

The Role of the Arts in Finnish Education as Informed by Teacher Narratives
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ABSTRACT

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This study aims to explore the Finnish Education system through a novel focus of the role of the arts in compulsory education. This study aims to explore the role of the arts in Finnish education through three domains: teachers' view on the arts and its role in education, perceived effect of the arts on student development, and characteristics of the Finnish education system that influence the degree to which teachers integrate the arts.

This qualitative study was conducted in Jyväskylä, Finland with six primary school, general education teachers. Data was collected by means of interviews and analyzed according to narrative analysis.

Evident in the narratives of teachers is an understanding of art that expound on its individualistic and inclusive qualities. Also, present is the strong opinion that the arts should be taught in discipline specific and integrated forms. Additionally, teacher perceptions of student development from arts-based activities such as improved self-esteem and increased concentration are shared. Reasons why teachers are creative and use the arts in their teaching point to the high degree of autonomy they possess in the Finnish education system. Supportive and trusting school leadership and close collaboration with colleagues are aspects that are perceived to contribute the most to the teachers' sense of autonomy.

A key finding from this study recognizes that the Finnish Education system has been conducive to learning in and through the arts. It is hoped that education systems around the world can glean understanding for best practices from aspects highlighted in this work.

Keywords: Art Integration, Finnish Education, Teacher Autonomy, Finland, Narrative

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CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION.....	6
1.2	Key terms	12
1.2.1	Discipline Based Art Education.....	13
1.2.2	Art Integration.....	14
2	LITERATURE REVIEW	16
2.1	Dewey.....	16
2.1.1	Art as Experience	17
2.1.2	Art for Democracy	19
2.2	The role of the arts in cognitive development.....	19
2.2.1	Degrees of integration.....	20
2.2.2	Cognitive development	22
2.2.3	Evidence from a model- arts integrated school.....	25
2.3	The teacher.....	26
2.4	Summary	28
3	RESEARCH AIMS	31
3.1	Research Questions:	31
4	METHODOLOGY.....	33
4.1	Ethical Considerations	33
4.2	Schools.....	34
4.3	Participants	34
4.4	Data collection.....	36
4.5	Narrative Data Analysis	37
4.6	Analysis Steps	39
5	EMILIA.....	44
6	JULIA.....	49
7	VEERA.....	54
8	IDA.....	58
9	SANNA.....	62
10	TIMO	66
11	FINDINGS.....	70
11.1	Teacher perceptions of the arts and its role in education.....	70
11.1.1	Art as individualistic and inclusive	71
11.1.2	DBAE and AI implementation.....	72

11.2	Effect of arts based activities on development	73
11.2.1	Social development	73
11.2.2	Cognitive development	74
11.3	Teacher autonomy and supportive aspects of the education system 75	
11.3.1	Autonomy	75
11.3.2	Influential factors of the education system.....	76
12	DISCUSSION	79
12.1	Limitations	79
12.2	Teacher theoretical view of art.....	80
12.3	DBAE and AI partnership, teacher autonomy is supreme	81
12.4	Implications for student learning and development.....	83
12.5	Implications for further research	84
	REFERENCES.....	87

1 INTRODUCTION

Educational systems of nations such as the United States, England, Sweden, Norway and France have approached challenges facing their education systems by implementing controlling measures such as standardized testing as a means for making schools accountable for student performance (Sahlberg, 2011). In contrast, Finland has approached educational policy differently by “improving the teaching force, limiting student testing to a necessary minimum, placing responsibility and trust before accountability, and handing over school-district-level leadership to education professionals” (Sahlberg, 2011, pg. 5).

Finland’s approach to education policy has resulted in high performance on assessments such as the International Programme for Student Assessment (PISA) in 2009 and 2015 in which students in Finland scored statistically significant above the OECD average in reading, science, and mathematics. Overall, in 2009, Finland scored in the top three of countries’ and economies’ in student performance. In 2015, Finland scored among the top five (OECD, 2010; OECD, 2016).

The PISA assessment also found that Finland has a narrow achievement gap between students placing it high on scales of equity (Reinikainen, 2012; OECD, 2010; OECD, 2016). Additionally, in Finland a student’s family background including economic, social and cultural affluence has relatively little impact on the student’s reading ability (Reinikainen, 2012). However, there is significant variance between reading scores of girls and boys in Finland with girls scoring higher. Still the boys in Finland perform higher than the OECD average (Reinikainen, 2012). Finland’s high ranking in academic performance and especially equity from the PISA results has sparked international interest. Reinikainen (2012) points out that contextual factors such as the economy, culture, and national history play a part in the success of students and it is not all due to the education system. In scales of these contextual factors, Finland is found to offer a high quality of life (Legatum, 2010; News Week, 2010; as cited by Reinikainen, 2012) which is reasonably

assumed to affect students in a positive way and therefore supports their ability to learn.

There are many contributing factors of student outcome within and surrounding the Finnish education system. This research is conceived from the idea that the arts within and surrounding the education system may also be a contributing factor. While culture in general is identified as being an influencer, the arts specifically in instruction and in teacher perception is yet to be highlighted in research focused on Finnish education. This research takes a novel approach of investigating the Finnish education system according to the role of the arts as informed by teacher perception.

This study is guided by a narrative approach in which contextual information is imperative to understanding a more complete picture of the experiences of the subject (Clandinin, 2007; Conle, 2000; Maxwell, 2012; Moen, 2006). Context in regards to a narrative inquiry focused on teachers, should include the characteristics of the school and school system such as curricula (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2007). An understanding of the national core curriculum of 2014 for basic education in Finland is pertinent to this work due in part to the research aims of this study. Additionally, this research includes inquiry of the curriculum itself, but more importantly, it provides familiarity with the nature of education in Finland. In summary, four primary points of the national curriculum are outlined: 1) purpose 2) progressive nature 3) effect on how the arts are implemented in the forms of discipline-based art education (DBAE) and art integration (AI) 4) the local curriculum and input of teachers.

Finnish National Core Curriculum

Curriculum reform is a dynamic and continual process in Finland. Nearly every ten years, a new national curriculum is introduced. The current curriculum, national core curriculum (NCC), was introduced by The Finnish National Agency for Education in 2014, and took effect in all schools providing basic education (grades 1-6) in August of 2016. The NCC is a product of an extensive, transparent, and inclusive process (Lähdemäki, 2019). The NCC is

considered to be a model of co-created public policy as it was designed in collaboration with numerous stakeholders such as: “national and local education authorities, university professors, representatives from industry groups, the union of municipalities, teachers unions, parents associations, and student unions” (Vahtivuori-Hanninen et al, 2014, p23).

The principle purpose for a national curriculum in Finland is to ensure equal, quality education across the country. This curriculum provides a guide for teaching and learning by defining the general values and goals for all Finnish schools (Lähdemäki, 2019). The NCC in particular, defines these values and goals through a progressive lens. Perhaps due to the collaborative way in which it was co-created, the NCC itself is arguably forward thinking. Objectives of the NCC were founded on the realization that education must evolve to meet 21st century demands on the national and global level (Lähdemäki, 2019; Vahtivuori-Hanninen et al, 2014). The NCC outlines a holistic approach to preparing students for the future by promoting transversal competencies not bound by subject areas. The transversal competencies outlined by the Finnish National Agency for Education (2016) include:

1. Thinking and learning to learn
2. Cultural competence, interaction and self-expression
3. Taking care of oneself and managing daily life
4. Multiliteracy
5. ICT competence
6. Working life competence and entrepreneurship
7. Participation, involvement and building a sustainable future

In the NCC, developing transversal competencies is the primary goal of basic education in Finland. Working to develop these competencies requires progressive pedagogy that is open and student-centered, such as project-based learning. Accordingly, the NCC mandates the execution of at least one project-based learning module for each academic year (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2016; Lähdemäki, 2019; Vahtivuori-Hanninen et al, 2014).

The NCC is meaningful to this study of the arts in Finnish education for it directly affects how students experience the arts in school. Regarding DBAE instruction, the NCC decides what subjects will be taught and how much time is allotted to each subject in each grade level. In the present NCC, arts subjects include: music, visual arts, and crafts. The NCC also supports AI through transdisciplinary aspirations (transversal competencies through project-based learning). Among the seven aims set for transversal competencies, the leading arts related aim is “cultural competence, interaction and self-expression.” The description of this competency in the NCC document presents potential for arts-based learning.

The pupils are given opportunities for experiencing and interpreting art, culture and cultural heritage. They also learn to communicate, modify and create culture and traditions and to understand their significance for well-being. .. School work encourages the use of imagination and creativity. The pupils are guided to act in a manner that promotes aesthetic values in their environment and to enjoy their various manifestations. (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2016, section T2)

While a national curriculum is an important aspect of Finnish Education, it is not the only agent. A Secondary factor is the local educational authority. Consistent with the national curriculum goals, a local curriculum is developed to outline execution in a specific context. The association of local and national curricula is meant to enable the education system to be unified, yet flexible. Consequently, teachers have an important role to play in the development of the local curriculum which contributes to their professional autonomy (Vahtivuori-Hanninen et al, 2014).

In summary, the NCC is a prominent document, conceived through collaboration, meant to unify and guide schools in Finland towards quality education with the intent of taking students successfully into 21 century applications. It promotes transdisciplinary themes through transversal competencies and student-centered pedagogy. Analyzing the national

curriculum delivers an understanding of the complexity of the education system involving the local level of policy and involvement from many facets of society. Subsequently, the role of the teacher is esteemed, as they are involved in curriculum design and given autonomy in the execution of the curriculum in the classroom.

Rationale for arts educational research

The rationale for educational research centered on art relies on theoretical and empirical evidence that establishes art as a basic human need, function, and beneficial to cognitive development (Baker, 2013; Baldacchino & Biesta, 2017; Burton, Horowitz, Abeles, 1999; Dewey, 1934; Eisner, 2002; Huotilainen, Rankanen, Groth, Seitamaa-Hakkarainen & Mäkelä, 2018). Further motivation is derived from the need for arts-based education to address current issues facing education, including preparing students with 21st century skills by which innovation and internationalization are pertinent (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2010; UNESCO, 2014). For example, new curriculum standards in the Common Core Curriculum in the United States reflect a change in the value of education, from rote learning of knowledge to a deeper understanding of broad concepts and developing cognitive behavior that is foundational to all disciplines (Marshall, 2014). Additionally, a chief tenant of the 2014 NCC in Finland is the development of transversal competencies that are built by and used in all disciplines for success in future life (Lähdemäki, 2019; Finnish National Agency for Education, 2016).

A qualitative inquiry focused on teachers regarding the arts in education is essential for identifying the current status of the arts in Finland as well as the direction and future of the field. Eisner (2002) describes how the goals and direction of a field or discipline are not merely based on the content within the field itself, but also “a view of education and human nature and upon beliefs about how schools and school programs might function given those views...” (ibid, 2002, p.41) The field of art education is especially influenced by a variety of “reasons and beliefs, some clear, others not; some grounded, some

not; some the result of habit and tradition, some not" (Eisner, 2002, p.41). By qualitative means, this study aims to uncover what views, reasons, and beliefs general classroom teachers hold concerning the role of the arts in education in Finland.

As research provides evidence of the value of the arts in education (Baker, 2013; Baldacchino & Biesta, 2017; Burton et al, 1999; Bresler, 1995; Huotilainen et al., 2018), it is important to ask why arts-based learning is not promoted more widely within general education. As the PISA results demonstrate, many countries around the world are failing to provide quality education to all students (Sahlberg, 2011; OECD, 2010; OECD, 2016). While valuable research has been done to provide ample evidence of the educational value of the arts, the current state of education calls for research aims investigating the disconnect between evidence and practice. Knowledge gained from this inquiry informs effective, sustainable change. Literature and previous research illustrate the need for more exploratory studies of teachers' perceptions of art integration (May & Robinson, 2016). More importantly, researchers should look to the professionals who make pedagogical decisions daily: teachers. It is important to explore the perceptions of educators about the arts, as well as the reality of implementation of art integration in schools today, and collect contributing evidence for the disconnect of the two. Bridging the gap between evidence and practice is the ultimate goal.

Exploring narratives of teachers in the Finnish context, in regard to the arts, is a novel focus of educational research. The principal goal of this research to shine light on this topic through authentic accounts from teachers with contextual understanding. From insights gained through the perceptions and experiences of Finnish teachers, elements that influence the integration of the arts in education are illuminated and explored for potential implications.

1.2 Key terms

In this work, art is left unbound or strictly defined as it is not the purpose of this writing to do so. Alternatively, in this section art is identified according to the context by which it is viewed in this writing: art's role in education and human development.

Baldacchino and Biesta (2017) write on the concept of unlearning and the role of the arts in it. Unlearning is explained as departing from a structure of education which saturates the students experience with preconceived notions or outcomes. The artistic process confronts this structure and preconceptions, by presenting students with opportunities to take risks and let mistakes guide them to discovery. Baldacchino and Biesta (2017) explain that the concept of unlearning produces a paradox for art. In one sense unlearning instates the arts in the pedagogical realm and so supports the presence of the arts in education. On the other hand, unlearning illuminates the intrinsic nature of art as being autonomous and distinct from education.

In short, art can contradict the structure of knowledge and "correctness" in education leading to new discovery. This aspect of art distinguishes it from education. Ironically, it is this aspect that makes art so essential to schooling. While this work focusses on applications of art in education, it is not meant to reduce its "immanence" as Baldacchino and Biesta describe (2017).

Within the application of art in education, there are a variety of forms where by the arts intentionally function in the school. The key two institutional forms that are relevant and fundamental to this study are discipline-based art education (DBAE) and art integration (AI). Each institutional form has a distinct purpose, that when implemented well creates a symbiotic relationship (Eisner, 2002). Subsequently, DBAE and AI are defined and discussed independently.

1.2.1 Discipline Based Art Education

In discipline-based art education (DBAE) art is the main subject. DBAE is ideally taught by an art teacher who is trained and skilled in art education. In DBAE, core ideas and goals are structured through a curriculum. The rationale for designating the arts as a distinguished discipline stems from Bruner's ideas for structuring disciplines. The structure of disciplines is how the learning material is organized and taught in a specific subject area. This particular way of organizing education was accepted in the American context in the 1950's, mainly due to geopolitical tensions. The Cold War between the U.S and the Soviet Union incited competition in many arenas and placed pressure on education to increase rigor in the disciplines of science and mathematics (Darling-Hammond, Orcutt, & Austin, 2003).

According to Bruner, optimum learning takes place when structured within a discipline as it enables the learner to make connections among aspects in a specific discipline that will then lead to drawing connections to concepts and functions in other disciplines, "Grasping the structure of a subject is understanding it in a way that permits many other things to be related to it meaningfully" (Bruner, 1960, p. 7 & 12 as cited by Darling-Hammond et al, 2003, p.174).

Bruner also believed that young children were capable of understanding complex ideas when scaffolded over time starting with a basic, simplified form that is built upon in different stages of the learner's development. Bruner termed this gradual strategy of teaching and learning as spiral curriculum (Darling-Hammond et al, 2003).

Eisner (2002) identifies four principles of DBAE: 1. Help students acquire the skills and develop the imagination needed for high-quality art performance. 2. Help students learn how to recognize and communicate the qualities of art they see. 3. Help students contextualize the historical and cultural context in which art is created. 4. Encourage students to explore the values that art provides (ibid, p. 26). In summary, these four principles represent people's relationship to art, as it is created with skill, admired according to its qualities,

and understood in relation to its place in culture and time. Furthermore, these principles serve as a vehicle to discover meaning, as its value to society is examined.

1.2.2 Art Integration

Surrounding the method of art integration are differing opinions and perceptions of its definition. The lack of a unified understanding of the term results in misconceptions and subsequent malpractice or lackluster implementation. Therefore, it is critical to understand what true art integration is. The leading, comprehensive definition of art integration was constructed by The Kennedy Center for the Arts to provide a foundation for implementing art integration programs such as Changing Education Through the Arts (CETA) in Chicago's underprivileged public schools. The definition is as follows:

An approach to teaching in which students construct and demonstrate understanding through an art form. Students engage in a creative process which connects an art form and another subject area and meets evolving objectives in both. (Silverstein & Layne, 2010 p.1)

Silverstein and Layne's definition utilizes intentional and explicit wording to identify the elements that are characteristic of quality art integration. Fundamentally, art integration is classified as "an approach to teaching." Essentially, it distinguishes art integration from an isolated activity and establishes it in pedagogy. Effective art integration begins from a student-centered mindset consistent with Constructivist learning theory and recognizes the process of learning as "actively built, experiential, evolving, collaborative, problem-solving, and reflective" (Silverstein & Layne, 2010, p.2).

Art integration is a pedagogical approach distinct from DBAE. Art integration is not meant to take the place of DBAE, rather it is meant to extend the influence and engagement of the arts in the context of content learning. Art integration draws connections from the arts to subject domains such as mathematics, science, social studies, language development and so on.

As educational research has found, implementation of AI can differ dramatically (Bresler, 1995). There is a spectrum of AI implementation encompassing low level integration such as producing pictures of academic content to high level integration which nurtures metacognitive behavior (Marshall, 2014). In further sections, levels of AI practiced in the U.S. are identified. Additionally, conditions of the school that influence the level of AI in teaching are critically considered.

In contrast to DBAE in which artistic sensibilities are structured and contained within a disciplinary boundary, art integration enables learning to be porous with artistic sensibilities and creativity engaged with content in other disciplines. As DBAE follows a scaffolded structure of instruction, AI is flexible and can be implemented in a variety of ways and to varying degrees. Because art integration can be theoretically practiced in any subject by any teacher (not just a specialized arts teacher), it was chosen as the focus of this research. Therefore, art integration is the focal point of interest in this work, and is the target of investigation in general education in Finland.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section, literature surrounding the arts in education is curated to first establish theoretical roots of core values in the field from John Dewey. Secondly, this review seeks to establish the connection of learning in and through the arts to cognitive development. In addition, it aims to reveal factors that influence the integration of the arts in schools. Lastly, this literature review will narrow the focus on arts educational research to the role of the teacher which informs the efforts of this study going forward.

Four studies are explored in depth to develop broad themes, focusing on specific elements. Each study identifies an element of arts learning including: the reality of arts integration in schools, general learning competencies gained from arts instruction, the link from arts based activity to cognitive functions, and teacher perceptions regarding AI implementation.

2.1 Dewey

This section considers the theoretical roots of the arts in education as contributing to the construction of values, understanding, and ideal practice surrounding art education. Core values that exist today surrounding the discussion and practice include: art is connected to life experiences, every human being is creative, and art is essential to the formation of the mind. These values are foundational to art education and AI pedagogy, derived from the work of key thinkers from the end of the 19th century to present day. John Dewey's ideas about art and its role in human development provide a theoretical foundation, as well as a vision for implementation in schools.

The themes of John Dewey's work on art serve as the basis for centrality of art in education. Commonly referred to as the father of progressive education, John Dewey (1859-1952) has had a profound effect on the field of education. Principle to his ideas of education is the motto "learning by doing." Dewey's writings concerning art developed towards the end of his career. The gravity of

his respect for the arts is evidenced by his own awarding of “the greatest intellectual achievement in the history of humanity” to the acknowledgement of art as a “conscious idea” (Dewey, 1934, p.25). Goldblatt (2006) summarizes Dewey’s conceptualization of art as a paradox in which art is both rooted in human experience and able to transcend the physical world. Art as experience and art for democracy are two core Deweyan themes. Each theme elaborates on a function of art in the development of the individual and society.

2.1.1 Art as Experience

John Dewey writes in great depth in “Art as Experience” about the innate nature of art for being connected to real, lived experience. Primarily, he equates art to experience. Consequently, to understand his ideas regarding art, one must begin with his ideas regarding experience. Much of Dewey’s writing is devoted to the ontology of experience. A snapshot of Dewey’s ontology of experience is “the continuous process of interaction whereby a person acts upon the environment and is acted upon (Dewey, 1934, p.104).” Environment in this context includes the emotional, imaginative, as well as the physical space in which we live. In essence, experience is transactional whereby the basis of experience and the value that we derive is engendered from the engagement of our senses. Dewey illustrates the holistic, transaction of experience in his writing: “In an experience, things and events belonging to the world, physical and social, are transformed through the human context they enter, while the live creature is changed and developed through its intercourse with things previously external to it” (Dewey, 1981c, p.251 as cited by Clandinin, 2007). This ontology of experience has ample implications for the epistemology of experience. Placing the subject in the midst of their environment as an active agent for constructing meaning informs the methods of inquiry for understanding phenomena.

Fundamentally, this translates to pedagogy as it frames arts-based learning as an experience in which the learner is interacting with the environment be it emotional, imaginative and physical. In this way the learner

is contributing to the environment, making each arts-based experience unique. This Deweyan view on art as experience grants the learner agency. According to this view, the learner is active in the learning process and contributes just as much to the experience as the experience contributes to the learner. This suggests a framework for arts-based education which is malleable and accepting of individuality.

Dewey identifies different levels or types of experience, with ordinary or real life experience as the predecessor to specialized experiences such as interactions with the arts (Jackson, 1998). Essentially, advanced and symbolic forms of experience originate from real, lived experiences. According to Dewey, the arts present potential for optimum experience. Dewey does not attribute the meaningful experience had from the arts to the object or performance itself as is common, rather he views meaningful experience as the intimate processes of art work such as an internal struggle within the artist when creating a work or for the viewer: the reflection and contemplation of the themes or emotions stimulated by a work (Jackson, 1998). "There is a difference between the art product (statue, painting or other physical form) and the work of art. The first is physical and potential; the latter is active and experienced" (Dewey, 1934 as cited by Johnson, 2012, p.43) Individuals have different artistic processes and ways of internalizing art but through these actions a true or meaningful experience, in Dewey's sense, takes place.

Dewey's notion of art as experience is consistent with the "new" psychology that was on the forefront of progressive education in his time, additionally appearing in educational discourse today. The "new psychology" was radically different from the "old" which viewed the mind as "a blank slate, passively accepting whatever experience might write on it" (Jackson, 1998, p.169) with the objective of gaining knowledge and maturing intellect. In contrast, the "new" psychology is holistically aware of socio-emotional, physical, and intellectual needs. The "new" psychology fundamentally views people as individuals as well as group members who are impacted by the social and physical interactions in their environment (Jackson, 1998, p. 169). In this

“new” way of looking at ourselves, others, and the world, meaningful experiences are as vital to life as H₂O.

2.1.2 Art for Democracy

As a pragmatist, Dewey’s conceptualization of art and its role in education is purpose driven. Dewey saw the arts as a way to reach equality, freedom, and justice or in a word: democracy. Unfortunately, Dewey’s work on art was written at the end of his life and career. Jackson (1998) postulates that had his work been completed earlier, Dewey’s approach to education as implemented in the Laboratory School in which Dewey founded in 1894 in Chicago, Illinois, would have been fundamentally different in pedagogy.

There would have been an increased emphasis on the qualitative immediacy of experience, on its unity and wholeness, on its emotional underpinnings, on the temporal unfolding of events, on expressive meaning (as contrasted with meaning of a more instrumental sort), on the way perception gradually develops, on the style and manner of undertaking a task, on the care with which things are done (Jackson, 1998, p.181).

Based on his ontology of art as experience which establishes art as a powerful, meaningful mode for experience, it is reasonable to assume that Dewey would have made art a central part of teaching and learning in his practical model of education.

2.2 The role of the arts in cognitive development

The arts are fundamental to the creation of mind. Elliot Eisner’s work in the field of art education connect Deweyan principles to the implementation of the arts in today’s schools. Eisner establishes the arts as a basic and necessary human function. His explanation of the transformation of brain to mind is the premise of the arts’ role in cognitive development (Eisner, 2002). Eisner’s

conceptualization is reflected in Huotilainen et al.'s (2018) explanation of how arts and crafts aid in the development of cognition and mind formation: "Organism environment interaction is the fundamental starting point for cognition, and the mind is constructed through the experiences of the individual in interaction with the material and social environment" (ibid. 2018, pg. 4). Eisner defines brains as "biological resources" and minds as "cultural achievement." This transformation is the primary goal of education. Experience is the basis of this notion for it is through the experiences in one's life that develop one's ability to think. "Education uses experiences as its primary medium" (Dewey, 1934 as cited by Eisner, 2002). With the theoretical lens of art as experience constructed by Dewey and supported by Eisner, we can look for evidence in educational research for the role of the arts in cognitive development.

In this study, cognitive development is viewed as a maturation of mental processes for gaining and applying knowledge. Consistent to the Deweyan lens of art as experience, experiences are the basis of learning and development. Moreover, leading theories from Vygotsky attribute development of thinking to not only experiences but also instruction (Baker, 2013). In art educational research, links have been made from arts integrated instruction to the development of the mind as outlined in the following sections.

2.2.1 Degrees of integration

As instructional design provides a frame for what kinds of learning experiences students will have in school, it is important to first identify the forms of arts-instruction that are present. In a three-year long study of three elementary public schools (grades K-8) in the United States, Bresler (1995) focused on how the arts were integrated into the general curriculum by classroom teachers. As a result of this extensive study, Bresler identified four styles of art integration: subservient, co-equal, affective, and social.

The most prevalent style of art integration that Bresler observed was the subservient. As defined by Bresler, the subservient approach to art integration

simply “services” other subjects. The arts in this case are used to enhance the lesson in a specific subject such as singing the names of the planets in a science lesson. Making up this integration style are low cognitive level tasks. They are considered low as they do not meet objectives of improved “aesthetic awareness, critical reviewing, or specific artistic skills” (Bresler, 1995, p.5). Furthermore, the catalyst for this type of integration is the demand on classroom teachers to teach the entire curriculum (which includes the arts and core subjects) in a limited amount of time.

On the opposite side of the spectrum, identified by Bresler, is the co-equal integration style. It was the least practiced integration style of Bresler’s study. It embodies the previously stated definition from Silverstein and Layne (2010) of true art integration in which objectives in the arts and a certain subject are of equal priority and are met simultaneously. Bresler describes a real life example of this integration style in which an 8th grade classroom teacher integrated music and social studies, “In order to place social events within a historical context, she invited students to engage with musical compositions actively and meaningfully as they represented the trends and values of their time” (Bresler, 1995, p.6).

Co-equal integration provides abundant meaningful and engaging learning opportunities for students. Bresler identified several parts to co-equal integration practice that include eliciting and building on students’ art-specific skills and sensitivities while guiding students to observe, perceive, and construct their own interpretations. Other competencies involved that are transferable to general learning were high-order questioning, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

This form of art integration is effective, primarily because it builds on students’ existing art skills and knowledge. These art specific skills and knowledge should be taught in discipline -based art classes. First, the students must have quality art-specific instruction. Secondly, the general classroom and art teacher must communicate with each other in order for the integrated lessons to be meaningful and beneficial to one another.

As mentioned, coequal integration was the least prominently practiced integration style Bresler observed, which begs the question: why is the most beneficial, effective form of art integration the least practiced? In short, it is the most difficult one to implement. The reasons are due to the way in which schools are structured and teachers are supported, or in this case: not supported. In order to enact this form of integration the classroom, teachers need to have artistic understanding themselves, or work with art education specialists or better yet, both! Bresler's study demonstrates the influence of factors on school structure in implementation of the arts in education.

2.2.2 Cognitive development

Under a research initiative by the Academy of Finland, Huotilainen, Rankanen, Groth, Seitamaa-Hakkarainen, and Mäkelä (2018) explain the physical basis for the effect of the arts on the development of the mind. Research in neuroscience demonstrates that cognition is linked to the motor system. More specifically, creating art stimulates a large area of the cortical surface of the brain (somatosensory, motor, and visual zones). This activation of the brain is especially important for the development of the brain in childhood (Huotilainen et al., 2018). Furthermore, the brain is malleable as it is able to change how it functions and its physical structure from how it is used. An example of how artistic use can change the brain is outlined from a study which demonstrates how learning to play the piano changed the brains of children. After 15 months, the children who played piano had more grey matter in the auditory and motor areas of their brains. The corpus callosum was also enlarged. Playing the piano enhanced the activity of these areas and strengthened neuron connections (Hyde et al., 2009 as cited by Huotilainen et al., 2018). Although observance of the change in the brain from visual arts is not yet conclusive, it is proposed that "the integration of multiple motor, perceptual and cognitive functions (from the visual arts) has a strong potential for cross cognitive transfer" (Huotilainen et al., 2018, p. 7).

Evidence from neurological studies compliment findings from arts educational research in which cross cognitive transfer is shown by students who hold experiences in multiple arts modes (music, visual, dance, and drama) consistently and over a substantial period of time. They demonstrate better abilities in skills that extend to learning in other subject areas and in general perceptions of self.

In a study conducted by the Teachers College Columbia University, over 2000 students in public schools in grades 4 to 8 in the U.S. participated in identifying cognitive, social, and personal skills that learning through and in the arts develop (Burton, Horowitz, & Abeles, 1999). Researchers realized that there was a wide range of arts instruction students have had within the same schools. Therefore, researchers placed students into two groups, high- arts and low- arts. High-arts students received a relatively high amount of in-school arts instruction such as in three arts subjects over the course of three years. Low-arts students received one year or less of instruction in two arts subjects.

A strength of this study is the design of investigating the broad spectrum of art learning in schools, primarily by using a combination of standardized measures and creating new measures to gauge such phenomena as risk-taking, creativity, practices and attitudes of teachers regarding the arts, and how much in-school experience students received with the arts. The ambitious and thorough study design included quantitative and qualitative measures.

In the beginning phase of the study, quantitative measures including the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking (TTCT), were used to assess cognitive factors such as expression of ideas, layered relationships, imagining new possibilities, and considering multiple vantage points (Burton et al., 1999, as cited by Baker, 2013) of students. The high-arts group performed higher on the TTCT compared to low-arts groups, suggesting a clear relationship between arts learning and competencies for academic achievement. In contrast, the low-arts counterparts showed significant inferior competencies in all identified areas. The lack of experiences due to a limited curriculum, “..exert a negative effect on the development of critical cognitive competencies and personal

dispositions” (Burton et al., 1999, p. 59). Students’ abilities are limited, which impedes development in all areas and effects their self-esteem.

The second phase of the study developed qualitative measures through interviews with school administration, art teachers, non-arts teachers, and artists. Researchers observed school life in and outside the classroom. Through these qualitative measures, researchers developed a codebook for the key characteristics listed as those assessed previously by the TTCT, in addition to socio-cultural and personal learning outcomes (Burton et al, 1999 as cited by Baker, 2013). Among the data, the predominant codes in the cognitive indicator category that emerged were: “expression of ideas and feelings and making connections” (Burton et al., as cited by Baker, 2013). Furthermore, in schools determined by researchers as having high arts instruction and integration, the analysis found more codes of expression of ideas and feelings, layered relationships, multiple vantage points, construction and organization of meaning, and focused perception. The results suggest a connection between quality arts implementation in schools and cognitive development.

Although the codes highlighted represent competencies that are key to arts learning, researchers note that they are not exclusive to DBAE but are important for learning across disciplines. For example, “high- arts” students were strong in other competencies that are clearly transferable to other subject areas and social situations such as: expression of ideas, use of imagination, risk taking in learning, cooperation, and willingness to make their learning public.

From their findings, researchers offer implications for education that is conducive to learning in and through the arts. Their implications are summarized into three parts:

1. Curriculum design- Counter to the reality of sporadic instruction of the arts, curriculum should be thoughtfully sequenced including multiple art forms throughout years of schooling. Included in curriculum design should be collaboration among arts teachers, teachers of other disciplines and artists to enhance and deepen DBAE and AI instruction. Also,

curriculum should be malleable and allow for various ways of obtaining and demonstrating knowledge (cognitive domains).

2. DBAE and AI partnership- The arts should be implemented through DBAE and AI simultaneously. Researchers recognize that implementing just one of these forms is not sufficient. Based on the findings, researchers conclude that DBAE and AI are partners in “the development of critical ways of thinking and learning” (Burton et al., 1999, p. 59).
3. Teacher education- Essential to quality arts implementation of DBAE and AI are teachers who demonstrate an open mind, are able to adjust practices, are well informed, and are involved in their own development. The conditions of the school environment (school leadership, curriculum demands, work culture...etc.) should support these traits in teachers.

2.2.3 Evidence from a model- arts integrated school

In the two studies discussed, to draw conclusions about the arts role in cognitive development, the researchers had to first identify the extent to which students were learning in and through the arts. More clear connections between the arts and cognition are found in Baker (2013) in which the level of arts integration is high and serves as a constant in the study. The primary objective of this pilot- study by Baker (2013) aims to identify how learning in an arts-integrated curriculum can aid cognitive development.

The study took place in a North Carolina charter school in which an arts-integrated curriculum is parts of its ethos. The structure and functions of the school embody the outline for implementation from Burton et al (1999) in the previous section. In this school, AI and DBAE are partners in student learning. In the classroom, AI is implemented through project-based, thematic units and DBAE lessons (visual art, drama, music, and dance) are held weekly. Classroom and art teachers collaborate monthly in planned meetings to design arts involved learning units.

Data was derived ethnographically from DBAE and general classrooms. To identify markers for cognitive development, researchers paid attention to the interaction of teacher and student as expressed in verbal dialogue and perceived engagement of students. A literature review of cognitive development informed the analysis of organizing data from field notes into domains. These domains included functions of cognition such as “verbal reasoning, non-verbal reasoning, concept formation, abstraction, quantitative elements, vocabulary development, spatial reasoning and memory” (Baker, 2013, p. 9).

The results of this study highlighted three important factors in arts-based learning. The first factor identified arts-based instructional activities implemented across disciplines in thematic units. The second factor recognized how students expressed their learning through the activities. The third factor acknowledged the cognitive domains active during these learning experiences.

For example, during a thematic unit about student character development through the invention of a super hero, visual arts involved activities such as making comic strips, caricatures and learning about pop art. Students demonstrated their understanding by drawing and constructing. The cognitive domains identified were planning, visual-spatial, verbal reasoning, vocabulary, nonverbal reasoning, and quantitative functions. Through the breakdown of these factors from activity to cognition, the connection of arts-based learning to cognitive development is clearly seen.

2.3 The teacher

Previous literature connects arts integrated learning to cognitive development and reveal factors surrounding instruction that influence the degree to which the arts are integrated. Present in all of the studies mentioned in this literature review is the acknowledgment of the role of the teacher. An underpinning of this research is that teachers are central to overarching values of education and the practical day-to-day pedagogical decisions. Elbaz-Luwisch (2007), explain

how educational research through different methods over time have come to the realization of teachers centrality. They also explain how narrative inquiry aimed at understanding the experiences of teachers emerged. To expound on this aspect, we explore literature which investigates arts learning through teacher perceptions. The following studies are focused on teacher perceptions regarding AI and provide insight from educational contexts of Australia and Canada.

Lemon and Garvis' (2013) study reveals an issue in Australian education in which teachers are expected to teach all of the arts areas in primary education, as is mandated by national curriculum of 2014. Their findings suggest, pre-service teachers lack personal and professional experience with the arts which contributes to low self-efficacy. Lemon and Garvis argue that these factors will result in low-quality implementation of the arts or an avoidance of it all together.

Lemon and Garvis (2013) focus on the pre-service teacher and attribute the potential implementation of arts education by these teachers to their own self-efficacy, which involve their past and current experiences with the arts in their personal and academic lives. This research identifies factors that contribute to teachers' mind sets in arts education at the pre-service level (at the beginning of their career) by quantitative means through a survey as data collection and descriptive statistics for analysis. This study lacks information pertaining to the reality of art education in general classrooms and neglects contextual factors related to the education system and cultural values that effect implementation of art education.

In contrast, Windsor-Liscombe (2016) focus on the perceptions of classroom teachers currently working in the public school system in British Columbia, Canada. In this case study the school in focus has transitioned to an arts-based orientation. Although the school is categorized as an arts integrated institution, teacher perceptions reveal the reality of the quality of arts integration in the school in which teachers lack a theoretical understanding of art as a separate entity (DBAE) and as a partner with other content areas (AI).

Exploring teacher perceptions can help in identifying the kind of support or environmental factors that teachers need in order to implement the arts effectively. For example, in Windsor-Liscombe (2016) it was revealed that “a shared vision of the arts in education” and “teacher autonomy” are essential for teachers to develop their own practices of AI (Windsor-Liscombe, 2016, p.14).

The current research aims to build on research focused on teacher perception in AI while focusing inquiry on perceptions of teachers who have ample teaching experience in Finland. Factors that influence teachers’ pedagogy are included in the inquiry, in an effort to paint a complete picture of teacher perception. In a school setting, as opposed to a university setting in which a pre-service teacher is operating in (as in Lemon & Garvis, 2013), additional factors affect teachers’ ability to implement quality arts education in DBAE and AI forms. Furthermore, the current research is contextually aware and seeks to investigate how contextual factors such as national standards (curriculum guidelines), working environment (collaboration with peers), school leadership, and cultural values influence the degree to which teachers integrate the arts. The research aims of this work are further explained in the research aims chapter.

2.4 Summary

The literature highlighted in this work serves to 1) connect the arts to cognitive development 2) identify factors in the environment that affect arts education 3) recognize the methods in which arts education has been studied. Following, key studies are summarized according to their contributions.

In Bresler (1995), the most effective yet least practiced form of AI is identified. Conclusions explain that demands on teachers have a negative effect on the degree to which the arts are integrated in the classroom. Burton et al (1999), conclude that experiences of learning in and through the arts result in developed competencies in all areas of learning and healthy ideas of self. A general outline for implementation in schools are given. Baker (2013), draws

clear connections in a school-wide arts integrated curriculum from activity to cognitive development. The work of Lemon and Garvis (2013) narrow in on the teachers role and the importance of exploration of teacher perception.

This literature review demonstrates how the function of the arts in education in modern schools is due to a multiple of influencing factors. Educational research focused on the arts recognize these factors and seek to identify the ways in which they may function together for the most conducive environment for arts based teaching and learning. For example, research such as Learning In and Through the Arts (LITA) by Burton et al (1999), recognize the essential role the arts play in development is mainly reliant on the quality of implementation, involving multiple elements of the school. Furthermore, Eisner identifies curriculum and teaching practices as two primary factors that influence the opportunities students have for arts experience. A chief aspect of the research goals in this present study is to investigate conditions of the Finnish educational context that influence teachers' ability to integrate the arts.

How the arts in education have been studied

Furthermore, the studies highlighted in this work demonstrate how art in education has been studied. Bresler (1995) identifies different modes of integration in a mixed methodology consisting of detailed observations, semi-structured interviews with classroom teachers, music specialists, artists in residence and principals. In addition, Bresler (1995) reviewed curricular materials. The Bresler study represents a large -scope investigation into the arts in education. The research design of Burton et al., (1999) also is of a large scope in which 2000 students as well as school leaders, art teachers, non-art teachers, and artists participated in identifying cognitive, social, and personal skills developed from arts learning. The mixed methodology included quantitative measures such as the TTCT. Qualitative measures included interviews with staff and observations in and outside of the classroom. Both Bresler (1995) and Burton et al, (1999) approach the arts in education through mixed methods and are of a large scale. In comparison, Baker's (2013) study is of a smaller scale and

narrower in focus as it investigates a single school. Data was collected via qualitative means through ethnographic field notes. Lemon and Garvis (2013) focus more precisely on a single aspect of arts education: teacher perceptions. Data was collected quantitatively through surveys. Additionally, Windsor-Liscombe (2016) follow a case study format and use data from interviews to construct teacher perceptions. The literature featured in this work demonstrates the variety of methods that have been used to study art education. It is important to note that most of the studies featured in this work take place in North America. Missing from art educational research are investigations into Finnish education. Exploring the Finnish education system according to the role of the arts is uncharted territory.

Previous research in neuroscience and art education establishes the arts as connected to cognitive development through a range of methods. Moreover, previous work has esteemed the role of the arts in education. With these foundations, art educational inquiries move toward specific investigations focusing on practical issues surrounding art education. This current research seeks to add a different perspective by shifting focus to teachers and their perceptions of the role of the arts in Finland.

3 RESEARCH AIMS

This study aims to understand the perceptions of general educators in Finland on the role of the arts in education. In keeping with aims and values of narrative inquiry, research questions have been adapted from previous studies to suit the target experience of the participants and context. The research questions of this study have also been adapted to be less specific regarding art integration since the target participant is not specialized in arts education and may not be as familiar with terminology surrounding it. Additional rationale for general form questioning rather than detail questioning with a constructed nature was to give participants opportunities to express their thoughts, ideas, and experiences openly (as in Jahnukainen, 2015). The present inquiry takes place in Finland with Finnish teachers as the subjects. Research questions were designed to avoid assumptions and illicit responses that resonate with cultural and contextual understanding.

3.1 Research Questions:

1. What are the perceptions of Finnish teachers about the arts in education?

This research aim is two-fold. One purpose is to elicit expressions of personal understanding and ideas of art in general which will be useful for determining each teacher's theoretical view for art. The second purpose is to grasp the participants' opinions on the role the arts should play in education. From here, inquiry will narrow in focus on the models of implementation: AI and DBAE.

2. In what ways do teachers integrate the arts into their teaching and how do they affect student development according to their perception?

The purpose of the question is to elicit narratives of teacher's experiences of the arts in their teaching and understanding the extent to which they integrate the

arts. Furthermore, teachers will be asked about what effects on student development they have observed.

3. How do characteristics of the Finnish education system affect teachers' ability to use the arts in their teaching?

The purpose of the question is to elicit responses from participants that reveal elements in the education system that affect the implementation of art integration. Efficacy regarding AI is explored and potentially linked to influential factors such as school leadership, the national curriculum, collaboration among peers, professional development, and cultural values. Exploring these factors in relation to teachers' capacity to integrate the arts may provide a more complete look into arts education in Finland.

4 METHODOLOGY

As Tracy states, “Qualitative researchers are interested not in prediction and control but in understanding” (ibid. 2013, p.3). This study aims to understand the perception of general educators in Finland on the role of the arts in education. Through a qualitative design, data was obtained through semi-structured interviews with six teachers. Data from each interview was analyzed holistically through a narrative approach.

4.1 Ethical Considerations

Participants were invited to take part in this study via email in which the main topic of the study (to gain insight into the role of the arts in education in Finland) was disclosed. At the time of the interview, participants signed a consent form which described what would be involved in participation (one-time, individual interview lasting approximately 30 minutes) and how the data would be handled. A copy of the consent form was also given to each participant. The interviews were recorded with a camera and a voice recording device. The recordings were then transcribed into text. During the research process, text-files were stored securely, accessible only by myself and my thesis supervisor as outlined in the consent form. Names of participants that appear on this, final document have been changed to protect the participants’ identities. To maintain authenticity and reflect the Finnish context, participants names were replaced with common Finnish names. Additionally, the names of the schools have been replaced with the pseudonyms: School A, School B and School C. In accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) of the EU, audio and visual recordings as well as transcriptions were deleted following the completion of this work.

4.2 Schools

The participants of this study included a total of six, classroom teachers from three different schools in the city of Jyväskylä in Central Finland. Together the schools offer a comprehensive view into Finnish education as they all follow the Finnish national core curriculum, offer compulsory education, and are funded by the government providing free education for students.

Information regarding class size and student population between grades 1 to 6 contribute to contextual understanding of the teaching environments. The three schools differ slightly in regard to class size. School A's classes vary from 20 to 24 students, School B's from 16 to 24 students, and School C's from 15 to 25 students. The class sizes of the three schools do reflect statistics regarding average class sizes in Finland from the OECD (2018) which has consistently been around 19 students among primary grade levels from 2010 to 2017. In addition to class size, the overall student population of the three schools (grades 1 to 6) was gathered for this study. School B is the largest school of the three with a student population of 456 students. School A has a similar student population with 409 students. School C has the smallest student population with 162 students.

4.3 Participants

The target grade range for participating teachers was primary education from grades 1-6. The second requirement for participation in the study was to be currently working as a general, classroom teacher, rather than a specialized subject teacher. Table 1 displays demographic information of each participant.

Participant	School	Teaching Experience (years)	Class Size (students)	Specializations
Emilia	School A	16	24	Religion, Psychology, Sports & Wellbeing
Julia	School A	20	22	Early childhood, ICT, Curriculum Design
Veera	School B	32	22	Music, Hand Crafts
Ida	School B	24	24	Finnish, Drama, Music
Sanna	School B	26	22	English, Special Education, ICT
Timo	School C	20	24	ICT, Physical Education, Research

Participating teachers are indeed general, classroom teachers within the primary grade range from 1-6. Additionally, they each have several years of teaching experience with 16 years as the least and 32 years as the most. The average years of experience is 23 years. Collectively the teachers have 138 years of teaching experience in the Finnish education system. Although, it was not a requirement for participants to have several years of experience, their extensive experience is advantageous for the study.

In addition to being a qualified classroom teacher in Finland, each participant holds multiple specializations. Collectively, the participants hold specializations in 14 different areas, the most common being *Information and Communications Technology* (ICT). As four of the six participants do not hold a specialization related to the arts, it is hoped that this will provide useful insights into AI in the general classroom and produce relevant findings. The class sizes of each participant ranges from 22 to 24 students exceeding the previously mentioned average of 19 students in Finland (OECD, 2018).

The demographic characteristics of the participants and schools fulfill the targets of the study design and provide additional value (ample experience and

mostly non-arts related specializations) for the research aims. Demographic characteristics of participants as well as the schools in which they teach are ideal for inquiry into teacher perception of the arts in general education within Finland.

4.4 Data collection

This study is of qualitative orientation, guided by methods of narrative inquiry. The rationale for a qualitative design was informed by previous studies and potential opportunities for understanding. Tracy identifies characteristics of qualitative research that are particularly appealing for this research: (a) being rich and holistic (b) offering more than a snapshot of a phenomenon, provides understanding of a sustained process (c) focuses on lived experience that is rooted in context (d) interprets participant view points and stories (ibid. 2013, p.5). Working within a qualitative design as opposed to quantitative, presents more opportunities for understanding teachers' experiences and views.

In narrative inquiry, data is obtained through a "collaborative dialogic relationship" between the researcher and subject (Moan, 2006). As a relational element between researcher and subject is important, it is worth noting that I (the researcher) had no prior experiences with the participants prior to the interviews except with one participant. I had previously spent two school days with one of the participants as a classroom observer as part of a university course requirement.

In this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with individual participants (Eisner, 2002; Lodico, Spaulding & Voegtle, 2010; Tracy, 2013). Each interview was conducted in English which is not the mother tongue of the participants. However, this did not appear to present challenges during the interviews. There were only a handful of instances in which a participant had difficulty thinking of an accurate English word for what they were describing. In this case, I asked the participant to use the Finnish word. In the transcribing

phase, with assistance from a Finnish speaker, I translated the word into English. Interviews lasted on average thirty minutes.

The interviews were conducted with the awareness of the social dynamic between interviewer and interviewee. For example, the interviews contained a multicultural element as I (the interviewer) am American and the participants are Finnish. This is worth noting and considering in the coming phases of data analysis. Furthermore, it was my intent as the interviewer to exhibit a neutral attitude and provide a sense of equality during the interviews as these two qualities have been deemed as essential for narrative inquiry especially for teacher studies (Moen, 2006).

Once all interviews were conducted, the audio recordings were used to transcribe interviews into text. In order to construct school profiles, general information was gathered from conversations had, in the summer of 2018, with a member of each school's administration including secretaries and principals. This information contributes to the contextual understanding of each teacher's working environment. Contextual understanding is essential for constructing a holistic view into teachers' experiences and perceptions of the arts in education. Only information about the minimum and maximum class sizes and student population of grades 1 to 6 were included in this study. Additional information was not included about each school for ethical purposes.

4.5 Narrative Data Analysis

The decision to approach the data through narrative analysis is consistent with the theoretical framework of a Deweyan ontology of experience and the research aims. The nature of narrative inquiry is to capture and honor "... lived experience as a source of important knowledge and understanding" (Clandinin, 2007, p.42) which suggests this is a suitable method for enabling teachers to share their relationship with the arts through their experiences.

In addition to providing a theoretical framework for understanding art's role in development, a Deweyan conceptualization of experience, as expressed

in the literature review, has implications for research design. More specifically, a Deweyan ontology of experience is suggested to be foundational to narrative inquiry by Clandinin (2007) and Conle (2000). Two salient features of Dewey's conceptualization embodied by narrative inquiry are: 1) Experience is the fundamental ontological category from which all inquiry- narrative or otherwise- proceeds. Experience marks an inexpressible interaction that decides the meaning of everything. 2) A pragmatic ontology of experience emphasizes continuity. Experiences are not isolated events happening on a timeline in one's life, they are each continuous and affect each other (Clandinin, 2007, p.40).

Using a narrative approach involves a mindset which is divergent of a positivist approach. This mindset is characterized in one way by the awareness of the relationship between the researcher and the researched. In this way the researcher is an active participant in the inquiry, not just an observer. Additionally, a characteristic of a narrative mindset is the inclusion of words and other ways of expression as data, not just numbers. Likewise, a narrative mindset enables inquiry of contextually specific phenomena rather than broad generalizations. Lastly, the narrative mindset is open to unconventional ways of knowing (Clandinin, 2007).

Moen (2006) summarizes three main claims of narrative inquiry which are based on postulations of Vygotsky (1978) and Bakhtin (1986). The first one asserts that people organically form their lived experiences into narratives. Through a Deweyan lens in which experience is the basis for meaning making and learning, this first claim of narrative inquiry establishes narrative as the vehicle for meaning making and learning. The second claim of narrative inquiry presumes that narratives are rooted in context. They are dependent on the "individual's past and present experiences, her or his values, the people the stories are being told to, the addressees, and when and where they are being told" (Moen, 2006, p.60). In this way, the environment (ex. relationship of researcher and subject) of the interview itself is involved in the construction of the narrative. The last claim acknowledges the multiple voices in narratives.

Voice is defined by Erickson (1986 as cited by Moen, 2006) as “The immediate and local meanings of actions, as defined from the actor’s point of view” (ibid. 1986, p.61). However, the definition of voice has been expanded by some scholars to include “external” forces on an individual’s experiences such as cultural beliefs and values.

The subject of this research, teacher perceptions shared as narratives, is viewed as “complex wholes.” In an effort to best understand complex wholes, researchers and intellectuals have developed methods for their analysis, such as treating narratives as units of analysis. Non-narrative approaches to understanding multifaceted subject matter commonly involve the separation and dissection of parts of a whole. Breaking down units of data simplifies the subject matter and provides “bite size pieces” of the whole that is easier to “digest.” The result of this process has harmful implications as it greatly reduces the significance of contextual relationships. Vygotsky advises against this kind of approach. Through his postulations, unit of analysis is understood as a living, whole which when broken apart, dies. However, when kept as a whole, complex processes are active within. Based on Vygotsky ideals, Moen (2006) summarizes why narrative inquiry and treating narratives as a whole, unit of analysis is necessary for understanding the complex whole of teaching, “Narratives are not broken into elements; they are neither reductionistic nor static. Narratives, rather, enable us to study teachers and their teaching in movement, in a process of development, and within the teachers’ social, cultural, and institutional settings” (ibid. 2006, p.59).

4.6 Analysis Steps

Given the richness of data from each interview, it was important in the analysis process to maintain their integrity. Narrative analysis enables each individual interview to be treated as a complete set of data where connections within can be seen and explored. Narrative analysis is a recognized approach in qualitative

research for conserving meaningful links within an individual interview (Maxwell, 2012).

The steps taken during the analysis process follow Tracy's (2013) guide for data analysis in qualitative research. They are listed below in Table 2.

TABLE 2

Steps of Analysis

1. Data Immersion Phase

- a) Listened to audio recordings of interviews
 - b) Transcribed audio recordings into text data
 - c) Made notes of significant, “stand out” moments in data
 - d) Reserved judgement and remained open to multiple meanings
 - e) Discussed data with supervisor and peers
-

2. Primary Cycle Coding

- a) Manually, wrote first-level codes for each interview
 - b) Refined initial codes across all interviews
 - c) Constructed interview summaries
-

3. Secondary Cycle Coding

- a) Used narratives in the interview summaries to deduce second-level codes
 - b) Organized second-level codes according to research questions
 - c) Presented emergent meaning and reinforcing quotes from data in findings
-

In the data immersion phase I became familiar with the content of my data through listening, transcribing, and reading the text through. Additionally, I reflected on it as a whole through note taking of surprising or important moments and discussing the data with peers and supervisor. Being knowledgeable of my data would be essential for later phases of analysis. Consistent with narrative analysis, important codes and later themes of meaning emerged from the data itself.

I began the next phase of analysis: primary-cycle coding by physically circling and highlighting parts of the data and then writing a first-level code in the margin. According to Tracy (2013), first-level codes identify the “what” of data. These codes reflect the actual information of the interview in a simplified form and do not involve interpretation. For example, from participant expressions about art existing in different forms such as from Veera: “You can express your personal feelings and thoughts by art using music, words, dance, paintings, drawings, acting anything not just words.” A first-level code used to abbreviate this expression was “diverse” (DIV). I then made a table of all of the first-level codes that were created. This table, along with revisiting the data enabled me to refine codes. Tracy (2013) suggests a way in which to refine codes through the constant comparative method in which you reassess the definition of codes and modify them. In my case, I saw that some of the first-level codes were very similar and could be combined in a newly labeled code.

Also, included in this phase of analysis is the construction of the interview summaries. This was perhaps the most important part of my analysis process as it transitioned my analysis from first-level to second-level understanding while ensuring that the data wasn’t broken down into digestible pieces but remained whole. Through writing the interview summaries I assembled the first-level codes or summarized what the participant expressed then identified second-level codes. Tracy (2013) explains how second-level codes “serve to explain, theorize, and synthesize the data; they include interpretation and help the researcher identify patterns, rules, or cause–effect progressions” (ibid. 2013, p. 202).

Each interview summary of a participant contains multiple narratives. Some narratives are easier to distinguish than others. The content of the interviews covers a vast array of topics associated with the arts and education. Therefore, narratives differ dramatically. Some narratives may follow a story like format such as a teacher describing an arts-based activity that they have implemented with their students. Other narratives may not follow a story like

format but rather expound on a central topic such as a teacher explaining their ideas about art itself.

Viewing each interview summary as containing multiple narratives from a single participant enabled me to look at each one as a whole, complete piece. By looking at one participant's interview summary as a whole, complete set of data, I was able to see the picture they were painting from their own ideas and experiences. This analysis process allowed for comprehensive insight into relevant issues to my research questions while maintained the voice of each participant.

The interview summaries are organized into three narratives correlating to the three research questions of the study. The last section of each interview summary ends with a conclusion that highlights the most important themes from that particular participant. These concluding sections were particularly useful for seeing a big picture of all of the narratives from one participant.

It is important to note that the interview summaries contain more than just what was said in the interview by the participant. In keeping with a narrative approach to analysis, meaning produced is co-created by the participant and researcher. Therefore, woven through the interview summaries is my understanding of what is said in the interviews. To deduce the participants' perspectives and perceptions about the given topics covered a degree of interpretation is needed.

Next, findings were organized according to the three research questions of the study. Direct quotes from the participants are featured in the findings to reinforce ideas and also, remain true to the character of the data. The following chapter begins the procession of interview summaries containing narratives that inform teacher perceptions of the arts in Finland.

5 EMILIA

Emilia is a primary teacher in Jyväskylä, Finland at School A. This section summarizes an interview conducted with Emilia in October of 2017. Through this summary, narratives emerge that inform the perceptions held by Emilia regarding the research questions of this study. As a teacher with considerable experience and expertise, Emilia shares her perceptions of teaching in and through the arts and how it is nurtured by the Finnish education system.

Narrative of art conceptualization and thoughts on art in education

Emilia's ideas about art are multifaceted touching on the various natures of art on an individual level. She starts to define art as, "something you can express yourself through." She goes on to explain that what you can express are, "your emotions, feelings, thoughts and you may enjoy it or sometimes it may be painful to you because it reminds you of something or you are just handling some difficult feelings or memories or expressions." Emilia makes an interesting point about artistic expression not always being a pleasant experience but a way to deal with difficult emotions or experiences. In this way, art is therapeutic. Also, Emilia describes art in both an active and passive sense, "you somehow express yourself through it or you enjoy doing or seeing or hearing it." Her perspective on art comes from a personal place.

Emilia's openness towards art itself transfers to how she views applications in education. She does think that the arts should have a place in formal education and can be taught in different ways since it is born from the teacher's imagination and creativity, "You can just use your imagination because I think there is not just one way to have it here or teach it." There is an organic and personal quality to how Emilia views teaching with the arts that is initiated by one's own ability to dream, imagine, or question.

Interestingly, Emilia references both AI and DBAE in her response about how the arts should be taught, "try different ways of doing it. Have art lessons or have it together with some other subjects combined or use some kinds of

themes or just whatever you can imagine.” Emilia’s perception of the arts in education transcends disciplinary lines. Accordingly, the arts are only bound by a teacher’s own imagination and creativity. Just as the individual is central to Emilia’s perception of art itself, the teacher and her/his own imagination is central to Emilia’s perception of arts-based teaching.

Narratives or examples of AI in teaching and recognized student response

Emilia reflects on her teaching experiences in relation to arts-based methods. She tells that almost every day she leads her students in some kind of artistic activity. Emilia also shares examples of AI, “when we study Finnish language we write stories and then we draw pictures or do plays according to those stories.” Furthermore, she explains how there are many opportunities for integrating the arts with different subjects including biology, geography, and math. Emilia does not express any difficulty or obstacles for integrating the arts rather the opposite. She exhibits an optimistic attitude toward integration and feels as though it is easy.

Emilia also reflects on how she perceives the effects of art-based activities on student development. She tells of how some students do not inherently enjoy creating art so she works with these students, “to find a way so that they can enjoy studying and doing art as well.” Emilia is aware of her students attitudes and instead of demanding them to participate she involves them and helps them to engage in learning with the arts. Emilia also tells of other students in her class who enjoy artistic activities and actually, “learn better when they can express themselves through art because they don’t just hear or just write but they can see and produce it. It kind of goes through them and they produce it.” Emilia perceives her students as unique and having different learning styles or ways in which they can express their learning most effectively.

Emilia describes the various social interactions students have when engaging in arts-based activities by discussing with one another throughout the creative process. Also, Emilia shares that students not only discuss what they

are doing but why they are doing it a particular way. Students provide feedback to one another throughout the process and even venture into critical thinking by analyzing each other's and his/ her own work. Interestingly, in regards to the social effects of arts-based activities, Emilia does not differentiate students. The pronoun "they" is used throughout her explanation suggesting that all students are involved.

Further adding to the possibilities of the arts in the classroom, Emilia mentions the use of virtual technology and other applications that can be used with art. Emilia finds this practice of combining art and technologies as having far-reaching implications, "I think always when you use art and something else as well it widens kind of their imagination and their perceptions of the world."

Emilia mentioned teacher imagination and creativity as a catalyst for arts-based education in the beginning of her interview. Later she references imagination again but this time in regards to student development. Through Emilia's thoughtful remarks the role of the imagination comes full circle from cause to effect.

Narratives that explore factors of the education system for how they influence arts teaching

When asked directly if she feels free to be creative in her teaching, Emilia responds quickly and decisively with "Yes." The main reason she gives is the lack of regulations and restrictions on her role as a teacher. Emilia explains that although there is structure and guidelines provided by the school curriculum, "I'm kind of free to do whatever I want to." Themes that are covered in her teaching are driven by her students' interest such as sports and international issues. Emilia is able to make student knowledge, experiences and curiosities relevant in her classroom, something that she attributes to the freedom she has as a teacher.

From Emilia's perspective the NCC is encouraging of the arts. She describes the curriculum as being a guide rather than a strict plan of what to do and how to do it. That is why Emilia says, "the teacher has a very big responsibility to decide and do things in his or her own class." Emilia attributes

this level of trust and autonomy to the high quality of the teaching profession in Finland. Teachers are fully invested in their profession and Emilia explains it's necessary since teacher education programs at universities are difficult to get into, "those that come in are very motivated and they really want to be teachers and they want to be good teachers." Emilia also explains that teachers genuinely care about students and want to do everything they can for them. Also, teachers are innovative in the sense, "they want to try different things you know? That's why art is kind of easy to start."

Emilia's high level of autonomy as a teacher is also supported by the school's administration. Emilia shares that the school leadership does encourage teachers to be creative mostly through positive feedback. Emilia perceives collaboration between teachers as important at her school. She describes some informal ways teachers collaborate with one another such as sending emails with attachments and casual, impromptu meetings around school. Emilia talks about working with her colleagues with joy and expresses that they are a good team.

Emilia along with the other teachers at her school, do have opportunities for professional development. However, access can be difficult as approval from the principal is needed and the school needs to pay their wage and a substitute teacher's wage. In regards to professional development, specifically related to the arts, Emilia remarks that she would benefit from more opportunities. She takes it upon herself to learn different ways and ideas like for example when visiting other schools she takes pictures of different projects that integrate the arts.

Next, Emilia expounds on Finnish cultural values and how she perceives their effect on the arts in education and artistic expression. Thoughtfully she suggests that the mindset of education in Finland is one that is open, not driven by competition or quantitative measures. Consequently, this mindset influences artistic expression in the students' freedom to express without judgment. Emilia talks about there being an absence of pressure to do something perfectly. Ultimately, the more free students are to express themselves the more honest

their expressions are and representative of each student's learning path. This appears to be highly meaningful and useful to Emilia as a teacher for understanding student thinking on a far deeper level, "it tells me how do you see the things that you are expressing."

Summary

Emilia perceives the arts themselves, the teaching of and integration of the arts, and the effects on the learner as being multifaceted and organically stimulated by individual imagination and creativity. In addition, Emilia perceives herself as autonomous and therefore free to be creative. Emilia connects her autonomy to factors of the education system such as trust in the teaching profession due in part to high quality and competitive teacher training programs. An overall sense of freedom is highlighted in relation to herself as a teacher and in the values of the education system that ultimately affect student learning experiences.

6 JULIA

The following is a summary of an interview that took place on September of 2017 with Julia, a primary school, classroom teacher at School A in Jyväskylä, Finland. Through this summary, narratives emerge that inform the perceptions held by Julia regarding the research questions of this study.

Narrative of art conceptualization and thoughts on art in education

Julia's conceptualization of art is told through an educational expert perspective. Accordingly, Julia's explains how art is connected to learning and development, "I think it's a very important part of learning and also the new curriculum. We take one child who can't speak, who is very shy, but with some artistic ways she or he can make himself more wide." Julia's explanation is loaded with implications for the arts in education including: inclusive education, curriculum design in Finland and student development.

Julia supports DBAE and AI applications of the arts, "It must be its own place as a subject but also a method." Next, she points out a problem in the time allocation of DBAE instruction, "Two years ago at this school we had two hours per week (of fine arts instruction) but nowadays only one hour a week and that's not quite so good." Even though she is dissatisfied by this reality, Julia finds a silver lining through AI, "but I think we make so much with our hands and I integrate so much. We learn artistic ways during the week so I think in this way it's quite good." Although Julia points out one challenge to arts education in instructional time, her overall attitude toward the arts is positive.

Narratives or examples of AI in teaching and recognized student response

"Everyday integration is happening if we think about it. Art is everywhere" Here Julia provides a glimpse into how she thinks about art. The omniscience and unbound perception of art is interesting and takes on a different tone than in her first explanation of art as embedded in a more professional discourse.

Next, Julia provides real life examples of how she integrates the arts with other subjects that range from simple to more complex tasks. To integrate art and science Julia leads her students in a series of activities that involve students choosing a tree in the playground to take pictures of with iPads. They take their first picture in the autumn and another of the same tree in the winter. Also, during these excursions, the students take pictures of other things they see that are interesting to them. Julia called it an “art walk.” Back in the classroom, students observe each other’s pictures and give positive feedback. As Julia explains, “I think positive feedback in the same age group is very important. So art is also the way to learn these social skills for example positive feedback.”

Upon reflecting on the effects of learning activities involving the arts, Julia highlights the importance of differentiating tasks for learners. Because some of her students may enjoy more technical, problem solving tasks and then others more open and expressive tasks, it’s important that projects be flexible and enabling for students to make decisions throughout the process, “Every student has to have the ‘I can make it feeling.’ If I made it so that every time the pupils all made the same kind of drawing or some kind of craft, I think it’s not good that way. Pupils must also make a choice.” Julia refers to ideas of student-centered pedagogy. To Julia art-based learning can be and should be implemented in a way that leaves room for differentiation and for students to make creative decisions. Julia talks about this kind of approach as building of a student’s sense of confidence that gives them the “I can make it feeling.” Julia’s perspectives on best practices of AI demonstrate that she is knowledgeable and experienced with it.

Narratives that explore factors of the education system for how they influence arts teaching

Evident in Julia’s reflections is value for the arts in education. She has not expressed any difficulty in teaching the arts and/or integrating the arts with other subjects. Julia feels free to be creative which she perceives as connected to

autonomy of the teaching profession, “because we have pedagogical freedom. We have it. We can do in our own ways.”

Julia alludes to elements of the Finnish education system that support this pedagogical freedom, “Some decades ago we had this checking persons who came to check how we teach here but not anymore. We have really good teacher studies. They trust that we can do it. It’s very good.” The key word here is “trust.” Julia asserts that the basis of that trust is quality teacher education.

Julia is highly familiar with the national core curriculum as she has been involved in its development for the past five years. In the very beginning of the interview, after I explained the research aims of the study, Julia enthusiastically began talking about the new curriculum and how it’s main tenet is creativity, “I think in the new curriculum, to develop children’s creative skills is the most important thing. How do we do it? It’s not only the crafts and art itself but I think a more pupil-centered pedagogy is the main thing in how we develop creative persons.”

Julia expands on the student-centered orientation of the curriculum, “I think that in Finland the good thing about the new curriculum is that we must develop pupil-centered skills and we must think about their own pedagogical ways, how we make children to think themselves.” Julia asserts that a key element of the national core curriculum is being student-centered with the aim of nurturing independent thinking.

According to Julia, the NCC, is encouraging of teacher creativity due to being more open and less specific about artistic techniques. Julia perceives this orientation to be more nurturing of teachers to be creative.

Shifting focus from the curriculum to the school’s administration, Julia shares that she is still new to School A and is still learning about how things are done so she does not say affirmatively that the school’s leadership is supportive. However, she assumes that they are supportive since she has not heard of or experienced anything otherwise, “because if it was not then I would know. We have this pedagogical freedom so.”

Julia is more conclusive in her responses about collaboration with other teacher, “Yes, of course, and it’s important.” Julia points out that collaboration is also encouraged by the national core curriculum. In groups, Julia meets with other teachers each week to plan and discuss about learning including the arts.

When asked if she has opportunities for professional development Julia responded very positively, “Yes. Yes. All the time.” Julia goes on to say that professional development is intrinsically motivated as it is solely up to her to take part in additional training. The school environment at School A, with teachers who are proactive and eager to improve their teaching, combined with guidelines in the curriculum provide additional motivation for engaging in professional development.

Overall, Julia believes that Finnish cultural values support creativity. Julia explains by highlighting the cultural value of gender equality. “I am very happy that as a woman I have been growing up in this kind of country.” While Julia acknowledges that equality has not been completely achieved she believes in Finland, society is actively working towards it. Julia also believes, “This school with our children and new curriculum is doing this way and we are going in a better way.” Fundamental equality is seen by Julia as important for creativity as it yields freedom.

Summary

Julia’s ideas of the arts in education, experiences of integrating the arts and her background in curriculum planning inform her perceptions on issues relevant to the research question of this study. Ultimately Julia perceives her own position as a teacher to be entrusted with pedagogical freedom. Julia discussed many elements in the education system that inform and influence her teaching but none more than the national core curriculum. Student-centered pedagogy is identified by Julia as foundational to the curriculum and it is also a theme that runs throughout Julia’s narratives. Present in this interview with Julia is a sense of national representation in which Julia frames her thoughts in such a way that presents the Finnish curriculum and ideals to a non-Finnish person.

7 VEERA

Veera is a primary school, classroom teacher at School B. The following summary is based on an interview conducted with Veera on November of 2017. It is worth noting that in Veera's classroom is a large piano. Other instruments are located around the room such as a xylophone and an electric guitar.

Narrative of art conceptualization and thoughts on art in education

"You can express your personal feelings and thoughts by art using music, words, dance, paintings, drawings, acting anything not just words." Not only does Veera present art as an avenue for expression, she acknowledges diverse forms and mediums. Veera's perception of art is wide. Even though Veera's thinking on art is centered on personal expression it is not solely concerned with the individual as she explains how art is important in contributing to society, " You can express what you think about the world."

Veera does think the arts should be taught in schools and explains how the arts are distinguished in the national curriculum as subjects such as: music, art and handicraft. She hints at art integration in the curriculum with an example, "in Finnish lessons we read books, write, act and have drama." When asked further about how the arts should be taught, Veera tells that the arts should be taught in DBAE and AI ways, "I think you need special classes just for music but of course we are free to use it in every lesson."

Veera has a positive attitude towards AI and deems it should be used as much as possible on two conditions, "if you (the teacher) really want to and if it affects your students." It's important to note that although Veera maintains a positive attitude toward AI she does not believe that teachers should be made to implement it, rather she believes teachers should have the right to decide what is best.

Narratives or examples of AI in teaching and recognized student response

Veera has experience in DBAE in music education and in AI in classroom teaching. Veera reiterates the freedom teachers have in their teaching especially in regards to integrating the arts, “now in school, of course, we can do everything.. whatever we want to.”

Veera reflects on her own teaching and shares that she integrates the arts into her lessons on a regular basis. Among the different forms of art, Veera integrates using music the most and then with literature. Briefly, Veera gives a recent example of a project she did with her students, “We were studying the stone age and then we made a handicraft like small models of the houses and paintings of stone age.”

When asked about how the arts affect the students, Veera primarily talks about aspects of social development. Firstly, Veera shares that all of her students find great pleasure in music specifically, and are intrinsically motivated to practice to develop their skills. “They ask me, ‘Can I stay during the break in the classroom to play piano?’” Secondly, Veera explains how they acquire self-confidence and become more outgoing from playing music together, “hey really have to concentrate and listen to each other because they have to be together. They can see as they develop in their skills. It’s a good feeling and they get self-confidence. They are more outgoing.” Lastly, Veera tells of how the students’ experiences in learning music transfers to outside of the classroom and vice versa, “Sometimes one will discover something from practicing at home, like how the base goes in a song, and then comes to the classroom and teaches the others how to do it. The others want to copy his ideas. If one is creative it spreads in a classroom.”

Narratives that explore factors of the education system for how they influence arts teaching

Regarding the national curriculum, Veera expresses concerns about the implementation for developing artistic skills. While she thinks the basic ideas of the curriculum are good, she shares that in practice they leave her and other teachers confused, “For example, in handicrafts we have now this idea that

children have to be creative and we shouldn't teach techniques as much as we used to. They have to find their own techniques but what if they don't find?" Veera goes on to suggest a more guided approach to encourage student creativity, "I think we get more done when we have a good teacher who can teach skills and then little by little you can give them more freedom to create something." According to Veera, it is the intention of the curriculum to encourage more creativity however as she points out in practice having less structure regarding artistic skills may be problematic.

Throughout Veera's responses notions of autonomy are prevalent. "we have a lot of freedom in our work." Veera attributes the freedom that she has to the trust that the school leadership bestows. She explains that one way this trust is evident is in the absence of inspectors for evaluating teachers. Veera expresses great respect for the principal at School B, "We have a very smart, clever, and human headmaster who just tries to confirm that we have the possibility to work in peace. He really trusts. He has the same education that we have. He is one of us. He really knows what this job is about." From Veera's perspective, much is learned about the working culture at School B. The principal is perceived to be a partner in the teacher work and not just an overseer.

In regards to collaborating with other teachers at her school, Veera talks enthusiastically about how she is part of a team of teachers. They collaborate on lessons and special projects such as a program to celebrate Finland's 100 years of independence. They also use their skills and specializations to help each other. Since Veera is skilled in music she will help other teachers in that way. Other teachers who are more skilled in areas that Veers is not confident in such as sports will help her in that area.

When asked specifically about professional development opportunities, Veera shares that in her opinion they are lacking. According to Veera, professional development is motivated by the teachers themselves and their personal interest. She suggest that there should be more long term development instead of a few hours after school when teachers are exhausted.

Veera gives a historical perspective to understanding the trust and cultural value of education in Finland. She explains that especially after WWII, Finland was the second poorest country in Europe and education was the way forward, “so I think education was the only way to reach something and it was appreciated. So I think we understood and still understand the meaning of it. Most people understand.”

Summary

Veera demonstrates a strong, positive view of the arts in education. Her ideas about art itself are told through the perspective of the individual but extend to the outside world. Evident in her ideas and also classroom examples, is a wide perception of the arts as inclusive of various modes of expression. Veera provides valuable insight as she has experience in DBAE through music and handicraft education and AI in her classroom activities. While she highlights positive aspects of the education system for arts teaching she also remarks on challenges such as lack of professional development and ambiguous curriculum guidelines.

8 IDA

The following narrative is based on an interview conducted with Ida in November of 2017. Ida is primary school, classroom teacher who also teaches music classes for two other classes at School B. It is worth noting that Ida has taught at several schools in Finland in different regions of the country. Her insights come from her diverse experiences and are especially valuable for understanding education in Finland. In fact, when sharing about her previous teaching experiences, Ida said, "People are different (in different regions in Finland) but I think that school (in Finland) is the same wherever you are." Ida's reflections are also pertinent to the research questions of this study as she teaches general and music education.

Narrative of art conceptualization and thoughts on art in education

Ida begins by describing art in an deeply individual and active sense, "Art is something that you can do from your own soul and body." She also remarks on how art contains rules and involves skills that need to be developed while asserting that people may differ in their development. For example, it may be better for some people to improvise first and then learn the skill while for others it is better to learn the skill first. Following, Ida mentions that art is something that can be enjoyed but not necessarily as it can take on a therapeutic function. "Art is a very good way to rid of every kind of bad feeling." Lastly, Ida touches on the implications of art, specifically music, for her students, "When they really start to do something in music lessons, they forget everything going on around them and they just do and they are absorbed in doing."

Ida believes the art has an important role to play in education but believes that teachers should decide how to use the arts if at all for themselves. If the teacher is a professional or skilled in that area than it is good to integrate as in Ida's case with music. An example of how Ida uses her expertise is in a current project in which her and another class are creating an original opera with the National Opera from Helsinki. Ida believes that what is best for students is for

teachers to use their own expertise and training in their teaching. Accordingly, Ida tells that it would not be beneficial for her students if she were to teach them through sports as it is not her strength. "If the teacher thinks I have to do this then it's not fun for anybody." Another reason Ida gives is that if teachers are made to teach or integrate in an area that is not their interest or specialty than it would negatively affect the teachers' attitude and consequently the students' attitude.

Narratives or examples of AI in teaching and recognized student response

Ida confirms that she uses music frequently. Specifically, Ida estimates that many times a week her students engage in artistic activities. She goes on to share many brief examples of how arts activities help students concentrate better in different subjects, "When we study math and then I see that they can't concentrate anymore, we jump up and sing a song or play and then we continue with math. We have these drama rehearsals also, because they can't concentrate for a very long time." Ida's expressions show that she is attune with her students and is able to adjust the learning experience spontaneously.

"I think music also brings a lot of social skills." Regarding social effects, Ida elaborates on how music connects people and creates a positive group atmosphere, "I think music brings people together and with music they learn to understand each other better and cooperation is better. When we all play it's very important that everyone plays. You're part of a group and it also shows here in the class." Ida's insight suggests that music can significantly aid in building positive peer relationships.

Narratives that explore factors of the education system for how they influence arts teaching

Thus far, Ida has not mentioned any limitations or challenges to implementing the arts in her classroom activities. She explains that her matured identity as a teacher is from many years of experience, "I have been working for a long time already. I know myself and I have the courage to be what I am. I trust myself."

Ida mentions that she is creative in lesson planning and also in the execution, “I plan what to do here during the classes then I see oh this doesn’t work. It’s very easy to change, ‘Hey let’s do this.’ And I think that’s also creative.” Next, Ida alludes to other reasons for her ability to be creative that stem from factors in the school system, “.. when you have the feeling that you are free to make here what you want, you don’t have to be scared of your neighbor or school director, then the feeling is free and you can be creative and feel good.” A sense of security gives Ida the foundation and support to express herself in creativity as a teacher.

Ida shares her thoughts on the Finnish national curriculum which are overwhelmingly positive. She describes it as really flexible and conducive to creativity for teachers and students, “The new curriculum allows the students to really be creative and I love it.”

Regarding the administration at School B, Ida states in a brief yet emphatic manner, “They are very nice people and they really support us.” It is reasonable to infer that the support of the school leadership contributes positively to Ida’s sense of creativity.

Another contributing factor in Ida’s ability to teach in and through the arts is the collaborative culture among her fellow teachers. Already in her previous response, we get the sense that the collaborative culture is positive. Ida confirms that she does work closely with a team of teachers and shares how meaningful it is, “It’s very lovely. We can support each other and we can gain strength from each other. It’s really nice. I have fabulous colleagues here.”

On the topic of professional development, Ida expresses a high degree of intrinsic motivation, “I want to get better and I want to learn different kind of things, ways to think, and ways to see. It’s very important to me.” Although she is highly motivated, Ida shares that there are not many opportunities in Jyväskylä for professional development compared to other areas in Finland she has worked.

Ida deems cultural values as important to education and life in general. “I think they are important because you have to understand where you come from

and what you are before you can do something.” The part, “what you are,” is particularly interesting as it implies cultural identity. According to Ida, the arts and particularly music aid in this development. One way, Ida mentions, is through folk songs. A stereotype that Ida identifies of Finnish people is that they are very quiet because of the dark, winter. Ida dislikes this characterization because she holds a contrasting view in which Finns are optimistic and warm. This disparity motivates her and gives purpose to her role as a teacher. “That is why I want to work with the music and make it joyful and make people happy and have good feelings.”

Summary

Ida’s perceives art as personal, active in nature, and having a therapeutic function. Ida maintains a strong opinion that the arts should be taught in schools and recognizes benefits for her own students. Interestingly, she asserts that decisions to integrate the arts should be determined by the teacher’s own interest and expertise. Present throughout her responses are expressions of creativity and freedom in her role as a teacher. Ida is confident in her identity as a teacher and attributes her ability to be creative to factors in her environment like school leadership, collaborative culture, and curriculum.

9 SANNA

The following narratives are based on an interview conducted with Sanna in November of 2017. Sanna is a primary school, classroom teacher at School B. It is worth noting that Sanna is not specialized in the arts. Furthermore, Sanna does not have a strong personal interest in the arts.

Narrative of art conceptualization and thoughts on art in education

Sanna's ideas about art are broad and inclusive. In her definition, she asserts that art is not limited in any way, "I think it can be anything. Anything you see in your head or something you can actually see so very many things." Interestingly, Sanna also makes the point of art not only being active, as in the creation, but it extends to other things as well, "not just your drawing or making with your hands it can be something else as well." Sanna does not identify other possible ways of art but rather keeps it open. Although Sanna does not possess a specialty in the arts nor has a strong personal interest in art she does think that they play an important role in schooling.

When asked how the arts should be implemented, Sanna's initial reaction is one of uncertainty. However, her thoughts quickly become decisive as she recalls how art is used in her lessons, "Now we are talking about farm animals in science lessons and we are making farm animals as our art lessons so we can mix them." Sanna does not pick either DBAE or AI as the single best way to implement the arts, rather she explains that both are important. "There are some things we like to teach in art lessons (DBAE) that are not in any other lessons, in any other subjects but pretty much we can mix them if we want to (AI)." Here, Sanna touches on the aspect of having freedom and autonomy to integrate the arts as she sees fit. She also expresses that it is easy for her to do so but may be challenging for other teachers if their students have a different art teacher. The last thing Sanna mentions in regards to the different ways of implementing the arts, is that the time allotted for DBAE is very low and has

decreased dramatically from the following year, “only one hour a week. I think it is a very very little amount.”

Narratives or examples of AI in teaching and recognized student response

Sanna reflects on real experiences in which her students were engaged in art-based activities and the affect she noticed on her students. With enthusiasm, she tells that her students really enjoy arts activities especially when it is integrated well with other subjects. “They love it. I think they even love it more when it’s something we have talked about in other subjects.”

Sanna goes on to explain how her students eagerly engage with one another when involved in an arts based activity and naturally inquire about each other’s work: “They want to talk about their works with each other. ‘Have a look.’ ‘I’ve done this.’ ‘How is your work?’ ‘Please, let me see.’ ‘It’s great.’ ‘It’s lovely.’ ‘How can you draw so well?’” In addition, Sanna shares that her students like to work in groups.

Sanna imparts that the enjoyment the students have transfers into cognitive benefits and ultimately better learning. This is demonstrated in another example of AI with Sanna’s students, “And they actually like it when they can read chapters with each other. When they are making a play, they like it too. And they can take some clothes, sun glasses, or pearls and dress up and then read the boring chapter. It’s much more fun when they can be the characters.”

Narratives that explore factors of the education system for how they influence arts teaching

Thus far, Sanna has demonstrated a high esteem for the arts and its role in education even though she does is not specialized nor possess a personal interest in the arts. When asked if she feels as though she can be creative in her teaching, Sanna responds with upmost certainty, “Yes. Yes. If I want to. Yes I can.” Sanna expressions reflect a sense of autonomy. Initially, Sanna attributes this autonomy to lack of restrictions and control of the education system.

“Actually there is nothing I couldn’t do here. I can do anything I want to. There is nobody saying to me that no you can’t do this or that.”

The Finnish national core curriculum does not have much influence on how Sanna perceives her ability to teach with the arts. According to Sanna it is she that must decide to be creative. It is not the curriculum that inspires creativity. She shares that she does not follow the curriculum so tightly but rather uses her expertise and experiences to choose what standards to follow. She also recognizes similarities between the current curriculum to former versions. It is her choices which are informed by years of teaching experience that guide her pedagogical decisions.

In contrast, a connection can be made from Sanna’s ability to integrate the arts to the school leadership. Sanna acknowledges the support and trust bestowed on her and fellow teachers from the principal, “We can do anything we want to. He just doesn’t have the money to let us do anything. He is really nice and supportive.”

Among Sanna and her colleagues there is an open, collaborative culture. Sanna is in close collaboration with other teachers at her school, especially those that teach the same grade level. Currently, she is working with another teacher on designing lessons and projects.

Sanna shares that participating in professional development is up to her. Because she is motivated to develop as a teacher she puts effort into being more creative and not just doing the same thing year after year. In theory, Sanna can participate in any kind of professional development she wants. However, in reality there are limitations such as time (cannot happen during the school day) and money (teachers have to pay). Sanna acknowledges this is a problem for she believes professional development should be better integrated in the teaching profession.

Sanna reveals cultural values of Finland that naturally influence her teaching. Nature including lakes, snow and animals are important to culture and society in Finland in a physical and symbolic sense. Additionally, Sanna explains how peace is one of the most important and valued characteristics of

life in Finland, “We can live in peace because we have so much war all over the world but (in Finland) we can live in peace.” Cultural values play a big role in the education system and in Sanna’s own identity as a teacher, “ I think it’s part of us. I don’t have to think about them they come naturally to my teaching.”

Summary

Sanna’s narrative suggest that a positive value for the arts in education and the act of integrating the arts is not dependent on being specifically trained in the arts or having a personal interest. In her narratives, Sanna shares how students find great enjoyment in activities that involve the arts. She also suggest that students are more engaged in the activity when it connects with other subjects. Essential to Sanna’s teaching is the notion of getting the students to experience what they are learning. Sanna sees herself as having autonomy and attributes this to the school leadership who gives teachers pedagogical freedom. Other positive factors include collaboration with colleagues and cultural values.

10 TIMO

Timo is a primary school, classroom teacher at School C. An interview was conducted with Timo in November of 2017. Timo's classroom is unconventional containing physical training equipment such as a pull up bar that is bolted to the ceiling and gymnastics rings that are hanging from the ceiling at the back of the room. However, student desks are arranged conventionally in rows, facing the board at the front of the room. Timo is involved in research projects with universities in Finland and abroad. It is important to note that Timo is not specialized in the arts.

Narrative of art conceptualization and thoughts on art in education

Timo demonstrates an intellectual view on art. Thoughtfully, Timo defines art in simple terms which he then expands on resulting in a more comprehensive view. "Art for me is anything that can be pleasure for your eyes. Art is even not pleasure but that's pretty much a personal question. You know what the message is of this piece of art that's personal then." Timo asserts that art is something that is enjoyed but not necessarily. Also, he identifies the interpretive nature of art therefore making art a personal experience in which meaning is ambiguous.

While defining art, Timo links it to education as he references his own work. Timo shares that he is involved in the work of STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) and is currently doing geometry-arts integrated activities with his students.

Timo is confident that the arts can be integrated with other subjects, "I see absolutely no obstacles in integrating. I have been working with STEAM and all is somehow connected to art." Timo goes further to explain how the arts can easily be integrated with other subjects especially with mathematics, "Very often like in math there are so many topics that would be easily integrated with the arts and using art as a tool to understand and visualize things. So, I see it everywhere basically and I would even say it comes automatically."

Talking about integrating subjects brings up the topic of interdisciplinary education. Timo comments on current trends in education such as interdisciplinary and phenomenal based learning by saying they are impossible if the students cannot see the relationship between them. Timo thinks art, music, and physical education can provide connections from different subject areas. He believes these are the easiest and natural ways of making connections.

Timo identifies two problems related to the arts in education. The first one is the lack of time allotted to DBAE instruction. Timo's students have one hour of DBAE instruction per week. The second problem is a tendency of art activities that are poorly designed. "There are too many expectations so kids think somebody's expecting me to do something so they make copies or clone something and that is what I want to tear apart and instead take risks, make mistakes and then to make some new innovations."

Narratives or examples of AI in teaching and recognized student response

From his teaching experience and work in educational research, Timo affirms that art based activities support development. Timo has done research into this topic with students from other countries in which he has partnered with a leader of STEAM. They have found that when students are involved in high level activities such as in art class or home economics in which they are physically engaged and possess agency, learning is more effective. Timo references the Deweyan notion of, "learning by doing."

Timo also notes social development in students in and outside of the classroom. Interestingly, learning from hands on activities such as through the arts has transferred into positive social engagement outside of the classroom. Parents of students have reported that students have become more responsible and helpful at home such as taking the garbage out and walking the dog without being told to do so.

In the classroom, the most significant development Timo has noticed in students is the increase in concentration. This is significant and beneficial as Timo explains it as having a domino of effects, "When you concentrate better

there is also motivation. And when you are motivated and you can concentrate better I see the learning is much more effective.” Timo also explains that when students can concentrate and are motivated negative behaviors are nonexistent.

Narratives that explore factors of the education system for how they influence arts teaching

Throughout his responses, Timo shares how he integrates the arts in his teaching. It comes as no surprise that he feels like he can be creative in his teaching. Timo is also aware that his ability to be creative is influenced by factors in his school and education system, “I cannot take it for granted that I could not be as creative as I am if I would be working in some other school.” Timo goes on to attribute his creative freedom to the school leadership, “They trust me. I have 200% autonomy. I can do anything I want. So I have this support and trust so I can try.” Timo is grateful that the school leadership is also supportive of him doing research and participating in opportunities outside of the classroom, “So having these great, great opportunities has even increased my openness and enthusiasm towards being creative.”

Regarding the national curriculum, Timo shares that it does not have much influence on his teaching practices even though he was involved in writing it. He shares that he has maintained this perspective with former versions of the curriculum. Timo asserts that curriculum doesn’t necessarily produce meaningful learning experiences. Rather the key is student motivation.

Collaboration with other teachers is built into the weekly schedule at Timo’s school. He shares that at least twice a week they have meetings together. They work closely together for multidisciplinary learning experiences such as last week when all teachers planned activities according to the theme of Finland 100 years.

Timo not only is active in different research projects to develop his own pedagogy, he sees these opportunities as ways that the classroom can inform universities and the field of education. “I couldn’t help the researchers, professors, the top scientists in some areas if I wouldn’t be working in the field

and actually testing my ideas, testing someone else's ideas and seeing what's happening."

Interestingly, Timo does not consider cultural elements of Finland to be influential in his ability to be creative but rather a high degree of autonomy. "I know that I have a lot of colleagues in the USA and in many countries in Europe and the problem is that they do not have autonomy. They can't use their personality and their talents put into use because they have too much bureaucracy, filling administration work and all of that and it's just comparing and scoring." A cultural value associated with Finland is equality and it is an essential part of the education system. Timo offers a critique on this cultural value by suggesting that instead of using the word, "equal" since equal means to have the same expectations for everyone, "what is fair" should be used instead. Knowing what is fair for individual students requires a deeper understanding of each learner. Timo asserts that as a teacher you can apply creative tools such as teaching through the arts to teach students in a fair way.

Summary

Timo's narratives encompass many interesting points that are valuable to the aims of this work. Timo presents a view on art that is innately individualistic, giving space for differing interpretations. Timo provides many examples of how he integrates the arts in his teaching. He sees involving the arts not only as a valuable tool but also a natural way of engaging students and connecting different disciplines. Both cognitive and social benefits are recognized by Timo of his students. Timo expresses having absolute autonomy and therefore the freedom to be creative which he attributes to supportive and trusting school leaders.

11 FINDINGS

The interview summaries presented in the previous chapters contain narratives of the teachers' perspectives and experiences teaching in and through the arts. To best answer the research questions of this work, it is necessary to consider the narratives side by side and recognize connections or anomalies among them. In the following chapters, findings from this wider view of narrative analysis is presented. Findings are organized according to the research questions that they answer.

Pertaining to the first research question: participants perceive art as innately individualistic and inclusive. A high esteem for the arts is applied to education as participants commonly expressed that the arts should be taught in schools as a separate discipline and integrated with others. Related to the second research question: teachers perceive the arts as beneficial to student development in social and cognitive spheres such as improved self-esteem and increased concentration. Lastly, findings related to the third research question focus on the strong expressions of autonomy and how teachers perceive the interaction of elements of the education system and the degree to which they are creative in their teaching.

11.1 Teacher perceptions of the arts and its role in education

Evident in all narratives is a high esteem for the arts. Each participant provided thoughtful definitions of art that reveal much about their personal attitudes towards it. When comparing the responses of all participants relating to views on art two prevailing themes emerged of art as individualistic and inclusive. In addition, undeniable is the consensus among participants that art plays an important role in education and should be implemented in both forms: DBAE and AI, simultaneously.

11.1.1 Art as individualistic and inclusive

Across the narratives, participants described art as innately individual as a way of expressing oneself, making personal emotions and ideas public. Furthermore, art at times is more effective than words at conveying personal feelings. Participants commonly described art as both pleasurable and non-pleasurable. Additionally, they defined art as therapeutic in helping someone deal with difficult emotions and experiences. Furthermore, meaning derived from art can be ambiguous and based on personal interpretation.

Maintaining the individual nature of art, participants commonly perceive art as something you can experience in an active and passive sense. Participants predominantly referenced active ways of experiencing the arts such as creating a visual work (painting, drawing..etc.) and creating music. Participants also mentioned passive ways of experiencing the arts such as viewing works of art and listening to music. Another interesting aspect of individualism expressed through the narratives is how the individual views him or herself in the larger context of society and the world.

Consistent among the narratives was an open, inclusive perception of the arts. Accordingly, art is boundless and possibilities are limitless. A reflection of Goldblatt's (2006) summary of Dewey's conceptualization of art as mentioned previously in the literature review, is found among the case studies: the idea of both the imagination and lived experience being a catalyst for art. Also, participants reference many different mediums and forms of art in their descriptions such as painting, drawing, sculpture, music, drama, and literature.

You can express your personal feelings and thoughts by art using music, words, dance, paintings, drawings, acting... anything not just words. (Veera)

Art is something that you can do from your own soul and body. (Ida)

11.1.2 DBAE and AI implementation

Consistent among all of the narratives, regardless of the teachers' specializations and personal interest in the arts, was the perspective that art has an important role to play in education. The teachers use of language such as: absolutely, of course...etc., demonstrate their conviction. Teachers also perceive the arts as essential to development and learning with implications for inclusive education.

The teachers were unified in their ideas of how the arts should be taught in schools: in both DBAE and AI forms. Teachers' also identified challenges to both DBAE and AI instruction. Firstly, DBAE suffers from having limited time for instruction (one hour per week). AI was referenced as a way to fill in the gaps of limited time for DBAE. Secondly, there is potential for bad practice in regard to arts learning especially with AI applications as it can be the tendency of teachers and students to strive to meet certain ideals and standards in art instead of being creative and taking risks.

Interestingly, a common assertion among teachers was that the integration of art should come from the teacher's will. Teachers should have full autonomy to decide what pedagogical methods are best for what is being taught and for student needs. It could be potentially harmful if a teacher integrates the arts when there is no interest or training to support it. Although teachers believe AI is valuable it should not trump teacher agency.

The teachers expressed a positive attitude towards AI. Prevalent were expressions from participants about how easy and natural it is to integrate the arts with other subject areas. Also, art was commonly referenced to as a means of connecting disciplines for interdisciplinary learning.

We take one child who can't speak, who is very shy, but with some artistic ways she or he can make himself more wide. (Julia)

There are some things we like to teach in art lessons that are not in any other lessons, in any other subjects but pretty much we can mix them if we want to. (Sanna)

If the teacher thinks I have to do this then it's not fun for anybody. (Ida)

In conclusion, a high esteem for the arts is present among the narratives which sets the tone for proceeding inquiry. The thoughtful and multifaceted conceptualizations of art reveal personal attitudes towards it which can be interpreted as a theoretical framework on which experiences and perceptions on the arts are built. Furthermore, the arts are conceptualized into two themes: *art as individualistic* and *art as inclusive*. Undeniable is the consensus that art plays an important role in education and should be implemented in both forms: DBAE and AI. Teachers also share their perspectives on immediate and potential challenges to arts teaching including limited time for DBAE instruction, low level tasks no involving risk taking or innovation, and low quality art integration by teachers who do not have interest or the skills to teach with the arts.

11.2 Effect of arts based activities on development

The frequency of integrating the arts among all teachers was consistent. All of the teachers shared that the arts are regularly involved in their classroom activities. Based on their experiences of integrating the arts in their teaching, participants observed on student development. The themes regarding social development were found to be positive peer interaction, self-confidence, and intrinsic motivation.

11.2.1 Social development

Many of the teachers remarked on how students find great enjoyment in activities involving the arts. In the narratives, classroom activities were described and included aspects of the students interacting together. Such interactions included students discussing their choices and reasoning throughout a creative process and exchanging feedback on a finished project. It

was reported by several teachers that these interactions contributed to a positive social atmosphere. Furthermore, creativity is contagious in a classroom. Noted in the narratives were instances of creativity spreading among the students, influencing each student to think outside the box and take risks.

Another theme that emerged through the participants' reflections was the increase of student self-confidence and intrinsic motivation. Teachers remark on students becoming more outgoing through arts-based activities especially when activities have room for differentiation and for students to make decisions about their own work. Consequently, students take ownership of their learning while producing an increased level of self-confidence and intrinsic motivation for future activities. Some participants also noted that combining the arts and another mode of learning such as with ICT further enhances the learning experience and positive outcomes.

I think music brings people together and with music they learn to understand each other better and cooperation is better. When we all play it's very important that everyone plays. You're part of a group and it also shows here in the class. (Ida)

If one is creative it spreads in a classroom. (Veera)

11.2.2 Cognitive development

While increased motivation and confidence affect all areas of development, a theme more specifically related to cognitive development that is prevalent in the teacher narratives is improved concentration. Multiple participants remark on an increase in their students ability to focus in class. Activities involving the arts are perceived to effectively engage students. Also, some teachers shared that they sometimes use arts activities in between other subject concentrated activities like in a math lesson to renew the students concentration.

Moreover, arts-based activities that have a physical component and involve student autonomy produce more meaningful learning experiences. The narratives provide examples of this phenomenon.

When you concentrate better there is also motivation. And when you are motivated and you can concentrate better I see the learning is much more effective. (Timo)

Students learn better when they can express themselves through art because they don't just hear or just write but they can see and produce it. It kind of goes through them and they produce it. (Emilia)

11.3 Teacher autonomy and supportive aspects of the education system

A compelling and significant finding from the narratives is how all six teachers perceive themselves as being autonomous. Absent from the narratives were identified obstacles to creativity. Teachers express in absolute certainty that they have autonomy and complete pedagogical freedom. Autonomy is the leading reason participants gave for why they are able to be creative. Through the narratives, teachers connect autonomy to elements of the education system. The strength of the connections vary between teachers. For example for one teacher the NCC is perceived as having the most influence on their autonomy. In contrast another teacher perceives the trust and support given by school leaders as most influential. In the next two sections, I expand on the dominant theme of autonomy. Also, I will identify teacher perceptions regarding elements of the Finnish education system.

11.3.1 Autonomy

Autonomy is by far the most conspicuous of themes running through all of the narratives. Also, common among the narratives is the concept of trust in relation to autonomy. Teachers express having trust from society and school leadership. Additionally, many teachers attribute this high degree of trust to high quality teacher training programs in Finland. It is difficult to gain acceptance into teacher studies therefore those that are studying to be a teacher are highly motivated and capable. Teachers also reference the lack of regulations and management of teachers as a reason why they have autonomy.

Among the factors discussed in the narratives (curriculum, administration, collaboration, professional development, and cultural values), administration is most frequently given as the reason why teachers are able to have autonomy and therefore be creative in their teaching.

We have pedagogical freedom. We have it. We can do in our own ways.
(Julia)

Yes, we have a lot of freedom in our work, yes. (Veera)

And when you have the feeling that you are free to make here what you want, you don't have to be scared of your neighbor or school director, then the feeling is free and you can be creative and feel good. (Ida)

Actually there is nothing I couldn't do here. I can do anything I want to. There is nobody saying to me that no you can't do this or that. (Sanna)

They trust me. I have 200% autonomy. I can do anything I want. So I have this support and trust so I can try. (Timo)

11.3.2 Influential factors of the education system

Five elements of the education system were discussed in the narratives. The elements in order of their significance are: administration, collaboration, curriculum, cultural values, and professional development.

As mentioned before, school leadership was attributed the most by participants to autonomy. Teachers share that leaders of their schools are encouraging of creativity. One way in which they are encouraging is by providing positive feedback to teachers. In all narratives school administration is described as being supportive. Two participants further describe their principal as being knowledgeable and understanding of the teaching profession because they were trained as teachers themselves.

Collaboration is the next most influential factor. All teachers shared that they regularly collaborate with other teachers. It is an integral part of their teaching position as meetings are built into their weekly schedules. All

participants express a positive attitude towards collaborating with their peers. In the case studies, participants shared examples of multidisciplinary projects they were working on with their peers. The participants describe the atmosphere at their schools as open and supportive. They also regard themselves and the other teachers at the school as being a team. As a team, they use their strengths to help each other.

The Finnish national curriculum lands as the third most influential factor. Although all of the teachers follow the curriculum, half of the participants express that it does directly influence their teaching approaches and the other half express that it has little influence. Those that say it is influential, state that it is encouraging of the arts. Furthermore, one participant says that creativity is a main tenant of the curriculum and serves to promote student-centered pedagogy. Those that say that the curriculum does not have a direct effect on the creativity, regard it as a guide and not a strict plan they must follow. These participants explain that it is their decision as a teacher to choose what parts to follow.

Each participant offered a different perspective regarding links from cultural values to teacher creativity. Perhaps a possible explanation of this is the ambiguous nature or the inquiry itself. Given the different responses, links to teacher autonomy cannot be easily drawn. However, they do help to paint a dynamic view on cultural values surrounding education in Finland.

In conclusion, through examining teachers' narratives on conceptualization of art we get a glimpse into how they value the arts on a personal level. Art as individualistic and inclusive were prevailing themes. The value that the narratives bestow for the arts is applied to education as participants commonly expressed that the arts should be taught in schools in DBAE and AI forms. Furthermore, teachers perceive the arts as beneficial to student development through improved self-esteem and increased concentration. Running throughout the narratives of teacher experiences and views on the various topics explored in the study were strong expressions of autonomy. Elements of the Finnish education system are perceived to be

supportive of teacher autonomy and ultimately their ability to integrate the arts. This study suggests that teachers' perceptions of autonomy and trust in their profession as well as the student centered orientation of pedagogy and as referenced in the NCC provide a conducive environment for AI in Finland.

12 DISCUSSION

The following sections address limitation of the study and then expand on the findings of this study and situate them in the ongoing conversation of arts educational research. The contributions discussed include: 1) the significance of teachers' theoretical view of art 2) the relationship of AI and teacher autonomy 3) a reiteration of effects on student development 4) an expanded view of AI as innately personal and transactional with the teacher at the center.

12.1 Limitations

As explained in the methodology chapter, data collection for this study involved one time interviews with participants. Data collection methods of narrative inquiries vary and range. Specifically, the researcher's role in the data collection can range drastically. My role as a researcher was minimally invasive. Interviews took place at a time that was most convenient for the participants which was usually in the afternoon, after lessons.

After reflecting on findings, more information regarding the school environment would have been useful especially within a narrative analysis. Ethnographic methods of data collection such as school observations inside and outside of the classroom and even participation in lessons with interactions with the students. However, these measures would have not been possible or would have been challenging given the language barrier of Finnish and English. My abilities to understand and speak Finnish are limited. Since lessons are carried out in Finnish, I would have not been able to understand teacher-student dialogue. Even in English lessons, at the primary (1-6th grades) level, explanations and student-teacher dialogue is communicated in Finnish. Therefore, my interactions with students would have been fun yet limited.

Conducting interviews in English with teachers whose native language is Finnish did not prove to be a limitation of this study. All of the teachers were fluent in English and did not express apprehension for communicating in

English. There were only a few instances in which a participant could not recall the accurate English word for what they were expressing. In this case, I asked the participant to use the Finnish word. In the transcribing phase, with assistance from a Finnish speaker, I translated the word into English.

Throughout this research process, knowledge of arts-based teaching and learning as well as arts-based research methods has been illuminating. Although the data obtained from interviews in this study provided ample material for analysis and understanding, one has to wonder if the use of an arts-based method for data collection could have deepened understanding of teacher perception. Current educational research by Moate, Hulse, Jahnke, and Owens (2019) utilizes arts based methods to gain deeper understandings of experiences and to demonstrate how information is internalized and expressed. In their qualitative study, sketchbooks (including visual media and text) of pre-service teachers, created during a course of study, provide data for analyzing how preservice teachers process new knowledge and express their understanding. Additionally, analysis of the sketchbooks reveal ways preservice teachers internalize “input” through reflections and lived experience (Moate et al, 2019). The arts-based method applied through sketchbooks facilitated unbound, individual expression. The data method for this present research of semi-structured interviews compared to an arts-based approach as in Moate et al (2019), is less open to individual expression.

12.2 Teacher theoretical view of art

Conclusions drawn from teacher narratives pertaining to how they view the arts identify a theoretical basis by which teachers apply the arts into their pedagogical actions. Furthermore, their theoretical basis of art affect how they interpret experiences of teaching with the arts. While each teacher defines art in a different way, common themes of individualism and inclusion are present. Additionally, the attitudes of teachers, as they expressed their conceptualization of art, is significant. The teachers’ thoughtful, definitions of art showed gravitas

for the subject matter. The ideas and experiences shared by the participants throughout the narratives were consistent with his/her theoretical understanding. These findings suggest a prerequisite for teaching in and through the arts is a theoretical basis for art. Similarly, it suggests that experiences of teaching in and through the arts affect how a teacher views the arts and shapes their theoretical framework. Teachers can apply sound, art-based pedagogy with a solid theoretical understanding of the arts. While common themes could be drawn from the narratives, each participant expressed their own understanding of art differently. The specific criteria participants included in their definitions of art is not the most important, but rather it is the depth of their expressions including diverse notions and capabilities of art. The narratives of Finnish teachers share this depth of understanding for art which is linked to their teaching practices.

The findings of this research suggest teachers' theoretical view of art can be a starting point for inquiry into arts based teaching practices. Additionally, inquiry should be aimed to uncover how theoretical views of art are formed. This inquiry could fall into the realm of teacher identity in which a narrative approach is well suited (as in Aladin, 2018). In addition, comparing studies of this nature of teachers from different educational contexts (for example, teachers from the United States and teachers from Finland or teachers in rural areas in China and teachers from urban areas in China) may reveal and pinpoint aspects of background (culture, access, experiences..etc.) that shape teachers' theoretical understanding of art and consequently their teaching practices.

12.3 DBAE and AI partnership, teacher autonomy is supreme

The narratives reveal Finnish teachers perceive the implementation of the arts in education in both DBAE and AI forms which is consistent with Deweyan ideals, guidance from Eisner, and research findings (Dewey, 1934; Eisner, 2002; Burton et al, 1999; Baker, 2013). The ideal model for the arts in education

involving a DBAE and AI partnership is reflected in the narratives as they assert that the arts have an essential role in education and should be implemented in DBAE and AI forms. In the findings, challenges to DBAE were expressed in the narratives of Finnish teachers such as limited time designated by the curriculum. Elements structuring DBAE in the Finnish education system are not determined by the teachers. Time allowance and what disciplines are taught is decided at the national level which is explained in a previous chapter on the NCC.

In contrast, narratives of Finnish teachers did not express challenges to AI, with their own professional agency cited as the principal factor. The ability for teachers to integrate the arts into their classrooms was unaffected by challenges faced by DBAE such as time allowance. Teachers have autonomy in lesson design, and as a result there are no structural elements that threaten the implementation of AI. Therefore, the primary source of AI is teacher autonomy which has profound implications for AI implementation, and educational reform in general. When teachers have autonomy, control in how they teach, they implement methods such as AI. Secondly, structural elements of the broader education system do not impede their pedagogical decision making. Teacher autonomy is essential to any effective mode of teaching, as it enables pedagogy conceived through intrinsic motivation, personal creativity and interest. An important lesson to be gained from the narratives is not that Finnish teachers integrate the arts in their teaching, it is that they choose to do so.

In order to be creative, one first needs the freedom to do so. Teachers must apply their creativity to integrate the arts effectively and meaningfully. Narratives of Finnish teachers demonstrate this. Teacher autonomy is built into the Finnish education system in many ways. One avenue is through curriculum design as is described in the previous chapter on the national core curriculum in which teachers are involved in the curriculum reform process, particularly in the local level. Additionally, information on methods and how to teach the content of the curriculum is intentionally absent in the documents.

Teacher autonomy has not previously been a main tenant of arts educational research. This research on teachers in Finland identifies the need for this focus in the future. To promote the status of the arts in education means to promote the teacher. How the Finnish education system prioritizes teacher autonomy in all facets can inform educational progress in other contexts.

12.4 Implications for student learning and development

It is important for the promotion of arts based teaching and learning to reiterate the effects on student learning and development. The ultimate goal of focusing on the teacher's experience and perception is to inform best practices for the betterment of the student. The primary findings of this study contribute to arts educational research by reinforcing the connection of arts based learning to development. Although the goals of this study is not to measure student cognitive activity, teacher narratives provide information regarding the responses of students from arts-integrated activities. What teachers share in this study about student response is consistent with evidence from neuroscience and arts educational research as elements of cross-cognitive transfer are present (Baker, 2013; Burton et al., 1999; Huotilainen et al., 2018; Hyde et al., 2009). Teachers describe different instances of student development in skills that extend to learning in other subject areas and general perceptions of self.

In the narratives, teachers describe examples of arts based activities they have implemented with their students. Teachers also report on how these activities affect the students. Effects that were more social in nature were found to be: positive peer interactions, self-confidence, and intrinsic motivation. The teachers' stories indicate that arts based activities can spark a chain reaction, i.e. creativity spreads among the students, which influences students to think outside the box and take risks. Subsequently, students exhibit outgoing behavior while taking ownership of their learning, especially when the activity provides room for differentiation and for students to make decisions about their own work. The self-confidence and intrinsic motivation produced from this arts

based activity is applied to future endeavors by the students. Consequently, the creative process and development does not end.

12.5 Implications for further research

This study has implications for how AI should be viewed and studied. By looking through a Deweyan lens using tools of narrative inquiry, this study contributes to a thoughtful understanding of AI in which it is a personal, organic process that is initiated and sustained by a teacher's own creativity. This expands the leading definition of AI by Silverstein & Layne in which AI is described as an "approach to teaching" and then continues with a student-centric description, "Students engage in a creative process which connects an art form and another subject area and meets evolving objectives in both" (ibid, 2010, p.10). This definition only tells half of the story. For students to be able to engage in a creative process the teacher has to plan and structure the experience. As this study reveals, AI implementation is conceived from the teacher's own creativity and views of the arts. The way AI has been understood in the past excludes the significance of teacher perceptions of the arts and individual creativity. However, with inquiry like in this study in which the focus is on the teacher, a new understanding of AI can be established.

Teacher narratives of this study reflect the transactional quality of AI in which the response of students and their unique contributions help to shape the learning experience. This resonates with the Deweyan ontology of experience in which experience is an interaction between a subject and environmental (the physical, emotional, social, and imaginative) elements (Dewey, 1934).

Future research should view AI as an organic process stimulated by the teacher's own creativity and as transactional. Research should also maintain teacher centrality as previously identified by Elbaz-Luwisch (2007). Accordingly, the experience of teachers is a complex interaction of identity and environment (school system, leadership, working culture, etc.) which results in

an ongoing construction of meaning that informs pedagogical practice. This is the arena in which further research should take place. Narrative inquiry is well suited to this view of AI.

This study illustrates assertions from Windsor-Liscombe (2016) that were previously mentioned in the literature review in which “a shared vision of the arts in education” and “teacher autonomy” are essential for teachers to develop their own practices of AI. Going forward, research focused on notions of teacher autonomy and teachers’ theoretical framework of the arts may provide valuable contributions to the arts in education. Exploring these topics in other educational contexts may illuminate connections between environmental elements and AI implementation. Potentially, elements in an education system that support or obstruct a teacher’s sense of autonomy and its application of integrating the arts can be identified.

In conclusion, identifying teachers’ theoretical views on art, the relationship of AI and teacher autonomy, a stronger sense of student development, and an expanded understanding of AI as innately personal and transactional with the teacher at the center contributes to the development of arts-based teaching and learning. The findings as informed by teacher narratives suggests the Finnish education system is conducive to arts based teaching and learning. Supplementary research should be done to determine how influential the arts are to the character and outcomes of schools in Finland. As new questions emerge concerning the role of the arts in education inquiry should seek to understand the intricacies of arts teaching and learning through the voices of teachers.

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