliavsky, 2006, pp. 3-4). The Zone of Proximal Development is the second level for child’s development, and it “defines those functions that have not yet matured but are in the process of maturation” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). Through this area, educators can predict learners’ developmental spaces and provide “scaffolding in the form of learning models” to support learners’ understanding of new knowledge and mastery of unfamiliar skills (Giest & Lompscher, 2003, p. 278). Music, for example, can provide a form of scaffolding for second language learning.

“Language represents the core type of interaction which allows social agents to convey information to children” (Morin, 2012, p. 437). Indeed, Vygotsky (1978) clarified that language “is a highly personal and at the same time a profoundly social human process” (p. 126), and he “emphasized dialogue and the varied roles that language plays in instruction and in mediated cognitive growth” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 131). “The child’s conquest of speech occurs through a constant interaction of inner dispositions prompting the child to speech and external conditions” (Vygotsky, 1986, p. 70).

Even though Vygotsky explored the effects of social interaction on cognitive and language development with children as the primary subjects, it is undeniable that interactive activities are always present in cognitive and learning contexts regardless of who the subjects are including adults. In reality, it has become quite usual to extend the sociocultural theory to track adults’
second language acquisition (Lantolf, 2000; Lee, 2015). As Lee (2015) said, sociocultural theory “has been beneficial for adult learners because it involves social interaction, cultural involvement, and all components of the teaching environment” (p. 28). Moreover, Vygotsky believed that “human-environmental interaction” depends on a series of “signs and tools” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 7), such as gestures, graphics, numbers, music, and art (Beliavsky, 2006; Vygotsky, 1978).

In response to the above points, this Master’s study sets up music as a language learning tool to explore the impact on the language development of adult second language learners through participation in social and cultural interactions initiated by music from a sociocultural perspective. The interactive activities developed on the basis of music have been noticed by different scholars (Adachi, 2021; Tomlinson, 2012, 2015). Specifically, “a natural connection exists between thinking, music, and language” (Salmon, 2010, p. 938). Everyone conveys ideas and thoughts through music in different ways. “Semiotics provides a lens” to “reveal complex micro interactions” in musical activities (Tomlinson, 2012, p. 46). “Semiotic resources include voice, instruments, media, movement, gesture, gaze, and proxemics,” and “formal resources are the conceptual elements of pitch, rhythm, meter, dynamics, tempo, and timbre” (Tomlinson, 2012, p. 46). Learners draw on different modes within the resources to redesign the musical representation to express themselves according to their background and context, for example, playing a “gentle” and “transcendent” or “playful” and “forceful” piece on a favourite musical instrument (Jackendoff & Lerdahl, 2006, p. 60), while others prefer to dance to contemporary music.

Besides, interpersonal cooperation reveals the macro interaction in musical activities. Within the learning space with music, learners “introduce and transmit musical signs” and cultural resources in each other’s meaning-making (Adachi, 2021, p. 29). Concurrently,
educators should consider learners as “partners in the process of curriculum-making” (Barrett, 2007, p. 38) because learners’ perceptions, experiences, ideas, and understandings of music can enrich the shaping and design of instruction. These interactive activities from previous studies inform and inspire this Master’s research favorably.

**Conclusion**

In the light of constantly evolving social forms, the task of curriculum design and pedagogy today “is to understand the new, constantly changing environments and to try to clearly grasp what the new conditions of learning are” (Kress, 2007, p. 23). In an era of flexibility and diversity, “cultural symbols and practices” take center stage in education (Dyson, 2001, p. 11). The initiation of multiliteracies and multimodality theory enlighten the “ways of stretching, reconfiguring, and re-articulating resources” that have been “key to literacy learning in contemporary times” (Dyson, 2001, p. 11). “The process of learning is completely and inseparably blended with the process of development” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 80), and he pointed out the concept that learning and cognition develop “within a social milieu” through social development theory (Beliavsky, 2006, p. 2). Thus, multiliteracies, multimodality, and sociocultural theories support the progression of this Master’s research. The next chapter, the Methodology, will elaborate on the research design, participants, research sites as well as the methods of data collection and analysis used in this Master’s study.
CHAPTER 4
Methodology

As aforementioned in the introduction chapter, this Master’s research is rooted in the research project “Multiliteracies for Adolescents and Adults: Teaching and Learning Literacy in the 21st Century.” This Master’s research was conducted after the review and clearance of the application for Secondary Use of Data through the University of Windsor’s Research Ethics Board. In this methodological chapter, I elaborate on the detailed research design, methods used to collect and analyze the data, the way to recruit participants, and the research sites in The Multiliteracies Project. Meanwhile, I clarify how the data pool for this Master’s study was sifted, refined, and built up, as well as the types of samples used and the research setting involved.

Research design

As a graduate research assistant for Dr. Holloway, my advisor, I have been working on The Multiliteracies Project. This research project, entitled “Multiliteracies for Adolescents and Adults: Teaching and Learning Literacy in the 21st Century,” was undertaken by Dr. Holloway, Principal Investigator of the University of Windsor, and Dr. Gouthro, Co-Investigator, of Mount Saint Vincent University, with support from a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) Insight grant. The Multiliteracies Project aims to deepen the multiliteracies theoretical framework applied to the teaching and learning of adolescents and adults.

When I achieved the TCPS2 certificate, received clearance from the Research Ethics Board (REB) at the University of Windsor for my Master’s research protocol, and obtained permission from my advisor, I was authorized to enter the database of The Multiliteracies Project. This Master’s research draws on the data already collected by Dr. Holloway and Dr. Gouthro and stored in The Multiliteracies Project database to build my small dataset. My role as a research assistant in The Multiliteracies Project is mainly to take part in the interviews, take field notes,
conduct data coding and analysis, update data onto the database, and assist the research team in developing The Multiliteracies Project web platform. Performing the duties and undertaking the responsibilities of a research assistant in The Multiliteracies Project allowed me to practice research competence and do my best to contribute to this large-scale research project moving forward.

In order to ensure the validity, rationality, and authenticity of the data, this Master’s study followed the research framework of The Multiliteracies Project. To begin with, The Multiliteracies Project was designed as a three-year qualitative research study, although this timeline was extended due to the pandemic. The research will be drawing to a close in the next few months. According to Creswell (2013), qualitative research “may lead to an in-depth understanding, fill a void in existing literature, establish a new line of thinking” (p. 133). Besides, The Multiliteracies Project adopts qualitative inquiry to look at multiliteracies pedagogical practices and multimodal learning strategies in traditional and non-traditional learning environments since qualitative inquiry offers the “studies a different lens toward validity” (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 125). Also, music, as one of the modes of multimodality (Jewitt et al., 2016; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001; Kress, 2010; Kalantzis et al., 2016), has been identified and explored as an important form of multimodality in several second language acquisition spaces in The Multiliteracies Project. This Master’s research focuses on using music as a modality for second language education with adult educators and learners, which also falls within the research direction and scope of The Multiliteracies Project. Accordingly, qualitative research is applied in this Master’s research. It seeks to investigate the progress of literacy and multiliteracies with adult second language learners and educators in language learning settings where music serves as a pedagogical instrument from the multiliteracies, multimodality, and sociocultural viewpoints.
Additionally, The Multiliteracies Project consists of comparative case studies (Kaarbo & Beasley, 1999), which are also implemented in this Master’s research. The comparative case studies in The Multiliteracies Project are based on face-to-face interviews with educators, learners, policymakers, and administrators; multiple field observations of classrooms and learning contexts; examination of curricular materials and policy documents; and multimodal analyses of film footage from actual teaching interactions. Each of the main sites such as art galleries, dance studios, language learning spaces, music organizations, and high school classrooms in both Ontario and Nova Scotia have been identified as different cases for comparison. According to Bartlett & Vavrus (2017), the comparative case study approach is heuristic and aids in identifying and solving problems, and this method ensures the validity of the context and the integrity of the reality of the situation. More importantly, a comparative case study promotes “simultaneous and overlapping attention to three axes of comparison:” “horizontal,” “vertical,” and “transversal” (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017, p. 15).

Following this concept, this Master’s research will be compared in several dimensions. First, The Multiliteracies Project contains abundant teaching and learning information from formal and informal learning spaces. Specifically, secondary school classrooms are formal learning spaces; adult learning sites such as dance studios, art galleries, and community-based English Additional Language Learning classes are informal learning spaces. Because of the favorable conditions offered by The Multiliteracies Project, the performance of second language learners in formal and informal learning spaces will be the first comparison along a horizontal axis.

Second, the vertical comparison is carried out in two dimensions. From a musicological point of view, music could be viewed as a multimodal discourse (May & Mckerrell, 2017). Van Leeuwen (1999) defined six major domains regarding sound that are “common to speech, music
and other sounds,” containing “sound perspective, sound time and rhythm, the interaction of voices, melody, voice quality and timber, and modality” (p. 9). Musicians and composers manipulate these to create “linguistic communication” in music (May & Mckerrell, 2017, p. 11). For example, visual language forms with musical notation and marks, aural language like an orchestral soundtrack, and sentimental language combine with unique lyrical content, rhythm, pitch, and texture of musical sound (May & Mckerrell, 2017). Accordingly, exploring various modes’ interplay within music becomes the first vertical comparison.

From the social semiotic point of view, “semiotic resources are tools for creating meaning” (Jewitt et al., 2016, p. 33). “Social semiotics has been used to account for a number of modes including image, color, writing and typography, texture and layout, as well as speech, gesture, gaze, sound and music” (Jewitt et al., 2016, p. 80). “Multimodality can tell us what modes are used” (Kress, 2010, p. 1) because it exhibits the features to “draw on distinctly different sets of resources” and “these resources are used in conjunction to form multimodal wholes” (Jewitt et al., 2016, p. 158). For instance, “musical motifs can be strongly correlated with textual or visual signs” to “signify a specific semantic meaning” (May & Mckerrell, 2017, p. 10). Consequently, the second vertical comparison is how music, as a separate modality, interacts with other modes within the context of second language acquisition.

Third, transversal comparisons across time are needed to respond to the new literacy requirements. As an illustration, consider two aspects: first, the performance of participants’ literacy and multiliteracies competence when participating in English classes with and without music as instructional materials, strategies, and resources. Second, whether the approach to learning in music-based English classes potentially impacts participants in their school public and personal lives and English practice.

Furthermore, purposive sampling is applied in The Multiliteracies Project. A very small and
purposely selected sample may be used in qualitative research (Campbell et al., 2020) to increase the depth of understanding instead of breadth (Palinkas et al., 2015). The Multiliteracies Project focuses on particular groups of participants, including adolescents and adults, and investigates specifically secondary school teachers, adolescent students, adult educators, adult learners, policy makers, and administrators. With this in mind, purposive sampling has shaped my Master’s research.

Overall, the Master’s research is a qualitative inquiry study that compares the data collected at different research sites utilizing purposive sampling. The purpose of this Master’s research is to explore the influences and implications of the occurrence of multiple variations of modalities of music in language education and learning practices on the development of literacy and multiliteracies among adult language learners and educators, which are explored on the basis of multiliteracies, multimodality, and sociocultural theories of language learning.

Research Sites

The Multiliteracies Project is mainly conducted in two cities and surrounding rural areas: Windsor and Essex County, Ontario, and Halifax and the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM), Nova Scotia. These two locations provide optimal opportunities for field research. Statistics Canada reports that in 2021, Windsor’s population with neither English nor French as an official language is 2.8 percent, an increase of 0.2 percent compared to 2016, according to Statistics Canada (Statistics Canada, 2021a). In Halifax, between 2016 and 2021, the number of people who speak neither English nor French rose from 2,210 to 2,550, even though the proportion of people who speak their mother tongue as an official language remained the same (Statistics Canada, 2021b). The cultural and linguistic diversity of the two cities creates a unique resource for the wide-ranging research project to explore the educational needs and challenges educators and learners face in a sophisticated and varied social context from the angle of multiliteracies.
theory. My Master’s study is mainly based on the research sites in Windsor, while I can also refer to the collected data from Halifax in the database.

The Multiliteracies Project configures secondary school classrooms and adult learning spaces as primary research sites. Among these, all secondary school-based research was conducted in Windsor-Essex County. Adult learning spaces cover different settings such as community-based adult language learning programs, workplaces, concerts, museums, and dance studios. After receiving clearance for Secondary Use of Data from the REB of the University of Windsor, I obtained permission and guidance from my supervisor to conduct this Master’s research at four research sites in The Multiliteracies Project that applied music-related modes as a language pedagogical tool. These organizations are called The Fourth Wall Music, The Multicultural Council of Windsor & Essex County, French Lit., and The Live Doc Project. Hence, I could observe adult language learners’ and educators’ performances and reactions in these educational spaces and conduct my Master’s research by analyzing these data.

Participants

Initially, participants in The Multiliteracies Project were recruited through two methods: Listservs and posters. Through a University of Windsor email account created exclusively for The Multiliteracies Project, emails and posters about information and invitations regarding the research project were sent to adult educators and secondary school teachers. The collaborators, Dr. Clara Howitt, a superintendent at the local public school board in Windsor and Essex County, and the other, Simone Le-Gendre-King, a STEM consultant in adult education for the Nova Scotia government, would assist with recruitment through Listservs. Teachers and educators who were interested in participating would reply via the contact information given on the poster or in the email, and the research team sent out electronic copies of the information letter, consent letter, and interview questions. Community organizations and institutions were reached through
public contacts and invited formally by mail. In this broader research project, if students or adult
learners were approached or interested in joining, all necessary communication, information
introduction, and consideration would occur through their direct teacher and adult educator as
requested by the REB as part of the protocol. Policy makers and administrators were sent email
invitations as well; they were included in the research to provide a broader understanding of
policies that inform systemic barriers and supports to teaching and learning across organizations
and government.

The Multiliteracies Project recruits secondary school teachers, secondary school students,
school administrators, adult educators, adult learners, and policymakers, with the approval of the
University of Windsor’s REB and the Greater Essex County District School Board. The Master’s
research comprises the work of five participants, all of whom are adult educators: two affiliated
with the 4thWall Music and the remaining three from across The Multicultural Council of
Windsor and Essex County, French Lit, and The Live Doc Project, respectively.

For all participants in The Multiliteracies Project, before the start of the formal study, the
researcher verbally informs participants of the study procedure, potential risks and benefits,
subsequent use of data, and confidential principles and invites them to sign consent options and
signatures if they wish to do so. Confidentiality proposes that the participants have the right to
choose a pseudonym and not disclose their real names, including any revealing identity markers
in publications related to them, or choose to make their identities public. Once participants
choose to keep their identity confidential, direct identifiers are removed and replaced with a code
according to the principles of privacy and confidentiality from TCPS2 and the University of
Windsor’s REB. In the consent section, secondary teachers and adult educators can choose the
type of participation they wish to have in the three data collection methods: interview, classroom
observation, and document analysis. For instance, a participant might agree to be interviewed but
not to take part in observations or document analysis. Thus, participants also have options around keeping their identities confidential or public.

**Data Collection**

This small data pool of this Master’s research is constructed on data already gathered for The Multiliteracies Project. Once again, the University of Windsor’s Research Ethics Board has approved the application of Secondary Use of Data in this Master’s thesis. My supervisor, Dr. Holloway, appointed me as a graduate research assistant to engage in the Multiliteracies Project’s research activities while I obtained access to the database of this massive project. All data from The Multiliteracies Project is stored securely on One Drive, managed by The University of Windsor. As a researcher for this Master’s study, I used data from The Multiliteracies Project to assemble a data pool relevant to my research topic.

Data for The Multiliteracies Project is gathered and built on the basis of the constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006; 2014). This method “consists of systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analyzing qualitative data to construct theories grounded in the data themselves” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 2). Charmaz (2006) indicates that “researchers generate strong grounded theories with rich data” (p. 14). However, she realizes that “rich data are detailed, focused, and full,” and they could “reveal participants’ views, feelings, intentions, and actions as well as the contexts and structures of their lives” (p. 14). Meanwhile, Charmaz (2006) suggests that grounded theories could be “built with diverse kinds of data,” including “fieldnotes, interviews, and information in records and reports” (p. 14). The data collection in The Multiliteracies Project adhered to constructivist grounded theory methods, including face-to-face interviews, field observations, document analysis, and film footage. Charmaz (2014) argues that the researcher must always be cognizant in the research process of their own positionality as researchers, taking into account their own backgrounds and potential for bias. For example, as an
adult Chinese woman recently arrived in Canada in the last year to study (having grown up in China), and as an ELL learner myself, and as someone who majored in music for my undergraduate degree, these facts about my life’s experiences and background affect the focus I chose for my thesis and how I view the data and interpret it for this study.

This Master’s research focuses on applying musical modalities in collaboration with the theory of multiliteracies and multimodalities to facilitate language teaching, language acquisition, learners’ acceptance of diversity, and multimodal mastery ability. After evaluation and deliberation of procedures and data types for all research sites in The Multiliteracies Project, this Master’s study adopts three primary forms of data collection: interviews, field observation notes, and document analysis. It also includes original film footage that can be analyzed as secondary data. I will describe the process of collecting data for each method in the following paragraphs.

**Interview**

Intensive qualitative interviewing is exceptionally well suited to grounded theory methods (Charmaz, 2006; 2014). Intensive interviewing established “the interactive space and time” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 85), which “permits an in-depth exploration of a particular topic or experience” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 25), allowing researchers to listen and sensitively observe the participants’ substantial views and insights that appear in the course interview (Charmaz, 2006; 2014). The Multiliteracies Project uses face-to-face semi-structured interviews since Charmaz (2006) also proposes that “broad,” “open-ended,” “semi-structured focused,” and “non-judgmental” questions could “encourage unanticipated statements and stories to emerge” (p. 26).

The majority of interviews for The Multiliteracies Project are conducted by my adviser. Notably, the whole interview is recorded as an audio file using a Zoom recorder with the goal of being transcribed into written form later. A second digital device also records the interview as a
precaution in case of accidental events with the Zoom equipment. All audio recordings are uploaded and preserved in the database after the interview, and the audio-recorded files on the second digital device are deleted permanently. Digital recording is consented to by all of the participants, and the researcher also obtains the participants’ agreement before starting the intensive interviews. The Letter of Information and Letter of Consent are distributed to participants. The interview formally commenced after obtaining the participants’ consent and signatures. During this time, participants are encouraged to speak up if they have questions regarding the research information or consent details. They were also provided in advance with written copies of all of the Consent forms to peruse.

Also, because of purposive sampling, this research project involves different categories of participants. In this case, the interview questions are designed according to the different positions and roles of the participants in the educational field, including teachers and adult educators, adult learners and secondary school students, policymakers, and administrators. The customized interview questions for participants with different identities not only make the intensive interviewing more dynamic and flexible, but also allow the participants to narrate their experiences with multiliteracies in their respective teaching and learning areas. Thus, the researcher can witness the meaningful practices of multiliteracies in educational settings from different contexts.

Moreover, interviews for The Multiliteracies Project are conducted in various languages such as English, Spanish, Arabic, French, and Ukrainian, as a response to the diversity of the concepts in the multiliteracies theory (recalling that one of the main tenets of multiliteracies theory is a commitment to cultural and linguistic diversity in teaching pedagogy). I was involved in interviews with adult learners at the pre-literacy level who were learning English as a second language. These participants state their native languages are Arabic, Spanish, and Ukrainian. I
assisted with setting up an appropriate placement for the interviews and preparing information letters and informed consent forms. A comfortable environment allows the interviewees to feel that they are not “being treated with insincerity” and that “their social and personal worth” are being respected (Charmaz, 2006, p. 34). The friendly atmosphere also helps to create “rapport” between the participants and the researcher (Charmaz, 2006, p. 19). The Arabic and Spanish interviews were performed by members of the research team, whereas the interviews in Ukrainian were done with the assistance of a Ukrainian staff person through direct interpretation. As a member of the research team, I sat in on the interviews while strictly adhering to the “etiquette” of intensive interviews (Charmaz, 2006, p. 26). In my role as a listener to the interviewee’s story, I also responded promptly and appropriately when the interviewee made eye contact with me; as Charmaz (2006) points out, “the researcher should express interest and want to know more” about the participants (p. 26).

All interviews in The Multiliteracies Project are eventually transcribed into written texts by the research team. These transcripts are emailed to the participants for review and revision. They are asked to complete the review within one month or provide a later date. If the research team does not hear back from the participant by then, the participants are told it will be assumed that they can use the transcript “as is.” Participants have up until they have approved the final transcript to withdraw completely from the study. Once participants confirm the finalized transcripts, they will be uploaded to the database, with the non-English interviews being uploaded after translation into English.

Consequently, the audio recordings and transcribed texts stored in the database are one of the primary data sources for this Master’s research. I collected data on music used in English language teaching and learning in several educational spaces by reading the transcripts and listening to the audio interviews. I also gathered information by personally observing the
interviews, reviewing the interview materials, and analyzing the participants’ responses through coding.

**Field Observations**

Collecting rich data is more challenging with the absence of field observations (Charmaz, 2006; 2014). Field observation notes “are constructions of observed and noted experience” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 44). Field notes convey detailed information about observations, crowd characteristics, behaviors, scenarios, processes, and events, which reveal what is occurring and visually depict cause-and-effect possibilities (Charmaz, 2006; 2014).

The role of a research assistant has given me the opportunity to access several research sites for field observations. As an observer, I observe with a keen eye, open mind, discerning ear, and steady hand (Charmaz, 2006; 2014).

When I conducted field observations, I followed the logical framework of field notes because it comprises “words,” “events,” and “ways” to make the information “comprehensible” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 128). To be specific, observing the teaching and learning practices that happened in educational spaces was documented from the outside to the inside. See Figure 4.1 for an example.
The exterior description of the learning sites was the first part of the field notes. I noted the location of the learning space, date, time, length of the class, total number of learners, and
posters pasted on the wall in the observed learning classroom. Through simple drawings, I portrayed the spatial layout of the classroom, for example, the orientation of the doors and windows, the teacher’s office area, the placement of the blackboard, the distribution of the learners’ seats, or the photo wall in the classroom.

In the internal description of the learning space, I focused on the educators’ and learners’ responses and behaviors in the lesson. Words, phrases, and simple sentences were used to describe the teacher’s teaching strategies, students’ learning states, and classroom interaction scenarios. From the educator’s side, I first noticed the handouts delivered to the students, such as the ratio of graphics to text in the handouts and the types of questions for the practice tasks and quizzes. In addition, I observed the way the instructors integrated paper-based learning materials with other modalities in the lecture sessions; for instance, the instructor directed the students to watch videos to learn the lexical phrases for banking scenarios. Also, I paid attention to the strategies in which the instructor motivated students’ engagement, such as utilizing roll calls, brainstorming, group discussion, heuristically guiding learners to do some explanations of knowledge points when they were silent in response to a question and offering an individualized solution to those who face any difficulties both in language learning and daily life. From the learners’ side, I watched their reactions and interactions with educators and fellow learners during the lesson. During the course, when the educator switched between pedagogical modalities, learners’ body movements, facial expressions, attitudes towards participation in classroom activities, and interactions with the teacher mapped their receptiveness and adaptability to the dynamic learning pattern. The way in which learners tried to solve their academic problems was also scrutinized such as the preference of some learners to seek help from the educator and others to communicate with classmates in their native language. Learners’ initiative to communicate with educators in a second language within the learning space was also
discovered after the class had formally finished.

Field observations in The Multiliteracies Project are conducted in both formal and informal learning spaces. These field notes documented happenings in the learning spaces in written form. They are written pen to paper while the actual observations are being done in any learning space. Initially, when our team comes into a new classroom or learning space, we introduce ourselves and our purpose, and we explain that we are not there to evaluate the teacher or the students, but rather take notes to better understand the dynamic of teaching and learning in everyday practice. In addition, after doing the field notes, I met with Rasha Qaisi, the more senior research assistant who has considerable experience now after several years as Dr. Holloway’s RA, and we went through our notes together to discuss and compare our observations and write down further insights gained from our mutual understanding of what we had witnessed. All observation notes, including my notes, are transcribed and stored in the database of The Multiliteracies Project. They are all the primary data sources for the Master’s research.

**Document Analysis**

In addition to the “first-hand” data gathered through interviews or field observation, “documents and information from other sources” are also recognized as “facts” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 29). The kinds of resources in daily life could be treated as documents, such as government records, organizational information, performance, webpages, photographs, movies, diaries, personal blogs, and so on (Charmaz, 2014). Usually, most documents consist of “varied forms of written texts and recorded visual images” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 45). The efficiency of using documents for the development of qualitative research and grounded theory has been demonstrated by Charmaz (2014).

The Multiliteracies Project encompasses a variety of documentation sources. As previously stated, teachers and educators both in formal and informal learning classrooms have the
opportunity to select which of the three data collection methods (interview, document analysis, and classroom observation) they would like to participate in (singly or in multiples) and whether they would like their documents to be public or confidential. Participants who choose document analysis share with the researcher their teaching resources and teacher exemplars. With the participant’s permission, the researcher takes pictures of these documents and uploads them to the project’s database.

Additionally, in the interview, secondary school students and adult learners may share experiences about meaningful assignments they have produced or the learning techniques that they invented, like creating a word memory dictionary. As the interviewer hears these stories from participants, they can triangulate data collection between different sources of data. For example, a teacher might talk in detail during the interview about an assignment they created. And then, they provide a copy of that same assignment for purposes of document analysis. It is much easier to understand the rationale behind the assignment when these two data sources can be cross-referenced for purpose of our research analysis. After obtaining consent from the participants, the research team takes images of the learners’ documents for data collection.

Moreover, The Multiliteracies Project also collaborates with some arts organizations, including art galleries, music institutions, and museums. Many documents originate from these educational venues, such as brochures explaining the notion and background of the painting exhibition. Images show works in the museum. Posters for the concert proclaim the theme and genres of the music. All of these documents are project artifacts saved in the database. The curators also provide advice on how to correctly reference these photos we have taken at concerts or exhibitions.

The documents included in The Multiliteracies Project are student works, teaching resources, teacher exemplars, and project artifacts. These documents were created in different
contexts for certain goals, and they mirror the realities of contemporary society in diverse ways and “explore, explain, justify, and/or foretell actions” (Charamz, 2014, p. 46). Documents, as one of the primary data sources, support me in collecting valuable information about music and language learning; thus, I can establish the Master’s data pool depending on the various documents in the database.

*Secondary Data of Film Footage*

The data collection method can amplify and broaden the researcher’s vision and perception of the studied objectives (Charmaz, 2006; 2014). Movies and films have also been accepted as a form of data collection (Charmaz, 2014). Original film footage that was filmed by the research team is one method of collection in The Multiliteracies Project that facilitates flexibility in this qualitative study. Usually, the filming and editing has been done by a film master’s student from the University of Windsor working on the team as a research assistant or by Dr. Holloway herself using professional level equipment and software. As previously introduced, the Multiliteracies Project is a “multi-site” study (Charmaz, 2014, p. 54), divided primarily into traditional and non-traditional educational sites. All original film footage was recorded at these sites. All secondary data from film footage was applied to develop the web platform of The Multiliteracies Project as part of the research process.

The main goal of this Master’s thesis is to explore the effects of multiple modalities of music on learners and educators in language learning and teaching. The film footage documents genuine educational paradigms, and I could find musical cues from different educational sites by watching the film footage. This link from a 4th Wall Music concert, as an example, accesses the page (please scroll down) to view the music modality in informal teaching and learning space: [https://multiliteraciesproject.com/adult-education/4th-wall-music/](https://multiliteraciesproject.com/adult-education/4th-wall-music/). The entire concert was filmed and is part of the data, but only short excerpts are provided on The Multiliteracies Project web
platform to highlight specific aspects of multiliteracies in an interactive musical adult learning environment.

Specifically, film footage from non-traditional educational spaces allowed me to watch a concert in its entirety or a documentary clip made in conjunction with music. Undoubtedly, music is a combination of multiple modalities (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001; Way & Mckerrell, 2017). While watching the visual data, I could observe how educators present the multiple modalities of music, such as the arrangement of instruments, the ebb and flow of melody, or the combination of music and multimedia. The film footage from the traditional educational space of French Lit. or the Multicultural Council of Windsor & Essex County documented the interactive processes of language teachers and learners in the classroom. Watching the learning and teaching in regular classrooms, I captured how the educators incorporate multimodal music and sound into the language learning environment while observing learners' responses to musical modalities during the second language lesson.

All film footage is recorded live on camera with the consent of participants who wish to be present. For example, at this concert, a large sign was posted in the entrance and throughout the venue to indicate this filming would take place. There were approximately 80 people present. Those who wished to not be filmed were directed by ushers to one side of the room, and they were purposefully left out of the camera’s eye. All musicians had signed the consent forms in advance. Amy Ley, Director of 4thWall explained their involvement in The Multiliteracies Project and the purpose of the filming to the audience. The film footage from any events is then uploaded to The Multiliteracies Project database. Therefore, I could create the Master’s research data pool by watching these dynamic sources in the database.

Data Analysis

The constructivist grounded theory outlined by Charmaz (2006; 2014) is fundamental for
analyzing the data for The Multiliteracies and this Master’s research. In accordance with Charmaz (2006), “grounded theory methods consist of systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analyzing qualitative data to construct theories ‘grounded’ in the data themselves” (p. 2). Constructivist grounded theory guides research to “get started, stay involved, and finish [their] project” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 3). Charmaz (2014) indicates that constructivist grounded theory “offers a set of general principles, guidelines, strategies, and heuristic devices rather than formulaic prescriptions” (p. 3). This method allows researchers to be rooted in the parameters of the research itself, such as “what occurs in the research setting” and “what participants’ lives are like” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 3) and leads researchers to construct data related to the research topic through hearing, seeing, sensing, observing, and interacting with all gathered materials (Charmaz, 2006; 2014). The processes of constructivist grounded theory not only “bring surprises, spark ideas” but also “hone your analytical skills” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 3).

Additionally, the constructivist grounded theory data collection methods are insightful for the research designed “for pursuing data in several settings” to locate diverse and flexible paths to explore research questions (Charmaz, 2014, p. 54). Most importantly, “for a major funded research project, multi-method and multi-site approaches often prove to be useful” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 54). As Charmaz advises for larger research projects, the research sites and data gathering for The Multiliteracies Project are aided by logical analysis and reflection based on constructivist grounded theory, and simultaneously, this theory “offer[s] sharp tools for generating, mining, and making sense” of rich and sufficient data (Charmaz, 2014, p. 26).

Furthermore, the “comparative methods” are a crucial point of constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014, p. 41), which provides theoretical support for the practice of the comparative case study approach in The Multiliteracies Project. The constructivist grounded theory underlines “to compare data from the beginning of the research,” “to compare data with
emerging categories,” and “to demonstrate relations between concepts and categories” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 23). Meanwhile, the application of comparative methods makes it possible to pursue research findings through “myriad interactions occurring in multiple forms at various levels” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 321) since constructivist grounded theory highlights “going back and forth between data and analysis” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 1).

The Multiliteracies Project adopted constructivist grounded theory as its primary data collection and analysis methodology. Taking the research framework of the larger project as a premise, the small data pool of this Master’s research is analyzed based on constructivist grounded theory. Meanwhile, all the data from the Master’s research on music-related modalities and English learning and teaching is analyzed based on the research questions designed on three dimensions: educators, students, and cultures, which I clarified in the first introduction chapter. Consequently, by adopting the constructivist grounded theory approach, as a researcher of the Master’s study, I can guide, manage, and streamline data collection while developing an original analysis of the data I collected (Charmaz, 2006; 2014). The specific procedures for analyzing the data collected from each method are described in the following sections.

**Interview Coding**

All audio-recorded interviews were transcribed into textual form, and these transcriptions were coded according to “grounded theory coding” outlined by Charmaz (2014, p. 109). Coding, according to Charmaz, is “the process of defining what data are about” through “categorizing segments of data with a short name that simultaneously summarizes and accounts for each piece of data” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 111). The codes of interview transcripts present how to “select, separate, and sort data,” and they also present scaffolding for the “analytic sense of stories, statements, and observations” by initial coding, focused coding, and memo writing (Charmaz, 2014, p. 111). The following picture, Figure 4.2, serves as an example of transcription coding
from an interview with an adult educator from an informal learning space involved in The Multiliteracies Project.

### Figure 4.2

*An example: Coding of Interview Transcripts*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial Coding</th>
<th>Focused Coding</th>
<th>Memo Writing</th>
<th>Interview Transcripts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Facilitating problem-solving by learning music | Talking about how music can help develop one's abilities | Composing music is a tough direction in the music field. To solve the problems they face, musicians need to not only grasp a lot of theories and knowledge but also acquire many different skills | Q: Do you feel that as a musician that you help to promote creativity in people?  
A: Yes, I think that is the point that I forgot is to be creative. I think in problem-solving, actually, you know we might be doing a piece, and it might have a difficult passage that does not quite hang together, so we are doing different things, and then we need to analyze it, identify the problem, and then figure out how to fix it. And I think learning an instrument specifically teaches patience and planning skills. You are not going to get it the very first try. You need to be patient and try it over and over again. Put it away, try it again tomorrow. And be creative about how am I going to do this? How am I going to make the sound on the flute? If I blow into the hole, nothing is going to happen. Where on here on my face is it going to make the best sound? So you use your ears to do that, and you use your air to do that. So yes, I think |
| Solving the difficulties faced when composing and arranging music | Explaining the development of personal qualities by learning a musical instrument | In the same way, learning an instrument not only allows learners to master how to play that instrument but also to exercise their diverse abilities and characters | |
| Cultivating patience by practicing an instrument | Speaking from the perspective of an educator about the benefits of music learning | | |
| Developing planning skills by thinking about techniques of playing an instrument | Problem solving needs creativity | | |

Initial coding is the first stage of coding for transcripts, and it is conducted by “stick[ing] closely to the data” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 116). Initial coding uses “gerunds” to label the
phenomena and behaviors in the data because gerunds can help researchers “gain a strong sense of action and sequence” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 120). In addition, “line-by-line coding” is applied in the initial coding (Charmaz, 2014, p. 124). Charmaz (2014) states that “line-by-line coding works particularly well with detailed data about fundamental empirical problems and processes” (p. 125), for which all interviews in The Multiliteracies Project are consistent with the conditions. Meanwhile, line-by-line coding motivates researchers to “remain open to the data and to see nuances in them” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 125). Simultaneously, these potential clues leave ample room for surfacing the “theoretical categories” and “build[ing] analysis step-by-step” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 125). Most importantly, the initial coding of the interview uses both line-by-line coding and gerunds. Charmaz (2014) indicates and emphasizes that “this type of coding helps to define implicit meanings and actions, gives researchers direction to explore, spurs making comparisons between data, and suggests emergent links between processes in the data to pursue and check” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 121).

The second step of coding the interview transcript is focused coding. Focused coding “requires decisions about which initial codes make the most analytic sense to categorize” the current data (Charmaz, 2006, pp. 57-58), which could help to “manage your emerging analysis” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 141). Therefore, focused coding is carried out based on initial coding. Processing the focused coding concentrates on using the “most significant and/or frequent” initial codes (Charmaz, 2006, p. 57). Studying initial coding helps to recognize which codes have “adequacy and conceptual strength” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 140), which contributes to creating “the skeleton” of subsequent analysis (Charmaz, 2014, p. 141). Meanwhile, Charmaz (2014) points out that focused coding tends to use “certain initial codes that had more theoretical reach, direction, and centrality” (p. 141), which are a large part of the final analysis. Consequently, focus coding conceptualizes data segments by sifting, storing, synthesizing, and analyzing the
information embedded in the initial codes (Charmaz, 2014).

The third step of interview coding is memo writing. Charmaz (2014) notes that memo writing provides an “interactive space” in which researchers can engage with their collected material and emergent ideas and observe the “comparisons and connections” between different data, codes, categories, and concepts to “crystallize questions and direction” of the research (p. 162). Memo writing is “the content and form of your budding analysis” outlined by viewing the focused codes (Charmaz, 2014, p. 189). Scrutinizing focused codes helps identify the most representational codes and construct “conceptual categories” for “developing analytic framework” in memo writing (Charmaz, 2014, p. 189). The coding is revisited throughout the research process by different research team members, discussed with the team, and at times modified or elaborated upon as the larger data pool has grown.

**Axial Coding and Triangulation**

All field notes are finally deposited in the database by transcribing. According to Charmaz (2006; 2014), transcribing the entire field notes is an analytical process in which iterative recording retains rich details and inspires new ideas, guiding the direction of moving forward and providing theoretical validation for data themes and category extraction. In the case of this research, it has also involved the extra step of translation as well for the research team.

Similarly, documents are used as “primary or supplementary sources of data” in qualitative research (Charmaz, 2014, p. 45). Constructivist grounded theory allows for the contextualization of document analysis (Charmaz, 2006; 2014). Charmaz (2014) and emphasizes the importance of “the detail of the texts themselves” and “thoroughness of analysis” when scrutinizing documents (p. 53). This approach can provide proper perspective and insight into the intent and chronology of occurrences to support data categorization.

Charmaz (2014) recommends axial coding, “which means coding the dimension of a
category” (p. 19). As Richard and Hemphill (2018) state, researcher “reads two or three different data transcripts and code them into generative categories,” and “the goal is to identify patterns common across transcripts” (p. 228). Due to The Multiliteracies Project’s use of various sites with multiple data collection methods, the research team receives different types of data within the same research site. During data analysis, as a researcher, viewing data from different collection methods provides a better frame to understand the multiliteracies philosophies and multimodality pedagogies within the social context of the educational research sites. The purpose of the data analysis of field notes, documents, and film footage was to explore characteristics of teaching and learning in research spaces collected by these means. Indeed, axial coding is a reintegration through sorting, synthesizing, and organizing the piece of data in the initial coding, and the attributes and dimensions of a category are specified in the axial coding process (Charmaz, 2006; 2014). “Axial coding aims to link categories with subcategories” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 148), during which researchers could explore the connections between categories. Charmaz (2014) indicates that the course of axial coding signifies “converting text into concepts” (p. 148), which helps “give coherence to the emerging analysis” (p. 147).

Furthermore, triangulation is a crucial method for analyzing data. Patton (1999) indicates that “the term “triangulation” is taken from land surveying” (p. 1192). Triangulation is also associated with mathematics (Renz et al., 2018; Thurmond, 2001). The principle of the qualitative study behind the triangulation is that “each method reveals different aspects of empirical reality, multiple methods of data collection and analysis provide more grist for the research mill” (Patton, 1999, p. 1192). “Triangulation also has been viewed as a qualitative research strategy” (Cater et al., 2014, p. 545). It focuses on utilizing multiple methods, data sources, investigators, theoretical perspectives, and analytical methods in the same research (Cater et al., 2014; Denzin, 2017; Mathison, 1988; Patton, 1999; Renz et al., 2018; Thurmond,
The Multiliteracies Project effectively integrates different triangulations from multiple dimensions. The Multiliteracies Project was conducted at multiple sites using face-to-face semi-structured interviews, field observations, documentary analysis, and secondary data from original film footage. Denzin (2017) indicates the reality that “the rationale for this strategy is that the flaws of one method are often the strengths of another” (p. 308). He also states that “method triangulation combines dissimilar methods to measure the same unit,” in which researchers “can achieve the best of each while overcoming their unique deficiencies” (2017, p. 308).

Besides, in varying numbers and combinations, researchers and research assistants in The Multiliteracies Project take on different roles, such as “observers, interviewers, coders, and data analysts” (Thurmond, 2001, p. 254), entering the research sites to obtain “multiple observations and conclusions” (Cater et al., 2014, p. 545). All the data in the study were derived from “times, places, and person” (Denzin, 2017, p. 302) in different formal and informal educational spaces, for example, the performance of learners of different ages and the pedagogical practices of educators in a certain period at a community-based language classroom. According to Patton (1999), data source triangulation implies “comparing and cross-checking the consistency of information derived at different times and by different ways within qualitative methods” (p. 1195), helping “to gain multiple perspectives and validation of data” (Cater et al., 2014, p. 545). Meanwhile, investigator triangulation “removes the potential bias that comes from a single person and insures a greater reliability in observation” (Denzin, 2017, p. 303).

Further, Thurmond (2001) outlines that theoretical triangulation aims “to conduct the study with multiple lenses and questions” (p. 254). Theoretical triangulation “lead[s] researchers away from particularistic explanations,” and “move[s] beyond theory-specific investigations to generalized-theoretical studies,” and “encourages systematic continuity in theory and research.”
(Denzin, 2017, pp. 306-307). Data from The Multiliteracies Project are analyzed by constructivist grounded theory, including initial coding, axial coding, and triangulation, as outlined by Charmaz (2006; 2014). Since all secondary data used in this Master’s study is drawn from the Multiliteracies Project, the data analysis follows these analytical methods. Analytical triangulation helps enhance research quality and validity (Patton, 1999).

As Patton (1999) describes, “the notion of triangulation also works metaphorically to call to mind the world's strongest geometric shape—the triangle” (p. 1192). Thus, triangulation in qualitative research effectively consolidates the reliability of research methods and enhances the credibility of research results (Patton, 1999; Renz et al., 2018; Thurmond, 2001). The Multiliteracies Project combines these five triangulation approaches efficiently, constructing an empirical framework for developing and implementing this Master’s study.

**Ethical Considerations**

As a graduate research assistant participating in The Multiliteracies Project, using secondary data, several ethical principles need to be considered. I begin by strictly adhering to the ethical principles framed in The Multiliteracies Project. Firstly, consent within The Multiliteracies Project is the first step considered because the research should protect participants from harm, obtain informed consent, and prevent privacy violations (Kelly, 2019). Meanwhile, the consent for The Multiliteracies Project allows for consent, assent, or objection and indicates that participation is voluntary and that participants can withdraw themselves and their data without penalties (Constantin et al., 2022). Secondly, the ethical considerations of The Multiliteracies Project give participants the freedom to decide how they wish to present their work with respect to confidentiality concerns. In response, I clearly identified how each participant participated and how they wished to keep their identity confidential. Throughout the course of the research activities and the writing of this Master’s thesis, I scrupulously complied with all the researcher’s
choices and the way in which information was kept confidential. Subsequently, participants
deserve to follow up on the results and how their ideas and stories are used (Kam et al., 2006). In
particular, The Multiliteracies Project advocates member checking, allowing participants to
review and approve what information they share in a confidential manner and in the public
domain. At the end of the research study, a report will be sent to all of the participants that
outlines the main findings and discussion points of the study as well as a list of publications,
presentations, and public outreach based on the research to date. A similar more condensed report
will also be published on the University of Windsor’s REB site for public viewing. The
development of the Master’s research and thesis cannot be completed without the data
contributed by the participants; thus, the Master’s thesis is subject to review and verification by
the advisor, Dr. Holloway, to ensure the accuracy and veracity of the citing and interpretation of
all data utilized in the thesis.

Additionally, when attending field research events, it was inevitable that I, as the researcher,
would interact with the participants, which was a rewarding experience. Nevertheless, my status
as a graduate research assistant added to my outsider status in research, which is a limitation. I
follow several ways to compensate for this as a researcher. First, The Multiliteracies Project
includes participants with diverse identities, such as refugees, immigrants, and seniors, who are
adult learners in the community-based learning spaces. In this case, I made an effort to interact
with participants in a sensitive way that showed respect for their diverse cultural background,
beliefs, and customs to avoid impolite behaviors and expressions. Second, transparency and
honesty are upheld throughout the process of research activities. When I watched participants in
one-on-one situations, I made sure they knew why I was there and my role as an observer and
member of the research team supported by the other researchers who had a longer history with
the organizations. Third, language flexibility, a main emphasis of The Multiliteracies Project, is
the approach I have implemented in my research practice. The adult learners in The Multiliteracies Project who participated in the community-based English language class were non-English speakers from different countries around the world with different levels of English. As a researcher, when I talked to the adult learners, I listened patiently as they answered with simple words and phrases. When they could not express themselves in English, they were encouraged to speak in their native language, and I also sought help from members of the research team to understand the learners’ intentions. I saw these on-the-ground research experiences as an opportunity to fully participate in research culture and to learn from the participants willing to share their experiences with me.

**Research Bias**

“Sample sizes in qualitative research are typically small” (Hammarberg et al., 2016, p. 500). Although the small sample size facilitates “an intensive analysis of each case” (Robinson, 2014, p. 29), the Master’s study elaborates more on the educator’s perspective rather than considering the “locatable voice” of adult learners in experiencing language learning patterns that fulfill multimodality and multiliteracies (Robinson, 2014, p. 29). This can lead to limitations of empirical generalization (Higginbottom, 2004). However, the research data for this Master’s thesis draws on The Multiliteracies Project, built on multiple research sites, using diverse data collection methods based on constructivist grounded theory. The flexibility of The Multiliteracies Project “foster[s] following up on what is happening” with gathered sources (Charmaz, 2014, p. 26), which helps boost “the analytic incisiveness of the resultant analysis” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 86). In addition, the utilization of axial coding and triangulation, precise quotes from the data, and extensive description support data interpretation while effectively enhancing the credibility of the research (Hammarberg et al., 2016). Nevertheless, I acknowledge that the small sample size that my research focuses on does bias the research in certain ways given that it is not a
robust reading of all of the data from the larger study.

Charmaz (2006; 2014) questioned the objectivity of constructivist grounded theory. She claims that “although scholars may don a cloak of objectivity, research and writing are inherently ideological activities” (2014, p. 305). Also, she mentions that the facts collected by field observation might be separate from values since the observer is not participating in creating the events (2006; 2014). Besides, regarding documents obtained in the study and texts edited from firsthand data collected by the researcher, Charmaz (2006; 2014) reminds us that these texts do not stand as an impartial source of data, nor do they represent undistorted views by the researcher. In response, Charmaz (2006; 2014) recommends that researchers use critical and analytical vision to approach data sources. In the meantime, EI Hussein et al. (2014) suggest that being sensitive to the data can “prepare the researcher to comprehend and interpret the data” (p. 6).

Conclusion

This Master’s study probes the impact of music-related multimodality as a pedagogical practice in language learning and teaching on adult learners’ language acquisition and multiliteracies abilities, as well as the implications for adult educators’ pedagogical philosophies. Data collection and analysis follow the methods and principles of the constructivist grounded theory proposed by Charmaz (2006; 2014). The data for this Master’s study draws on data collected from The Multiliteracies Project. Data are gathered from community-based English language classrooms and informal learning spaces in Windsor through face-to-face semi-structured interviews, field observations and notes, document analysis, and original film footage. The data interpretations and findings of this Master’s research are elaborated upon in greater depth in the following chapter.
CHAPTER 5
Findings and Discussion

This Master’s thesis is based on a qualitative multiple case studies research that aims to explore the impact and practical insights of music as a learning means for adult learners’ advancement of language acquisition and multiliteracies and educators’ teaching philosophies in the context of second language learning from multiliteracies, multimodality, musicology, and sociocultural perspectives. In this chapter, I will expound and analyze the findings collected from five adult educators in four learning sites embedded in The Multiliteracies Project. These sites are 4th Wall Music, the Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County, French Lit., and the Live Doc. Project. The secondary data I drew upon to build up my thesis research were gathered through face-to-face individual, audio-recorded, and transcribed interviews, classroom and adult learning space observations, document analysis, and original film footage. The analysis of collected data can present rich and solid examples of how the potential benefits or challenges of music can be brought to bear in various second language learning scenarios, illuminating a range of educators with different teaching styles and learners at different literacy and language learning levels while answering the research questions posed in the previous chapter.

Following the principles of constructivist grounded theory, two main themes have emerged from the data through initial, focused, and axial coding. The themes that will be discussed here in the Findings & Discussion are: (1) Multiliteracies: Music helps construct the new learning environment; and (2) Multimodality: Music helps promote the recognition of the target language and diversity. The data analysis and discussion will occur under these two themes.

Multiliteracies: Music Helps Construct the New Learning Environment

The traditional concepts of literacy learning and teaching refer to what we call a “standard” or “educated” pattern (Kalantzis et al., 2016, p. 3), in which learners, as passive recipients, have
to accept what was shown to them and comply with the old basics to be subjected to authority and uniformity (Kalantzis et al., 2016). Traditional language learning philosophy is very narrow and fragmented, overvaluing the importance of phonetic rules, correct spelling, and grammar, which causes students to lose motivation and interest in language learning and to be unable to apply what they have learned in real life contexts. The scholars in the New London Group realize that this old-fashioned, rigid, isolated, mechanical approach to learning and teaching is not enough to meet the needs of contemporary education and learning (The New London Group, 1996).

The theory of multiliteracies comes with new basics of literacy learning; that is, except for insisting on the primary roles of reading, writing, and mathematics, it also proposes making meaning through a broad range of communications (Kalantzis et al., 2016). The new literacy basics enlighten educators to find divergent paths for their learners to communicate and interact with their knowledge and shape learners with multiple competencies to be innovative and agile to create a new representation of meaning (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009). Indeed, cultivating learners who engage in the “Knowledge Processes” and whose learning is shaped by the foundational principles of multiliteracies theory and pedagogy cannot be achieved without the guidance from professional educators. Thus, having educators who are engaged with multiliteracies’ concepts and multifaceted skills becomes a prerequisite. That being said, the participants in this study identified with the main tenets of multiliteracies theory which were identified in the recruitment posters and letters of invitation, but they did not necessarily know explicitly in detail about multiliteracies theory prior to participating in the research. The following data will present concrete examples of how educators incorporate the multiliteracies theory into their lesson plans and create new learning environments that might serve to inspire learners to grasp new literacy skills when music is integrated as a learning tool in language learning spaces.
Amy Ley, an adult educator and the artistic director at 4th Wall Music, designs a student-oriented learning environment in which adult learners no longer merely acquire the content imparted by educators because she engages them to be “active knowledge-makers” (Kalantzis et al., 2016, p. 11). The 4th Wall Music is a chamber music ensemble. Amy, a harp player, has been involved in classical music for over 25 years, and as she claims in her interview, “my favourite part is the moment when you [the musicians] are sharing the music with the audience.” However, the traditional model of classical music does not necessarily encourage the audience to connect with the performers. As the institution’s name suggests, the fourth wall is the barrier between musicians and audiences. Getting rid of this metaphorical wall brings musicians and audiences closer together. The concept of the 4th Wall Music community-based organization is based on the classical music styles and compositions of smaller ensembles and continues to perform in intimate settings, supporting a new platform for classical chamber music in Windsor and making it possible for the audience to reach out to the musicians. Amy explains in her interview,

So, the 4th Wall is that wall between the audience and the performer and it is often used in staging and theatre. And our mission is to take down that wall so that we are reaching out to the audience, and equally taking from that their insight, creating a shared experience.

The collapse of the fourth wall and establishing an intimate relationship are created by constant interaction. For example, musicians in 4th Wall Music purposefully design the concerts in a manner that engage directly with their audiences, and people can watch the performance up close and have a comfortable face-to-face conversation with the musicians after the concert and even sometimes during the concert itself.

When musicians create sound effects, Liesel Deppe, a flute player and adult educator at 4th Wall Music, recalls that opportunities for interaction arise. Sound effects are artificially
created sounds like gun firing, glass breaking, and slaps in the movies, and musicians can use their instruments to produce these unique sounds. The presence of sound effects defies most people’s common perception of musical instrument sounds, which is that musicians can only play beautiful melodies on their instruments. After the audiences see how Liesel plays her flute and hear the distinctive sounds from Liesel’s flute in person, they start a free talk with the musician to express their amazement and curiosity about hearing the unexpected sounds. Liesel talks about this phenomenon in her interview,

   So, there were people who came up to us afterwards, they came up to me and said, “I did not know the flute could make those sounds.” That expands the tonal qualities of the instruments. Or “I did not know you could hold your breath that long or play that long.” Things like that. I think people, they really like to see your hands move, possibly how you breathe. I have not actually asked them that, but I think people like to see what we do or possibly even look at us looking at each other. Making eye contact.

Through the initial coding and focused coding of Liesel’s interview, the codes such as “providing audience members with the chance to ask questions and share wonderings,” and “audiences watching closely musicians play their instruments,” and “demonstrating instrument playing to audiences during the concert” and “speaking with audience members casually after the concerts,” it is evident that the Liesel incorporates educational practice to musical performances while actively engaging audience members in the context of the actual concerts.

   Meanwhile, Amy’s interview points to the fact that audiences get closer and try the instrument in a wall-down environment. For example, audience members might stroke the harp strings while simultaneously talking directly to the musicians about their excitement about feeling the instrument and listening to the different sounds it produces. They might
As educators, Amy and Liesel employ the theory of multiliteracies in their educational practice. They provide a professional and up-close atmosphere in which they mobilize the audience to become spontaneous learners, motivating them to actively explore new knowledge by experimenting with initial tactile components of performing musical pieces (strumming and plucking the harp) and musical elements (Amy showing how to make sounds on the instrument) instead of directly giving a lecture to these learners. This positive learning environment induced
by music is also applicable to second language learning.

As a teaching tool, music builds a platform where language learners may benefit from interactions with “a variety of conversational partners” (Díaz-Rico, 2020, p. 179), and enables learners to create meaning through interacting with the meaningful materials associated with music that can be in-person even in the cyber age (Díaz-Rico, 2020). From the perspective of sociocultural theory, teacher-student relationships based on social interaction are a significant branch of the interactive learning community. Music serves “as a mode of social interaction” (Cross, 2014, p. 813), and its universal and communicative properties provide a bridge for teacher-student interaction (Cross, 2014, p. 809). In an interactive learning environment, the educators will act “the role of a mentor to student more than a traditional instructor” (Lee, 2015, p. 32). Vygotsky defines mentors as “More Knowledgeable Others” (MKO) from the sociocultural perspective (Cicconi, 2014, p. 58). MKO can be “someone with more knowledge or a greater understanding of a particular task or process than the learner” (Cicconi, 2014, p. 58). MKO is not limited to the academic and educational environment or learning guided by people; it also occurs in an entertaining learning setting and interactive medium, such as watching videos or learning how to use technology (McLeod, 2023).

“Literacy teaching and learning occurs through interaction across a variety of spaces and includes moment of interaction that are unmarked and/or unintended as literacy acts” (Boyd & Brock, 2015, xii). Amy and Liesel provide new language learning materials and channels for audiences with English as their target language by creating an intimate, interactive relationship and playing musical effects. Although the instruction of second language learning is not one of the key objectives of 4th Wall Music, this organization actively engages learners in exploring music with a sense of wonder, curiosity, and enjoyment as a type of language everyone can learn. Looking at concerts produced by 4th Wall Music in the last few years such as “Tea Time
Travels” exploring tea traditions from various cultures or “Celebrating Black Composers” shows this organization’s commitment to showcasing equity, diversity, and inclusion in its programming. Sociocultural approaches to language learning similarly recognize that designing safe spaces that make learners feel emotionally and physically safe is crucial to fostering learners’ willingness to take risks and encouraging them to share their thoughts and feelings comfortably (Boyd & Brock, 2015; Cummins, 2000). In such a learning environment, appreciating music and watching performances becomes the learner’s MKO, which is a sign that the learner has actively started interacting with music. In the process of interacting with music as primary learning material, the “inner,” “soundless speech” developed by Vygotsky in 1986 emerges (p. 93). When language learners ponder over sound effects that they have never heard before and the unprecedented touch of the instrument, this “soundless inner speech” (Vygotsky, 1986, p. 32) comes since learners “chant” their “thoughts and actions” internally (Vygotsky, 1986, p. 28), which are based solely on their own opinions and recognition. Specifically, all of the doubts and confusion about music that appear in English-language concerts, for example, about why the flute makes sweet sounds, stimulate students to connect with their real lives and inspire them to explore the mysteries of music using the English mind. This is relying upon what Vygotsky proposes, that internalized speech is a “pervasive and profound part of the higher psychological processes,” which “acts to organize, unify, and integrate many disparate aspects,” such as “perception and memory” in learning a new language (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 126).

The external interaction of the teacher-student relationship is also a necessary part of language acquisition development, aside from the “inner internalized form” of interaction with music that originates in the teacher-student relationship (Kozulin, 2003, p. 19). The intimate learning environment advocated by Amy and Liesel and the other musicians is where teacher-student interactions develop positively.
Indeed, Jenny Harris, an adult English as a Second Language educator at The Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County, emphasizes a healthy teacher-student relationship. The adult learners at the Multicultural Council are relatively exceptional with their identities and backgrounds in that they are new immigrants to Canada or have come to Canada as refugees. Their common denominator is that English is not their first and native language, even if they are at different levels of English proficiency. The Multicultural Council was set up to offer newcomers a place to learn English and help them adjust to life in Canada, where English is one of the country’s two official languages, the other is French. However, the adult English learners at the Multicultural Council are seen as “individuals with complex lives” because they have families, beliefs, previous learning experiences, grief from their past lives, and hopes for a better life in a new country (Lee, 2015, p. 32).

As a language teacher, Jenny recognizes the significance of building rapport with her adult learners and has adopted this as her teaching philosophy. Jenny teaches the pre-literacy class, which means that students are able to produce one word or short phrase responses in the target language of English. Many of these adults have not had opportunities to learn how to read and write in their home language or even know how to hold a pencil. Thus, for these learners, any type of formal education, further complicated by it being in a new language and in a new country, must feel quite intimidating initially. It should be noted though that multiliteracies theory would deem these students as still literate, but that their literacies are encoded in a variety of other modes (i.e. the ability to sing or tell folktales of their culture or barter effectively at the local market). Jenny states in her interview,

I always want to be someone that the students can come and talk to that they feel comfortable with. I never want to be someone who they are intimidated by. I want them to look at me as a friend as well as their teacher. I have always tried to think
about how they feel and, you know, it is not easy. I know that their lives are not easy, so I just tried to be the place that they can come to and be happy, and they learn.

It is not sufficient in terms of pedagogy to merely relay basic language forms and grammar to communicate with adult learners from different backgrounds who are at this emerging stage of language development in the multicultural classroom; the social element of learning has to be played a role in their ability to be successful in the language classroom. In contrast to just thinking of language learning as vocabulary and syntactic sentence construction, a “nonthreatening” (Díaz-Rico, 2020, p. 182) and “supportive” classroom “offers equal education opportunity to all students, regardless of their language background” (Díaz-Rico, 2020, p. 76). As Boyd and Brock (2015) claim, educators “bear the burden, challenge, and joy of bringing all voices into conversations about literacy and culture” (p. 71). Adult educators must be leaders in creating this safe, warm welcoming environment for English as a second language learners as Jenny clearly articulates is a main aim of her own pedagogy.

Cope and Kalantzis (2000) notes that “communication is, in its very nature, interactive” and “interacting with audiences becomes a prime focus in most moments of art” (p. 226). Amy from 4th Wall Music points out in her interview that “they do enjoy that” whereby she is referring to music in that she starts frequent conversations and exchanges initiated by learners in the learning setting where music works as mediation. In fact, the audience at the concert is in many ways the same as learners in a language classroom, in which the organized environment provided by educators motivates them to become more engaged in the learning material (Klem & Connell, 2004).

The secondary data of original film footage from the 4th Wall Music, accessed via the link https://multiliteraciesproject.com/adult-education/4th-wall-music/, presents an explicit scene of musicians interacting with the audience in the live concert, which is worth further
examination. During the concert, Liesel introduces the audience to how to play the flute through relatively casual words. She asks the audience, “how many of you have blown across the top of a pop bottle with a glass or plastic?” This question helps learners imagine blowing the flute with a live example that builds on the audience’s prior knowledge. Then, Liesel invited the audience to make a movement with her to experience blowing the flute, and she said that “usually the right-hand index finger is good, and I want you to place it on your chin, and then you form the embouchure as if you are blowing across the top of your finger; let’s try that.” When Liesel finished these instructions and the expression of music, the angle of the film shot was aimed at the audience members. The camera shows that the audience followed Liesel’s instructions and tried to blow air toward the index finger on the chin. This “bodily movement” (Kress, 2000, p. 196)” serves as a “gesture language” (Kress, 2000, p. 190), which visualizes the abstract concept of playing the flute and helps learners develop a sense of blowing the flute. In this multimodal moment of instruction, these adults are engaged through imagined playing of the instrument using the combined modes of gesture (their mouths pursed, fingers poised, elbows held out, chins postured straight as if holding a flute); tactile (the breath imitating playing the notes); audio (inner listening to the notes as if playing); linguistic (attempting to follow Liesel’s verbal instructions); visual (watching Liesel play). Like language instruction, learning to play an instrument involves a lot of active imitation. The interaction between educators and students is the “heart of the educational process,” which also “determines the quality of education the student receives” (Díaz-Rico, 2020, p. 295). Encouraging positive “teacher-student interactions” can stimulate learners’ interest in participating in the activities (Díaz-Rico, 2020, p. 295).

For promising English as a second language learning progress, “cognitive challenge” and “intrinsic motivation” should “be infused into the interaction between teachers and students”
(Cummins, 2000, p. 273). Basically, second language learners’ knowledge and understanding of the nature, content, and methods of learning English are incomplete; there also needs to be attention given to the social side of learning. If learners they enter a well-structured learning environment, their cognition of the English language will gradually develop in response to environmental stimuli, but more so in a socially engaged milieu. With the increasing growth of learners’ language cognition comes the number of needs for more diverse and expansive learning resources, which is a considerable challenge to language educators.

Among the recommendations of multiliteracies theory for “new teachers” is the suggestion that educators should “collaborate with other teachers and share learning designs” (Kalantzis et al., 2016, p. 11). Amy from 4th Wall Music talks about how this community-based organization was first conceptualized using a collaborative approach to design concerts on a variety of topics:

Myself [I], as well as a number of other performers with the Windsor Symphony, got together and started talking about concert programs, and from there we became a non-profit organization. As we continued our programming, we started finding that the more we collaborated with other artistic organizations in Windsor. Kalantzis et al. (2016) realize that “new teachers are collaborative professionals” because they are “immersed in a professional culture of mutual support and sharing” (p. 11). The coding “collaborating with other artistic organizations” and “recognizing that this collaboration allows for various expertise” from Amy’s interview through initial coding and focused coding make it evident that the educators in 4th Wall Music enjoy working in with other community members instead of closing themselves off and working independently. Also, the codes of Amy’s interview, like, “noting the brainstorming and rehearsing behind concerts,” and “creating inspiration from different passions,” and “receiving positive feedback,” clearly reflect that these educators are constantly communicating and sharing in
collaboration with musicians from different fields. This is what Kalantzis et al. (2016, p. 11) names as “refusing and adapting” others’ ideas, and “peer-reviewing” of others’ concepts, which leads to 4thWall Music members ultimately selecting the optimal plans to exhibit a very dynamic concerts for the audiences. Nevertheless, from a sociocultural standpoint, English as a second language learners’ motivation may be affected by the social context in which the learning occurs, according to Diaz-Rico (2020). Therefore, a cheerful learning ambience and rich learning resources constructed by educators through cooperation extrinsically motivate learners to develop cognition of the target language and fully enjoy the learning process.

In addition, Liesel, a 4th Wall Music educator and musician, also discusses her experience searching for and preparing resources for concerts and teaching practice, which is a further extension of the conversations around concert themes discussed above. Liesel indicates in her interview that “educators are not one hundred percent exhaustive.” It is known by the corresponding initial and focused codes, such as “limited music database” and “satisfying everyone’s music preferences is hard,” Liesel expresses that the educator’s ability and knowledge are limited to a certain extent. Yet, as an educator, Liesel adheres to a philosophy of lifelong learning to enrich her musical library and repertoire. Hence, according to Liesel’s statement in the interview, she keeps a running list when she hears something she does not know while attending another concert, reminding her to search for unknown resources. As soon as Liesel starts searching for resources, she thinks critically about reliable music sources, for example, choosing the befitting database based on the concert’s topic or listening to the music and analyzing the instrumental combinations to decide on a suitable target one. As an educator, Liesel’s professionalism, initiative, and critical thinking in preparing teaching resources exemplify how the preparation of what counts as a more traditionally known English as a second
language learning classroom has much in common with the music concert hall because both are spaces of learning that involve skillfully planning instructional strategies to create an engaging circumstance to challenge or satisfy language learners and audiences.

More importantly, multiliteracies theory requires that new teachers should be able to “use new media for learning design at any time and from any place” (Kalantzis et al., 2016, p. 11). “Internet technology continues to play an ever-increasing role” in contemporary educational practice (Lee, 2009, p. 146). In line with the increasingly technological education age, Liesel points out YouTube as a good start for educators to catch inspiration for the concert. However, Liesel realizes the drawbacks of online media. She notes in the interview, “if you think YouTube is the only source, and there are some good things in there, but there is also really bad stuff.” According to Liesel’s expression in her interview, to avoid the misleading caused by online falsity and educators’ insufficient experience, she accesses well-organized and professional websites, for instance, the Flute World, the Canadian Music Center, and Naxos Online. Meanwhile, these platforms can help her, both as a musician and an educator, find high-quality music recordings and more reliable music resources for audience members and learners. Likewise, the audience members are adult learners, many of whom “grew up in a technology-enhanced learning environment” (Díaz-Rico, 2020, p. 228).

Towela Okwudire, is another participant in this study, and she is the director of French Lit., a language learning organization in Windsor, is an adult educator who teaches French as a second language. She insists on a student-centered language teaching model, and she suggests that the educator’s voice is not the only sound in the language classroom and that some voices could replace it with authority from new media. Towela explains in her interview,

So, there might be another authority on a particular point who can speak for me by the form of a podcast, or by the form of a video or a Ted Talk or whatever. So that helps,
not being the only authority in that limited space where you are the main authority. So, there are other authorities.


The podcasts present an excellent voice for developing “transcultural competence” (McBride, 2009, p. 156) and becoming “motivated and autonomous learners” (McBride, 2009, p. 153). In the film footage, Towela chose technology-related podcasts to help learners build their vocabulary through listening exercises. She describes the goal of listening training as wishing for learners to identify words by their sounds, and she explains further, “you don’t know the word, but you may hear it.” At the same time, Towela encourages learners to keep listening without stopping while writing down what they catch about the recording. After listening, Towela reviews the content of the podcast with the learners. The learners try to read out the words in French they heard in the recording, such as “revolution,” “technology,” “international,” and “electricity.” McBride (2009) notes that podcasts are beneficial to second language learners to make connections between words in written form and sounds in spoken language as is the case here in this short excerpt from Towela’s class with adult learners who are at the beginning stages of learning French.

In addition, the film footage shows learners self-correcting as they sound out the words in French, while Towela pronounces the words in French, giving learners a model of correct
pronunciation. This is part of the potential impact of technology on the second language classroom. Learners can “self-correct” in a “technology-mediated environment;” simultaneously, they can obtain “feedback from the tutors concerning a linguistic item” (Sotillo, 2009, p. 105). Through communicating and reflecting, in subsequent task completion activities with their tutors, learners can amend their linguistic performance in response to the feedback provided (Sotillo, 2009).

Moreover, the sociocultural approach emphasizes that language learning involves a cultural context. The podcast is also “intriguing” on a “cultural level” (Guikema, 2009, p. 178), and it could “encourage them [learners] to delve deeper into the cultural significance and functions of discourse” (Guikema, 2009, p. 182). Indeed, by listening to the podcast and the discussion with Towela, learners can learn about the development of technology in France or focus on the role of technology in their own and French cultures. Besides, Guikema (2009) proposes an additional way of using podcasts as learning materials. When students listen to the podcast while reading the transcript, they can focus on the intonation and rhythm of spoken French. This helps them know how to use these phonetic and linguistic elements to convey a specific message in a particular French context. Whether in a concert hall or a French classroom, enriching learning resources and an enjoyable learning atmosphere can motivate learners and enhance their cognitive development. Note how everyone is laughing frequently in this French Lit. learning space as they work through the podcast. The same educational strategies and media applied to these two learning spaces are applicable to English language classrooms.

In addition to external incentives, motivation comes from the learner’s internal drive. Intrinsic motivation is regarded as “intrinsic reward,” and it refers to learners who are internally driven to enjoy second language learning without any pressure from outside,
including an interest in language learning and a desire to explore new knowledge (Oxford & Shearin, 1994, p. 20). Lems (2018) claims that “music is motivating” (p. 15). Learners’ curiosity begins by experiencing music, and curiosity produces motivation and interest and raises attention (Posner & Patoine, 2009). This explains very well why learners initiate a dialogue with the educator precisely because music learning resources stimulate the emergence of their curiosity and intrinsic reward mechanisms force them to find the answers and gain further knowledge. The best way for learners to satisfy their curiosity is to talk with the teacher in depth, ask questions, and express confusion. In this case, the answers and responses of the teacher are especially important for the learner’s desire to learn and gain knowledge.

As a flutist and adult educator in 4th Wall Music, Liesel gives relevant examples of how she assists learners in understanding the role of airflow in playing the flute across settings because air control is one of the essential techniques for blowing the flute. Liesel takes students into a contextualized environment, using one of the pedagogical orientations from the “Knowledge Processes” of multiliteracies theory, namely, “Experiencing the Known” and “Experiencing the New” (Kalantzis et al., 2016, p. 74). To illustrate, in the interview, Liesel analogizes the flute to a backyard hosepipe, and she compares the flow of water from the hosepipe to the changing airflow of the flute. Liesel explains this principle through conversations with the interviewer,

Liesel: So, if your air is like water in a hosepipe, if there is not enough water in a hosepipe, but you want the water to go farther, what do you do?

Interviewer: You put your thumb on it.

Liesel: Yes, but what does that do?

Interviewer: It puts pressure.
Liesel: Okay, what does it do to the opening?

Interviewer: It limits the amount of space for the water to come out.

Liesel: It makes the hole smaller, right.

Interviewer: Yes.

Liesel: So we make the hole a little bit smaller, as well. So, as you have less air, it needs to become smaller and then you, of course, also direct it. How do you direct it?

You also use your thumb. And if you have enough air, let us say you have enough air or enough water, but you want to direct it, you still use your finger to make it go somewhere or change the direction. So that is what we use for air, for example.

In this dialogue, Liesel guides the interviewer to recall prior knowledge through life experiences as a basis for understanding how air changes in the flute.

Among other things, the interviewer’s recognition of the control of water in the pipes is “Experiencing the Known” (Kalantzis et al., 2016, p. 77). However, thinking about airflow in the flute is an unfamiliar scenario for the interviewer, which is “Experiencing the New” (Kalantzis et al., 2016, p. 77). Simultaneously, Liesel “create[s] visual parallels to elements of the musical form” through this interactive discourse (Rowsell, 2013, p. 15). This visual language aids learners in connecting familiar everyday life with new situations, laying the groundwork for them to digest the new knowledge, in this case, language that helps to conceptualize the playing of an instrument.

In a similar manner, Jenny, an adult educator at the Multicultural Council, is responsible for teaching English learners at the pre-literacy level. She also draws upon parallel strategies to Liesel’s the “Knowledge Processes” in her English classes to help learners sound out words much like Liesel helps new musicians acquire proficiency with manipulating their fingers and breath to produce sounds on the flute (Kalantzis et al., 2016, p. 74). It can be found through
observing the secondary data film footage documenting Jenny’s classroom teaching. Jenny noticed that learners could pronounce the words with similar English pronunciations but still sound distinctly different, which can be viewed through this link: https://multiliteraciesproject.com/adult-education/the-multicultural-council-of-windsor/the-multicultural-council-of-windsor-and-essex-county-jenny-harris-class-excerpts/. According to Díaz-Rico’s (2020) interpretation, this phenomenon is understandable. She explains that “pronunciation (phonology) changes” as time goes by (Díaz-Rico, 2020, p. 17). Still, language learners might be confused about the correct phonology of the words in the target language for varying reasons. To be specific, when Jenny was teaching the pronunciation of vegetable words, she realized learners sound potato in /pəˈteɪtə/, instead of /pəˈteɪtoʊ/, and tomato in /təˈmeɪtoʊ/, instead of /təˈmeɪtoʊ/. Both pronunciations of “potato” and “tomato,” respectively, are extremely close to each other, but learners cannot sound out the last syllable of both words properly.

Díaz-Rico (2020) analyzes this case of sounding out pronunciation for at least two reasons. First, “English learners’ aural comprehension and pronunciation may be affected when English words contain phonemes that are unfamiliar to them” (p. 20). She explains with an example that “the schwa (the sound of the “e” in the phrase “the hat”) is often difficult for Spanish speakers because Spanish vowels rarely alter their sound quality in unaccented syllables” (Díaz-Rico, 2020, p. 20). The second reason that Díaz-Rico (2020), notes that “the manner of articulation” of the first language could influence sounding English words, such as the “tip, front, or back of the tongue,” and “whether the vocal cords vibrate or not” (p. 20). She also takes an example to demonstrate, namely, “Arabic speakers may say “barking lot” instead of “parking lot” because to them /p/ and /b/ are not distinguishable (Díaz-Rico, 2020, p. 20).

Language changes are irreversible and ongoing; thus, facing the phonological differences in English language learning is necessary. As seen in the film footage, Jenny sounds out two
different pronunciations for potato and tomato, offering learners the comparison to identify the existing nuances. Meanwhile, phonological instruction is “to provide students with appropriate oral models” (Cummins, 2000, p. 21). Then, Jenny articulates the words clearly, giving learners a standard phonetic template and leading them to pronounce the words. “Teachers who respect the dynamic nature of language can take delight in learners’ approximations of English” (Díaz-Rico, 2020, p. 17). In this regard, the learner’s perception of part of the word’s pronunciation is “Experiencing the Known,” whereas “Experiencing the New” is sounding the correct third syllables of potato and tomato through perceiving the subtle differences under Jenny’s instruction (Kalantzis et al., 2016, p. 77). This new experience appears “only within zone of intelligibility and safety” and what is “sufficiently close” to the learners’ understanding of the pronunciations of learned words (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009, p. 185).

Music makes second language learning a socializing process (Cores-Bilbao et al., 2019). Notes from field observations at the Multicultural Council recorded that “before the first regular class in the morning, the Canadian national anthem was played over the radio, while everyone in the classroom, teachers and learners, stood up” (Fieldnotes, February 9, 2023). “A national anthem is a unique musical work in that it functions primarily as a malleable symbol of a bounded geographical region” (Abril, 2007, p. 73). Each country’s national anthem is composed based on its sociocultural background and historical precedents, and the value and meaning of the anthem itself far exceed the notes and lyrics (Abril, 2007). Even though the Canadian national anthem appears only as a ritual piece of music in the English language learning space to promote patriotism amongst Newcomers, its presence depicts an important, intangible aspect of the concept of belonging in Canada. The national anthem, one of Canada’s symbols, conveys the “nation” and “the ideology of nationalism” (Gulliver, 2011, p. 125). When English language learners from different regions of the world listen to the Canadian national anthem at the
Multicultural Council, they hear not only the music, but the social and cultural atmosphere of Canada shaped by the melody, rhythm, and lyrics. As Roswell (2013) claims, “music allows listeners to move beyond immediate contexts, situations, and thoughts to exist within the mode,” and music “eclipses other competing forces for a listener’s attention” (p. 34). Although everyone at the Multicultural Council has different cultures and beliefs, when the Canadian national anthem was played, everyone stood up and concentrated on it, showcasing respect for Canada.

Differentiated learning is seen as necessary in the plethora of questions from learners with diverse interests, levels of curiosity, and points of view is very challenging for educators who may enjoy the diverse social environment but find it hard to meet everyone’s needs. Differentiated learning provides some direction. First, the musical literacy of learners varies widely. Take Liesel’s example that she shares in her interview that when students ask her about the field of music, for instance, how instruments work and make sound, she responds with professional answers by playing instruments, using language and different analogies or metaphors to describe a concept. All these responses benefit experienced people who are used to attending orchestras and regular concerts. However, those who do not go to concerts, do not like the instruments or are addicted to some style of music that is contrary to the field in which the musicians perform, causes a tricky task for educators. Second, from a music therapy perspective, Haase (2012) manifests that the “conversation” is the foundation of therapeutic interventions rather than the music itself (p. 194); hence, “the help of music, as well as other media including language,” assists in modifying the “interpersonal processes” in music therapy (p. 194). As described before, music helps overturn the obstacle between teachers and students, facilitating interaction between the two, including questions and answers, conversations, and shared experiences.

Meanwhile, Rabinowitch (2020) states that music “leaves more room for personal
interpretation, allowing people of different views and attitudes to collaborate and share experience” (p. 3). Yet, impromptu questions posted by people in interactive communication and collaboration with educators sometimes go beyond the educator’s field of study and knowledge since educators are not all-knowing. Although educators do not have enough expertise and skills to satisfy every learner, they still explore various strategies to help learners with their questions and concerns. For Liesel, she considers the learners’ learning needs, preferences, and purpose of learning as the primary solutions. She notes, “you cannot please everyone, but you kind of know what people might like.” Understanding learners’ goals in advance allows educators to track each learner’s learning dynamics and provide timely and customized solutions. This echoes what the multiliteracies perspective through recommendations for a new teacher to “offer a variety of learning paths for different students” (Kalantzis et al., 2016, p. 11).

The differentiated pedagogy inspired by music also informs the design of lesson plans for second language teachers. The age range of adult English as a second language learners at the Multicultural Council crosses an extensive range, from young adults as young as 18 years old to the elderly (sometimes in their late 80s). Essentially, if these different age groups of learners are at the same English level, they will be assigned to a class. Therefore, providing differentiated instruction to help learners with their difficulties becomes fundamental in Jenny’s English classes. The topic of one of Jenny’s classes is to celebrate students’ birthdays through singing. This lesson is important because many learners have never celebrated their birthdays before. Many of these students have arrived from refugee camps, where they might have lived most of their lives. They have not had access to formal education. In their culture, birthdays may have been insignificant or not tracked in formal records. If newcomers do not know their birthdays, Canadian Border agents often assign January 1st to their profiles. Jenny says in her interview,

I like that we celebrate birthdays in my classroom because a lot of students have never
celebrated their birthday before. So, we try to make it a special day for them. We decorate, we have cake, whatever they bring in, candy, we sing, and we take a nice picture for everyone to take home. And it makes them feel special because a lot of students have never celebrated their birthday before.

The Multicultural Council accommodates immigrants, settlers, and refugees who are the primary learners in the English language classroom. Language learners with various identities and backgrounds in Jenny’s classroom wish to meet “immediate needs for survival” by learning English as an additional language, such as “food, housing, transportation, immigration status, [and] navigating the system” (Stewart et al., 2008, p. 137), which speaks to the importance of functional literacy.

Yet, learners in Multicultural Council also need to use the language to fulfill an internal psychological demand. For learners with limited language skills in Jenny’s classroom, “one of the major hurdles to succeeding in learning the language is the occurrence of negative emotions when engaging in collaborative activities and when adapting to the classroom environment” (Cores-Bilbao et al., 2019, p. 3). Cummins (2000) indicates that psychological phenomena are sociological. For one aspect, the passive state of mind can stem from “insecurity and shyness” about unfamiliar surroundings (Cores-Bilbao et al., 2019, p. 3). For another aspect, the Newcomers “may have experienced physical or emotional trauma” (Cummins & Early, 2015, p. 22). From a sociocultural perspective, it is crucial to consider the psychological state of the learners in second language education.

In this case, Oxford and Shearin (1994) recommend that second language educators can “help students relax through music” (p. 17). Kraus and Slater (2015) express that “language enables articulation of what is within us, whereas music strengthens what is shared between us” (p. 208). This is precisely because, no matter what background the learners come from, they are
more likely to listen to songs celebrating birthdays. At the same time, the sensation of emotion caused by familiar musical stimuli not only helps relieve learners’ tension and anxiety (van den Bosch et al., 2013) but also “develops a non-threatening classroom climate” (Oxford & Shearin, 1994, p. 17), which promotes emotional resonance between teachers and students, and between classmates in the classroom. In other words, music shapes “an effective emotional form of communication and coordination” so that those involved in the music begin to “pay attention to the emotional state of others, generate an experiencing of togetherness and a sharing of intentions and feelings” (Rabinowitch, 2020, p. 3). When music is used as a pedagogical tool, it activates cognitive, social, and affective abilities through mental states (Cores-Bilbao et al., 2019, p. 3). The comfortable and pleasant environment created by music positively regulates learners’ emotional responses and satisfies their psychological needs, thus allowing them to be more at peace with language learning in a new environment.

Jenny’s strategy of using birthday songs as a teaching tool in the English language classroom, and her emphasis on an inclusive learning environment, also provides further insight into the current state of teaching English as an additional or second language in Canada. In fact, “Canada continues to be a prominent and refugee-receiving country in worldwide migration, resettlement, and search for refuge” (Stewart et al., 2008, p. 123). This trend has made “acculturation, adaptation, and multiculturalism” vital concepts in the academic and social development of Canada (Rousseau et al., 2002, p. 50). Nonetheless, Newcomers “will experience significant challenges navigating the sociocultural and socioeconomic landscape of their English-dominant host country” (Montero et al., 2014, p. 60). The Canadian government and education system take into account the impact of “linguistic fluency” on the “well-being” and “successful integration” of Newcomers (Beiser, 2009, p. 567). Implementation and outreach of several language programs, such as “Canada’s Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada
programs” (Beiser, 2009, p. 567), which is used at the Multicultural Council, offer facilitated placements for developing English literacy for Newcomers.

Language educators also support Newcomers’ learning of English with multimodal tools with Canadian symbolism: visual messages like the graphics of maple leaves, flags, currency, post offices, and insurance cards (Gulliver, 2011) or audio information includes the Canadian national anthem, nursery rhymes, and broadcasts (Gulliver, 2011). Most importantly, this new learning atmosphere permits “newcomers to understand and, if they so wish, question their new culture” (Richards & Rodgers, 2014, p. 169). This also responds to Cummins’ (2000) statement, namely, “a rigorous multiculturalism should engage students in a critical analysis of the roots of inequality in curriculum materials, school structure, and the larger society” (p. 262). Thus, Cummins works from a multiliteracies social justice perspective arguing that adult English as a second language learners need to build critical capacities to engage in critique with the power dynamics that they are confronted with in their new country, including structural inequities.

Apart from helping learners cultivate positive emotional values, mastering learning skills is beneficial to learners to navigate language learning easily, and thus better manage with the pressing realities of negotiating things like job interviews, childcare arrangements, and doctor’s appointments. As an example of how music can be a source for learning with how to deal with pressure and performance-based situations (i.e. a job interview is a type of performance), Liesel from 4th Wall Music notes in her interview that techniques from sports psychology are used to guide musicians’ performances such as the ability to learn focus. Liesel elaborates:

Focus. Like it is easy, and I am sure they get nervous just like we do, and so techniques to learn how to focus, deep breathing, looking at one spot on the floor that is maybe not higher than eye-height or something. You know nothing there but maybe down there – it works differently for different people. So we have a similar kind of ways of focusing. So it may not
be directly applicable to some things, but then again music theory is a lot like math, I think or it can be with patterns. Recognizing patterns.

These techniques are also instructed to her students, such as improving focus by breathing deeply and relaxing the body’s muscle groups when feeling nervous. The commonality between music and sports is also reflected in the fact that, in addition to having specific goals, much hard work and years of practice are required to attain an outstanding achievement (Bonneville-Roussy et al., 2011). The interplay between skills needed for both music and sports also parallel what happens between music and language learning. Furthermore, Liesel mentions in the interview that “you probably hear the connection between math and music.” Usually, mathematical skills are used extensively in composition to calculate the value of musical notes because “musical rhythm is based upon mathematical relations” (Vaughn, 2000, p. 149). Similarly, learning a new language involves developing logic and the ability of pattern finding.

Techniques and competencies learned from other disciplines that apply to music performance and composition are known as transferable skills. “Transferable typically involves applying a learned skill or a strategy to a new context” (Schellenberg, 2001, p. 358). In other words, learners could demonstrate mastery of transferable skills when they “apply something learned in one context to another” (Bridges, 1993, p. 49). The transferability between disciplines reveals the logic and correlation of different types of knowledge and provides an empirical and scientific basis for solving a new problem currently faced, thus facilitating cognitive skill development in other domains (Schellenberg, 2001; Incognito et al., 2022). “Transferable skills” and “cross-curricular skills” not only affect learners who use music as a tool to learn a second language and enhance their musical skills, but also provide new directions for learning and teaching language in English classrooms (Bridges, 1993, p. 46).

As an illustration, Jenny, an adult English educator from the Multicultural Council, realizes
the effective of transferable competencies in her teaching. Jenny has adult students who have various multimodal forms of literacies but may not have the ability to read and write in their native tongue and have never held a pencil. Using a pen or pencil to write and make notes is essential for many types of learning, especially learning a language. In this case, Jenny takes the students’ hands in her own to instruct them on how to hold a pencil properly. Jenny makes games, like tracing, cutting, and bingo daubers, that help learners work on and improve their fine motor skills. Through these activities, learners can improve their hand-pen coordination, build muscle strength, and get used to writing with a pen. This generic motor skill acquired during activities lays the foundation for subsequent writing in English learning. Similarly, in the discipline of music, playing the piano requires fine motor skills as well. Hanon Piano Etudes is the fundamental practice material. Etudes are classified based on various rhythms, tempos, and playing techniques, from basic to advanced. Playing the Hanon Etudes aids in training finger dexterity and agility, hand strength, wrist mobility, right and left-hand muscles, and hand coordination. The hand skills developed through Hanon exercises can be transferred to playing complicated pieces of music. Hence, applying transferable skills allows teachers to adjust instructional strategies to deal with unique challenges from a wide range of students and facilitate students’ cross-disciplinary cognitive skills to assist them in adapting to different learning contexts. Clearly, students are also engaged in multimodal learning when they learn fine motor skills that eventually allow them that connection – to formulate how to write a word or play a melody for the first time that has been produced by their own hands on an instrument.

While it is undoubtedly necessary to provide students with responses appropriate to their needs, it is also vital to “let go” of them to cultivate independent learners because multiliteracies theory states that new teachers “are able to ‘let go’ as students take more responsibility for their learning” (Kalantzis et al., 2016, p. 11). Liesel sticks to this principle because she thinks that the
teacher is the guide in a limited-time classroom and that the students are the ones who plan their own learning after class. Liesel notes in her interview,

   I am your teacher for half an hour, an hour a week. You are your own teacher for the rest of the time. I am giving you the tools, but you have to think of everything I said or written down for you in your notebook.

Learners can only take charge of their own learning when teachers empower them with the rights and responsibilities they deserve.

   “Continuously assess student learning and progress” (Kalantzis et al., 2016, p. 11) is one of the rules that Towela and Jenny use from the multiliteracies theory for adult educators to help make learners more engaged. To illustrate, Towela refuses to assess students by grading but instead finds a way to evaluate and understand the reasons for errors in students’ assignments or tasks by working with them. For example, spelling errors in dictation may result from hearing things differently in mind. Thus, Towela schedules time in her lesson plan to sit down almost daily with her students to talk back and forth with them about specific errors, in which she can understand the learners’ rationale for making the choices in depth. Grammar is not just grammar to Towela; it is an opportunity to engage adult language learners in their meaning-making process.

   In addition, Jenny provides timely feedback to every single learner in the class. For instance, firstly, in the reading lesson, when learners fail to articulate correctly, Jenny will promptly give instantaneous verbal feedback to help them sound out the phonetics properly. Secondly, in the matching exercise, Jenny will demonstrate how to connect the correct word to the picture through a line that will match them. Thirdly, as mentioned before, some learners have never been exposed to reading and writing, for which Jenny will hold their hand to write the words, or work through reading short simple sentences multiple times with the class and
individual students. Subsequently, Jenny uses the worksheet to record each learner’s work completion and test scores. Differentiated instruction and suggestions are given to each learner according to their learning progress and language ability.

These educators follow many of the premises set out by the multiliteracies theory, creating student-centered, professional, participatory language learning classrooms where the teacher is flexible, problem-solving, collaborative, proactive, adaptable, and creative to meet the needs of modern learners. With music designed by the teacher in language learning, music as an educational and learning tool creates a positive learning environment, encourages teachers and students to interact healthily, and motivates students to learn. Music creates a learning atmosphere, regulates learners’ emotions, and teaches the teacher to empathize with students. The transferable skills embodied in music learning contexts enrich the practice of language teaching and learning.

In general, multiliteracies maps out the way forward for English language pedagogies, fleshing out the instructional paradigm and learning modes for learners and educators to engage in the teaching and learning of English as a second language.

**Multimodality: Music Helps Promote the Recognition of the Target Language and Diversity**

Mode and modality can be used to make meaning and communicate (Jewitt et al., 2016; Kress, 2010). “The term ‘multimodality’ was used to highlight that people use multiple means for meaning making” (Jewitt et al., 2016, p. 2). The multiple means of making meaning and communicating are “shaped by social and economic factors” (Kress, 2010, p. 19). The New London Group (1996) explicates that the ever-changing and booming economy, markets, technology, work techniques, lifestyles, and representations of communication have created a multimodal world. The arrival of multimodality is also “calling for corresponding progress in
language and literacy education” (Lee et al., 2021, pp. 66-67). Jewitt et al. (2016) indicate that “language is the most resourceful, important and widely used of all modes” (p. 14).

Representational forms associated with music are “not an alien concept” in language learning (Farias et al., 2011, p. 133), for example, the English accent of a second language learner, the variations of sound constituting English speech.

Meanwhile, diversity is related to multimodality, as multimodality “extends and supports” cultural and linguistic diversity (The New London Group, 1996, p. 61). Diversity in our daily lives has become a resource. However, regarding individuals, the choices of modality are shaped by “the cultural, social, and historical experience and context of the sign maker” (Jewitt et al., 2016, p. 59). Regarding society, “the resources are socially and culturally: depending on what a society needs or wishes to mean and express” (Kress, 2010, p. 156). The combination of different modalities has the potential to present a variety of cultures. In order to make meaningful language learning in this dynamic era, new teachers have adopted music as a multimodal form, which effectively guides learners to process the information from fluid lives, organizes them to activate existing knowledge, and finally integrates it into language acquisition (Farias et al., 2011). The following data will provide evidence of different modalities used by the educators in the study sites and the learner’s performance in the transduction and transformation of different music-related modalities, which will demonstrate the practical insights that music as a tool brings to language teaching and learning and the cultural and linguistic diversity that music conveys in language teaching and learning settings.

The interview with Towela, an adult educator from the French Lit., provides insight into how multimodality and music play a role in her language classroom. Music-related elements are pervasive in Towela’s classroom. As described in the previous section, Towela prefers to use audio from podcasts and live broadcasts as sound sources in her French classroom. Nevertheless,
Towela is not just adopting media into her language learning classroom but also advocating for learners to listen to these authoritative voices in conjunction with spatial modality.

Towela suggests learners listen to the French recordings on social media and radios in their living space outside the classroom; she notes, “listen to it in your car.” She further describes,

And you know, driving the car and commuting, it has remained quite important.

Because the person on the radio or the podcaster has to use sound, to create pictures and to create images.

Towela believes the sounds from social applications are indispensable in everyday life while driving or commuting. For second language learners, sound gives them an indirect visual experience compared to written representation, which is “more powerful to express abstract concepts” (Farias et al., 2011, p. 139).

“Meaning relations are established by the spatial arrangement of entities in a framed space and the kinds of relations between the depicted entities” (Kress, 2010, p. 82). Take a scenario as an illustration. As we all know, Canada is a bilingual country. Many infrastructure banners, food packaging, and product manuals are written in English and French. Suppose the learners in Towela’s class listen to a podcast about food on their way to the supermarket for grocery shopping. They may hear the names of some foods, some familiar and some vaguely remembered. After arriving at the supermarket, learners can respond immediately to the familiar pronunciation of words when they see the names on the food packages. For words with a vague impression, learners will search for the pronunciation in their vocabulary pool as they see the foods’ names, trying to match the sounds with the correct words. Once the learner recalls the words, the aural information heard in the car from the podcast helps the learner locate the entities in the supermarket. At the same time, the food introduction seen when focusing on the words can strengthen the learner’s impression of the new vocabulary.
Additionally, the impact of spatial literacy effects is far-reaching. Learners’ memories of words cannot be clear all the time. Suppose learners want to pronounce the words with an ambiguous impression after a while. In that case, the experiences in both spaces are in play because “spatial deixis is present in overt markers of place and position” (Kress, 2010, p. 119). To further explain, firstly, the car’s interior space can help trigger or locate the memory of the phonological aspects of the words. Secondly, in the supermarket, the memory cues of food shape, color, package, and item placement will help learners locate the words’ phonology while locating the word’s spelling. “Sequence, spatial disposition” (Kress, 2010, p. 118), repetitive information, and timelines that happened in cars and supermarkets are all signs to support looking for the target words. In addition, the imaging of information in space varies according to the individual, and some learners can remember experiences in space in “geometric” form (Rowsell, 2013, p. 83), which is a kind of mode that is effective in solid memorization of specific linguistic elements present in space for them. All learners’ experiences in the spatial modality can be used to frame a visual representation to remind learners to seek out the linguistic information they need.

Besides contributing to the mastery of language knowledge, Towela’s innovation of learning language through auditory modes in different spatial modes provides resources for learners to achieve the goal of transformative learning. While technology has facilitated daily lives, it has also brought new sounds, such as digital sounds, audio, and recordings (Jewitt et al., 2016; Rowsell, 2013). Immersing learners in the diverse sounds of the target language through multimedia everywhere in their daily lives gives them a chance to learn using new media and keeps them in the habit of continuing to learn outside the classroom. The “hybrid form” of language learning (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000, p. 81), including spatial, auditory, and visual modes,
has been practiced in teaching and learning French and is equally compatible with the education of English as a second or target language.

From a musicological point of view, Towela’s notion that learners can learn French by listening to sounds is related to phonology. According to Lerdahl (2003), “the linguistic component that most resembles music is phonology” (p. 368). Each language has differences in “their repertoire of speech segments, syllables, and intonation patterns” (Pinker and Jackendoff, 2005, p. 210). There are several steps to making up the sound of a sentence in a new language. First, speech segments include “voicing, place of articulation, and mode of onset and release” (Pinker and Jackendoff, 2005, p. 210). “Patterned rhythmic constituents such as syllables, feet, and prosodic phrases” (Pinker and Jackendoff, 2005, p. 211) are made up of speech segments that are linked together. Then adding, “patterns of stressed and unstressed sounds,” “long and short sounds,” and “forming rising or falling contours” (Lerdahl, 2003, p. 368) to complete the phonology.

It is well known that French has its specific phonological system. This means that learning the phonetic rhythms of French is essential, no matter what language the learner comes from. Listening to the sounds of the target language all the time makes language learning part of a student’s everyday life and makes them feel less confined to the classroom. This method makes the learners more aware of the intonation, rhythm, stress, and melodic contours of speech in that language. It also stops learners from being uncomfortable with and rejecting the new language because they are not good at pronouncing words properly. This teaching and learning approach are also valuable for second language learning classes where English is the target language.

Towela reinforces comprehension of the target language through a multimodal mixture of auditory, oral, and written modes once learners adapt to the rhythms of the new language. As seen by watching the secondary data film footage of Towela teaching found at:
“Listening to Radio-Canada.” In this film excerpt, Towela keeps the application of listening to the audio of the new media in her daily teaching. The uniqueness is that she and the students write down the details they heard while listening to the audio clips, and then students are required to narrate what they heard in French based on their notes. At this point, writing down the audio information is a conversion process. Learners can convert something they hear into something they can see, and the notes serve as a visual annotation. In multimodality, moving from one mode to another in this way is referred to as transduction.

When learners concentrate on “visual representation” (Farias et al., 2011, p. 143), the visible annotation will mobilize learners to connect in their minds with the cues of “semantics” and “phonetic[s]” of the new language (Farias et al., 2011, p. 146), recall the entire audio, and encourage learners to interpret the story described by the audio. Moreover, the sounds and voices from the radio are a “semiotic resource” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001, p. 82). Written notes serve to break up the complicated sounds and enable learners to focus on smaller units of sounds, such as tension, pitch, roughness, breathiness, loudness range, and vibrato (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001), allowing them to build phonic awareness and practice the pronunciation of target words. Learning any language requires the mastery of a basic phonological system. The phonological acquisition is a fundamental part of English language learning. For the improvement and development of phonological skills in English education, Towela’s approach is significant. That being said, it is important to note that Towela does not ask her students to fill out typical ESL commercial worksheets based on formulaic recitations. She has them listening to the real radio, having to decipher as best they can a few words, despite the fast pace of the native French speakers talking about everyday subjects.
Meanwhile, Lerdahl (2001) indicates that linguistic stress and musical accent are counterparts; accents are perceived syllables or pitches, which is one of relative acoustic prominence in their contexts. Each language has its own way of putting stress on words or sentences. For example, English words have different syllables, and the stress falls on one or more of those syllables. Therefore, for second language learners, listening to the sounds of the target language helps them master the stress patterns of that language. Even if they are not proficient in the target language, paying attention to how the stress changes in sentences can help them capture important information, especially for beginners. Stress pattern is a vital part of the English language. Even though Towela is teaching French, what she has tried in her classrooms focusing on stress and syntax has proved that her methods work just as well for learning a second language with English as the target language.

The audio, oral, written, and spatial combinations are not the only multimodalities in Towela’s classes. After watching secondary data film footage of Towela’s teaching through the link: https://multiliteraciesproject.com/adult-education/french-lit/french-lit-learning-space/, under the subheading “Learning Verbs through Movement,” it can be observed that Towela teaches French nouns and verbs by combining sounds with physical actions. As they stand in a circle, the students repeat after Towela as they communally sing and act out the song with gestures, facial expressions, and dance. This language learning process is also filled with diverse musical elements. To be more specific, first of all, Towela teaches the facial expressions and words associated with each finger by pointing to certain places on the body, and saying the French words that go with them. For example, she points to her eyebrow to signal “penser,” which is “to think” in French when her hand touches her eyebrow. Second, when teaching verbs, she will make movements with the verb. For example, if she is teaching “walking,” she will make a walking pose with her body and say the French word for “walk.” Simultaneously, the
students are asked to follow her movements and gestures and to sing the French words for the actions after they are done. Similar findings from the field observation notes are “Les verbes d’accion [and] full kinesthetic” (Fieldnotes, October 7, 2019). A reasonable understanding of this note is that action verbs and language teaching are in kinesthetic form.

It is apparent that Towela insists that using the body and she tries to create a connection between body movement and language learning. Chapple (1981) explicates that “gestural movement and speech are interdependent” (p. 5). The impact of sound on the learner stems “from its relation to physical patterns of posture and gestures” (Jackendoff & Lerdahl, 2006, p. 65). Posture and gesture are solid visual cues in Towela’s voice when teaching new words. In fact, in the field of music, posture and gesture convey the emotion and intent of the music itself, for example, when the conductor’s movements are drastically different in a symphony, and the players respond appropriately (Jackendoff & Lerdahl, 2006, p. 65). In a similar way, Holck (2004) says that “a particular movement, gesture, or facial expression” is often related to the learning activity or classroom topic the learner is working on (p. 8). Hence, when learners imitate the educator’s actions, it reinforces their perception of the word’s sound, helping them give the proper oral response when they see the same gesture or posture. Rowsell (2013) highlights that “the body is central to how we make meaning in the world” (p. 111). Total physical responses teach pre-production stage language learners through sight, sound, and touch to conceptualize language knowledge. Integrating body movements and kinesthetic modalities into English language learning can make the language classroom livelier and give learners a better sense of the learning process.

It is particularly noteworthy that Towela also adapted the words of the fingers to the lyrics of the children’s songs and led the students to sing the corresponding names while acting out the finger movements. Under the subheading “Multimodal Approach to Acquiring Vocabulary” find
the excerpt in which we watch Towela and the adult learners singing along to the tune of Frère Jacques: [https://multiliteraciesproject.com/adult-education/french-lit/french-lit-learning-space/](https://multiliteraciesproject.com/adult-education/french-lit/french-lit-learning-space/).

This original nursery rhyme of Frère Jacques is very well known in French amongst Anglophone children in the Canadian context. In this video, they are learning the names of the different fingers on the hand (thumb, index finger, etc.) within the context of this nursery rhyme set to new lyrics to help recall the vocabulary alongside music and gesture. Children’s songs generally have simple and repetitive melodies with distinct strong and weak beats. Using children’s songs as a form of language instruction is very attractive.

Therefore, in Towela’s lesson, learners respond to words that relies on “stressed syllables and strong beats” in the music (Temperley, 2022, p. 159) besides how they see the body moving to the sounds. As mentioned before, stress is a significant part of the language. People speak a word based on multiple syllables that are made up of vowels and consonants. Stress is the relative prominence and emphasis of a syllable. When second language teachers say a new word, they usually emphasize the stressed syllable by making it louder and putting more power on it, which reminds the student to pay attention to where and how the stressed syllable changes. At the same time, music and language have “pitch, loudness, and temporal density” in their stresses (Temperley, 2022, p. 157). For example, teachers usually say stressed syllables at a louder volume, which may stay the same over time. They also use a higher pitch to spotlight stressed syllables because the pitch is a factor in perceived stress (Lerdahl, 2013). From a musical point of view, the way the word is stressed helps people remember how it sounds.

On the other hand, stress patterns could be replaced by rhythmic principles (Lerdahl, 2001) because rhythm “ameliorates clashes in stress between adjacent and nearby syllables” (Lerdahl, 2001, p. 339). The presence of rhythm ensures that each stress is capable of and evenly distributed to the corresponding syllable of the word, assisting the language in forming a stress
pattern through regularity. Second, rhythm is made when Towela says different words, acts out
the corresponding gestures and guides the learner through the process within a specific speed
range. Stress and rhythm can take on two different combinations. First, when the stressed
syllable matches the strong beat rhythm, such as when hand movements accompanying speech
are timed to coincide with strong stresses (Jackendoff & Lerdahl, 2006). Once the stress of the
word and the rhythm of the physical activity are aligned, students will speak more accurately
about the pronunciation of the word they are learning (Temperley, 2022). For example, according
to the secondary film footage of teaching in the link provided in the previous paragraph, the
children’s song Towela selected is in a typical quadruple meter. She divided the word “le
pousse,” the name of the “thumb” in French, evenly over the last two meters of the rhythm.
Regarding musical nature, the last two beats of the quadruple meter are the second strongest and
weakest beats. As Towela and the learner sang the thumb’s name in French, the corresponding
movement (putting their thumbs up) appeared perfectly on the strong and weak meters of the
melody. As a result, if second language educators design physical movements based on stressed
syllables of words, it aids learners’ perceptions of the salient phonetic sounds of the stressed
parts while listening by working with the body.

Additionally, when an accent goes against the meter, it causes syncopation, a type of rhythm
in music (Temperley, 2022), especially when the accent shifts from a strong beat to a weak one.
In this case, the language teacher should explore the appropriate musical meter to create a
rhythm based on the stress rules of the words to help students become familiar with the
pronunciation. For example, in music, a triplet is a rhythmic pattern that means playing three
notes evenly in one beat. The word that matches this rhythmic pattern are “banana” or
“pineapple” in English. Also, for syncopated rhythms, teachers could use more than one word or
phrase to make this pattern of rhythm. Specifically, four sixteenth notes plus an eighth note in a
syncopated rhythm equal the English term “strawberry-cream.” Combining word stress with musical rhythm to make a melodic contour helps learners remember how to say words correctly in the target language. In the end, “both linguistic stress and musical meter serve to guide attention to certain points of time in the auditory input” (Temperley, 2022, p. 159).

In terms of the multiliteracies theory, it underlines “the necessity of an open-ended and flexible functional grammar” (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000. p. 6) because grammar is the fundamental principle and “a rich concept upon which to [find] a language curriculum and pedagogy” (The New London Group, 2000, p. 20). The “various semiotics” between music and language, containing pitch, stress patterns, beats, rhythmic patterns, and so on, are all the “available” resources that could be used for the target language learning and teaching (The New London Group, 2000, p. 20). Cope and Kalantzis (2000) explain that diverse resources within the field of grammar aid ”language learners to describe language differences” and “the multimodal channels of meaning” (p. 6). Communication “draws attention to use of language as a facet of social practice that is shaped by—and shapes—the orders of discourse of the culture, as well as language systems,” that is, “grammars” (The New London Group, 2000, p. 25). Bianco (2000) also indicates that “the grammars of social semiotic systems” can provide language learners with “transportable knowledge and skills for participation in rapidly evolving communication environments” (p. 97). Hence, the skillful practice of music in teaching a second language can facilitate the advancement of grammar instruction and contribute to learners’ acquisition of grammar by presenting novel strategies related to musical modalities. Conversely, detailed attention to traditional grammar learning in acquiring second languages can in a similar way build capacities for students to learn music with its comparable attending need for precision through practice of complex and nuanced communication skills. In this sense, a symbiotic relationship of inspiration, support, and nurturing can grow between the pedagogies second
language grammar foundations and music learning.

The third function of rhythm can be exhibited from a music therapy perspective. Rhythmic auditory stimulation is the most used technique in neurologic music therapy research (Clements-Cortès, 2012). In this treatment, “auditory stimuli excite neurons in the spinal cord, priming muscles for movement,” which “cause the automatic motor responses that occur when listening to music” (Clements-Cortès, 2012, p. 37). As with the music therapy approach, the pronunciation and rhythm of the words that Towela pronounces are the music in the classroom. The learner’s nervous system picks up on the teacher’s voice to make the specified posture, which reacts as a visual message to cue the learner to pronounce the words themselves. All in all, second language learners listen to the sounds with their “bodies,” “nervous systems,” and “skeletal and memory functions.” After that, they can produce stress, meter, and rhythm through their bodies, using them as “instruments” to intensify the memory and recognition of the pronunciations of the target language (Chapple, 1981, p. 3).

Last but not least, Towela leads the students to repeat the sounds and movements, which is very effective for learners’ memories. To begin with, Besson et al. (2011) indicate that extensive musical training is associated with good verbal memory, such that if musicians do not conduct the articulatory rehearsal, their long-term verbal memory will disappear. By repeating how to say new words continuously with Towela, learners have taken part in a lot of training. This training activates the learners’ auditory memory, which helps them say words more correctly over time. In addition, Temperley (2022) explains that meter and prosody could be regarded as forms of repetition. Also, Hlock (2004) says that “short repeated musical forms or motifs” (p. 4) are often used in “improvisational music therapy” (p. 14), where music therapists often use repetitive musical images in the treatment. In Towela’s language classrooms, the musical elements of each word are a simple musical image, and these rhythms and stresses are repeatable resources. These
repetitive sounds, rhythms, accents, and body movements signify the upcoming words the student is about to pronounce. At the same time, this repetition is interactive, allowing the teacher to observe the learner’s behavior and provide the necessary guidance. Repetition’s musical qualities grab the learner’s attention, and the repetition of the language, which contains words and phrases, stimulates the learner’s emotional response and engages them in a physically interactive language learning activity. The enjoyable learning circumstances provided by the musical elements and music-related modality and the educator’s encouragement contribute to the learners’ willingness to participate in creative activities outside their comfort zone.

French is thought to be a language with insufficient lexical stress but with stronger beats and meters (Temperley & Temperley, 2013). English, on the other hand, has stronger musical element correlations than French (Temperley & Temperley, 2013). Even though Towela teaches mainly in French, her teaching experience has shown how powerful it is to learn a second language through a combination of auditory, oral, written, spatial, and gestural modes. At the same time, sound’s musical elements, including stress, meter, beat, melody contour, and rhyme, are constructive for learning a second language, especially English. Overall, the teaching strategies that Towela practices in her courses would be equally beneficial in an English language teaching environment.

Amy from 4th Wall Music, as an adult educator and musician, favours an experiential learning environment for listeners who may want to learn more by listening to music through visual and tactile means. When it comes to visual mode, specifically, the musicians in 4th Wall Music designed a concert in which they were playing alongside painters. During the two-hour concert, the musicians are responsible for playing the musical piece while the painter draws how they feel with their brushstrokes in response to the music. Amy says in her interview,

An early program that we did was in collaboration with two local painters. As we were
performing our works of chamber music, they were creating a painting and their brushstrokes sometimes went with the flow of music and they ended up with a finished, complete painting at the end of the two-hour program.

In such concerts mixed auditory and visual modes, musicians enable learners and listeners to hear music, while painters’ paintings enable learners to visually see what music looks like.

Furthermore, as derived from the field observation notes, Amy also uses digital modal multimedia as a visual modality. As an illustration, the theme of the concert is “Imagining a strong woman you really admire” (Fieldnotes, October 9, 2019). Amy introduces the German musicians Clara Schumann by projecting their portraits onto the screen while telling Clara’s story, including her habits, family and career. Then, a movie clip about Clara will be shown, and learners and audiences can watch the love story between Clara and her husband, Robert Schumann. Afterwards, the pieces by two musicians will be played. Some English words and sentences have been exhibited on the screen during the process. “Multimedia presentations have the potential to result in deeper learning and understanding” (Farias, 2011, p. 137). Besides, Farias (2011) asserts that comprehension occurs as words and images are structured in a verbal and visual model, which are merged with the learner’s prior knowledge. In response to this notion, as learners and audiences see the words and images on the projected screen while hearing the story told verbally by the educator, they will connect their previous knowledge with the musician’s stories and achievements, digesting this new information to reframe their recognition framework. At the same time, with instruments playing and the musician’s works of the performers of the 4th Wall Music, learners and audiences could feel more authentically the strong relationship between Clara and Robert and the grief of Clara over the loss of her loved ones.

This concert not only offers a multimodal pedagogical model suitable for language learning,
but it also conveys social reality from a feminist perspective. The concert focuses on female musicians who have been overlooked in history. The concern for feminist social justice that the concert resonates with are vital issues that multiliteracies similarly emphasizes in literacy education. Carmen Luke, a member of the New London Group, researches feminist theory, cultural studies, sociology, and communication (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000). Luke (1994) argues, from a feminist perspective, educators do not see themselves as “authoritative arbiter of student interpretation and understanding,” and educators “acknowledge [their] own experience and knowledge as no more and no less valid, ‘better’ or ‘authentic’ than the diversity of students” in the learning settings (p. 38). Meanwhile, she indicates that literacy education needs to consider the diversity of female learners’ backgrounds to design instructional modalities that meet the “cultural interests and possible learning styles of women learners in the classroom” (p. 39). Luke (1994) also states that educators’ perceptions and cognition of “social justice and equity principles” can offer learners “theoretically and historically grounded frameworks from which to approach cultural and textual constructs of meaning, gives students the discourse analytic tools with which to interrogate the socio-cultural and historical contingencies of difference, exclusion and marginalization” (p. 44).

A multimedia, and hence multimodal, approach is also evident in the conceptualization of what Kim Nelson has named the Live Doc. Project. In the interview, Kim Nelson as the Director introduces that in the Live Doc. Project, music is used as part of the live documentary. This project aims to produce deconstructed live documentaries, and this documentary format allows people to present their documentaries live in front of audiences. The documentary is the first shown to the audience during the live performance. Then, in response to the audiences’ questions and comments after the documentary has been shown to the audience, the Q&A becomes a very interactive, multimodal event in itself. The performers on stage narrate aspects of the story, the
musicians play live music and the operators on the sidelines playing the screens that display visuals to respond in a completely multimodal way to answer the audience’s questions as they are being asked. For instance, their response will not just be answering the question verbally. They also pick out music, sounds, and video clips to share with the audience related to the documentary to help explain and provide answers to the audience members’ specific questions or comments.

Kim believes that when music reflects life experiences, it is easy for learners to immerse themselves in those experiences. The kind of atmosphere created by the music attracts the participants just like a movie. Whether learners and listeners empathize with the musician’s emotions and compositions or resonate with others’ documentaries, this confirms the argument from Rabinowitch (2020) that language and music are the same things, as rhythm and melody most effectively convey sentiments and images. Through processing these images and emotions, learners can successfully construct an understanding of the meaning of language and music.

In spite of the focus on visual modality, Amy also specializes in using spatial modality to guide language learners and listeners to experience and understand the music. In the interview with Amy, she also describes a concert theme, “Mysteries and Melodies.” The venue for this concert is the Windsor Scare House, that is open around Halloween, which aims to show the fear that a haunted house brings through music. The basic units of music, such as pitch, timbre, intensity, duration, and rhythm (Jackendoff & Lerdahl, 2006), can be used to shape the “central story” (Rowsell, 2013, p. 53) of a haunted house, namely, a horrifying, jumpy, spooky, and creepy ambience. When musicians compose music, the way instruments are arranged, and the music structures are selected based on music theory can make different kinds of music. For instance, in a musical theme dominated by fear, the cello plays a slow and poignant sound; metal instruments can emit an angry growl. The rising melodic line of the violin’s fast-strung strings is
tensing, and the violin can be performed with a sharp, piercing sound. In addition, the knowledge of music theory used by the composer and arranger can create a sense of dread such as dissonant intervals can give the listener a sense of unease; minor keys fill the music with melancholy and gloom as opposed to harmonic major keys. Music has its own “musical structure” and “musical grammar,” and “the understanding of a piece of music” involves all these aspects. It is well known that language also has specific grammar and sentence structures (Jackendoff & Lerdahl, 2006, p. 36). Therefore, educators should design attractive musical themes and guide language learners to understand the meaning expressed by music through its grammar and structure. This way of learning helps language learners develop a mindset that helps them understand what the target language means based on how it is structured and used.

After combining visual and spatial modalities, Amy combines tactile modalities with music to give language learners and listeners an avenue to experience culture firsthand through music. In the interview, Amy says that one of the 4th Wall concerts is about food and music and is titled “Harmonies and Hors d’oeuvres.” In this concert, the special guests are the chefs. When the chef finishes making a dish, he describes the savory base with a spicy finish. At this point, the musicians will need to think about what kind of music pieces or sound could express the spicy flavor like tango music. In fact, most people know what tango is or have heard of tango music, yet they probably do not know much about it. At this point, by listening to the musicians play the tango and tasting the food, a link is established, allowing the language learners and audiences in the concert to enter the cultural world constructed by tango music. Meanwhile, the unfamiliarity with tango music creates a sense of mystery, and that mystery evokes learners and audiences to be explorers and observers of the secret world. “The functions of music in all societies are primarily social rather than hedonic” because “the dynamics of particular cultures will shape and be shaped by the musics of those cultures” (Cross, 2014, p. 812).
In terms of the role of music in language learning, Díaz-Rico (2020) highlights that “sociocultural factors play important roles in a learner’s acquisition and use of a second language” (p. 64). The culture of tango described by music builds “attractive and culturally sensitive” learning opportunities and resources (Cummins, 2000, p. 9), which can encourage learners to achieve their learning goals by drawing on diverse cultural resources. As learners and audiences taste the food, their unique taste buds evoke a desire to know more about the tango and the culture behind it. In order to understand a culture embedded in music, it is important to be “familiar with the style alluded to and its extra-musical connotations” (Jackendoff & Lerdahl, 2006, p. 63). First of all, from the melody of tango, syncopated rhythm is the main feature of this form of music, creating a deep, languid, strong, and powerful feeling. Secondly, regarding its form, “Argentine tango is a complex phenomenon, involving music, dancing and lifestyle” (Tateo, 2014, p. 299). For example, the “tango argentino is a form of partnered dance,” and the most crucial characteristic of this form is “the necessary physical contact between partners” (Murcia et al., 2009, p. 15). Third, in terms of the development of tango, Tateo (2014) describes that,

The origins of tango, in a social and historical context somehow unique, are embedded in a social practice of different ethnic groups that were forced to meet in the only public space of their blocks. Some among the European immigrants were musicians. They started to play their native instruments to gladden the bitter evenings of a poor population of unqualified workers or for some marriage or birthday. They started to observe each other and to learn, to enjoy the other’s music, finding very appealing the percussion instruments and the sensual rhythm of African-American music or the ironic battles of dialogue of the countrymen immigrated to Buenos Aires from the interiors of Argentina. (p. 306)
The food enables the music to assume the form of taste buds, providing learners with a sense of taste for the tango’s spicy nature. The unique taste experience and musical elements enhance learners’ ability to appreciate tango culture. Language, an integral and essential cultural component, is also exposed to the learners as they experience the culture while stimulating their understanding of the language. Together, learners experience audio, tactile, kinaesthetic, and visual modes combined to express new ideas.

Additionally, the usage of tactile modality encourages learners to appreciate diverse cultures. Kim from the Live Doc. Project states in one of the events, they included food as a part of the performance. The audience can experience the documentary’s story by making or tasting the food, watching the visual message, and listening to the music or the historian discussing the documentary with the audience. In this event, for instance, the Lebanese restaurant served fusion nacho platters, participants make salads, and there were also pastries and pizza. Kim also explains the purpose of holding the event. She says,

The second one [Live Doc. Project performance] we had done was about food in Windsor. It’s about the Lebanese, or the Arab community, actually, because it is not just Lebanese. So, the Arab community in Windsor and Detroit, about food and identity, how identity sort of works across the border.

Audience members and food production participants in this live event may have studied English because of their immigration status or are currently experiencing English language learning. “Foods of the world” (Díaz-Rico, 2020, p. 145), as a feature of cultural diversity, allows participants and audience members to connect their immigration lives, second language learning, and native culture to the new living environment and culture. Although language education is not the primary objective of the Live Doc. Project, applying the tactile mode is beneficial to maintaining an open and inclusive attitude toward cultural
diversity for all audiences and participants. Furthermore, through these performances, we see how multimodality is as much about social engagement and reflecting cultural diversity as it is also about using one or more modes in combination to convey meaning-making.

Moreover, Amy also recalls in her interview that one of the themes of one of the 4th Wall concerts was to taste tea and music (mentioned briefly earlier on in this thesis). In this concert, the musicians selected tea from countries such as England, France, China, South Africa, and India. They matched the music that reflected the flavor of the tea. Learners and listeners sipped the tea to experience the flavour of the tea from different countries and understand the culture that comes with tea. For example, the musicians played music with the traditional Chinese instrument, the Zheng. The music, “Nanyin,” is popular in Guangdong, where the “singer traditionally accompanies himself on Zheng and wooden clappers.” Nan Yin is a form of “narrative singing,” which is a “type of story telling,” and “it is a product of urban teahouse culture” from the ancient until now (Thrasher, 1981, p. 37).

Tasting food from different regions and ethnicities while enjoying the music and music-related modes enables learners to genuinely experience the cultural diversity conveyed and implied by the musical works. Educators incorporate a combination of tactile, visual, and auditory modalities into the learning atmosphere in a way that goes beyond the superficial cultural phenomena symbolized by food. Instead, it weaves different cultures within the same space and time, enlightening educators to use this meaningful instructional scenario to guide learners’ language learning, thereby enhancing the likelihood that learners’ target language proficiency will improve through better understanding cultural aspects of a society (Díaz-Rico, 2020).

Most importantly, the vast and diversified range of musical materials and cultures challenges educators. In the interview, Liesel, an adult educator and musician from the 4th Wall
Music, talks about the side effects of cultural appropriation in music. As Liesel reflects in interview,

But there is, not so much criticism directed at us for playing it, but directed at the composers for composing it. And that that is by using African Rhythms or because that is more important than African music than melody or harmony. And that it is cultural misappropriation. So sometimes, we are a little bit careful about that.

When musicians use musical compositions that are viewed as cultural appropriation, they do affect how we ‘read’ a concert, even though the musicians’ performances are in of themselves not criticized by the audience.

Cultural appropriation and cultural bias are educational priorities that cannot be ignored. Educators must be able to think critically about musical materials. From initial and focused coding, for example, “facing the critique of cultural borrowing from the audiences,” and “having criticisms of composers,” and “thinking cultural appropriation,” and “existing cultural controversies surround musical work and performance,” and “the major cultural issues in music composition across countries,” it is evident that Liesel has thought deeply and critically about the cultural phenomena behind musical works in light of audience reactions and feedback. Critical educators are precursors to the literacy journey of learners. “Critical educators advocate an inclusive society in which language, literacy, and culture are integrated with respect and not compromised in any way” (Díaz-Rico, 2020, p. 7).

Furthermore, classroom observation notes from the Multicultural Council documented that an adult English language educator, Karin, adopted emerging linguistic information as a teaching and learning tool for language vocabulary. During one of Karin’s classes, it was noted that “the conversation focused on the proper usage of each abbreviation and acronym” (Fieldnotes, January 30, 2020). Actually, it is common in the contemporary era that lyrics, terms in music
disciplines, and album titles include many abbreviations and acronyms. In addition, the music encompasses “verbal and non-verbal” language forms from the music industry, such as “announcements about events in the world of music,” “concerts and performances,” and “musical ensembles” (Akhmadullina et al., 2016, pp. 1299-1300). By reading newspapers, periodicals, and advertising, the teacher creates a contextualized classroom in which students comprehend the meaning of abbreviations and what these forms of language are intended to convey and in which they apply. This method has significant practical implications. Because learners are likely to encounter these new words in everyday situations, for example, when listening to songs, watching videos, and sending emails or text messages, this lesson enables them to apply language knowledge to social practice. Moreover, in the cyber era, learning abbreviations and acronyms exposes language learners to a great deal of reading and writing rooted in cultural practice (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000). Language variants appear in all aspects of social life. Extending the awareness of language diversity gained from the music modality domain to more language learning modes will promote learners’ language acquisition and foster their multimodal and lifelong learning habits outside the classroom.
CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

The New London Group proposed the multiliteracies theory in 1996, and in doing so heralded the direction of current literacy education practices and offered guidelines for advancing literacy education in response to rapidly changing times. Cultural and linguistic diversity, multimodality, communication and meaning-making, critical literacy, social justice and equity, the adoption of increasingly advanced technology, and globalization are keywords that situate within the scope of multiliteracies. The evolution of language learning and teaching has become particularly prominent in the present context of globalization. Following the critical points in the multiliteracies theory to implement second language and target language learning is necessary and imperative.

This Master’s research sets the English language as the primary linguistic parameter for second language learning or target language learning, music as the main pedagogical tool in language learning and teaching contexts, and adult educators as the primary subject of study. The aim is to explore the effects of independent musical modes, transmodal, and different modes of synesthesia, transduction, and transformation on English language learners in the contexts of language learning. This qualitative case study selects four research sites (community-based language classrooms and informal learning spaces) and five adult educators through using purposive sampling, exploring the phenomena of multiliteracies present in these learning settings. The Master’s research draws on data collected in the Multiliteracies Project to create a consistent database with the research theme. The data collected from interviews, field observations, documentary analysis, and secondary data films and the analysis of them are completed under the guidance of constructivist grounded theory. The study examines the findings from the theory of multiliteracies, multimodality, and sociocultural approaches and explores the
implications for real-life English language education.

“Schools everywhere in the world are today facing larger challenges than they ever did in the past” (Kalantzis et al., 2016, p. 8). Implementing new literacies is a strategy to address these challenges and crises. However, educators are the pioneers in practicing the new literacy theory. “New schools,” new teaching environments, and “new learners” will likely be possible if educators’ professional literacy and pedagogical philosophies transfer to the new literacy pedagogy (Kalantzis et al., 2016, p. 10).

Observations and analyses at the research site reveal that adult educators have skillfully applied the new literacy to educational practices. According to the multiliteracies concepts, adult educators establish learner-centred classrooms with inspiring instruction at research sites. Educators are able to design their learning plans through communication and sharing with other colleagues. Educators engage learners through creative activities, such as employing new media. Meanwhile, educators focus on developing learners’ digital competencies, fostering a sense of lifelong learning. Throughout the learning processes, educators concentrate on cultivating learners to be in charge of their learning activities, exercising their independent and problem-solving skills, assessing learners’ development during continuous learning, and immediately giving learners different approaches and strategies to solve their problems.

Nonetheless, the benefits of practicing new literacy methods go far beyond that, especially when musical modalities are present in these educational environments. When educators incorporate musical and music-related modalities into their instruction, an interactive learning space is constructed from a sociocultural perspective. A healthy relationship between teacher and student develops in this comfortable, safe, and intimate learning environment. The insights and open-mindedness that learners gain in this space stimulate their cognitive development. In addition, transduction and modal transformation contribute to developing learners’ transferable
skills, which play an essential role in their language acquisition. At the same time, the “Knowledge Processes” (Kalantzis et al., 2016, p. 74) occurs in this dynamic learning environment, which enhances learners’ competence to apply their knowledge flexibly to various scenarios. The sounds of technology and media in the language classroom not only provide a contextualized voice but also bring the learner’s voice into the classroom, enhancing the learner’s academic language potential (Díaz-Rico, 2020). Diverse social contexts in Canada have many second language learners who can acquire desired language skills through traditional or non-traditional learning settings as seen in the range of research sites in this study. Thus, combining multiliteracies pedagogical philosophies with music is also appropriate to implement in English language-based learning environments.

According to the data analysis, educators have frequently used multimodality in learning activities, because “many students need to see, hear, smell, touch, and feel knowledge all at the same time” (Díaz-Rico, 2020, p. 152). From a multiliteracies and multimodality perspective, written, oral, visual, auditory, tactile, kinesthetic, and spatial modalities in conjunction with music appear within the research sites’ learning space. The synesthesia of spatial-musical pairing facilitates language learners’ memory and has the potential to allow learners to transfer language learning across contexts naturally. When music, kinesthetic, auditory, and oral are combined, the learner integrates the linguistic information the modalities represent to digest the language knowledge. From the social semiotic lens (Kress, 2000; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001), the rich symbols and signs in music help learners build phonological awareness and improve their pronunciation skills of the target language. The musical structure and grammar in music composition also inspire language education to focus on the structure and grammar of the target language to get closer to the actual meaning it conveys.

Additionally, blending music with multiple modalities deeply reflects cultural and linguistic
diversity. Indeed, language literacy education “are the activities that form discourses within the culture or society at large” (Díaz-Rico, 2020, p. 33). The presence of textual modalities in music reflects the increasingly updated linguistic representations of the cyber age, where mastery of linguistic variants allows learners to adapt to forms of communication in a specific society and encourages them to use these linguistic signs to create meaning. Combining musical modalities with the visual, auditory, tactile, and aural senses visualizes superficial cultural characters and stimulates learners’ understanding of culture and its language. At the same time, reflecting on the social issues behind the culture becomes an essential part of language teaching and learning under the educator’s guidance.

Culture is a rich resource in the world. In the face of the variances among cultures, the social patterns, linguistic systems, and ideologies that different cultures symbolize, literacy education needs to focus on critical literacy, a theory in its own right, but also closely related to and seen as a central perspective emphasized by the multiliteracies theory. Critical literacy with its focus on critical thinking, social justice, and action that leads to greater equity and inclusion in education, which is happening at these research sites. Educators are aware of the authenticity and reliability of media voices in language learning in the technological age. Educators think critically about and select musical pieces. Educators connect pedagogical practices to feminism, social justice, and identity to guide learners to think critically about differences between contemporary settings and histories, understanding their identity status and cultural nuances. Meanwhile, critical literacy also enables language learners to “become capable not only of decoding the words but also reading between the lines in order to understand how power is exercised through various forms of discourse” (Cummins, 2000, p. 46). Or as Janks (2010) argues, “literacy is at the centre of the politics of text and identity,” and educators “have a responsibility to create opportunities for students to reflect critically on their world in order to re-
imagine and redesign it” (p. 180).

Ultimately, the fact that teaching English as a second language is not the primary goal at some research sites is a limitation of this Master’s research. However, it is indisputable that many learners of English as a second language in Canada are likely to attend various formal and informal English learning settings. English is present in these learning environments as a basic form of communication. Thus, English language learning is everywhere. Through observation and exploration of teaching practices at the research sites, it has been found that musical modalities, transmodal, and combinations of multiple modalities positively affect adult learning and second or target language acquisition. Therefore, these pedagogical philosophies and strategies of combining music and music-related modalities benefit teaching and learning spaces where language learning is the primary goal.
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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Interview Questions for Participants – Teachers/Adult Educators

1. How would you describe your teaching?
2. Could you describe a favourite class that you taught that exemplifies some of the elements of teaching that you feel create a great learning space?
3. How do you bring cultural and linguistic diversity into your teaching? Can you give an example? Is addressing diversity a social justice issue for you?
4. Reflecting on your teaching philosophy, what are some of your core teaching values?
5. How does multimodality play a role in your everyday teaching or assignments you have created?
6. Can you think of an example where you have been able to design a task that requires learners to use modalities that might be new to them?
7. How would you define inquiry-based learning? Why does it matter? What are its pros and cons? Can you give an example of how you might create a lesson that is inquiry based?
8. Does technology play a role in how you teach? Is it an important part of your teaching? Do you incorporate new and emerging technologies into your teaching?
9. Are you familiar with the theory of multiliteracies – and if so, what do you know about it?
10. What is involved in taking students to a deeper level in their learning?
11. How do you plan your courses? How does design play a role?
12. What do you need from broader educational institutions to be able to teach the way you want to and that reflects what you think would lead to great teaching across the system?

Additional Questions for Teachers/Adult Educators/Learners/High School Students (where
1. Could you tell me about why you chose this educational material to share with me today?
2. In your opinion, what can I learn from looking at this material?
3. How does this artifact represent something about you as a teacher or a learner?
4. Could you talk about the modalities that you see represented in these materials?
LETTER OF INFORMATION FOR CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH:
Adult Educators and Secondary/Middle School Teachers

Title of Study: “Multiliteracies for adolescents and adults: Teaching and learning literacy in the 21st century”

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Dr. Susan M. Holloway, Principal Investigator from the Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor, and Dr. Patricia A. Gouthro, Co-Investigator from the Faculty of Education at Mount Saint Vincent University. This research is funded through a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Insight Grant.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel to contact Dr. Susan M. Holloway at 519-253-3000, extension 3818 or via email at holloway@uwindsor.ca, or Dr. Patricia A. Gouthro via email at Patricia.Gouthro@msvu.ca

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to investigate ways to improve teaching literacy to teenagers and adults. “Multiliteracies” is a theory that expands our traditional definition of literacy as just reading and writing. In this study, we explore that learning can be done, not only through pen to paper, but through many other modes – drawing, movement, sound, and the use of technology in all subject areas. For instance, combining some of these modes to communicate ideas, a teacher could ask students to create a board game or YouTube video, participate in a dramatic role play, or design a poster. These are examples of what multiliteracies can look like in practice. Multiliteracies also helps us to think through how to best incorporate technology into teaching, think about how to connect literacy to the workplace and broader society, and figure out how to work with people from multiple cultures and languages. This theory put into practice has been very successful over the last 20 years, but it has been used more often in other parts of the world and with younger children. This research will help to explore and document how multiliteracies theory can improve the teaching of literacy for teenagers and adults.
PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to:

1. Read over the Letter of Information and Letter of Consent. Ask the researchers any questions you might have about the research study. On the Letter of Consent, fill out the Yes/No check box options according to your preferences, and sign and date the letter.

2. If you choose to participate in the Interview Method, you will have 2 options:

   Participate in an individual face-to-face interview that will last approximately one hour. I will provide you with the main questions in advance of the interview itself.

   (a) I ask you questions about your teaching experiences, and you give your answers.

   (b) If you participated in a previous media event with me, then during this interview, you might choose to be shown a short video clip from that content.

If you choose to participate in the Document Analysis Method, you will have 4 options:
(a) You may choose to bring in teaching materials to share with me. You might just want to give them to me, or else discuss them with me during the interview, if you choose to participate in an interview.

(b) You may choose to have some of the teaching materials you give me posted to the social media web platform (and you decide if you want your name to remain confidential or posted publicly).

(c) You may choose for me to post quotations from your interview transcript on the social media platform I have created. You can also choose whether your identity will be publicly associated with the quotation(s) or not.

3. If you do the interview, you will be sent the transcript for you to edit. I will suggest one month for you to do so, but if you need longer, we can agree upon a later date. If I do not hear from you by that date, then I will assume you are fine with the transcript finalized as is.

4. You will have the opportunity to edit the transcript, or alter the way(s) in which you would like
to participate in the study, and/or withdraw from the study, at any time up until you have approved the finalized transcript, or in the case of document analysis, up until you have signed the Letter of Consent.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

You might feel awkward knowing me as someone who is a colleague in the field of education. It is possible I may or may not know you personally. You may feel assessed or evaluated when talking about your pedagogy, which can be an uncomfortable feeling. It might feel awkward talking to me knowing that I am a Faculty of Education professor. You may feel some stress in reviewing the media content excerpts if you allow me to use these prompts in the interview. It may feel uncomfortable that I hold a dual role in relation to you – now as the researcher inviting you to be a part of this research study after already having been contacted by me previously regarding your interest in participating in creating media content as a learning tool. You may feel unsure about the option to state your wishes about being re-contacted in the future to participate in another related research study.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

You will have the opportunity to consider how the formal theory of multiliteracies might connect to your teaching practices.

Multiliteracies is a well-recognized formal learning and teaching theory within the larger research community in Canada in the field of literacy. However, it is usually investigated at the primary/junior level, and the majority of empirical studies come out of Australia. This study will further knowledge about a multiliteracies theoretical framework through in-depth interviews with adult educators in higher education and community settings as well as secondary/middle school teachers, which in turn has the larger aim of contributing to improving education systems in our society.

As a secondary/middle school teacher or an adult educator, if you choose to be publicly named in the research, having your work discussed in-depth through the interview may help to showcase your work to other teachers and adult educators around the world, and it may lead to interesting networking possibilities.

COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION

If you participate in the research study, you will receive a $20.00 dollar gift card from Chapters
as a token of appreciation for your time.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Prior to starting the interview, I will verbally go over the consent process in person. In both email and in person, I will answer any questions you might have. You will have options around the level of confidentiality you would like to have in this study (please see the checklist at the end of this letter). Every effort will be made to disguise identity markers if requested.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

If you wish to withdraw from the study at any point up until you have reviewed and approved the finalized transcript for your interview by the pre-established due date, or in the case of document analysis, up to the point of signing this letter of consent, you may do so. You can contact me in writing, via phone, or in person to withdraw (with no explanation required).

FEEDBACK OF THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY TO THE PARTICIPANTS

A summary of the research will be found at the University of Windsor REB website by May 31, 2021.
Web address: http://www1.uwindsor.ca/reb/study-results
Date when results are available: May 31, 2021

SUBSEQUENT USE OF DATA

These data may be used in subsequent studies, publications, presentations.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact: Research Ethics Coordinator, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, N9B 3P4; Telephone: 519-253-3000, ext. 3948; e-mail: ethics@uwindsor.ca

CONSENT OPTIONS

Please check only ONE box for EACH of the following options, depending on your individual
preferences:

**Interview Methodology:**

I agree to be digitally recorded for an interview

☐ YES  ☐ NO

If yes, then I also agree that the digital recording of my interview will remain *(choose one)*:

Confidential – your identity will not be revealed in relation to the interview  ☐ YES

Public – your identity will be made publicly associated with the interview  ☐ YES

I agree to being shown the Media Content Prompt as part of my interview

☐ YES  ☐ NO

*Please note, this option is only for participants who were a part of previous media event prior to research*

**Document Analysis Methodology:**

I agree to my teaching materials being used for research analysis and posted to the social media platform

☐ YES  ☐ NO

If yes, then I also agree that the teaching materials will remain *(choose one)*:

Confidential – your identity will not be revealed in relation to the teaching materials  ☐ YES

Public – your identity will be made publicly associated with the teaching materials  ☐ YES

I agree quotations from my interview can be posted to the social media platform

☐ YES  ☐ NO

If yes, then I also agree that the teaching materials will remain *(choose one)*:

Confidential – your identity will not be revealed in relation to the quotations  ☐ YES

Public – your identity will be made publicly associated with the quotations  ☐ YES
Option for Re-Contacting You

I agree to the researcher re-contacting me again to invite me to have the option □ YES □ NO to participate in a related research study in the future.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

I understand the information provided for the study “Multiliteracies for adolescents and adults: Teaching and learning literacy in the 21st century” as described herein. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

SIGNATURE OF THE PARTICIPANT

______________________________
Name of Participant (Printed)

______________________________   __________________________
Signature of Participant   (Signature)   Date

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

These are the terms under which I will conduct research.

______________________________   __________________________
Signature of Investigator   Date
LETTER OF CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH:
Adult Educators and Secondary/Middle School Teachers

Title of Study: “Multiliteracies for adolescents and adults: Teaching and learning literacy in the 21st century”

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Dr. Susan M. Holloway, Principal Investigator from the Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor, and Dr. Patricia A. Gouthro, Co-Investigator from the Faculty of Education at Mount Saint Vincent University. This research is funded through a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Insight Grant.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel to contact Dr. Susan M. Holloway at 519-253-3000, extension 3818 or via email at holloway@uwindsor.ca, or Dr. Patricia A. Gouthro via email at Patricia.Gouthro@msvu.ca

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to investigate ways to improve teaching literacy to teenagers and adults. “Multiliteracies” is a theory that expands our traditional definition of literacy as just reading and writing. In this study, we explore that learning can be done, not only through pen to paper, but through many other modes – drawing, movement, sound, and the use of technology in all subject areas. For instance, combining some of these modes to communicate ideas, a teacher could ask students to create a board game or YouTube video, participate in a dramatic role play, or design a poster. These are examples of what multiliteracies can look like in practice. Multiliteracies also helps us to think through how to best incorporate technology into teaching, think about how to connect literacy to the workplace and broader society, and figure out how to work with people from multiple cultures and languages. This theory put into practice has been very successful over the last 20 years, but it has been used more often in other parts of the world and with younger children. This research will help to explore and document how multiliteracies theory can improve the teaching of literacy for teenagers and adults.
PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to:

1. Read over the Letter of Information and Letter of Consent. Ask the researchers any questions you might have about the research study. On the Letter of Consent, fill out the Yes/No check box options according to your preferences, and sign and date the letter.

2. If you choose to participate in the **Interview Method**, you will have 2 options:

   Participate in an individual face-to-face interview that will last approximately one hour. I will provide you with the main questions in advance of the interview itself.

   (a) I ask you questions about your teaching experiences, and you give your answers.

   (b) If you participated in a previous media event with me, then during this interview, you might choose to be shown a short video clip from that content.

If you choose to participate in the **Document Analysis Method**, you will have 4 options:

(a) You may choose to bring in teaching materials to share with me. You might just want to give them to me, or else discuss them with me during the interview, if you choose to participate in an interview.

(b) You may choose to have some of the teaching materials you give me posted to the social media web platform (and you decide if you want your name to remain confidential or posted publicly).

(c) You may choose for me to post quotations from your interview transcript on the social media platform I have created. You can also choose whether your identity will be publicly associated with the quotation(s) or not.

3. If you do the interview, you will be sent the transcript for you to edit. I will suggest one month for you to do so, but if you need longer, we can agree upon a later date. If I do not hear from you by that date, then I will assume you are fine with the transcript finalized as is.

4. You will have the opportunity to edit the transcript, or alter the way(s) in which you would
like to participate in the study, and/or withdraw from the study, at any time up until you have approved the finalized transcript, or in the case of document analysis, up until you have signed the Letter of Consent.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

You might feel awkward knowing me as someone who is a colleague in the field of education. It is possible I may or may not know you personally. You may feel assessed or evaluated when talking about your pedagogy, which can be an uncomfortable feeling. It might feel awkward talking to me knowing that I am a Faculty of Education professor. You may feel some stress in reviewing the media content excerpts if you allow me to use these prompts in the interview. It may feel uncomfortable that I hold a dual role in relation to you – now as the researcher inviting you to be a part of this research study after already having been contacted by me previously regarding your interest in participating in creating media content as a learning tool. You may feel unsure about the option to state your wishes about being re-contacted in the future to participate in another related research study.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

You will have the opportunity to consider how the formal theory of multiliteracies might connect to your teaching practices.

Multiliteracies is a well-recognized formal learning and teaching theory within the larger research community in Canada in the field of literacy. However, it is usually investigated at the primary/junior level, and the majority of empirical studies come out of Australia. This study will further knowledge about a multiliteracies theoretical framework through in-depth interviews with adult educators in higher education and community settings as well as secondary/middle school teachers, which in turn has the larger aim of contributing to improving education systems in our society.

As a secondary/middle school teacher or an adult educator, if you choose to be publicly named in the research, having your work discussed in-depth through the interview may help to showcase your work to other teachers and adult educators around the world, and it may lead to interesting networking possibilities.

COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION

If you participate in the research study, you will receive a $20.00 dollar gift card from Chapters
as a token of appreciation for your time.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Prior to starting the interview, I will verbally go over the consent process in person. In both email and in person, I will answer any questions you might have. You will have options around the level of confidentiality you would like to have in this study (please see the checklist at the end of this letter). Every effort will be made to disguise identity markers if requested.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

If you wish to withdraw from the study at any point up until you have reviewed and approved the finalized transcript for your interview by the pre-established due date, or in the case of document analysis, up to the point of signing this letter of consent, you may do so. You can contact me in writing, via phone, or in person to withdraw (with no explanation required).

FEEDBACK OF THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY TO THE PARTICIPANTS

A summary of the research will be found at the University of Windsor REB website by May 31, 2021.
Web address: http://www1.uwindsor.ca/reb/study-results
Date when results are available: May 31, 2021

SUBSEQUENT USE OF DATA

These data may be used in subsequent studies, publications, presentations.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact: Research Ethics Coordinator, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, N9B 3P4; Telephone: 519-253-3000, ext. 3948; e-mail: ethics@uwindsor.ca

CONSENT OPTIONS

Please check only ONE box for EACH of the following options, depending on your individual
preferences:

**Interview Methodology:**

I agree to be digitally recorded for an interview  □ YES □ NO

If yes, then I also agree that the digital recording of my interview will remain *(choose one):*

Confidential – your identity will not be revealed in relation to the interview  □ YES

Public – your identity will be made publicly associated with the interview  □ YES

I agree to being shown the Media Content Prompt as part of my interview  □ YES □ NO

*Please note, this option is only for participants who were a part of previous media event prior to research*

**Document Analysis Methodology:**

I agree to my teaching materials being used for research analysis and posted to the social media platform  □ YES □ NO

If yes, then I also agree that the teaching materials will remain *(choose one):*

Confidential – your identity will not be revealed in relation to the teaching materials  □ YES

Public – your identity will be made publicly associated with the teaching materials  □ YES

I agree quotations from my interview can be posted to the social media platform  □ YES □ NO

If yes, then I also agree that the teaching materials will remain *(choose one):*

Confidential – your identity will not be revealed in relation to the quotations  □ YES

Public – your identity will be made publicly associated with the quotations  □ YES
Option for Re-Contacting You

I agree to the researcher re-contacting me again to invite me to have the option □YES □NO to participate in a related research study in the future.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

I understand the information provided for the study “Multiliteracies for adolescents and adults: Teaching and learning literacy in the 21st century” as described herein. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

SIGNATURE OF THE PARTICIPANT

____________________________________
Name of Participant (Printed)

______________________________________
Signature of Participant (Signature)                Date

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR
These are the terms under which I will conduct research.

____________________________________
Signature of Investigator                Date
Appendix D

LETTER FOR CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH:
Adult Learners: Interview or Document Analysis

Title of Study: “Multiliteracies for adolescents and adults: Teaching and learning literacy in the 21st century”

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Dr. Susan M. Holloway, Principal Investigator from the Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor, and Dr. Patricia A. Gouthro, Co-Investigator from the Faculty of Education at Mount Saint Vincent University. This research is funded through a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Insight Grant.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel to contact Dr. Susan M. Holloway at 519-253-3000, extension 3818 or via email at holloway@uwindsor.ca, or Dr. Patricia A. Gouthro via email at Patricia.Gouthro@msvu.ca

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to investigate ways to improve teaching literacy to teenagers and adults. “Multiliteracies” is a theory that expands our traditional definition of literacy as just reading and writing. In this study, we explore that learning can be done, not only through pen to paper, but through many other modes – drawing, movement, sound, and the use of technology in all subject areas. For instance, combining some of these modes to communicate ideas, a teacher could ask students to create a board game or YouTube video, participate in a dramatic role play, or design a poster. These are examples of what multiliteracies can look like in practice. Multiliteracies also helps us to think through how to best incorporate technology into teaching, think about how to connect literacy to the workplace and broader society, and figure out how to work with people from multiple cultures and languages. This theory put into practice has been very successful over the last 20 years, but it has been used more often in other parts of the world and with younger children. This research will help to explore and document how multiliteracies theory can improve the teaching of literacy for teenagers and adults.
PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to:

1. Read over the Letter of Information and Letter of Consent. Ask the researchers any questions you might have about the research study. On the Letter of Consent, fill out the Yes/No check box options according to your preferences, and sign and date the letter.

2. If you choose to participate in the Interview Method, you will have 2 options:

Participate in an individual face-to-face interview that will last approximately one hour. I will provide you with the main questions in advance of the interview itself.

(a) I ask you questions about your learning experiences, and you give your answers.

If you choose to participate in the Document Analysis Method, you will have 3 options:

(a) You may choose to bring in learning materials to share with me during the interview. Some examples of learning materials could be assignments or work exercises you have done, journal entries, or videos you have created. Any learning materials you give me might be posted to the social media web platform (and you decide if you want your name to remain confidential or posted publicly in relation to these materials).

(b) You may choose for me to post quotations from your interview transcript on the social media platform I have created. You can also choose whether your identity will be publicly associated with the quotation(s) or not.

(c) You may choose for me to use your learning materials for analysis in the research, but not have any of those materials posted to the social media web platform.

3. If you do the interview, you will be sent the transcript for you to edit. I will suggest one month for you to do so, but if you need longer, we can agree upon a later date. If I do not hear from you by that date, then I will assume you are fine with the transcript finalized as is.

4. You will have the opportunity to edit the transcript, or alter the way(s) in which you would like to participate in the study, and/or withdraw from the study, at any time up until you have
approved the finalized transcript, or in the case of document analysis, up until you have signed the Letter of Consent.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

You may feel assessed or evaluated when talking about your role as an adult learner, which can be an uncomfortable feeling. You may feel unsure about the option to state your wishes about being re-contacted in the future to participate in another related research study.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

It is important for educators and policy makers to hear the voices of adult learners. What are your thoughts, feelings, experiences of learning as an adult? How do you learn best? By contributing to this study, you can help express to educators what you think supports effective adult teaching and learning communities.

Multiliteracies is a well-recognized formal learning and teaching theory within the larger research community in Canada in the field of literacy. However, it is usually investigated at the primary/junior level, and the majority of empirical studies come out of Australia. This study will further knowledge about a multiliteracies theoretical framework through in-depth interviews with adult learners, which in turn has the larger aim of contributing to improving education systems in our society.

As an adult learner, if you choose to be publicly named in the research, your ideas can be showcased to educators and attributed directly to you.

COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION

If you participate in the research study, you will receive a $20.00 dollar gift card from Chapters as a token of appreciation for your time.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Prior to starting the interview, I will verbally go over the consent process in person. In both email and in person, I will answer any questions you might have. You will have options around the level of confidentiality you would like to have in this study (please see the checklist at the end of
this letter). Every effort will be made to disguise identity markers if requested.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

If you wish to withdraw from the study at any point up until you have reviewed and approved the finalized transcript for your interview by the pre-established due date, you may do so. If you have chosen to participate in the Document Analysis Method, you can withdraw at any point up to signing this Letter of Consent. You can contact me in writing, via phone, or in person to withdraw (with no explanation required).

FEEDBACK OF THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY TO THE PARTICIPANTS

A summary of the research will be found at the University of Windsor REB website by May 31, 2021.
Web address: http://www1.uwindsor.ca/reb/study-results
Date when results are available: May 31, 2021

SUBSEQUENT USE OF DATA

These data may be used in subsequent studies, publications, presentations.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact: Research Ethics Coordinator, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, N9B 3P4; Telephone: 519-253-3000, ext. 3948; e-mail: ethics@uwindsor.ca

CONSENT OPTIONS

Please check only ONE box for EACH of the following options, depending on your individual preferences:

Interview Methodology:

I agree to be digitally recorded for an interview □ YES □ NO

If yes, then I also agree that the digital recording of my interview will remain (choose one):
Confidential – your identity will not be revealed in relation to the interview  □ YES

Public – your identity will be made publicly associated with the interview  □ YES

I agree to being shown the Media Content Prompt as part of my interview  □ YES  □ NO
*Please note, this option is only for participants who were a part of previous media event prior to research*

**Document Analysis Methodology:**

I agree to my learning materials being used for research analysis and posted to the social media platform  □ YES  □ NO

If yes, then I also agree that the learning materials will remain *(choose one)*:

Confidential – your identity will not be revealed in relation to the learning materials  □ YES

Public – your identity will be made publicly associated with the learning materials  □ YES

I agree quotations from my interview can be posted to the social media platform □YES □NO

If yes, then I also agree that the learning materials will remain *(choose one)*:

Confidential – your identity will not be revealed in relation to the quotations □ YES

Public – your identity will be made publicly associated with the quotations □ YES

**Option for Re-Contacting You**

I agree to the researcher re-contacting me again to invite me to have the option to participate in a related research study in the future. □ YES  □ NO
SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

I understand the information provided for the study “Multiliteracies for adolescents and adults: Teaching and learning literacy in the 21st century” as described herein. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

I understand the information provided for the study “Multiliteracies for adolescents and adults: Teaching and learning literacy in the 21st century” as described herein. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

SIGNATURE OF THE PARTICIPANT

____________________________________
Name of Participant (Printed)

____________________________________
Signature of Participant (Signature)        Date

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR
These are the terms under which I will conduct research.

____________________________________
Signature of Investigator          Date
Appendix E

CONSENT FOR DIGITAL RECORDING

Research Participant’s Full Name (printed): ____________________________________________

Title of the Project: “Multiliteracies for adolescents and adults: Teaching and learning literacy in the 21st century”

I consent to the audio-taping of the interview for the research mentioned above study.

I understand these are voluntary procedures and that I am free to withdraw at any time by requesting that the taping be stopped. I also understand that my wishes around the level of confidentiality I have agreed to in the Letter of Consent will be respected. If I choose for my interview to be treated confidentially, my name will not be revealed to anyone and that digitally recording will be kept confidential. Digital recordings are filed by number only and stored in a locked cabinet.

The destruction of the audio digital recordings will be completed once you have had the opportunity for editing, verification, and approval of the transcript.

I understand that confidentiality will be respected if requested, and that the digital recording will be for professional use only.

I choose to have excerpts of my digitally recorded interview uploaded to the social media platform

☐ YES  ☐ NO

SIGNATURE OF THE PARTICIPANT

________________________________________
Name of Participant (Printed)

________________________________________  ___________
Signature of Participant (Signature) Date
SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

These are the terms under which I will conduct research.

____________________________________  ______________________
Signature of Investigator                        Date
Appendix F

CONSENT FOR VIDEO TAPING

Research Participant Name: _______________________________________

Title of the Project: “Multiliteracies for adolescents and adults: Teaching and learning literacy in the 21st century”

Following the interview, you now have the option to participate in an additional component of the research.

Now having completed the interview, I will consult with you to discuss one or two ideas that you talked about in the interview, which I would ask for you to repeat while I video tape you talking. This video segment would be approximately 2-10 minutes long.

The purpose of this video tape would be to share it on the social media platform I have created for educators.

In signing this Consent Form, you understand these are voluntary procedures and that you are free to withdraw at any time by requesting that the videotaping be discontinued.

You also understand that your name will be publicly associated with the video tape and the video tape will be for professional use only.

This research has been cleared by the University of Windsor Research Ethics Board.

SIGNATURE OF THE PARTICIPANT

_____________________________________
Name of Participant (Printed)

_____________________________________
Signature of Participant (Signature) Date

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Appendix G

CONSENT FOR PHOTOGRAPHY (PORTRAIT PHOTO)

Research Participant’s Name: ____________________________________________

Title of the Project: “Multiliteracies for adolescents and adults: Teaching and learning literacy in the 21st century”

In signing this Consent Form, you understand that I am taking your photo for purposes of posting it to use on the social media platform and/or for various publications, presentations, workshops.

You also understand that your name will be publicly associated with the photograph and the photograph will be for professional use only.

This research has been cleared by the University of Windsor Research Ethics Board.

SIGNATURE OF THE PARTICIPANT

______________________________________  ______________________
Name of Participant (Printed)  (Signature)  Date

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

These are the terms under which I will conduct research.

______________________________________  ______________________
Signature of Investigator  Date
Appendix H

The Multiliteracies Project

I, ________________________________________________________, hereby give consent to photographs, audio-video recordings, and work being used, re-used, and published in media worldwide, for any and all legal purposes without payment or notice to me by Dr. Susan Holloway who may use this media for educational purposes.

Signature: _________________________________
Home Telephone Number: ______________________________
Date: _________________________________

Please check this box if you agree that Dr. Susan Holloway can utilize this content for secondary data which she will ensure first receives review and clearance by the University of Windsor Research Ethics Board.
VITA AUCTORIS

NAME: Siyu Chen

PLACE OF BIRTH: CHINA

YEAR OF BIRTH: 1996

EDUCATION: University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, Canada, 2021-2023