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SHAPING POSTSECONDARY DEVELOPMENTAL/MAINSTREAM CURRICULUM  
THROUGH INTUITIVE INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN: A CASE STUDY

By

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in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
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## **DEDICATION**

To Tess, Parker, and Melissa

Tess – Your daily prayers meant more to me than you know. You have no idea of how proud I am to see the person you have become and the directions you are heading. Know that this dissertation came to be due in part to the father and man you made me want to become. I know you will find dreams to chase, but remember - do not shy away from a challenge. It is in the struggle, when doubt and fear are all around, that the prize becomes even more precious.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES .....	xi
LIST OF TABLES .....	xii
ABSTRACT .....	xiii
CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION .....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	4
Purpose of study.....	5
Grand Tour Question .....	5
Study Propositions .....	5
Significance of the study.....	8
Delimitations .....	9
Limitations .....	10
Theoretical Framework .....	11
Definitions.....	14
Summary .....	16
CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW .....	18
Database review .....	18
Nature of Developmental Education.....	19
Developmental and mainstream curriculum .....	22
Theoretical Frameworks for Developmental Instruction .....	24

Locations for Developmental Instruction .....	25
Summary .....	28
CHAPTER 3 – METHODOLOGY .....	31
Research Method .....	31
Data Analysis .....	35
Trustworthiness.....	36
Role of the Researcher .....	40
Summary .....	44
CHAPTER 4 – PILOT STUDY .....	45
Pilot Study.....	45
Summary .....	49
CHAPTER 5 – DATA COLLECTION .....	51
Interview Protocol.....	55
Participant Profiles.....	57
Interview Schedule.....	75
Summary .....	76
CHAPTER 6 – DATA ANALYSIS .....	77
Stage 0 – Transcript Preparation.....	78
Stage 1 – General Sorting .....	78
Stage 2 – Reflective sorting .....	85



Stage 3 - Conceptualization and Reconceptualization.....	113
Stage 4 – Theme Generation.....	122
Summary.....	126
CHAPTER 7 – DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS .....	127
Supplemental Literature Review.....	127
Academic Sub-question 1 .....	128
Academic Sub-question 2 .....	134
Academic Sub-question 3 .....	155
Summary.....	159
CHAPTER 8 – CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	161
Implications of the Findings of Theme 1 .....	161
Implications of the Findings of Theme 2.....	163
Implications of the Findings of Theme 3.....	168
Recommendations for Future Research .....	170
Personal Reflections.....	172
REFERENCES .....	177
APPENDIX A – STUDY TIMELINE.....	190
APPENDIX B – RECRUITMENT LETTER.....	191
APPENDIX C – STAGE 1 INTERVIEW PROTOCOL.....	192
APPENDIX D – STAGE 2 INTERVIEW PROTOCOL.....	193

APPENDIX E – STAGE 3 INTERVIEW PROTOCOL .....	194
APPENDIX F – HUMAN SUBJECTS COMMITTEE APPROVAL DOCUMENTATION ...	195
APPENDIX G – INFORMED CONSENT FORM .....	198
APPENDIX H – INTERVIEW AND TRANSCRIPTION SCHEDULE.....	199
APPENDIX I – ORGANIZATION OF SUPER-CATEGORIES .....	200

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 - Matrix Depiction of Study Alignment. ....	7
Figure 2 - Baxter and Jack's (2008) case study methodology. ....	31
Figure 3. Modified Merriam-Williams-Vaismoradi data analysis process. ....	77
Figure 4 – First Reading. ....	80
Figure 5 – Codesheet. ....	82
Figure 6 – Second Reading. ....	83
Figure 7 – Printing codes ....	86
Figure 8 – Clustering codes. ....	87
Figure 9 – Expanded clusters. ....	88
Figure 10 – Assigning codes to categories. ....	89
Figure 11 – Master Codesheet. ....	90
Figure 12 – Super-category structure. ....	114
Figure 13 – Organization of super-categories. ....	115
Figure 14 – Adding dimensions within super-categories. ....	116
Figure 15 – Kolb's experiential learning cycle. ....	144
Figure 16 – Intuitive instructional design model. ....	148
Figure 17 – Heuristic representation of IID Model. ....	149
Figure 18 – Application of intuitive instructional design model. ....	154
Figure 19 - Heuristic representation of Phil's design experience. ....	155

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Stage 1, Phase 3 Category Labels (54) .....	91
Table 2. Initial Categories and Corresponding Dimensions within Perceived Influences .....	117
Table 3. Initial Categories and Corresponding Dimensions within Informed Action .....	119
Table 4. Initial Categories and Corresponding Dimensions within Design and Delivery .....	121

Shaping Postsecondary Developmental/Mainstream Curriculum through Intuitive Instructional  
Design: A Case Study

Dissertation Abstract–Idaho State University (2018)

The problem addressed in this case study was a gap exists in understanding what informed the instructional design strategies of developmental/mainstream faculty working in developmental and mainstream instructional settings. The purpose of this intrinsic case study was to describe how postsecondary faculty at broad-access institutions of higher learning in the Intermountain West perceive the influences that inform their design and delivery of instruction as they transition between developmental and mainstream instructional settings. The Grand Tour Question framed the scope of this study: What do faculty at broad-access institutions of higher learning in the Intermountain West describe as influences that inform their design and delivery of instruction as they transition between developmental and mainstream instructional settings?

Eight full-time faculty from five broad-access institutions throughout the Intermountain West participated in this intrinsic multi-site case study. Three cohesive themes emerged:

1. Developmental/mainstream faculty meet their students where they are by designing courses and curricula guided by the principle that there is not one right way to help students who are just catching up to the starting line of postsecondary studies as they transition into university culture.
2. Developmental/mainstream faculty describe their work as a calling, a deep connection to their students, expressed by respecting the humanity and uniqueness of each learner by artistically exploring what works in the developmental classroom.

3. Developmental/mainstream instructors negotiate being under the microscope of increased institutional attention to developmental instruction by establishing a culture that embraces at-risk students by showing that instructional insights gained in developmental settings can be applied elsewhere to help students thrive.

The study's findings suggest developmental/mainstream instructors explore differentiated learning models, validating students' lived experiences, and expanding professional service efforts. Implications for the practice of instructional designers included supporting faculty efforts to engage in differentiated learning, supporting faculty efforts to understand students through learner analysis, and increasing accessibility through curricular design. Implications for institutional policy include increasing opportunities for developmental faculty to share expertise in service settings, fostering opportunities for pre-service teachers to prepare to teach in developmental settings, and increased participation by developmental faculty in retention and persistence initiatives at the institutional level. The study recommends further investigation into the differences between broad-access universities and community colleges regarding developmental instruction and the lived experiences of developmental/mainstream faculty.

Keywords: instructional design, developmental, mainstream, case study, qualitative, postsecondary

## CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

*The irony of this situation is that the problems of the high ground tend to be relatively unimportant to individuals or society at large [...] while in the swamp lie the problems of greatest human concern. (Schön, 1987, p. 3)*

It is a typical Friday morning. The seven members of my program faculty and I gather in one of the empty classrooms on the floor, ostensibly for a routine faculty meeting. The classroom is a normal one for our building, with beige cinder block walls and a mish-mashed assortment of tables, chairs, and other classroom furniture. The lighting comes from banks of fluorescent tubes set regularly in the ceiling. The room is windowless, and often feels claustrophobic when I teach in there. The eight of us in attendance spread throughout the room. Though we have worked together for many years, each faculty member maintains a relatively large bubble of personal space from each other. Most of us have a tablet or computer in front of us, and we try our best not to give into the temptation to focus our attention on them as the meeting progresses.

As with most of our meetings, the goal is to help identify mechanisms that can improve our ability to retain developmental students and enable them to enter into, and succeed, in regular coursework. We teach in a general education program at a vocational college, and many of the students who come to our courses tend to be skeptical of the importance or relevance of non-vocational courses and content. All the members of our program teach developmental, traditional, and non-traditional college students. That being the case, the challenges that can come with teaching developmental students are familiar with the faculty in our program, though the differences in our instructional disciplines can result in insular attitudes about pedagogical practices and a lack of enthusiasm toward interdisciplinary conversations.

The topic of discussion for this particular meeting is the somewhat tired and overwhelmingly broad topic of best practices in the classroom. It is clear from the look on many of the faces around the room that there are many differing opinions in the room about the scope

of the topic and its relevance to our interests and needs. Trying to ignite a spark of engaged conversation among us, the facilitator of the meeting brings up the idea of using a flipped classroom methodology. After a brief discussion of what the concept entails, the facilitator asks each of the workshop participants to share their level of interest in implementing such an approach in our classrooms.

When it comes to my turn to speak, I know the facilitator expects me to add my support to the positive peer pressure for other instructors in the program to consider altering their approaches in the classroom. I have a reputation in the program as an early adopter and cheerleader when it comes to new instructional technologies and pedagogical approaches.

Rather than joining the cause, however, I find myself speaking with surprising candor. “I have been there, already,” I say, “I have read the articles about how to use it. I have tried the method in my class, and I have to be honest, I am leaving it behind.”

“Oh, really?” the facilitator says with surprise. “Why? Everyone is talking about flipped classrooms these days; it is the new hot method at all the conferences I go to.”

“Why?” I pause for a moment, trying to decide how honest I want to be, since if I do not engage in this conversation, the training meeting can be over that much sooner. However, despite my reluctance, the honesty pours out.

“Because it does not work. Because it assumes that students will be motivated and engaged enough in the material to be willing to take on the additional responsibility of introducing themselves to the content before class. Moreover, to be honest, I cannot get them engaged enough even to read the articles I assign. Articles, mind you, not chapters. Not sections. Articles. Articles that are only one or two pages long. Even that much reading for a night is too much for them. Forget trying to get them to reflect on what they read or think about how it



relates to anything important outside of what they need to know for the next test if I can even get them to think that far ahead.”

I can tell that my response was a little too emotionally authentic for the setting, and I surprise many of the other instructors with the vehement tone of my voice. However, I can see in the faces of some of the other instructors that what I said was a little more on the nose than they wanted to admit.

“So, you are not using a flipped classroom?” the facilitator asks, sounding a bit deflated and worried about how to get back on track with the planned flow of the meeting. “Well, what are you doing that seems to work in your classroom to get your students to engage?”

I respond, “Honestly? Nothing. Nothing I am trying seems to work these days.”

My sadness seems to hang in the air, like the musty odor of something pulled out from the back of the faculty icebox and injudiciously opened in the middle of the meeting. It is clear that this was not what the faculty expected me to say, and it leaves the facilitator a bit flat-footed.

“Well, then, how are you managing to teach if nothing seems to work?” His tone seems resentful as if I am looking to complicate a task he is already uncomfortable about completing.

With a sad smile, I shrug my shoulders. “That is the point. I do not know if it is the students, or what I am teaching, how I am teaching it, or if it is something else. I am running my classes the same as always, but I do not know if I am successful in *teaching* anything these days.”

In this chapter, I outline the research problem, purpose of the study, grand tour question and academic sub-questions, theoretical framework, and theoretical sensitivity of this study. This chapter also discusses the significance of the study to the field of education in general and instructional design in particular, and reviews delimitations and limitations of the study.

## Statement of the Problem

This study considered the problem of a gap in understanding as to what informed the instructional design strategies of developmental/mainstream faculty working in developmental and mainstream postsecondary instructional settings. Fike (2005) notes that the terminology used to describe these types of instructional settings can vary widely within the literature; this ambiguity and flexibility can lead to the confusion that practitioners might feel about what kinds of learning outcomes and curricular expectations are appropriate in developmental settings. Bustillos (2007) and Mesa (2012) consider that in the absence of an explicit theory that outlines how instructional designs work in developmental settings, and a lack of understanding about what has lead students to require developmental instruction, instructors can resort to a myriad of practices and theoretical approaches to achieve their instructional goals. In many cases, postsecondary institutions intentionally or unintentionally marginalized developmental and remedial efforts through organizational structures or professional interactions (Arendale, 2001b, 2001a). Professionals in these fields can then feel even further isolated, leaving them few options other than to seek out new, creative solutions to the pedagogical, instructional, and curricular challenges they encounter (Neuburger, Goosen, & Barry, 2014). In addition, research regarding the design and delivery of developmental instruction in postsecondary settings focused primarily on community college settings (Kirst, Proctor, & Stevens, 2011). Little of this research overtly acknowledged that developmental instruction occurs in other institutional settings or discussed whether these differences affected the underlying propositions that direct that research (Deil-amen, 2011; Jenkins & Rodríguez, 2013).

**Purpose of study**

The purpose of this intrinsic case study was to describe how postsecondary faculty at broad-access institutions of higher learning in the Intermountain West perceived the influences that informed their design and delivery of instruction as they transitioned between developmental and mainstream instructional settings.

**Grand Tour Question**

The Grand Tour Question for this intrinsic single case study was, “What do faculty at broad-access institutions of higher learning in the Intermountain West describe as influences that inform their design and delivery of instruction as they transition between developmental and mainstream instructional settings?”

**Study Propositions**

A review of the relevant research literature brought to light a series of underlying academic assumptions or attitudes about the research problem that shaped the study by informing and influencing the academic questions that explore the elements of the Grand Tour Question. Yin (2018) suggests that the purpose of including these propositions is to include elements that inform the Grand Tour Question. Yin (2018) notes that this type of reflection might only occur when formally articulating these propositions, which are listed below:

1. Postsecondary faculty gain access to a host of different theoretical frameworks through multiple mechanisms, including graduate studies, peer interactions, academic conferences and other related professional development activities, and through personal investigation and study.
2. Theoretical frameworks and current practice and experience can influence curriculum design, consciously or unconsciously.

3. The use of new instructional models can support or complicate postsecondary faculty existing curriculum design processes; such transitions can require significant evaluations and evolutions of previously utilized frameworks.

**Academic Sub-questions.** Academic sub-questions guide the exploration and investigation of the Grand Tour Question. I generated the following three academic sub-questions to parse out potential dimensions and nuances within the Grand Tour Question:

1. What practices and experiences have informed participants' efforts to design curriculum in developmental settings?
2. What practices and experiences have informed participants' efforts to design curriculum in mainstream post-secondary instructional settings?
3. What do faculty perceive about the similarities and differences in design and delivery described between their developmental and mainstream instructional models?

Figure 1 contains a matrix graphically depicting the alignment between the Grand Tour Question, reflective propositions, academic sub-questions, and interview questions.

<b>Grand Tour Question: How do faculty at a post-secondary institution in the Intermountain West describe the influences that inform their design and delivery of instruction as they transition from remedial to mainstream instructional settings?</b>			
<b>Academic Proposition</b>	<b>Access to different theoretical frameworks</b>	<b>Curriculum design</b>	<b>Evolutions of previously utilized frameworks</b>
<b>Academic Subquestions</b>	What practices and experiences have informed participants' efforts to design curriculum in developmental settings?		
	What practices and experiences have informed participants' efforts to design curriculum in mainstream post-secondary instructional settings?		
	What do faculty perceive about the similarities and differences in design and delivery described between their developmental and mainstream instructional models?		
<b>Interview 1</b>	Tell me the story of your educational background.	What aspect(s) of this process were the most effective or meaningful, from your perspective? Please tell me a specific story about this aspect.	Describe your institution's remediation process. How did it work? Who did it serve?
	What were your earliest experiences with remedial or developmental instruction?	What aspect(s) of this process were the least effective or meaningful, from your perspective? Please tell me about a specific instance that encapsulates this aspect in practice for you.	
<b>Interview 2</b>	As you taught remedial courses, what thoughts occurred to you about how you might set up this course, or which instructional strategies or approaches to use?	What would success look like if you accomplished your curricular goal(s)?	Please describe something specific you would do to evaluate whether this is a good method or approach for you?
	In your view, how did your students learn in your remedial courses?	Knowing that, how did you build courses to facilitate learning in your classes?	What would success look like in terms of implementing these thoughts, approaches, or strategies?
	What did success look like when helping your students learn?		As you taught these types of courses, what would you describe as being your main goal?
			How did this goal inform or influence your choices as you prepared the design and delivery of the course?
<b>Interview 3</b>	As you go about teaching these new courses, what thoughts occur to you about how you might set up this course, or which instructional strategies or approaches to use?	Please describe something specific you would do to evaluate whether this is a good method or approach for you?	How do these ideas reflect on the thoughts you had in developing your remedial courses?
	In your view, how do your students learn? How does this relate to the ideas you held when developing and teaching previous remedial courses?	What would success look like in terms of implementing these thoughts, approaches, or strategies?	How are these practices similar or different to what you would use in your remedial courses?
	What does success look like when helping your students learn? How does this definition relate to what you used in your remedial courses?	Knowing that, how do you build courses to facilitate learning in your classes?	How does this definition relate to what you used in your remedial courses?
	What would success look like if you were to accomplish your curricular goal(s)? How does this success align with your goals in your remedial courses?	As you teach these types of courses, what would you describe as being your main goal?	What differences or similarities exist between this course construction and what you used in your remedial courses?
		How does this goal inform or influence your choices as you prepare the design and delivery of the course?	How does this goal differ or align with what you used in your remedial courses?
			How does this influence look in comparison with how you designed and delivered your remedial courses?

*Figure 1 - Matrix Depiction of Study Alignment.* A matrix depiction of the Grand Tour Question, academic propositions, academic sub-questions, and interview protocols facilitated assessing alignment of concepts introduced in the GTQ to the interview questions.

## **Significance of the study**

The primary significance of this study emerges from questions regarding the applicability of existing literature regarding the settings in which delivery of developmental instruction takes place. Deil-Amen (2011), particularly, suggests that the body of literature regarding postsecondary developmental instruction is almost exclusively focused on instruction delivered in community college settings. Deil-Amen (2011), as well as Kirst, Proctor, and Stevens (2011), suggest that broad-access university settings are unique in terms of their demographics, missions, and institutional cultures. As such, it is necessary to examine if, and to what extent, research conclusions drawn in other settings are applicable in broad-access settings. This study can add to the body of literature examining these questions.

In addition, Chung (2005) suggests that the processes through which individual instructors develop their theoretical perspectives and practices require additional examination. Chung (2005) suggests that the implication of such research is not necessarily intended “to generate a list of specific behaviors and norms to which all developmental instructors must subscribe,” but rather as a means of “discovering common theoretical benefits” (p. 10). As Chung (2005) notes, initiating discussion among developmental faculty about how their practices and perceptions can “help foster a greater sense of community within the field, encourage dialogue across traditional boundaries, and affirm a more unified sense of professional identity and purpose” (p. 10). This study contributes to the body of research regarding these instructional design processes by describing and exploring the reflections of a specific group of developmental/mainstream practitioners regarding their practices and the influences that shaped those practices. The benefits that can emerge from recording and sharing these reflections are numerous. For instance, by capturing the voices of practitioners in these unusual settings can

contribute to the discourse regarding common instructional practices in developmental and mainstream settings at broad-access institutions. Looking at how faculty perceive the influences of student preparation, motivation, and persistence when designing curricula can assist instructional designers in evaluating applications of instructional design models and theoretical approaches commonly used in developmental and mainstream settings. This study also lends insight into the consideration of institutional perceptions and treatment of developmental/mainstream faculty at broad-access institutions.

### **Delimitations**

Delimitations establish boundaries and qualifications, explicitly restricting the scope of a study (Creswell, 2013). The following delimitations applied to the structure of the study:

- The study involved eight participants.
- Participants were employed as full-time faculty members at a broad-access institution of higher education.
- Specifically excluded from the scope of this study were part-time faculty, adjunct or temporary faculty, and students.
- Prior to the changes in the developmental program, participants' past workloads included at least 33% responsibility for formal developmental instructional activity.
- Participants completed at least 30 Carnegie credits of instructional experience defined as developmental within a postsecondary setting before the beginning of the research study.
- The study was delimited to institutions that have historically offered developmental pathways for students seeking to enroll in a credential or degree program.
- The institution selected was delimited to a user of an open or non-restricted enrollment policy.

- Included participants voluntarily completed all interviews, as well as any necessary follow-up sessions needed.
- Included participants voluntarily agreed to the electronic recording of the interviews.

### **Limitations**

Gay, Mills, and Airasian (2009) state that "[a] limitation is some aspect of the study that the researcher cannot control but believes may negatively affect the results of the study. The following limitations existed in the implementation of the study: researcher bias and response bias.

**Researcher bias.** The nature of qualitative research relies primarily on the ability of the researcher to act intentionally as a research instrument. Inherent in this practice is the threat from the researcher's own personal and professional experience introducing bias into the data collection and analysis phases of the study, which might undermine the trustworthiness of the data and conclusions. Patton (2001) challenges researchers to "*own one's own voice and perspective* [emphasis in original]" (p. 65). The intent of this reporting allowed me to anticipate potential conflicts of interest or the presence of bias throughout the research process.

**Response bias.** Since the study methodology required individuals to self-report their experiences, there are inevitable questions about the potential for bias in their responses, including socially desirable responses, acquiescence, and extreme responses (Paulhus, 1990). To address these concerns, I included a clear audit trail and performed member checks and triangulation to moderate the impact of response bias on this study. I discussed these measures in more detail below in Chapter 3, in the Role of the Researcher section, as well as in Appendix A, which contained a timeline of the audit trail for this study.



## Theoretical Framework

Merriam (2009) stated that research studies should be organized so that the foundation articulates the “underlying structure, the scaffolding or frame [...]” that serve to delimit “the concepts, terms, definitions, models, and theories [...]” that form the basis of the research in question” (pp. 66-67). I addressed how this framing influenced the Grand Tour Question, the analysis and interpretation of the data, and the thematic conclusions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), by formally identifying this theoretical scaffolding.

Under scrutiny, in this case, was how postsecondary faculty at broad-access institutions of higher learning in the Intermountain West perceived the influences that informed their design and delivery of instruction as they transitioned between developmental and mainstream instructional settings. In reviewing the literature, I noted that Mezirow’s (1985, 1990) theory of transformational learning suggested that self-examination and reflection informed the context of a situation, as well as the assumptions and beliefs related to that phenomenon. Mezirow (1991) defines transformative learning as,

“[...] an enhanced level of awareness of the context of one’s beliefs and feelings, a critique of their assumptions and particularly premises, an assessment of alternative perspectives, a decision to negate an old perspective in favor of a new one or to make a synthesis of old and new, an ability to take action based upon the new perspective, and a desire to fit the new perspective into the broader context of one’s life.” ( p. 161)

According to this definition, Mezirow (1991) presents transformational learning as a series of phases that began with a disorienting dilemma that demanded critical reflection and rational discourse to determine a course of action intended to resolve the dilemma.

Within the context of critical reflection, Mezirow (1990) suggests that individuals, through experience, learning, and cognitive activity, generate a set of boundary structures, comprised of the various beliefs, attitudes, and cultural expectations they bring to a learning experience. These boundary structures referred to as meaning perspectives in Mezirow's (1990) work are defined as "the structure of assumptions within which one's past experience assimilates and transforms new experience" (p. 142), serve as scaffolds upon which the individual processes new experiences or ideas. However, there are moments when new experience or information challenges or violates the foundations of these structures, creating disorienting dilemmas. The resolution of these dilemmas forms the transformation at the heart of Mezirow's (1991) learning theory.

A pivotal phase of this resolution process is the self-reflection of the assumptions and premises that form meaning perspectives. When considering the concept of the scholarship of teaching and the manner in which instructors consider their approaches and assumptions about the instructional process, Kreber (1999) suggests that reflection should include consideration of three meaning perspectives: content, process, and premise. Content reflection focuses on the content or description of the problem at hand, whereas process reflection focuses on the actions or sequences of events that inform or seek to resolve the problem. Mezirow (1991) points out that the process of content reflection does not necessarily require consideration of the assumptions underlying the problem, but can lead to solutions based on pre-existing knowledge or beliefs.

Critical reflection, according to Mezirow (1990), occurs when reflection moves beyond previously acquired knowledge to evaluate the efficacy and adequacy of the underlying beliefs, attitudes, and assumptions that make up individual meaning perspectives. Building on Mezirow's

work on critical reflection, Kreber (2004) suggests a model of scholarship of teaching and learning which focuses on how educators interact with these meaning perspectives in the context of their teaching. Building on Schulman's (1987) work on pedagogical content knowledge, Kreber and Cranton (2000) advocate for the inclusion of two additional domains of knowledge, instructional and curricular, to help to frame an instructor's understanding and perception of the instructional experience. While instructional knowledge relates to pedagogical knowledge, Kreber (2004) proposes that this domain extends beyond the scope of pedagogy, including consideration of "how to respond to different learning styles and approaches to studying, how to facilitate critical thinking and self-management in learning, or how to influence students' motivation to learn" (p. 31). Curricular knowledge, on the other hand, relates to "knowledge of the goals, purposes, and rationales for our classes, courses or programs. It includes, for example, knowledge of how a particular course fits into the larger curriculum and how our teaching contributes to the university's societal and cultural role" (Kreber, 2004, p. 31). Therefore, as Kreber (2004) points out, this model provides an instructor with a significantly complex matrix of potential aspects of reflection to inform their consideration of the situation and possible resolutions.

Schön (1987) suggests that one difficulty in engaging in self-reflection is the predilection, especially in professional disciplines, to search for and rely on what he terms "technical rationality" (p. 3). Schön (1987) defines technical rationality as "an epistemology of practice [...] [where] professional practitioners solve well-formed instrumental problems by applying theory and technique derived from systematic, preferably scientific knowledge" (p. 4). He argues that one consequence of acceding to the premise of technical rationality is the potential to proscribe practice, requiring it to adhere to interpretation and application of an appropriate

theory. The issue with technical rationality, according to Schön (1987), is that it can fail to adequately provide guidance in situations where appropriate theory does not address the unique nature of the situation's context. According to Schön (1987), in such situations, practitioners may not resort to an appeal to existing theory, but can, instead, implement solutions on their own experience and intuition. Jarvis (1999) builds on this line of inquiry by suggesting that practitioners deal with continually changing instructional theories, practices, technologies, and student demographics by resorting to critical and self-reflection in cases where current knowledge and theory fail to provide clear direction on how to deal with instructional situations.

Building on the work of Schön (1987) and Jarvis (1999), Chung (2005) argues that developmental education practitioners often encounter situations in which current learning theories might not easily fit or apply. In such cases, developmental practitioners must appeal to alternative sources to find satisfactory resolutions, even in the absence of traditional learning theory guidance or support. In these disorienting situations, they may engage in critical reflection on their own experience, and the assumptions that inform their perceptions of those problems. Using Kreber and Cranton's (2000) theory of scholarship can potentially provide a useful framework for describing how practices emerge and operate within the scope of the phenomenon under scrutiny in this study.

## **Definitions**

*Action research:* "a systematic process for solving educational problems and making improvements" (Tomal, 2003, p. 5).

*Broad-access institutions of higher education:* Institutions throughout the United States which foster "the ability to enroll regardless of socioeconomic and academic background" (Kirst et al., 2011). For this study, I will use the term broad-access institutions of higher education to

describe or refer to four-year baccalaureate institutions throughout the United States which serve as a middle ground between top-tier instructional or research institutions, and those which have more focused and intentional vocational or developmental institutional missions, such as technical schools or community colleges.

*Developmental education:* Interventions and activities intended to support and encourage at-risk students, which can include tutoring, personal and career counseling, advising, and coursework supplemental to traditional academic programs (Casazza, 1999).

*Experiential learning:* “the process of creating knowledge through the transformation of experience.” (Tomkins & Ulus, 2015, p. 3).

*Instructional design:* a system of procedures for developing education and training curricula in a consistent and reliable fashion (Branch & Merrill, 2011).

*Knowing-in-action:* to “engage in practice without thinking about how they learned the material or their personal recognitions, judgments, and actions prior to performance” (Stoner & Cennamo, 2018, p. 17).

*Mainstreaming:* the process of integrating developmental students into traditional academic courses with higher entrance requirements, usually with the inclusion of additional requirements and activities for those developmental students (Damashek, 1999; Edgecombe, 2011).

*Professional artistry:* “an irreducible element of art in professional practice” (Kinsella, 2010, p. 8).

*Reflection-in-action:* “we may reflect in the midst of action without interrupting it. In an *action-present* – a period of time, variable with the context, during which we can still make a

difference to the situation at hand – our thinking serves to research what we are doing while we are doing it” [emphasis in original] (Schön, 1987, p. 26).

*Reflection-on-action*: “We may reflect *on* action, thinking back on what we have done in order to discover how our knowing-in-action may have contributed to an unexpected outcome. We may do so after the fact, in tranquility, [...] our reflection has no direct connection to present action” [emphasis in original] (Schön, 1987, p. 26).

*Remedial education*: “a class or activity intended to meet the needs of students who initially do not have the skills, experience or orientation necessary to perform at a level that the institutions or instructors recognize as ‘regular’ for those students” (Grubb & Worthen, 1999, p. 174).

*Technical rationality*. “Technical rationality focuses on systematic problem-solving and professional curricula which reflect it are, or will be, organized around the acquisition of generic competences of systematic problem-solving” (Greenwood, 1993, p. 1185). Schön (1987) adds that technical rationality focuses on “the applications of theories and techniques derived from systematic, preferably scientific research to the solution of the instrumental problems of the practice” (p. 33).

*Transformative learning*. “The process of making meaning from our experiences through reflection, critical reflection, and critical self-reflection” (Dirkx, 1998, p. 4).

## **Summary**

Chapter 1 began by introducing the problem addressed in this case study: a gap existed in terms of understanding what informed the instructional design strategies of developmental/mainstream curricula that work in developmental and mainstream instructional settings. The purpose of this intrinsic case study was to describe how postsecondary faculty at

broad-access institutions of higher learning in the Intermountain West perceive the influences that inform their design and delivery of instruction as they transition between developmental and mainstream instructional settings. The following grand tour question helped framed the scope of this study – What do faculty at broad-access institutions of higher learning institutions in the Intermountain West describe as influences that inform their design and delivery of instruction as they transition between developmental and mainstream instructional settings? Chapter 1 also outlined the delimitations, limitations, and definitions specific to this study proposal. In Chapter 2, I examine the body of literature that informs the topic underlying the problem, which leads to the purpose and Grand Tour Question of this study.

## CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review consists of four streams pertaining to this study. The first section summarizes research related to the nature of postsecondary developmental instruction. The second section reviews research related to similarities and differences between developmental and mainstream instruction in postsecondary contexts. The third stream summarizes research related to existing theories of developmental instruction. The fourth stream reviews research related to the delivery of developmental instruction in broad-access colleges and universities. This review was limited in its scope to mitigate the potential for bias in the analysis of data due to exposure to findings from other research (Patton, 2001) that could have colored my impressions and interpretations of the nuances in participant responses. Chapter 7 contains an additional review of relevant literature based on the findings of the study.

### **Database review**

To initiate a literature review, Galvan (2012) recommends beginning with a survey of various relevant research databases, to assist in the narrowing of topics to assist the researcher in evaluating how expressions of the topic under investigation manifest themselves within those databases. Such an approach requires a methodical organization for reviewing database search results, including explanations of how the search procedure, which limitations affected the search, and how the results resolved into streams of literature.

The first stage in the literature review was to search for related terms and subjects using the Subjects databases in Academic Search Premier and EbscoHost. Once I articulated those subject terms, I performed general searches using Academic Search Premier, EBSCOhost, ERIC, and PsychInfo. I filtered the search results using the following limitations:

- Results had to be peer-reviewed.



- Results had to come from academic journals.
- The initial results were limited to materials published after January 1, 2010, to present.
- Results were to be full-text results.

In addition to general database reviews, which formed the foundation for the themes expressed in this section, I also evaluated the bibliographies from relevant sources to expand the scope of the review, and to assist in creating a more holistic understanding of the available literature related to the topics under study.

### **Nature of Developmental Education**

Remedial instruction, according to the literature, is limited in scope to “courses generally considered to be precollege level” (Boylan, Bonham, & White, 1999, p. 88). Developmental education, on the other hand, can be defined as all types of instruction and intervention at the postsecondary level to assist students in acquiring the prerequisite skills, abilities, and socialization necessary to perform required tasks in postsecondary educational settings (Boylan, 1987, 1995; Boylan & Bonham, 2011). Rather than being a specialized type of instruction, Boylan describes as developmental education as being more like an umbrella of potential interventions and processes including “ranging from individual basic remedial courses at one end to comprehensive learning centers at the other end” (Boylan, 1999, p. 2).

There do exist, however, some misunderstandings about the use of the term developmental education. Fike (2005), as well as Levin and Calcagno (2008), note that practitioners are not necessarily familiar with the role, function, and scope of developmental education. Some of this confusion stems from the common conflation of the terms remediation or remedial courses with developmental education. While remediation comprises a subset of the

umbrella concept of developmental education, practitioners intermix the two concepts to such a degree that many consider the terms synonymous.

Duffy (2012) investigated faculty reactions and perspectives about professional development opportunities related to basic skills acquisition, a critical outcome in developmental instruction, among community college faculty in California. One of the findings of the study was that “in order for faculty development to be successful in promoting student learning, it must work to change the basic identity of college instructors by encouraging them to be scholars and practitioners while strengthening instructional skills and teaching methods” (Duffy, 2012, p. 125). Such a perspective can imply that faculty must take a much more self-reflective attitude about their professional roles and the nature of the profession in which they have engaged.

Smittle (2003) focuses explicitly on principles within in the literature that would foster success in developmental settings. Her first finding is that faculty can, and should, dedicate themselves to the prospect of being engaged in developmental education as a professional pathway. Her analysis of the issue identifies that fact that developmental instruction involves far more than simple delivery of content, but a wide variety of non-academic knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Unless faculty are aware of these requirements and possess more than just a passing interest in such activity, the likelihood of success for students in such settings diminishes.

Mesa, Celis, and Lande (2014) examined the similarities and differences between the theoretical frameworks that instructors at community colleges described as framing their instructional practices and their implementation within the actual classroom. In many ways, the work performed by Mesa, Celis, and Lande echoes the early intent of this study by looking at how instructors perceive teaching theory and how it informs the work taking place within the instructional space. Their study, however, had several notable delimitations that distinguished it

from this study, including delimiting the study to a community college context, delimiting participation to mathematics faculty, and not focusing on the specific impacts of developmental instruction on the instructional performance.

Bustillos (2007) examined the preparation and perspectives of community college instructors involved in the delivery of developmental mathematics instruction, specifically for minority students. Her findings suggest that many instructors did not base the framework for their instruction on an understanding and appreciation of the needs of developmental students, but rather on their own educational experiences and the cultural expectations developed by their surroundings. Indeed, “[u]nderstanding beliefs held by educators across all levels of the education spectrum becomes singularly important given the training of K-12 teachers and the lack of training of university instructors” (Bustillos, 2007, p. 37).

Mesa (2012) investigated differences between student and faculty perspectives regarding student self-efficacy in developmental and mainstream mathematics courses at community colleges. The study seems to suggest that faculty in developmental mathematics courses can struggle to appropriately perceive and interpret the motivations and attitudes that students bring with them to the classroom. Such misunderstandings can complicate already complex interactions and introduce significant challenges to student success; they can also delay students’ on-time entry into degree and credential programs. Indeed, Mesa asserts that these misunderstandings can result in misdirected curriculum development, based on assumptions of what students are trying to accomplish in the classroom, which can be significantly different than what those self-same students are willing to do and how they recognize and interpret their efforts in those areas.

Davis and Palmer (2010) examine the performance of minority students in postsecondary developmental education programs, specifically African-American students. Their findings underscore a common trend in the current literature: the nature of developmental instruction requires additional research to determine what factors contribute to successful completion of developmental instruction and entry into degree and certificate programs. Davis and Palmer also emphasize that developmental instruction has a long and rich history in American postsecondary institutions, even if that history is problematic and underrepresented, suggesting that “[...] qualitative research may help illuminate how postsecondary remediation affects particular groups of students, under what conditions, and in what contexts” (p. 514).

### **Developmental and mainstream curriculum**

Levin, Cox, Cerven, and Haberler (2010) examine student perspectives of what makes them successful in developmental educational settings through a phenomenological examination of the experiences of three students enrolled in a community college in Texas. One of the conclusions of this study was that institutions that provide developmental instruction needed to engage in regular, meaningful evaluations of those programs. As a part of this review, institutions should consider the methodological and theoretical practices of the instructors involved in those programs, to determine whether they are relevant and adapted to the needs of their students.

Arendale (1993, 2001a) has written extensively on the subject of supplemental instruction and other related academic interventions as a potential new pathway for the integration of developmental education programs, especially in institutional settings where developmental education might not necessarily align with institutional identities or missions. In many cases, Arendale sees that faculty and students engaged in developmental education suffer from isolation

because of perceived gaps in student potential and preparation and that the intentional and unintentional quarantining of these programs serves to act as a self-fulfilling prophecy. Arendale also suggests that as these programs move into more mainstream settings, faculty can grow, students can benefit from more effective instruction and social engagement, and outcomes can begin to grow to match more traditional student performance levels.

Neuburger, Goosen, and Barry (2014) argue that many developmental education practitioners tend to forgo engaging in the kinds of professional development activities and avocation that would help to inform outsiders about the actual state of the discipline. Neuburger, Goosen, and Barry's (2014) argue that this occurs because "[i]n the vast siloed fields of academe, professionalism and theory walk hand in hand, but in the field of [developmental education] DE, we often expend ourselves addressing the students before us with what little resources we muster, leaving theory and professionalization for another time" (p. 75). Because of this choice of professional priorities, developmental faculty lose opportunities to explain what is happening with their students and to lend their expertise to discussions about program funding, support, and advocacy.

Brothen and Wambach (2004) engage in a review of the literature regarding future pathways for developmental education. Among their findings is the suggestion that institutions and instructors need to consider alternative means for providing developmental and remedial courses that align with the needs of specific types of institutions and institutional identities and missions, as well as encouraging faculty to explore and develop robust theories to guide their instructional practices. In doing so, the authors suggest that "[a] renewed focus on the ideas of literacy skill development, encouragement, placement testing procedures, adaptability, theory,

integration, and typology may help developmental educators to find a common vision for the educational goals of their programs and their students” (p. 22).

### **Theoretical Frameworks for Developmental Instruction**

Cassaza (1997) introduces a theoretical framework that attempts to address the practice of developmental education. What makes Cassaza’s work noteworthy is effort to express a holistic theoretical framework for developmental education that focuses on theoretical underpinnings, rather than just suggesting particular instructional practices. Chung (2005) lauds Cassaza for taking a step long advocated by other voices in the field, including Boylan (Boylan, 1987, 1995, Boylan & Bonham, 2007, 2011; Boylan et al., 1999), Collins and Bruch (Collins & Bruch, 1999), and others by attempting to articulate the initial elements of a cohesive theory of developmental education. However, Chung (2005) notes that there is currently limited evidence to show that such a framework is gaining traction among practitioners in the field, as evidenced by a lack of growing numbers references in academic journals, which Chung (2005) argues is the best evidence of likely adoption.

Hutchings (2007) discusses the historical tension that exists within the scholarship of teaching and learning (SOTL) movement between practice and theory. He specifically examines the almost hostile attitude that can exist among many practitioners about the role that theory plays in the instructional space. Practitioners can perceive theories as representing a bias toward research at odds with the need for student engagement, especially when practitioners see such engagement as essential for real, meaningful instruction. Hutchings then considers several different case studies where instructors came to see that theory is not an antithesis to good teaching, but a natural outcome of examining what is happening during the instructional experience. Hutchings (2007) concludes by stating, “And maybe that’s the critical point here:

theory matters in the scholarship of teaching and learning because it is essential to a meaning-making, knowledge-building process” (p. 3). These processes, whether conscious or unconscious, are involved as instructors change their instructional settings and form the awareness of how they design, deliver, and evaluate curriculum.

Johnsen, Pacht, Slyck, and Tsao (2009) examine one of the critical implications of SOTL in developmental settings - teaching can be a messy, ill-formed, problematic experience that can be embarrassing and difficult to share with others. The fraught nature of developmental instruction that Johnsen et al., describe is especially true when the instruction is taking place in academic settings already perceived as being problematic or contrary to the stated missions of postsecondary education at many broad-access and research institutions of higher education. DE faculty can struggle to meet requirements for promotion and tenure, complicating their ability to be honest and forthright about their teaching experiences and share what insights they have gained from their successes and failures with others. The authors assert that as the arbitrary barriers and institutional silos that currently separate instructors from each other dissolve, meaningful discussions can occur that place the needs of students at the forefront. Since this emphasis on the needs of the student tends to be a primary interest and motivator for many DE faculty, engaging in honest and open examinations of teaching practices and the theories that guide them is critical to the health and continued effectiveness of the academy as a whole.

### **Locations for Developmental Instruction**

Twombly and Townsend (2008), while analyzing the role and nature of faculty in community college settings, note that those faculty involved in developmental education in such institutions suffer from status levels in comparison with their colleagues. It is noteworthy to consider that even in institutions that embrace teaching, access, and student empowerment as

institutional missions, individuals engaged in activities centered on addressing these such aims receive professional disparagement and denigration by their colleagues. This contrary behavior suggests that additional research should examine how institutions where other academic missions, goals, and cultures perceive and interact with faculty who teach developmental courses.

Since the bulk of developmental instruction occurs in community colleges, it is reasonable to expect the literature regarding developmental education to focus exclusively on the experiences of faculty in such settings, omitting references to, and consideration of, the experiences of faculty in other types of institutions. Indeed, Deil-Amen (2011) considers that investigations into developmental instruction have been far too limited in their scope and context regarding where the developmental instruction takes place. Deil-Amen (2011) asserts that much current research suffers from “the tendency to create dichotomies between remedial and non-remedial students and between community college and four-year college student populations” (p. 68), and suggests that such distinctions are without significant meaning regarding student preparation and degree completion.

Bastedo and Gumport (2004) examine the conflict that exists between institutional mission and accessibility for all students. The authors assert that the idea of access to postsecondary instruction is an essential and ubiquitous expectation of most postsecondary institutions throughout the United States, even if specific policies and procedures vary from state to state, even from institution to institution within those states. In many cases, institutions attempt to address the expectations of many external stakeholders by establishing academic missions that are in line with current political, social, and financial ideals. However, in some cases, these missions fail to address fundamental purposes such as access for all and the needs



that a growing population have for developmental instruction in basic academic skills in order to operate successfully in those academic settings. One of Bastedo and Gumport's (2004) potentially relevant findings is that "[...] the question becomes whether equitable access is provided when those who are underprepared for college are encouraged, and even mandated, to attend community colleges. There is no evidence that community colleges provide a better education in remedial courses than four-year colleges" (p. 355). The authors argue that developmental education is an essential component necessary for open access at most public postsecondary institutions, and that being more aware of the nature and needs of this kind of instruction is critical for institutional success in meeting the needs of a growing proportion of its student body.

Krist et al., (2011) examine the predominance of social science research in postsecondary education settings tends to limit itself to highly selective institutions, and the outcomes that these institutions elicit regarding student performance and degree completion. As a result, "The sector routinely is portrayed as a hierarchy, with selective schools at the "top" and ever less selective schools toward the "bottom." Such imagery encourages the presumption that selective schools are the best and should, therefore, be emulated by less selective ones" (Kirst et al., 2011, p. 7). Such an attitude cripples the utility of the current body of literature by ignoring the realities of what is occurring in classrooms that fail to meet these highly restrictive definitions. Indeed, the authors assert that institutions should value access as a societal benefit, one that is encouraged and documented in the literature more often.

Jenkins and Rodriguez (2013) consider that due to growing economic pressures, more and more students are being forced to limit their postsecondary educational options to more affordable educational options, these being broad-access public universities and community

colleges. Because of these restrictions, these types of open access institutions tend to have a disparity regarding enrollment trends of at-risk, academically underprepared students who will require additional resources and support in order to achieve their academic goals. As a result, the authors argue to pay more attention to how these types of institutions best utilize already restricted funds and resources to meet the needs of a growing population that taxes their already strained infrastructures.

In examining the workloads of faculty tasked with teaching courses defined as being developmental and public and private two- and four-year postsecondary institutions, Boyer, Butner, and Smith (2007) find that the workload assignments for those at community colleges and broad-access four-year institutions were significantly higher than those at other more-selective and private institutions. According to the authors, one of the most critical findings in their study is that faculty in more accessible institutions tended to have much higher workloads in terms of more student contact hours and credit hours. This finding implies that faculty in these high workload settings can struggle to maintain the kinds of professional development activities needed to maintain awareness of trends in the field, as well as have the time to implement new theoretical models and practices into their instructional behaviors.

### **Summary**

Developmental education is a complex activity, often misunderstood and mischaracterized in the literature, even by its practitioners. The literature often fails to recognize that developmental education is a unique academic discipline itself, worthy of research inquiry and theory, not a secondary instructional aspect of other academic disciplines, such as mathematics or composition. This misapprehension of the nature and scope of developmental

education of comes as the result of a lack of pedagogical awareness and training among postsecondary faculty, as well as the lack of coherent and widely accepted theories in the field.

The nature of developmental education and its underlying propositions can be troubling to postsecondary institutions, and often results in the marginalization of its students and instructors. This isolation complicates efforts to understand the causes and consequences of student participation in developmental instruction and limits the opportunities for faculty to engage in meaningful discussion and research in the discipline. Also, the traditional workloads of developmental faculty often limit or frustrate efforts to engage in scholarship and research in the discipline, leaving the development of theory to individuals often located outside of the practice.

The literature regarding theoretical frameworks that inform development education, in general, are sparse, suggesting practitioners have been either unaware of them, or not demonstrating a willingness to embrace existing theories comprehensively, as evidenced by thin references in the literature and as a dearth of topical discussion at major disciplinary conferences (Chung & Higbee, 2005). In many cases, research, such as Schön (1987), Jarvis (1999), and Jay and Johnson (2002), suggests that developmental educators rely on practice to inform their instructional and curricular decision-making processes, which complicates efforts to establish broader theoretical frameworks or conversations about them.

These gaps in the literature – nature of developmental instruction, differences in developmental and mainstream curriculum, theoretical frameworks, and locations for developmental instruction – warrant additional research to understand the specific aspects of the study problem; that is, what informed the instructional design strategies of developmental/mainstream faculty working in developmental and mainstream postsecondary instructional settings. Therefore, the purpose of this intrinsic case study is to describe how

postsecondary faculty at broad-access institutions of higher learning in the Intermountain West perceived the influences that informed their design and delivery of instruction as they transitioned between developmental and mainstream instructional settings. Chapter 3 discusses the process by which I selected the methodology for this study, my consideration of questions regarding the methodological rigor and trustworthiness of the study and how I addressed these questions, and a discussion of my role as a researcher in this study.

## CHAPTER 3 – METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I described the methodology selected for this study, provide a rationale for this selection, as well as outline the completed study procedures for participant sampling, data collection, and data analysis. Also, I disclosed my role as the researcher and the methodological rigor in the completed study.

### Research Method

**Intrinsic Case Study.** Merriam and Tisdell (2016) describe a case study methodology as “an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system” (p. 37). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) further explain that for a system to be bounded, it must be identified in such a way as to be unique to “*one* particular program or *one* particular classroom of learners [emphasis in original]” (p. 38). The emphasis of the research scope focused on the phenomenon under study *in situ* within a defined context. Stake (2000) categorizes case studies as typically being intrinsic, instrumental, or collective (also known as multisite).

Baxter and Jack (2008) identify the inherent traits that distinguish these and other case studies as being the unit of analysis, the type of study, the binding principle, the scope of the study, the presence and utility of propositions and issues, and the conceptual framework of the study. The delimitations for this study were direct reflections of these traits. Figure 2 outlines this methodology:

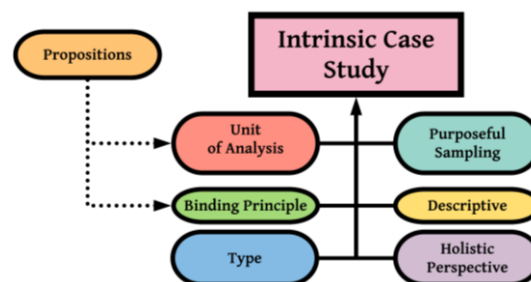


Figure 2 - Baxter and Jack's (2008) case study methodology. This typology guided consideration of the appropriate application case study methodology.

**Unit of Analysis.** Baxter and Jack (2008) assert that one of the most critical aspects of an intrinsic case study is the articulation of the specific unit to be investigated. By delimiting what phenomena were under investigation, I, as the researcher, had a basis with which to consider what types of information would be relevant, and best determine how to observe and collect data regarding the phenomenon. In this particular study, the phenomena under investigation were the influences that informed instructional design of postsecondary instructors transitioning between developmental and mainstream instruction.

**Binding Principle.** Baxter and Jack (2008) explain that in case studies, bounding the limits of the case is critical and that defining what does not belong in the study is as important as explaining what does belong. In this case study, the bounding principle combined Creswell's (2013) limit of place by focusing on a specific type of post-secondary institution while including Stake's (2000) recommendation of activity as an element of the binding principle. Specifically, this study focused on how postsecondary faculty at broad-access institutions of higher learning in the Intermountain West (**delimiter based on place**) perceived the influences that inform their design and delivery of instruction as they transition between developmental and mainstream instructional settings (**delimiter based on activity**). Teaching in both developmental and mainstream settings was a unique experience, as was delivering developmental instruction in a broad-access institution. The critical bounding principle for the study existed in the co-existence of these two traits in the participants. As Stake puts it, "It is not unusual for the choice of case to be no 'choice' at all. [...] We are interested in it, not because by studying it we learn about other cases or about some general problem, but because we need to learn about that particular case" (Stake, 2000, p. 3). While there were potential implications derived from this study, the driving

impetus for this study was simply to describe the lived experiences of individuals living and working at the convergence of such unique circumstances.

**Type.** Baxter and Jack (2008) build on the work of Stake (2000) and Yin (2018) to articulate in more detail the defining characteristics of each subcategory of case study methodology. These descriptions, the elements of the Grand Tour Question of this study, and the binding principles initially suggested that a single site case was the most likely methodological approach to yield relevant results. However, complications in finding an institution with sufficient number of participants to arrive at the level of saturation led to the adoption of a multi-site approach. The diversity of institutional settings increased the potential for finding unique lived experience and differences in perspectives, which added to the richness of the descriptive findings and themes developed during this study.

**Propositions.** Baxter and Jack (2008) suggest that “The researcher can have several propositions to guide the study, but each must have a distinct focus and purpose. These propositions later guide the data collection and discussion” (p. 552). They further explain that “[...] propositions can be equated with hypotheses in that they both make an educated guess to the possible outcomes of the experiment/research study” (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 552). Chapter 1 outlined these propositions, along with including a discussion of what influence they exerted on the Grand Tour Question that founded this study.

**Holistic perspective.** Qualitative research, according to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), centers on a phenomenon in its entirety and “understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences” (p. 6). As I considered the problem and purpose of this study, I came to see that I wanted to examine and describe, through the reflections and shared experiences of the

participants, the strategies that faculty perceived as influencing their instructional design of curriculum in developmental and mainstream settings. I collected data and then applied an inductive analysis process to identify and characterize potential categories and dimensions in the context of the comprehensive aspects of the phenomenon.

To respect the comprehensive intent of the study, I allowed the edges of the phenomenon to coalesce throughout the research process. Each step taken toward data collection and analysis influenced and informed subsequent collection and analysis activities. As an exploratory activity, this study required a flexible approach to respond to the information elicited. Throughout the study, my ability to grasp nuance and to pursue new avenues of inquiry matured as I moved through the collection, analysis, and interpretation phases.

***Rich, thick descriptions.*** Qualitative research, and case studies in particular, according to Merriam (2009), focus on providing a “rich, ‘thick,’ description of the phenomenon under study” (p. 43). Description attempts to provide concrete details about context, participants, and the processes and activities associated with the phenomenon. In this study, I sought to describe the experiences of these participants with enough description to assist readers to understand their perspectives and practices in meaningful ways.

***Purposeful sampling.*** Merriam and Tisdell (2016) suggest that in qualitative settings, “the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (p. 96). In this case, the study depended on finding faculty with sufficient practice in both developmental and mainstream environments. Therefore, I used a snowball sampling process to direct my recruitment efforts directly to those individuals who would fit the delimitations outlined in the study.



***Snowball sampling.*** The participants of this study were identified by contacting English and Mathematics programs at institutions that fit the institution delimitations. During these contacts, I consulted with faculty members who fit the profile outlined in the study delimitations who would be likely to be able to provide insights into the topics related to the Grand Tour Question and its corollary academic sub-questions. Once identified, I invited potential participants to join in the study. I also asked participants whether they knew of other faculty members who might be equally qualified to expand the scope and diversity of participants in the study. This recruitment process was used to help increase the potential of perspective saturation, which Lincoln and Guba (1985) defined as a level of redundancy in shared experience and perspective, as well as diversity in the types of participants involved in the study.

### **Data Analysis**

This study followed Merriam and Tisdell's (2016) methodology for data analysis, which utilized three phases (construction, categorization, and reduction) to arrive at the themes that represent the study's findings. Modifications suggested by Williams (2004) and Vaismoradi, Jones, Turunen, and Snelgrove (2016) provided additional direction and clarification in the development of categories and themes within the scope of the methods initially described by Merriam and Tisdell (2016).

**Analysis process.** Merriam and Tisdell (2016) underscore the emergent and inductive nature of qualitative research that often requires research data be analyzed concurrently with data collection. Delaying analysis until after collection can limit or even prohibit the researcher's ability to be reactive to gaps, opportunities, required clarifications, confirmations, and confusion, which are inherently present within the wondrously unpredictable nature of fieldwork. Patton (2001) continually reiterates that qualitative research cannot be predictive or prescriptive, since

“[...] naturalistic design unfolds or emerges as fieldwork unfolds” (p. 44). While I strove to conduct data analysis concurrently with the data collection process, it was not possible to move through all the stages of the data analysis process advocated by Williams (2004) and Vaismoradi et al. (2016) for each participant transcript prior to beginning the next data collection interview. I detail the specific steps and implementations of the data analysis process within this study below in Chapter 6 - Data Analysis.

### **Trustworthiness**

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) define methodological rigor as “what you can do as a researcher to ensure trustworthiness in your study” (p. 242). Merriam and Tisdell recommend four attributes that address the reader’s expectations for trust within a qualitative context: credibility, transferability, consistency, and dependability, with related internal assessments that gauge the degree to which these attributes are present within the completed study.

**Credibility.** Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe the notion of credibility as the study’s ability to “display an isomorphism (a one-to-one relationship) with that reality” (p. 294). The nature of a qualitative study is intended to explore and describe the reality of experience from the participants’ own lived experience, within the context in which that experience occurred. The purpose of assessing credibility in this study was to demonstrate that the description presented “represent[s] those multiple constructions adequately [...] [and] are credible to the constructors of the multiple original realities” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 296). To assess the degree to which this occurs, Merriam and Tisdell (2016) recommend the use of triangulation, member checking, and saturation.

**Triangulation.** The collection of information from a variety of different interviews allowed the study to affirm the existence, breadth, and depth of new findings. By collecting data

from multiple perspectives, the study explored the degree to which participants' depictions or interpretations of facets of the phenomenon under investigation converged or diverged from each other and currently available literature on the subject. As Patton (2001) argues, "Areas of convergence increase confidence in findings. Areas of divergence open windows to better understanding the multifaceted, complex nature of a phenomenon [...] Focusing on the degree of divergence rather than forcing a dichotomous choice – that the data do or do not converge – yields a more balanced overall result" (p. 559). In this study, triangulation was achieved by conducting multiple interviews with multiple individuals, member checking the adequacy of the fit of descriptive themes to the lived experiences of participants, and saturation of experience in the interviews themselves.

***Member checking.*** Curtin and Fossey (2007) define member checking as a "way of finding out whether the data analysis is congruent with the participants' experiences" (p. 92). The goal of member checking is to determine whether the codes, concepts, and themes identified and used in the study elicit sufficient information to generate the meaning units that comprise what Moustakas (1994) defined as essence descriptions (Creswell, 2013). By sharing some of the preliminary findings or emergent themes with all of the participants, I was able to ascertain if the study adequately represented their perceptions of the phenomenon. Such sharing provided opportunities to find misinterpretations of statements or analysis without exposing the raw data for review.

***Saturation.*** Merriam and Tisdell (2016) define saturation as the condition when "you begin to see and hear the same things over and over again, and no new information surfaces as you collect more data" (p. 247-248). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) note that while there might not be objective guidelines that delineate the level of saturation in a study, a review of the raw data

collected during participant interviews and other data collection could serve to indicate if any new information is likely to be forthcoming.

**Transferability.** For a qualitative inquiry like a descriptive case study, the researcher's ability to represent the phenomenon under investigation in a resonant or meaningful way determines the study's value to potential readers. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), the onus is on the reader to determine applicability to his or her purpose, situation, or context. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) suggest that transferability can be achieved if the study includes thick, rich descriptions, sufficiently dense enough to allow readers to make extrapolations of the case to other cases. Lincoln and Guba (1985) also suggest that the presence of a clear audit trail provides the means for other readers to follow the logic of the study and make decisions as to the applicability of the study case and method to other studies or contexts.

***Rich, thick descriptions.*** A priority for this study was to demonstrate sufficient depth, breadth, and detail of content so that readers had access to enough detail for them to peer over the shoulder of the investigator, metaphorically speaking. Through the mental paintings generated through words and images of the researcher, the reader can then appreciate what is happening within that portrait enough to draw connections to other cases or settings.

**Consistency.** Merriam and Tisdell (2016) describe consistency within a study context as the degree to which the study uses the same methodology in data collection and analysis from the beginning to the end of the study, meaning that data is reviewed using the same methodology, typology, or process. For this study, the development of bracketing and a clear audit trail helped to demonstrate the consistency of the methodology.

***Bracketing.*** As with the qualitative tradition of phenomenology, case study researchers are interested in portraying the lived experience of participants in as holistic a manner as

possible. Therefore, researchers must take care to refrain from imposing their own biases and assumptions into the collection and analysis of data from participants. The process of *epoche*, which represents the articulation and setting aside of the researcher's "everyday understandings, judgments, and knowings" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 33), is a mechanism for restraining these biases. The Role of the Researcher section in this chapter contains a description of the *epoche* achieved in this study.

***Audit Trail.*** Merriam and Tisdell (2016) describe an audit trail as "a research journal [...] on the process of conducting the research as it is being undertaken" primarily in the form of "reflections, your questions, and the decisions you make with regard to problems, issues, or ideas you encounter in collecting data" (pp. 252-253). Appendix A contains the audit trail developed over the course of the study. The development of a Master Codesheet, pictured in part in Figure 11, helped to articulate how I developed the data units from the individual transcripts into codes, then categories, super-categories, dimensions, and finally thematic statements.

***Dependability.*** Merriam and Tisdell (2016) argue that internal reliability as a measure of value for qualitative studies can be problematic. They suggest that the project include internal controls to demonstrate whether the researcher has enough training and practice to produce reliable results. For this study, I used triangulation, peer review, and a pilot study to address dependability issues within the study's context.

***Pilot study.*** According to Glesne (2011), the purpose and function of a pilot study "are not to get data per se but to learn about your research process, interview questions, observation techniques, and yourself" (p. 56). The pilot study was intended to serve as a training process and evaluate the quality of the questions and methodology before initiating the formal research (Glesne, 2011; Slavin, 2007). In this case, I used my pilot study to replicate the conditions,

expectations, and ethical considerations inherent in the study, as well as using the selection processes for identifying sample participants. I conducted the pilot study for this dissertation with a volunteer participant from Idaho State University.

***Audit Trail.*** Merriam and Tisdell (2016) describe an audit trail as “a research journal [...] on the process of conducting the research as it is being undertaken” primarily in the form of “reflections, your questions, and the decisions you make with regard to problems, issues, or ideas you encounter in collecting data” (pp. 252-253). Appendix A contains the audit trail developed over the course of the study.

### **Role of the Researcher**

As Patton (2001) suggests, I, as the researcher, was the investigative instrument when conducting qualitative research. My own experiences, perceptions, and internal frames of reference influenced every aspect of this study. Therefore, it was critical that I provided means for readers be aware of my history with the phenomenon under scrutiny so that they could determine the degree to which my presence inserted itself into the study, its conduct, and conclusions. I include a discussion of my personal and professional history in education below to provide this context.

**Personal history.** I started teaching in a developmental setting at Idaho State University in 2002. I had completed my master’s degree in English in May of 2002 and had spent several months in a fruitless national search for a composition position. With a wedding coming, I was becoming more and more frantic, ready and willing to take any teaching job at any institution that would be willing to take me. That offer came in late July, and I formally accepted employment at Idaho State University on August 16, 2002, two weeks before classes began.

Upon arrival at the campus for my first day of work, I was up for a rude awakening. After receiving my workload, I found that the former instructor whose position I was filling was skeptical of formal syllabi and textbooks, and had left no course structures that I could build on to prepare for classes that began in less than two weeks. I would be responsible for creating two developmental courses, one on Writing and one in Critical Thinking. Despite the bravado I had shown a few weeks before in the interviewing process, I came to see that I had little to no idea of what a developmental course entailed and what differences existed in terms of teaching students in these courses.

That being the case, I took the syllabus and textbook from a first-semester composition course, eliminated some discussions of critical analysis and revision, replaced them with more intensive grammatical review and lectures of sentence structure, and walked into my class, confident that I was ready for what was to come. As experienced developmental instructors would expect, my first semester was a series of crises, disappointments, and radical self-reflection about my competence and preparation for the job I had accepted.

Despite sixteen more years in the position, I still feel that my understanding and capacity for meeting the needs of developmental students is still in development and transition. It is through this lens of perceived personal inadequacy that I seek to investigate the processes of other instructors, to determine, in part, if others share my sense of insufficiency and how they deal with it.

**Professional history.** The experiences outlined in Bustillos' (2007) recounting of her experiences working with developmental mathematics faculty resonated with me, in that they seemed to mirror my own experience in working with developmental faculty and students. I, too, find myself still struggling to understand the socioeconomic and academic backgrounds of my

developmental students and often see myself interpreting their responses and activities through the lens of my own academic and personal experiences. Moreover, just as Mesa (2012) found, instructional decisions based on inaccurate and inadequate information and understanding often result in misdirected curriculum and failed instructional experiences.

A personal anecdote might help to illustrate this struggle. A few years after I had begun teaching in the Technical General Education program, a colleague and I were comparing notes about how we were teaching a developmental writing course. Over the course of two hours, we considered whether the purpose of the course we were both trying to teach was to instill a strong foundation of fundamental writing skills or to elevate student skills to the point where they would be able to navigate an introductory composition course successfully. We also discussed how these philosophical positions affected what content we included in our course.

From our perspective, these were mutually exclusive goals. It was clear from even the most basic diagnostic writing activities that the diversity of skill ranges among our students were dramatic. Some students were reasonably adept at the fundamental processes of writing, and reference to their scores on the institutionally-mandated assessment tests were just a few points below the cut-off requirements for placement into regular composition courses. Other students showed that they had a flawed understanding of the mechanics and structure of writing, even at the sentence level.

It was clear that I had to make selective choices about what content to cover. Playing to the lowest common denominator students often alienated higher skilled students and complicated their efforts to enter their degree or credential programs. At the same time, providing them with the higher order content they required would require the introduction and discussion of content



so academically involved; this was sure to confuse some students, despite our best efforts to offer tutoring, extended office hours, and other instructional interventions.

So how does one plan and maintain focus and progress for a class with such a disparate set of needs? While the discussion began with a focus on this question in terms of the curriculum of the course, it quickly expanded into a much broader discussion about the nature of developmental education and questions that we, as instructors, had about what kinds of outcomes we had set for ourselves and how to measure the intangible nature of college readiness.

It was at this point where my colleague, Carolyn (pseudonym), one of the more senior faculty in our department at the time, asked me, “Clayn, do you think you would be comfortable running a triage?”

I responded, “What does that have to do with this?”

“Well,” she answered, thoughtfully, “You can’t save everyone. Like a doctor, you have to decide which individuals are worth the most investment. That means that you will have to ignore some students, even though they paid to be in the class and deserve just as much of your attention. Are you sure you want to deal with what that means?” It was a penetrating and haunting question then. I find that it is a question that still does not have an adequate answer.

In addition to my work with developmental students, in recent years, I have taken on more administrative responsibilities as a faculty coordinator, working with instructors teaching a variety of developmental and mainstream courses. In working with these instructors, I have had many opportunities for formal and informal conversations about the unique nature of remedial and developmental education, and the challenges that can come to both new and experienced instructors seeking to support their at-risk students. While I have gained valuable insights

through these experiences, I remain curious about how others negotiate these questions and the other unanswered aspects inherent in this discipline.

### **Summary**

In Chapter 3, I outlined the manner by which I selected the methodology I used in this study. I discussed the primary elements of case study methods; I also discussed how this study addressed those elements. I discussed the recruitment process used in this study, and my process for data collection and analysis, in accordance to recommendations from Merriam and Tisdell (2016).

I also discussed potential threats to the trustworthiness of the study and what steps I included in the methodology to address these concerns. I included a discussion of my personal and professional educational history in an effort to articulate my role as researcher in an effort to bracket my own experiences and perspectives prior to beginning data collection. Chapter 4 discusses the pilot study conducted for this study and the modifications to the study made because of the pilot.

## CHAPTER 4 – PILOT STUDY

In Chapter 4, I outline the way I conducted the pilot study in order to review the data collection and analysis processes. I include details about the pilot study, insights and changes made because of the pilot study, as well as the challenges that occurred during the collection process and the steps taken to resolve those concerns.

### **Pilot Study**

As per Merriam and Tisdell (2016) and Creswell (2013), it was strongly recommended that qualitative researchers ask a disinterested third party to review protocols and well as raw data to determine whether the findings are plausible, based on the data. Following committee approval of the initial proposal, I engaged in a pilot test of the interview protocols and data collection processes outlined previously in this proposal.

**Recruitment.** For the pilot test, the committee chair recommended locating an individual at an institution separate from any of the institutions meeting the same recruitment delimitations outlined in the research proposal. Having identified such an institution, I then contacted the English department at that institution. After acquiring a listing of individuals who would fit the study's participation parameters, a participant was selected randomly, using a simplified random sampling process - specifically, a random number generator to identify a  $k$  variable – and then selecting the individual, ordered alphabetically, that aligned with that number. The first participant selected using this method satisfied the delimitation requirements outlined in the study. I recruited this participant into the pilot test using an email invitation; I included a copy of this email as Appendix B. Since the data collected were not intended for use in research, I did not request Vivian, the pilot participant, to sign a notice of informed consent.

**Data collection.** The participant, Vivian (a pseudonym selected by the participant), agreed to use Zoom®, a distance learning software application, as the forum for the interviews.

Vivian also agreed to electronic recording, both audio and video, of all interviews. I conducted four interviews, 45, 40, 38, and 67 minutes respectively, over the course of one week. The participant logged into sessions from her office and home. Interviews most often occurred in the afternoon, with one session happening in the morning. The participant used both a laptop and iPad® device to access the Zoom® sessions. Zoom® allowed for video recording of the interview sessions, though I used Audacity®, a sound recording and mixing application, for audio recording as a backup should audio or video issues arise with the Zoom® recording.

**Peer review.** As per Merriam and Tisdell (2016) and Creswell (2013), this pilot was intended to serve as more than a test run of interview questions and protocol. The pilot test gave me the opportunity to examine the study propositions, as well as how the interview questions elicited responses. I also considered whether those responses were likely to yield insights into the study phenomenon. Based on direction from my advisor, I selected a disinterested peer, Dr. Lisa Kidder, who agreed to serve as a peer reviewer during the pilot test phase. In this capacity, Dr. Kidder examined my proposed data collection process and copies of the interview transcriptions. During the pilot study, I identified and addressed several issues noted during the pilot test: connectivity issues, interview transcription, and gaps in the alignment and sequencing between the interview questions and academic sub-questions.

**Connectivity issues.** I conducted the first interview online; both Vivian and I accessed a Zoom® session from our home internet networks. Upon opening the session, I discovered that I was using a link to Zoom® that was not set up to allow for video recording, so I opened Audacity® to generate an audio recording. In subsequent interviews, I used a different session setting that permitted recording so I could seamlessly create video recordings of the interviews. As a precaution, I decided to continue to use Audacity®, should other video complications arise.

As per the data security guidelines outlined in this proposal, all video and audio recording files were stored exclusively within an encrypted folder on Box®, a secure cloud storage service recommended by Idaho State University Educational Technology Services.

Within fifteen minutes of beginning the interview, the internet connection failed twice. At this point, I apologized to Vivian, paused the recording, and went to my office at the Pocatello campus where I would have access to a much faster internet connection. I also cut the two-way camera recording since it was possible that the video feed could be overloading the connection. After further discussion, Vivian determined the speed of her home network was likely the cause for the connectivity issues. We agreed to conduct all additional interviews from locations at the Pocatello campus of Idaho State University, as the connection speed there was consistently stronger.

This experience did highlight the importance of conducting connectivity tests with all participants before the beginning of the formal interviews, to ascertain which locations were most likely to provide consistent and uninterrupted interviewing environments. I did not experience similar connectivity issues with any of the study participants.

***Interview transcription.*** Following the completion of the first interview, I struggled to find the most efficient and effective means for generating a transcription of the interview. After consulting with the peer reviewer, I decided to test the captioning and subtitle services offered through YouTube®. As I reviewed the privacy options, I discovered that if I uploaded the files and designated them as private, they would not be publicly accessible or discoverable through search. After consulting with personnel at the Instructional Technology Resource Center (ITRC) at Idaho State University, I determined that I could upload these files privately, and then delete upon generation of the captioning transcript. The ITRC staff concluded that using this process

would satisfy any privacy and security concerns related to the research. I confirmed authorization for this process with Dr. Ralph Baergen, the Idaho State University Human Subjects Committee Chairperson.

Following processing, YouTube® automatically generated a captioned version of the video file, using a SubRip Service (.srt) file format. I then converted the .srt file into a plain text document. Once in text format, I uploaded the data into Data Miner Lite® for analysis. As would be expected with any computerized transcription of human dialogue, the transcription generated by the YouTube® algorithms was not devoid of transcription errors. Researcher review and correction of the transcription were required, though the actual number of errors and omissions were surprisingly low and significantly reduced the time needed to generate a reliable transcript. Again, all electronic copies of transcripts were stored online in an encrypted format using Box®. All transcripts only referred to the participant by the assigned pseudonym.

*Alignment and sequencing between interviews and academic sub-questions.* After completion of the second interview and the initial first reading of the transcripts of interviews one and two, I found that gaps seemed to exist between the questions posed in these interviews and the focus of the academic sub-questions and Grand Tour Question. I returned to the academic sub-questions and found that many of these questions focused more on the technical and procedural aspects of the transition between developmental and mainstream instruction. Such a focus suggested the questions would be unlikely to elicit responses related to describing how postsecondary faculty perceived the influences that informed their design and delivery of instruction as they transitioned between developmental and mainstream instructional settings, which was the stated purpose of the study.

As a result, in consultation with my advisor, I began to revise the academic sub-questions and interview questions. After reviewing the sub-questions, I, amended the interview questions and the sequencing of the interviews. Specifically, I condensed the preexisting first and second interview questions into a new first interview represented in Appendix C.

I also revised the second and third interviews to focus on historical and current processes regarding the design and delivery of instruction. Also, I integrated the concepts of curricular, pedagogical, and instructional domains of knowledge, as well as the transformational content, process, and premise reflections as outlined in the theoretical frameworks section of this proposal. Following this revision, I contacted Vivian and asked her if she would be willing to participate in an additional interview so I could pilot the revised question frameworks, which are included as Appendices D and E. She agreed, meaning that the pilot process involved four interviews, rather than the three initially proposed for the dissertation study.

***Committee review.*** Based on the alterations made during the pilot study, my review committee reconvened electronically in September 2017, to review the changes and recommend the submission of the study for Human Subjects Committee review.

## **Summary**

To review and test my proposed data collection and analysis processes, I conducted a pilot study prior to beginning data collection for this study. I recruited one participant from Idaho State University who met all the study parameters. I conducted the first interview as articulated during the study proposal phase. Upon reviewing the data collected from that interview, I decided I needed to amend the remaining interview protocols. I reformatted the remaining interviews and presented my findings to my committee. Following these changes, my committee approved a proposal submission for Human Subjects Committee review and recommended

proceeding to data collection. In Chapter 5, I discuss the data collection process and introduce the eight participants of the study.



## CHAPTER 5 – DATA COLLECTION

**Initial Human Subjects Committee approval.** Once the study proposal received committee approval following my completion of the pilot test, I applied for expedited review through the Idaho State University Human Subjects Committee. I received Human Subjects Committee approval on October 19, 2017; see Appendix F. After receiving institutional authorization, I initiated the recruitment and data collection process.

**Initial recruitment.** Recruitment for potential participants began by identifying specific broad-access institutions of higher education located in the Intermountain West region of the United States that offered developmental instruction programs. At every institution contacted during the initial recruitment stage, these developmental instruction programs focused on English or mathematics, so the primary recruitment process entailed contacting department chairs and faculty within these disciplines at selected institutions to inquire as to developmental instruction processes at those institutions and querying them as to whether their institutional structure satisfied the study parameters.

After identifying an institution that did meet the parameters for the study, I solicited a list of possible faculty participants from the department chairs of the English and Mathematics departments. I then invited candidates via their campus email addresses to participate in the study on an opt-in basis. The recruitment invitation email included clarification of the purpose and scope of the study, how I would use the data collected to improve practice, what data I planned to collect, and aggregation and privacy practices related to participation. I included a copy of the recruitment email as Appendix B.

Two weeks after the initial recruitment email was sent, I sent follow-up emails to the initial twelve invited potential participants. Up to that point, only three participants of the original twelve had responded to my queries; of those three responses, only one candidate had

met the individual study delimitations and had agreed to participate in the study. Following the second round of invitations, I had no additional affirmative responses, even after direct phone contact with each potential participant. After consultation with my dissertation advisor and the committee, I decided to revise and broaden the scope of the study to institutions outside of the original location.

**Modification of study bounds.** I designed the initial study for a participation pool located at a single institution. After further consideration and discussion with my advisor, I determined that the phenomenon and study question did not require geographical delimitations. By expanding the scope of the study to include other institutions, I could increase the potential for diversity in the participant pool, which could lead to a deeper level of saturation within the study. As a result, I made several modifications to the study related to changes in the recruitment parameters.

**Supplemental Human Subject approval.** After I completed these revisions, I sent a modification request to the Human Subjects Committee (HSC), outlining the changes made to the original research request. HSC approved this modification on November 9, 2017; (see Appendix F). Once I acquired this modified approval, I restarted the recruitment process, this time expanding the recruitment net to include faculty at other institutions within the region. During the study, I discovered that the changes proposed in the 11/9/2017 HSC Modification necessitated additional modifications in the wording of the academic sub-questions tied to the study to make the internal structure of the academic sub-questions consistent. I submitted these changes for review on January 17, 2018, and February 20, 2018, respectively; see Appendix F.

**Revised recruitment.** Upon approval of the modified HSC application, I returned to the beginning and started identifying a larger group of specific broad-access institutions of higher

education located in the Intermountain West region of the United States that had previously offered developmental instruction programs. I identified twelve different institutions within the Intermountain West that fit within the institutional parameters outlined in the study delimitations. Eight of these institutions had faculty that met study delimitations regarding participation.

For each institution, I followed the same procedures used in the previous recruitment phase for initial evaluation of the institution. I began by contacting department chairs and coordinators in English and mathematics programs to determine if the program met the institutional elements of the study delimitations. If the program met delimitation parameters, I then began soliciting the names of potential faculty members that might fit the participant elements of the study delimitations. I would also inquire as to whether there were additional remedial or developmental programs at the institution that might meet the study delimitations. I then invited candidates via their campus email addresses to participate in the study on an opt-in basis. The recruitment invitation email sent to these participants was the same as was presented in Appendix B, since none of the modifications made to the study parameters affected the language contained in the original recruitment email.

In this second round of recruitment, participation rates improved. I contacted twenty faculty members at eight different institutions. Of those contacted, I was able to interact with twelve candidates through email or phone contact. After additional discussion, two of these candidates did not meet all the parameters. I thanked each of these candidates for their time and excused them from further participation in the study. Two candidates elected not to participate due to time constraints. The remaining eight candidates met the participant parameters and agreed to participate in the study.

**Informed consent.** Once I received email notice of interest or received verbal agreement to participate, I sent an email detailing the participation requirements for the study, as well as a written notice of informed consent, approved by HSC. Within this email, I asked participants to indicate consent by submitting a signed copy of the consent document by scanned image or faxed documentation. I acquired informed consent from all participants before the beginning of any data collection. Appendix B contains a copy of the recruitment email; Appendix G contains a copy of the informed consent document.

***Voluntary participation.*** I informed participants that they could recuse themselves from the study without additional inquiry or requirement. If they requested removal from the study, I would remove and destroy any data collected from them through the course of the study. No participants requested removal from the study, though June expressed concerns that her personal and professional conflicts were complicating the study and offered to recuse herself from the study. After discussing these concerns with her, June decided to remain in the study, and I included all data collected from her interviews in the study analysis and eventual themes.

**Interview medium.** Once informed consent was obtained for each participant, a preparatory interview conversation was held using Zoom® distance conferencing software. This software solution reduced time constraints on the participants and made data collection much more feasible for me to complete, as geographical distance between the candidates was considerable and I had professional duties that prohibited traveling to conduct face-to-face interviews. Zoom® also integrated the video and audio recording processes, which made data collection more consistent.

## Interview Protocol

For this study, I based my interview protocol on Seidman's (2006) multi-stage interviewing protocol. Seidman recommends using three separate interviews with different contextual foci, each with its own set of interviewing questions. As per Seidman's suggestion, each interview helped to create a scaffold, which assisted in the collection of data that resulted in the creation of a substantive holistic depiction of the phenomenon in context, as advocated by Stake (2000), Patton (2001), Creswell (2007), and Merriam and Tisdell (2016). For each interview, I asked participants a series of questions related to the Grand Tour Question, the research propositions, and the associated research sub-questions, resulting in exploratory conversations guided by semi-structured interview protocols during three separate interview sessions.

**Seidman's interviewing series.** Seidman (2006) suggests that interviewing be conducted in three stages, each one having specific objectives and delimitations. In conducting the interviews in this manner, Seidman (2006) suggests that the researcher allows the participant to share the context in which the phenomenon occurs, and to separate descriptions of the phenomenon itself from attempts to attach meaning or significance to that lived experience.

As per Seidman's (2006) direction, each stage of interviews took place over different time periods. This staggered timeframe allowed me to engage in the initial data analysis advocated by Merriam and Tisdell (2016). It also satisfied Seidman's (2006) suggestion that extending the time between interviews builds a greater sense of a relationship between the researcher and participants, as well as "[...] [reduces] the impact of possibly idiosyncratic interviews. That is, the participant might be having a terrible day, be sick, or be distracted in some way as to affect the quality of a particular interview" (p. 21).

***Stage one: detailed life history.*** The first of the three interviews focused on asking each participant to provide a focused life history, articulating as much of the participants' lived experience as possible. It is during this stage that questions focused on the context in which the phenomenon occurs, and allow for the generation of the rich, thick details sought for in qualitative research. Appendix C contained the outline for the protocol for the Stage 1 interviews.

***Stages two and three: transition to mainstream instruction.*** The second and third interviews focused on questions that consider the meaning and connections the participant drew from the past effects or current ripples that stemmed from the phenomenon. It was at this stage that Mezirow's (1991) transformative learning model, as well as Kreber and Cranton's (2000) supplemental theories, regarding the role of disorientation and critical reflection as a foundation for the scholarship of teaching, came into play. Mezirow (1991) suggests that transformation occurs when individuals encounter experiences that disrupt and disorient previously established processes and assumptions that informed the interpretation of new experience.

When this disorientation occurs, Mezirow (1991) argues that individuals can engage in critical reflection about distortions in aspects of their processing methodology or the assumptions that underlie those processes. Kreber and Cranton (2000), in considering Mezirow's (1991) critical reflection process, suggest that a matrix of nine potential interstices exists when considering the three primary forms of generating and interpreting meaning – content, process, and premise – through three domains of educational knowledge - instructional, pedagogical, and curricular. Appendices D and E, respectively, outline the interview protocols for the Stage 2 and 3 interviews.

**Data handling.** To protect the confidential identity of participants, I attached pseudonyms selected by the participant to the transcripts and data units collected from each participant. In one instance, a participant suggested a pseudonym that seemed too informal for the nature of the study; Monica initially asked to be called Yoda, based on a nickname she had acquired at a youth camp. I recommended the alternative of Monica and she agreed to the newly selected pseudonym. I redacted any personal identifying information, such as places of employment, or past educational history, recorded in the electronic recordings or used in the transcript generation process. I limited access to the transcripts of the interview to the dissertation advisor and myself. All printed copies of the transcripts were stored in a locked file cabinet separated from the Informed Consent forms that revealed the participants' actual names. All electronic files containing transcripts were password protected. Upon publication of the study findings, I will destroy all transcripts by shredding and hard drive erasure.

**Off-site storage.** Based on Merriam and Tisdell's (2016) recommendations, a running inventory of the entirety of the data set collected, including "interviews, field notes, documents, [...] memos you wrote while collecting or thinking about your data," (p. 200), was maintained in an off-site location to address the potential for disastrous loss of data. I chose Box® to serve as a secure repository for all study-related materials based on requirements and expectations outlined by the Institutional Research Board at Idaho State University. I also adhered to all Idaho State University requirements and practices related to data security and privacy in research settings.

### **Participant Profiles**

The participants of this study were eight faculty members from five separate broad-access post-secondary institutions throughout the Intermountain West in three separate states. They ranged in age from 40 to 55 years old; six were female and two were male. All eight participants

had advanced degrees: one Doctor of Philosophy, one participant had completed doctoral studies and had been working on the dissertation for her degree, and the rest of the participants' degrees were Master of Arts. Participants held degrees in a wide variety of disciplines, including Mathematics, English Composition, and Higher Education Leadership/Curriculum Design.

All eight participants had previous teaching experience in what they identified as remedial or developmental instruction. This experience ranged from three years, the delimited minimum standard for the study, up to thirty years' experience teaching in developmental settings. Three participants reported less than 10 years of overall instructional experience; three participants had between 11 and 16 years of experience, and two participants had 28 years or more of overall experience. All eight participants described themselves as having experience in teaching in remedial or developmental settings as part of their current roles as faculty. For the scope of the study, developmental instruction was defined as "interventions and activities intended to support and encourage at-risk students, which can include tutoring, personal and career counseling, advising, and coursework supplemental to traditional academic programs" (Casazza, 1999, p. 5). In three instances, participants defined their workloads as being almost exclusively developmental.

As a formatting note, in the following chapters, direct quotations from participants appearing in block quotation format will use italics and single spacing.

Christine – *"You learn on the job from people that have been doing the job."*

Christine was 55 years old and the only mathematics instructor in the participant group. She has a master's degree in mathematics and had the most years of experience in teaching among all the participants, with thirty years of experience in both developmental and mainstream



instructional settings. Christine was relatively new at the institution and saw her arrival as a sign of a changing attitude about the future of developmental instruction at her institution.

*Recently, we've had some new hires and I'm one of them and I think that's been the most helpful thing to the students here is to get some fresh faces that have experience with development. That, and just new people tend to be more energetic, you know, and willing to try. I think they were in a little bit of a rut for a while just because they haven't had any new hires for so long and the word was the faculty were not as experienced in developmental instruction (Christine)*

Christine did not use a webcam during our interviews. Even though our conversations occurred in Zoom®, I was often talking to a black screen, which limited the option of using non-verbal cues to interpret Christine's emotional reactions to questions or gauge her feelings about her responses. However, Christine's voice was quite expressive and she varied the tone, speed, and emphasis of her voice regularly based on the context of her comments. For example, in our first interview, she talked about her experiences in trying to get students to attend class and said, "I don't have any answers other than they gotta come to class." She placed heavy emphasis on the word "gotta." Coming to class, class attendance, and physical presence were common elements of Christine's responses regarding her practices in the classroom.

Christine grew up in a house where her father was an engineer; she shared that she knew her father set clear expectations about her own need to pursue higher education. After changing her degree several times to find a field that best suited her interests, Christine found herself completing a bachelor's degree in curriculum and instruction, a degree she has found to be of little use in terms of preparing her for the rigors of teaching in the classroom. As she put it,

*Honestly, it was a title only. It didn't help me at all. I took three classes in the Education Department at [redacted] in order to get a degree called Curriculum and Instruction and one of them was a math methods course, one of them was scientific methods, and one of them was in educational technology but there was no educational technology in 1985. (Christine)*

Christine did not believe everyone can, or should, teach these kinds of students. For instance, when discussing the impact and utility of student course evaluations, Christine shared an experience from a faculty meeting where

*We have one faculty member here in the math department will say in a mass meeting, "I don't like doing group work. I want to lecture to my students," and to me, that's a mistake, but that's his approach. And students say to me, 'Oh, my gosh! I didn't learn anything from his class,' and I wonder if it's because it's hard to listen for an hour if someone's just talking at you. (Christine)*

Christine seemed discontent with the kind of teaching she has observed in traditional university settings. The nature of instruction in these kinds of settings can lead to situations where

*a freshman calculus section at [redacted] University might have 250 students. There's not a lot of teaching going on in there; there's somebody standing up there, telling them what they should know and then they gotta go learning on their own. Whereas a Calc[ulus] I class at a community college might have 30 [students] and there's some real teaching going on. (Christine)*

At the end of the first interview, Christine asserted that

*Community college teachers are experts in teaching; we don't have PhDs because we don't want PhDs. We want to be good teachers. We don't want to do research; we just want to be good teachers. The community college teachers in America, who teach the developmental math and follow with transfer level math, are the real teachers and there's a lot of value there. They should not be sold short. (Christine)*

She emphasized the importance of the experience of actual teaching in the classroom. Many of the experiences she shared related to how she learned to teach, which revolved around her time in teaching in community college settings. As she observed in the third interview, she felt that these were places where “*people with a master's degree are appreciated because I don't know that that's necessarily true, everywhere.*”

I think that the proverbial walls came down only after I shared my professional connections and history with developmental education. When Christine seemed to realize that I did have a significant history in teaching in developmental settings, she acted as though she felt

more comfortable discussing her thoughts and feelings regarding her own experiences. This comfort level grew to the point that, at the beginning of the third interview, she even suggested that I attend a regional conference on developmental mathematics that she found particularly useful and potentially relevant to the topic of my research, though mathematics was not my disciplinary background.

Diane – *“They're different; I'm interested.”*

Diane was a 45-year-old instructor with shoulder length dark blonde hair and a penchant for wearing bright floral scarves or turquoise jewelry during our interviews. Diane's hands were always active as she spoke, gesturing or emphasizing a concept with motions or pantomime. She always had a smile on her face, and her nose would crinkle a bit when she laughed at a memory or something she or I said during our interviews. Her eyes were also very emotive, widening when she asked questions about the nature of the study and my motivations for investigating this topic, or shifting off to the side as she reflected on a question in the second and third interviews. Diane participated from her office, which seemed large, as there were no corners visible in the webcam, or shadows to indicate close spaces, and the light coming from an office window somewhere off-camera always provided subtle diffused lighting on her face. At the beginning of the second interview, a fuchsia-colored music stand appeared next to a well-ordered bookshelf over her shoulder, and she had taped what looked like guitar or string tablatures to the stand itself.

Diane holds a master's degree in English Rhetoric, Composition, and English as a Second Language, and, on paper, was the least experienced participant in the group, with only five years of instructional experience, three of them in developmental instructional settings. However, from Diane's perspective, much of her life was lived in preparation for working with disadvantaged

and at-risk students. Even from a young age, Diane appeared to be aware of marginalized populations and expressed a desire to engage with them

*I was, I think, at an early age in elementary school, looking at students and going, 'Oh, look, he speaks Spanish. They're different; I'm interested.' Eventually, my educational background led me to be an exchange student in Spain after my senior year of high school, so I learned Spanish and I think I've always wanted to acknowledge that there are a lot of ways to be and there are a lot of ways in education that aren't accessible to everybody. (Diane)*

She spoke often of the need to appreciate the needs of different audiences and that such an awareness should shape the teaching process. As she expressed in our first conversation,

*I was really intrigued by being part of a program that granted young students access to an education that they may not be able to have. And I believe that you know, if you get to go to college and perhaps your family before didn't, that's power. That's got some power. [...] After having worked, as you have, with students who don't have the same kind of access to transition skills or knowing the right people or understanding how an institution works [...] these are really important pieces of not just education, it's a holistic model of saying, 'You deserve to be here; you, you have different kinds of preparedness. You're differently prepared than the mainstream students.' (Diane)*

Diane described an experience where she was able to help a few of her developmental students to express themselves in powerful and meaningful ways. This experience resulted in the students standing up to influential political figures, both inside and outside of her institution, and had lasting positive impacts on those students' perspectives of their potential. Diane's face was always bright and open, but it was in those moments when Diane spoke about how her students were beginning to conceptualize their power that her face seemed to shine.

Diane saw direct correlations between her work as an instructor in a developmental setting and the opportunities for meaningful access and progress for her students.

*But in terms of what do I want to have my students experience or what's the outcome that I want for them? [ . . . ] I think it's the confidence, self-awareness and maybe the self-kindness, the confidence to know they're here. Yeah, it's going to be hard, it's going to be challenging; some classes are gonna just break you. They*

*get us all, you know? To give them the broader view, almost, to give them a little experience in metacognition, thinking about thinking - why are you here? (Diane)*

Diane ardently expressed her desires to not assimilate her students, especially those with their own deep-rooted identities, into the atmosphere of the university. Instead, she described her role as a type of guide or interpreter, helping these students find unique or creative means of bridging the gaps that have separated them from the opportunities higher education offers to them while remaining true to their cultural heritage. In her own words,

*If you don't understand the ways that a system works, I think it's our gift. We can try to make education transparent to our students and try to understand that they're not supposed to come here and get it right away. They might fail, and it's heartbreaking, but even if they fail, showing them how to fail gracefully, you know? (Diane)*

June – “[...] help them see themselves as they really are instead of what they believe they are”

June was a 42-year-old with a master’s degree in Theory and Practice of Writing and has thirteen years of postsecondary teaching experience, eleven of them working in developmental settings. As with Christine, there was no webcam connection with June, so I conducted all our conversations via audio only.

June’s experiences with postsecondary education were reflective of many of the challenges faced by her students, especially non-traditional students. As she explained,

*I enrolled right after I graduated from high school and, um, I got married the same semester and got pregnant the same semester. And I remember when I told my dad and my mom that I was pregnant, my dad, he was angry, he was really angry because he thought I was going to stop going to school once I was pregnant. And it was really hard. I kept going to school, but it was difficult once you start having kids, so then it took me seven years to get through my bachelor’s degree. (June)*

This set of experiences seemed to shape her perceptions of how to deal with situations when her students faced similar challenges. As a result, she tended to focus on helping her

students become more aware of these concerns and identify possible processes that could minimize or mitigate them:

*It's a lot. It can be very overwhelming. But I have seen such enormous growth. Every semester, I have students who come to me, and not because I am such a fantastic teacher, whatever, but I have acknowledged that they are smart, they are capable, and that there was something that happened in the past that kept them from doing what they knew they were capable of doing and just because I instill in that student that they are capable, that they have the ability to do great things.*  
(June)

June faced significant challenges during our interview processes. Several miscommunications about scheduled times, an unfortunate skiing accident, and an injury June suffered from slipping on ice delayed her initial participation in the study. At one point, June asked if I still was interested in interviewing her, because, as she stated in an email communication, “*Trust me. I'm over myself at this point.*” However, her passion for developmental education and the need for scholarship and research in this area was such that she persisted, telling me in the same email that she still wanted to participate in the study. There were times that June’s commitment to this study helped to bolster mine and kept me moving forward to its completion. For instance, when sharing how a colleague negatively reacted to her decision to focus on developmental instruction, June stated

*Yeah, it is really interesting to me, all the different thoughts about different things, and where attitudes come from and how dated and antiquated some of them are. I'm really happy that you are doing this research because I think there is a lot that needs to be done regarding developmental students and education, so I think it's a great thing.* (June)

June’s current workload focuses on developmental instruction. She has not worked in mainstream settings regularly in the past few years. In this position, she spent quite a bit of time working with both the instructional/curricular and policy/institutional aspects of developmental instruction and brought unique insights into some of the developing trends in the field, including

increased institutional awareness of the presence of developmental students, though sometimes this attention was not necessarily positive, as when she shared

*And that is a fear, a fear of mine. And I think that's the direction we're going. I think that's what [our Associate Provost] is doing here - the idea that developmental is not serving our students the way that they need to, but [...] if we change the way we label them as learners, [...] we could just remove the developmental from the University completely. But I don't know if I am fully on board with that. [...] I see this trend and it makes me nervous. (June)*

Marie – “It's with the students that are not likely to succeed, that's where you change a life.”

Marie was a 42-year-old woman with a Master's degree in English and nineteen years of professional teaching experience, sixteen of those in activities related to developmental instruction. I conducted my interviews with Marie using teleconferencing, rather than video conferencing, as using telephones rather than computers made conducting the interviews a little easier for her. However, using a phone rather than a computer did not allow for video capture; this changed the dynamic of the interview slightly. Conducting interviews over the phone limited my observations to what the audio recording captured. Marie worked in a program that combined developmental courses with a host of other developmental activities, including the creation of a block of developmental courses with a strong emphasis on college readiness and integration. She described it as

*a transition to college program, so we want students to get to have a community. We want them to have a community of peers that they have multiple classes with and a community of faculty who are also working together in the program and getting to know the students really well. Then we add on an advisor to each class; each first-year seminar class has an advisor that is prepared with that class so that the students see that person in class and it's also the person that is helping them with their major, financial aid, and all of that. (Marie)*

Marie's work included administrative responsibilities, which gave her unique perspectives on the program as well as the function the program serves at the institutional level.

For instance, she shared that she perceived that in her interactions with institutional leaders, the common perception was

*There hasn't been any talk of raising admission standards, but more talk of, 'How do we better support our students?' so I think we're in a good spot right now. I think we're moving towards if it's not embracing developmental students, at least understanding that what you do to help developmental students will end up helping a lot of other students as well. (Marie)*

Marie began her current work by getting involved in a social learning project as a graduate student, and this idea of social connection appeared prominently in her descriptions of the priorities that shaped her class design and delivery

*I do a lot of community building in the first few weeks of the semester because, for my at-risk students, most of what will keep them coming to class and being engaged in the community that they feel that they have with their classmates and with me and that sense of having a family on campus. It is just a couple of quick things I do like trying to marry in some secondary research with some of the assignments so that students have an opportunity to talk with people and reach out back to their communities and reconnect with people from their home communities in their assignments. (Marie)*

Like Diane, Marie saw that student connections with others served a critical function in developing learning, especially for students who are at-risk in higher education settings. Marie spoke several times about the role construction plays in her design process, especially in creating and fostering the sense of community necessary to reassure these students

*I'm really looking at scaffolding and breaking down assignments into smaller pieces. I'm thinking a lot about relevance to students and I change out all the readings if I need to, to make sure that the readings are going to be highly engaging and relevant for the students [...] I also do some guided in-class writing where I am trying to lead the students through the moves that college students make when they're working on an academic paper because I see that so many of my students have not done sustained writing much at all in high school. (Marie)*

Later, she added,

*I do think there's a need for contextualizing at every level, of every type of student, [...] I do think that contextualizing, the community building, just working*



*more on the affective pieces, I think, will be more transformative in terms of college persistence with remedial students, with their learning in general. (Marie)*

Monica – “[...] 50-60% of what I do in a developmental class has absolutely nothing to do with content”

Monica, a 53-year old instructor working toward a Doctor of Education degree in Higher Education Leadership/Curriculum Design, has short dark-brown hair with grey highlights and red-rimmed glasses. Her interviews all took place in her workspace. Pictures, notes, stacks of papers, and copies of Norton© Anthologies filled the walls and cabinets of her office. A picture of Yoda peers out at me from the frame of the video in the top hand corner.

Throughout all three interviews, Monica was incredibly personable and welcoming to me, both as a researcher and a colleague. For instance, she apologized during our initial phone call for her faculty photo on the department website, which she felt was completely misleading. When I asked her to select a participant pseudonym, she requested that I call her Yoda. Monica constantly joked and laughed, transforming our interviews into a series of relaxed conversation between colleagues, rather than stiff clinical experiences, as evidenced by the regular light-hearted examples she gave to illustrate ideas she was sharing. For instance, she gave this comparison when talking about critical thinking and the use of outside sources in writing

*I try to tell them, ‘You know, charlatans write books, too. People who lie to you, write books and articles for newspapers, you know, so you have to be a critical reader [...] I want them to be as critical of the information they get in print or digitally as they are of the items in a salad bar at a restaurant. They are more concerned about how that broccoli looks on that salad bar at the local restaurant than they are about this digital information that's coming at them 24 hours a day. (Monica)*

With a very deep professional portfolio in the field of developmental education, Monica served in leadership positions related to developmental education at the institutional, state, and national levels, providing insights into the nature and condition of developmental education in

the United States. In our first conversation, Monica shared the following about her own professional history and experience with developmental instruction

*I guess because I'm 53 and it's like, 'Okay if I get my doctorate now, what's that gonna do? It's just gonna be a title, it doesn't change the depth of experience I have with developmental education. It doesn't change the fact that people still call me like you do, you know? People call me and find out who I am and they're like, 'Oh, oh!' you know? 'Let's talk if it's okay that we talk.' But it's those it's that kind of experience, more than a degree, more than something on paper, I think, that makes me feel like I've accomplished something. (Monica)*

Monica was still dedicated to developing her teaching skills and often talks about new approaches and concepts that she is testing in the classroom to meet the needs of her students. For instance, even though she sees herself as somewhat constrained in the kinds of assignments and activities she could use in a developmental writing class, as she put it,

*it doesn't preclude me from bringing in a research article or bringing in quotes or data showing them how to summarize, showing them how to paraphrase [...] We can talk about Wikipedia and how that's a good place to get an idea, but it's not a great place to find a quote. I show them how easy it is to update a Wikipedia page because I actually go on one in class and update it so that they can see that I can update it, so that means some guy in his basement can update it too. (Monica)*

Beyond her professional interest in the field, Monica shared a personal awareness of the burdens her developmental students can face. Her voice breaking, Monica stated:

*When I got with those developmental students, it was life or death for some of them. Yeah, it was the way out of poverty, it was, and this gets me choked up because it literally saved their lives, and I think people don't understand that about, about developmental education - that for some people, it is literally the key to their existence, that if they can get past poverty and abusive relationships and dead-end jobs, it is transformative. (Monica)*

Monica's personal and political philosophies tended to underscore an emancipatory perspective of developmental instruction. As she describes it, "I don't ever want to lose sight of that and I don't want to assume that I'm some kind of, you know, white savior out there, too, but it kind of has that feel; it's not just a vocation, it's a calling."

Phil – “[...] *the more I realize that sometimes it's not about the answer, it's about the effort*”

Phil was a 42-year-old full-time English instructor. He had dark brown hair and a short brown beard with whiskers of grey and white along his jawline and chin. All the interviews took place in his office, which was an institutionally painted off-white but which did not seem to have any windows or natural light sources. His shelves and bookcases were neat and organized, with several different textbooks and primers. There was one paperback text lying upside down on a shelf behind him. A large poster over his left shoulder displayed a Greek pantheon issuing commands against the use of various logical fallacies. Next to the poster, I saw a framed image of the endangered Pacific Northwest Tree Octopus©, an illustration from a well-known fake news source commonly used by composition instructors to help demonstrate the potential dangers of relying on outside sources without adequately evaluating their credibility.

Phil had a master's degree in English and taught English in postsecondary settings for eight years, focusing on developmental instruction for that entire period. Before his current position working in higher education, he spent time working in a wide variety of industries, including secondary and international settings. When asked about this diversity of professional experiences, he explained

*I had been really just going to school too much and I needed some more practical experiences, so I moved with some of my friends and just went to work, you know, waiting tables, doing landscaping, things like that. But then, when I went back to school, something changed. I wanted to take the courses; I found I was interested in absolutely everything, like my First Aid/CPR class. My biology class was great; I even liked math when I could understand it, you know? (Phil)*

Phil often emphasized the desire for critical disruption and disorientation in his class design. For instance, he often used deception in his class design, such as when he described an unusual assessment technique:

*I also have a pop midterm. I know, who gives a pop midterm? [...] About 50 minutes into it, they usually haven't had enough time to finish, but I tell them to put their pencils down. They think I'm finished with it and I ask them if they'd like to cheat. I said, 'Okay, with your partner, for five minutes, share your answers - help each other out.' Then, five minutes after that, I'd ask them, 'Do you want to cheat some more?' and then I allow them to use their notes and the idea is it's just a big review session. (Phil)*

Phil often spoke of working to break down student expectations in order to encourage them to engage in intentional and critical thinking activities in the classroom. As Phil described it, “it's not about teaching them new things; it's breaking down the walls that they've built up to prevent them from doing the very things that we're asking them to do.” Nowhere is this goal more evident than in Phil's approach toward grading, which he described as

*I also work to really stop students getting through without meeting essential outcomes, [...] I still use a rubric, but students get the lowest score on that rubric. [...] Let's say that they do fairly well on sentence structure, word choice, [...] but the organization is way off. So, [...] if they got a B for organization. the whole paper would be a B[...] When you aggregate scores, you don't see where the problems are because the other scores cover it up [...] They can resubmit [...] as long as they highlight changes that they made in their paper along with why they've made those changes. (Phil)*

By failing to take deficiencies in writing seriously, by not requiring students to address errors, Phil suggests that he sees himself as part of the problem. As he put it,

*I feel like we're not doing anybody any favors because what happens is people get passed along and so in college, we wonder how these students get passed along through high school. Out in the workforce, people are wondering, 'How come this person can't write?' and so I say, 'We're gonna stop that cycle right here.' (Phil)*

Phil also focused on integrating intentionality in his class design, asking students not only to consider content but the underlying assumptions that shaped their perceptions of the information presented and its relevance to their own experiences. Phil shared that this design decision originated part from specific course readings and content that he used to illustrate the value and necessity of critical thinking and its impact on their own lives. For instance, he

discussed an assignment he had students complete regarding their attitudes about the phenomenon of academic grit and stated

*Hey, it's more complex, it's not just putting your head down and doing crap you don't want to do, ' because a big part of grit is supposedly a growth mindset and the idea that I can improve and motivation. So those piano lessons that you hated to go to? That was not grit because if you didn't get any enjoyment or you couldn't see any future value out of that [...] so it's really trying to get them to engage in a deeper level than I think they used to. (Phil)*

According to Phil, such reflection also helped students to appreciate failure, and to recognize the nature and intent of an academic experience happened while they were learning.

As he explained it,

*That's why I tried to be fairly disruptive with them, to set them up, usually in an anxiety-provoking situation, where I give them their mock spelling test and disrupt that [...] to help students understand that we have this English class and we have this work to get done, but at the same point, the way we approach their work is really going to determine our outcomes [...] So, if we can model playfulness, if we can create those situations that allow students to do that, yeah, I think that can help get them to where they want to go. (Phil)*

Ralph – “My number one goal is to get students to [...] start self-identifying as writers with a student task.”

Ralph was a 40-year old with a Ph.D. in English Composition and twelve years of composition experience, five of those years in developmental settings. Ralph had light brown hair, a short, well-groomed beard, and a baritone voice. His first two interviews took place in his office, which, like many of the other participants, was open, well lit, and very organized. Ralph would tend to look at the camera when I asked a question, but his gaze would shift somewhere else when responding. His eyes would narrow, especially when asked questions that would require recollection or reflection of his experiences.

Like some of the other participants, Ralph shared that his family's past educational successes and expectations served as motivation for him to pursue his postsecondary education.

As he explained,

*Education in my family was, it was very valued you know? My father had an MBA from Harvard, my grandfather had his JD from Georgetown. I mean, just several generations - my mother went to college and so I always felt kind of like a failure, you know? I felt like, even if I didn't use the degree, I just needed to go back and get it done. (Ralph)*

That pressure provided him with a positive impetus to return to education after several years working in other fields, though, as he realized, there were other realities:

*I was working as a plumber's apprentice for not very good money and it was hard work and that's actually what kind of motivated me to go back to school. You know, I would come home from work just beaten up every night and think "This is so hard when I'm 20, what's it going to be like in my 50s?" (Ralph)*

After returning and entering a degree program, Ralph discovered his interest in teaching stemmed from the realities of his work as a graduate student:

*I did the teaching assistantship and I realized at the end of that first semester that all the work that I did as a teaching assistant never felt like work, like putting together assignments, grading papers, teaching the class - it just felt like it was fun. It felt like a hobby and then I would go and do my real job at the Sheriff's Office. 'Hmm,' I thought, 'what would it be like if I could just do this full-time?' (Ralph)*

This sense of identification, of empathy with his students, resonated in Ralph's descriptions of his teaching perspective. His own lived experiences seemed to echo some of the concerns and challenges his students were encountering: "*I think because of my experience of coming back to school after I was married, with kids, and working full time, I just had a soft spot for people that were non-traditional*" (Ralph). That view sparked his interest in developmental education as he shared an experience in his graduate career when he first visited a developmental class and noted that:

*In my mind, I was picturing the classroom as just being all either international students or students with disabilities or domestic ESL students. When I went and sat in, it wasn't like that at all. These were just like my students in my English 101 classes I was teaching. I really didn't see much difference and I started realizing that if things had been just slightly different, these students probably would have been in my English 101 class. (Ralph)*

Ralph suggested that context should be a focus in curriculum design. As he puts it

*I always try to make sure everything is in a context like I never teach grammar out of context. I don't teach the writing process out of context; everything has to do with their own writing, and that's why I often will have a first draft due right away right after we start a unit. Because once they get a draft out there, it's much easier to talk about things like topic sentences, grammar, and transitions, if they have their own writing they can look at. (Ralph)*

This concept of context also connected with another theme in Ralph's experience – the importance of reducing instructional confusion. In designing his developmental courses, Ralph came to the realization that

*every assignment was very different in the way I would approach them: the drafting process, the rubrics I used they were all very different [...] but when I started teaching 990 and 1010, it became evident very quickly that students would figure out the process for the first formal paper and then the next, if I didn't do that exact same process, they would just get confused and I felt like I spent the whole semester [...] just trying to make sure they understood the instructions. (Ralph)*

In addressing that concern, Ralph found that reducing instructional change increased students' ability to demonstrate proficiency in learning outcomes, rather than their ability to adhere to assignment expectations. As he expressed it, “*Now they can just focus on the ride and focus on the paper [...] [it] takes some of the mystery and the work out of the class and lets them just focus on the writing.*” (Ralph)

Savannah – “*[...] I sort of stumbled into the best job ever*”

Savannah was a 44-year-old full-time instructor with a master's degree in Rhetoric and Professional Writing. She had shoulder-length brown hair, a very calm voice, and shifted her

shoulders and head quite a bit as spoke. Her office was more colorful than many of the other participants, with a mint-green accent wall, stained glass in the window inset on her office door, and a large whiteboard over her right shoulder. Pictures of family, notes, dot the board, along with a handwritten note, attributed to Winnie the Pooh©, asserting that, “People say nothing is impossible, but I do nothing every day. Do the impossible!”

Savannah has fifteen and a half years of professional postsecondary teaching experience; fourteen associated with developmental instruction. The developmental program she worked in is nationally certified, and Savannah shared this impression of that certification

*we've taken our program through the national certification process, which is quite an in-depth process of evaluating what we're doing and looking at what we should be doing differently, what we could do to be more productive with the students, what the university could do to be more productive with the students.*  
(Savannah)

Savannah's background and teaching experience were unique from the other participants in that much of her mainstream instruction, especially in recent years, was not in introductory composition courses, but instead in upper-division professional/technical writing courses. Savannah designed her courses for college juniors and seniors, who came to her courses with a much different skillset and perception of the university culture and their role within it. As she described them,

*I have different expectations in terms of how much scaffolding will be needed for the students to be able to take on the work. I expect a higher level of execution from them without hand-holding, I feel like I can provide them with the information and we discuss it and I provide them with models that should be sufficient, and I expect them to run with it.* (Savannah)

For instance, Savannah asserted that there was value in experiential learning, creating opportunities for students to engage in learning that grounded learning in real life settings outside of academia, but struggled to find ways to integrate it into her developmental course settings:



*I've sort of lamented with my developmental students [...] they are really pressed for time. They have families, they have full-time jobs, all of different things, so between their time constraints and the fact that they don't really have those baseline skills yet for functioning at a college level, I have not found that they seem to be in a position where I would feel safe giving them those kinds of experiences, challenges to take on as I would in an upper division class just because they get easily intimidated. A lot of times, they are afraid to try because they would rather not try than fail. (Savannah)*

Savannah also noted that her current position allowed her to engage in additional service assignments within the university community that did not necessarily relate to her work in a developmental program. She shared her experiences on these committees and the impact she felt it had on her program and her department

*I did notice that dynamic immediately so it's hard for me to section out what part of the respect I'm getting comes from the service I'm doing at the university level and what part of it comes from the fact that they see me as more than developmental English, do you know what I mean? It's just that many of them see the instructors as developmental as well as the students. (Savannah)*

She also reflected that this increased level of visibility on campus has had other effects as well:

*[A]dministrators are more interested in us and more interested in what's going on in developmental education and that kind of thing than at any point that I've ever seen in the past, so we're on we're under a little bit more of a microscope than we have been, but we're also able to ask for more support in some respects than we previously were because the administration is just more aware [...] [that these] at-risk students that are most likely to not be retained if we don't take steps to do things well. (Savannah)*

## **Interview Schedule**

As the interviewing process began in November and continued through January, I allowed participants to select dates for their interviews that would fit into schedules already busy with holidays, final exams, grading, and vacations. The goal was to schedule interviews for each participant close to each other, in line with guidelines suggested by Seidman (2006).

Unfortunately, I was not able to fit all interviews into the timelines he suggested. Appendix H

displays the dates when I conducted each interview for each participant, along with along with the dates when I began initial transcription and analysis for each transcript.

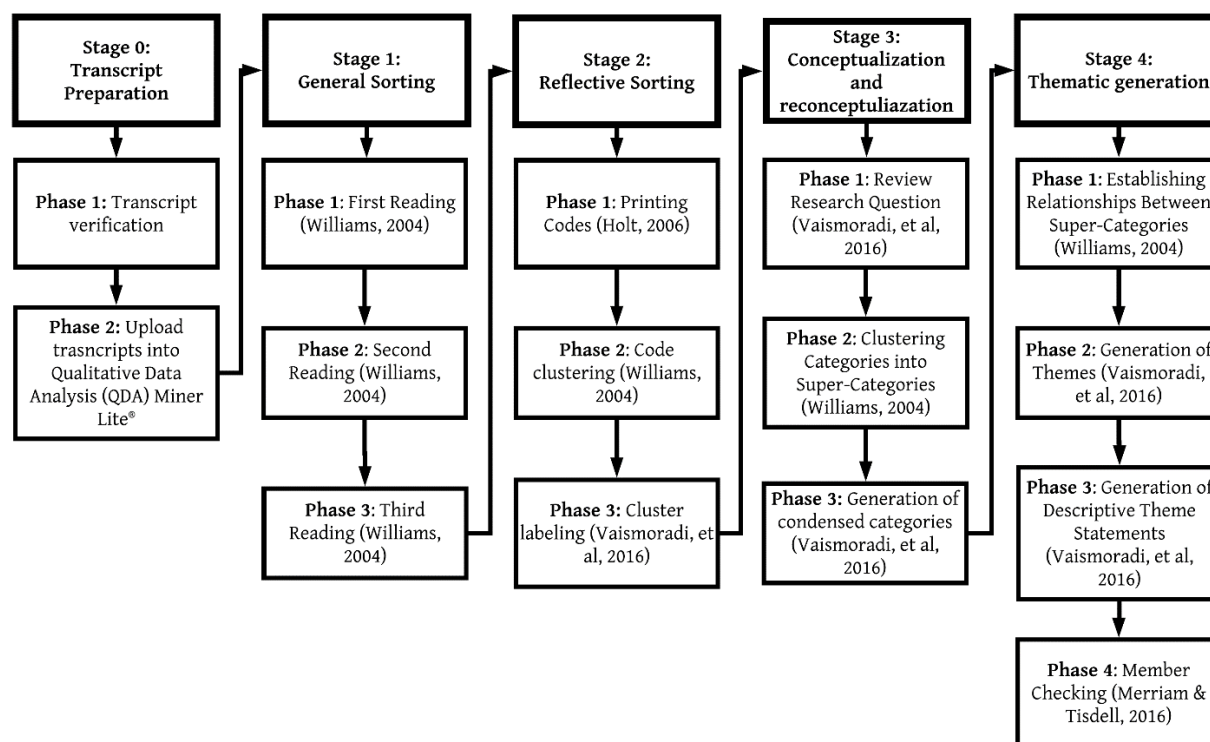
### **Summary**

After receiving committee approval, I submitted a proposal to the Human Subjects Committee at Idaho State University to conduct this study. After receiving initial approval, I determined that the institution I had originally planned to use as the research site for this study would not work. After consulting with my committee, I revised the scope of my study from a single site case study to a multi-site study. I amended my Human Subjects Committee proposal to reflect this change and received approval to begin data collection. I outlined the processes through which I conducted all the interviews. I also include profiles of all eight participants to provide context for the data analysis, which I discuss in Chapter 6.

## CHAPTER 6 – DATA ANALYSIS

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) assert that qualitative data analysis should follow a structured process. Williams (2004) suggests a concrete description of this implementation process. For this study, I utilized Williams's (2004) four-stage process in the analysis phase with minor technical differences, outlined below. I also utilized elements from Vaismoradi et al.'s (2016) work regarding qualitative thematic development. The combination of the two approaches led to the exposure of the underlying dimension relationships among the super categories that form the basis of the themes for this study. This process was developed based on the analytical approaches of Holt (2006), Merriam and Tisdell (2016), Vaismoradi et al., (2016), and Williams (2004).

Figure 3 below graphically outlines the steps of the modified Williams-Vaismoradi data analysis process used in this study.



*Figure 3.* Modified Merriam-Williams-Vaismoradi data analysis process. This modified model articulated the process through which analysis moved from raw transcripts to descriptive thematic statements.

## **Stage 0 – Transcript Preparation**

At the end of the data collection process, I had twenty-four digital transcripts. Each transcript represented a separate interview session with one of the study participants. However, before analysis could proceed, I needed to review and confirm the accuracy of the transcripts before I could upload them into the computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) program I selected, Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) Miner Lite®.

**Phase 1 – transcript verification.** After the transcripts were generated using YouTube®’s captioning service, I reviewed each transcript to verify that the transcript reflected, as accurately as possible, the actual interview conversations that took place with the study participants. I did this by replaying the audio track of each interview while following along in the printed transcripts. During the playback, I corrected any errors or omissions I found in the transcriptions. I saved each interview transcript in Microsoft Word® format and stored a copy in an encrypted folder in Box.com® using the participant’s assigned pseudonym.

**Phase 2 – transcript upload.** Once I had verified all the transcripts, I uploaded the transcripts into Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) Miner Lite®. I identified each transcript by participant pseudonym and the sequential number of the interview. I uploaded all twenty-four interviews into QDA Miner Lite®.

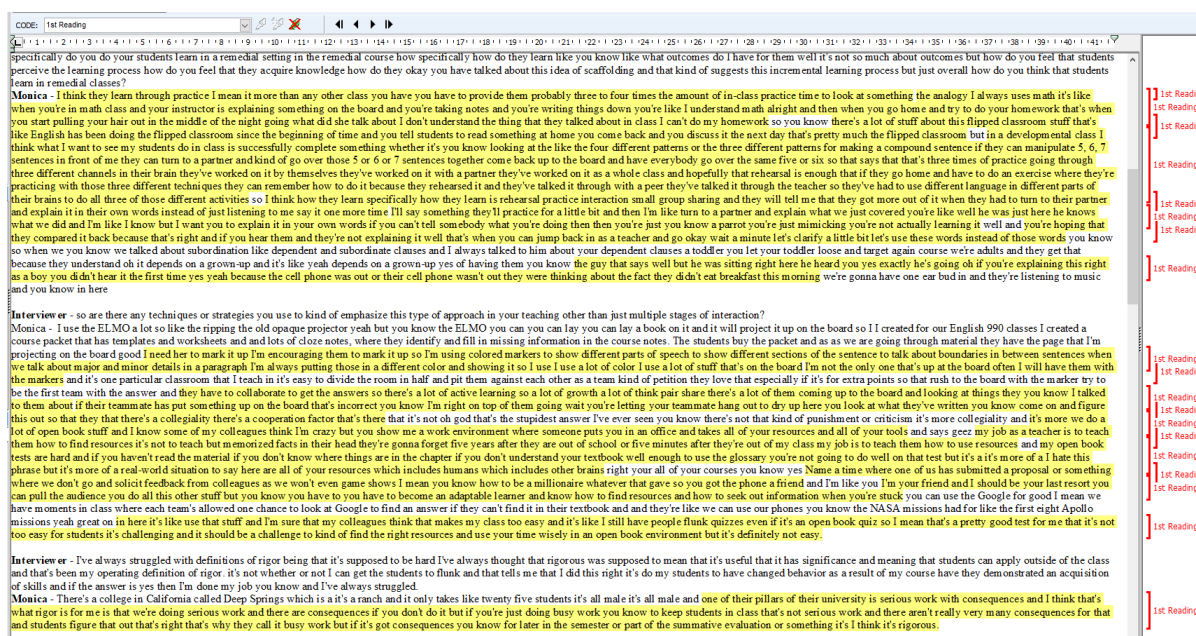
## **Stage 1 – General Sorting**

Stage 1 of the data analysis process, according to Williams (2004), focuses on multiple readings of the transcripts, each reading having a different purpose and annotation process. The purpose of these readings is to identify segments within the transcripts that Merriam and Tisdell (2016) suggest are “responsive to the purpose of the research” (p. 212) and that meet the two criteria recommended by Lincoln and Guba (1985) of being heuristic and discrete. The first of

these criteria, that a data unit should be heuristic, suggests that data units should provide information germane to the Grand Tour Question and that could direct readers to consider meaning beyond the context of the original unit of information. The second, granularity, implies that data units should be discrete and as specific and short as possible, without requiring significant contextualization to elicit the heuristic effect mentioned previously.

**Phase 1 - first reading.** In phase one, Williams (2004) suggests the first reading should proceed in a highly intuitive state, looking for segments within the text that, as Merriam and Tisdell (2016) state are “interesting, potentially relevant, or important to your study” (p. 204). In William’s process, these segments should be marked using a yellow highlighter. Rather than using a printed copy of the transcript and marking it by hand, I instead utilized the coding features in QDA Miner Lite® to accomplish the same task.

I began the first reading by creating a Category and Code in the QDA Miner Lite® Coding menu. Since I was not seeking to generate codes that suggested any greater meaning yet but was striving to remain in the intuitive state that Williams (2004) and Merriam and Tisdell (2016) suggest, I opted to use the simple phrasing “First Reading” as both category and code. Such phrasing was clear, understandable, and did not rush to attach meaning or significance to any particular data unit. I marked text segments I found to be relevant in each transcript by selecting the First Reading code. I highlighted the selected text in yellow and I designated each data unit in the margin. I proceeded to use the same code and category organization for each transcript. This process yielded 1053 unique data units. Figure 4 shows a screenshot of a transcript page containing marked data units within QDA Miner Lite®.



*Figure 4 – First Reading. In Stage 1, Phase 1, marking of a first transcript using QDA Miner Lite®, included highlighting key text to indicate the presence of a potential data unit; marking also included adding 1<sup>st</sup> reading codes in the right margin.*

**Discussion of alternative process.** There were two primary reasons for using QDA Miner Lite® instead of Williams' (2004) yellow highlighter method. I planned to use digital software, specifically Microsoft Excel®, to organize and manipulate the data units identified during the analysis process. In considering Williams' (2004) marking process, I realized that after I finished marking each transcript by hand, I would then have to replicate those handmade highlights in a digital format, adding unnecessary redundancy to the sorting process. I could eliminate this redundant process if I completed the original marking in a digital environment.

Second, I was desirous of keeping my data organized, as suggested by Merriam and Tisdell (2016). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) recommend that data management should prioritize the preservation and protection of the data. I decided that using a digital format to store my ongoing analysis findings would be a safer solution to address Merriam and Tisdell's (2016)

concerns of possible data loss or corruption. Printing out and managing large sheaves of transcript documentation seemed likely to add unnecessary complexity and risk to the process.

**Phase 2 – second reading.** Merriam and Tisdell (2016) advocate that analysis progresses initially by annotating study transcripts by “jot[ting] down notes, comments, observations, and queries in the margins” (p. 204). Williams (2004) recommends that this phase occur by returning to the beginning of the transcript and reviewing only those data units marked in yellow during the first reading. The focus of this annotation is to address why these segments were initially selected what aspects of the segment truly stand out (Williams, 2004). To help emphasize those parts of the unit that stood out, Williams (2004) suggests that the use of a blue highlighter on top of the segments previously marked in yellow will result in marks that appear green, making it easier to identify them.

***Discussion of alternative process.*** As I had already used QDA Miner Lite® to identify data units during the first reading, I did not intend on using an analog process during this phase. As I considered how I could replicate the intent of Williams’ (2004) second phase, I discovered QDA Miner Lite® did not support marking processes not tied into a specific coding designation, meaning there was no mechanism to easily add annotations. I could add an annotation as a note, but not in a format that could be exported into other software or remain visible the same way that handwritten notes would appear in the margin of a transcript.

It was at this point that I decided to export the data units I had already marked using the “First Reading” code into Microsoft Excel®. This process involved generating a report through QDA Miner Lite® that contained all the coded segments, each containing the full data unit, as well as the identifier of the transcript file from which the unit came. I exported these files into a text file, which I then imported into Microsoft Excel®.

To help keep the information organized, I consolidated all the annotations for each participant into a single worksheet within one Excel® workbook, generating eight total sheets. I labeled each sheet with the participant's pseudonym. In the first column of each worksheet, I indicated which phase generated the annotation. For instance, I marked the all units found during Stage 1, Phase 1 as "First Reading." I anticipated that I might find additional units during the third reading; if this were to be the case, I could then designate them as "Third Reading" and code them accordingly. I determined that this column organization would allow me to be able to filter results based on their reading, as needed.

In the second column, I identified the participant pseudonym and the transcript number. The third column contained the entirety of the language of each marked data unit. Figure 5 depicts a screenshot of this phase.

Reading	Interview	Data Unit
1st Reading	Ralph 1	Education in my family was it was very valued you know my father had an MBA from Harvard my grandfather had his JD from Georgetown I mean just several generations - my mother went to college and so I always felt kind of like a failure you know I felt like even if I didn't use the degree I just needed to go back and get it done
1st Reading	Ralph 1	While I was in both graduate programs, I focused a lot on developmental writing. I took as many seminars as I could in developmental writing, adult literacy. I was really interested in non-traditional students. I think because of my experience of you know coming back to school after I was married with kids and working full time I, you know, just had a soft spot for people that you know were non-traditional but unfortunately while I was taking all these seminars as a graduate student I really never had the opportunity to teach developmental writing courses
1st Reading	Ralph 1	I thought I was brilliant but now looking back I realized it just was not a very rigorous educational experience and I think that's why I struggled in college because I expected to kind of skate through my classes the same way in college and it wasn't the case at all.
1st Reading	Ralph 1	I really enjoyed the course; you know, she was a great instructor and like I said before, though it was all theoretical, they offered to let us kind of sit in on basic writing courses to observe what was being done you know and I took advantage of those opportunities. I asked the department several times to make an exception. I said, "This is what I want to do, I want to teach these basic writing courses."
1st Reading	Ralph 1	I thought it was just, you know, I would get a master's degree and you know teach at like a community college or junior college. I said, "If, if that's what I'm gonna do, I need experience teaching these courses." But they just held firm to their policy, you know only master's degrees can teach these courses; we don't like TAs; I was always bummed about that.
1st Reading	Ralph 1	I kind of felt like a fraud because I had never actually taught a course but I was the administrator of it.

*Figure 5* – Codesheet. The Excel® codesheet initially separated data units by row and included the phase in which they were collected, as well as the participant name and interview number.



I decided to use the fourth column in the worksheet to add annotations and comments, as per Williams (2004) and Merriam and Tisdell (2016), and have those notes contextualized to their respective data units in a usable digital format. I then began to read each segment, writing out what I felt to be the main idea or compelling aspect of the unit in light of my Grand Tour Question. In some cases, especially in cases where the central idea of a segment might not appear consecutively, but from selected ideas that appear in different parts of the segment, I would use red text to identify the idea in the data unit in the third column and include a summarization of the main idea in the fourth column. Figure 6 depicts a screenshot of this worksheet.

Reading	Interview	Data Unit	Main Idea	Codes
1st Reading	Diane 1	I was looking at students and going oh look she speaks Spanish <b>they're</b>	they're different I'm interested	they're different I'm interested
1st Reading	Diane 1	I think I think I've always wanted to acknowledge that there are a lot of ways to be and <b>there are a lot of ways in education that aren't accessible to</b>	a lot of ways in education that aren't accessible to everybody	a lot of ways in education that aren't accessible to everybody
1st Reading	Diane 1	I watched my Mexican and Mexican American friends that <b>struggle with language in middle school or high school or culture or class because</b>	struggle with language [...] or culture or class because they didn't have as much if someone else did	struggle with language [...] or culture or class because they didn't have as much if someone else did
1st Reading	Diane 1	I started being aware of this and so <b>I wanted to learn about another culture and become knowledgeable and</b>	learn about other cultures [...] aware of the world	learn about other cultures [...] aware of the world
1st Reading	Diane 1	started to really think about injustice and about how <b>we may not be serving populations of people that deserve just as much as someone else who's</b>	may not be serving populations of people that deserve	there's not equal access for everybody in education
1st Reading	Diane 1	<b>there's not equal access for everybody in education</b>	there's not equal access for everybody in	there's not equal access for everybody in education
1st Reading	Diane 1	I was really intrigued by being part of a program <b>that granted young students access to an education that they may</b>	that granted young students access to an education that they may	a lot of ways in education that aren't accessible to everybody
1st Reading	Diane 1	<b>if you get to go to college and perhaps your family didn't before that's power</b>	you get to go to college [...] that's power	you get to go to college [...] that's power
1st Reading	Diane 1	after having worked as you have with <b>students who don't have the same kind of access to transition skills or knowing the right people or understanding how an institution work</b>	[certain] students don't have access to transition skills	[certain] students don't have access to transition skills
1st Reading	Diane 1	these are really important pieces of not just education <b>it's a holistic model of saying you deserve to be here</b>	holistic model saying you deserve to be here	holistic model saying you deserve to be here

*Figure 6 – Second Reading. Code identification began in the 1<sup>st</sup> reading, highlighting the salient data bit, reducing the data bit to a main idea, then abbreviating it to an early code.*

As I realized that summaries might not always be the most useful annotation, I began to use the fifth column to articulate what Williams (2004) described as an explanation of “why I chose the insights and consider what aspects of the highlighted areas stand out” (p. 1). By adding this clarifying element, I began to record elements of my audit trail for others to follow in my work. In some cases, this was a simple repetition of the summary appearing in the fourth column. In other cases, it represented my interpretation of the idea I felt the participant was trying to communicate, especially in situations where using the participant’s expression might require too much context to meet Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) expectation of discrete units. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) refer to this process as coding. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) define coding as “*nothing more than assigning some sort of short-hand designation to various aspects of your data so that you can easily retrieve specific pieces of the data*” (p. 199, emphasis in original).

***Creating a codebook.*** As I moved through the participants’ transcripts, I began to aggregate the codes that the reflective reading was generating into a master worksheet. This master worksheet alphabetized all the codes assigned during Stage 1, Phase 2, regardless of their source. This codebook contained over 750 codes, though I associated some of these codes with more than one data unit, which explains why there were fewer codes than there were data units. Such an aggregation process helped me to begin to notice trends and repetitions of concepts amongst the participants.

The code, “*adjuncts and temporary faculty in developmental settings*” serves as a good illustration of this repetitive use of a single code. When Marie spoke about the developmental program at her institution, she mentioned, “I think the university has tried to mitigate it to some degree but we have probably 2/3 of our instructors in [institution] are either temporary or adjuncts right now.” In discussing the same topic, Monica noted, “the least effective thing right

now is that a hundred percent of the [developmental] classes are taught by adjuncts.” Phil observed, “[...] the irony of developmental writing is the students that need the most help oftentimes get the instructors that are at least qualified to help them, so your instructors are a lot of adjuncts.” Not wanting to attach a value judgment to these different references, I used the code “*adjuncts and temporary faculty in developmental settings*” as a short-hand reference that I could then use as a filter to find these data segments using Excel®’s data filtering features.

***Discussion of alternative process.*** Williams (2004) suggests that the generation of a master codebook take place in Stage 3. I found that by digitizing the transcripts and coding, it was easier to begin the development of the codebook earlier in the process. The underlying purpose of beginning the codebook in Stage 3 in Williams’ (2004) model is the idea that the analysis process is an ongoing process that begins as soon as the first interview is conducted, with the intent being that this analysis should inform any additional interviews. In this particular study, I completed all the interviews before the initiation of the data analysis; therefore, I completed the analysis in a different sequence than Williams outlined in Stages 1, 2, and 3 of his model.

**Phase 3 - third reading.** Once I finished the second reading in Excel®, I returned to QDA Miner Lite® to complete what Williams (2004) described as the third reading. At this stage, I used a feature in QDA Miner Lite® to redact all the text segments I had previously coded as “First Reading.” I then reviewed the remaining text segments, but did not find any overlooked data units that would address the Grand Tour Question in potentially meaningful ways.

## **Stage 2 – Reflective sorting**

In Stage 2, I continued the coding process begun in Stage 1, Phase 2, recording my reflections in column 5 of the worksheets for each participant. In some cases, these reflections

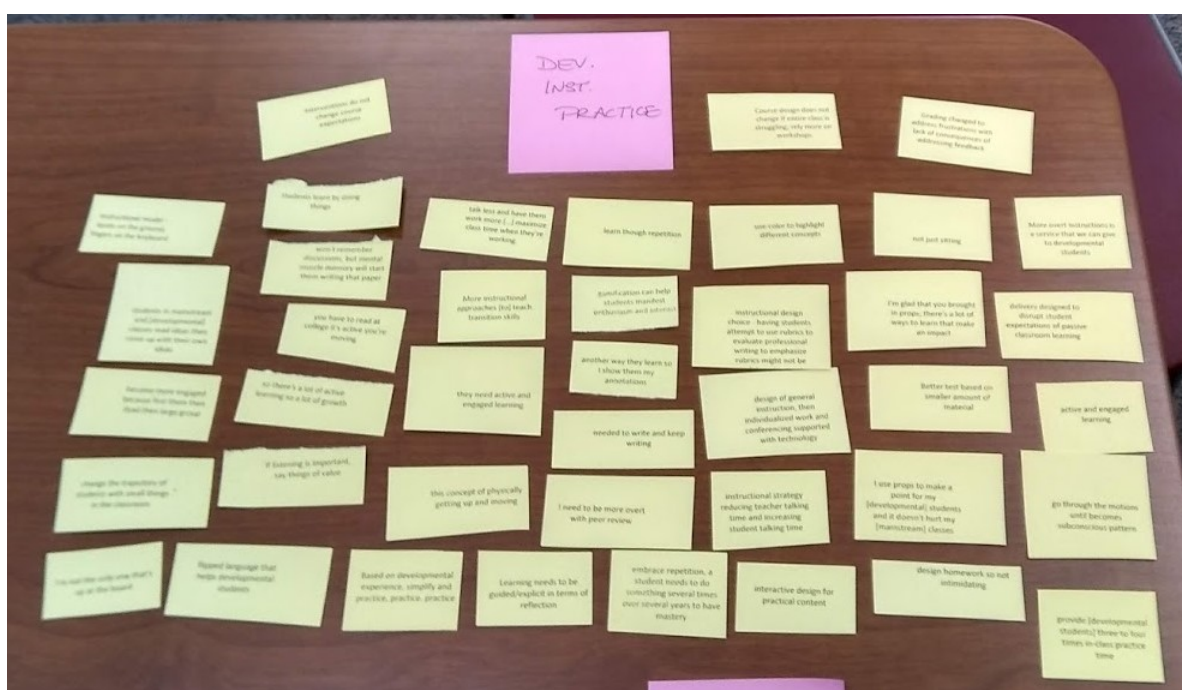
were full sentences, but in many cases, they were simple phrases. For instance, the content of one of Marie's original data units stated, "We were trying to put together a set of classes for students coming in under the admission bar so that they would not be put into a class that would not count for them as a first-year composition class." I coded this unit as "reaching out to students below admissions level."

**Phase 1 – code printing.** While I first tried to organize the codes in Excel®, I felt that the digital environment isolated me from the codes I was trying to organize. Holt (2006) suggested printing out the categories to facilitate different configurations and classification patterns. I decided to print out the codes using cardstock paper to create cards I could easily shuffle and move. Figure 7 depicts one of these sheets of codes.

a lot of critical thinking is] figuring out what you want to know	a lot of ways in education that aren't accessible to everybody	a position of authority saying your experience matters	A signal in the back of my mind [...] we're not having a deep discussion [...] so let's try another tack
a single model that stays consistent throughout the course	a single model that stays consistent throughout the course came from developmental to inform mainstream design	ability to deal with negative feedback important	access and engagement led to success
access to and consistent contact with support services	accessibility and trust	accountability - miss a test, get a zero.	acknowledge capacity leads to motivation
acknowledging student capability builds confidence	ACT scores and GPAs not just product of their skill but reflection [their] environment	active and engaged learning	activities designed to foster successful academic habits
actually reading a text and holding them accountable to that text	Additional support systems implemented (advising, cohort, conferencing)	adjunct or temporary faculty in developmental settings	adjuncts and temporary faculty in developmental
adjuncts and temporary faculty in developmental	administration more aware of developmental	administrative awareness of at-risk students and effect of developmental on retention	administrative awareness a "microscope"
adult learners need to understand value of what we're doing	advocates outside developmental making it a priority	Age and maturity tend to lead to curiosity and growth mindset	aggregate grades hide problems
all human; it doesn't matter what level of academic preparedness we come with	always creating supplemental games to get students to interact with each other	another way they learn so I show them my annotations	anticipate what they know and they don't know; what will turn them on or tune them out

*Figure 7* – Printing codes. Compiling the codes and then printing them out facilitated the process of physically sorting them according to emergent unifying concepts.

**Phase 2 – code clustering.** Once the cards were printed and cut, I began the process of clustering cards by placing them in piles based on conceptual comparisons and classifications, as suggested by Vaismoradi et al., (2016). I started with one card and considered what concept or pattern the code seemed to suggest, then placed it in a separate area on a large table. I then took the next card in the stack and reflected on whether it suggested the same pattern or concept as the previous card. If the answer were yes, I would place it next to the first card. If it were not, I would place it on a different physical area of the table. Figure 8 shows this process.



*Figure 8 – Clustering codes. Codes clustered into groups based on unifying concepts written on using Post-It® notes; these labels were amended or moved as the need arose.*

This sorting and clustering was an intuitive and iterative process, meaning that as I encountered codes that did not seem to fit into currently existing clusters, I would create a new one. I then repeated the same process for the next code, and so forth, until I finished the initial sorting and clustering for all the codes identified in Stage 1. Figure 9 depicts this sorting stage near the end of the process.

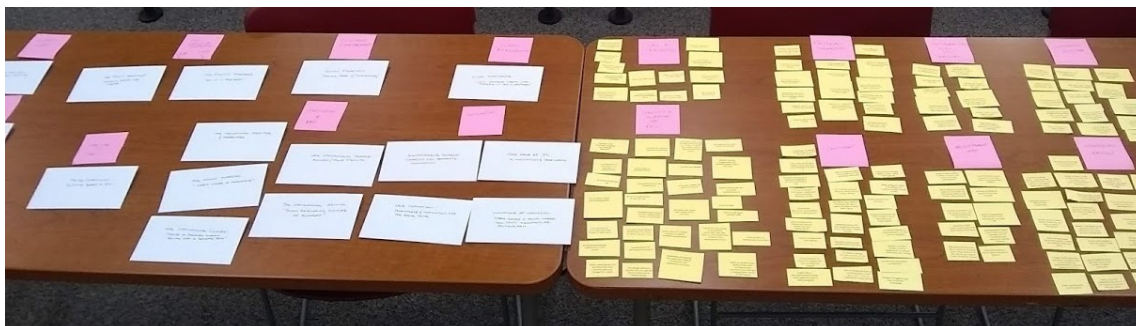


*Figure 9* – Expanded clusters. As the sorting process expanded to include more and more codes, clusters were added, divided, rephrased, or abandoned to reflect the emergence of more adequate unifying ideas.

**Phrase 3 – category labeling.** To help keep these clusters organized, I would use Post-it® notes to attach labels to the pile, to represent the organizing principle that explained what the pile represented. According to Vaismoradi et al., a label “captures something important about what is presented by the participant. [...] Researchers need to sort codes into piles of similar meaning and find labels that give sense of the main ideas developing from them” (p. 105). As labels were attached to these clusters, they transformed from simple clusters of codes to what Merriam and Tisdell defined as categories (2016). As I worked through the process, I would regularly review my existing categories to determine whether new categories suggested more inclusive or descriptive patterns that reflected relationships between codes. Thus, I would sift, reorganize, divide, or combine categories as I added more codes to the table.

Once I finished sorting, I realized that leaving individual codes laying unsecured on the tables posed an unnecessary risk. An inadvertent bump of a table or slight breeze caused by an opening door could easily thwart the organizational layout before I could record what I had discovered. Therefore, I placed the codes of each category into small white envelopes and transferred the concept written on the Post-it® onto the front of the envelope. I depicted this transformational process in Figure 10.





*Figure 10* – Assigning codes to categories. The use of white envelopes represents the transition from clusters of codes into discrete categories of data units.

Additionally, I generated a new worksheet in my Excel® workbook, labeled Master Codesheet. I transferred all the data units and codes from the separate participant worksheets into this new Master Codesheet. I removed the data previously contained in the first column, as the source of different readings were no longer pertinent information in the analysis. I also moved the original fourth column of codes to the third column. In the new fourth column, I appended the first category labels I had created during Phase 2. This way, I had a digital record of the physical envelopes and a worksheet where I could visually see the path taken from identifying the initial data units through the categorization process. Figure 11 shows a screen capture of this new Master Codesheet.

Case	Datapoint	Code	Category
Diane 3	you're working from a place of trying to catch up with the knowledge they may not know at the same time feeding them new information	trying to catch up with the knowledge they don't not know [while] feeding them new information	Meeting them where they are
June 1	you're not a novelty if you have gone through developmental, a lot of students have to go through developmental, but there is a stigma	lot of stigma (about dev ed)	Not less than...
Christine 3	You're just catching up to the starting line. That can be incredibly imposing when you when you think about how much work you have to do just to catch up with everybody else is starting	just catching up to the starting line	Just catching up the starting line
Diane 1	You're here Wow you survived that and you're here you deserve to be here	no shame no blame you're here	Help[ing] them to believe in [and] trust the instructional process
Diane 2	you're all doing a portfolio everyone's doing it like this so I don't want them to feel that they're exceptional in a pejorative way	never make it explicit that they are [developmental] students	Not less than...
June 1	when I tell people that when I say, I'm going to stay in Developmental Ed, when I was getting my PhD, my advisor asked me what I was going to do when I, once I graduated and I said, I don't know, I think I am just going to keep doing what I'm doing and she acted like that just was the weirdest response to say that I really wanted to stay in	should aspire to higher things (than dev ed)	[We] should aspire for higher
Christine 3	You want to get through the content - that's the first thing you do when you're prepping for a class.	plan out the content [...] and spac[e] it out [...] to give enough tests.	Shifting gears a bit
Savannah 1	Well we do have a lot of our interaction with them which has been a really positive thing I don't feel that most most of the faculty members really understand what we do and there are a number of them who don't value it all that much but I feel that the more integrated the development and English program has become with the English department	most faculty lack an understanding of developmental and don't value it	[We] should aspire for higher
Ralph 1	You start to see this pattern of, you know, they just haven't really taken the time to sit down and read and enjoy something or write something. They've always just kind of found shortcuts to get out of that and so you know obviously I can't force them, but you know, I try to develop my assignments in a way that there's no way to complete the assignments without actually completing the	Students have found shortcuts to avoid engaging in academic activities	Reading the signals of students' 'alternative strategies of avoidance.'

*Figure 11* – Master Codesheet. The Master Codesheet contains the original codesheet, adding the cluster labels developed during Phase 3 to facilitate future sorting and organizing.

I generated fifty-four categories through the labeling process. Table 1 presents these categories in descending alphabetical order, moving from left to right. Below the table, I have included representative data units to illustrate each category.



Table 1

## Stage 1, Phase 3 Category Labels (54)

A community of faculty [...] working together	Domino effect of developmental education	Inheriting students who have suffered from educational malpractice	Past kept them from doing what they were capable of doing	There's so many pieces [...] but they all take so much time
Archaeology of curriculum development	Feel[ing] a sense of excitement about moving forward in college	It is a calling in a lot of ways	Quick feedback [...] helps them build their confidence	They don't know what it means to be a college student
Aspire for higher [we should]	Finding what works	It is literally the key to their existence	Reading the signals of students' 'alternative strategies of avoidance'	They have to feel a connection to their classmates and me
Broad interest in student retention	Good teaching is good teaching	Just catching up the starting line	Respecting students as humans	Understand[ing] the culture of college
Can you learn how to learn	Help[ing] them to believe in [and] trust the instructional process	Meeting them where they are	Shifting gears a bit	We don't have [...] the institutional flexibility to [...] meet their needs
Class attendance - Can't address needs until they're in the classroom	How do we better support our students?	More differentiated learning, but we're not quite there yet	Showing students the moves other students use	We're under a microscope
Classes are smaller - there's real teaching	How in the hell am I gonna use what I learned?	No perfect plan	Tailoring parts of the class to who's in my class	What you do to help developmental students will [help] other students
Content engagement - Serious work with consequences	I can really tailor my feedback	Not just one right way to get there	Teach them enough to be successful	Who are we to know what they deem as the best things to take away?
Creat[ing] a culture that embraces at-risk students	I don't have to [...] fill in any of those [confidence] gaps	Not just sitting	Teaching everything in context	Willing to do the work as a teacher
Critical thinking is figuring out what you want to know	I learned everything [...] from my colleagues	Not less than...	The instructors that are at least qualified to help them	You're missing a lot of that human interaction
Day to Day teaching is what you're going to say	I think they learn through repetition	Not watered down	The relationship between instructor and student is important	

*A community of faculty [...] working together.* Marie observed, in discussing the strengths of the developmental program at her institution, that she felt as though her program was

“a community of faculty who are also working together in the program and also getting to know the students really well.” June noted that from her perspective,

*I think that administrators, and other professors, and colleges are starting to understand the importance of developmental but it has taken a lot of years, a lot of years and I don't think it's totally fixed, but it's getting better.*

Savannah shared the observation that in her program, “the people in developmental English really are colleagues with the people in the rest of the English department.”

*Archaeology of curriculum development.* This category label stemmed from a statement Ralph shared in his third interview. When asked what influences directed his own approach to teaching, Ralph replied, “You know, I'd have to really think about the archaeology of curriculum development. I'm not sure if it came from a textbook or it was just something I noticed as a student that I liked. It's just the way I've always done it.” In talking about her own influences, Christine described an analogy comparing teaching with learning to drive. In part, she shared that

*You're not a good driver for the first few years, but you're okay, you know? You stay between the lines and get to where you want to go, but after a few years, you get better at it and you notice more. [...] After five to seven years of teaching, you can step back and you're not so focused on getting the content to them, you're thinking big picture.*

*Aspire for higher [we should].* The reaction she received when she told her graduate adviser that she was planning to teach developmental composition surprised Jane. In her words, Jane recalled, “I don't know if it is just the ugly stepchild. I don't know if it is like she kind of said that I should aspire to higher things.” Monica observed, “I don't think a lot of people understand that; I think they think because I teach developmental classes maybe I'm not quite smart enough to teach other things.” Savannah shared that “I noticed immediately at the very first faculty retreat [...] I had said I'm teaching developmental English and that was kind of the conversation ender.”

*Broad interest in student retention.* This category focused on participant perceptions of shifting attitudes among colleagues, administrators, and departments at the institutional level concerning efforts to increase student retention, particularly among at-risk and developmental populations. As Marie described it, “We've been on a roller coaster for a while now but I think we're at a place now where there's actually some broad interest in student retention.” Savannah noted her own feelings on the subject in her first interview, when she noted that her administrators were “just more aware of those students I'm working with [...] as being kind of the at-risk students that are most likely to not be retained if we don't take steps to do things well.”

*Can you learn how to learn?* Christine, when discussing what she wants to instill in her developmental students, stated, “It's not necessarily about the math, [...] it's about can you learn how to learn? Do you understand [...] how to listen, how to take notes, how to use your book, how to use your resources?” In considering how his students learn, Phil suggested that

*I find my work is breaking down the wall. It's not about teaching them new things; it's breaking down the walls that they've built up to prevent them from doing the very things that we're asking them to do.*

Savannah observed that

*I think it's exciting to be a school that offers people who are serious about their education a chance to have a second try or a chance to have a first try [...] when they discovered that that's what they want.*

*Classes are smaller - there's real teaching.* The original stimulus for this category came from an observation that Christine shared in her first interview. In contrasting community colleges and larger universities, she noted that “[...] whereas a Calculus I class at a community college might have 30 and there's some real teaching going on.” This concept of smaller class size is comparable to a more favorable teaching environment, especially in cases of developmental students, was echoed in Diane’s comment that

*I think sometimes focus on the individual is a great thing. It's easy to do that when classes are smaller; if you have a class of 40 or 50, that's not going to be one of my strategies as much.*

*Class attendance - Can't address needs until they're in the classroom.* When discussing how she evaluates whether she is being effective in helping students to acquire the learning objectives she has attached to the course, June added the idea that “I know a lot of professors don't take roll, they don't care if their students are there. They don't they don't monitor it, but I do. If I'm teaching my students time management, about responsibility, about finishing what you started, stuff like that, then they have to be there.”

*Content engagement - Serious work with consequences.* Monica introduced the core phrasing of this category when she mentioned the core mission of another institution she was familiar with was “Serious work with consequences.” She expanded on this thought later in the same interview, observing that

*I think that's what rigor is for me [...] doing serious work and that there are consequences if you don't do it. But if you're just doing busy work [...] that's not serious work and there aren't really very many consequences for that and students figure that out.*

Diane shared, “Sometimes I see that excitement in my [developmental] students, but sometimes we may be worried to kindle it because they don't realize how much they don't know.” Savannah shared her concern that for many of her students, “They take on a new text and they employ those reading skills and then they practice what they're learning [...] so it's experiential, but it's not at a level that comes with the consequences; the risk is minimized.”

*Creat[ing] a culture that embraces at-risk students.* Marie observed, “we've had good support, I would say, in our programs overall, but I wouldn't say that there's been a lot of effort up until the last couple years to actually create a culture among faculty and just in general at [institution] that embraces at-risk students.” Savannah noted, “We really are at a point right now

at [institution] where the administrators are more interested in us and more interested in what's going on in developmental education and that kind of thing than at any point that I've ever seen in the past.” When discussing the institutional changes to developmental in recent years, Monica, shared that despite these changes, she has observed

*We had some really strong advocates who had never taught developmental courses who were still saying, ‘Look, I want students who are prepared, [...] I want students to feel comfortable in my classroom and not overwhelmed by assignments, so we're gonna make a priority to keep these classes.’*

*Critical thinking is figuring out what you want to know.* Many of the participants shared thoughts and practices centered on helping students to develop critical thinking skills. As I began to place more and more codes around this category, I discerned that their observations spanned a broad spectrum of perceptions about their students’ critical thinking abilities. After looking over all the assigned codes, I separated them into smaller sub-categories, one of which focused on positive statements and practices related to critical thinking. For instance, Diane shared, “I want students to see that they're going to need to form questions and that's a lot of critical thinking - you have to figure out what you want to know.” Marie added that “I want them to recognize nuance; I want them to appreciate different perspectives. I want them to learn that appreciating something is not always the same as liking it or thinking it's good.” Monica also noted that

*It's like strong beliefs loosely held. You can have nice strong core value belief systems but hold them loosely enough that you can be a little skeptical of something; not necessarily critiquing, but critically looking at something.”*

*Day to day teaching is what you're going to say.* Christine introduced the concept of this category as she observed, “The day to day thinking about a college-level class to me is thinking about what you're going to say and what you expect of them and they should match as far as homework or assignments or group work.” In talking about how he made day-to-day decisions about what to do in the class, Phil shared an experience about helping students write an

exploratory essay. When students complained about the the open nature of the assignment, he added, “It's so funny because students are like “I can't write about that I don't know anything about it, and I'm like “Well, no shit, that's why you write about it, right?” and I use it - that language - in the classroom too, excuse me.”

*Domino effect of developmental education.* Monica, during the same round of interviews, shared a similar perspective,

*If I don't get this right, you know, it's a domino effect. A lot of what I do in my developmental classes too is I teach that class like it's the only English class of students are ever gonna get.”*

Christine said she had come to see that, despite challenges from colleagues about whether there was need for developmental programs, the reality was that “If I didn't help some of those students that come in at elementary algebra get into intermediate algebra, so they can take Calculus, so they can take biology, [these colleagues] wouldn't have students.”

*Feel[ing] a sense of excitement about moving forward in college.* Marie stated that her desired goal for her students was “I want them to just feel a sense of excitement about moving forward in college you know persistence is a big issue for us.” Marie observed that, in her institution, that her efforts seemed to be having some effect because “We've seen a really big bump in student persistence and success and we attribute some of that to the fact that they feel like they're, they have some ownership and some choice about what they're getting into.” Christine added in her interview that, “They stick it out to the end and that's probably the only way to measure retention in any way shape or form for my students.”

*Finding what works.* Christine shared, “[I] actually have changed my whole philosophy of teaching to not just think of teaching as what I say to them but to make sure what I assign, how I assign, how I grade - all of that is tied to getting them to come and looking at my classroom as a fair place.” Diane shared that her reflection has yielded an insight into

instructional pacing, specifically that “so if I’m thinking about instructional strategies, um, something to slow the tempo down, not lecturing a lot because I can see with the remedial students [...] they’re gone after a few minutes.” Ralph shared that he has considered the role of scaffolding in his course and found that his practice now includes “more coaching than teaching them, and so I actually standardized that now all the sections of [developmental composition] are required to have at least 50% of their time as [...] open writing studio time.”

*Good teaching is good teaching.* Monica observed that over the course of 27 years of teaching, primarily in developmental settings, she has come to see that “good teaching is good teaching and strategies that work well methodologies or pedagogy that work well for developmental students really do help traditional [mainstream] students succeed even further or go even further than they normally could.” She also noted that, in her experience, “good teaching, good pedagogy is cross-disciplinary and the more we can kind of get in each other’s piles of content we can kind of see what works.” Marie shared the same sentiment, using the term “interdisciplinary.” Christine stated that from her perspective, “We don’t have PhDs because we don’t want PhDs; we wanna be good teachers. We don’t want to do research; we just want to be good teachers.”

*Help[ing] them to believe in [and] trust the instructional process.* Monica stated that, “I try to help them to believe in the process, to trust the process, that I’m not going to set them up for something that’s uncomfortable or for failure [...] I’m not just throwing them in the deep end.” Diane expressed the idea that a part of her course design is intended to convey to her students that, “You’re here. Wow, you survived that and you’re here! You deserve to be here.” When describing the philosophy that guided the instructional design choices that shaped the organization of her courses, Christine shared that, from her perspective, “If they think it’s fair,

and if they respect me, I think they're more likely to attend.” Phil shared that the foundation of creating a safe learning environment is to get the students to realize “it's okay to make a mistake and I'm going to give you some feedback in order to improve upon that [...] [it's] all right but you're going to work on that thing in this class.”

*How do we better support our students?* Marie broached this question when she mentioned in her first interview that, “There hasn't been any talk of raising admission standards, but more just talk about how do we better support our students.” Christine noted that “students don't know to take advantage of the support services or they're afraid because they're embarrassed or they're too busy [...] probably that's the main reason why students aren't successful.” Ralph observed, “That's why I wanted to teach at a place like [redacted], that's open enrollment, [...] I'm very supportive of anything that gets students into college that gets them the support they need.”

*How do you learn from other people?* Monica asserted in her first interview that “I have as my motto: Humankind - be both. It's like, just be kind to each other and my job as an instructor is to teach that, as well to teach that empathy, that humaneness that each of us brings to the classroom.” In discussing what kinds of outcomes she desires for her students in all of her classes, Marie observed that, “I tend to have a lot of diversity [...] Immigrants, students of color, first-generation students, lots of complicated lives. So part of it is building that culture of the classroom that I hope then is a memory you know something that sinks in a little bit.”

*How in the hell am I gonna use what I learned?* When asked to consider what sources she uses in designing and delivering instruction, Diane shared, “I go to a conference, I love the speakers, the great ideas. I'm writing things down [...] and I go back to my office or I go to a class and I think, ‘How in the hell am I gonna use what I learned?’” When answering the same



question, Phil observed “Some of it I got from conferences or from reading different papers. But I would say that about half of it is just me going, ‘Well, what's the next step?’ and just playing around with this stuff. Savannah discussed her professional development efforts and their impact on her instructional design, stating “This past semester, I took an e-learning class [...] with [...] the developmental six credit hour class in mind, trying to rework as much of that as possible and trying to figure out what I could be doing better.”

*I can really tailor my feedback.* Marie suggested that an area that allows her to personalize her instruction is in the way she presents feedback to students, stating, “[I]f they have some issues and they often do, I can really tailor my feedback so they see that I believe that they are very smart and that they have some incredible ideas to contribute.” Phil, in discussing the successful aspects of his developmental practice, shared that his thought that “it's the amount of feedback, the type of feedback, and giving them chances to improve that I think are the necessary components in order to meet those sort of goals that I want to see in these students.” Ralph shared that he has come to see that “things like never marking up their paper I think helps them feel like I'm valuing their writing more. I don't just see it as this problematic thing that needs to be fixed; I see it as this great thing that has potential.”

*I don't have to [...] fill in any of those [confidence] gaps.* June shared her observation of mainstream students, stating that “They act different; they have an understanding of their ability [...] They have a sense that's like, ‘I can do this’ or ‘I've already done this.’ I don't have to [...] fill in any of those gaps.” In her experience, Savannah noted, “I do think students who are more prepared or not first-generation [...] have a little bit more grounding in higher education; they come in are willing to work even if they don't see the relevance.” Diane noted that her mainstream students “were more adept at picking up knowledge and retaining it.” She also

described these students as “having a bigger given ball of knowledge from which to work and to connect new material to.”

*I learned everything [...] from my colleagues.* When asked to reflect on how she acquired her current ideas about how to teach, Christine shared that

*I learned everything from my jobs from my colleagues. Thank goodness the jobs I went into had veteran teachers already on the staff and we could talk and I could listen and make some mistakes and have people sit in and say, ‘Why don't you try this? or ‘That was good’*

Savannah also underscored the value of insight acquired from interacting with colleagues, stating, “The things that I've been doing to help myself as a developmental educator have really been very much self-supported or things that I've done in conjunction with other faculty.”

*I think they learn through repetition.* Diane said, “I think they learn through repetition so we have lots of drafts in [mainstream composition].” Monica shared that in her practice, “I think they learn through practice. I mean it. More than any other class, you have to provide them probably three to four times the amount of in-class practice time to look at something.” Ralph noted that, through his practice, he has found that “even if they can't really stop and articulate why they're doing what they're doing, they can still put those things into practice, but, again, that comes from the repetition.”

*Inheriting students who have suffered from educational malpractice.* Sharing her experience with developmental students who shared with her their own educational histories, Monica stated, “I want to go back and charge those people with malpractice because they just ruined that person and gave them so much unnecessary suffering when it comes to language.” Finding that past educational experiences that equated with abuse were problematic for her students, Diane said, “When we inherit those students as developmental students, sometimes

you've had somebody who's been beaten into this conformity, who really has a lot of fear and pain and trying to break out of that mold that they've been forced into.”

*It is a calling in a lot of ways.* June, when talking about how she began teaching developmental students, shared that “If we don't have good developmental students, we're not giving students the opportunity to move forward in their life. It is a calling in a lot of ways and a lot of educators do not look at developmental that way.” Marie “My view is if you want to really change society, if you want to make an impact, it's with the students that are not likely to succeed; that's where you change life.” When discussing her background in teaching in developmental settings, Savannah stated, “I didn't have any specialized training and developmental education as neither did any of the other full-time people who work in developmental English, but we have all really developed a love for it.”

*It is literally the key to their existence.* Monica shared that, from her perspective working with developmental students that “It was the way out of poverty [...] and this gets me choked up because it can literally save their lives and I think people don't understand that about developmental education - that for some people, it is literally the key to their existence.” Marie also shared her perspective that “My view is if, you know, if you want to really change society, if you want to make an impact, it's with the students that are not likely to succeed - that's where you change life.”

*Just catching up the starting line.* In considering how student preparation factors into the design of her courses, Christine shared her perception of how some developmental students might feel at the beginning of their coursework, “You're just catching up to the starting line. That can be incredibly imposing when you when you think about how much work you have to do just to catch up with where everybody else is starting.” Addressing the same question about student

preparation, Monica stated, “That puts them farther behind the goalposts, you know, with a weight tied around their foot trying to get to the college level class that their peers are going to just jump right into.”

*Meeting them where they are.* Diane said, “I think that the kindness to them and to ourselves is to meet them where they are and not say, ‘Oh, you're lacking in this; how did you get here? It doesn't matter.’” In her second interview, June noted, “I have students who come to me, and not because I am such a fantastic teacher, whatever, but I have acknowledged that they are smart, they are capable.” When speaking about how her students learned, Diane said, “I think that when I validate their life experiences, then they can breathe a little more easily.” Marie said, “They see that I believe that they are very smart and that they have some incredible ideas to contribute.”

*More differentiated learning, but we're not quite there yet.* When talking about the manner in which he makes curricular decisions, Phil said, “I was kind of keen on the ideas of differentiated instruction because that's one thing that I find is just really difficult teaching anything [...] because everybody has different things they need to work on.” However, he also shared that “I'm trying to make more differentiated lessons, using Canvas® [learning management system] but we're not quite there yet.” Savannah defined differentiated learning as “[...] this customized kind of approach where maybe various content and skills that the students need can be somehow modular and they can go through and work on the things that they need to work on at their own pace.” However, she then added, “Even as I say that and even as I think that would be ideal, I'm also not entirely certain that it's a good fit for the style of study habit that developmental students tend to exhibit in my classrooms.”

*No perfect plan.* As Christine described her strategy of reorganizing her classroom time to allow students more time to work in class with peers and the instructor, she remarked, “I know there's no perfect plan but that's my current strategy. It's working; there's some flaws, but anyway.” June noted, “I don't think anybody has the answers. I think we have to try, you know, different things to get there. It's going to take a little bit of time, I think.” In her first interview, Christine had shared, “As soon as you think, ‘Oh I know everything I need to,’ then you need to get into a different field because you never know everything.” Diane observed that “Maybe it's an art. Yeah, I think that that's a very good way to describe it, that teaching is not just a scientific experience; it's an, it's an artistic experience.”

*Not one right way to get there.* June shared an anecdote of a student who asked for permission to complete a narrative assignment by writing a rap song. As she reflected on what she learned from that situation, she observed, “There's not just one right way to get there, but students get there in different ways and I have to listen to them. I have to understand them and be flexible in the way I try to help them get there.” Diane noted that her expectations about assessment could differ from those of her students, stating, “I value incremental progress, tiny, incremental progress where maybe they feel like they want to see enormous progress.” Ralph shared a similar feeling, stating, “It's not so much that it's a massive great something, but it's just, you know if they're starting to see that they're writers [...] that that's how I gauge if they're developing, if they're learning.”

*Not just sitting.* June mentioned that in her own classroom, she tries to include activities to get students physically active, stating that “you can lose your students really quickly with grammar [...] so it's not just sitting there giving them information.” Diane added, “It's this concept of physically getting up and moving. I mean, just from a health standpoint, we know that

prolonged sitting can have very detrimental health impacts.” Ralph added a similar level of activity in his courses, stating, “[...] you've heard that phrase, ‘boots on the ground,’ and I started thinking about fingers on the keyboard. That's really what it is, you have just got to get fingers on the keyboard.” Monica said, “I’m not the only one that's up at the board; often I will have them up there with the markers.”

*Not less than [...].* June stated, when describing her developmental students, “There are some that have disabilities or have difficult times learning, but they are smart. They're not, they're not less than, they are intelligent.” Diane noted, “These students are not stupid, they're not lazy, they're not weak. If anything, they're the exact opposite of that.” Monica argued, “Probably fifty to sixty percent of what I do in a developmental class has absolutely nothing to do with content. It has everything to do with retraining them to stop listening to those stupid voices in their head.” As I watched Monica as she thought more about this topic, the more visibly upset she seemed to get. Her eyes narrowed, her lips pursed, and her voice seemed to be more intense, as she shared, “When people say, ‘Oh, you're just working with the also-rans [...] or something like that [...] I just want to shake them and say, ‘Where would these people be if we didn't give them an opportunity?’”

*Not watered down.* When talking about how he made decisions about curricular-level design, Ralph shared, “Someone gave me the advice, ‘Don't make your course just a watered-down version of first-year writing,’ and I didn't know what that meant at first [...] I realized I was kind of doing that [...] it really was just a watered down version of [mainstream composition].” Speaking about the same topic in her interview, Monica mentioned, “we've actually been able to make it so that students keep progressing [...] and doesn't seem to dumb

down any of the curriculum or overwhelm the students with something that's too hard or too rigorous.”

*Past kept them from doing what they were capable of doing.* June noted in her first interview that, “There was something that happened in the past that kept them from doing what they knew they were capable of doing.” Diane shared that for many of her students, “there are so many traumatic experiences that have happened in their lives, you know, all kinds of adverse childhood experiences.” Phil also said, “I think some of it too is just having had terrible educational experiences.” Because of these experiences, June describes that, for her students, “something along the way, a barrier of some sort, they didn't get the chance for learning in some sort of way.”

*Quick feedback [...] helps them build their confidence.* Marie noted, “I think quick feedback that helps them build their confidence.” As Christine expressed this idea, “In remedial classes, I think they need their homework graded and turned back almost immediately actually like the next class day if you can.” When discussing his use of technology as a means of facilitating prompt feedback, Phil asserted “And also, you can say things in a video faster than if you're trying to write out the comments and it would take way too long to generate the same amount of comments as audio feedback.”

*Reading the signals of students' 'alternative strategies of avoidance.'* In discussing her own experiences with the coping mechanisms that her students use, Diane noted, “They are faced with issues where ‘I can't do this; I have got to learn how to distract somebody from this glaring deficiency that I have,’ and they've had to develop that as a survival skill.” When this happened, Diane described, “that's another kind of like a signal in the back of my mind like, ‘Okay we're not having a deep discussion because this didn't work for you guys, so let's try another tack.’”

Savannah added that she often saw that “It's sort of like they've found alternative strategies of avoidance oftentimes to compensate for their lack of skill in certain areas.” Phil observed that in his practice, “A lot of my students think that they can't write. I think we just see this kind of the cycle where they feel like they can't write, they get a bad score that proves that, and it just keeps going.”

*Shifting gears a bit.* Diane noted that she was “using the same assignments but I have to slow down and shift gears a little bit.” Christine, in describing how her pedagogical understanding affected her course design, stated, “[...] The first thing I do is make sure or plan out the content [...] sort of comparing it with the course objectives, [...] and spacing it out appropriately [...] to give enough tests.” June noted that “a lot of my work was just going back and deconstructing my course and take it apart and putting it back together with super fundamental skills.”

*Showing students the moves other students use.* In describing her instructional framework, Marie noted, “I am actually trying to lead the students through the moves that college students make when they're working on an academic paper.” Phil also mentioned a similar instructional design strategy in his courses, stating, “They see me model that as I go along. How would I research this? What would I not include? What would be my organizational strategy? Things like that.” Ralph mentioned, “One of the things that I picked up from grad school is the idea of helping students by building assignments piece by piece, rather than throwing the entire assignment at them all at once.” Diane stated she brought former students into her classes to speak with her current students because she found “that particular instructional strategy is wonderful for these students [...] because they see someone who's been successful



and their sophomore or their junior year and [...] they came through a little bit of college experience.”

*Tailoring parts of the class to who's in my class.* When we spoke about how her understanding of how her students learned shaped her instructional design, Marie shared that “leaving space especially in the first unit of a class to get to know the students [...] where I have an opportunity to start tailoring parts of the class to who's in my class rather than [...] locking everything down.” Phil shared “In English, we ask people to explore their own interest and so that's what I kind of emphasize, to play on my strength, within a guided framework.” Diane described a similar process as “sometimes they're very amazed that they get to choose their own topic to write about and I welcome that.”

*Teach them enough to be successful.* When sharing her thoughts about what she wanted students to learn from her class, Christine said, “I always wanted to teach them enough so that when they go into the next class they are successful regardless of the instructor.” In the same vein, Monica stated, “it's kind of an ethical responsibility to make sure that they have enough knowledge to also pass in their next class; otherwise, you're just taking their money, which bothers me.” While considering the learning outcomes she has attached to her developmental courses, Savannah noted that “it's my goal to help the students feel like they have enough knowledge [...] and enough practice with thinking on their feet [...] that they're able to sort of put their own creativity into play [...] while also functioning inside the conventional expectations that are there.”

*Teaching everything in context.* In discussing the manner in which he organizes his developmental curricula, Ralph shared that “When I do the whole curriculum, I always try to make sure everything is in context; like, I never teach grammar out of context. I don't teach the

writing process out of context. Everything has to do with their own writing.” In discussing her curricular influences, Diane noted, “I think that's part of asking questions, contextualizing something and giving it a full-bodied frame so it's not just a little dot on it on a canvas but you've painted in the whole picture.” Savannah added, “Transfer is something that really has to sort of be pointed out again and again in the process so that they start to recognize these are skills you're supposed to take and use someplace else.”

*The instructors that are at least qualified to help them.* Phil noted that “I think that's the irony of developmental writing is the students that need the most help oftentimes get the instructors that are at least qualified to help them, so your instructors are a lot of adjuncts, things like that.” Marie noted that her institution, “[...] has tried to mitigate it to some degree but we have probably 2/3 of our instructors [...] are either temporary or adjuncts right now.” Ralph observed “[...] our part-time faculty, they're not really involved in that decision-making process. They don't care about that [...] they're not involved in the long-term assessment of courses.”

*The relationship between instructor and student is important.* When we spoke about her perceptions of her students, Diane shared that for her, “the relationship between instructor and student is important.” Christine observed that, in her experience, “But honestly, the best thing a student can do is make a connection with a teacher so they want to go to class [...] so they know that the best thing they can do for themselves is go to class.” June mentioned that, for her, “They have to trust that I am there to help them, [...] and I have to maintain that trust; I have to show them that I really mean what I say.” Phil shared that “I found that I really liked working with students, giving them that little bit more help, so that's kind of how I got hired here. I felt like I was a person who can work well with all kinds of students.”

*There's so many pieces [...] but they all take so much time.* Savannah mentioned designing content for an online course she was about to use the next semester and related that “Whenever you start talking about developing a new course, there's, and not even a new course, but a new delivery method, there's so many pieces and these ideas occur to you that need to happen, but they all take so much time.” Phil, in talking about his challenges in finding useful instructional resources, states it is difficult to find useful information for several reasons, including

*I find I don't have enough time to go through and check things out and 2) what I do go through and check out [...] I find that it's not specified enough for me and kind of my students or that 3) I can make stuff that is just better myself.*

*They don't know what it means to be a college student.* When talking about what he understood about how his students learn, Phil shared that “So many times, our students struggle with, they don't know what it means to be a college student, so they overthink everything.” During our conversation about how students learn, Savannah noted: “Well, you mentioned ‘education as we think of it’ [...] because part of what these students are often facing is that they don't have much concept of education as we think of it at the college level anyway.” Diane shared, “It's sometimes easier to just go the path of not questioning and wandering in the path of least resistance, but, at least in our English classes, we want people to grapple with uncomfortable notions.” Monica, laughing, observed that some of her students “are more concerned about how that broccoli looks on that salad bar at the local restaurant than they are about this digital information that's coming at them 24 hours a day.”

*They have to feel a connection to their classmates and me.* Marie expressed the following as a central question that directed her design priorities in her developmental program, “How can we set up experiences and relationships that are going to help you know navigate through this experience?” In response to that question, she states, “They have to feel a connection to their

classmates and me, they have to understand why they're in college, you know, all of those things, I feel like, are the first step.” Savannah, in discussing the importance of interaction, specifically in online developmental settings, stated, “Research shows again and again that the way to engage students when they're in an online setting is really to provide them with lots of opportunities to connect with the professor, connect with the content, and connect with each other.”

*Understand[ing] the culture of college.* Savannah shared, “[T]hese are students, very often first-generation students [...] that places them at somewhat of a disadvantage in the game, so to speak, because they don't understand the culture of college, sort of the underlying expectations.” Addressing the same topic, Phil added that he seeks to help students in “learning cultural expectations and norms in that what we're trying to do is hopefully not erase somebody's culture but kind of teach them a way that we kind of expect and want things to be in certain areas.”

*We don't have [...] the institutional flexibility to [...] meet their needs the way that they have needed.* Diane noted that at her institution, it was possible that “we don't have necessarily the institutional flexibility to perhaps meet their needs the way that they have needed or the institutional disposition to meet them where they come in at.” When asked to describe aspects of her developmental program that she found to be the least effective, June mentioned the program structure, noting that “They're run by two different people [...] we have different goals and we work really well together, but I just see a disconnect between the two programs and that makes me nervous.” When discussing challenges she perceives in her developmental program, Savannah noted,

*Our developmental English director meets with people [...] at the university level [...] and puts in her two cents [...] but there's there is virtually no coordination between developmental English and developmental math in that sense.*

When discussing the challenges facing developmental instruction at her institution, Monica asserted, “There's a lot of elements and aspects about developmental education [...] especially when it becomes decentralized, that become very problematic.” Historically, the developmental program at her institution was housed in an independent department and included a wide variety of services, including first-year transition, developmental composition and mathematics, and other programs. When the institution dissolved this department, Monica said, “It became a little less structured. In my opinion, that affected the quality control of the class. We couldn't really guarantee that a student who had had that developmental program had had the rigor in place to be ready for [mainstream composition].”

*We're under a microscope.* When describing institutional initiatives for developmental education at her institution, Savannah shared that “We're under a little bit more of a microscope,” stating that she finds that administrators can “[be] more curious about what could be done without necessarily finding out what's actually being done.” June described her own experience in dealing with institutional initiatives “What's really discouraging is the people who are making these new courses or new rules, they have never taught developmental. They want to create this new progressive movement, but they don't, they've never been in a developmental classroom.” In a later interview, June shared “And that is a fear, a fear of mine. And I think that's the direction we're going, the idea that developmental is not serving our students the way that they need to.”

*What you do to help developmental students will [help] other students as well.* Marie shared that, from her perspective, “I think we're moving towards, if not embracing developmental students, then at least understanding that what you do to help developmental students will end up helping a lot of other students as well.” This insight can be critical because, as June noted, “there are students in a composition, a basic composition class, that have varying

levels of skills and understanding.” Ralph also observed, “So I start realizing that there wasn't a huge difference between these basic writing students and the mainstream composition students you know. It's just kind of circumstantial for a lot of them.” Diane shared that “I don't know that there needs to be a significant difference between the two, that what works for developmental students in terms of that emotional connection with students is as meaningful for mainstream students.”

*Who are we to know what they deem as the best things to take away?* When talking about how her students learned and how she adapted her instruction based on that knowledge, Christine admitted, “At the college level, I probably expect more attendance, more responsibility, more self-discipline, but that's an expectation. I don't know, I mean, you can expect that and I don't know if you can.” Diane expressed her concern that “I think that at a university level, especially the longer we're teaching here, we assume way too much, we assume that students arrive with this certain ball of knowledge and they don't have it.” She concluded, “Who are we to know what they deem as the best things to take away?”

*Willing to do the work as a teacher.* In discussing faculty preparation for teaching, Christine shared the insight, “As long as you're willing to do the work as a teacher, you've got the skills, okay?” When talking about his own experiences in professional development, Ralph shared an experience in talking with an administrator, who asked “‘Well, what about the new faculty member that's never taught the course before that needs that textbook?’ and I said ‘We would never hire someone who doesn't know how to teach this course without it.’” Ralph continued, stating, “My message to instructors and administrators and, as I develop my own course, is ‘If you find resources, textbook stuff that you want to use as supplemental, great, but don't ever let it replace your skills, your talents, your efforts as an instructor.’”

*You're missing a lot of that human interaction.* When talking about how her students learned, and how she adapted her instruction based on that knowledge, Monica observed, “if all you're doing is technology, then you're missing a lot of that human interaction. “When talking about how students learn, Diane asserted that one challenge she faced with her students was “the device that's in somebody's hand all the time. It's no wonder; maybe that's dissipating and that's being like blunted because we can get access to anything all the time.”

### **Stage 3 - Conceptualization and Reconceptualization**

Once I assigned all the codes had to their first categories, I began working on refining these categories, seeking broader, more abstract concepts that connected the various categories. In this stage, I relied on several sorting strategies suggested in the structure of the Grand Tour Question in identifying these abstracted categories.

**Phase 1 – Grand Tour Question review.** Now that I had categorized all the codes, I faced the question of what to do with those categories. In their current disaggregated state, the categories hinted at deeper relationships, but I was unsure how to express what those relationships might be. At this point, I recalled that Merriam and Tisdell (2016), when discussing the formation of categories, suggested that first and foremost, categories must be “*responsive to the purpose of research*” (p. 212, emphasis in original). Based on this recommendation, I returned to my original Grand Tour Question.

In looking at the formation and structure of the question itself, I realized that the Grand Tour Question phrasing seemed to suggest a more abstract means of reducing the categories that would help the categories shed light into what the research was investigating. Breaking apart the Grand Tour Question guided my next step into the analysis phase. Figure 12 depicts the parsing

of the Grand Tour Question into three groupings, which I employed as super-categories into which I sorted the 54 categories.

What do faculty at post-secondary institutions in the Intermountain West describe as **influences that inform their design and delivery of instruction** as they transition between developmental and mainstream instructional settings?

Super Category 1      Super Category 2      Super Category 3  
[describe as influences] [that inform] [their design and delivery of instruction]

*Figure 12* – Super-category structure. The organizing structure embedded within the Grand Tour Question suggested the organization of super-categories that would better organize the categories generated in Stage 1, Phase 3.

**Phase 2 – clustering categories into super-categories.** In *Perceived Influences*, I clustered categories that seemed to address the influences or forces that the participants described throughout our interviews. *Informed Actions* encapsulated categories that described the actions that participants took in their instruction, whatever the cause, while *Design* included categories that reflected design and delivery models and theories. In the Excel® worksheet, I used colors to help visually distinguish between the groupings: green for *Designs*, blue for *Actions*, and yellow for *Influences*. I used these colors for organizational purposes and I did not intend them to have any specific research significance. Figure 13 contains a screen capture of a portion of this organizational illustration; see Appendix I for the full organization chart:



Design	Action	Influence
Archaeology of curriculum development	Creat[ing] a culture that embraces at-risk students.	Domino effect of developmental education
Finding what works	Help[ing] them to believe in [and] trust the instructional process	Feel[ing] a sense of excitement about moving forward in college
How in the hell am I gonna use what I learned?	Reading the signals of students' 'alternative strategies of avoidance.'	I don't have to [...] fill in any of those [confidence] gaps
Good teaching is good teaching.	Meeting them where they are	Understand[ing] the culture of college
I learned everything [...] from my colleagues	Shifting gears a bit	Who are we to know what they deem as the best things to take away?
No perfect plan	Tailoring parts of the class to who's in my class	Can you learn how to learn
Willing to do the work as a teacher	You're missing a lot of that human interaction	Class attendance - Can't address needs until they're in the classroom
There's not just one right way to get there	I think they learn through repetition.	Classes are smaller - there's real teaching
They have to feel a connection to their classmates and me	More differentiated learning, but we're not quite there yet.	Content engagement - Serious work with consequences

*Figure 13* – Organization of super-categories. Super-categories, suggested by the Grand Tour Question, facilitated the organization of categories by overarching thematic elements with the addition of color-coding to distinguish columns from each other.

**Phase 3 – reflecting dimensions within super-categories.** In looking at these newly generated super-categories, I realized that the categories needed additional structure to expose the patterns and themes that potentially existed among the data units, codes, and categories. As Merriam and Tisdell (2016) suggest, I needed to generate a model to help visualize these potential relationships. I took all of the envelopes I had previously labeled and organized them into piles, just as I had done when clustering the codes into their first categories. Then, I used larger manila-colored envelopes and clustered categories into what I perceived as dimensions within each super-category. I inserted these dimensions into the fifth column of the Master Codebook worksheet, labeling them as dimensions to avoid confusion regarding the terms categories and super-categories. Figure 15 represents a screen capture of this updated worksheet.

Case	Datapoint	Code	Category	Dimension	Theme
Monica 1	it became a little less structured in my opinion that affected the quality control of the class we couldn't really guarantee that a student who had had that developmental program had had the rigor in place to be ready for 1010 they need to be teaching this idea just for scaffolding and just to build kind of the scope and sequence of the course	freedom in curricular design challenges quality control and student preparation	We don't have [...] the institutional flexibility to [...] meet their needs the way that they have needed	We're under a microscope	Perceived Influences
Savannah 2	I always have to have learning disabilities who have struggled with school because of those	some developmental students arrive due to learning disabilities	Meeting them where they are	Meeting Them Where They Are	Informed Actions
June 3	I always feel like I could get them through the class what they needed to do in 1010 they would be able to meet the class requirements. I never felt like whoa this person is radically misplaced; I never remember feeling that way. I mean I'm sure there, but I didn't have a lot of experience doing it	instructor confidence in teaching mainstream vs developmental	I don't have to [...] fill in any of those [confidence] gaps	We're under a microscope	Perceived Influences
Phil 1	I always feel it's kind of unfortunate and I can't really blame all my math and science instructors but I feel that if I had math and science instructors who were a bit more progressive you know that could target students individual interest that I think I could have done	instructors were more progressive and target individual interests	More differentiated learning, but we're not quite there yet.	Meeting Them Where They Are	Informed Actions
Marie 2	I also want them to learn certain habits of mind and behavior that will allow them you know to be successful to keep going forward in college and to keep in communication in general	self-awareness and self-regulation in developmental students	Help[ing] them to believe in [and] trust the instructional process	Creat[ing] a culture that embraces at-risk students.	Informed Actions
Ralph 3	I also received suggestions from more experienced faculty who had very strong feelings that 990, both in terms of content and outcomes, should be very different from 1010 or 1010 D. Rather than just making 990 1010 light, we should focus on the things that made these students need developmental support in the first place	Rather than just making developmental mainstream light, focus on what made these students need developmental in first place	A community of faculty [...] working together	It's A Calling	Perceived Influences
Marie 3	I would say yeah those vary based on the class does it tend to lend itself more towards mainstream courses just because you're not dealing with questions of developmental students who are simply trying to acquire the ability to demonstrate academic discourse	critical thinking challenge when building basic skills	We don't have [...] the institutional flexibility to [...] meet their needs the way that they have needed	We're under a microscope	Perceived Influences

Figure 14 – Adding dimensions within super-categories. Amending the Master Codebook by adding columns to reflect the addition of super-categories and dimensional labels facilitated additional data sorting to reveal thematic relationships.

***Dimensions within Perceived Influences.*** I identified more than twenty categories related to the super-category Perceived Influences. From these categories, three dimensions emerged that helped to express different nuances of the participants' shared transitional experiences. Table 2 outlines these categories and their respective dimensions within the super-category. Below the table, I have included a discussion of the principle that guided the articulation of each dimension.

Table 2

*Initial Categories and Corresponding Dimensions within Perceived Influences*

Initial Categories	Dimensions of Perceived Influences
Can you learn how to learn?; Class attendance - Can't address needs until they're in the classroom; Classes are smaller - there's real teaching; Content engagement - Serious work with consequences; Critical thinking is figuring out what you want to know; Inheriting students who have suffered from educational malpractice; It is literally the key to their existence; Catching up the starting line; Not less than...; Not watered down; Past kept them from doing what they were capable of doing; They don't know what it means to be a college student	Catching up to the starting line - (Student history as instructional influence)
Aspire for higher [we should]; A community of faculty [...] working together; It is a calling in a lot of ways	It's a calling in a lot of ways - (Professional experience as instructional influence)
Broad interest in student retention; Domino effect of developmental education; Feel[ing] a sense of excitement about moving forward in college; How do we better support our students?; I don't have to [...] fill in any of those [confidence] gaps; The instructors that are at least qualified to help them; There's so many pieces [...] but they all take so much time; Understand[ing] the culture of college; We don't have [...] the institutional flexibility to [...] meet their needs the way that they have needed; We're under a microscope; Who are we to know what they deem as the best things to take away?	We're under a microscope - (Institutional practices as instructional influence)

*Catching up to the starting line - student history as an instructional influence.*

Participants talked in numerous situations about how their students came to college with a wealth of challenges stemming from past academic and personal experiences that interfered with their prior learning. This dimension examines how prior experience informed the participants' actions in the classroom and their instructional design choices and frameworks.

*It's a calling in a lot of ways - professional interactions as an instructional influence.*

This dimension sought to represent the idea that participants shared regarding how their affiliation with developmental instruction affects their interactions with their peers, administrators, and other individuals. These reactions varied among participants, as well as

whether those reactions were positive or negative. This dimension examined the nuances among participant observations about this topic and the effect these interactions had on the instructional decisions the participants made.

*We're under a microscope - institutional practices as an instructional influence.*

Participants all expressed concerns to varying degrees of intensity about institutional practices, cultures, and attitudes about developmental instruction that complicated their professional work. For instance, some participants discussed their perceptions of growing institutional pressures to re-evaluate the role of developmental instruction in post-secondary institutions and the trickle-down effects these pressures had on individual instructors and their work with developmental students. Other participants described their observations and concerns about external pressures that were affecting the way that institutions perceived the efficacy and legitimacy of delivery of developmental instruction for their students. This dimension contained categories that identified, defined, or illustrated these kinds of pressures or their consequences on design and delivery at the faculty level.

***Dimensions within Informed Action – pedagogical dimensions.*** I sorted twenty-six categories into the super-category *Informed Action*. Analyzing the traits and characteristics of these categories, I determined that three dimensions existed within the overall super-category that reflected different aspects of the participants' shared experiences as related to pedagogical practices. Table 3 outlines these categories and their respective dimensions within the super-category. Below the table, I have included a discussion of the principle that guided the articulation of each dimension.

Table 3

*Initial Categories and Corresponding Dimensions within Informed Action*

<b>Initial Categories</b>	<b>Dimensions of <i>Informed Action</i> – <i>pedagogical practices</i></b>
<p>Creat[ing] a culture that embraces at-risk students; Help[ing] them to believe in [and] trust the instructional process; Reading the signals of students' 'alternative strategies of avoidance.'</p>	<p>Creat[ing] a culture that embraces at-risk students - pedagogy of inclusivity</p>
<p>I think they learn through repetition; Meeting them where they are; More differentiated learning, but we're not quite there yet; Not just sitting; Shifting gears a bit; Tailoring parts of the class to who's in my class; You're missing a lot of that human interaction</p>	<p>Meeting them where they are – pedagogy of learner analysis</p>
<p>Day-to-day teaching is what you're going to say; Respecting students as humans; I can really tailor my feedback; Quick feedback [...] helps them build their confidence; Showing students the moves other students use; Teach them enough to be successful; Teaching everything in context; The relationship between instructor and student is important; They have to feel a connection to their classmates and me</p>	<p>Respecting students as humans – pedagogy of care</p>

*Creat[ing] a culture that embraces at-risk students – pedagogy of inclusivity.* Many participants shared that developmental students, particularly those in identified at-risk groups, struggled to acclimate themselves to higher educational settings. One action that the participants found that helped to address this challenge was the effort to create meaningful opportunities to create supportive relationships between students and their peers, teachers, and their institutions in general. This dimension reflected categories and codes that explored how participants helped build a culture that sought to include and embrace these students.

*Meeting them where they are – pedagogy of contextual analysis.* Participants often discussed how students struggled to meet explicit and implicit learning expectations, whether these expectations came from themselves, their instructors, or the institutions where they had

enrolled. One of the pedagogical practices that participants shared was an effort to consider their students' levels of preparedness and see their students as they really were, or, as June said, "[to] help them better understand themselves, help them get a better sense of who they are, what they're capable of doing, and where they're going." This dimension considers categories that describe and explore the participants' pedagogical practices in regards to contextual analysis (Richey & Tessmer, 1995; Tessmer & Richey, 1997).

*Respecting students as humans – pedagogy of care.* In discussing how to increase engagement and motivation among both developmental and mainstream students, participants often mentioned that they found it essential to adjust activities based on the awareness they had of their students' capacities. Whether it manifested as scaffolding assignments into smaller, more manageable sections, walking students through the processes involved in completing a task, or allowing students to complete assignments in unique and unusual ways, participants shared that acknowledging and respecting the humanity of their students as a critical design feature in their developmental and mainstream courses. This dimension includes categories that describe the effect of respecting student humanity as a pedagogical practice in the classroom, evocative of a pedagogy of caring (Butler, 2012; Larsen, 2015; Soto, 2005).

*Dimensions within Design and Delivery – instructional models and theories.* As the participants discussed and described their instructional experiences, some of those data units suggested the use or influence of specific instructional design models or theories, whether intentional or not. These dimensions sought to identify categories to reflect on the presence or influence of these principles. Table 4 outlines the organization of these initial categories into dimensions.

Table 4

*Initial Categories and Corresponding Dimensions within Design and Delivery*

<b>Initial Categories</b>	<b>Dimensions within Design and Delivery – instructional models and theories</b>
Archaeology of curriculum development; Finding what works; How in the hell am I gonna use what I learned?	Finding what works – Jarvis (1999, 2006) personal theory
Developmental insights can transfer elsewhere; Good teaching is good teaching; I learned everything [...] from my colleagues	Developmental insights can transfer elsewhere – Beach (1999) consequential transition theory
No perfect plan; There's not just one right way to get there; Willing to do the work as a teacher	There's not just one right way to get there – Gardner's (2011) multiple intelligences and Schön's (1987) reflective epistemology

*Finding what works – Jarvis (1999, 2006) personal theory.* When asked about what kinds of sources might have influenced or shaped their current instructional practices and frameworks, participants pointed at a wide variety of resources that they relied upon. In some cases, participants mentioned specific instructional design theories and models, such as when Marie described her theoretical perspective as “I’m kind of a social constructivist at heart.” But in many other cases, the participants did not mention any specific theories that drove their design practices. Instead, they suggested that their previous classroom experience served as the basis and justification for their unique, organic instructional design practices. The initial categories in this dimension articulated these sources and participants’ applications of that information in generating their instructional theories (Jarvis, 1999).

*Developmental insights can transfer elsewhere – Beach (1999) consequential transition theory.* Participants noted that their decisions about curricular, pedagogical, and instructional outcomes and goals did not occur in a vacuum. These participants worked in multiple instructional settings; indeed, the purpose of the study centers on “their design and delivery of instruction as they transition between developmental and mainstream instructional settings”

[emphasis added]. This dimension represents categories that describe these transitions and how they might shape instructional design and delivery decisions in a variety of settings outside of developmental instruction. This dimension is informed by Beach's (1999) work on consequential transitions, which build on work in the realm of transfer learning (Cormier & Hagman, 1987; Dewey, 1938) to consider how context impacts the application and transfer of learning and knowledge.

*Not just one right way to get there – Gardner's (2011) multiple intelligences and Schön's (1987) reflective epistemology.* Participants mentioned the idea that their instructional design choices sometimes came because of questions that arose because of their practice and the reflection on those issues. Schön (1987) asserts that in these kinds of situations, practitioners might rely on their innate understanding of the instructional environment to engage in what he called "professional artistry" (p. 13) to develop unique and innovative solutions. In many cases, these solutions arose as students came into the classroom with different learning needs and styles (Gardner, 2011). This dimension explores how Schön's (1987) "questions of greatest human concern" (p. 3) impact practitioners' efforts to address Gardner's (2011) theories on differences in intelligence shaped participants' design and delivery experiences. This dimension focused on categories that focused or uncovered participants' practices and perspectives related to reflection and artistic approaches to inclusivity as instructional design problems.

#### **Stage 4 – Theme Generation**

Having identified dimensions within the three super-categories that reflected the structure embedded within the Grand Tour Question, I questioned whether this model of dimensions and super-categories was sufficient to express what the study has uncovered, or whether, as Merriam and Tisdell (2016) describe it, "there is more to be understood about the phenomenon" (p. 216).



As I looked at the super-categories, I realized that while the structure of the Grand Tour Question suggested the need to divide the original categories into these grouping, this “category scheme d[id] not,” by itself, allow me to, as Merriam and Tisdell (2016) described it, “tell the whole story” (p. 216).

***Phase 1 – establishing relationships among super-categories.*** Looking back at the Grand Tour Question, I realized the structure of the question seemed to suggest the phenomenon could benefit from considering those points where dimensions within each of the three super-categories, *Perceived Influences*, *Informed Actions*, and *Design and Delivery Models/Theories*, converged.

In other words, I could derive the meaning of the study by describing *Perceived Influences* through the lens of how participants used *Informed Actions* and *Design/Delivery* to address or interact with them. I next looked for meaningful links among the dimensions reflected in each of the three super-categories. In exploring the nature of the three super-categories, I began to see that participants tended to describe *Perceived Influences* in causal terms, suggesting that these perceived influences acted as the basis for *Informed Actions* or the impetus to uncover or employ *Design and Delivery Models*.

***Phase 2 – generation of themes.*** Based on this perspective, I placed the three *Perceived Influence* dimensional labels in the first column of a separate Excel® worksheet. In the second and third columns, I placed the dimensional labels for the *Informed Actions* and *Design and Delivery Models super-categories*. While the placement of the Perceived Influences in the first column was intentional, the order of placement of the other two lists of dimensional labels was arbitrary. I then began to shuffle the labels in the second and third columns looking for combinations of all three dimensions that suggested a fit that reflected the relationships that

prompted the creation of labels at the code and category levels. I continued this process until I had sorted all the dimensions, resulting in three concentrated points among the dimensions in all three super-categories. The description and definition of these alignments, which Merriam and Tisdell (2016) defined as themes, form the basis for the findings of this study.

***Phase 3 – generation of descriptive theme statements.*** The final step in the analysis phase was to generate descriptive statements that helped to flesh out and define the relationship that existed among the three dimensions that composed each theme. Chapter 7 contains a discussion of these thematic statements that form the foundation for the findings of this study. These thematic statements are

1. Developmental/mainstream faculty meet their students where they are by designing courses and curricula guided by the principle that there is not one right way to help students who are just catching up to the starting line of postsecondary studies as they transition into university culture.
2. Developmental/mainstream faculty describe their work as a calling, a deep connection to their students, expressed by respecting the humanity and uniqueness of each learner by artistically exploring what works in the developmental classroom.
3. Developmental/mainstream instructors negotiate being under the microscope of increased institutional attention to developmental instruction and continue to establish a culture that embraces at-risk students by showing that instructional insights gained in developmental settings can be applied elsewhere to help students thrive.

Phase 4 – Member Checking. Once the descriptive theme statements were generated, I sent copies to all the participants, asking them to share their reactions, thoughts, and feelings about the theme statements and how they reflected the participants' lived experiences. Follow up responses from the participants were limited; only four of the eight participants replied to the original email. I sent a follow up email with limited responses. The overall responses were positive; Savannah replied, "Looks good to me!", while Monica stated, "Clayn, I think you have articulated your themes clearly and precisely. I look forward to seeing your finished product. Good luck, and keep writing."

Diane's response did raise some questions regarding the thematic focus, especially of Theme 3. She stated,

*Thanks for contacting me. [...] Right now I feel like statement three speaks to my lived experience a lot. Perhaps "widening" our lens gives more credibility to our own population (as if comparing a certain group to the "norm" group is the only way to offer validity. Sigh. That feels a bit circular, and hopeless, but sometimes it happens).*

*I'm reading Academic Ableism (not finished yet), by Jay Dolmage, and enjoying it---your first statement makes me think of his text. We've excluded and "sorted" groups of people in academic for far too long, and I think (finally) the cracks are showing in the "steep steps" of the academy. Statement two does reflect my lived experience.*

*Statement three does reflect my lived experience, but I like it the least. :) I mean, it feels, no offense, sort of "squishy," when we say, "artistically exploring," yet, yes, that IS what we do sometimes.*

Ralph also provided more extensive feedback regarding the Themes, stating,

*I think these new themes are great! I don't have any real concerns about any of them. I especially like the second half of the second theme: "expressed by respecting the humanity and uniqueness of each learner by artistically exploring what works in the developmental classroom." I think that's a fantastic way of explaining what I do.*

**Summary**

After I had completed conducting all the participant interviews, I electronically transcribed the interviews, uploaded them into Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) Miner Lite®. I then followed a qualitative case study data analysis process influenced by Williams (2004) and Vaismoradi et al. (2016). I outlined the phases of each of the four stages suggested by this blended model, along with explanations of points where my own process diverged from their recommendations. The process generated 54 initial categories, three super-categories, and nine dimensions. Through recursive reflection, I used these categories and dimensions to generate three themes, described in Chapter 7.

## CHAPTER 7 – DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study addresses the problem gaps existed regarding developmental instruction, specifically how instructors negotiate transitions between developmental and mainstream instructional settings. Chapter 1 provided a rationale for the study and a brief history of the transition between developmental and mainstream instruction in post-secondary institutions to position the study. I collected data over the course of twenty-four interviews, with eight participants completing three interviews each. Following case study methodology guidelines suggested by Merriam and Tisdell (2016), I electronically recorded, transcribed, and verified those transcripts with the participants in terms of fit with their lived experience. I provided profiles of the participants using Seidman's (2006) suggested protocol.

In Chapter 5, I recounted the participants' stories and described their transitional experiences in their own words. Using bracketing, I sought to recognize and bracket my voice in order to allow readers to hear the voices of the participants through the data presented in the study. In Chapter 6, I analyzed and described the data and identified nine dimensions pointing toward three overarching themes. I also included feedback and insights from the participants obtained during the member checking stage. In this chapter, Chapter 7, I discuss the findings of this study, and consider how these findings relate to the body of available literature.

### **Supplemental Literature Review**

The overarching grand tour question driving this study was, "What do faculty at broad-access institutions of higher learning in the Intermountain West describe as influences that inform their design and delivery of instruction as they transition between developmental and mainstream instructional settings?" From this Grand Tour Question, I derived three academic sub-questions:

1. What instructional design choices have participants made about the development and implementation of curriculum in historical developmental settings?
2. What practices and experiences have informed participants' efforts to design curriculum in mainstream post-secondary instructional settings?
3. What do faculty perceive about the similarities and differences in design and delivery described between their historical and transitional instructional models?

In this chapter, I review the themes that emerged during data analysis and examine how these themes address the study sub-questions. Also, I examine how the emergent themes of this study relate to the literature already reviewed in Chapter 2, as well as how these evolving themes inform new bodies of literature.

### **Academic Sub-question 1**

Academic Sub-question 1 asked, "What instructional design choices have participants made about the development and implementation of curriculum in historical developmental settings?" After progressing through the four major phases of the Williams-Vaismoradi modified analysis process - General Sorting, Reflective Sorting, Categorizing, and Thematic Generation, I was able to articulate the scope of Theme 1, which suggests that participants utilize three primary principles to guide and shape their choices in terms of developing and implementing curricula in developmental courses:

1. Meeting their students where they are
2. Accepting that there is not one right way to help students

3. Acknowledging that developmental students might be just catching up to the starting line of postsecondary studies as they transition into university culture.

**Meeting students where they are.** Participants repeatedly described the need to meet their students where they are or have an authentic understanding of who their students were, what their motivations were for seeking postsecondary education, and what their capacities were for dealing with the rigors and demands of college learning. Part of this process involved developmental/mainstream faculty engaging in self-reflection on their educational biographies. Because of this self-reflection, they often sought to bracket the expectations associated with their own lived experiences when interacting with their students.

The literature seems to suggest that faculty could struggle with efforts to understand the goals and motivations that students bring with them into the classroom, which could affect the efficacy of chosen instructional design models. In Chapter 2, I introduced Mesa's (2012) study, which focused on the divergence in perceptions between students and faculty regarding how they understand student goal achievement orientation in a wide variety of mathematics courses in community college settings. Mesa suggested that misunderstanding goal achievement orientation could lead to course designs that failed to address student interests and instructional needs. After finding that gaps existed between faculty and student perceptions, Mesa stated that one possible cause for the existence of this gap was a lack of interaction between faculty and students, which prevented instructors from understanding why their students were taking their classes and what they sought to get from the course.

The Mesa (2012) and later Mesa, Celis, and Lande (2014) studies previously mentioned in Chapter 2 concentrated on examining issues of faculty perceptions of students and their

motivations in community college settings. Comments from Christine, the sole participant who taught mathematics, echoed the findings of both studies. The findings of this study suggest that developmental faculty in 4-year institutions may also perceive their students' motivations as similar to their own, thus beginning to extend this thin body of literature to include faculty in both community colleges and broad-access 4-year institutions. This study also serves to extend the literature by including a broader demographic of instructors and disciplines than reflected in the study conducted by Mesa et al., (2014).

Bustillos (2007) examined tendencies among community college mathematics instructors to inadvertently introduce expectations and cultures into the classroom based on instructors' academic histories and experiences as students, regardless of whether those perceptions were reflective of what students had experienced. Several of the participants shared examples in their practices where these assumptions affected the instructional design choices they made regarding their courses, and that it had taken time to be able to make the necessary adjustments in their perceptions to address these concerns. Bustillos's (2007) study was conducted exclusively among mathematics faculty at the community college level. Bustillo's (2007) findings suggest that faculty need to be aware of the possibility of slipping into the habit of conflating their nostalgic recollections of what it meant to be a student with the current behaviors and capabilities of students. This behavior could then lead to faculty making instructional design decisions based on flawed premises. This study extends that finding by including discussion of what occurs in terms of design when faculty in developmental settings acknowledge their own educational experiences and perspectives and bracket those experiences when dealing with developmental students.



Participants openly acknowledged that developmental students typically did not have a full awareness of what it meant to be a college student and were often not conversant with the cultural norms of higher education. However, these instructors argued that they saw that part of their role as instructors, particularly in developmental settings, where culturally naïve developmental students were the rule, not the exception, was to authentically see what attitudes and motivations their students did bring with them.

While not addressed explicitly in the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, the concept of the authenticity of acceptance does exist in a stream of literature focusing on English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Seedhouse (1995) notes a lack of needs analysis in General English instruction, suggesting in his findings that “[n]eeds analysis may be the preferred basis for design because of the concept of learner authenticity, and because a direct link can be drawn from needs to aims to course design, classroom implementation, and evaluation” (p. 64). In considering the impact of textual authenticity, Lee (1995) introduces the idea that authenticity is an issue to be considered in textual analysis, but also in the learners engaged in studying those texts. As part of helping make texts become more authentic to learners, Lee (1995) notes that teachers play an important role, stating that instructors who are “friendly, understanding, and sensitive to learners' needs, and who also have high cultural awareness” (p 325) increase the likelihood of encouraging student engagement and self-regulation in learning environments. The dimension of meeting students where they are, of working for authentic assessment and understanding of students, seems to extend the findings in this body of literature outside the scope of linguistics into developmental instruction.

Gagné, Wagner, Golas, and Keller (2005) suggest that an intended outcome of learner analysis is to “identify those dimensions of common learner characteristics that carry different

implications for instruction and that lead to design differences that influence learning effectiveness” (p. 106). As faculty gain more authentic knowledge of who their students are and the nature of their learning styles and backgrounds, they can provide more nuanced information to designers, who can then direct faculty more meaningfully toward the design implications and differences mentioned by Gagné et al.. More relevant to this study, Gagné et al. mention that as designers identify common learner characteristics and adjust curricula to meet related student needs, designers and faculty can direct attention more effectively to address “those learner variations that [...] make a difference in learning results.” (p. 10).

The learner variations suggested by Gagné et al. (2005), can lead to applications of the differentiated instruction mentioned by several of the participants. Differentiated instruction emphasizes that “learning experiences need to be designed and adapted to meet students’ individual, and diverse needs in order to facilitate student success” (Santangelo & Tomlinson, 2008, p. 308). This can take the form of self-directed and self-regulated learning (Knowles, 1979; Kraglund-Gauthier, Young, & Kell, 2014; Santangelo & Tomlinson, 2008, 2012), whether that instruction is mediated by technology or not (Watson, 2008). By providing instruction that is reactive to learner characteristics, like academic preparedness, motivation, academic goals and interests, instructors can increase the potential for students to find learning experiences that address their needs in uniquely tailored ways that are likely to improve their academic progression and overall success (Davies, Dean, & Ball, 2013).

**Not one right way.** The second element of Theme 1, acknowledging the possibility of many equally valid and useful paths that instructors and students can follow to meet learning outcomes, included examples of the ways participants designed curriculum for developmental students. Most participants did not identify instructional design models or theories that guided

their particular design choices. In most cases, they suggested that their exposure to ID models or theories was discipline-oriented, and rarely instrumental, in conceptualizing or implementing instruction. More often, they suggested that practice and experience were the guiding principles that helped them to evaluate the efficacy of any particular approach or model in their classrooms.

This practice of avoiding reliance on singular design models or learning theories seems to concur with Chung's (2005) findings, outlined in Chapter 2. Just as Chung (2005) and Farakish (2009) discussed, the participants tended to describe their choices about selecting and evaluating their curricular designs more from the perspective of addressing the needs of their students than from determining alignment with any particular theoretical model. Instead, they regularly referenced their own experience as the primary resource they relied upon to guide their practice, just as Jarvis (1999) suggested.

**Catching up to the starting line.** Participants regularly described the importance of learner analysis in their instruction. In most cases, this analysis suggested that students entering developmental education were facing significant obstacles that were likely to undermine their successful completion of developmental courses and entry into postsecondary degree and certification programs. These obstacles included inadequate academic progression at the secondary level, learning disabilities, socio-economic issues, lack of support from family and other stakeholders, life events that derailed their previous educational experiences, and what one participant described as *educational malpractice*. The cumulative effect of these negative experiences tended to result in students beginning their developmental studies with serious disadvantages which, as Monica described it, “puts them farther behind the goalposts, you know, with a weight tied around their foot trying to get to the college level class that their peers are going to just jump right into.”

As described by participants, the challenges that students face and the impact such realities pose in designing and delivering instruction in developmental settings confirm the findings of Spann (2000) and Petty (2014). Attempting to categorize or describe developmental students in monolithic terms, assigning the causes of their need for remediation to only one or two potential limitations, is highly problematic and may lead to faulty reasoning and inadequate instructional planning, as described by Mesa (2012) and Mesa, Celis, and Lande (2014).

### **Academic Sub-question 2**

Academic Sub-question 2 asked, “What practices and experiences have informed participants’ efforts to design curriculum in mainstream post-secondary instructional settings?” Theme 2 emerged as a reflection of data elements that centered on participant discussions of personal and emotional connections to this chosen field of instruction, connections that resonated with their desire to acknowledge the humanity of their students. This alignment of professional identity with core instructional mission resulted in a willingness among participants to critically evaluate the efficacy of their instructional design choices and engage in innovative and artistic efforts to find pedagogical approaches that better aligned with what the participants knew about their students and the outcomes they designed into their courses. The primary elements of Theme 2 are expressed as

1. Faculty work as a calling
2. Respecting the humanity and uniqueness of each learner
3. Artistically exploring what works in the developmental classroom.

**Work as a calling.** All of the participants shared thoughts or experiences that described instances of caring for the students they teach and the impacts of having strong affinities to the work they do in developmental education. Despite adverse reactions and treatment from some

peers, misunderstanding, and ignorance about the nature of postsecondary remediation at the departmental level, and institutional obstacles, these participants voiced their abiding feelings of commitment to this career path and desire for additional research into the field of developmental education as a legitimate discipline.

The affirmation of self that these participants described that they found in their work, (e.g., Monica's statement, "It's not just a vocation, it's a calling"), appears to confirm what Kovan and Dirkx (2003) found when examining the experiences of environmental activists. In their study, they found that the participants in their study

learned and developed with a strong emphasis on understanding who they are within their work. They expressed a close alignment between the deep values they bring to their work and the hope they feel when aligning their work tightly with those values. (p. 111)

The idea that personal values and beliefs could and should be supported and enhanced in professional settings confirms findings by Brownell and Tanner (2012) and Smittle (2003).

**Respecting the humanity of learners.** All of the participants shared stories about interactions with students that centered on legitimizing student experience, positive or negative. In some cases, this took the form of participants inquiring about student progress and confidence in learning conferences with students. Other participants introduced these topics in group and classroom settings, where participants gave students opportunities to share and explore how their lived experience shaped their perceptions of themselves and others and the ways these perceptions affected their approach to learning. Participants also shared experiences in using grounded care for students as priorities in making curricular decisions. For instance, Marie described her choice to provide students with opportunities to interact with texts that addressed marginalized populations. She also described including opportunities in her courses for students

to hear from and connect with students with similar past histories who had been able to transition into university studies successfully and who could act as role models and positive influences.

While not addressed in the initial review of literature appearing in Chapter 2, subsequent queries uncovered a body of literature surrounding the concept of a pedagogy of care that closely mirrors the premises expressed by the participants in this study. Larsen (2015) explains that this pedagogy centers on the concept that “caring matters to college students. As described by student and professor participants, college students are motivated to succeed, are more likely to attend, and feel more satisfaction in classes where they perceive that their professors care for them” (p. 109). All of the developmental/mainstream instructor participants in the present study shared anecdotal evidence that suggests agreement with Larsen’s (2015) findings. This alignment suggests for many of them, this sense of care (Kyriacou, 2015; Soto, 2005) gave them sufficient emotional resilience (Lengelle, Van der Heijden, & Meijers, 2017) to persist in their career fields, despite the challenges they faced in working with developmental and mainstream students.

**Exploring what works in the developmental classroom.** Participants all described situations in which evaluations of instructional plans in the classroom led to radical changes in instructional design and delivery in both developmental and mainstream settings. These evaluations sometimes revealed gaps in student performance or helped instructors articulate what was causing their dissatisfaction with learning outcomes. In all of these cases, participants manifested a willingness to engage in curricular change, to question not only implementation processes but also the premises and assumptions that provided a foundation to construct those processes. This willingness seemed to reflect the types of progressions that Mezirow (1998),

Kreber and Cranton, (2000), and Dirkx, Mezirow, and Cranton (2006) ascribe to transformative learning and growth.

Participants, based on their comments, seemed to suggest that these changes often reflected the influence of, in their words, “subjective” and “artistic” thinking about the problem and potential solutions. This willingness to explore new and unique solutions to address the needs of their students supports work by Campbell (2009) and Roberts, Park, Brown, and Cook (2011). Recognizing that their students are unique individuals, and therefore, need instruction that is responsive to their particular needs, Joseph (2018) states, “effective teachers are interested in differentiating instruction in response to student readiness, interest, and learning profiles.” (p. 280). As they expressed it, participants confirm the supposition that Scott, McGuire, and Shaw (2003) share, that “many of these dedicated teachers have also spent years of trial and error in responding to student needs in their college instruction” (p. 377).

*Schön’s reflective epistemology.* Faculty described unique efforts of increasing engagement among developmental and mainstream students, improving student performance on essential skill areas related to their courses, and facilitating transition into the university. In many cases, faculty were able to describe what they did, but when asked why they were doing it, or the basis on which they predicated these choices, they struggled to articulate their rationale. Schön (1987) suggests that individuals sometimes struggle to explain the justifications or thought processes that lay behind specific decision-making processes because they are basing those decisions on tacit knowledge, understanding which might exist outside the scope of verbal constructions required to express it. Much like the idea of the challenge in explaining to someone how to ride a bike, practitioners, according to Schön (1987), intuitively understand what good teaching feels like or looks like even if they cannot express how they arrived at that knowledge.

In his reflective epistemology, Schön describes such knowledge as knowing-in-action (1987). In describing knowing-in-action, Schön (1987) states

The knowing-in-action characteristic of competent practitioners in a professional field is not the same as the professional knowledge taught in schools; in any given case, the relationship of the two kinds of knowledge should be treated as an open question.

Ordinary knowing-in-action may be an application of research-based professional knowledge taught in schools, may be overlapping with it, or may have nothing to do with it. (p. 40)

Schön (1983, 1987, 1992a) then describes situations in which ordinary knowing-in-action yields unexpected results which defy resolution. In these situations, Schön (1987) suggests that practitioners engage in what he labels reflection-in-action, a term he uses to describe situations when “[w]e think critically about the thinking that got us into this fix or this opportunity; and we may, in the process, restructure strategies of action, understandings of phenomena, or ways of framing problems” (p. 13). This reflection-in-action operates much like Mezirow’s (1998) transformative learning process in that unexpected or disorienting experiences disrupt routine or common activities or perspectives. Schön (1987) notes that some reflection can occur in “the *action-present*” (p. 26), a context in which the practitioner can still affect change. For instance, Ralph shared his experience with teaching a “canned” class for the first time shortly after he was hired,

*I had started to teach. About a week into the class, I said, ‘This isn’t working,’ and I did a complete curriculum overhaul. I kind of went rogue from the standardized model we were using and I introduced what I called a whole-part-whole approach. So instead of making them start by writing standalone paragraphs, I had them start by writing a full essay and then we would kind of focus on the paragraphs within the essay and kind of go back and forth between focusing on paragraphs and essays and whatnot..*



Ralph's reflection in the action of teaching course suggested that the planned design was not meeting what he felt to be his students' needs, resulting in the dramatic course overhaul.

However, this change only worked because Ralph was able to initiate the alterations to the content and sequencing in the moment of instruction, the action-present that Schön (1987) refers to when he describes reflection-in-action.

Compare that with Christine's description of the change she made to her math testing sequence:

*So with that in mind, I do things like try to give tests. You know, like a 50-minute class period is typical, right? Trying to give tests fairly often, like every couple of weeks. Two to three weeks, so that the material is not so long I have to stop and study the material, right? Then, I can write a better test because it's on a smaller amount of material because they only have sixty minutes and so I have to write a test that they can finish in 60 minutes, right. And then they're stopping and studying every two weeks. Generally every two weeks to, you know, 12 class days, they're stopping and studying that material hard enough to pass a test, however that, whatever that means for each student right and then we move on to the new material.*

In Christine's circumstance, reflection is occurring, yet it cannot work retroactively to address student performance in the past that was negatively affected by tests that covered too much material or required more time for studying than students had available in their schedules. Schön (1987) referred to this kind of reflection as reflection-on-action, which he described as,

We may reflect *on* action, thinking back on what we have done in order to discover how our knowing-in-action may have contributed to an unexpected outcome. We may do so after the fact, in tranquility, [...] our reflection has no direct connection to present action" [emphasis in original]. (p. 26)

The challenge then becomes to consider how Schön's (1983, 1987) reflective epistemology addresses the role of instructional design theories and models, especially in light of his positions on technical rationality. One answer might be to suggest that reflection-in-action is

not a solitary or isolated practice, but can include activity that seeks additional information in the form of scholarly activity and research. However, when asked whether research was a part of their reflective practices, the majority of participants did not suggest that it was. Phil shared that he was engaged in professional development that included discussions of learning theories and models, while Marie and Ralph specifically mentioned instructional design paradigms, such as social constructivism, that influenced their design choices, but did not discuss models or techniques that influence their teaching practice.

**Action research.** According to Erlandson and Beach (2008), “it is clear that for Schön the competence of the practitioner is ultimately found in an underlying structure of reflection, a structure that it is itself possible to reflect upon” (p. 419). This post-action reflection suggests the idea that reflection-on-action can and should generate structures that can articulate how reflection shaped solutions and continued practice. It is at this point that I turned to a new body of literature that suggests a mechanism developmental instructors can rely on to generate these structures: action research.

Though the terminology may vary by author, there is considerable literature regarding this research methodology. For instance, Sagor (2010) uses the term action research, defined as “an investigation conducted *by the person or the people empowered to take action concerning their own actions, for the purpose of improving their future actions* [emphasis in original]” (p. 4). Tomal (2003) describes the practice as “a systematic process for solving educational

problems and making improvements” (p. 5). Robinson and Lai (2006) label the term interchangeably as practitioner or teacher research, defining it as “practitioners as researchers inquiring into their practices with the aim of making sustainable improvements to teaching and learning in their schools” (p. 3). While the titles might vary, the underlying perception and description of the activity is very similar: a research methodology that can utilize quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods research approaches (Tomal, 2003) with the specific intent of finding solutions for specific problems that manifest within the scope of one’s professional practice (Lankshear & Knobel, 2008; Sagor, 2010). In some cases, these decisions require practitioners to utilize systematic or scientific methods to compare, explore, or evaluate the efficacy of specific solutions. According to Tomal (2003), what distinguishes action research from more traditional quantitative or qualitative approaches is “it does not require elaborate statistical analysis [...] or lengthy narrative explanations [...], but is more concerned with solving a problem in an efficient and feasible manner” (p. 5).

The fundamental practice of action research centers on practice, on finding solutions to problems encountered in the classroom. Echoing the premises of Schön’s (1987) work on knowing-in-action and reflection-in-action, Lankshear and Knobel (2008) state that teachers draw on a shared fund of professional knowledge and accumulated experience to take them as far as possible in specific situations. When they need to go beyond that shared ‘professional wisdom’ they draw on specialist educational knowledge, experience,

networks, and their capacity for informed autonomous judgement to make decisions about how to best promote learning objectives. (p. 4)

Another aspect of action research, which separates it from other research methodologies, is the researcher's role. According to Heron and Reason (2001), traditional "[r]esearch is [...] something done by people at universities and research institutes. There is a researcher that has all the ideas, and who studies other people by observing them, asking questions, or by designing experiments. [...] People are treated as passive subjects rather than active agents" (p. 179). Action research, on the other hand, "reject[s] key assumptions about the possibility and prospects of objective, neutral, 'proof- and truth-centered' research" (Lankshear & Knobel, 2008, p. 7). In traditional research, according to Heron and Reason (2001), "the roles of researcher and subject are mutually exclusive: the research only contributes the thinking that goes into the project, and the subjects only contribute the action to be studied" (p. 179). Instead, practitioner researchers (such as the participants of this study) seek to solve a specific problem (such as curriculum design for developmental students), and therefore, do not need to separate themselves from the phenomenon they are investigating. Indeed, their goal is to harness their intimate knowledge of the issue at hand (as developmental/mainstream instructors in open-access universities) and recruit others (fellow developmental/mainstream instructors, mainstream instructors, and even on occasion developmental/mainstream students) to participate alongside them in the resolution of the concern.

***Experiential learning.*** Exploring these two bodies of literature seemed to suggest ways that participants could intuitively seek for solutions to problems they encountered in their professional practice, yet the two models, reflection-in-action and action research, seemed disparate by themselves. In returning to the literature, I found that Kolb's (2015) model of

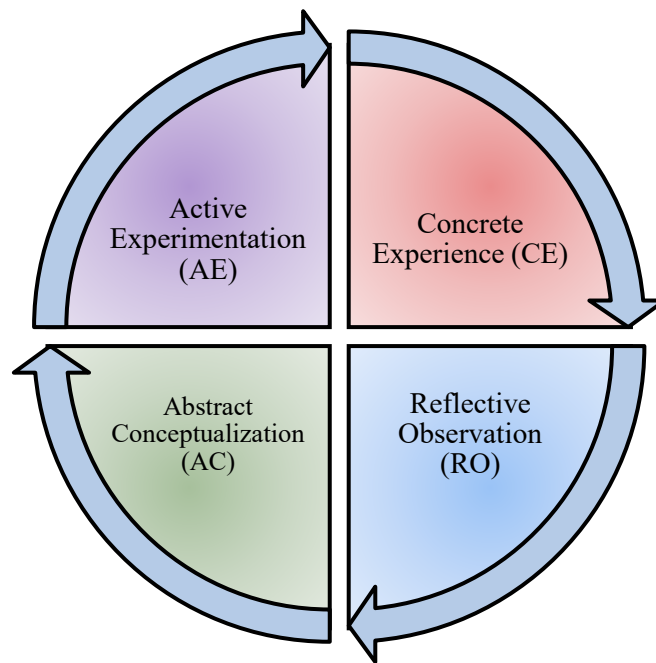
experiential learning seemed to provide a more holistic theory which adequately encompassed Schön's (1987) epistemology of reflective practice and Tomal's descriptions of action research within the context of the participants' lived experience.

Kolb's (2015) experiential learning theory (ELT) centers on the idea that "[k]nowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience" (p. 67). Learning occurs as individuals move among phases articulated between two axes of dialectally opposite modes, which Kolb and Kolb (2016) claim are comprised of "Concrete Experience and Abstract Conceptualization and [...] Reflective Observation and Active Experimentation" (p. 194). It was as I considered these two axes of influence that I began to see how ELT was able to merge the participants' shared perspectives with the work of Schön's (1987) reflective epistemology (SRE), Mezirow's transformative learning theory (TLT) and Robinson and Lai's (2006) work regarding action research.

Kolb's (2015) ELT cycle begins with concrete experience; according to Lewis and Williams (1994), when learners encounter challenges that disrupt their understanding or application of a concrete experience, "they reflect on the experiences from a variety of perspectives" (p. 6). These reflective observations then guide them to abstracted conceptualizations, which Kolb and Kolb (2016) describe as the process through which "[t]hese reflections are assimilated and distilled into abstract concepts from which new implications for action can be drawn" (p. 194). Goldstein (2001) notes, that in this phase

concepts or theories grasped by the intellect along, in this stage, are integrated into the mind of the learner. They are not imprinted like Xerox copies, but are given their special form by the individual's cognitive style, talents, or intelligence, life experiences, and world view" (pp. 79-80).

As the concepts become more concrete in the learner's mind, they guide the learner toward opportunities where learners synthesize concepts into continual practice until those actions achieve the level of normalized or concrete experience. At this point, the learning cycle begins again. Figure 15 reflects the component parts of the Kolb experiential learning cycle.



*Figure 15* – Kolb's experiential learning cycle. Kolb's (2016) model of learning includes opposing dialectical tensions between grabbing knowledge (CE/AC) and transforming knowledge (RO/AE).

*A heuristic conception of intuitive instructional design models.* As I considered Kolb's (2015) cycle, I began to see how this cycle shared similarities with elements within Schön's (1987) reflective epistemology (SRE) and Mezirow's transformative learning theory (TLT). Specifically, the actions involving knowing-in-action (SRE), the knowledge "built into and revealed by our performance of everyday routines of action" (Schön, 1992b, p. 194) seem to align with Kolb's ELT depictions of concrete experience. Both modes are observable, though participants might not necessarily be able to explain the nuances or underlying warrants of their operations to others, as both operate on a foundation of tacit knowledge.

*Disorienting dilemmas.* However, while Schön (1983, 1987) does mention the importance of surprise or unforeseen consequences occurring during knowing-in-action, such disruptions act as unanchored elements within his epistemology, while Kolb (2015) does consider disruption as a factor, but omits it as a formal element in his model. Mezirow (1985, 1998, 2000), however, does include disruption as a formative stage in transformative learning theory (TLT), which provides the critical bridge disorienting dilemmas that provide the spark for practitioners to engage in formative change in the design and delivery of instruction, particularly in the form of instructional design in developmental/mainstream settings.

*Reflection-in-action.* It is in these moments when the practitioner or learner realizes that routine solutions are not resulting in desired, or even expected, outcomes that pathways to potentially new or unique solutions become manifest. Schön (1987) labels in-the-moment adaptations of practice or perception as reflection-in-action. These kinds of actions can reflect minute adjustments to instruction, such as Phil's spontaneous response to a student's voiced concern about their lack of knowledge about the subject of a writing project

*It's so funny because students are like "I can't write about that I don't know anything about it, and I'm like "Well, no shit, that's why you write about it, right?" and I use it, that language in the classroom, too, excuse me.*

*Professional artistry.* An affiliated concept in SRE is the use of professional artistry to negotiate instructional impasses, such as when Monica shares an analogy with her students to illustrate the dangers in unfiltered media consumption,

*I try to tell them that, 'You know, charlatans write books, too. You know, people lie to you, write books and articles for newspapers, you know. So, you have to be critical [...] I want you to be as critical of the information you get in print or digitally as you are of, you know, the items in a salad bar at a restaurant.' [...] They are more concerned about how that broccoli looks on that salad bar at the local restaurant then they are about this digital information that's coming at them 24 hours a day, and they're letting themselves be exposed to some really bad produce.*

*Reflection.* The next phase in the heuristic model includes phases specifically identified in the ELT, SRE, and TLT models that focus on some form of reflective activity. This activity entails critical consideration of the nature of outcomes that surprise or disrupt expectations born of the practitioners' concrete experience, knowing-in-action, reflection-in-action, or manifestations of professional artistry. Normally, this level of reflection requires time outside of the scope of activity. This pause in action, not necessarily specified in any of the models as being requisitely short or long in a chronological sense, forces the individual to see the event, context, or surrounding with new eyes. TLT contains two phases that encompass a practitioner's critical reflection of these dilemmas: self-examination with feelings of guilt or shame; and critical assessment of epistemic, sociocultural, or psychic assumptions (Kitchenham, 2008, p. 105).

*Content, process, and premise reflection.* Within the scope of TLT, Kreber and Cranton (2000) expand the focus of Mezirow's TLT by suggesting that an element of this reflective thinking stage centers on examining instructional practices through the lenses of content, process, and premise in instructional, pedagogical, and curricular domains. This approach provides a more articulated and structured means for framing reflections and determining the specific avenues for further consideration or where to begin to conceptualize possible actions to rectify the dilemmas previously encountered.

*Abstraction.* In this stage, the learner/practitioner shifts into from reflection into a more subjective, artistically oriented phase. Creativity and abstract thinking challenge previously established patterns, habits, assumptions, or beliefs that limit options to find detours that work around, under, or through the obstacles made manifest in the disruptions or surprises in lived experience, such as instructional design for developmental curricula. Kolb (2015) labels this phase abstract conceptualization, while Schön (1987) refers to it as reflection-on-action. TLT

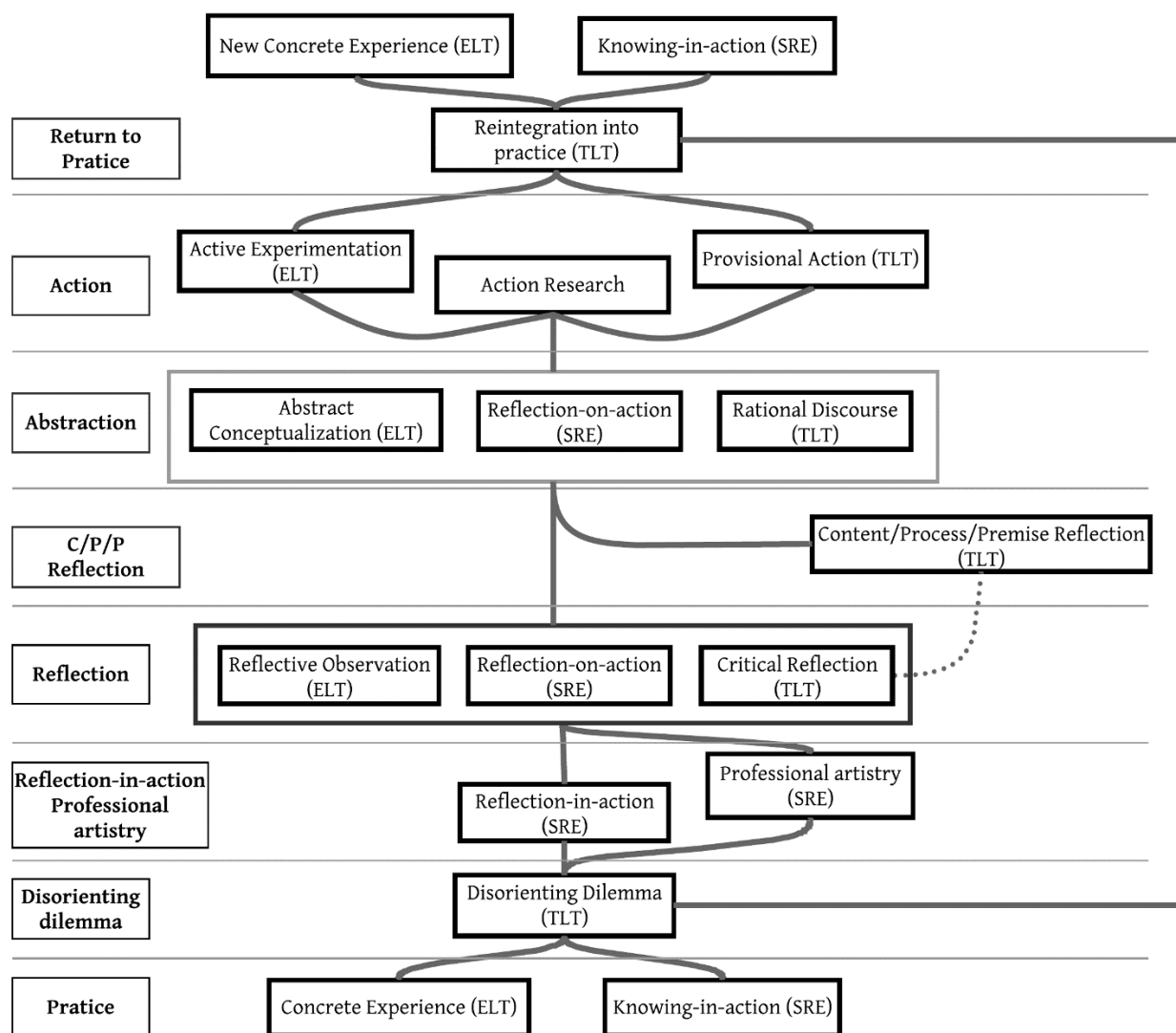


divides this stage, referred to as rational discourse, into two more discrete phases: recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared and that others have negotiated a similar change; and exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions (Kitchenham, 2008, p. 105). In all three models, abstraction is a phase where learners and practitioners can suspend tradition, history, and cultural norms temporarily in order to find passageways to resolutions to current challenges.

*Action.* At this stage, practitioners are now primed to engage in activity. Robinson and Lai (2006) suggest that faculty develop theories of action, which include an articulation of the constraints of the problem, action, and the likely consequence of those actions. They note, "How a teacher consciously or unconsciously solves a practical problem will therefore be determined by the content of his or her particular theory of action" (Robinson & Lai, 2006, p. 16). Kolb (2015) suggests that practitioners, such as developmental instructors, work to develop these explicit or implicit solutions through active experimentation. Mezirow's TLT (1999) articulates more discrete phases that practitioners might pass through toward the development of a theory of action: planning a course of action; acquisition of knowledge and skills for implementing one's plan; provisional trying of new roles; and building of competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships (Kitchenham, 2008, p. 105)

*Return to practice.* Within Mezirow's (1999) TLT, following the action phases, the practitioner will return to a state of practice, integrating the newly perspectives and practices (Kitchenham, 2008), reflective of Schön's (1987) knowing-in-action. However, it is possible that in the act of reintegration, disorienting dilemmas may arise as a result of the new information. If and when this occurs, the heuristic model would suggest a return to this phase in the model and the reworking of the dilemma using the established model. Should those disruptions not occur,

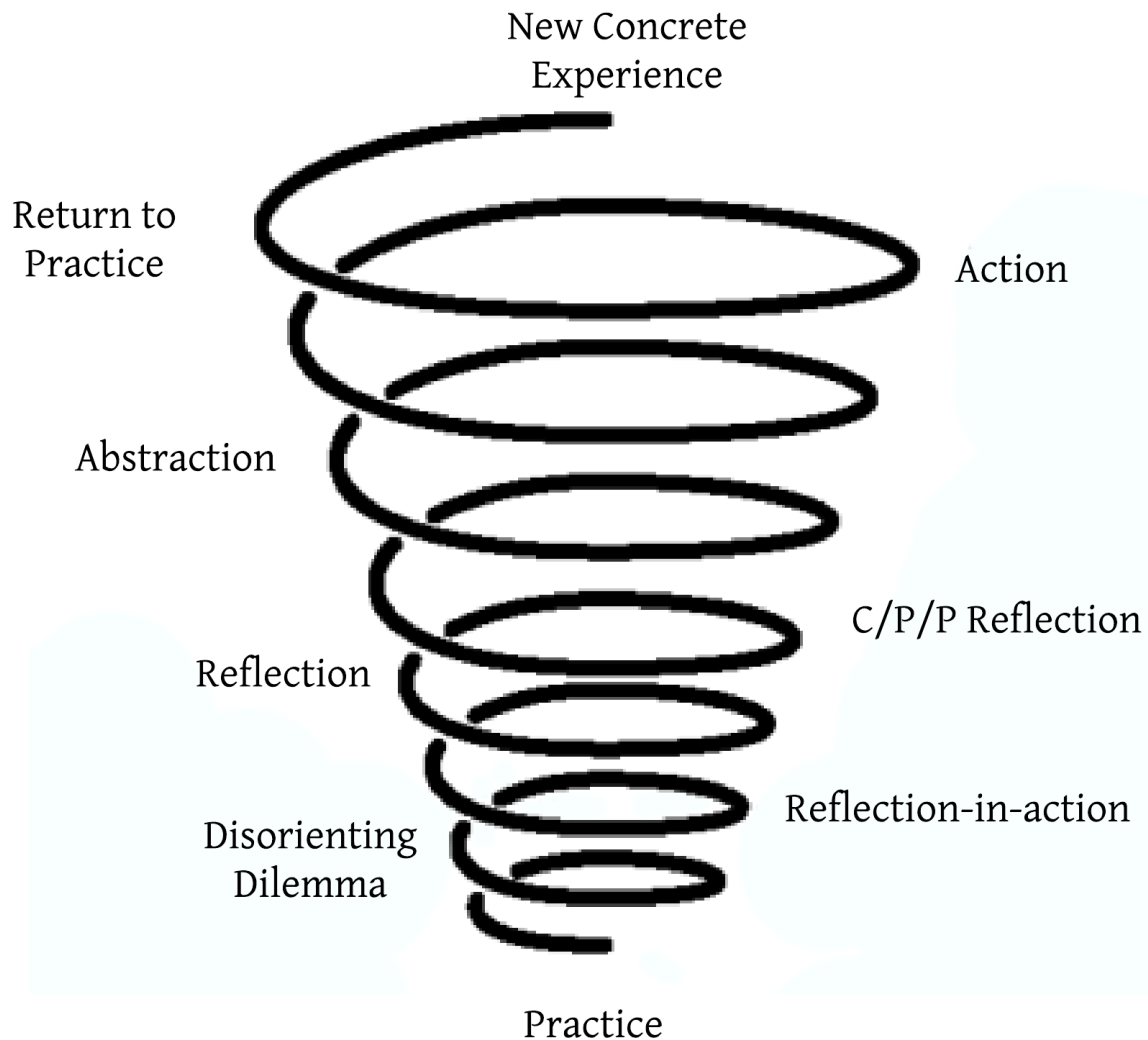
the practitioner then returns a new concrete experience until the next disruption occurs. A graphic representation of this intuitive instructional design (IID) model is included as Figure 16.



*Figure 16* – Intuitive instructional design model. The intuitive instructional design model serves as a heuristic guide that includes Kolb's (2015) ELT, Schön's (1987) SRE, Mezirow's (1998) TLT and Robinson and Lai's (2006) practitioner research models.

In looking at this model, however, I determined that the pathways seemed to suggest linear progressions through the various stages, which failed to express the concept inherent in all of the models that previous experience, action, and reflection informed future action in an ongoing

cyclical pattern, as demonstrated in Figure 17.



*Figure 17 – Heuristic representation of IID Model. A more accurate representation of the IID model would demonstrate that each subsequent action or reflection builds on previous activity.*

***Application of the intuitive instructional design heuristic.*** This new intuitive instructional design heuristic provided a useful framework with which to analyze participant descriptions of their design and delivery decisions. For instance, Phil discussed his decision to adopt an inverted grading system in lieu of more traditional grading rubrics in an effort to address persistent performance gaps in his students' writing.

*Practice.* Phil discusses a typical teaching situation: the experience of grading student writing that reflects strengths in some areas, but weaknesses in others. He explained that

*Let's say that they do fairly well on sentence or word choice. They're doing fairly well on that, but the organization is way off. So if I averaged out the scores, if they got a D for organization, the whole paper would be a B. Yeah, I know, I know. It sounds unfair; it's a classic thing that our faculty talk about - when you aggregate scores, you don't see where the problems are, because they cover it up so many times with whatever.*

As he mentions, it is a common quandary among faculty: how to assign grades when a student shows competency in many areas of an assignment, but struggles in a few. According to Kolb's (2016) ELT model, this consideration of grading and its tendency to hide student deficiencies through aggregation would be a concrete experience; Schön's (1987) reflective practice would describe this as knowing-in-action.

*Disorienting dilemma.* In discussing this concern, Phil shared the following observation "Because, what happens is people get passed along and so, in college, we wonder like how this student got passed along, you know, through high school. Out in the workforce, people are wondering, '[...] This person can't write.'" This perspective suggests that current practice is not meeting instructional or curricular outcomes, surprising Phil enough to the point that he reflects on how to address the concern of which he is now aware.

*Reflection-in-action.* In talking about his current format of teaching, and how he modified his instruction based on his observations in the *action-present*, Phil shared,

*One thing I got from a class, it's been funny, this guy was a senior and he ended up in my ENGL 1010 class, not the way things are supposed to be, you know he should have taken the class as a freshman or sophomore. So he got in my class and he said, "Yeah I got all A's, you know, in all my other classes and you're my first B." But I think he just kind of got passed along through those other ones, with people saying "Hey, please work on this, please work on this, please work on this." And he got into my class and he actually had to, so he resubmitted a couple times and his score went up. I think I am trying to do something a little different, but it's also the students can take from it what they want to from it.*

*Reflection-on-action.* Next, Phil described his own thoughts and attitudes about the issue, observing

*The idea is, some of them kind of wish I would just average everything out and let them go on their way, but I feel like we're not doing anybody any favors. [...] And so, I say, 'We're gonna stop that cycle right here.'*

His consideration of the problem included the realization that in many cases, students had grown comfortable with the averaged grading processes used in secondary education. As a result, these students were entering postsecondary courses without adequate skills to progress and therefore assigned to developmental courses. He also reflected on the likely consequences of sustaining this grading process and the likelihood that student behavior was unlikely to change under the status quo. Phil expressed this by sharing

*[O]nce again, it's not letting them off the hook, because otherwise they go, 'Yeah I understand it,' and keep the same structure or organization that's wrong. Yeah, I mean, I'm not sure if I'm a tiger mom or something like that; part of it is my own frustration with them saying, "I know these things are wrong," but they never change it*

*C/P/P reflection.* Phil stated, "I also work to really stop students getting through without meeting essential outcomes so I've used a new grading system where I still use a rubric but students get the lowest score on that rubric." In this statement, Phil identifies a curricular premise concern – the current grading system is allowing students to complete the class without meeting essential outcomes. There is also an implied pedagogical process insight - changing the orientation of the grading process is likely to change the way that students perceive feedback and their motivation to address that feedback is likely to change if their original scores fell below the students' minimum acceptable score thresholds.

*Abstraction.* When asked about how he conceptualized solutions to these concerns, Phil stated

*A lot of it was fifty-fifty. As for the video feedback, I mean, I've kind of heard of people doing that before, but my specific type where I highlight different things, deliberately give them the lowest score on the rubric - that's my own experimentation. But I did go to CCCC Conference where somebody was talking about that students when polled about what they want is as much feedback as soon as possible.*

Later, Phil also shared,

*But just going back, some of it I got from conferences or from reading different papers. But I would say that about half of it is just me going, "Well, what's the next step?" just playing around with this stuff.*

At this stage, Phil had already conceptualized the problem, but was now in the process of envisioning solutions to address the underlying concerns that had resulted in the manifest problems that had disrupted his teaching. Kolb (2016) defines this state as abstract conceptualization, while Mezirow describes this process as rational discourse, the consideration of potential new roles based on consideration of others' shared experience and dissatisfaction.

*Action.* The next step was describing or articulating a novel solution that was likely to elicit different behavior in his students in terms of how they reacted to the critical feedback that Phil had perceived that they needed to receive. Phil described a two-part solution: allowing students to resubmit, and providing them with an increased amount of feedback in their writing. He explained that his first approach was

*Allowing them to resubmit, allowing them to resubmit as many times as they want. But also, when they resubmit, they have to comment on what they changed and why they changed it, so that way, they are not just making these superficial changes because they will just say, 'I added a comma here.'*

Phil described his changes in feedback as

*One way to make the feedback not as brutal is I give them video feedback. They don't see me, but they see the paper I am commenting on and they hear my nasally voice walking them through their paper, and that way tone is communicated more clearly. And also, you can say things in a video faster than if you're trying to write out the comments and it would take way too long to generate the same amount of comments as audio feedback.*

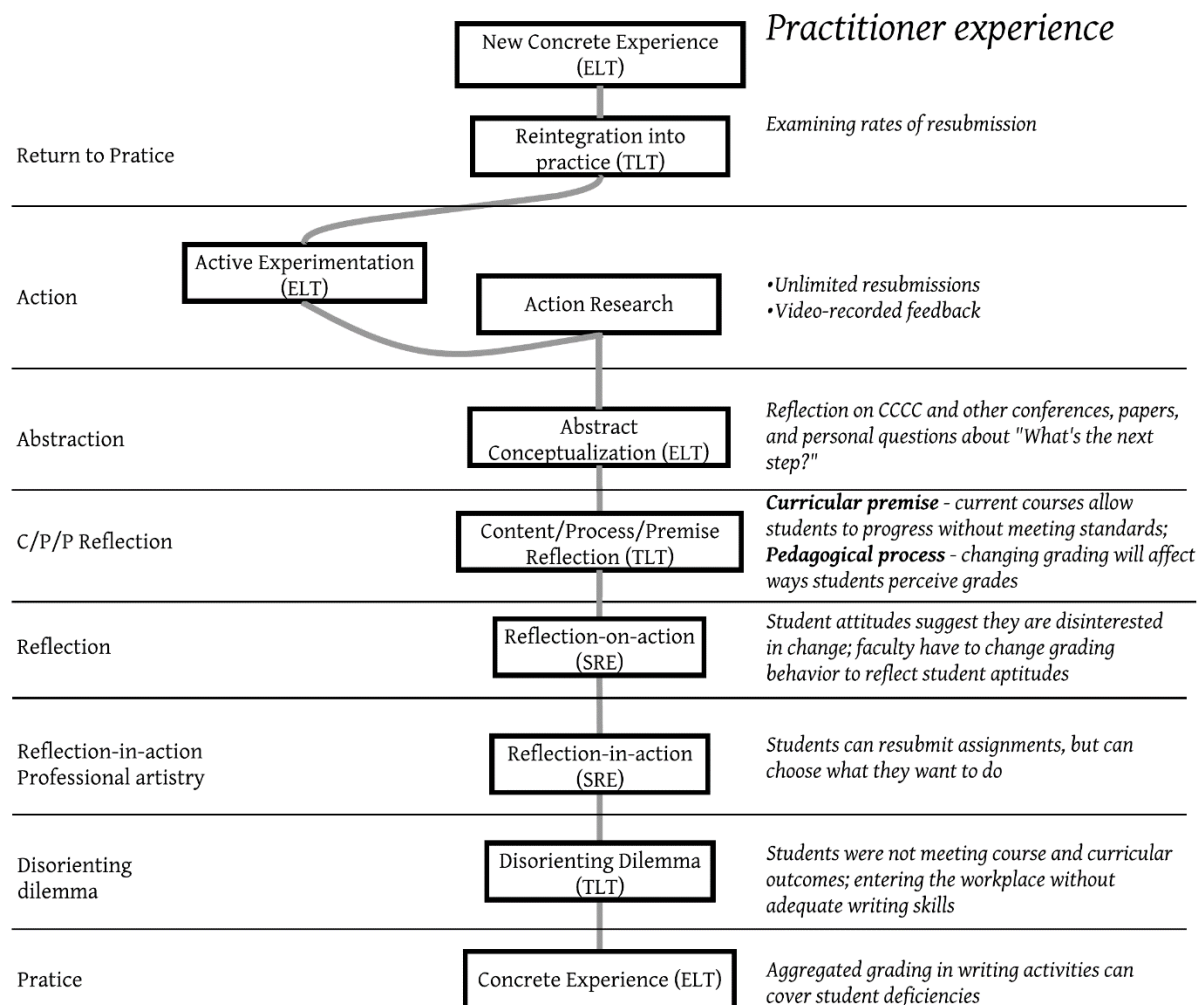
*Return to practice.* After Phil shared the ideas he had conceptualized into a solution to his concern, I asked him how he would be able to tell if his solution was having any kind of effect on his students. Phil responded,

*Well, the generic answer is improvement. What I mean by that is that people would actually resubmit because I don't make people resubmit their work. [...] But, at that point, I kind of let them decide. [...] If everybody resubmitted, then that would at least show that people are invested and interested in improving their writing. So, maybe the point is not so much that they need more feedback as much as more motivation. And once I figure out how to instill more motivation in my students, then we'll be good.*

In developing his solutions, Phil also articulated a means by which he could evaluate whether this approach was having the desired effect. In essence, Phil is engaged what Tomal (2003) defined as “a systematic process for solving educational problems and making improvements” (p. 5). As Tomal (2003) observed, Phil’s research model did not require extensive preparation or complex methodologies; he relied on simple processes to frame a question and determine a means for answering it. Schön (1992a) states,

Ordinarily, we might call such a process ‘trial and error.’ But it is not a series of random trials continued until a desired result has been produced. The process has a form, an inner logic according to which reflection on the unexpected consequences of one action influences the design of the next one. (p. 197)

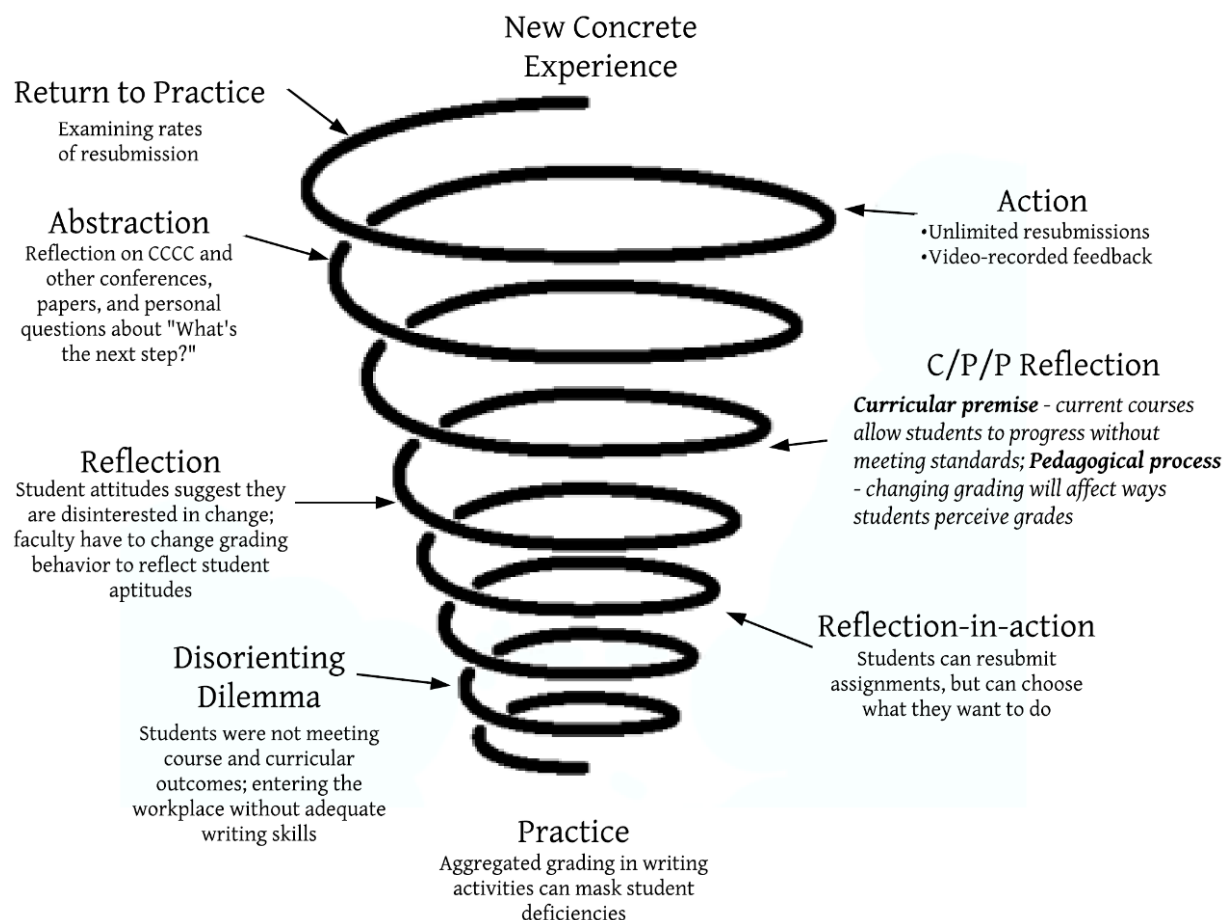
Phil’s solution itself was not an arbitrary or random action, but a logical conjecture one that reflected his professional experience and critical analysis of the problem he was facing in his practice. Figure 17 illustrates the stages of Phil’s experience in developing his new approach to grading in comparison with the elements of this modified theoretical cycle.



*Figure 18 – Application of intuitive instructional design model. The intuitive instructional design heuristic model provides an explanation of the cycle reflected in the practitioner's development of a new grading model as an instructional design act.*

As with the overall model, this linear model failed to reflect the manner in which Phil's former actions informed his latter actions. Figure 19 presents a more accurate model, reflecting the recursive nature of the intuitive design model.





*Figure 19* - Heuristic representation of Phil's design experience. This model demonstrates how each stage of Phil's intuitive design process is informed and directed by previous action or reflection.

### Academic Sub-question 3

Academic sub-question 3 sought to answer the question, "What do faculty perceive about the similarities and differences in design and delivery described between their historical and transitional instructional models?" Theme 3 suggests that increased institutional attention to the presence of developmental instruction in broad-access university settings provides participants with opportunities to shift cultural attitudes about remediation, to create environments where faculty and institutions would embrace at-risk students and where the insights gained in working in developmental settings apply in other instructional settings. The dimensions of Theme 3 are:

1. The microscope of increased institutional attention to developmental instruction

2. Establish a culture that embraces at-risk students
3. Instructional insights gained in developmental settings can be applied elsewhere to help students thrive.

**Microscope of institutional awareness.** Participants described a notable increase in institutional attention to developmental education. Participants observed that this shift in institutional awareness provided them with meaningful opportunities to share their perspectives and experiences with decision makers. They also described increased occasions to participate in decision-making processes about future directions in developmental instruction at their institutions. This shift seems to align with findings suggested by Bastedo and Gumport (2004), who suggested that developmental education is an essential component necessary for open access at most public postsecondary institutions. Being more aware of the nature and needs of this kind of instruction is critical for institutional success in meeting the needs of a growing percentage of its student body. Zachry and Schneider (2010) observed that

educators, policymakers, and researchers should continue to question the traditional developmental course sequence [...] creating ever more novel ways to improve students' achievement and providing concrete evidence for the successes of these new innovations [...] to allow academically disadvantaged students the opportunity to achieve the college and career dreams that they are so avidly pursuing. (p. 64)

Participants described shifts in the focus of the discussion about developmental instruction at their institutions to include considerations of how improved developmental outcomes could contribute to higher persistence and retention outcomes, which are becoming topics of growing concern to institutions throughout the United States, which appears to confirm findings by Kozeracki and Brooks (2006), Quirk (2005), and Faulkner (2013).

**Culture that embraces at-risk students.** As a part of the increased awareness of developmental education at their institutions, participants also shared that they are finding increased willingness among some of their colleagues to change attitudes and cultural responses to the presence of developmental students. This shift, though described as being slow-moving by participants, suggests new opportunities for institutions to support at-risk students, increasing the possibility that institutions can better retain these students once they transition into mainstream settings and persist to degree or certificate completion.

In Chapter 2, a review of the literature suggested that workloads among developmental faculty prevented them from interacting with colleagues and institutions to help address misunderstandings about the nature, scope, and efficacy of developmental instruction as a means of shifting institutional culture in regards to developmental students. Participants reported that they were regularly involved in service opportunities outside of their developmental settings, even though such service was challenging in light of their heavy workloads, supporting in part findings by Neuburger, Goosen, and Barry (2014), as well as Boyer, Butner, and Smith (2007) covered in Chapter 2. Participants shared experiences where they were engaged in the professional development activities, somewhat disconfirming the findings of Neuburger, Goosen, and Barry (2014) and Boyer, Butner, and Smith (2007), who suggested that such activities lay outside the scope of developmental faculty. In most cases, the faculty shared that their participation occurred due to the support and encouragement of their developmental colleagues and administrators. In many of these service opportunities, participants shared that they did have the opportunity to increase awareness and change attitudes of other faculty and administrators about the efficacy and impact of developmental instruction, particularly in the settings of broad-

access universities, which were not commonly considered as venues for remediation (Deil-Amen, 2011; Jackson & Kurlaender, 2014).

**Developmental insights applied elsewhere.** One of the critical propositions underlying the Grand Tour Question and academic sub-questions was that new instructional models could support and/or complicate postsecondary faculty existing curriculum design processes; such transitions might require significant evaluations and evolutions of previously utilized frameworks. When queried about how shifting between developmental and mainstream settings resulted in the need to shift or change their theoretical frameworks, participants shared that if changes were needed, they were not significant in scope. What changes did occur generally revolved around the pacing of instruction, types of learning models, and differences in self-efficacy and regulation between developmental and mainstream students.

Surprisingly, participants described that in many cases, the instructional approaches they used in their developmental courses had similar positive impacts in mainstream settings. Participants shared several stories of using developmental methods, activities, and processes to great success in their mainstream settings, confirming research that existing dichotomies and assumptions about learning styles and capabilities between developmental and mainstream students might not support realities in the classroom, as observed by Deil-Amen (2011).

Participants described efforts to increase access for all their students, including providing students with alternative ways of completing assignments and demonstrating competencies in learning outcomes, evocative of the goals within the Universal Design of Learning (UDL) (CAST, 2011; Rose & Dolan, 2000) model. UDL is intended to articulate ways that instructors can design activities to allow students to demonstrate learning competencies in a multiplicity of

ways, as well as acquire learner attributes commonly associated with student success (Dallas, Sprong, & Upton, 2014; Lombardi, Murray, & Gerdes, 2011).

### **Summary**

After articulating the themes that emerged from the data, I returned to the literature to determine how these findings aligned with previously established perspectives. I began by considering the three primary dimensions of Theme 1: (1) Meeting students where they are, (2) Accepting that there is not one right way to help students, and (3) Acknowledging that developmental students might be just catching up to the starting line of postsecondary studies as they transition into university culture.

The findings of Theme 1 in terms of meeting students where they are suggested that this study extends the literature by including new groups of faculty with different disciplinary focus than previously considered. The study extends the body of literature by looking at the design and instructional decision-making processes of developmental faculty who engage in self-reflection about the influence of their educational backgrounds and behaviors. In terms of understanding student needs, a corollary element of meeting them where they are, the findings of this study suggest that the field of developmental instruction could enhance best practices by extending the existing literature in the area of needs analysis from the field of linguistics. The findings of the study in terms of no one right way of designing instruction seemed to confirm existing findings in the literature, as do the findings regarding developmental students catching up to starting lines in their postsecondary studies.

Theme 2 addressed three primary dimensions: 1) Faculty work as a calling, 2) Respecting the humanity and uniqueness of each learner, and 3) Artistically exploring what works in the developmental classroom. The findings confirm the existing literature

in terms of the importance of professional work that reflects personal values and beliefs. The first dimension of Theme 2, work as a calling, also seems to extend the findings of Kovan and Dirkx's (2003) research regarding work as a calling by extending the scope of study beyond environmental activists to include developmental/mainstream faculty. The second dimension, respecting the humanity of students, finds confirmatory resonance in the form of a body of literature dedicated to the pedagogy of care, which echoes the positions and attitudes shared by the participants. The literature also confirms the findings of the third dimension of Theme 2, the use of artistry in finding what works in the classroom, particularly through the work of Schön (1987) regarding professional artistry and personal practice in instructional settings.

Theme 3 considered three dimensions: 1) Working under an institutional microscope, 2) creating a culture that embraces at-risk students, and 3) Applying insights from developmental instruction elsewhere. Findings in Theme 3 confirm literature that suggest increased institutional attention to the delivery and efficacy of developmental instruction. The findings of Theme 3 regarding the establishment of an accepting culture for at-risk students would seem to disconfirm previous literature that claims that developmental faculty are limited in their ability to interact in institutional service. Many of the participants reported important professional service opportunities that had positive effects on faculty perceptions and attitudes about the role of developmental instruction. This was particularly the case regarding literature involving broad-access institutions that might not share the same institutional identities and missions as community colleges.

## CHAPTER 8 – CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The overarching grand tour question driving this study was, “What do faculty at post-secondary institutions in the Intermountain West describe as influences that inform their design and delivery of instruction as they transition between developmental and mainstream instructional settings?” In this chapter, I present the findings of this study and consider implications that these findings might suggest in regards to the design of curriculum and delivery of instruction by developmental/mainstream postsecondary instructors. I also outline potential implications for instructional designers in terms of practice and support for faculty, as well as implications for institutional policy. I include recommendations for further research and offer some reflections of the impact this study has had on my personal practice.

### **Implications of the Findings of Theme 1**

Theme 1 suggests that developmental/mainstream faculty meet their students where they are by designing courses and curricula guided by the principle that there is not one right way to help students who are just catching up to the starting line of postsecondary studies as they transition into university culture. These findings suggest that potential implications exist regarding faculty design of curricula and delivery of instruction, the practice of instructional designers, as well as possible suggestions regarding institutional policy regarding developmental/mainstream instruction.

**Implications for faculty.** The findings of Theme 1 suggest that faculty benefit from exploring more efficient and effective means of developing differentiated instruction. As discussed in Chapter 7, differentiated instruction focuses on providing “high quality content, process, and product based on their understanding of students’ readiness levels, interests, and learning profiles” (Santangelo & Tomlinson, 2008, p. 308). As Phil noted,

*If we need more time, they study that aspect of grammar, or word choice, or sentence structure, or whatever it is a little bit more. So more differentiated instruction, more workshopping, yeah so that's kind of the strategies that I'm trying to get towards is to make that more individualized.*

By acknowledging the potential impacts that exist due to a spectrum of differences in student needs, exploring differentiated models could assist faculty to generate learning activities and experiences that can more meaningfully address gaps in student preparedness without negatively affect students with higher skill levels, especially in mainstream settings.

**Implications for instructional design.** Faculty, especially developmental faculty, can struggle to find the necessary flexibility in their workloads to explore new instructional methods (Neuburger et al., 2014), even if these methods are advisable to deal with student needs. When discussing the concepts of differentiated instruction, Savannah noted the complexities that come with technology-facilitated instruction stating,

*I thought perhaps software like this would be a good way to engage the students at their own levels and allow them to work at their own pace and that kind of thing but [...] I feel that [...] they're just too time-consuming to go through that process with the workload that I'm working with"*

In a different interview, she noted again, "there are so many moving pieces in this online course and, I swear, it hurts my head every day that I'm here, trying to make all these pieces hold still long enough for me to pin them down into the course." Instructional designers can assist in these situations by working with faculty in assessing current differentiated instructional approaches and determine how to modify these approaches to address concerns about faculty workload, instructional efficacy, and concerns about potential impacts that differentiated instruction could have on teacher-student interaction.

**Implications for Institutional Policy.** Institutions could benefit from fostering expanded opportunities for developmental faculty to interact, particularly in interdisciplinary settings. Several of the participants described changes to organizational structures that cut developmental



instructors off from each other. Many lamented the loss of interdisciplinary interaction, which they found enriched their instructional perspectives and improved the opportunities they had to share insights and concerns about the progress of students within their courses. Such interaction, as suggested by multiple studies (Adams, 2009; Brier, 2012; Goldrick-Rab, 2010; Lyle, 2017; Nguyen, 2011), could provide what Monica described when she stated

*Good teaching, good pedagogy, is cross-disciplinary, and the more we can kind of get in each other's piles of content, we can kind of see what works in a math class, what works in a reading class, what works in a writing class might work in some other classes.*

This interaction could also potentially provide better support and understanding among faculty who interact with students in multiple developmental courses, as described by Monica, Diane, and Marie, and other researchers (Bahr, 2012; Barbatis, 2008; Craft, 2014; Henry & Stahl, 2017).

## **Implications of the Findings of Theme 2**

Theme 2 suggests that developmental/mainstream faculty describe their work as a calling, a deep connection to their students, expressed by respecting the humanity and uniqueness of each learner by artistically exploring what works in the developmental classroom. These findings suggest that potential implications exist regarding faculty design of curricula and delivery of instruction, the practice of instructional designers, as well as possible suggestions regarding institutional policy regarding developmental/mainstream instruction.

**Implications for faculty.** The literature (Deggs, 2011; Perin, 2011; Richey & Tessmer, 1995; Tessmer & Richey, 1997) suggests that effective instruction can require, in part, authentic faculty understanding of a student's goals, aspirations, and motivations in seeking postsecondary education. The findings of this study suggest that faculty can acquire understanding through learner analysis and meaningful student interactions, which can inform numerous facets of the decision-making process in curriculum design, such as when Diane shared

*my particular instructional strategy [in dealing with students trying to distract classroom conversations] is being aware of that and I can see that prickly cactus and saying, "Okay, but we're still going to talk about things that you may not want to talk about or be exposed to otherwise." [...] I see it [their efforts to derail conversations on sensitive topics] as a strategy and then I recognize it and then I don't give up; usually, maybe I take another tack, go in through a different angle.*

Inaccurate analysis can significantly undermine the efficacy of the instructional process.

Concerns about factors that can interfere with this analysis, such as those previously discussed by Mesa (2012) and Mesa et al., (2014), suggest that faculty could benefit from training to acknowledge factors that could potentially obscure or confuse perceptions of student preparedness and capacity in their classrooms.

This study's findings also suggest faculty practices that recognize and validate the lived experiences of students positively influence learning in postsecondary settings. As Diane stated, students need to hear statements like,

*You're here. Wow, you survived that, and you're here. You deserve to be here. I support you. So, that's one piece of it, I think, that somebody in a position of authority may be saying, 'Your experience matters.'*

Significant research has been performed regarding the impact of faculty expressions of care, concern, or interest in affecting student performance and persistence (Domene, Socholotiuk, & Woitowicz, 2011; Larsen, 2015; Taylor & House, 2010; Wiggins & Mctighe, 2008). A summation of this research suggests that emotional connection with students is a likely predictor of student success (Barbatis, 2008; Di Tommaso, 2010; Dirkx, 2001; McCabe & Day Jr., 1998; Nguyen, 2011; Vansteenkiste et al., 2018). Literature also shows that emotional connections between students and faculty serves as a means of finding deep personal meaning among faculty professionals (Bouwma-Gearhart, 2012; Loughran, 2002; Mezirow, 1998; L. M. Scott & Lewis, 2012).

Action research seems to align with the participants' current instructional practices of identifying existent problems in their classrooms and reflection leading to creative and effective means of addressing those problems, echoing Christine's observation that "we don't want to be researchers, we just want to be good teachers." Indeed, the findings of this study seem to strongly confirm what Shannon (1993) recollected of a Teacher as Researcher meeting, where he was

struck by the energy with which teacher researchers discussed the context and conclusions of their investigations of their practice, the ways in which their students learned, the opportunities and constraints that curricula and materials afford their classes, and the various ways by which policy becomes practice in our schools. (p. 1)

Such activity would also suggest a means for addressing concerns raised by Neuburger, Goosen, and Barry (2014), as well as Boyer, Butner, and Smith (2007) regarding the challenges that developmental instructors face in terms of legitimizing their practice. Action research potentially provides a means for articulating compelling evidence for developmental instructors, who are already constrained by heavy workloads, needy students, and a lack of collaborating evidence about what is occurring in their classrooms beyond quantitative numbers that can cast dark shadows on the efficacy and benefit of developmental instruction (Bolick, 2017). Instructional designers can assist in this process by providing support to faculty engaging in action research, as well as looking at the findings of such research to finding practices and insights that can contribute to the development of grounded theory that can guide other practitioners in the field of developmental instruction.

**Implications for instructional design.** Because of their constant interaction with students, faculty members have opportunities to come to understand the unique lived experiences

and challenges their students face. The reflections and insights shared by the participants would suggest that in many cases, appropriately adjusting instruction based on these insights can be a challenging experience, often resulting in modification through trial and error. Such approaches can result in negative educational outcomes for students during the trial and error process.

Instructional designers can assist in this process by supporting faculty in determining how to adjust and align faculty instructional practices and curricular design based on faculty insights acquired through direct contact in the classroom. Christine, for instance, shared

*That's the big question, that's the thing that I want to go to [...] conferences for and listen to other people who think about it, but not everybody's ready to think about 'How do students learn?'*

Instructional designers are capable of providing a wide variety of relevant answers to that question as well as providing faculty with suggestions about how to implement changes in instructional practice and curricular design based on those answers.

The findings of Theme 2 suggest that curricular design and instructional delivery in developmental settings can be shaped through the acquisition and utilization of tacit knowledge, artistically applied (Schön, 1987), in addition to more traditional training programs that emphasize understanding and application of formal instructional models and theories (Boylan et al., 1999). Fostering programs at the institutional level for pre-service instructors that acknowledge a broader spectrum of possible pedagogical approaches in the classroom has the potential to prepare graduate students planning on entering into careers in developmental instruction for the realities they can face in the classroom and improve their ability to help students immediately, rather than having to learn solely through trial and error. Ralph noted

*While I was in both graduate programs, I focused a lot on developmental writing. I took as many seminars as I could in developmental writing, adult literacy. I was really interested in non-traditional students. I think because of my experience of you know coming back to school after I was married with kids and working full time, I, you know, just had a soft spot for people that you know were non-*

*traditional, but unfortunately while I was taking all these seminars as a graduate student, I really never had the opportunity to teach developmental writing courses*

Instructional designers could assist in this process by exploring identifying which faculty traits and behaviors tend to improve student outcomes and generating literature about how to help instill these traits in pre-service instructors.

**Implications for institutional policy.** Broad-access institutions may consider revisiting policies regarding graduate-level opportunities for working and teaching in developmental education settings. All of the participants reported that their graduate preparation for teaching failed to include adequate training and preparation for working in developmental settings. Even in those situations where the participants voiced interest in pursuing a career in this area, opportunities were limited due to concerns around their level of readiness to teach and the instructional expectations associated with working with developmental students. For instance, Ralph shared

*I thought it was just, you know, I would get a master's degree and you know teach at like a community college or junior college. I said, 'If, if that's what I'm gonna do, I need experience teaching these courses.' But they just held firm to their policy, you know only master's degrees can teach these courses; we don't like TAs. I was always bummed about that.*

While graduate students might require additional assistance and supervision when working in developmental settings, graduate programs could benefit from providing training in developmental instruction. Multiple studies (Bahr, 2008; Bettinger, Boatman, & Long, 2013; Boyer et al., 2007) suggest that upwards of 80% of students in community colleges in the United States currently require some form of remediation. Such numbers seem to point toward the idea that that professional preparation for many graduates planning on teaching at postsecondary institutions might benefit from increased levels of familiarity with the fundamental aspects of developmental instruction (Neuburger et al., 2014).

### Implications of the Findings of Theme 3

Theme 3 suggests that developmental/mainstream instructors negotiate being under the microscope of increased institutional attention to developmental instruction and continue to establish a culture that embraces at-risk students by showing that instructional insights gained in developmental settings can be applied elsewhere to help students thrive. These findings suggest that potential implications exist regarding faculty design of curricula and delivery of instruction, the practice of instructional designers, as well as possible suggestions regarding institutional policy regarding developmental/mainstream instruction.

**Implications for faculty.** Participants voiced consistent desires to participate in institutional level service and consistently described the positive impacts and relationships that developed when such service opportunities were open to them. Despite anecdotal experiences questioning their professional capacity, the participants of this study possessed academic degrees and professional experience equivalent to their departmental counterparts who taught primarily or exclusively in mainstream settings. As Savannah shared,

*What I have observed within the last few years is as we've become more and more involved in terms of service and that kind of a thing, [...] I would say it helps our colleagues in the rest of the English department to see us as bright, valued colleagues, as opposed to just these people who are over here doing something we don't really know about.*

Schwartz and Jenkins (2007) suggested that when working in developmental settings, “[h]aving mastery over both the subject content they teach and the diverse teaching strategies shown to be successful with developmental education students can improve instructor effectiveness” (p. 20). Schreiner, Noel, Anderson, and Cantwell (2011) suggest that decision-making bodies across postsecondary campuses can benefit from the insights shared by faculty members who possess previously acquired academic subject matter expertise combined with the added experience of

providing instruction to students who can present a wide variety of cognitive, behavioral, and affective challenges in the classroom.

**Implications for instructional design.** The findings in Theme 3 suggest that developmental instruction is not limited to formal developmental settings. As Marie shared, “I would say that I started teaching developmental students right away, even in a regular English 101 class.” Studies regarding the utility and accuracy of placement assessments (Hodara, Jaggars, & Karp, 2012; Ngo & Melguizo, 2016; Rodríguez, Bowden, Belfield, & Scott-Clayton, 2014) imply that the possibility of misplacement based on current assessment processes can negatively affect student potential to successfully complete developmental sequences or keep up with entry level coursework, depending on the nature of misplacement. Therefore, faculty who teach entry-level courses might be working with developmental students without being aware of it (Kozeracki & Brooks, 2006).

In cases where student reassignment is not likely or possible, mainstream faculty could benefit from instructional design assistance in understanding how to assist developmental students who might have placed in mainstream courses. This understanding would be likely to contribute to institutional efforts to retain these students and move them along the pathway toward degree completion and graduation. As Marie noted, this kind of awareness does not require radical changes in curriculum design at the mainstream level, but instead, she suggested, “You can really change the trajectory of a lot of students’ educational lives if you do some small things, you know, in your class that will help them.” The premise of this statement would suggest that faculty could benefit from understanding the underlying theories and practices related to UDL and its effects on increasing accessibility in every learning setting.

**Implications for Institutional policy.** Campus discussions about programs and institutional efforts aimed at student retention and persistence can potentially benefit from increased participation from developmental faculty. Questions exist, as discussed in Chapters 2 and 7, about the manner in which administrators develop policies and initiatives related to retention and developmental instruction absent of feedback from individuals tasked with delivering that instruction. As June noted, in her experience,

*What's really discouraging is the people who are making these new courses or new rules, they have never taught developmental. They want to create this new progressive movement, but they don't, they've never been in a developmental classroom*

Developmental faculty tend to work with high-risk students, those most likely to desist from progressing toward graduation, but tend, by definition, to fit into more than one category of risk. Developmental faculty can contribute to institutional-level discussions regarding student challenges and means by which institutions can mitigate the impacts of those challenges in student lives. As Savannah noted

*we're also able to ask for more support in some respects than we previously were because the administration is just more aware of those students I'm working with and the others who teach developmental ed are working with as being kind of the at-risk students that are most likely to to not be retained if we don't take steps to do things well*

The findings of this study suggest that these developmental faculty can possess insights that benefit not only those at the most risk, but students in general whose levels of challenge might not be great enough to trigger academic interventions, but are still potential severe enough to disrupt their forward progress.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

A review of the literature revealed very few scholarly works that focused on developmental instruction from the perspective of the broad-access college or university



perspective. While works were found that did acknowledge that remedial/developmental work was being performed in settings other than community colleges (Deil-Amen, 2011; Jenkins & Rodríguez, 2013; Kirst, et al., 2011; Passaro, Lapovsky, Feroe, & Metzger, 2003), developmental instruction in broad-access settings seems to be an area of study that warrants significant study in the future. Differences exist between community colleges and broad-access colleges and universities. These differences include divergences in institutional missions (Bartling, 2009; Perin, 2006), admissions processes (Bryant, 2001; Richardson, 2005), student and faculty perceptions of cultural identity and purpose (Bye, Pushkar, & Conway, 2007), and access to education (Brock, 2010; Cowan Pitre & Pitre, 2009). Therefore, researchers should continue to investigate whether existing theories, practices, and policies regarding postsecondary remedial and developmental instruction based on previous literature limited in scope to community colleges are equally applicable in broad-access settings and how to proceed in those cases when these elements are not compatible or applicable.

Additionally, a review of the literature yielded few studies focused on the perspectives and practices of faculty simultaneously teaching in both developmental and mainstream class settings. Similarly lacking were studies that examined practices designed to work in both instructional settings. As literature regarding design practices tends to focus on individuals commonly situated in one of these two disciplinary areas, additional investigation into the practices of individuals who inhabit both spheres simultaneously could benefit the development of future practitioners (Boylan & Trawick, 2015). Studies could also examine the lived practices and informal findings generated by this subgroup of faculty (Boyer et al., 2007).

Future studies could also aid in the development of more holistic theories regarding the delivery of instruction in both developmental and mainstream settings (Chung, 2005; Chung &

Higbee, 2005; A. M. Lee, 2001), especially when considering recent trends suggest greater integration and assimilation of both fields is likely (Arendale, 2001a; Jacobs, Hurley, & Unite, 2008). As discussed by Chung and peers (Chung, 2005; Chung & Higbee, 2005), there is a gap that exists between academic theory and practitioner experience in the realm of postsecondary developmental instruction. According to Chung and Higbee, noteworthy experts in the field have worked to close this divide, and Chapters 2 and 7 of this study contain discussions of that work, but in most cases, it is generated by academic figures with the time and freedom to consider theory. Specifically, Chung and Higbee (2005) note that

But it is not clear whether the conversation regarding theory adequately represents the experiences, perspectives, and needs of those "in the trenches," the front-line practitioners working in the classroom, learning center, or advising or counseling office (p. 6)

Work that can better reflect the experiences of these "in the trenches" perspectives can help to rectify this division and help to move the field of developmental instruction forward.

### **Personal Reflections**

I started this study as a practitioner who has spent my professional career straddling the line between developmental and mainstream education. It is a fraught space, where I became acutely aware of the scope of how inadequately my graduate studies had prepared me for dealing with the lived realities and struggles of my students. Several times during these first years, I seriously contemplated leaving the profession. Low pay, high stress, mounting workloads all contributed to these feelings of self-doubt and fear. Sometimes, the only thing that kept me in place was my new family and the reality that my personal obligations made leaving one career to move into the unknown too high a risk. As Shakespeare suggests through Hamlet's famous

soliloquy, it is the fear of the unknown that forces us, at times, to suffer from the pain of the present reality.

However, one day, in a developmental critical thinking course, a student leaped to his feet in the middle of a class discussion, threw his book to the ground, and turned to me, demanding, “What the hell good is any of this? Why does any of this matter?” I paused for a moment, looking down at the crimson cover of my copy of *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, and I realized that I was asking myself the same question. I shelved our conversation about the experience of political prisoners in the Soviet *gulags* and opened the rest of the class up for a candid and frank discussion about the intended and perceived purposes of that class. For the first time, rather than merely hiding behind the aura of authority lent to me by the institution, I wanted to take full responsibility for both the good and bad in my course. Because of that conversation with my students in class that day, and many which followed in the hallways, in my office, and many other locations, I began to engage in a serious and intentional reflection on my own courses, examining the content, assessments, and assumptions that lay at the heart of each. I began to experience Mezirow’s (1991) transformative process for myself.

Throughout my doctoral program, my work in remedial/developmental settings has grounded me, formed the lens through which I have listened, read, discussed, argued, debated, and researched the field of instructional design. Always, at the back of my mind, the question lingers, regardless of what topic I was studying, “How does this relate to your students? How does this relate to your work?” While I acknowledge that such an orientation can blind me to applications or aspects of this content worthy of consideration in other fields, it is in my blood. I have become, for good or ill, a permanent member of the developmental community and it will stay with me, regardless of future endeavors. It shapes how I see the world in my workplace, and

the way I experience life outside, when I see individuals out in my community, some of whom are former students, living full and productive lives, and realizing that, to some small degree, I might have helped contribute to a change in their life trajectories.

However, a reality of my adopted community is that we sometimes live lives of academic isolation, instructional hermits working on the fringes of higher education. We work with those who not regularly depicted in movies or plastered on billboards as part of the college community, or if we are, it is usually through tired tropes and negative stereotypes. We work with single parents, underemployed adults, non-traditional returnees, drop-offs, and washouts. We are the ones who devote much of our time and work debriding the wounds inflicted on a student over the course of a lifetime. We spend our workdays engaged in academic triage, trying to figure out how to reach out to as many as we can, pulling them toward solid ground and a pathway forward.

It is a life that can feel confusing, frustrating, and yet worth every second. Moreover, what I came to realize during this study is that I am not alone in this effort. Every participant expressed thoughts and feelings that had me jumping up and down inside my head, screaming, “Yes! Exactly!” Though I tried my best to adopt a non-partial, scientific demeanor during our interview sessions, hearing other instructors express the same thoughts, worries, and aspirations I have held, caused my excitement to bubble up and pour out. I often found myself grinning, laughing out loud, and jumping up and down as soon as I disconnected the video conference, grateful for the privacy of my own office.

That is the value of this study, both for the participants and for me. Each participant shared that it was a chance to be acknowledged, to be heard. When I called Monica to discuss her participation in the study, she commented, “Clayn, I hope you are ready for what you are about to get. I have 30 years of stories and experiences I have been saving up, waiting for someone to

come along that I could share them with.” This study represents, through the lives and experiences of these eight participants, a powerful representation of my own sixteen years of experience.

During the initial literature review for this study, I came across work by Chung (2005) that significantly affected my perspectives regarding this study and my practice in general. He suggests, for instance, that initiating discussion among developmental faculty about how their theoretical frameworks evolve can “help foster a greater sense of community within the field, encourage dialogue across traditional boundaries, and affirm a more unified sense of professional identity and purpose” (p. 10). Happily, that has been my experience during the study, and it has profoundly changed my understanding of what it means to be a developmental-mainstream instructor. Despite sixteen years of experience in the field, this study has left me feeling as though I am seeing my work for the first time and finding it valuable.

As I reflect on the nature, focus, and tone of the stories I have shared throughout this dissertation, I have come to realize that I have spent much of my professional life in “the swamp of important questions” (Schön, 1987, p. 3). I might not describe some of those teaching experiences as being clean, nor perhaps pleasant. Nevertheless, I can say that, as I work with developmental students, I have come to see that this is where, for me, real teaching happens, where lives change, where transformative teaching takes place, where connections can shift the trajectory of not only one individual, but the lives of families, of communities, of generations.

In thinking on of this metaphor of the swamp, another image comes to mind, a scene from the film, *O, Brother, Where Art Thou?* (2000). The film depicts the adventures of three convicts fleeing through the backwoods of the South in the 1930’s. Having escaped capture or death by fire the previous evening, the three men sit and contemplate their fate and the choices

that have led them to the situation in which they find themselves. As they talk amongst themselves, groups of white-robed individuals walk through the trees around them, completely oblivious of their presence as they walk forward, singing an old gospel hymn, (*As I Went*) *Down to the River to Pray*. As the hymn suggests, the group, along with the convicts, make their way to a nearby river, reminiscent of the swampy terrain Schön describes. One of the convicts, Delmar, caught up in the moment, suddenly breaks from the group and wades out into the water. After conversing for a moment with the pastor standing in the water, Delmar is baptized. He gasps as he comes up out of the water, and then makes his way back to the shore, proclaiming he has been born again. Standing dripping wet in front of his stunned comrades, Delmar throws his arms wide and, with a smile of contentment that echoes the one I find in my heart these days, proclaims, “Come on in, boys, the water’s fine.” Indeed, it is, Delmar, indeed it is. Swampy though it may be, it is a fine place to be.

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## APPENDIX A – STUDY TIMELINE

**April 2015:** Considered potential programs that fit study delimitations to identify a suitable site for case study research.

**May 2015 – March 2017:** Made several modifications to methodological determinations through dissertation seminar and began preparations for literature base and Human Subjects Committee documentation.

**April 2017:** Established email and phone communication with the selected program to inquire about their interest in study participation.

**May 2017:** Presented research proposal to full dissertation committee; began revising academic sub-questions and protocols based on recommendations from the committee

**August 2017:** Conducted pilot test

**September 2017:** Completed pilot testing and review; prepared Human Subjects Committee documentation for submission and review

**October 18, 2017:** Received initial Human Subjects Committee approval to conduct research; initiated recruitment of participants from a selected institution

**November 9, 2017:** Following a failed recruitment process, revised and expanded the scope of the study to multi-site study. Modification of initial Human Subjects Committee proposal submitted and approved

**November 2017:** Recruitment process reinitiated, 8 participants selected. Follow up conversations with all 8 participants, confirming their willingness to participate in the study. Received signed informed consent documentation from all participants.

**November 16 - 28, 2017:** Conducted three separate interviews with “Phil”

**November 11 – December 8, 2017:** Conducted three separate interviews with “Ralph”

**December 1 – 15, 2017:** Conducted three separate interviews with “Christine”

**December 15, 2017 – January 9, 2018:** Conducted three separate interviews with “Marie”

**December 20, 2017 – January 4, 2018:** Conducted three separate interviews with “Monica”

**December 20, 2017 – January 19, 2018:** Conducted three separate interviews with “Diane”

**December 20, 2017 – January 16, 2018:** Conducted three separate interviews with “June”

**December 27, 2017 – January 4, 2018:** Conducted three separate interviews with “Savannah”

**January 22, 2017 – February 2, 2018:** Performed a transcription and analysis process of all twenty-four interviews.

**February 3 – February 16, 2018:** Data analysis through transcript review.

**February – May 2018:** Conducted member checking and peer review as findings and themes emerged from the data analysis

**June 2018 – October 2018:** Reviewed the data analysis process; Redrafted categories and themes; completed drafting of remaining chapters of the study

**November 2, 2018:** Submitted final draft of study to the committee for review

**November 16, 2018:** Defended final draft of study with the committee

**December 1, 2018:** Submitted approved draft to Graduate School

## **APPENDIX B – RECRUITMENT LETTER**

Dear (Participant's Name),

Hello, my name is Clayn Lambert. I am a doctoral candidate at Idaho State University, conducting an intrinsic case study to describe the influences that inform your design and delivery of instruction as you transition from remedial to mainstream instructional settings.

You have been identified as being a faculty member who previously participated in remedial instruction at your institution and who can provide valuable insights into this inquiry. The methodology selected for this case study includes conducting 3 semi-structured informal interviews, which are anticipated to last about 90 minutes each over a course of two to three weeks. These interviews will be conducted via free distance conferencing software at a time of your convenience. You and your responses to the questions will be kept confidential. You will be assigned a pseudonym to maintain your confidentiality in the study report.

There is no compensation for participating in this study. However, your participation will be a valuable addition to our research and findings could lead to greater understanding of developmental education and the role that theoretical frameworks play in the field of curriculum development and instructional design.

If you are willing to participate, please contact me by email or by phone. I will be scheduling a block of weeks in which to conduct the interviews so that I can identify days and times that suit you.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

Thanks!

## APPENDIX C – STAGE 1 INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Project: DEVELOPMENTAL/MAINSTREAM FACULTY SHAPING INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN INTUITIVELY IN POSTSECONDARY SETTINGS: A CASE STUDY

Interview Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Interview Number \_\_\_\_\_

Demographics- Age \_\_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_\_

Highest Educational Credential \_\_\_\_\_

Years of experience in teaching postsecondary students \_\_\_\_\_

Years of experience in teaching in developmental education settings \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer: Clayn D. Lambert

Interviewee: (as identified by pseudonym)

Please feel free to discuss your thoughts or feelings as they arise in the interview, and feel free to return to previous questions or responses if new ideas come to mind during the course of the interview. As discussed earlier, this interview will be electronically recorded. Before we begin, do you have any questions or concerns?

### Interview Questions:

- Tell me the story of your educational background.
- What were your earliest experiences with remedial or developmental instruction?
- Describe your institution's remediation process. How did it work? Who did it serve?
- What aspect(s) of this process were the most effective or meaningful, from your perspective? Please tell me a specific story about this aspect.
- What aspect(s) of this process were the least effective or meaningful, from your perspective? Please tell me about a specific instance that encapsulates this aspect in practice for you.
- What have we not talked about that I should know to understand this situation from your perspective?

## APPENDIX D – STAGE 2 INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Project: DEVELOPMENTAL/MAINSTREAM FACULTY SHAPING INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN INTUITIVELY IN POSTSECONDARY SETTINGS: A CASE STUDY

Interview Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Interview Number \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer: Clayn D. Lambert

Interviewee: (as identified by pseudonym)

Please feel free to discuss your thoughts or feelings as they arise in the interview, and feel free to return to previous questions or responses if new ideas come to mind during the course of the interview. As discussed earlier, this interview will be electronically recorded. Do you have any questions or concerns?

### Interview Questions:

- As you taught remedial courses, what thoughts occurred to you about how you might set up this course, or which instructional strategies or approaches to use?
- What would let you know that a method you were using was a good method or approach for your students?
- In your view, how, specifically, did your students learn in your remedial courses?
- What would success look like in terms of implementing these thoughts, approaches, or strategies in remedial courses?
- What did success look like when helping your students learn in remedial settings?
- Knowing that, how did you build courses to facilitate learning in your remedial classes?
- As you taught these types of remedial courses, what was your main goal? Tell me more about that.
- How did this goal inform or influence your choices as you prepared the design and delivery of the course?
- What would success look like if you accomplished your curricular goal(s)?
- What have we not yet talked about that is important for me to know?

## APPENDIX E – STAGE 3 INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Project: DEVELOPMENTAL/MAINSTREAM FACULTY SHAPING INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN INTUITIVELY IN POSTSECONDARY SETTINGS: A CASE STUDY

Interview Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Interview Number \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer: Clayn D. Lambert

Interviewee: (as identified by pseudonym)

Please feel free to discuss your thoughts or feelings as they arise in the interview, and feel free to return to previous questions or responses if new ideas come to mind during the course of the interview. As discussed earlier, this interview will be electronically recorded. Do you have questions or concerns?

Interview Questions:

- As you go about teaching these new courses, what thoughts occur to you about how you might set up a course or which instructional strategies or approaches to use? How are these ideas similar to or different from thoughts you had while developing your remedial courses?
- Please describe something specific you would do to evaluate whether this is a good method or approach for your students? How are these practices similar or different to what you would use in your remedial courses?
- What would success look like in terms of implementing these thoughts, approaches, or strategies? How does this definition relate to what you used in your remedial courses?
- In your view, how do your students learn? How does this relate to the ideas you held when developing and teaching previous remedial courses?
- Considering your perspectives on how students learn, how do you build courses to facilitate these learning environments or practices in your classes? What differences or similarities exist between this course construction and what you used in your remedial courses?
- What does success look like when helping your students learn? How is this definition similar to or different from what you did in your remedial courses?
- As you teach these types of courses, what would you describe as being your main goal? How is this goal similar to or different from what you used in your remedial courses?
- How does this goal inform or influence your choices as you prepare the design and delivery of the course? How does this influence look in comparison with how you designed and delivered your remedial courses? What would success look like if you were to accomplish your curricular goal(s)? How does this success align with your goals in your remedial courses?



**APPENDIX F – HUMAN SUBJECTS COMMITTEE APPROVAL DOCUMENTATION**

October 19, 2017

Clayn Lambert  
COT General Education Core  
MS 8380

RE: regarding study number IRB-FY2017-247: THE INFLUENCE OF LEARNING THEORIES ON TEACHING PHILOSOPHIES REGARDING REMEDIAL INSTRUCTION AMONG POSTSECONDARY FACULTY- AN INTRINSIC CASE STUDY

Dear Mr. Lambert:

I agree that this study qualifies as exempt from review under the following guideline: Category 2. Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.  
This letter is your approval, please, keep this document in a safe place.

Notify the HSC of any adverse events. Serious, unexpected adverse events must be reported in writing within 10 business days.

You are granted permission to conduct your study effective immediately. The study is not subject to renewal.

Please note that any changes to the study as approved must be promptly reported and approved. Some changes may be approved by expedited review; others require full board review. Contact Tom Bailey (208-282-2179; fax 208-282-4723; email: humsubj@isu.edu) if you have any questions or require further information.

Sincerely,

Ralph Baergen, PhD, MPH, CIP  
Human Subjects Chair

November 9, 2017

Clayn Lambert  
COT General Education Core

RE: study number IRB-FY2017-247: THE INFLUENCE OF LEARNING THEORIES ON TEACHING  
PHILOSOPHIES REGARDING REMEDIAL INSTRUCTION AMONG POSTSECONDARY FACULTY- AN  
INTRINSIC CASE STUDY

Dear Mr. Lambert:

I have reviewed your application for revision of the study listed above. The requested revision involves:

1. The study scope is being changed from a case study at a single postsecondary institution to a multiple site case study at several different postsecondary institutions within the Intermountain West region (defined as Idaho, Utah, Montana, Wyoming, and Colorado).
2. Participant inclusion parameters are being altered to reflect the change in scope and the expansion of the study outside of Idaho. As institutions outside of the State of Idaho might not have the same policies regarding remediation at the postsecondary level, references specific to Idaho's change in policy and inferences that remediation is no longer offered are being removed.

You are granted permission to conduct your study as revised effective immediately. This study is not subject to renewal.

Please note that any further changes to the study must be promptly reported and approved. Contact Tom Bailey (208-828-2179; email humsubj@isu.edu) if you have any questions or require further information.

Sincerely,

Ralph Baergen, PhD, MPH, CIP  
Human Subjects Chair

Jan 17, 2018

Clayn Lambert  
COT General Education Core

RE: study number IRB-FY2017-247: THE INFLUENCE OF LEARNING THEORIES ON TEACHING  
PHILOSOPHIES REGARDING REMEDIAL INSTRUCTION AMONG POSTSECONDARY FACULTY- AN  
INTRINSIC CASE STUDY

Dear Mr. Lambert:

I have reviewed your application for revision of the study listed above. The requested revision involves change to one of the academic subquestions.

You are granted permission to conduct your study as revised effective immediately. The date for renewal remains unchanged at , unless closed before that date.

Please note that any further changes to the study must be promptly reported and approved. Contact Tom Bailey (208-828-2179; email humsubj@isu.edu) if you have any questions or require further information.

Sincerely,

Ralph Baergen, PhD, MPH, CIP  
Human Subjects Chair

Feb 20, 2018

Clayn Lambert  
COT General Education Core

RE: study number IRB-FY2017-247: THE INFLUENCE OF LEARNING THEORIES ON TEACHING  
PHILOSOPHIES REGARDING REMEDIAL INSTRUCTION AMONG POSTSECONDARY FACULTY- AN  
INTRINSIC CASE STUDY

Dear Mr. Lambert:

I have reviewed your application for revision of the study listed above. The requested revision involves changing the language of questions on the protocol.

You are granted permission to conduct your study as revised effective immediately. This study is not subject to renewal.

Please note that any further changes to the study must be promptly reported and approved. Contact Tom Bailey (208-828-2179; email [humsbj@isu.edu](mailto:humsbj@isu.edu)) if you have any questions or require further information.

Sincerely,

Ralph Baergen, PhD, MPH, CIP  
Human Subjects Chair

## APPENDIX G – INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Dear Participant:

You are invited to participate in a research study seeking to describe the influences that inform your design and delivery of instruction as you transition from remedial to mainstream instructional settings.

Reasonable efforts will be made to keep the personal information in your research record private and confidential. Any identifiable information obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. The members of the research team and the Idaho State University Office of Research Compliance (ORC) may access the data. The ORC monitors research studies to protect the rights and welfare of research participants.

Your name will not be used in any written reports or publications which result from this research. Any information or quotation will be attributed to the pseudonym assigned to represent your contributions to this study. Data will be kept for three years (per federal regulations) after the study is complete and then destroyed.

Participation is completely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. There is no reward for participating or consequence for not participating.

For further information regarding this research, please contact Clayn Lambert at (208) 282-3257 (office) or (208)380-8320 (cell), or by email: [lambclay@isu.edu](mailto:lambclay@isu.edu), or Dr. Karen Wilson Scott at (208) 521-9793, or by email: [scotkare@isu.edu](mailto:scotkare@isu.edu)

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Idaho State University Institutional Review Board:

- Tom Bailey, Committee Coordinator  
Business and Technology Center, Bldg 86  
Off-campus at 1651 Alvin Ricken Dr., Rm 107 STOP 8046  
V: 208-282-2179  
Email: [humsbj@isu.edu](mailto:humsbj@isu.edu)
- Dr. Ralph Baergen, Committee Chair  
Liberal Arts Room 247, STOP 8056  
V: 208-282-3371  
Email: [baerralp@isu.edu](mailto:baerralp@isu.edu)

There are two copies of this letter. After signing them, please keep one copy for your records and return the other one. Thank you in advance for your cooperation and support.

Please indicate your agreement to participate by signing below: I am 18 years or older and have read and understood this consent form and agree to participate.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ (Please Print)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX H – INTERVIEW AND TRANSCRIPTION SCHEDULE**

Participant	Interview 1	Interview 2	Interview 3	Transcription
Ralph	11/16/2017	11/20/2017	11/28/2017	11/16/2018 – 12/05/2017
Phil	11/20/2017	11/27/2017	12/08/2017	11/20/2017 – 12/09/2017
Christine	12/01/2017	12/13/2017	12/15/2017	12/09/2017 – 12/26/2017
Marie	12/15/2017	12/18/2017	01/09/2018	12/17/2017 – 01/12/2017
Monica	12/18/2017	12/28/2017	01/04/2018	12/29/2017 – 01/05/2018
Diane	12/20/2017	01/12/2018	01/19/2018	12/29/2017 – 01/20/2018
June	12/20/2017	1/11/2018	11/16/2018	01/10/2018 – 01/17/2018
Savannah	12/27/2017	12/29/2017	01/04/2018	12/29/2017 – 01/05/2017

## APPENDIX I – ORGANIZATION OF SUPER-CATEGORIES

Design	Action	Influence
Archaeology of curriculum development	Creat[ing] a culture that embraces at-risk students.	Domino effect of developmental education
Finding what works	Help[ing] them to believe in [and] trust the instructional process	Feel[ing] a sense of excitement about moving forward in college
How in the hell am I gonna use what I learned?	Reading the signals of students' 'alternative strategies of avoidance.'	I don't have to [...] fill in any of those [confidence] gaps
Good teaching is good teaching.	Meeting them where they are	Understand[ing] the culture of college
I learned everything [...] from my colleagues	Shifting gears a bit	Who are we to know what they deem as the best things to take away?
No perfect plan	Tailoring parts of the class to who's in my class	Can you learn how to learn
Willing to do the work as a teacher	You're missing a lot of that human interaction	Class attendance - Can't address needs until they're in the classroom
There's not just one right way to get there	I think they learn through repetition.	Classes are smaller - there's real teaching
They have to feel a connection to their classmates and me	More differentiated learning, but we're not quite there yet.	Content engagement - Serious work with consequences
	Not just sitting	Critical thinking is figuring out what you want to know
	What you do to help developmental students will [help] other students as well	How do you learn from other people
	I can really tailor my feedback	Not watered down
	Quick feedback [...] helps them build their confidence	[We] should aspire for higher
	Showing students the moves other students use	A community of faculty [...] working together
	Day to Day teaching is what you're going to say	It is a calling in a lot of ways.
	Teach them enough to be successful	The relationship between instructor and student is important
	Teaching everything in context	How do we better support our students?
	Inheriting students who have suffered from educational malpractice	The instructors that are at least qualified to help them.
	it is literally the key to their existence	There's so many pieces [...] but they all take so much time
	It's not their first rodeo – less academic success	We don't have [...] the institutional flexibility to [...] meet their needs the way that they have needed
	Just catching up the starting line	We're under a microscope
	Not less than...	
	Past kept them from doing what they were capable of doing.	
	They don't know what it means to be a college student	
	Broad interest in student retention	