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**BELIEFS AND INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES OF TWO COLLEGE
DEVELOPMENTAL READING INSTRUCTORS AT AN
OPEN- ADMISSION COLLEGE**

by

LYNNE MORGAN-BERNARD

DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Graduate School

of Wayne State University,

Detroit, Michigan

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

2015

MAJOR: READING, LANGUAGE
& LITERATURE

Approved By:

Advisor

Date

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my mother and father. Their love and support inspired me to complete this degree and to continue under adverse circumstances. For that I am truly grateful.

This work is also dedicated to my husband, three children, and sister who always motivate me to strive for my goals. For that I am truly grateful.

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CHAPTER ONE

Background of the Problem

President Barack Obama recently called for discussion of free community college education in the United States. He has emphasized the importance of post-secondary training and education for high school graduates. The Michigan State Board of Education adopted “more rigorous” (Flanagan, 2006) high school content expectations to prepare students for college and has focused on college and career readiness (www.michigan.gov/mde). The Michigan economy is rebounding from a downturn which saw its manufacturing base erode and needs to find replacement industries, to not only keep its tax base from also eroding, but also to keep its graduates in the state. These graduates will need different skills for the 21st Century workplace than did their parents and grandparents. Colleges and universities are addressing these changes, but students themselves need to be prepared.

The number of students attending college is likely to keep increasing. This will be especially true in the two-year, open-admission institutions which might be the only option for those students who can't afford a university education. Also many students who do not have high grade point averages for a university are able to enroll in open admission colleges. For many at-risk students, this is their only option.

Between the fall of 1970 and the fall of 2000, there was an increase in enrollment in degree granting institutions from 8.5 million to 15.1 million students (Cox, Friesener, Khayum, 2003). There has also been an increase in the numbers of institutions offering developmental programs (Cox, Friesner, & Khayum, 2003). As numbers go up so do costs, which critics argue is the reason remedial courses should not be offered at post-

secondary institutions; taxpayers have already paid to educate students in the K-12 grade levels. “Community colleges spend 1.4 billion annually on remedial courses for recent high school graduates, according to a 2006 report by the Alliance for Excellent Education” (Smydo, 2008, p.7A).

Historically there has been a steady increase in the numbers of students needing assistance. After World War II the G.I. Bill of Rights motivated record numbers of veterans to enroll in college. Many of them needed help with their basic skills such as reading, writing, and math. With funding available, many colleges and universities set up learning centers and tutoring services which continued to grow due, not only to the rise in G.Is, but also to the rise in the numbers of women, minorities, people from impoverished backgrounds and special needs students. Due to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, many students with disabilities were given easier access to colleges and were guaranteed academic assistance. Then in 1990 the Americans with Disabilities Act was passed. By 1994, seventy-five percent of disabled adults had completed high school. Colleges had to institute learning centers and tutoring programs to not only help the special needs students but also to meet the demands of the low income students. By 1970, one half million students...one seventh of those enrolled in U.S. colleges...came from poverty backgrounds (Casazza & Bauer, 2004). In many cases, colleges opened up learning centers and tutorial programs because of this need. The need continues to grow and with increased emphasis on getting a college degree, the numbers of college students should also increase. With that increase come the students whose literacy skills aren't at the college level. Many will test into a developmental course such as math, writing and/or reading. At some colleges, developmental students might have to take more

than one course per weak area. The curriculums for developmental education differs per institution. Though there are theories of what works for developmental institutions, many schools appear to put band-aids on the problem and might not be addressing the need for a structured plan for the developmental education at their institutions.

There is still opposition to remedial education at the college level. These arguments cite the lack of graduation rates among under-prepared students who lose their motivation and end up dropping out. “Those who complete remedial programs ‘succeed’ because of their prior program motivation or abilities” (Brothen & Wambach, 2004). The argument goes that these students would succeed even if they had not taken remedial courses. Some studies support the argument that remedial education does not prepare students to finish their degrees. Brothen and Wambach (2004,) discuss the National Study of Developmental Education report which “suggests that taking fewer remedial courses is associated with better retention and higher graduation rates” (p.17). A 2007 report by Rand Corporation and the University of Texas at Dallas, found that remedial courses during the 1990s did not help students graduate. “Our estimates indicate that remediation has a minimal impact (or even a slightly negative one) on the years of college completed, academic credits attempted, receipt of an academic degree and labor-market performance” (Smydo, 2008, p.7A).

Brothen and Wambach (2004) contend that under-prepared students in college-level courses affect the quality of the curriculum. They cite Richardson et al (1983) who “found that teachers in a large community college system felt strong pressure to reduce the literary requirements for their mainstream courses, especially when under-prepared students were allowed to simply enroll” (p.17). If colleges eliminate developmental courses, what

effect will it have, not only on developmental students, but also on the rest of the college curriculum? Will instructors water down their courses to enable all the students in their courses to pass? Even if these students do not go on to get a degree, they might gain life-skills such as improved reading skills to better understand everyday reading material. Some say this is a worthwhile goal, while others contend that gaining the degree should be the goal. If colleges enroll students who are below college level, they have a responsibility to help these students improve their skills.

Community colleges have open admission policies and therefore have a high number of developmental students. If these students are to be successful, they need to improve their skills, but views on the best way to incorporate developmental education into college curriculum vary. What is apparent is that colleges need to address the issue of underprepared students who are enrolled on their campuses. Institutions must formulate plans to address the deficiencies of many of their students. This involves developing reliable placement testing, instituting curriculum which meets students' goals, learning outcomes which benefit the developmental student, and hiring instructors who are trained in teaching developmental courses. The need for developmental education is not going away. For many students who were less than successful in high school, their success in college is a high-stakes endeavor.

Statement of the Problem

One of the biggest roadblocks to a student's success in college can be a reading deficiency. Enrollment data shows that students with a reading deficiency are more likely to have multiple academic deficiencies than other underprepared students (Cox, Friesner, Khayum,

2003). Forty-two percent of those students taking a developmental reading course were also taking three or more developmental courses. However, of those students enrolled in a developmental math class, only 16 percent were also taking three or more developmental courses. Poor reading skills result in poor achievement in students' discipline courses, especially those classes that require a great deal of reading.

It is important that research identify the most effective classroom practices to ensure these students gain the necessary skills to succeed in college. If reading is instrumental to students' success, it is imperative that instruction in reading be a priority in any developmental program. It is also essential that research uncover what the learning environments look like in these courses. Developmental reading courses are a staple in the open-admission colleges, so there are many instructors who are teaching developmental students. A goal of my research is to identify these instructors' beliefs and practices, to look for any connections between their beliefs and practices and to ascertain what the learning environments look like.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to add to the limited research on instruction in developmental education. A major component of any course is the instructor. What the instructor brings to the classroom goes unmeasured at times. Many instructors motivate and encourage students, give extra help, and go beyond what is outlined in the curriculum. Many students are successful due to these individuals. It was important to ascertain the beliefs and theories by which the subjects of this study viewed developmental students and developmental reading courses, how (or if) these beliefs guided their practices and how they affected the

learning environments of their classrooms.

I have described each instructors' beliefs, to what extent these beliefs are mirrored in their instructional practice in the classroom, and to which theoretical model(s) these beliefs and practices are linked. I then discuss the resulting learning environment of each instructor.

The study focused on the following questions:

Research Question 1: What are instructors' beliefs about teaching developmental reading and developmental reading students, and how do their instructional practices reflect these beliefs?

Research Question 2: How do instructors' beliefs and practices about developmental reading and developmental reading students reflect behaviorist, cognitivist and/or constructivist theories?

Research Question 3: How do instructors' beliefs and instructional practices affect the learning environment of the developmental reading classroom?

Limitations of the Study

The results can not be generalized to the larger population of reading teachers within the college or across the country.

1. The study is limited by the number of teachers in the study.
2. The study is limited by the fact that only one college was in the study.
3. The study is limited by the fact that I am an administrator at the college; measures were taken to diminish this effect, the actual effect of this is unknown.

CHAPTER TWO

The focus of my study is instructors' beliefs and how instructional practices mirror these beliefs and then how they impact the classroom learning environment of two developmental reading classrooms in an open-admission private college. This review of literature will first define terms needing clarification and then investigate reading theory in order to position the theoretical perspectives of the participants in the study, two developmental reading instructors. It is necessary to understand the various theories driving developmental education and the instructional strategies derived from these theories. Although it would be unusual to have an instructor commit solely to one type of strategy in the classroom, successful teachers at all levels have their own teaching practices and philosophies which can, more than likely, be traced to one or more theory families.

Part of the theoretical framework for my study will be Ruddell and Unrau's Socio-Cognitive Processing Model (1994), so I will describe their model and also Ruddell and Harris's study of effective teachers used in creating this model. I will then discuss Langer's Excellence in English project (2004), as well as other research of instruction in open-access institutions of higher learning. Before reviewing theories, some terms need to be clarified.

Developmental Education Terms Needing Clarification

The term developmental education is only two words but a mammoth concept in the world of higher education. The term developmental has often been used with the term remedial, and past literature might have used them interchangeably; however, there is a clear distinction between remedial education and developmental education. For the purpose of this review, remedial will be defined as courses and programs which attempt

“to compensate for deficiencies in prior learning” (Boylan, 1995, p.2). Developmental courses and programs attempt to encompass more than the academic and address factors such as “personal autonomy, self-confidence, ability to deal with racism, study behaviors, social competence” (Boylan, 1995, p.2) and more. In essence, developmental education looks at the whole student and not just low skill levels. Although this is an important part of developmental education, for this review, remedial education will not be discussed separately but will be incorporated into the definition of developmental education.

In studying the literature on adult learning, it became obvious that the legal definition of ‘adult’ could not be easily incorporated into a definition of ‘adult learner’ or into a definition of developmental education at the college level. The identifier adult is fraught with ambiguities. First, the legal definition of a person over 17 or 18 years old is simple when dealing with a traffic ticket. However, in adult education, is an 18 year old, coming to college directly from high school, the same type of adult as a person coming back to school after three children or a failed marriage, who is working as a waitress to support these children? Is this adult the same as the employee who needs a degree to be promoted at work? For a number of reasons to be discussed later, the answer is no. Traditional and nontraditional might be more descriptive terms to discern the difference in adult students. Traditional students are usually high school graduates who come to college right after high school. Bye, Pushkar and Conway (2007) in their study of traditional and nontraditional students, define as traditional those students “aged 21 and younger, who are most likely to have followed an unbroken linear path through the education system” (p. 141). They define as nontraditional “those aged 28 and older, for whom the undergraduate experience is not

so age normative” (p. 141). A nontraditional student has a wide range of characteristics, but a student who is working, has a family, might have never attended college or is coming back after leaving college earlier tend to be the common factors. These terms will be used when it is important to note the type of adult learner being discussed.

Another term needing defining is open-access institution or open admission institution. Research on developmental programs has, for the most part, focused on community colleges which have an open-access policy. This term needs to be defined for this review because the schools which take all students who apply vary from public and post-secondary schools to for profit career/vocational schools.

First, a distinction must be made between open admission or open access institutions and those that have entrance requirements. Community colleges and career colleges are open admission institutions and are generally seen as second class to the research-based four year universities. Grubb and Associates (1999) studied 260 classrooms at the community college level. They describe community colleges as “second chance” institutions because they are open access, their tuition is lower and students can commute and not have to leave home (p.3), which is why they attract older students and minorities. This is also true for institutions seen as career schools, which usually have an open admission policy. The students who attend these institutions with open access are varied in their reasons for seeking a higher education: displaced homemakers, displaced workers who have lost their jobs due to a multitude of reasons, recent high school graduates who can not afford to go away to college or those who need to decide what career path they want to pursue. For the purpose of this review, open admission or open access will be used to include

community colleges and other two- and four-year institutions which confer associate and bachelor degrees but do not have entrance requirements beyond students having a high school diploma or GED. It will not include for profit career or vocational schools. Now that these terms have been clarified, it is important to look at the theories driving developmental education – behaviorism, cognitivism, constructivism, and the instructional practices derived from these theories.

THEORIES DRIVING DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION

Behaviorism

There are a number of theories which have influenced the field of developmental education, but behaviorism, which originated with John Watson in the early 1900s, has had the greatest impact on developmental educational practice over the last fifty years. It is based on the premise that people respond to external variables in the environment and these variables stimulate individuals to act in different ways. The learning process occurs when there is an observable change in a behavior. Here, the environment, not the individual learner shapes behavior or causes a change (Casazza and Silverman, 1996, p. 37). Behaviorists focus on scientific principles to improve instruction and the learning process. Behavioral objectives, immediate reinforcement and “small packages of clearly specified learning tasks” (Cross, 1976, p.50) characterize a behavioral approach.

Pavlov’s Classical Conditioning Theory, Thorndike’s Connectionism (stimulus-response), and Skinner’s Operant Conditioning Theory form the foundation for behaviorist ideas. First, Classical Conditioning Theory focuses on observable changes in behavior and responses to stimuli as a demonstration of learning. An example of classical conditioning would be when an adult is nervous about attending college for the first time, but through a series of good experiences becomes a good learner. Second, Connectionism, also connects learning with observable changes in behavior. However, Thorndike worked with stimuli occurring after an observable behavior. Thorndike called this his Law of Effect which states that “if an act is followed by a satisfying change in the environment, the likelihood that the act will be repeated in similar situations increases. However, if the act is followed

by an unsatisfying change, then the chance of the behavior reoccurring diminishes” (Tracy and Morrow, 2006, p.35). Thorndike had three other laws guiding behavior, including The Law of Readiness, which states that when easier tasks precede those that are more difficult then learning is facilitated. In terms of reading, behaviorists believed skills needed to be sequenced. The Law of Identical Elements, which states that the more elements of one situation are identical to the elements of a second situation, the greater the transfer, and the easier the learning. Finally, The Law of Exercise states that the more stimulus-response connections are practiced, the stronger the bonds become whereas fewer connections, the weaker the bonds (Tracey and Morrow, 2006, p. 35). For example, when children recognize target words in a story, they should be praised in order to create the stimulus that aids in developing the desired response.

B.F. Skinner’s Operant Conditioning Theory went a step further than the other two theories. He believed that behaviors aren’t always elicited by a stimulus and can be done voluntarily. People “operate” on their environment to produce different kinds of consequences. This forces people to learn to behave in certain ways as they operate in the environment (Tracy and Morrow, 2006, p. 36). Skinner focused on the use of reinforcement and punishment in changing behavior including scheduled consequences.

The publication of B.F. Skinner’s *The Analysis of Behavior* (1961) “was a major impetus to the programmed instruction movement of the 1960s” (Boylan, 1986, p. 1). An individual learning approach called programmed learning is synonymous with behaviorism. It utilizes written materials or a computer program to guide the students as they work at their own individual pace. There is a proctor/teacher to provide tutoring or direction to the student,

but it is not structured in the traditional classroom format. Students receive immediate feedback and are not allowed to move forward unless they have mastered the current lesson or skill. Teachers can provide positive or negative feedback to stimulate a desired behavior. Behaviorist theories of learning have the following characteristics (Boylan, 1985, p.2):

1. Specific and measurable objectives.
2. Sequential presentation of materials
3. Mastery of skills before advancing.
4. Immediate feedback.
5. Emphasis on learning material rather than teachers or tutors.

Behaviorist Instructional Practices

Many remedial or developmental programs utilize a behaviorist approach, including programmed learning, competency-based learning, computer-aided instruction, study guides, and mastery learning. Behaviorists view reading as a “complex act consisting of component parts” (Tracy & Morrow, 2006, p.39). A sub-skills approach to reading breaks down the act into component parts or steps. The skills are practiced with exercises and immediate feedback is given. If students get something wrong then they try again until it is correct. “Behavioral objectives will state exactly what the learner must do, under what circumstances, and what the successful outcome will be” (Casazza & Silverman, 1996, p.39). The learner’s positive behaviors will be reinforced by the instructor. Programmed learning leads to linear models of learning in which each step is outlined and mastered before the learner is allowed to move on to the next level. Although this type of learning

is not student-centered, it is the student's individual learning rate that determines the speed with which the student goes through the learning activities. These types of learning programs require diagnostic tests before a program can be set up for the student. Behavioral objectives would be designed around the results of these tests.

In a developmental reading program based on the behaviorist theory of learning, the first step would be diagnostic testing in skill areas: reading, writing, and math. The students would then be placed in appropriate courses. If a student had low reading skills based on this diagnostic test, then he/she would take a reading course. This course would have behavioral objectives which "would lead students through a series of learning experiences designed to strengthen weaker skills" (Casazza & Silverman, 1996, p.39). Examples of such objectives include:

- 1 Given an expository passage, the student will identify the main idea of the passage with 70 percent accuracy (level of mastery).
- 2 Given a list of facts and inferences from an article, the student will distinguish fact from inference with 70 percent accuracy.

A series of learning activities will break each objective down into a set of skills, which will lead students toward mastery (70 percent). Examples of such 'building blocks' are as follows (Casazza and Silverman, 1996, p.40):

1. Read a series of expository passages and list important details.
2. Identify what the lists of details have in common for each passage and identify that as the topic.

3. Specify what it is about the general topic that is specifically being discussed and identify that as the main idea.

Students cannot go on to the next activity without achieving mastery; however, they can proceed at their own pace. It is important that students get timely feedback and corrections. Boylan (2002, p.87) advocates for mastery of learning, as does Cross (1976) "...for remedial courses because of its reported capacity for improving the performance of the weakest students" (p.87). Mastery learning emphasizes "small units of instruction and frequent testing" (Boylan, 2002, p.87) and is characteristic of a behaviorist philosophy. It seems to be facilitated best in a computer lab format, providing additional instructor support is available in the lab to help clarify classroom instruction. Videos and workbooks are often used as well. The following table, Table 2.1, lists characteristics of behaviorist theory and practices.

Table 2.1 Behaviorist Beliefs and Practices

	Behaviorist Belief	Behaviorist Practice
Learning	Stimulus/response	Immediate feedback
	Observable change in behavior	Specific & measurable behavioral objectives
	Respond to external variables	Diagnose skills/extended practice
	Reinforcement	Skill mastery before going further
	Surface level outcomes of processes Occurs after a series of steps in which information is processed hierarchally	Sequential presentation of materials
Motivation	Extrinsic	Immediate feedback and reinforcement
Role of Student	Passive learner	Computer-aided instruction/programmed learning
Role of Instructor	Less of an important role	Emphasis on material not teacher; Provides the external stimuli

Behaviorism has a long history dating back to the early 1900s and still impacts the educational system today. However, there is another important theory of learning which is very different from behaviorism.

Cognitive Theory

The cognitive psychology theory of learning is concerned with intellectual processes. It is based on the belief that learning involves mental processes which are controlled by the learner rather than by an instructor or some other person or thing. Behaviorists are concerned with surface-level outcomes of the processes which are observable behaviors whereas “cognitivists look at perception, attention, comprehension, learning, memory, and executive control of all cognitive processes” (Pearson & Stephens, 2002, p. 30).

Before going too far into a discussion of cognitive theory, it is important to discuss Piaget, who impacted the instructional process with his development theory and his belief that there are developmental stages that children and adults go through in order to be able to construct their own meanings in a classroom. First, Piaget outlined four stages of development in children at specific ages: sensorimotor, pre-operational, concrete operations, and formal operations, which is the highest level of cognition. Second, he believed that learning took place through assimilation and accommodation. If a learner has a knowledge base for incoming information, he/she will take in the information readily and it will be assimilated with existing knowledge. If, however, there is no knowledge base with which to connect this new information, then existing knowledge must be accommodated or a new knowledge base must be created. This was the basis for schema theory, which has become an important concept in reading and learning. In terms of instruction, a learner will be able

to construct meaning only if he/she has the appropriate prior knowledge. The concept of developmental stages impacts instruction within a cognitivist paradigm. Learners can't be successful if they do not have the cognitive ability to do what is being asked of them.

Casazza and Silverman, (1996) describe the work of Perry (1970), Lucas (1990), and Cameron (1984) who also studied stages of development but differed with Piaget in terms of the specific stages (p. 43-44). There were also other differences among their studies. Perry described college students as operating at the higher cognitive levels whereas Cameron stated that they were functioning at the lowest level. Using Perry's nine stages, Cameron found that "63 percent of entering students who were at least twenty-two years were functioning at the dualistic level" (Casazza & Silverman, 1996, p.43-44), which is Perry's lowest stage. At this stage, knowledge comes from an external authority and involves acquiring a set of facts. If college students are at this cognitive stage, they are not capable of the higher level thinking required of college courses. Among developmental psychologists, there might be consensus that individuals progress through stages of cognitive development but the description of these stages vary. However, it is important that college faculty not assume that these post-secondary students are developmentally at the highest cognitive level, especially those students in developmental courses.

The 1970s saw the development of schema theory, built on the premise of Piaget's theory of assimilation and accommodation. First applied to reading, it also explained learning in general. Pearson and Stephens (1994) define schema as "a theory about the structure of human knowledge as it is represented in memory" (p.31). When we encounter new experiences, we must "make some structural change in our existing array of schemata

to account for that anomaly” (p.31). Comprehension is more difficult if readers have limited or no background knowledge about a subject, a topic, or a concept. An instructor who embraces a cognitive philosophy would help students activate prior knowledge to facilitate comprehension and a connection to a text or concept. If students know why facts are important, they “develop knowledge structures that enable them to deal with novel situations” (Bransford, 2004, p. 490). This is important for college students who will be applying information learned in class to other situations. It is also important in facilitating critical thinking skills. Second, activities in the classroom which can show the relevance of information will help students remember learned material. Schema activation and construction is an important aspect of cognitive learning theory and has direct application to the college classroom.

According to Casazza and Silverman (1996), there are four assumptions made by cognitivists regarding the learning process:

1. Learning is an active process, not a passive one.
2. Individuals think about problems until they gain insight towards a solution.
3. The motivational drive is intrinsic.
4. To solve a problem, learners must have access to pertinent information and they must be able to work with this information in order to come up with a solution. (p.41)

The mix of traditional and nontraditional students in a classroom guarantees that

there will be differences between these students in terms of their prior knowledge. If an instructor in my study engages in cognitive instructional strategies, they will understand the relationship between prior experiences and learning. This should become evident through interviewing the instructors and through observing in their classrooms.

In another twist, Hunter Boylan (1986), a leader within the growing field of developmental education, outlines a theory of developmental education. Although Boylan describes the characteristics of developmental education, much of what is written by him seems to come from a behaviorist view of learning. Boylan states that developmental theory posits “that individuals differ in their levels of development and growth and that learning can only take place as a result of accepting a student’s current level of development and working from there “ (p.4). Individuals must pass from one stage to another in the process of growth and learning. Developmental theorists also believe that the environment must be safe, supportive and conducive to learning.

According to Boylan (1986), characteristics of developmental theories include (p. 4):

1. Growth and learning takes place in stages.
2. Each stage of development is an integrated whole.
3. As individuals pass from one level of development to another, all previous stages are integrated into the next.
4. Each individual develops in a direction and at a rate that is unique.

Boylan goes on to state that the developmental philosophy permeates most developmental programs even if the instruction is delivered in a behaviorist manner. Many

courses in developmental programs are self-directed and emphasize a mastery of skill based on specific objectives and immediate feedback in the behaviorist tradition. Boylan's statement is somewhat confusing. It leaves questions about how a behaviorist classroom would take into account the four characteristics of developmental education stated above. Identifying practices which would be considered linked to developmental theory might be difficult in a behaviorist classroom. As will be shown later in this chapter, these four characteristics are also present in constructivist theory, the learner-centered approach, as well as andragogy. Boylan's citing of these four characteristics would seem to provide a framework for developmental education. However, he then emphasizes programs that are self-directed and involve mastery of common objectives, with much of the instruction done in a programmed learning environment, which are characteristics of a behaviorist teaching philosophy. It seems that Boylan might favor a more hybrid approach combining behavioristic methods of instruction with those of a developmental approach.

After reading the literature on developmental education, it becomes clear that researchers within the field of developmental education can not quite discern what a truly developmental approach entails. It seems best not to classify classroom instruction based on Boylan's developmental paradigm because it is unclear what he really means. Since the four characteristics mentioned by Boylan as part of a developmental theory are an integral part of the other three theories under discussion here - behaviorism, cognitivism and constructivism, it makes sense to focus on these three theories for observing and classifying instruction in a developmental reading class.

Cognitive Instructional Practices

An important early step in cognitive instructional practice is for the instructor to gauge what the students already know. New information will need to connect to students' prior knowledge or schemata. For adults, their personal and experiential knowledge becomes important and must be taken into account by college instructors. As discussed, students' cognitive levels will vary, but they will definitely affect, not only the classroom environment, but also the success of the individual students. For example, if a student is operating at a concrete operational or a dualistic level, he/she will not be able to synthesize information readily. They will need a more structured learning situation, and this will affect the instructor's use of class discussion and group work. These students often become angry that the instructor isn't teaching them and they feel that they are left to fend for themselves (Casazza & Silverman, 1996, p. 48).

Pugh, Pawan and Antommarchi (2000) reported that "there was discomfort and resentment among students" when professors tried to engage students in expressing their own reflections. Many students have a prejudice against personal knowledge (p.39). Empowering the students with the ability to play a part in their own learning might be a challenge in the developmental reading classroom but one that seems likely to reward the student and make him/her more successful in college.

With many developmental reading classes having 25 or more students, it becomes difficult to individually assess the cognitive levels and the background knowledge of each student. One way to start the course is by gaining some necessary information with a survey. An open-ended interview would be the best method, but with a large group, a written

survey would be more feasible. Some sample questions might include the following:

1. How do you feel about yourself as a learner at this school?
2. What is your role as a student in the college classroom?
3. Is this role different from your role as a student in high school?
4. Describe your experience in high school.
5. What was the most meaningful part? Explain.
6. What was the most frustrating part? Explain.
7. What are you presently doing besides going to school?
8. If you are employed, what do you like best about your present job?
9. Why did you decide to enter college at this time?
10. What do you think will be the most difficult adjustments you will have to make at college? Explain. (Casazza & Silverman, 1996, p.48)

The instructor could also include questions which get to the heart of the students' beliefs about reading and their experiences with reading, both as students and as adults. It is important to know where these students are coming from in order to know where to take them or where they want to be taken. From a cognitive learning philosophy, it is important that the adult students know their individual ways of learning. It is imperative that reading instructors give developmental reading students the skills to improve their comprehension of content reading material and to help the students learn ways of adjusting to different styles of teaching. Poor readers are unaware of the strategies used to comprehend difficult text. Students could bring in a content textbook and do activities using this text. The reading

instructor might share strategies for organizing new content and for creating connections to students' personal experiences and to other aspects of their lives such as work duties. Reading material contributed by individual students and which pertains to some aspect of their lives would help students connect what they learn in class to what they are doing outside of class.

For both traditional and nontraditional students, a personal connection to learning makes the experience more meaningful. This reading material would also be a clue about what the students feel are their levels of reading and also what topics they find interesting. Instructors can show students, even adult students, how they can use strategies to access their own prior knowledge themselves.

Reynolds and Werner (2003) posit a three-stage model which fosters individual learning. Stage one requires identification of individual learning style. Activities include workshops, study skills courses and utilization of learning styles assessment instruments. Stage two involves identifying an individual's ineffective learning skills and strategies. An assessment tool such as the LASSI (Learning and Study Strategies Inventory) can be used for assessing learners' weaknesses and strengths (p.92). Stage three involves individuals learning new ways to read and study and then practicing these individualized processes. This model operates from a cognitive perspective but is grounded in humanistic learning theory which will be discussed later in this chapter.

Pugh (2002) calls for college instructors to "include field-specific and content-specific approaches in their reading instruction" (p.39). Students need to be taught the organizational structure and styles of texts within their content areas. If students are taught generative

strategies, and they can adapt their reading situations, then these students will have a better chance of being successful in college. Another instructional practice within the cognitive domain is direct instruction.

The practice of direct instruction is often advocated. Readers are taught specific strategies and how to use them. Using direct instruction, students would be given a concrete description of the strategy and an explanation as to ‘why’ the strategy should be learned so that they will apply the strategy more effectively. Instructors would model the strategy in an authentic activity. Scaffolding to support students in doing the task, and then having students articulate their knowledge and monitor the effectiveness of their strategy, is a main aspect of direct instruction. The instructor would then withdraw support so that students become self-sufficient. Nist and Holschuh (2000) argue that epistemologically empowered students believe that they have the knowledge within themselves. They also understand that there may be other viewpoints. Students who aren’t empowered in this way see knowledge as coming from the instructor. Direct instruction helps students be responsible for their own comprehension and learning.

Casazza (2003) found that students taught via a direct-instruction method (EMQA) for writing summaries were more successful than those not given direct instruction in this method (p. 136). Marzano (2004) and Simpson and Randall (2000) make a case for direct vocabulary instruction. They also advocate for active student engagement. Pressley (2000) calls for direct explanations and teacher modeling of strategies, followed by guided practice of strategies. He also states that teaching of vocabulary improves reading comprehension (p.552). Direct instruction is a cognitive instructional practice; however, much of the

literature also incorporates active student engagement, a tenet of constructivism, the third theory to be discussed.

Table 2.2 builds on the previous table and lists characteristics of cognitive theory and practice. Whereas behaviorism views learning from a stimulus/response perspective with reinforcement being a major component, cognitivism views learning from the perspective of stages of cognitive development.

Table 2.2 Comparison Behaviorist and Cognitive Beliefs and Practices

	Behaviorist Belief	Behaviorist Practice	Cognitive Belief	Cognitive Practice
Learning	Stimulus/response	Immediate feedback	Stages of cognitive development	Determine developmental stage of learning
	Observable change in behavior	Specific & measurable behavioral objectives	Schemata	Connect information to prior knowledge
	Respond to external variables	Diagnose skills/extended practice	Active Process	Active learning strategies
	Reinforcement	Skill mastery before going further	Series of mental processes Perception, attention, comprehension, learning, memory, executive control of all cognitive processes	Administer learning styles' inventory
	Surface level outcomes of processes Occurs after a series of steps in which information is processed hierarchally	Sequential presentation of materials	To solve a problem, learners need access to pertinent pieces of information	Whole to part
Motivation	Extrinsic	Immediate feedback and reinforcement	Intrinsic	Set purpose Learning journals
Role of Student	Passive learner	Computer-aided instruction/programmed learning	Active role; think about problems until he/she gains insight to solve problem	Active learner; move towards independence
Role of Instructor	Less of an important role	Emphasis on material not teacher; Provides the external stimuli	Facilitator	Direct instruction; role is reduced as students become more independent

Constructivism

Another theoretical perspective which took root in the 1920s and continues to have an impact on instructional practices is constructivism, a theory of learning which emphasizes the active construction of knowledge. In terms of reading, instructors “want students to understand the role of reading in the construction of knowledge” (Pearson & Stephens, 1994, p. 37). The learner must be actively engaged in the learning process in order for learning to take place. There are three major components of constructivism

1. Learning can take place without any observable behaviors.
2. Learning often results from a hypothesis-testing experience by the learner.
3. Learning results from inferencing. This component can be tied to reading instruction. (Tracey & Morrow, p. 48, 2006)

John Dewey was a constructivist who believed that learners needed to formulate hypotheses and take a problem-solving approach to learning so that they could reason and develop thinking skills. Accordingly, the students do not sit passively taking in information, rather they are actively engaged in making meaning. This construction of learning involves goals but these will be achieved through discussion and interaction in the classroom, rather than via lecture or skill-building exercises as in the behaviorist tradition.

Vygotsky’s (1978) zone of proximal development which refers to the level at which a child can be successful, with some support; and scaffolding, defined as the support given by an adult or another student, are key concepts in constructivism. Whereas Piaget believed that “specific cognitive structures need to develop before certain types of learning can take

place” (Tracey & Morrow, 2006, p.46), Vygotsky believed that learning could take place before the cognitive structures were developed and that this learning was the result of interacting with others.

Constructivists posit that for students to be successful, they must be able to gather information from different sources in multidisciplinary ways. Danielson (1996) in discussing the teacher’s role in a constructivist class states, “Teaching focuses on designing activities and assignments- many of them framed as problem solving- that can engage students in constructing important knowledge” (p. 25). This approach is also most relevant to students’ future career and their lifelong learning needs. If students are reliant on an outside authority (college instructor) to provide necessary information, with its meaning constructed by this authority, how will students develop the skills to construct their own meaning and become independent learners?

Two approaches to instruction under the constructivist paradigm which directly impact adult education are the learner-centered approach and andragogy.

Learner-Centered Teaching

The learner-centered approach focuses on the learner and on what and how students are learning. It has been labeled in some of the literature as a theory but seems to be more aligned with instructional practice from a constructivist perspective. In terms of higher education, this approach can be used with developmental and college-level students. Instruction begins at the student’s current level of ability. The goal of instruction is to move students from a dependent learner to a learner who is independent, similar to what the developmental educator tries to do (Weimer, 2002, p.168).

The stages from dependence to independence are laid out in Grow (1991). In stage 1, students are dependent and not self-directed at all. In Stage 2, students are interested but not totally self-directed. In Stage 3 they have advanced to being more involved in their own learning, but not independent. That comes in Stage 4 when students are self-directed (p. 134-135). The teacher's role at these different stages also changes as the students' needs change. The learner-centered approach utilizes the teacher as a facilitator more than a traditional giver of knowledge. At each stage the teacher's role is reduced. What would this mean for the adult developmental student who has been placed into developmental classes? The student might need to be taught how to interact within a learner-centered classroom. It also isn't fully explained within the literature as to who decides when the teacher's role should be reduced—the teacher or the student? Students whose skills are low might never have participated in their own learning in K-12 or at other post-secondary institutions and might not know the parameters that they have within the learner-centered classroom. More studies need to be done on the impact that particular strategies have on the learner (Weimer, 2002, p.167).

Andragogy: A Constructivist Adult Learning Concept

A review of literature on adult learning could not be complete without discussion of the concept of andragogy and its guiding principles. The principles of andragogy “have been at the core of adult learning since the theory was put forward over 30 years ago” (Houde, 2006, p.4-3). In the 1970s, Malcolm Knowles introduced this new term andragogy and “the concept that adults and children learn differently” (Knowles, Halton, Swanson, 2005, p.1). The six core principles of andragogy include: 1. the learner's need to know; 2. self-

concept of the learner; 3. prior experience of the learner; 4. readiness to learn; 5. orientation to learning; and 6. motivation to learn (Knowles, Halton, Swanson, 2005, p. 4). The basic premise is that these core principles can apply to any adult learning situation, and they should be adapted to the learners and the learning environment. In an adult classroom, the students' and the instructor's knowledge is of equal importance. The role of the teacher becomes that of facilitator.

Adult learning theory has roots in clinical psychology, philosophy, sociology, and social psychology. Important influences were those of Eduard Lindeman (1926), Carl R. Rogers (1951), Abraham Maslow (1972), Cyril O. Hould (1961), Allen Tough (1979), and others who tried to tie these concepts regarding adult learning together. The most successful was Malcolm Knowles (1968) who borrowed the term andragogy from a Yugoslavian adult educator named Dusan Savicevic. It has been used more often in Europe, but it is also gaining acceptance in the United States. Whereas pedagogy means "the art and science of teaching children" (Knowles, Holton, and Swanson, 2005, p.61), andragogy "is best identified as one perspective on how adults learn but it is not synonymous with the field of adult learning or adult education" (Knowles, Holton, Swanson, 2005, p. 231). The use of the term is based on the six core principles mentioned earlier. The idea that the strategies are to be based on the learner's particular needs should be kept in mind.

The andragogical model moves the student towards independence using the six core principles as goals. As the student progresses towards independence, the principles will be applied and the learner will become more independent" (Knowles, Holon, Swanson, 2005, p. 70). Again, who decides when the student takes on more independence? The

traditional pedagogical model, whose history goes back centuries, “assigns to the teacher full responsibility for making all decisions about what will be learned, how it will be learned, when it will be learned, and if it has been learned” (p.61). Children mature and become more independent, yet the pedagogical model does not permit the same movement towards independence in the classrooms. Students between adolescence and adulthood should not be as dependent on the classroom teacher as children. Teenagers are maturing, becoming more independent as they start to drive, get jobs, and yet still are dependent on the teacher in the high school/college classroom. The andragogical model acknowledges this inconsistency for adult learners. Constructivism, the term used most often with K-12 education, also recognizes the limitations of traditional pedagogical practices and offers a more child-centered classroom at the K-12 grade levels. As the constructivists acknowledged and created alternatives for the inadequacies of traditional behaviorist K-12 pedagogy, andragogists also found the inadequacies of the K-12 pedagogical methods when working with adult students and thus established the adult learning concept of andragogy. Through analysis of both constructivism, as defined by K-12 educators, and andragogy, the latter clearly aligns with the broader theory of constructivism.

How does a mature adult, after making the decision to come to college, feel when testing into a developmental class? This adult might support a family, work two jobs, supervise employers and any other tasks of a grown adult, yet after testing has been told that his/her skills are too low. How would an institution of higher learning handle these types of students so that they will see success and at the same time still feel like adults? The andragogists ensure that the students know why they are in the class and why they

needed to know how to read at a higher level and how it will help make them successful in their other courses (Assumption #1). The adult learners' self concepts must be considered as they may not want to be seen by others as not self-directed. It is important that adult learners are not thrown back into their K-12 school experiences and become dependent children again (Assumption #2). Driving to college as a grown, mature adult and then walking into a classroom where you are thrown back in time to an environment where you are a dependent child is not only demeaning for many adults, but it also reinforces the feelings of inadequacy that many adults felt in their K-12 school years. Some endure, yet many drop out of the developmental class and/or the college itself. Adults have varied experiences which could result in more emphasis on life experience. "The richest resources for learning reside in the adult learners themselves" (Assumption #3) (Knowles, Halton, Swanson, 2005, p.70-75).

Adults should be developmentally ready for a particular learning experience. Readiness to learn is an important aspect of the andragogical model (Assumption 4). If they aren't ready then the instructor must help get the student ready. Developmental courses should have this purpose - helping the student get ready for college-level courses. Adults are life-centered in their orientation to learning (Assumption 5). They tend to want to learn things which apply to their lives. If instruction is tied to life experience and students are able to apply this to their lives, learning has a better chance of being facilitated. Finally, motivation factors in adults are very important, especially internal motivations such as increased job satisfaction, self-esteem and quality of life (Assumption #6). Knowles, et. al (2005) describe the work of Tough (1979) who found that adult motivation is frequently

blocked by “negative self-concept as a student, inaccessibility of opportunities or resources, time constraints, and programs that violate principles of adult learning “ (p.68). Bye, Pushkar and Conway (2007) studied 300 undergraduates (aged 18-60) assessing three areas: their intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to learn, their interest, and positive effect (p. 141). The nontraditional students had higher levels of intrinsic motivation than traditional students. The instructor could use this as an advantage and be encouraging to the adult learner. Along the same line of thinking, unnecessary criticisms can be counterproductive with these students.

The six core principles/assumptions of andragogy aimed at adult learners lead to the question of developmental education and to what extent this model might work for learners whose reading skills are below college level. Are these stated principles about adult learners deployed within developmental education courses? It is evident from the limited research on developmental education that instruction in these courses varies by institution and by instructor.

Another theory which is present in all three concepts discussed in this section-constructivism, learner-centered practices and andragogy is -- humanism.

Humanism

The humanist theoretical perspective is based on learning taking place naturally. Maslow (1970) and Rogers (1961) were humanists who perceived learning as part of a human need for personal growth. These needs are hierarchal: physiological, safety, love/belonging, esteem and self-actualization. For example, the need for food and shelter take precedence over the need to meet one’s potential.

From a humanistic perspective, a developmental learner would need to have his/her basic needs met in order to focus on the higher need of trying to meet his/her own potential. Within the classroom, the student must feel that he/she belongs and is safe. This is especially true for a non-traditional student who might feel out of place in the post-secondary environment. Instructors who teach from a humanistic perspective provide a safe, supportive environment tapping into the students' natural tendency to learn. Such instructors provide multiple options for students, allowing them to choose what they want to learn and how they want to learn it.

This humanistic view is an important part of the previously discussed andragogy. However, according to Boylan (1986), many developmental programs do not use a totally humanistic approach because it is believed that under-prepared students, especially the younger ones, aren't "prepared to accept responsibility for their own learning" (p.2). On the other hand, Tough (1978) found that "adult learners are self-directed and able to learn in classrooms embracing humanistic concepts" (Knowles, Holton and Swanson, 2005, p. 61). Similarly, the Reynolds and Werner (2003) study discussed earlier was grounded in humanistic learning theory and the work of Rogers and Maslow. Although their model took a cognitive approach to instruction, the premise of their model was that with the help of the instructor, students could find their own way of learning based on their personal characteristics.

Table 2.3 below adds the characteristics of constructivism to the previously discussed characteristics of behaviorism and cognitivism.

Table 2.3: Comparison Behaviorist, Cognitive and Constructivist Beliefs and Practices

	Behaviorist Belief	Behaviorist Practice	Cognitive Belief	Cognitive Practice	Constructivist Belief	Constructivist Practice
Learning	Stimulus/ response	Immediate feedback	Stages of cognitive development	Determine developmental stage of learning	Active construction of knowledge	Individual construction of meaning
	Observable change in behavior	Specific & measurable behavioral objectives	Schemata	Connect information to prior knowledge	No observable behaviors necessary	Learner reflection
	Respond to external variables	Skill mastery before going further	Active process	Active learning strategies	Learning results from hypothesis testing & inferencing	Solving problems
	Reinforcement	Diagnose skills/ extended practice	Series of mental processes Perception, attention, comprehension, learning, memory, executive control of all cognitive processes	Administer learning styles' inventory	Zone of proximal development	Cooperative learning
	Surface level outcomes of processes Occurs after a series of steps in which information is processed hierarchially	Sequential presentation of materials	To solve a problem, learners need access to pertinent pieces of information	Whole to part	Learning communities	Social interaction; Scaffolding
Motivation	Extrinsic	Immediate feedback & reinforcement	Intrinsic	Set purpose Learning journals	Intrinsic	Teachers encourage perceived competence in class; Promote autonomous behaviors & validate students active participation
Role of Student	Passive learner	Use computer- aided instruction; programmed learning; commercial software	Active role; think about problems until he/she gains insight to solve problem	Active learner; move towards independence	Constructor of knowledge	Part of a learning community; Social interaction; Transact with text
Role of Instructor	Minor role	Emphasis on material not teacher; Provides external stimuli	Facilitator	Direct instruction; model role is reduced as students become more independent	Facilitator	Scaffolds; Builds on prior experiences

A Sociocognitive Model of Meaning Construction

Now that I have discussed the major theories, it is important to look at a socio-cognitive model that incorporates theories that guide my study: Cognitivism, humanism and

constructivism. First, I will discuss Ruddell and Unrau's model (1994), then Ruddell and Harris's study (1989) which was a preliminary study that supported some of the effective teacher data used in the later study; then Langer's study (2004) of effective teaching; and finally six additional studies which investigated teachers' beliefs and practices.

Reading is a meaning construction process, not only involving the reader but also involving the teacher as the chief architect of what takes place in the classroom. Ruddell and Unrau's model (see Figure 2.1 below) not only includes the reader and the teacher but also the text and the classroom context. This dynamic relationship is at the center of their model. Because my study involves teachers, I will primarily discuss the role of the teacher and how this affects the reader and the classroom context. The three components of the model are the reader, the teacher and the classroom context (including the text). As the three components interact, the construction of meaning takes place.

The teacher brings to the classroom prior knowledge and beliefs which are both affective and cognitive. These beliefs, among other things, influence a teacher's instructional plans and decision making, motivation, attitude towards the students and expectations of these students. Teachers also have the prior knowledge about how readers construct meaning. The teacher's instructional plan, built around this knowledge, will guide the reader's attention and purpose. This is a very interactive model whereby one component will ultimately affect the others. For example, if a teacher's knowledge includes knowing the interests of her students, then she will choose material of high interest to them. This might motivate them to read and through discussion of this text, she might discover more about her readers both affectively and cognitively.

Supposedly teachers bring more to the classroom than readers as they have more knowledge and life experience than readers do, but they also have the responsibility to learn about their particular students. They will also learn about the teacher through the classroom context, including the rules and procedures he/she designs, the way she asks questions, the social dynamic in the classroom, and other occurrences. This classroom dynamic is always in motion as the components interact. Ruddell and Unrau's model takes a transactional perspective- meaning does not reside in the text itself but emerges through the transaction between the reader and the text and adds the interactions of the reader, the text, the teacher, and the classroom community for meaning construction. Classroom dialogue thus results in a range of meanings being produced; but as Rosenblatt states, the meaning should be grounded in the text itself (p. 1033).

To summarize, the reader's experience affects his/her transaction with a text, but the teacher also affects this interaction within the classroom environment, as well as affecting the social context of the classroom. All of this ultimately affects the individual students.

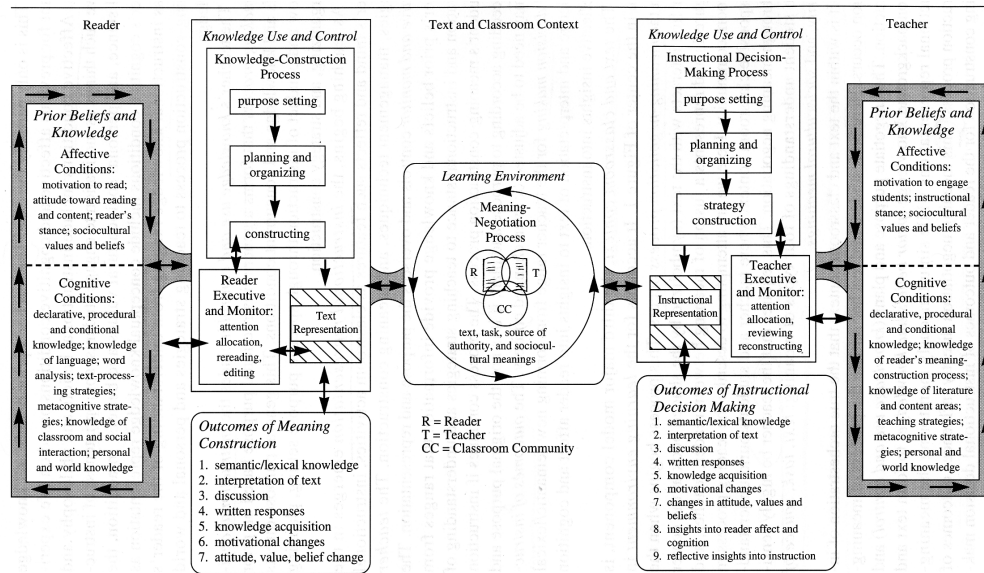


Figure 2.1 Reading as a Meaning-Construction Process: The Reader, the Text, and the Teacher (Ruddell & Unrau, p.1465, 1994)

In my study, it will be important to discern the cognitive and affective beliefs and philosophies of the subject instructors as this seems likely to affect what takes place in their classrooms. Since the classroom environment is so dynamic, it will be important to observe in the classroom on an on-going basis.

Ruddell and Harris (1989) studied effective college teachers and the relationship of influential teachers' prior knowledge and beliefs and their actual teaching performance. They reported two results including a positive relationship between teachers' prior knowledge and beliefs and their teaching effectiveness and a constructivist belief among the teachers that students learned by exploring and resolving problems (p.471). These teachers used learner-centered approaches and problem-solving to achieve higher order thinking. They also modeled and directly engaged students in the problem-solving process. In addition

they used examples which related to students' own experiences and understandings.

The authors identified the following key knowledge and beliefs shared by the university instructors:

1. Making material personally relevant to students.
2. Developing students' critical thinking.
3. Engaging students in the process of intellectual discovery.
4. Presenting material in a logical order with a clear statement of the problem, use of concrete, familiar examples and extending thought to more abstract examples and concepts (p. 461-462).

These instructors' beliefs exemplify tenets of humanism, constructivism, and also those of andragogy and learner-centered instructional strategies.

Langer (2004) studied successful instructional practices of teachers in high achieving middle and high school English classes. This study is also positioned within a sociocognitive theoretical framework and examines "the deeply contextualized nature of both teaching and learning" (p. 1042). This is consistent with Ruddel and Unrau's model. Students and teachers bring their own knowledge and experiences to the classroom and Langer's study examined this context. For this literature review, I will focus on results related to the teachers and instructional practices.

Although Langer's study took place at the secondary level, it has implications for instruction at the post-secondary level. In examining teachers' beliefs about learning, the researchers ascertained how teachers' beliefs impacted their instruction. If a teacher believed that learning had taken place once the student had an initial understanding of the

skill or concept, the teacher stopped once this was achieved. If the answer given was correct, for instance, then the teacher might go on to the next question. There was no “generative activity that built upon the new knowledge” (Langer, 2004, p. 1074). On the other hand, teachers who believed that an initial understanding of a skill or concept was inadequate tended to go beyond initial understandings to help students grasp deeper meanings. Langer gave examples of teachers who went beyond the initial reading of a novel and provided opportunities for students to “contemplate historical, ethical, political, and personal issues raised by the reading” (p. 1073).

Langer’s study provides further evidence that the classroom context is affected by all its participants. Both the teacher and student are impacted by their prior experiences. Student learning is impacted by what the teacher has learned about knowledge and communication and also by what the student has learned. Teacher and students interact to create a uniquely complex learning environment. Langer’s results echoed the results of Ruddell and Unrau. It is imperative in my study that I ascertain the teachers’ beliefs and philosophies early in the study in order to observe the impact on instruction.

The model that I envision (see figure 2.2 below) has three components: reader, teacher, and classroom context as did the previously described Ruddell and Unrau model (1994, p. 999). In their model, three separate circles depicted the reader, the teacher, and the classroom context. The reader and teacher bring their affective and cognitive knowledge and experience to their respective circle. A meaning negotiation process goes around the outside of these three circles. My model below has a constant flowing interaction between teacher and reader exemplified by the intersecting ovals. Within these ovals are the affective

and cognitive knowledge, beliefs and behaviors which are part of how each student and teacher address learning. The ovals are surrounded by the classroom context which circles around the two ovals

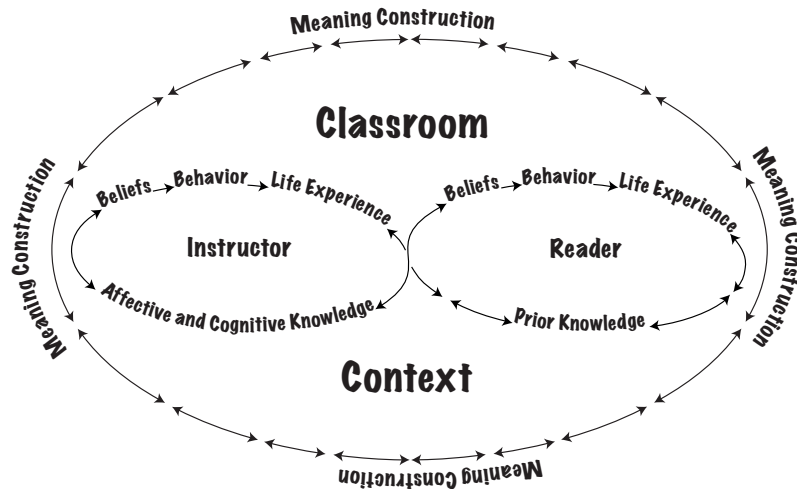


Figure 2.2: Model of Meaning Construction

Reader

The reader in my circle can be any reader; however, for a model of developmental reading, the reader would be a student who has low reading skills and has tested into developmental reading. If reading ability is below college-level, then there will most likely be lower achievement in content courses. Poor reading ability is seen as the “kiss of death” for college education (Adelman, 1998, p. 2). For those students who were in a reading course and three or more other remedial courses, the bachelor degree completion rate was 12 percent (Adelman, 1998). The Michigan Department of Education states “Nearly 30 percent of college freshmen are immediately placed into remedial courses that cover material they should have learned in high school...76 percent of college students requiring remedial reading do not earn either an associate’s or a bachelor’s degree” (www.mi.gov/

mde). For students who have been poor readers throughout high school, a reading course might not be a course that they want to take or they might question their need to take it at all. Many want to get on with courses in their programs.

Motivation is a factor in reading ability as those who are motivated to read improve and are very likely to become better readers. However, if students only see their reading course as a barrier to taking their regular college courses, they won't be motivated to improve. Developmental reading students' intrinsic motivation may be low because they might not have a history of good reading experiences. However, they might be extrinsically motivated by the hope of a better job and/or a better life by going to college (Bye, Pushkar, & Conway, 2007, p.143). "Struggling students need active support, effective learning tools, and real opportunities for success if they are to become intrinsically motivated" (Allgood, Risko, Alvarez, Fairbanks, 2000, p. 209). The reader in the college reading course needs the teacher to offer this support and provide the learning tools necessary for his/her success.

Schema play a major role in reading and learning. Developmental reading students might lack certain schemata such as lexical knowledge, world knowledge, personal experience, as well as a lack of schema for text organization. This deficiency can result in loss of meaning. Ruddell and Unrau cite the example of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (Twain, 1884) whereby some students might activate schemata that leads them to see the novel as just "a series of adventures" (p. 1009). These students might then have trouble seeing the "novel as a satire" (p. 1009). Their existing schemata has led them in a direction that affected their understanding of the text. This example is consistent with what takes place with developmental readers and their limited text knowledge.

Teacher

The teacher in my model brings to the learning environment a particular belief system. This has been cultivated over a lifetime and involves many facets of prior knowledge, including how students learn and communicate. It also includes a belief about developmental reading students and how they should be taught. It could possibly include preconceived ideas about these students such as their lifestyles, their socio-economic levels, or their cultural characteristics.

I have described some of the characteristics of readers who have below college-level reading skills. The beliefs and philosophies that instructors have about these students might impact the students and the classroom learning environment. This classroom environment and the resulting social interaction might affect the students. The surrounding circle depicted in my model is a result of the interaction of the students' cognitive and affective beliefs with the teacher's cognitive and affective beliefs. Given this scenario, each classroom learning environment will be unique. It is therefore critical that any analysis of teachers' beliefs and practices would involve investigating classroom practices and also knowledge of the instructors' beliefs.

Instructional Practices

The realities of adjunct reading instructors are that they may come to the college classroom with content knowledge but no knowledge of the methods they can use to teach college developmental students. Many college adjunct instructors use a trial and error approach to instruction.

Due to a diverse student population, open-access schools are challenged to meet the

needs of under-prepared students while also challenging those students whose skills are at college level and those students who might transfer to a four-year university. These students need to be prepared for the rigor of their last two years at a university. This is a challenge for institutions, but it is also very challenging for instructors in the classroom. Many of the students who attend open-access institutions come with lower skills than other students. This might force “instructors to find new ways to teach and requiring more remedial or developmental education” (Grubb & Assoc. 1999, p.7). Studies which show the effect a teacher’s prior beliefs have on teaching, make me wonder whether any negative beliefs adjunct instructors have towards these developmental students affect their instructional practices.

Grubb (1999) addresses the challenges facing open-access schools and instructors without formal training in teaching and instructing students whose skills are not at the college level. “In the absence of any preparation for teaching, most instructors develop their methods through a lengthy process of trial and error” (p. 27). He analyzed instructors’ approaches to instruction at the community colleges and created two categories. The first category was labeled behaviorist (also called passive, teacher-centered, didactic, conventional wisdom, ‘skills and drills’ or the part to whole approach) (p.28). The second category outlined by Grubb was labeled meaning-making, taken from Bruner (1990) where students create their own meaning and interpretation (also called constructivist, student-centered, andragogy, active, holistic, whole to part, and progressive) (p.31). Most of the decisions regarding instruction were made by the faculty individually. With the absence of formal training, many instructors learned by trial and error. They came to realize what they

thought worked in their courses, with their students, and taught accordingly.

Most of Grubb's data came from classroom observations. Many of the instructors describe beginning these courses with teacher-centered instruction, "found them ineffective, and then moved through trial and error to more student-and meaning-centered practices, or to some version of hybrid teaching" (p. 45). If developmental instructors can be given instructional practices which have proven successful, they might not have to go through as much trial and error. This seems especially important when a large percentage of the teaching staff are comprised of adjunct instructors, those teaching at the institution on a part-time basis who might not have time for training in teaching strategies. They might be the most in need of strategies to help developmental reading students.

When instructors are unsuccessful, what happens to the developmental students in their classes? These vulnerable students might not continue on with their education; they might have their negative expectations realized. Post-secondary, open-access institutions have an obligation to provide the best support possible to help these students. It is essential to find instructional practices which have proven successful with college developmental reading students. For my study it will be important to ascertain the instructor's level of training in teaching reading.

Richardson, Fisk and Okun (1983) also did a three -year, in-depth study of one open-access college, Oakwood (pseudonym). This study documented "the leveling down of literacy at this college" (p.2). They described three types of classrooms at this school, the teaching and learning going on, the reading and writing requirements and the effects of instructor objectives on literacy in each of these classrooms.

The Oakwood study documents the typical classroom instruction as teachers doling out information. Most of the knowledge was very general in nature and not focused on real-life practice. The instructional practice was lecture and discussion. Few basic skills classes included critical literacy skills. While the mode of learning in these courses was described as social interaction, instructors directed all activities with the students (p.62). In describing the reading and writing requirements at Oakwood, the authors cited “the lack of critical thinking required of students and the dependent role they assumed as learners” (p.72).

The study also looked at the effects of instructor objectives on literacy and “confirmed that course objectives and students’ use of reading and writing co-vary” (p.73). They based this analysis on Bloom’s Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. First, instructors’ approaches to teaching were related to their objectives. Cognitive objectives resulted in the instructor having an information disseminator style of teaching. Affective objectives resulted in a more social interaction mode of instruction. Psychomotor resulted in a lab type of classroom where the instructor was a resource as seen in a vocational lab course. Over 40 percent of all objectives fell into the lowest level of the cognitive (knowledge) domain, 30 percent into the second and third levels of comprehension and application, and less than 5 percent were related to the highest levels of the cognitive domain – analysis, synthesis, and evaluation (p.75). If learning is watered down for developmental students, the institution does a terrible disservice to these students. Institutions must be aware of what types of teaching and learning are going on in developmental reading courses. “...when reading is the core of the problem, the odds of

success in college environments are...low” (Roueche & Roueche, 1993, p.21).

Studies by Grubb and by Richardson, Fisk and Okun highlight the teacher-centered approach used by many college instructors. They also highlight instructors’ lack of formal training in teaching methods. Next I will describe recent studies which investigated teachers’ beliefs and practices.

The following six studies used qualitative methods in investigating teachers’ beliefs and practices. The studies, which encompassed both K12 and higher education teachers, found that beliefs and practices were aligned in some ways but also influenced by other factors.

Meidl (2013) studied third and fourth grade teachers at an urban elementary school to investigate testing and teachers’ actions when the district mandates what reading program they must use. Her qualitative methods included observations, interviews, and documents related to curriculum planning such as pacing guides, textbooks, and district timelines. Two major themes emerged from the data regarding curriculum and testing. The district’s curriculum was often incongruent with teachers beliefs and practices. Some teachers opted out of parts of the curriculum that they did not agree with. Also students completed benchmark testing every six weeks, so teachers’ daily instruction often mirrored test preparation. Meidl concluded that the mandated curriculum “constricted a teacher’s ability to build relationships, meet students’ needs, and scaffold learning” (p. 7). She used the term “pedagogical dissonance” (p. 7) to characterize this incongruity.

Pecore (2013) studied four teachers’ alignment of classroom practices with constructivist principles after participating in a problem-based learning (aligned within constructivist

philosophy) workshop. He found that beliefs alone did not seem to explain whether teachers adopted new teaching practices. “Despite all four participants...having beliefs supportive of constructivist learning environments, not all of the teachers aligned as high in practice to constructivist principles when teaching a PBL unit” (p. 24). The two teachers whose beliefs aligned highly with constructivist beliefs implemented the problem-based learning from the workshop much more fully than did the teachers whose constructivist beliefs were not as highly aligned. Pecore suggested that other things such as classroom culture and school district accountability measures might interfere with teacher practice.

Peabody (2007) examined how teacher beliefs and instructional practices might influence the Florida Comprehensive Reading Assessment Test performance (FCAT) in low and high performing schools in Florida where a majority of the students at the schools were at-risk (p. 181). Peabody used qualitative methods for this study including observations, interviews, domain analysis and Attride-Stirling’s thematic networks method. It was a follow up to a quantitative study where those results warranted further investigation of classroom variables. Peabody found that teachers at higher performing schools utilized a student-centered instructional format where in lower performing schools the instruction was teacher directed. Peabody’s findings demonstrated that “the presence of the FCAT affected the curriculum” (p. 188). The state and the school district had mandated teachers to focus on assessments and mini-lessons. In the student-centered classrooms, the teachers allowed the students to analyze, interpret, and synthesize information on their own within the curriculum guidelines whereas the teachers whose practices were more teacher-directed did not do this and instead focused on test preparation. Consistent with Pecore (2013)

and Meidl (2013) described above, factors in addition to beliefs can affect the learning environments of classrooms.

Unlike some of the previously discussed research, Maxson (1996) found a relationship between teacher beliefs and practices. This study investigated the influence of five teachers' beliefs on literacy development of at-risk first graders in different high risk schools. Maxson used some of the same methods including teacher interviews and observations in a constant comparative method of data analysis. When interviewing the teachers, Maxson found that they held strong beliefs about literacy instruction, their diverse student population, and the classroom environment that "they created for their students" (p. 10). They supported these beliefs in their practices. Maxson's finding was that teachers need to have a clear understanding of the needs of at-risk students.

Powers, Zippay, and Butler (2006) also investigated teachers' beliefs and practices in literacy by studying four teachers; however, their study took place in a literacy clinic at a university where participants were doing graduate work. They worked one-on-one with a struggling reader in the clinic, but they were also observed at the schools where they taught at-risk student populations. To study teacher beliefs and practices, this study used the Literacy Orientation Survey, pre-post-interviews which were recorded and transcribed, field observations, and teacher reflective journals. Three key findings emerged from the study. First, they found a misalignment between teachers' literacy beliefs and instructional practices in the classroom, and they identify three contributors to the misalignment: 1. education policies which are "preoccupied with standards and accountability, 2). teacher training, and 3). a lack of professional development and administrative support. A

second finding was that the “instructional framework employed by teachers influences their application of literacy instructional strategies in the clinic and the classroom” (p. 136). For example, two of the teachers did not agree with using the Accelerated Reader program mandated by district curriculum and used it in a way more in line with their beliefs about literacy. The third finding involved assessment and that “Teachers serve as the most important assessment instrument of their students’ literacy development” (p. 138). Some examples of these included one teacher taking anecdotal notes and then writing reports and summaries on students for assessment purposes. Another teacher, who held constructivist principles, used authentic assessments such as projects. A third teacher who worked in Reading Recovery used mandated assessment surveys as well as running records and anecdotal notes. The fourth teacher also used authentic assessments. This study demonstrated that each classroom environment was different and influenced by the teachers’ beliefs and other factors unique to the teachers and their situations.

Addy, et. Al (2013) completed a study of higher education science faculty with educational specialties to gain insight into the beliefs and practices of those instructors who are being hired at higher education science departments at an increasing rate due to their training in education. These institutions are looking for faculty to teach using student-centered practices. The methods used included teacher beliefs interviews, inventories, and a one hour classroom observation was video recorded for ten of the 25 instructors.

The authors found that faculty “who espoused more student-centered beliefs also adopted more student-centered practices” (p. 88). However, those faculty who espoused more traditional teaching beliefs did not adopt the student-centered instructional practices

preferred by the institution. These results imply that if an institution requires more student-centered practices in their departments, then “attention to espoused teaching beliefs may be warranted during the selection process” (p. 88). This study also found that the alignment of beliefs and practices are made more complex because of other factors imposed on instructors (p. 82). These results are also in line with the previously discussed studies which demonstrated that other factors such as district and school demands impact the classroom learning environments. Even when instructors wanted to implement certain practices, they did not always feel that they could because of other demands. For higher education faculty, this study noted the potential impact of the requirement for published research and the fear of poor student evaluations for instructors to gain tenure. These factors might impact what occurs in the classroom.

Kuzborska (2011) also studied beliefs and practices in higher education. This study took place at a university in Lithuania and utilized qualitative methods to investigate instructors’ beliefs and practices in teaching reading. These methods included observations, video tapes, and document analysis such as syllabi, textbooks, and tests. Kuzborska identified teachers’ beliefs as congruent with practices. The teachers’ beliefs and practices reflected skills-based approaches even though those approaches were not considered best practices. The instructors did not have training in reading instruction. Kuzborska states that if instructors are to change their skills-based practices, then they need to be made aware of “alternative models and approaches” (p. 120). This is consistent with Addy, et. Al (2013) in that institutions are aware of the need for student-centered practices in higher education classrooms which are more in line with adult learning philosophy discussed previously in

this chapter.

Thus the results of these studies suggest that beliefs do have an impact on classroom practices, but things other than beliefs can also influence classroom practices. Therefore, in my study it is important to consider the relationship between beliefs and practices for these instructors. There is a possibility that factors other than beliefs may affect the practices of the developmental reading instructors.

Summary

The number of developmental students in all institutions is growing, especially those with open-admission policies. Colleges are faced with a significant challenge in addressing the needs of students whose skills, for whatever reason, are below college level. After reviewing learning theories that tie classroom instruction to a philosophical framework including behaviorism, humanism, cognitivism, constructivism, andragogy, and learner-centered theory, it became clear that my study should investigate the beliefs of developmental reading instructors in order to link classroom instruction to a philosophical framework.

Behaviorism has a long history and exemplified in mastery learning, programmed learning, diagnostic testing of students, and the use of publisher programs. Characteristics of behaviorist practice include specific and measurable behavioral objectives, diagnosis of skills, sequential presentation of materials, mastery of skills before advancing, immediate reinforcement, opportunities for extended practice, programmed instruction as well as computer-aided instruction.

The second learning theory important to research in developmental reading is the cognitive psychology theory of learning, which is based on the belief that learning involves a series of mental processes. “The dual nature of cognition: all human intellectual activities such as thinking, communicating, problem solving, and learning require both process and knowledge” (Roueche & Roueche, 1993, p.171).

A cognitive concept, schema theory, plays an important role in reading and this is particularly important when dealing with adult students. Many adult students bring with them a variety of backgrounds which impacts their classrooms, but particularly a reading classroom. Students encountering new experiences make some structural changes in their existing array of schemata to account for this anomaly (Pearson & Stephens, 2002, p.31). Reading instructors help students activate prior knowledge or help them develop a schema to facilitate their reading and learning.

In researching adult education, the term ‘constructivist’ is not often used in relation to adults (e.g. Grubb, 1999; Tracy & Morrow, 2006). The two terms used in most adult education literature are andragogy and learner-centered theory. After researching them both, I believe they are constructivist in nature, and I classified them under the constructivist umbrella. However, I also question whether andragogy and learner-centered are theories. They might be better described as instructional practices rather than theory, especially learner-centered. A theory which belongs under the umbrella of constructivism is humanism, an important aspect of andragogy and learner-centered practice. The humanist perspective anticipates learning taking place naturally and not through manipulation, such as reinforcement. Humanists perceive learning as part of a human need for personal growth and see students

as whole persons, not just students. They value adults' life experiences and foster this in the college classroom. Humanism, andragogy, and learner-centered approaches posit that classrooms should be student-centered.

Constructivists believe that learners should be actively engaged in the learning process. Learning can take place without observable behavior which is such an important component of behaviorist theory. Students actively construct knowledge, and learning results from a hypothesis-testing experience. Constructivist teachers see themselves as facilitators in the classroom, rather than experts imparting knowledge to a quiet classroom of note-taking students.

In researching modes of instruction, the majority of the literature advocated for limiting the use of lecture in the classroom; and the use of technology to only supplement instruction, not to be the sole method of instruction. Many of the cognitive based literature advocates for direct instruction leading to students' independent use of learning strategies. Even with direct instruction by the teacher, the learners must be actively engaged in constructing and generating meaning themselves. Instruction coming from a behaviorist perspective advocates mastery learning whereby the students learn in small units, are given timely feedback, and tested frequently before going on to more difficult material. Although programmed learning is not as popular as it was in the 1970s and 1980s, computer-aided instruction remains used in the form of commercial software prevalent in many developmental classrooms, especially reading and math courses.

The purpose of this study is to ascertain beliefs of two developmental reading instructors, to which theoretical model(s) these beliefs are linked: behaviorist, cognitivist

and/or constructivist, to what extent these beliefs are mirrored in their instructional practice in the classroom, and then how do these factors impact the learning environments of their classrooms.

Much of the literature on developmental reading calls for more research (Addy, et.al, 2013; Allgood, Riski, Alvarez and Fairbanks, 2000; Casazza, 2003; Caverly, Orlando and Mullen, 2000; Grubb, 1999; Kuzborska, 2011; Nist and Holschuh, 2000; Nist and Simpson, 2000; Powers, Zippay, and Butler, 2006; Simpson and Randall, 2000). Since there is a need for more research on developmental reading instruction, my research may provide information regarding what is going on in developmental reading classrooms and how instructors' beliefs inform practices. It is important that I ascertain if instructional practices mirror beliefs and how both affect the learning environments of the developmental reading classrooms of the two instructors in my study.

Quantitative data is not enough to discern the nuances of classroom activities and their impacts. The number of students who pass the course and improve their skill on a post-test, for example, is not data which alone can describe the instructor or the classroom environment. These data come from observing classroom reading instructors. Taking an ethnographic approach to this study of developmental reading will allow me to see, not only what the instructor is doing; but through interviewing and analysis, I can ascertain what beliefs guide the instructor's practices and then how their particular beliefs and practices impact the learning environments of their classrooms.

CHAPTER THREE

Research Questions

The proposed research is a 10-week study of two developmental reading instructors at a private, non-profit, open-admission, four-year college.

The problem addressed in the study:

To ascertain beliefs of two developmental reading instructors, to which theoretical model(s) these beliefs are linked: behaviorist, cognitivist and/or constructivist, to what extent these beliefs are mirrored in their instructional practice in the classroom, and then how do these factors impact the learning environments of their classrooms.

The questions guiding this study include the following:

Research Question 1: What are instructors' beliefs about teaching developmental reading and developmental reading students, and how do their instructional practices reflect these beliefs?

Research Question 2: How do instructors' beliefs and practices about developmental reading and developmental reading students reflect behaviorist, cognitivist and/or constructivist theories?

Research Question 3: How do instructors' beliefs and instructional practices affect the learning environment of the developmental reading classroom?

Research Paradigm

This study's research design is descriptive within the naturalistic paradigm, utilizing ethnographic methods of data collection. "Ethnography is an approach to learning about the social and cultural life of communities, institutions, and other settings" (Schensul, Schensul, & LeCompte, p.1, 1999). The authors' characteristics of ethnography are listed below along with the aspect of this study which meets the requirement(s):

1. *It is carried out in a natural setting.*

Participants were observed in their classrooms. I was a passive participant so that I was able to observe natural teaching situations. The classrooms were not adjusted in any way for the observations. If the instructor moved the class to another area such as the library or a computer lab, then this area was considered a natural setting.

2. *It involves intimate, face-to-face interaction with participants.*

I interviewed each instructor twice in a semi-structured format in a face-to-face situation. Additional informal face-to-face discussions occurred before and after each of the observations.

3. *It presents an accurate reflection of participants' perspective and behaviors.*

To help ensure an accurate reflection of participants' perspectives and behaviors, digital audio recordings were utilized. The interview transcriptions were given to the instructors to check for accuracy. Member checks

were conducted so that participants could verify the accuracy of my data.

In addition to the participants themselves verifying accuracy, an independent coder verified twenty-five percent of my collected data. Inter-rater reliability helped to ensure accuracy.

4. *It uses inductive, interactive, and recursive data collection and analytic strategies to build local cultural theories.*

Collecting data, recording data, and analyzing data in a cyclical pattern utilizing thick description are the ethnographic methods that were used to build a theory regarding the culture of the two instructors' classrooms and what they did to enhance student learning. I was in the classroom for five observations during a ten-week quarter, going back and talking with the participants regularly and conducting member checks. Their reflective journals were also analyzed as part of data collection. These strategies were on going through the ten weeks and continued until no new ideas were revealed.

5. *It uses multiple data sources.*

Two surveys and a questionnaire were given before observations began supplied data about participants' beliefs regarding teaching reading and developmental reading students. Interviews provided further data regarding beliefs and also provided rationale for actions in the classrooms, as well as reflections on what occurred. Observations supplied data regarding classroom context, including instructor actions and teaching.

Journals helped ensure that participants' reflections were part of the data collection.

6. *It frames all human behavior and belief within a sociopolitical and historical context.*

Unrau and Ruddell's Reading as a Meaning Construction process and Langer's 2004 study of successful instructional practices of teachers in high achieving middle and high schools, both described in Chapter Two, were positioned within a sociocognitive theoretical framework. They also both emphasized the contextualized nature of teaching and learning. The instructor brought his/her knowledge and experiences to the classroom. In my study, observing what happens in the classrooms and asking questions through interviews, surveys, questionnaires and reflective journals, data analysis was framed within the sociocognitive context discussed in Chapter Two.

7. *It uses the concept of culture as a lens through which to interpret results.*

The concept of culture is complex. In this study it included the culture of the college as a private, open-admission institution; the culture of the students in the classroom; the culture of the participants themselves; and the culture of developmental education. Participants saw and interpreted through their own personal lens, what made their classroom contexts unique. Semantic domain analysis, taxonomic analysis and componential analysis was performed on all data gathered through the survey,

questionnaire, interviews, artifacts, observations, and participants' journals. These multiple perspectives allowed me to come to know what the instructors were doing in their classrooms and the reasons given for doing them (Schensul, Schensul, & LeCompte, 1999, p.9).

Description of the Setting

The site for this research was a four-year, private, non-profit institution located in the northern suburbs of a large Midwestern city. The institution has a student population of approximately 6,400 on its campus, and grants associate and bachelor degrees. It has a right-to-try philosophy with an open-access policy. It is accredited by the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools and is part of a larger system of thirteen additional campuses located across Michigan's lower peninsula totaling over 40,000 students.

The campus has seen its enrollment grow from approximately 200 students in 1990 to over 6,400 in 2009. The majority of students are drawn from a northern suburban area of this Midwestern city. The county where the campus is located has seen a change in its population due to an increase in foreign-born immigrants settling in the county, with ten percent of the county residents being foreign born. The income level is typically middle- to lower-middle class with the median household income of \$52,102 in 1999. Approximately 32% of the county's population has a high school diploma or equivalent (American Community Survey, 2000). In the last few years the county has seen its manufacturing base decline as companies relocate to other states, foreign countries or close their businesses. Many students have come back to school for retraining and to gain skills which will result

in an alternate career. Thus, students who come to school for this specific purpose tend to be nontraditional. The college has also seen its base of traditional students increase. These students commonly attend classes during the day and have increased the college's daytime enrollment to fifty percent, whereas in the past, there was a significantly larger percentage of night-time students.

New, first time freshmen with no college transfer credit are given a COMPASS (ACT, 1994) test which assesses their reading, math and writing skills. If they do not have college-level skills in these areas, they are placed into the corresponding developmental class: Reading (score of 0-68), Essential Math (score of 0-43), Pre-Algebra (score of 44-57), or English Review (score of 0-24). Students who place into the math or English class are prevented from taking any higher level math or composition classes until these developmental courses have been passed. The reading course is not typically a pre-requisite for any course. However in 2006, due to the level of reading required in their introductory courses, the Early Childhood Education (ECE) and Computer Science (CIS) programs made the reading class a pre-requisite for their introductory classes. In 2007, the developmental reading class was made mandatory for those new students who tested into it.

Recently the reading course curriculum was rewritten to address the need for improved comprehension of college-level reading material and study skills. The goal was to help retain the developmental students and to enhance their success in college-level courses. A post-COMPASS test was also added as an exit exam, and students are required to attain a score of 60 to pass the reading course. This open-admission college enrolls a substantial

number of developmental students, and it is in the process of trying to meet the needs of these students. As an employee of this institution, I have seen the struggles that have occurred with the increase in the numbers of developmental students.

Participants

Two instructors of the developmental reading course at this institution were the subjects of this study. Instructors are an important influence on developmental students; and it is important to analyze what these instructors are doing in the classrooms. The number of developmental reading instructors varies per quarter based on the numbers of students who test into developmental reading courses. This study took place in the fall quarter of 2010 and winter quarter of 2011. I selected the instructors once the reading course sections were staffed and instructor names were added to the course on the college schedule for each quarter.

Participant Selection

Two instructors who taught the reading course for at least three quarters and were willing to participate in this study were selected. First, the length of time teaching at this institution was important. It is necessary for the instructor to have a minimum of three quarters teaching the developmental reading course. At this institution developmental instructors are evaluated during their first quarters and their student retention rate is taken into account if they are asked to continue teaching developmental courses, including developmental reading. Choosing instructors who had taught at least three quarters ensured a participant had experience and was deemed by the institution as effective in teaching this course.

The only compensation included \$100 gift cards to restaurants of each instructor's

choice (one instructor had two \$50 gift cards to two different restaurants). These were a gesture of thanks after I completed the observations and final interviews.

Minimizing Workplace Risk

To avoid compromising their work environment, the instructors' identities were kept confidential. No one knew which instructors are subjects of my study, including their supervisor and other employees at this institution. The instructors were asked to sign an informed consent form which detailed their responsibilities as participants in the study. These forms were stored at the Principal Investigator's home in a locked file cabinet as will all other data related to the study. Identifiers were coded so that real names were not used. All interviews took place off campus, and emails were sent through the personal email addresses to avoid using the institution's email system.

Data Collection

Data collection included observational data from in-class observations including digital audio recordings, transcribed for analysis; interviews with the participants, which also were audio recorded and transcribed; artifacts; and participants' reflective journals. It was important that I observed these instructors in their natural setting, which is a feature of ethnography. Spradley (1980) states "Ethnography is the work of describing a culture" (p. 3). He goes on to state, "The essential core of ethnography is this concern with the meaning of actions and events to the people we seek to understand" (p. 5). If this ethnographic study was to be effective, it had to deal with "cultural behavior, cultural knowledge, and cultural artifacts" (p.5). Classroom observations of the instructors facilitated knowledge, behavior, and artifacts.

Observations and Follow-up Informal Interviews

Each instructor was observed five weeks in the classroom for a total of 20 hours. I was a passive participant in the classroom, making an ethnographic record by keeping a comprehensive account in field notes of what took place in the classroom. It was important that I remain aware of the three principles: The language identification principle, which means that the ethnographic record “reflects the same differences in language usages as the actual field situation”; the verbatim principle, whereby the record should state exactly what the participant says; and the concrete principle, which means that concrete language should be used when describing observations (Spradley, 1980, p.68).

The classroom included an instructor, the only participant, and approximately 25 students who were not participating in this study. I digitally audio recorded the instructor with a lapel microphone, as a check on the accuracy of my field notes. No names of students were used in the data or data analysis. I informed the students in the classes that I was conducting a study on reading instruction and would be observing approximately once per week for the evening class and twice per week for the day class. I emphasized that this study did not include them in any way.

Since I took notes in the classroom, if I needed to refer to students, it was in very general terms or pseudonyms so that they were not recognizable to anyone other than the researcher. However, at the beginning of the observations, I asked students to inform me, through my personal email address, if they preferred that I not mention them in my field notes, even using pseudonyms. If anyone did object, then I would not refer to them. No students requested this. Participants were advised to refrain from telling anyone that I was

conducting research in their class.

After each observation I conducted a ten minute informal discussion with the instructor to verify data from the observations. The discussions served as member checks, recorded in the researcher field notebook, and also digitally recorded and transcribed for analysis.

Passive Participation

Spradley (1980) lists five types of participation: non-participation, passive participation, moderate participation, active participation, and complete participation. My participation in observing the two developmental reading classes is classified as passive participation which Spradley describes as “present at the scene but does not participate or interact with other people to a great extent” (p.59). I was present in the classroom, sitting and taking field notes but not participating in any manner.

Artifacts

I collected artifacts from the classroom such as items the instructor handed out to students, instructor-only material, media such as videos, clips, etc., institution related information pertinent to the course, and other items which physically represent contributions to the classroom context. I did not collect any student work. “Detailed studies of artifacts are necessary if a researcher is to explore the systematic relationship between people and their physical environment” (Erlandson et al., 1993). These artifacts were analyzed and provided more data regarding the instructors’ beliefs and how these beliefs affected the classroom context.

Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP) Survey

The Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP) (IRA, 1985) survey provided

information regarding the instructors' beliefs about reading. This survey has 28 items which were not all suitable for the college-level instructor. As a result, the survey was modified to include only those items which would aid in understanding the participants' underlying orientation to reading and reading students at the college level.

The Literacy Orientation Survey (LOS)

The Literacy Orientation Survey tool was developed “as a way for teachers to investigate their beliefs about literacy acquisition and to see how these beliefs relate to their classroom practices” (Lenski, Wham, & Griffey, 1998, p. 2). “The LOS, therefore, can be a tool to assist teachers with monitoring their own movement toward constructivist teaching and clarifying the beliefs and practices they hold about literacy learning” (Lenski, Wham, & Griffey, 1997, p. 16). This survey was to be utilized in conjunction with the TORP as another measure of instructors' beliefs and practices.

Instructor Beliefs' Questionnaire

A questionnaire was created to provide further information regarding instructors' beliefs about developmental reading and also teaching beliefs in general. This was modified from a Teacher Belief Interview (Richardson, Anders, Tidwell and Lloyd, 1991, p.580) which asked participants to elaborate on the following topics: background, reading and learning to read, reading instruction, students and the school where the teacher was employed. The questionnaire was given to the participants of this study in a written question format. It was administered to the subjects before the first semi-structured interview. This allowed me to have a third tool to help identify their theoretical beliefs about reading and teaching. I used this data, along with the TORP and LOS surveys and other data collected throughout the

study, to ascertain if their classroom practices were linked to their perceived beliefs and the resulting affects on classroom learning environments.

Formal, Semi-Structured Interviews

I interviewed each instructor in a semi-structured format before the classes began and again when the observations were complete. The first interview was guided by the Teachers' Beliefs' Questionnaire mentioned above and lasted approximately one hour. Other open-ended probing questions arose out of these responses to ensure that the participants provided complete explanations. Additional questions were taken from individual instructor's responses to the TORP Survey and LOS Survey.

The second interview focused on questions developed throughout data collection and lasted approximately two hours. Questions aimed to gain further insight into the observations, reflective journals, and artifacts. The questions focused on specific instructional practices that were observed in the classroom, such as:

In the pre-observation interview, Carolyn said that students are given the opportunity to write a paragraph using a main idea and supporting details" (PI-2; Lns 45-51). However, this was inconsistent with my observation as students did not write their own paragraphs at the end the lesson. I asked Carolyn why she went back to the textbook exercises and she stated, "They needed additional practice" (O2A-2; Lns 102-103). She felt that this particular class was not ready to write their own paragraphs.

The questions might also refer to the Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP) Survey or the Literacy Orientation Survey (LOS) administered before the observations began.

A question asked of one instructor who had inconsistent answers on the TORP:

In the questionnaire you disagree that “It is not necessary for a child to know the letters of the alphabet in order to learn to read” (TORP) which means that you believe it is necessary for readers to know the alphabet. However on another question you agreed that children’s encounters with print should focus on meaning, not exact graphic representation. Can you give me further explanation of your belief in this area?

Answer: I believe that parents should read to their children from infancy.

This answer clarified the contradiction in the TORP question.

All interviews were digitally audio-recorded, transcribed and checked for accuracy. These transcriptions were given to each instructor after the interviews as a member check for accuracy.

Subjects’ Reflective Journal

It is important in qualitative studies that the researcher is concerned with “how people make sense out of their lives” (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006, p. 431). The instructors kept a reflective journal while participating in this study. These journals allowed insight into what these instructors “are thinking and why they think what they do” (p. 431). They reflected on the class session and included anything they felt affected their behavior or mindset about teaching at that particular time. I asked for one entry per week during the 10-week quarter. Emailing them to me allowed me to respond if I had a question about the journal entry. Before they agreed to be participants in the study, instructors were made aware of this requirement. I also supplied a written guide as to the kinds of information which would

be helpful in the journal. I analyzed the journals to determine participants' beliefs and compared this data to other data collected.

Researcher Fieldwork Journal

I kept a reflexive journal throughout this study, in addition to my fieldwork notebook, to write down what Lincoln and Guba call information about self and method (p. 327). They advocate having three sections for this reflexive field journal: method log, emerging findings, and perceptions of personal impact on the site. (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 327). My decisions and rationales regarding methods were recorded. These were not daily entries whereas personal reflection and scheduling were entered more often. This fieldwork journal was important for trustworthiness in this study, to help eliminate researcher bias in the data collected, and to maintain an audit trail. I dated each entry and was specific in my writing so that reading it at a later date supplied necessary information.

Member Checks

It was important that my interpretations and/or "reconstructions are recognizable to audience members as adequate representations of their own multiple realities" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 314). After the interviews had been transcribed, I gave these transcriptions to the participants to check for accuracy and clarity. During informal conversations after observations, I asked participants to clarify any aspect of the observation that was unclear to me and needed further discussion. This was also be member check. For the final check I gave members a written description of their beliefs and their teaching and asked them to respond in writing and verbally to that description.

Peer Debriefing

Lincoln and Guba (1985) list four purposes for peer debriefing: to keep the inquirer honest; to test emerging hypotheses with the inquirer; to develop and test next steps in the research; and to provide a time for catharsis” (p. 308). My major advisor was used to provide an “external check” (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p.327). She reviewed research methods and ongoing data analysis. Written and audio records of these sessions were kept by the researcher, and the peer debriefer also kept a written record. Before I began classroom observations, I met with the debriefer once or twice while I formulated plans, then bi-weekly during the study. After the observations were finished, we met as much as necessary throughout the data analysis.

Independent Coder

I utilized an independent coder to verify my analysis. To check inter-rater reliability, this individual and I first discussed my definitions and categories and then coded a portion of the data together. When we had an understanding of the definitions and categories, each of us coded 10 percent of the data separately then come together to compare our coding. If there were differences, we reviewed definitions and categories again and coded a portion of the data together. Once the separate coding was similar, then we each coded another 10 to 15 percent separately. After the independent coder and I coded 20-25 percent in a similar fashion, I continued the coding alone.

Progression of Study

This study took place in three phases before, during, and after a regular 10-week quarter (See table 3.1). Instructors was identified and chosen based on the criteria outlined in the

previous section. They signed an informed consent form detailing what would be expected of them.

Phase I: the subjects were given the Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP) survey, the Literacy Orientation Survey (LOS) which asked questions related to reading. They were also given an additional Teacher Belief Questionnaire which addressed general teacher beliefs and specific questions related to developmental reading. Also the first interviews titled pre-observation interviews were conducted. To minimize work-place risk, these took place off campus.

Phase II: each subject was observed five times teaching in their classrooms. One observation was completed during week 1 and the final one during week 9 as week 10 was focused on students taking the Post-COMASS test. It was important that I observed the instructor initially going over the syllabus and introducing the students to the class and also ending the course during week 9. The other three observations were scheduled during the middle weeks of the quarter and were different weeks for each instructor, depending on what the instructor had planned. I wanted to observe meaningful classroom activity. During these observations, I took field notes, digitally audio recorded the instructor, collected artifacts, and was a nonparticipant observer. Informal discussions with the instructors were held for approximately ten minutes at the end of each observation. Subjects also completed a reflective journal to be done each week of the 10-week quarter and emailed to my home email address through their personal email accounts. Nothing was communicated through the institution's email system. These emails were copied without identifiers into a file and then deleted in order to protect subjects' identities. During this phase, additional questions

arose which needed to be addressed in the course of this study. Analysis of data was ongoing through this phase.

Phase III: A final interview with both instructors was completed off campus. At this time, a member check was conducted whereby the instructors corroborated my data. During this phase, analysis of data was ongoing. Audio recordings were destroyed once the data was transcribed and verified.

Table 3.1: Progression of Study

<p>Phase I: Prior to the start of the quarter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify two instructors from a list of four or five instructors chosen using stated criteria • Complete consent form • Instructors complete TORP LOS and Teacher's Belief Questionnaire • Set up a schedule of observations with the instructors • Pre-observation interviews with the instructors • Transcribe audio recording of interview • Member checks • Explain instructor reflective journal
<p>Phase II: Weeks 1-10 of the quarter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observe, audio record, and take field notes in the classrooms • Collect artifacts as needed • Post-observation informal discussions with instructors • Member checks • Instructors complete journals • Researcher reflexive journal • Analyze data
<p>Phase III: After the quarter concludes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final interviews with instructors • Member checks • Researcher reflexive journal • Analyze data and write up results

Data was stored off campus at the researcher's home. The audio recorded data was destroyed once it had been transcribed and verified. The additional data will be kept for seven years per Wayne State University's regulations.

Data Analysis

All audio recordings were transcribed and analysis was done on this transcription. This includes observations and interviews. Other data analyzed included the participants' reflective journals and artifacts.

Spradley (1980) identifies three types of analysis: semantic domain analysis, taxonomic analysis, and componential analysis. First it is important to identify the term cultural domain as "...a category of cultural meaning that includes other smaller categories" (p. 88).

A semantic domain analysis involves looking for cultural domains embedded in the data. These domains include cover terms, included terms and semantic relationships. Cover term is the name for a cultural domain. Included terms are the names for all the smaller categories inside the domain. Semantic relationship links both of these categories, "Its function is to define included terms by placing them inside the cultural domain" (p. 89). I identified categories of cultural meaning from classroom observations, artifacts, interviews, and participants' reflective journals.

A taxonomic analysis shows the relationships among the "things inside a cultural domain... a taxonomy reveals subsets and the way they are related to the whole" (Spradley, 1980, p. 113). A taxonomic analysis was completed on observations, interviews, reflective journals and artifacts.

In addition to similarities, it is important for the researcher to also look at the differences among domains. One way to accomplish this is through selected observations, where the researcher narrows his/her focus to areas of contrast. This leads to the third type of analysis, a componential analysis. Spradley defines this as including "...the entire

process of searching for contrasts, sorting them out, grouping some together as dimensions of contrast, and entering all this information onto a paradigm” (p.133). This analysis of contrasts was conducted on all gathered data.

I looked for statements which illustrated beliefs. I looked for scenarios through observations which illustrated practices (Dooley & Assaf, p.369, 2009). Artifacts, for example, might reinforce a belief statement or may provide evidence that the instructor’s practice did not follow her belief statement. For example, one instructor used cartoons a number of times in the classroom. What did this say about her beliefs regarding reading? How does this demonstrate what the instructor has verbalized about her beliefs about inferencing and critical thinking? Another instructor utilized a vocabulary game online. This game was skills oriented. Was this consistent with the instructor’s stated beliefs about reading?

Table 3.2:Methods

RESEARCH QUESTIONS	DATA SOURCES	ANALYSIS
What are instructors' beliefs about teaching developmental reading and developmental reading students, and how do their instructional practices reflect these beliefs?	TORP LOS and Beliefs' Questionnaire, instructors' interviews, and instructors' journals	Semantic domain analysis, taxonomic analysis, componential analysis, classification of beliefs based on characteristics' chart in Chapter 2
How do instructors' beliefs and practices about developmental reading and developmental reading students reflect behaviorist, cognitive, and / or constructivist theories?	observations, interviews, instructors' journals, artifacts	Semantic domain analysis, taxonomic analysis, classification of practices based on chart in Chapter 2
How do instructors' beliefs and instructional practices affect the learning environments of the developmental reading classrooms?	observations, instructors' journals, TORP Survey, LOS and Beliefs' Questionnaire, interviews, and artifacts	Semantic domain analysis, taxonomic analysis, componential analysis, comparison of beliefs and practices based on chart in Chapter 2

Trustworthiness

In analyzing the data from the methods used, it was important to address the need for trustworthiness. My methods had to meet the four criteria for trustworthiness outlined by Lincoln and Guba (1985): credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. To demonstrate trustworthiness, the naturalistic inquiry must show that it has “represented those multiple constructions adequately” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.296).

Credibility

There are three activities which can help ensure credible findings including prolonged engagement, persistent observation and triangulation. I will next discuss each of these in relation to my study.

Prolonged engagement is “the investment of sufficient time to achieve certain purposes: learning the culture, testing for misinformation, introduced by distortions either of the self or of the respondents, and building trust” (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 303). This study had prolonged engagement. I observed five (night) and ten (day) class periods for approximately 16 hours within a 10-week period. Misinformation and distortions were minimized by my understanding the role of the developmental reading instructor, by the instructors keeping a reflective journal, and through weekly interviews with them.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) caution against “going native” whereby the researcher, over the course of the study, comes to identify with the subjects and loses perspective (p. 304). There is minimal chance of this as the class only lasts ten weeks.

Persistent observation is the second technique used to enhance credibility and involves being present in all of the contexts where important activities take place, ascertaining what

is typical and atypical. I identified, documented and described in detail things that occurred or was said in the observations and interviews which related to the instructor. Student data was only addressed as it applied to what the instructor was doing or saying. The students were identified in general terms or with pseudonyms.

The third mode of enhancing credibility was triangulation. I triangulated my data by utilizing different modes of data collection. I compared data gathered during two formal surveys (TORP and LOS), questionnaires, interviews (pre, post, and during observations), observations (digitally recorded), and subjects' reflective journals. I looked for patterns that were obvious across varied sources, as well as things that were not congruent across sources.

Member checks were utilized to enhance the study's credibility. "The member check, whereby data, analytic categories, interpretations and conclusions are tested with members of those stake holding groups...is the most crucial technique for establishing credibility" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.314). Participants reviewed their interview transcriptions to check for accuracy and clarity. Also after the observations were finished, I asked the participants to review a written description of their beliefs and their teaching and asked them to respond to those descriptions.

Finally, peer debriefing was utilized in order to ascertain any biases I might have had and to make sure I was aware of my role (Lincoln & Guba, p. 308). This was especially important since I was employed at the setting for this study. I used my major advisor in this capacity. This individual reviewed my plans for the classroom observations, to give input about research practices, including planning, interviews, semantic domain analysis,

taxonomic analysis, and componential analysis. This individual heard my reflections, ideas and thoughts regarding every aspect of this study. The peer reviewer was able to ascertain if I was being biased in any way. For example, at times I was interpreting an action when I should have been describing it. This person was "looking over my shoulder" in order to detect activities which reflected my bias.

To enhance credibility further, I utilized an independent coder. This individual, using my definitions, coded 20-25 percent of the data to verify my coding. If there were any differences, these were discussed and investigated. I also had this individual verify my categories and themes.

Transferability

We have discussed credibility; so the next measure of trustworthiness is transferability, the degree to which the findings of a study can be applied to a similar situation. Transferability is enhanced by what Lincoln and Guba (1985) term "thick description" (p. 316). To facilitate making transferability, I provided descriptive accounts of classroom activities, as well as described the study context fully. This "makes transferability judgments possible on the part of potential appliers" (p.316).

Dependability and Confirmability

The last two components of trustworthiness were dependability and confirmability, achieved through an audit of the study's data collection methods. This audit trail showed connections between all data collected. This was done by the chair of my committee. All data was carefully catalogued and secured, so that an outside auditor could follow my interpretive process, following findings back to analysis worksheets and then to raw data.

Conclusion

This is a study of two developmental reading instructors at an open admission four-year college. It utilized ethnographic methods of data collection including a survey and questionnaire, interviews, observations, collection of artifacts, participants' reflective journals and researcher's reflexive journal. As a passive participant, the researcher was present in the classroom, sitting and taking field notes but not participating. Workplace risk was minimized by keeping the study and the identity of the participants confidential. Their identities were kept from their supervisor and other employees of this institution. The only personnel at this institution, outside of the instructors, who knew about the study was the IRB committee who had to give its approval.

Data collection followed a cyclical pattern whereby questions were asked, a record made, and this cyclical pattern continued until no new ideas were revealed. The research was done in three phases: prior to the quarter, during the quarter and after the quarter.

Trustworthiness was met by the criteria outlined by Lincoln and Guba (1985): prolonged engagement, persistent observation and triangulation. Member checks, peer debriefing, and use of an independent coder was utilized to enhance credibility further.

Transferability was enhanced by using thick description which provided detailed description of the classroom context. Dependability and confirmability are the last two components of trustworthiness and are achieved through an audit of the data collection methods. This was performed by the chair of my committee and the research methodologist. Data was carefully catalogued and secured so that an outside auditor could follow findings back to the analysis and then to the raw data.

CHAPTER FOUR

Chapter four will address all three research questions for the first instructor, Shelley, and the second instructor, Carolyn. First, I will describe each instructors' beliefs, to what extent these beliefs are mirrored in their instructional practice in the classroom, and to which theoretical model(s) these beliefs and practices are linked. I will then discuss the resulting learning environment of each instructor.

Three major categories were derived from the theoretical models of behaviorism, cognitivism, and constructivism. These categories include reading, teaching and learning, and developmental students. These were first described in Chapter Two, and tables were created to reflect characteristics of each theory. It became clear through continuous analysis of the data that I needed to differentiate between beliefs about reading and beliefs about teaching and learning. For example, when Shelley stated that vocabulary is essential to reading comprehension and that students need to complete weekly vocabulary cards, this is a belief about reading. However, she also made a belief statement that she is a facilitator in the classroom. This statement is related to the teaching and learning category. Many statements from both instructors related to reading, but then others were statements or observed practices which related to teaching and learning in general. The final category of developmental students emerged because both instructors demonstrated particular beliefs and practices about developmental students which impacted the learning environment.

Through a comparative analysis of data collected through classroom observations, interviews, surveys, and instructor journals, themes emerged for each instructor which became the subcategories of the major three categories. Through analysis of these

themes and categorizing them by theoretical model, I was able to link both instructors to a theoretical model(s). Shelley's beliefs and practices place her within the behaviorist theoretical framework whereas Carolyn is placed within the cognitivist and constructivist frameworks.

I will first describe Shelley including her background, then her beliefs about developmental reading students, the major themes derived from observations of classroom practice, interviews, and journal entries and how these reflect a behaviorist theoretical framework. In the category of reading, Shelley's themes include vocabulary, comprehension techniques, and critical thinking. In the category of teaching and learning, Shelley's major themes include teacher-directed instruction, extrinsic motivation, and group work. Shelley categorized developmental students into three categories based on skill levels. Information cited from transcripts will be coded as follows:

Instructor 1 = Shelley (pseudonym)

Instructor 2 = Carolyn (pseudonym)

POI-1 = Pre-observation interview with instructor one

POI-2 = Pre-observation interview with instructor two

PTOI-1 = Post-observation interview with instructor one

PTOI-2 = Post-observation interview with instructor two

J1- = Journal with the first number identifying the journal number and the second number identifying the instructor.

O1-1 = Observation with the first number identifying the number of the observation

and the second number identifying the instructor.

Ln = Line of transcribed digital recording data

Shelley

A Description of Shelley

Shelley is a white female in her mid-30s. She grew up in a white, middle class suburban Detroit household with two parents. Shelley is in her third year of teaching adult students. Shelley eagerly said yes to participating in this study and did not seem to have any hesitation in being digitally recorded in the classroom. Shelley is a very talkative and open individual in person and also in front of her students.

Shelley is a state-certified elementary teacher who has been teaching for ten years, and this has included a variety of age levels, from young five/kindergarten to adults. Her student teaching experience was a split with eight weeks in the young five room and eight weeks in third grade. When asked how her cooperating teacher taught reading, she stated that a third of the class went to the reading specialist and the remaining seven to ten, deemed advanced students, were in the classroom with the teacher.

“From day one of my student teaching experience, I assisted my cooperating teacher with the process of reading a trade book. The reading was done a couple pages as a read aloud from the teacher and then in the round robin format of students reading a page”

(POI-1; Lns 15-18).

Shelley went on to state that multiple decoding strategies, as well as reading for fluency, was explored. Questioning techniques were used “as a way of engaging the third graders with the text in addition to checking for comprehension of material” (POI-1; Lns 20-21).

There was no innovative instruction in the cooperating teacher's class. Shelley stated that she did not really have any training in teaching reading in her pre-service education besides attending a workshop sponsored by the reading specialist.

For 2-1/2 years Shelley was a K-5 substitute teacher and spent one summer teaching reading to at-risk seventh graders. For the last three years she has taught developmental reading and writing skills to adults at this institution. Shelley follows the developmental reading curriculum outlined by this institution which involves reading skills instruction and discussion of an assigned novel. In this case it was *Tuesdays with Morrie* by Mitch Albom.

Shelley's Beliefs and Instructional Practices

Shelley's belief statements, classroom practices, and TORP survey can be classified within the theoretical framework of behaviorism even though some of her belief statements and LOS survey reflect cognitivism and constructivism characteristics. When Shelley teaches, she does so from a behaviorist theoretical framework.

Description of Developmental Reading Students

Shelley describes developmental reading students by dividing them into three categories. Her main points of focus in each category are skill based which is a characteristic of behaviorism. These include fluency, motivation, critical thinking skills, and the ability to decipher word meaning.

Shelley's first category focuses on skills and describes a student "who is having great difficulty in reading who can usually decode words, but lacks fluency when reading" (POI-1; Ln 184). Here Shelley focuses on the skill of decoding words and the fluency or lack of fluency the reader exhibits. She stated, "The student encounters unfamiliar vocabulary

words and lacks the critical thinking skills which are necessary to effectively read and comprehend the material” (POI-1; Lns 184-186). Shelley believes that a lack of vocabulary will interfere with comprehension. She goes on further, “this student is not motivated to improve nor is he or she willing to put forth the extra effort it will take to improve his or her reading skills. In addition, the student is unwilling to complete extra lessons of *MyReadingLab* (computer based skills practice) or additional resources provided by the instructor” (POI-1; Lns 187-188). Shelley’s statements demonstrate that she believes that the skill levels of these students such as fluency and critical thinking are lacking. She also cites a lack of motivation in these students. Shelley believes that developmental reading students will be unsuccessful if they aren’t motivated to complete reading lab exercises.

Shelley described the second type of student she encounters frequently in the reading class as one who is

somewhat fluent when reading...the student encounters unfamiliar vocabulary and takes the time to look up the words in a dictionary. This student is somewhat willing to improve critical thinking skills through extra *My Reading Lab lessons* and/or extra work provided by the instructor. Through interactions between the student and the instructor, progress is made to improve vocabulary and comprehension skills (POI-1; Lns 194-196).

This category of developmental reading students, Shelley believes, are slightly more skilled in fluency, and they look words up in the dictionary as opposed to the students in the first category. Shelley believes that this student is more motivated to learn because he/she does extra skill work in *MyReading Lab*. Her statements also demonstrate that she believes that this skill work improves critical thinking.

Finally, the third category includes those developmental reading students that Shelley

infrequently encounters. These could be described as really doing well. The focus is consistent with the first two categories including fluency, unknown vocabulary words, and motivation.

This student is one who is fluent when reading and asks questions of the instructor when he or she does not understand the content. This student takes time to look up every word in the dictionary as well as exploring the meaning of the word in context. The student enjoys reading and is always looking at ways to better themselves (POI-1; Lns 200-201).

This category of students are “really doing well” in the focus areas of fluency, motivation, and word meaning. Shelley includes vocabulary in context for these students but also mentions that they look words up in the dictionary which she believes is a factor in their stronger reading skill. Shelley fails to mention critical thinking for this group, but she believes that this type of student does enjoy reading and is very motivated.

Shelley believes that in order to be successful, developmental reading students must be “disciplined and determined” (POI-1; Lns 181-182). This involves time management skills and being able to juggle life’s ups and downs” (OI-1; Lns 182). Shelley’s statements demonstrate her belief that students need to be motivated to improve.

The characteristics that Shelley uses to describe developmental reading students including fluency; decoding; dictionary work to decipher word meaning; motivation to complete additional skills’ work in MyReadingLab; and looking words up in a dictionary are skilled based. Shelley created these three categories of developmental reading students when asked in an interview to describe the students who must take developmental reading. In creating these categories, she has demonstrated her belief in the importance of skills and

the acquisition of them, to not only be a better reader, but to also become a better individual.

Shelley's Beliefs and Instructional Practices in Reading

Through comparative data analysis, three themes emerged in regard to Shelley's beliefs and practices about reading: vocabulary, comprehension techniques, and critical thinking. Data will show that Shelley's beliefs and practices are firmly embedded in behaviorism.

Through her belief statements, Shelley exemplifies a focus on skill mastery, a behaviorist characteristic, when it comes to teaching reading. Shelley believes that information is processed hierarchically and skill mastery is through reinforcement and practice. She stated, "Students who take the reading class do better in other classes because they do learn those skills that they will need" (PTOI-1: Lns 161-162). Another tenet of behaviorism is the belief that skills, once learned, will transfer. She feels it is important to focus on skills in order for the students to pass the post-COMPASS test (a score of 60) which is necessary to pass the class. In the first class session she told the students, "By the end of ten weeks, you will have the skills I have taught you, and you should pass the COMPASS test" (O1-1, Ln 28). Shelley teaches these skills in sequential order. For example she said that she tells students, "...vocabulary, (then) you are going to have to do main idea and details. You are going to have to do inference and critical thinking and so forth" (PTOI-1; Lns 109-111). She went on to state, "the idea behind that is that vocabulary is more important than main idea, which I agree with" (PTOI-1; Lns 111-112). "They (students) need to build their comprehension through repeated readings and constant vocabulary building" (POI-1; Lns 159-160).

Shelley believes that when a student leaves college, the student should possess “the entry level skills that are needed to successfully perform one’s job” (POI-1; Lns 35-36). Through the study, in class and to me, Shelley emphasized skills, especially vocabulary words, as a necessary ingredient in reading comprehension. Shelly’s belief statements characterize her as teaching skills in isolation, which is a characteristic of behaviorism. First, I will discuss vocabulary, then I will discuss comprehension and critical thinking together as Shelley used them interchangeably.

Vocabulary

Shelley believes that vocabulary is an important factor in improving reading comprehension. This belief is mirrored in her classroom practices where she had a focus on vocabulary even in other skill areas. She is very consistent in this belief. Her approach to teaching vocabulary is skills driven and behaviorist in nature. When asked what a student entering college should be able to do in terms of reading, she responded, “They should already know how to read as well as possess basic concepts such as vocabulary and comprehension techniques. Although these vocabulary skills and comprehension techniques may be limited, I see my job as helping them refine these skills and in turn become a better individual and/or student” (POI-1; Lns 26-27). Shelley sees reading as a series of skills that once learned, can improve an individual’s reading comprehension.

Shelley’s definition of reading comprehension is “the understanding and interpreting of the material that is read” (POI-1; Lns 60-61). Shelley believes that a good grasp of vocabulary allows for an easier time in identifying the main idea, purpose or point of view in a reading (POI-1; Lns 64-65). This perception looks at reading from a part to

whole perspective common in behaviorist reading theory. However, Shelley states that she teaches reading whole to part, “my teaching philosophy is one that looks at the whole and then breaks it into parts” (J3-1; Lns 4-6). She believes very strongly in vocabulary cards and substantiates this by mentioning what is done in the K-12 setting where “it is good for teachers/reading specialists/other adults to compile a word bank with students in which unfamiliar words are written and defined (on cards). Students can revisit these cards or be tested over them periodically to increase their vocabulary and/or language skills”(POI-1; Lns 66-67). These cards have the words out of the context of the real text. Thus the focus is on the part instead of the whole. Shelly carries this use of vocabulary cards into her own teaching.

Students were required to complete vocabulary cards six times (5 or 6 words each time) during the 10-week quarter or ten class sessions. These vocabulary words were taken from the memoir *Tuesdays with Morrie* (Albom, 1997). Each vocabulary word was written in the upper left-hand corner of a 3x5 or 4x6 card. A three or four word phrase was written in the middle of the card that included the word as it was written in the context of the novel. At the bottom left of the card was the page number and the source, *Tuesdays with Morrie*. Additionally, on the back of the card students wrote the definition and a picture capturing the definition of the word (Syllabus). Shelley believes that she is breaking the whole text into parts by pulling out vocabulary from the memoir. This is the only example observed of a whole to part instructional practice.

Shelley stated to the class, “The idea is you are going to use them (the cards) to remember what the words mean (O2-1, Lns 36 and 37).” Shelley also stated in her

journal, “The vocabulary cards help to enrich students’ understanding of words as well as recognizing these words in contexts” (J1-1; Lns 19-20) Students were also given three vocabulary quizzes. “You will need to be prepared as you will not know in advance which weeks the quiz will be given. Therefore, it is imperative that you complete the weekly vocabulary cards and review them” (Syllabus). Shelley’s comments to her students and in her journal demonstrate her belief in the important role vocabulary plays in reading comprehension. These comments are also consistent with her practices and a behaviorist theoretical framework.

In addition to vocabulary cards, Shelley also required warm-up activities at the beginning of eight of the ten class sessions. Of the five classes I observed, three of the warm-up activities involved vocabulary words. These words were isolated in that they were taken out of the context of a whole text.

Upon entering the classroom, students would see a word projected on the screen, along with a notation as to whether it was an adjective, noun, or adverb. Below the word was a sentence using the word in context. Students had to decipher the definition of the word by its context and then complete two activities. For example, during observation four, the word given was ‘tedious’ and students saw the following on the screen: tedious (adj)

Context clues: Everyone assumed the speaker would be fascinating, but he turned out to be so tedious that half the audience fell asleep.

1. List five activities you find tedious
2. Write a sentence using the word tedious.

Students were given time to complete this as other students walked in and got settled. At about 6:20 p.m., the instructor began going over what students thought the word meant and then discussed their answers to numbers 1 and 2 above (O4-1). If students were late, they did not get a chance to complete the warm-up assignment. This practice is an isolated skills approach, a characteristic of behaviorist philosophy.

This technique is also evident in the exercises from the course textbook, *The Reader's Handbook* (Smith, 2007). These involved exercises which were skills' driven. Students completed sixteen practices totaling 160 exercises in the vocabulary chapter. In addition to the textbook and the *Tuesdays with Morrie (TWM)* memoir, the course required Pearson Education Publishing's online skills lab, *MyReadingLab* (MRL) which included vocabulary skills' building. Students were required to achieve a proficiency of 70% on both the practice exercises and the quizzes to be able to go on to the next skill (Syllabus). They were then awarded 50 points. "Reading Lab has the most points in the course" (O-1, Ln 25). To summarize, Shelley gave vocabulary skill a total point value of 189 points out of the total 1,000 points for the course or approximately 19 percent. A prominent behaviorist belief is the importance of computer-aided instruction, and Shelley embraced this belief as does the institution which mandates the use of MyReadingLab.

Shelley had vocabulary assignments which were part of the course but did not have points attached to the assignments. For example she accessed two websites in class to work on vocabulary. These were www.vocabulary.com which focused on roots, suffixes and prefixes. "I particularly like this website because it illustrates the concept of word parts" (J 4). The second website she showed the students was www.freerice.com which

required clicking on synonyms of words. “At this website students continue to build their vocabulary by clicking on synonyms of words. They enjoy this site because according to the website they are helping to donate rice to the United Nations’ World Food Program while building their vocabulary” (J4-1; Ln). None of these in-class activities were given points toward the 1,000, so even though vocabulary only counted for about 19 percent of the total number of points in this course, this isn’t representative of the amount of time focused on vocabulary.

Shelley also infused vocabulary while discussing other skills. In a class session focusing on inference, Shelley provided a worksheet “In the Mood” for which students had to match the word from a word bank with the sentence that described a mood. Shelley told the students that she gave them definitions of the vocabulary in the word bank “so you wouldn’t have to look them up” (O4-1; Lns 173-174). When a student mentioned that ‘chagrined’ was not defined, she said that she couldn’t find it in the dictionary and commented “...so process of elimination, you should be able to figure it out. See which ones fit and which ones don’t” (O4-1). In the end, she gave them the answer. The worksheet was done in groups and then Shelley read the sentences and students called out the answers. No discussion was observed about why that particular word was the correct emotion for the statement nor how they found the answers in their groups.

In another example, while discussing learning styles in the fourth class meeting, Shelley used an example of kinesthetic learning by having the students play homonym bingo which Shelley designed based upon the concept of bingo. She read the definition of the word and they had to find the word that she was defining on the game board by spelling it out

(O4-1). Afterwards they completed a small group activity which consisted of identifying homophones (taken from the website www.teacherdesk.org) that were related to fairy tales (J4-1; Lns 13-14). This was infusing vocabulary into a lesson about learning styles. This is another example of Shelley's instructional practice that supports her belief that vocabulary is important for students' improved reading comprehension.

Shelley's statements and instructional practices consistently demonstrate her belief that vocabulary is an important aspect of improved reading comprehension. In addition, they also demonstrate Shelley's belief in a skills' approach to teaching reading. This data aligns with Shelley's skills-based descriptions of developmental students discussed in the previous section. Both are characteristic of a behaviorist view of reading instruction, as are Shelley's views of comprehension and critical thinking addressed in the next section.

Comprehension and Critical Thinking

Shelley believes that comprehension is an important component of improved reading skill. In her description of developmental students, she stated that the lowest category of students lack critical thinking skills "which are necessary to effectively read and comprehend the material" (POI-1; Ln 184). Shelley focused on comprehension throughout the ten week class. However, as with vocabulary, she focused on a skills' approach, again looking at reading from a part to whole philosophy rather than whole to part one.

Shelley planned her class time based on her belief that skills and critical reading are important in helping students become better readers. The first half of the class was dedicated to skill work which involved exercises from the textbook and included, not only vocabulary as discussed in the previous section, but also other skills Shelley felt would improve

comprehension. These included determining main idea, details, organizational patterns, inference, point of view, reading rate and remembering textbook information. There were 50 practices each averaging five to ten exercises, totaling 250 to 500 exercises. For each of these chapters, a numbered sheet was given for the students to write in their answers as they did the homework. "... a lot of times students feel the homework is overwhelming, but by the end of the quarter, they are thanking me for pushing them to do well and encouraging them to think critically" (J-1; Lns 21-23). Typically this comprehension skill work involved reading a paragraph and then answering questions which pertained to the skill set mentioned above. Shelley read the answers to the students or had students respond as to which multiple choice answer was correct. There was little discussion as to why the answer was correct or why a student's answer might be incorrect. This was comparable to what students were doing on their computer generated *MyReadingLab* requirement where the computer gave the correct answers and students had to achieve a 70 percent mastery in order to go on with the skills' work. There was not much difference between their computer skills and their textbook skills' work.

Besides the comprehension skills section of the textbook, there was also a section called, "Reading in the Disciplines." Students completed these readings for homework and wrote answers on an answer sheet. Answers were checked in class but not discussed. For example, in the discipline of history, the reading was *The 'New Era' of the 1920s* (p.388). Sections were broken into "Henry Ford" and the "Airplane" No discussion was observed prior to students reading this text dealing with what students knew about the 1920s or Henry Ford or any discussion of how Henry Ford is linked to Detroit. Other discipline sections

included readings on health discussing cardiorespiratory fitness, on business discussing writing a millionaire book, and two sections on short stories and essays. After each reading there were questions labeled main idea, details, vocabulary, and a think and write section where students had to answer questions based on their opinions. The vocabulary section came last. The text did not review and Shelley did not go over the vocabulary with the students before they read these texts. Again, there was little difference between doing exercises in *MyReadingLab* and the skill exercises in the text. This is another example of out of context skill exercises.

To address comprehension and critical thinking, the second half of each class was dedicated to discussion of the *Tuesdays with Morrie* study guide questions. Shelley believes that it is her responsibility to help college students refine vocabulary and comprehension skills which are an essential component of reading (POI-1; Lns 24-25).

When students leave college they should be critical thinkers, understand the vocabulary appropriate to one's field of study, in addition to possessing the entry level skills that are needed to successfully perform one's job. This may include...improving fluency rates, comprehension strategies, inference and point of view skills...the student should always be willing to discover how he or she can become a better individual (POI-1; Lns 36-38).

Shelley stated that in the post-secondary setting, she utilizes defining and questioning techniques to test for reading comprehension. When asked what types of questioning techniques, she answered, "In-class discussions as well as study questions" (POI-1; Lns 69-70). Students were required to complete study guide questions for the week's reading assignments. "These questions need to be completed on a weekly basis. I will pick one or two students to share their answers with the class" (Syllabus). Shelley stated that she

believes the “answer (to improved reading comprehension)...is through critical reading and critical thinking” (POI-1; Lns 28-29). It is this belief that provides the rationale for her journal and study guide assignments. However, the majority of these questions were low level comprehension questions with the page numbers next to the questions so that students could easily find the answers. Of the 84 questions on the study guide, 79 were low-level comprehension questions, whereby the answer was stated in the text. Five questions asked for interpretation, for example, asking students to interpret a quote such as, “Why does Morrie say, ‘...if you accept that you can die at any time, then you might not be as ambitious as you are?’” (#12 Study Guide). Observations two and three involved *Tuesdays with Morrie* study guide questions.

In the second observation, Shelley gave students a handout on Bloom’s Taxonomy. At this time she explained to the class the difference between literal/ knowledge level questions and interpretive questions. She stated, “Your interpretive levels are the tougher ones. Those are your inference questions. And those of you who did your study questions, what did you notice I did? I threw in some inference questions, right? Those ask for your opinion” (O-2, Lns 494-497). Shelley went on to state that she tends “to ask a lot of evaluative questions and a lot of knowledge questions. You’ll find a lot of instructors/teachers use a lot of knowledge questions, and that just comes as a force of habit because those are simple” (O-2, Lns 549-551). However, Shelley’s statement was not evidenced in classroom observations where most of her questions were knowledge based.

In going over the questions in class, Shelley “picks one or two students for each section to share their answers with the class” (Syllabus). During observation three, Shelley had

two students come up front to report their answers and commented, “Remember there are 15 points for students who come up to read their answers” (O3-1, Ln 85). Shelley stated that she gives students 15 points because “it keeps them doing their homework each week as they do not know who will be the reporters until they come to class” (J-3, Lns 25-27). This aligns with a behaviorist belief of extrinsic motivation. The student went through each question in the section, then back to his/her seat. The next student came up and did the same thing. Since the questions themselves were low-level recall and the answers left no room for interpretation, there was not much to discuss. Shelley did not seem to foster critical thinking in the class discussion aspect of the study guide assignment. However, Shelley created the study guide and commented, “I share with my colleagues the study guide questions that I have developed for both *Tuesdays with Morrie* and *A Place to Stand*. These questions incorporate knowledge, critical thinking, and inference” (POI-1; Lns 211-212). Although there were some inferential questions, the majority were low-level, knowledge based questions. In addition to the study guide questions, Shelley asked 235 knowledge based questions, five application questions, four comprehension questions, and two analysis questions (using definitions from the Bloom’s handout) during the five times I observed her teach. Thus her belief that it is important to ask evaluative questions does not match her actual observed practice during these five sessions. They do, however, align with behaviorist philosophy of improving comprehension through skill building.

To develop comprehension, Shelley utilized journal entries with *Tuesdays with Morrie*. There were ten required, one each week. “After reading the section assigned, you need to summarize it and then reflect upon what you have read” (Syllabus). These were turned

in but not discussed. Shelley might write comments on the reflections. She gave students points for turning them in, but they were not graded as an assessment, only for completing the assignment. This aligns with Shelley's behaviorist belief that points motivate students.

In looking back at Shelley's definition of developmental students, she might have limited the higher order questions because she believes that students "lack the critical thinking skill"(POI-1; Ln186). She might believe that she needs to build the students' understanding and skill set before they can handle higher level questions. Shelley agreed with this analysis.

Newspaper articles were another vehicle Shelley utilized in her classroom practice. Students had to choose a newspaper article (total of three), write a brief summary of the article (two sentences maximum) and then a three to four sentence reflection of the article (four sentences minimum). Students were also required to find three vocabulary words from the article that were unknown to them, define them and use them in a sentence (Assignment handout). In the summary, students had to discuss what they liked and didn't like about the article and what they agreed or disagreed with. Shelley stated in her syllabus, "Tell me! I want to know what you are thinking as you are reading these articles....tell me why you liked this article" (Syllabus). The syllabus stated that she wanted them to tell her what they were thinking as they were reading these articles; however, the assignment handout did not mention this nor was this discussed in class. Having students write about what they were thinking is different from summarizing the articles. These article summaries were not discussed as a whole class but points were given as a homework grade.

Shelley's Beliefs and Practices in Teaching and Learning

I have discussed the themes of vocabulary, comprehension and critical thinking as important aspects of Shelley's beliefs and practices in reading. The next section on Teaching and Learning will focus on Shelley's subcategory themes of teacher-directed instruction, motivation, and group work.

Teacher-Directed Instruction

It is important to note that Shelley considers herself a "facilitator" (J-3; Ln 24), and this is an area in which Shelley's beliefs and practices differed. Behaviorist teaching and learning practice emphasizes the material, and the instructor teaches the skill to the student which is then followed by practice on worksheets and computer programs. The goal is mastery and moving on once this occurs. However, this differs from the role of facilitator which is characteristic of both the cognitive and constructivist theories of teaching and learning. A facilitator guides students through the learning process and provides opportunities for them to participate in "firsthand learning" (Doyle, 2008, p.7). It is not teacher-directed but student directed. Shelley's classroom practices did not mirror that of a facilitator. It might be that she viewed herself as a facilitator in that she carefully crafted lessons to develop the skills she considered important. Shelley's classes were generally very teacher-directed with an emphasis on skills.

The class sessions were divided into skills work and novel discussion. These teacher-directed activities, including the warm-up activities which were projected on the screen, the exercises which were corrected in class, and the study guide questions which were reviewed with a student reading the answers, all suggest a behaviorist view of instruction.

In one example, a student came to the board after being directed to underline a minor detail in a sentence. When she didn't underline all of what would have been the correct answer, Shelley told the student what else to underline (O3-1; Ln 33). This also fits with the behaviorist model that views correction as important.

The group work observed in Shelley's classes was also more teacher-directed than facilitated. For example, there were presentations of a final group project in the ninth class meeting. As I observed the students' presentations, Shelley made elaborate comments throughout them. She did not facilitate class discussion but she commented on what the student said or elaborated on another aspect of the topic. For example, one group had family as its topic. When the student explained her visual, which involved 2-1/2 lines of dialog, Shelley replied with three lines of dialogue:

“So, we would suggest and maybe say that family is everything. And we kind of talked about that when we talked about that section. Everything else can be going to crap, so to speak, but if you have your family, family helps you survive, right?” (O-5; Ln 34-36). The student responded, “right” (Ln 37). Shelley told her to go on to the next part, which the student did with three lines of dialogue. Shelley elaborated and responded with six lines of dialogue. This was the general practice throughout the presentations.

Shelley said that she believes in direct instruction “when exploring new concepts” (POI-1; Ln 143). Cognitive theory posits that direct instruction is reduced as the student becomes more independent. Shelley stated in a journal entry, “I want them (students) to become responsible for their work including the consequences so the focus shifts from me to the student, although the student may not see it this way” (J-1; Lns 71-73). Shelley's

belief statement aligns with cognitive theory; however, her classroom practice aligns more with behaviorism.

In another area of teaching where Shelley's belief statements did not mirror her practices was in her statements regarding learning styles and differentiation. She stated, "Teachers need to be flexible....it helps them to become more receptive to the different learning styles of his or her students" (POI-1; Lns 108-110). She mentioned learning styles specific to Howard Gardner's multiple intelligences. She stated, "Teachers need to know how to modify or adapt current teaching strategies to meet the needs and interests of his or her students" (POI-1; Lns 111-112). Shelley also commented that she believes in differentiating instruction with her reading students and believes that she individualizes this instruction at their levels. "For those (students) who have a hard time comprehending information...I find other ways to explain the information to them which is how I use differentiated instruction techniques" (J-3;Lns 7-8). She also stated in a post-observation interview, "I find for the reading students I'm really good at picking up what they need, but it's really hard" (PTOI-1; 99-100). However, this was not observed in Shelley's practice. Shelley did talk to the students about finding out what their learning styles were and had them complete a survey on learning styles. However, it was not evident that she was addressing the different learning styles of the students in her classroom nor differentiating instruction with them. I observed no evidence of students doing different assignments or adjustments being made in any of the other activities.

The important aspect for Shelley was that the students were completing the assignments and getting the answers correct. However, except for the MyReadingLab exercises, Shelley

did not have students correct incorrect answers to work towards mastery. Shelley's classroom focus was on points and completing assignments, and she valued completed work.

Extrinsic Motivation

Shelley believes that students respond to external variables, which is a characteristic of behaviorist theory. The majority of Shelley's extrinsic motivation techniques were related to points and passing the post-COMPASS test and ultimately passing the class. Two examples of the types of statements she made regarding this belief include: "I chose this assignment because they get 15 points for presenting and it keeps them doing their homework each week" (J1-1; Lns 125-126) and "Students will receive points for completing these activities that go towards their final grade" (POI-1; Lns 126-127). In regard to Pearson Publishing's computer software, MyReadingLab, students were required to complete these exercises, which were similar to the post-test. Shelley believes that this software prepares students for their post-test, which is why it was prioritized with 300 points. For this reading course, Shelley stated that "They have three chances (to pass the course). It is nicknamed three strikes and you are out" (PTOI-1; Lns 167-168). Although this is an institution policy, Shelley reaffirmed it many times in discussing why she had students complete particular activities. She stated, "I am confident that the COMPASS test is good" (PTOI-1; Ln 661).

Although Shelley uses extrinsic motivation, she made a few statements demonstrating a belief in intrinsic motivation as well. She stated, "Students have to like what they are doing in order to have the will to complete it (the task). If they naturally do not like something, they are not going to want to complete the task. This philosophy can play a

role in determining the good readers from the poor readers” (POI-1; Lns 43-46). She also stated, “Environmental factors, personal motivation, and self-confidence can account for why students are good readers”(POI-1; Lns 40-41). In discussing her belief in intrinsic motivation, Shelley relates it to tasks and how to motivate students to complete the task. Although she says she believes in intrinsic motivation, she views it through a behaviorist lens of task completion.

Group Work

Shelley believes in group work to “help them (students) get a sense of community and get to know each other” (O3-1; Lns 59-60). This statement is one which aligns with a constructivist view of teaching and learning. In a pre-observation interview, Shelley stated that she has two ways of grouping students, “For the sake of time...students pair up or triple up with one another at their tables. I am flexible with whom they choose to work with to complete the assignment” (POI-1; Lns 127-129). The main focus seemed to be on the points the students received for completing the group work. Shelley stated, “The students will receive points for completing these activities that go towards their final grade” (POI-1; Lns 126-127). Constructivism involves grouping in a collaborative environment whereby students work together to construct meaning while the instructor acts as a facilitator in this environment. In Shelley’s classroom, the students were given activities to complete.

Shelley had a total of four group activities throughout my observations including the final project at the end of the course, although in a pre-observation interview she stated that the textbook lists several group activities within each chapter (POI-1; Ln 125). She went on to state, “I will choose (a total of) five or six of these small group activities to do with my

students” (POI-1; Lns125-126). However, I did not observe five or six group activities nor did she discuss additional activities in her journal. She did four major group activities in ten class sessions including a scavenger hunt, a main idea activity, an inferencing activity, and a final group project (which was eighty percent individual work and twenty percent group work). The majority of the project was individual work.

On the first night of class, students were given a syllabus scavenger hunt. “For the next seven minutes or so I want you to work with your table mates or alone to find answers on this scavenger hunt” (O1-1; Lns 37 & 38). After some minutes of silence, Shelley went over the answers by calling on students. This tended to be an isolated activity which aligned with a behaviorist philosophy in terms of finding the correct answers.

In the third observation Shelley had students work with the other students at their tables on a main idea activity. They had index cards on which they would write main and minor details in different colors then exchange with another group for them to decipher the major and minor details. Shelley stated that this activity supported her belief that she looks at the “big picture and breaking it apart” (O3-1; Ln 53). Except for the final project, discussed later, this was the most involved group activity I observed in that students were trying to create their own ‘problem’ for another group of students to solve.

In observation four Shelley stated to the class, “I’ll have you decide how you want to split into groups” (O4-1; Ln 488). Shortly after stating this, she told them to use the other students at their tables to form groups which was Shelley’s usual group practice. Shelley gave each group an enlarged facsimile of a completed check and asked them to decide what they believed the checks were for. This was done as an inferencing activity. “...all you are

given is this information and making an inference based on what you have” (O4-1; Lns 596-597). While the groups were completing this assignment, Shelley talked to a student who had missed class the previous week. Later the students reported out to the class what they had inferred their checks were for. Later in this class period, she went back to the same groups for them to complete a worksheet on synonyms as a group (O4-1; Ln 771). The answers to the worksheet were read aloud.

The most involved group activity was a result of the final class project discussed in the previous section. A poster was a compilation of individual student’s work which was then presented to the class during weeks nine and ten. I observed half of these presentations. The project involved a topic assigned by the teacher from a list of topics related to *Tuesdays with Morrie* such as death, aging, and a meaningful life. There was an assignment sheet that listed the five required elements which had to be displayed on a poster board and then presented. This assignment was designed by a non-developmental English teacher at this institution. The group was graded on the poster itself and also group discussion questions. Groups chose who would complete various visual depictions from the following: a written explanation of the topic and how it related to *Tuesdays with Morrie*, quotes with a written summary, a compare and contrast half page paper comparing one of the book’s character’s understanding of the topic with the student’s understanding, and a summary of an article which dealt with the topic. Students completed their assignments on their own and then the group would meet in class during week 8 to put it all together on a poster board. During weeks nine and ten the posters were presented. There was no rule about whether all group members had to go up front to present or one representative of the group so this varied per

group presentation.

The final project provided students a chance to integrate individual viewpoints with the group's view. It was cooperative learning but not collaborative learning as students divided up the duties and then worked on their individual assignments outside of class. They did have to put it all together in a poster representing *Tuesdays with Morrie*. Shelley's statement that she is a facilitator might be based on the fact that she assigned the groups and created the group activity, but this doesn't fit the definition of a facilitator.

Shelley is very task oriented in her instructional practice and focuses on points and getting assignments accomplished. Shelley makes some statements from a cognitivist perspective, but her instructional practices continue to align her with behaviorism.

Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP)

Shelley's TORP survey (IRA, 1985), classified her as teaching from a decoding perspective. She was only one point away from the skills' perspective but forty-six points away from a whole language perspective. This mirrors Shelley's behaviorist beliefs discussed earlier. Of the twenty-eight statements on the survey that Shelley identified as agreeing (1 or 2 was circled) or disagreeing with (4 or 5) was circled), fourteen were behavioral in nature. I did not count those that were marked with a (3) as these were noncommittal. On three of the statements, Shelley seemed to contradict herself. On statement seventeen, she disagreed that "It is not necessary for a child to know the letters of the alphabet in order to learn to read" (TORP, p. 1), which means that she believes it is necessary for readers to know the alphabet. However, on statement twenty-three, Shelley agreed that "Children's initial encounters with print should focus on meaning, not upon

exact graphic representation” (TORP, p. 2). However, in questioning Shelley about this statement, she said that she believed that parents should read to children from infancy and that this would focus on meaning.

In a second example, Shelley agreed with statement twenty that “Controlling text through consistent spelling patterns is a means by which children can best learn to read” (TORP, p. 2). On the other hand, she agreed with statement five, “Materials for early reading should be written in natural language without concern for short, simple words and sentences” (TORP, p. 1). These two belief statements are contrary.

Finally, on statement eight, Shelley agreed that “The use of a glossary or dictionary is necessary in determining the meaning and pronunciation of new words” (TORP, p.1). In contrast, in statement fifteen she agreed that “When coming to a new word that’s unknown, the reader should be encouraged to guess based upon meaning and go on” (TORP, p. 2). Clearly these statements suggest different beliefs about reading.

There are a number of factors which could lead Shelley to contradict herself including not being sure about what she believes, not reading the questions carefully, or thinking too much about the questions and inferring other factors into them. When verbally asked about these questions, she stated that she uses a variety of methods (PTOI-1). The TORP survey results were in line with observational, interview and journal data in that it was aligned with behaviorism.

The Literacy Orientation Survey (LOS)

Lenski, Wham, and Griffey (1998) developed the Literacy Orientation Survey “as a way for teachers to investigate their beliefs about literacy acquisition and to see how

these beliefs relate to their classroom practices” (p.2) Shelley’s survey results classified her as aligning with constructivism. Her belief statements were eclectic (score of 64), her practices were classified as constructivist (score of 67) and overall the survey labeled her as constructivist. (score of 131).

Lenski, Wham & Griffey (1998) describe eclectic as “uses some traditional and some constructivist reading methods; frequently ‘basalizes’ literature selections; combines traditional and constructivist views about student learning” (p. 10). Constructivist practices are described as “uses whole text and integrated instruction; teaches using primarily an inquiry approach; views students as using prior knowledge to construct meaning to learn” (p. 10). According to the LOS score interpretation description, “If your Practice Score is higher than your Beliefs’ Score, you need to think about why you make **the instructional** decisions that you do” (Lenski, Wham & Griffey, 1998, p. 9). This is true in Shelley’s survey results with a practice score of 67 and a beliefs score of 64. For example, on question twenty-three, “I use a variety of grouping patterns to teach reading such as skill groups, interest groups, whole group and individual instruction” (Lenski, Wham & Griffey, 1998, p.9). Shelley marked ‘1’ which means that she always does this. However, through the study, this was not observed. Shelley only grouped according to physical proximity. Statement nineteen, “Reading instruction should be always be delivered to the whole class at the same time” (p. 9) is another example of an inconsistency. Shelley marked a ‘4’ which means she disagrees; however, in the observations, Shelley always instructed the whole class in reading skills. Shelley’s LOS results are somewhat inconsistent. However, they may be consistent in the way Shelley sees herself as a teacher. Shelley made statements

which were constructivist in nature such as her belief statement that she is a facilitator based on her use of group work. Shelley also made belief statements that she utilizes leaning styles in individualizing instruction which was not observed in her classes. The fact that Shelley's practices score on the LOS is higher than her beliefs score is consistent with what I observed in her classroom.

Summary

Table 4. 1 Shelley's Beliefs and Practices

Theory Descriptions	Shelley's Beliefs	Shelley's Practices
Behaviorism: stimulus/response; information processed hierarchically; extrinsic motivation; student as passive learner; meaning in text; immediate feedback; skill mastery; sequential presentation; computer aided instruction; use of dictionary to determine meaning; isolated skills instruction; teacher directed	Stimulus/response Extrinsic motivation Information processed hierarchically Student as passive learner Meaning resides in text Skill mastery Vocabulary essential to comprehension Use of dictionary for word meaning	Worksheets and go over answers as a class Points for activities; pass the post-COMPASS test Moves through skills' lesson hierarchically Few engaging activities One correct answer; low-level questions Exercises; MyReadingLab 70% mastery Large percentage of time spent on vocabulary Activities using dictionaries for unknown words
Cognitivism: stages of cognitive development; learning styles; intrinsic motivation; student as active learner; direct instruction; instructor as facilitator; active learning strategies; skills taught in context;schemata; meaning resides in what reader brings to text;whole to part instruction; whole to part instruction	Stage of cognitive development Learning styles Intrinsic motivation Whole to part Direct instruction	Determine stage of learning Lesson on learning styles Not seen Vocabulary from <i>Tuesdays with Morrie</i> Throughout course
Constructivism: active construction of knowledge; intrinsic motivation; instructor as facilitator; solving problems; active student learner; build on prior experiences; whole to part instruction	Instructor is facilitator	Not seen

Table 4.1 above summarizes Shelley's beliefs, practices and the theories to which they align. Shelley made belief statements about reading which are linked to the behaviorist belief in skill mastery whereby information is processed hierarchically and skills are mastered through reinforcement and practice. This was evidenced in her focus on the skills

involved in passing the post-COMPASS test and her statement that she teaches skills in sequential order such as vocabulary first, then main ideas and details. Inference and critical thinking skills follow. Vocabulary skill seemed to be a primary focus for Shelley and she believes that the other reading skills should be taught after vocabulary. This was evidenced in Shelley's instructional practice. One area that Shelley's stated belief was not observed in her classroom was in the area of critical thinking. As discussed, Shelley believed in a progression of lower-level questions to higher order questions. Observations did not show evidence of many higher order questions. It might be that she did not believe that the students in her class were ready for such questions. Shelley made belief statements that critical thinking is important for successful reading comprehension; however, this was not evidenced in her instructional practices.

Shelley's teaching and learning practices also align with behaviorism which was discussed within the themes of teacher-directed instruction, motivation, and group work. Shelley believes that she is a facilitator in her classroom. However, this was not consistent in her classroom practice where she conducted a more teacher-centered approach. There could be reasons for this such as Shelley's understanding of a facilitator as one who carefully designs lessons and activities. The focus on skills within Shelley's classroom aligns with a behaviorist philosophy of instruction.

Shelley also made belief statements that she differentiates instruction and focuses on students' different learning styles. This was not observed in her practice as the class was very sequential in its order and activities did not seem to offer any differentiation. Skills work was done for the first half of the class session and *Tuesdays with Morrie* was the focus

of the second half. I did not observe nor did Shelley discuss any particular differentiation in which she was engaging. This statement might be in regard to believing in learning styles and having the students complete a survey and textbook section on different learning styles. Shelley believes in the philosophy of learning styles, but she does not incorporate it into her teaching techniques. It is discussed so that students can recognize their own learning styles and accommodate themselves in terms of their studying and learning.

Extrinsic motivation is a characteristic of behaviorism and was evident in Shelley's classroom practice. She placed an emphasis on points and passing the post-COMPASS test as motivation for completing coursework. However, Shelley did make a belief statement regarding the importance of intrinsic motivation for developmental students. She stated that "students have to like what they are doing in order to have the will to complete the task" (POI-1; Ln 43). Shelley's description of intrinsic motivation was also focused on tasks and task completion. Shelley believes that external motivating factors such as points and passing the class should encourage intrinsic motivation.

Shelley believes in group work which is not a characteristic of behaviorism. The group work tended to focus on completing tasks and students seemed to enjoy doing group activities. However, there tended to be minimal class discussion and more teacher talk after the group work, which aligns with Shelley's teacher-directed classroom.

Finally, Shelley's scores on two surveys were opposed to each other. On the TORP, Shelley scored within a decoding perspective and on the LOS she scored within the constructivist perspective. The TORP scores classified her as teaching from a decoding perspective and one point away from a skills' perspective. This seems to fall in line with

observation data that Shelley teaches from a behaviorist perspective; however, it is opposed to some of her statements such she is a facilitator and teaches reading by taking the whole and breaking it into parts. In the classroom, Shelley focused on skills and most of the time, these were done in isolation such as the warm-up activities at the beginning of each class. Shelley also believes strongly in the MyReadingLab skills exercises which prepares them for the post-COMPASS test.

On the LOS, Shelley's answers reflected a constructivist perspective but also fell into a category which states the teacher might want to look at why she engages in the instructional practices that she does. Shelley's statements on the LOS did not match her other belief statements or her practices.

The table below is a summary of Shelley's stated beliefs and observed practices through the study.

Carolyn

Now that I have described the first instructor Shelley, I will describe the second instructor Carolyn within the same three main categories of reading, teaching and learning, and developmental students. Through observations, interviews, journal entries and a comparative data analysis, themes emerged within these three areas. In the category of reading, Carolyn's themes were making connections, comprehension techniques, author's voice and metacognition. In the category of teaching and learning, her themes were the role of the instructor and intrinsic motivation. Shelley categorized developmental students according to the reasons that they are attending college. The central theme in her descriptions of developmental students is motivation.

A Description of Carolyn

Carolyn is a white female in her early '60s. She grew up in a middle class, two-parent household. Carolyn was not as eager to participate in this study as Shelley. She had many questions regarding my rationale for the study as well as what I would be looking for in her classroom. As part of this discussion she reiterated to me that she might not teach the way other instructors teach this class. After two meetings where I assured her that there would be no right or wrong analysis in my study, she agreed to participate. Carolyn was more nervous at first than Shelley, but she seemed to become more relaxed after the first two observations. She was not as talkative as Shelley, so in the interviews, I had to ask more follow-up questions.

Carolyn is a retired public school teacher who taught twenty years in an elementary classroom, grades 2, 3, 4 and 5; fifteen years as a reading consultant; and five years at the college level. Her student teaching experience was at the elementary level. Carolyn stated that her cooperating teacher taught reading in small reading groups within the classroom. "The reading seemed normal and not innovative for the time that I student taught. It was, I think, the expected norm" (POI-2; Lns 14-15). When asked if she had any training in teaching reading in her pre-service education, she said that she took a 'Reading for the Elementary Teacher' class with Dr. Gerald Duffy (POI-2; Lns 10-11).

For the last five years, Carolyn has taught developmental reading and developmental math to adults at this institution. She says that she follows the reading curriculum outlined by this institution. The assigned novel for the quarter I observed her class was also *Tuesdays with Morrie* by Mitch Albom.

Carolyn's Beliefs and Instructional Practices

Carolyn's belief statements and classroom practices can be classified within the cognitivist and constructivist theoretical frameworks. The Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP) survey, however, categorized her as teaching from a skills' perspective, but the Literacy Orientation Survey (LOS) classified her as a constructivist in her literacy orientation. Through classroom observational data, it is clear that Carolyn teaches from both a cognitivist and constructivist perspective.

Description of Developmental Reading Students

Carolyn describes developmental reading students by dividing them into three categories as did Shelley. Her main points in each category focused on the reasons these students are attending college and their motivation to be in college.

"Students in this course are very different from one another"(POI-2; Ln 89), stated Carolyn. She went on to explain that she groups these students into three categories. The first category is *newbie* (fresh from high school) who are usually mad that they tested into this class. "This student has either been thrust into class by their parents or a government group that has told them they have to get an education to be supported by funding" (POI-2; Lns 90-91). The second category includes the same age group but these students have "decided themselves that they want to go to school to better educate themselves and prepare for the outside world" (POI-2; Lns 92-93). Carolyn calls a third group *older learners*. "Persons in this group are re-entering the workforce or are trying to improve their skills to get a job" (POI-2). From conversations Carolyn has had with students, "...for the most part they (developmental reading students) have not had college educated role models or

families that have the expectations of completing college” (POI-2; Lns 94-95). She went on to state that the “Older Learners and self-motivated students have the best chance of completing their degree and fulfilling their aspirations” (POI-2; Lns 96-97).

Carolyn’s belief statements regarding developmental students reflect a belief that intrinsic motivation is a strong factor in developmental students’ success. This is in line with a cognitive and a constructivist theoretical perspective.

Carolyn’s Beliefs and Instructional Practices in Reading

Through comparative data analysis, themes emerged in regard to Carolyn’s beliefs and practices about reading: making connections, comprehension techniques, the author’s voice and metacognition. Data will show that Carolyn’s beliefs fall in line with cognitivism and constructivism; but her classroom practices might be classified as eclectic, as they fall within cognitive and constructivist theoretical frameworks while also displaying a characteristic of behaviorism.

Making Connections

A major theme throughout the observations with Carolyn was her belief in prior knowledge, schemata and the importance of students making connections to their reading. This was reflected in her definition of reading comprehension as “the ability to read a passage, use what the reader knows about the topic and apply the known to the unknown to formulate a new way of thinking or understanding” (POI-2; Lns 35-37). This belief was mirrored in her classroom practices.

Carolyn’s belief in the need for readers to make connections to their reading aligns with her whole language beliefs and both cognitive and constructivist theories. Both theories

emphasize the important role that schemata and prior knowledge play in successful reading skills. I will discuss Carolyn's belief statements and classroom practices surrounding the role of making connections while reading.

Throughout the observations, Carolyn referred to students' background knowledge and the importance of making connections twelve times. In addition, she demonstrated or discussed the connections she, as a reader, made to a passage or concept eleven times throughout the observations. The importance Carolyn places on background knowledge and the importance of readers making connections is a central theme in her belief framework.

Before the observations started, Carolyn stated in an interview, "A good reader can apply what they read to new and different situations and relate them to their experiences (POI-2; Lns 30-31). In class, she told her students, "Reading is a brain science. And what we know about reading is that if we read something that makes sense to us, and that we can connect to, it will make more sense" (O2A-2; Lns 227-228). Carolyn also stated, "If we read something that we connect to, the more we remember. If we read something that we don't know a lot about, it makes it harder...we have to be able to connect to what we know" (O1B-2; Lns 38-42). To reinforce this concept, after she made these last statements to the class, she showed a cartoon on the overhead of a boy sitting in a children's race car reading a book about automobile racing. She then went on to comment that the boy was "Bringing new information to his schema, or what he already knows" (O2B-2; Lns 48-49). In addition, Carolyn gave a personal example describing how her husband told her where the oil for her car needed to go by telling her that it was just like adding washer fluid but in a different place (O2B-2; Lns 52-55). She told the students that this connection helped her

understand her husband's explanation.

To further demonstrate her belief in making connections while reading, Carolyn referenced an activity to the class that they observed in MyReadingLab (MRL) at the beginning of class which compared compound words to fractions. She told the class that we “use what we know (fractions) to figure out what we don't know (compound words)” (O2B-2; Lns 96-98). “You might not have thought about it in quite that way” (O2A-2; Lns 235). In another example, before they read an article from the textbook on Mardi Gras, she asked the class what they knew about Mardi Gras. Students called out “parade,” “topless women,” “takes place in the summer,” “in New Orleans,” “big party” (O2B-2; Lns 127-129). After the reading she asked them if what they said about Mardi Gras was correct. What did they learn? Students commented on some of the items that were wrong such as when Mardi Gras takes place. After one of the student's comments, Carolyn replied,

So you were adding to something you already knew. She (the student) thought she knew something and she learned it was something else. And that's what good readers do. They are always thinking, and they are either able to confirm what they know or find out something new (O2A-2; Lns 606-609).

In another example during observation 3A, Carolyn taught inferencing and focused a great deal on prior knowledge and what the reader brings to the page. She emphasized throughout the lesson “...the author expects us, the readers, to bring to the page some information...some background information. They just assume that we know something about the world and that we have some background to bring to the page” (O3A-2; Lns 168-171).

In another example during the inferencing lesson, Carolyn related to students that after

reading a political ad, which called Sarah Palin the ‘grizzly mom’ who came into contact with a grizzly bear, “I had to bring something to the page...I had to know that she came from Alaska, that she has kind of a rough edge to her, and that she sometimes is aggressive” (O3A-1; Lns 185-190).

As part of her lessons, Carolyn used the textbook and handouts which included visuals such as cartoons and advertisements. She modeled for students what she thought as she read some of the passages in the practice exercises. For example, in discussing a piece on the Emancipation Proclamation, she said “That surprised me too. I thought the Emancipation Proclamation freed all the slaves, but now I learn from this that he (Lincoln) allowed it to continue in four of the border states” (O3A-2; Lns 564-567).

In another class session when discussing previewing strategies, making connections was also emphasized. Carolyn stated, “...looking at the title, the introductory material, the subheadings, you’ll find out in the blue box what the topic is and you might want to think, what do I already know about this topic? Just like the little boy with the race car (referring to previous cartoon on overhead). What do I think I’m going to learn in this book?” (O2A-2; Lns527-531). Carolyn related examples like this throughout the observations.

Carolyn acknowledged that she felt frustrated at times that students in the class had such a limited background knowledge. She stated “The enhancement of background is a challenge” (J2-2; Ln 16). In a post interview discussion of the students’ lack of background knowledge, she said, “This was a hindrance” (PTOI-2; Ln 125). Students had very limited knowledge, if any, of Mardi Gras, Winston Churchill or Calamity Jane, to name a few. Carolyn talked about these topics before the readings but students still had trouble. It was

obvious that students' lack of prior knowledge affected their understanding of the texts. The majority of Carolyn's students were African Americans, a total of ten, with one middle eastern male, and three white students. It was difficult for Carolyn to provide so much needed background knowledge for such short pieces of text.

Carolyn felt frustrated with the textbook for the course because students did not have the background knowledge to aid in comprehending many of the passages. "The textbook is difficult for most of the students so I need to either help them read the text or supply easier material that they can read in order to scaffold the students and build strategies" (PTOI-2; Lns 79-81). Carolyn brought in handouts for the students which gave them an easier context from which to practice their reading strategies. She stated, "I would also like to see a textbook that is easily understandable for the students and has a wealth of interesting stories and topics for the students to read" (PTOI-2; Lns 82-83).

Carolyn believes in the important role that background knowledge plays in reading comprehension and that good readers make connections. This was mirrored in her classroom practices as she asked students what they already knew about passages and topics. She made statements, showed cartoons and demonstrated through modeling her own personal connections as a reader, the importance of making connections. Carolyn addressed background knowledge, schemata, and making connections twenty-two times in the observations. Carolyn's beliefs and practices are characteristic of both cognitive and constructivist theories.

Comprehension Techniques

In teaching reading comprehension, Carolyn stated that she emphasizes strategies that

can aid students in their reading comprehension in a variety of reading situations. In an interview she stated, “I believe I teach from a whole language perspective” (POI-2; Ln 124). However, this was not always mirrored in her classroom practices when she used the textbook and the exercises to teach comprehension.

Carolyn told the students on the first day of class, “Our goal is to bring up our strategies and our reading skills to a college level so that we can be successful in our other classes” (O1-2; Ln 156). The textbook was used eighteen times through the course of the observations and played a large role in instruction of the comprehension strategies of vocabulary, main idea, details, tone, previewing, and inference. Carolyn used handouts to supplement the text in these areas five times, and addressed these topics outside of the textbook eight times. In each observation, one of these techniques was discussed using the textbook. The main focus was on having students read passages and complete exercises. These were then discussed in class. Sometimes Carolyn had the students complete an activity she created, and at times Carolyn allowed students to work with a partner to complete the textbook activities.

Vocabulary was emphasized the most within the area of comprehension techniques and was discussed or mentioned thirteen times throughout the observations. Carolyn believes that vocabulary is important and she enjoys teaching it. She stated in her journal, “I love teaching vocabulary” (J1-2; Ln 1). Carolyn believes the best way to teach vocabulary is in context and stated, “I almost never give a list of words to learn” (PTI-2; Lns 144-145). However, teaching vocabulary in context was not always observed.

For the majority of the lessons on vocabulary, Carolyn used the textbook and taught

Chapter Three: Vocabulary in the second and third observations. This involved *How Do You Learn New Words? What Clues Help You Understand the Meanings of New Words? What Resources Can Help You With Words? and What are Analogies?* (Smith, 2007, p. 30). The textbook has explanations of concepts and then practice exercises. For example in the section on using context clues, it discusses how words can be “defined directly in the sentences” (p. 32) and then has practice exercises which included sentences with the vocabulary word in bold and four multiple choice answers for the “meaning closest to that of the boldfaced word” (p. 33). Carolyn went through the entire chapter having students do the practice exercises. Sometimes they would complete them with a partner.

Carolyn did interrupt the textbook lessons with a group activity on word parts. Carolyn stated in an interview that she “likes to use prefixes, roots, and suffixes to show students how to learn many words quickly” (PTI-2; Lns 143-144). This was observed in her classroom during the second observation. Each team was given a prefix and they had to look up the definition of that prefix and then write out words from the dictionary with that prefix. These were written on presentation paper and stuck up on the wall around the room. Each team then went through their lists with the class and Carolyn discussed the prefixes (O2A-2; Lns 57-58). This activity was followed up with a handout “The 14 Words that Make All the Difference” (Ln 59) which involved the fourteen most powerful roots in the English language. The handout included an activity that students could do with a partner which involved drawing a line to form words from three different columns comprised of root words, prefixes and suffixes. After the handout, Carolyn asked students to complete additional exercises in the text. Carolyn said, “Finish page 47 with a teammate as two

heads are better than one” (O2A-2; Lns 73-74).

Vocabulary played a strong role in Carolyn’s reading class and this emphasis supports her belief that vocabulary is an important comprehension strategy. However, Carolyn’s statement that she teaches it in context was only observed when discussing the *Tuesdays with Morrie* packet which was due each Tuesday. Part of this packet included defining vocabulary words that Carolyn had taken out of each reading section with their respective page numbers next to the word. Students had to go to that section of the memoir and decide the definition of each word. For example, in class she discussed the word aphorism. “What about the aphorisms? That was one of your vocabulary words. What is an aphorism?” (O2B-2; Lns 90). Carolyn went on to read a paragraph in *Tuesdays with Morrie* with aphorisms as examples and students guessed what the word meant by the context of this paragraph (O2B-2; Lns 95-106). Except for the *Tuesdays with Morrie*’s vocabulary words, the majority of vocabulary was taught as isolated skills activities which mirror a behaviorist philosophy rather than Carolyn’s stated belief that she teaches from a whole language perspective characteristic of cognitive and constructivist theories.

Another comprehension technique Carolyn emphasized in class was main idea and supporting details. She taught main idea in the second week of the course using the textbook and a group exercise. Main idea was discussed four times using the textbook and three times outside of the text and was never discussed using additional handouts except to show students the real text in the group exercise described below.

Carolyn taught *Chapter Four: Main Idea* utilizing the same format as she taught the vocabulary focusing on textbook explanations and then practice exercises. Concepts

discussed included What is a Main Idea? What is a Topic? What is a Detail? And What are the Strategies for Stating Main Ideas? (p. 70) The practice exercises included multiple choice answers such as “Circle the number of the sentence that best expresses the general subject. Then circle the phrase that best describes the subject of the sentences” (p. 76). In other practice exercises in the text, students had to find the main ideas and supporting details of sample paragraphs.

Carolyn also had the students complete a main idea/supporting details group activity in which they were given a paragraph that had been typed and cut apart using a paper strip for each sentence. The students were asked, in groups, to reassemble the paragraph and to identify the main idea. According to Carolyn, “This has several purposes depending on the paragraph—it could be to show that the main idea could be anywhere or that the paragraph has to be written in a specific order depending on the transition words the author uses” (PTO-2; Lns 45-51). Once groups were finished, they discussed the order of their details and the main idea sentences they created. Then Carolyn handed out the original paragraph she took from a novel *She’s Come Undone* by Wally Lamb so that students could compare their answers to what the author had written. Carolyn stated, “He (Wally Lamb) put the main idea at the end. Could he have put it somewhere else?” Discussion ensued and Carolyn stated, “Authors try to put main ideas up front to make it easier to see the main idea” (O2B-2; Lns 148-149).

In the pre-observation interview, Carolyn said that students are given the opportunity to write a paragraph using a main idea and supporting details” (PI-2; Lns 45-51) at the end of this lesson. However, this was inconsistent with my observation as students did

not write their own paragraphs. After the discussion of Lamb's paragraph, Carolyn stated, "Okay back to the book" (O2B-2; Lns 216-217). In a later interview, I asked Carolyn why she went back to the textbook exercises and she stated, "They needed additional practice" (O2A-2; Lns 102-103). She felt that this particular class was not ready to write their own paragraphs. This was a cognitive/constructivist activity. Teachers who are constructivists, feel free to change their plans based on students' needs in the classroom. Carolyn did this citing that students weren't ready to move on and needed additional practice.

Other comprehension techniques were taught in similar fashion to vocabulary and main idea discussed above. Tone was discussed using the text and a power point explanation of tone (O4A-2). Carolyn asked students to say words or sentences in various tones of voices that were listed in the power point.

Inferencing was discussed using the text, a handout (exercises and three cartoons) and a group activity where students had to exchange key rings and infer something about the owner. The class then discussed what they had inferred such as "He owns a Chrysler Jeep" and "You are a mom because you shop at certain stores" (O3B-2; Lns117-122). Additionally, fix-up strategies, questioning, and previewing were briefly discussed mainly using the textbook.

Tuesdays with Morrie itself was not discussed much and the journal assignment due each Tuesday was the bulk of the coursework. Carolyn presented a journal handout which included a model for students to use. This journal involved writing a summary of the reading; writing out a purpose setting question that "you hope will be answered in the next section" (Journal Model Handout); defining vocabulary words which are listed with their

respective page numbers; writing at least four quotes from the book with a reaction; and answering focus questions. In fact, Carolyn commented to me that she doesn't spend too much time on *Tuesdays with Morrie* because there is so much to do in this course. On the other hand, she also commented in her journal on having students react and reflect on the conversations between Morrie and Mitch in the memoir, "Some students 'get it' and others do not. But I do see growth among readers in the classroom" (J1-2; Ln 10). Not many of the reading strategies taught in the course were connected to the memoir even though Carolyn stated that she sees some growth in reading from the limited number of journal activities. She felt that she didn't have time to focus on the novel. The institution had only recently added the novels to the curriculum and Carolyn had not been teaching using them before this year.

Carolyn also made some statements that were behaviorist in nature related to isolated skills' instruction. These were in regard to the COMPASS post test required to pass the course. For example, "...the student that works diligently on the activities on MyReadingLab usually does well on the COMPASS test" (PTOI-2; Lns 74-75). The MyReadingLab skills' exercises were aligned with the COMPASS test by Pearson Publishing. This requirement was mandated by the institution, but Carolyn's statement does seem to mean that she agrees that it is working. However, it is unclear whether Carolyn would have included this type of focus on isolated skills' work in her curriculum if the institution had not mandated it.

The Author's Voice and Metacognition

Carolyn believes that the author has an important part to play in reading comprehension; and in practice, she emphasized to the students that they need to attend to the author's

voice. This was discussed seven times throughout the observations and Carolyn divided instruction between handouts and general discussion. This reflected her whole language belief.

Carolyn focused on teaching students to “attend to the voice of the text” (O4A-2; Ln 62). She asked students “What does it mean to attend to the voice of the text?” (O4A-2; Ln 61-63). She went on to tell students that when they are reading, they need to attend to the voices in the article “not only with your eyes, but also your listening ear” (O4A-2; Lns 66-68). Students were directed to read an article and listen to “voices you hear and then write it down” (O4A-2; Ln 69-70). Carolyn then had the students discuss what they heard in the story with a partner. She also referenced the author many times when discussing *Tuesdays with Morrie* or passages in the text in order to show students that the author is a partner with the reader. In a lesson on tone, Carolyn also discussed voice, “We are going to talk about tone, how we have to change the voice in our mind’s eye” (O4A-2; Ln 80-82).

Carolyn made statements such as “the author will help you out” (O4A-2; Ln 58), She also made the statements, “Reading is a conversation with the author” (O1A-2; Ln 36). and “As a reader, the author wants us to hear and see things” (O4A-2; Ln 75-76). Carolyn also told the class, “...if you are reading along and don’t understand something, then a good reader goes back and asks a question of the writer to get some clarification” (O1B-2; Lns 441-444). The example described below in discussing metacognition is also a good example of this.

The second technique Carolyn believed was important was metacognition. She wanted to have students understand the meaning of metacognition and understand how their ability

to become better readers involved their monitoring their own reading. She mentioned in her pre-observation interview that she believes that good readers have fix-up strategies that poor readers do not. She stated to the class, “Good readers know what they know and what they don’t know, and they know what they have to learn and they know how to fix it. If they are reading along and they don’t know something or something stops making sense, they know how to fix it” (O2A-2; Lns 671-674). She went on to talk about how the first thing they do is stop reading and go back to reread. They might also verbalize the confusing part “...where you say, I understood it up to this point, but then I got confused” (O2A-2; Lns 690-692).

After discussing metacognition in the second observation, Carolyn asked students about correction strategies. “What do you do if you’re reading along and all of a sudden you figure out you don’t understand a word you just read? What do you do?” (O2A-2; Lns 696-698). Students answered, “Go back...take notes...highlight it” (O2A-2; Lns 699-704). Carolyn told them that these were good responses and to also go back and reread or go on and see if it gets clearer.

Carolyn shared an example of her own when she was reading *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*.

I got fifty pages into it, and I realized that I didn’t know what I was reading. I was very confused. And I am a good reader. I just had no idea what was going on. I had to come up with a fix-up strategy. What I came to realize was there were so many characters in this book that I couldn’t keep them straight. So I decided I had to read it again, and I had to take notes. So I literally took out a pad of paper and started writing (O2A-2; Lns 737-742).

In another example when explaining the journal assignment for *Tuesdays with Morrie*,

Carolyn asked students to “show me your thinking” (O3A-2; Ln 43). Carolyn made belief statements and taught students about the importance of attending to the voice of the author and utilizing metacognition. Both of these concepts align with cognitivist and constructivist theories.

Carolyn’s Beliefs and Practices in Teaching and Learning

Role of the Instructor

The fourth theme that emerged from observations, interviews and journal entries was related to teaching and learning and the role of the instructor. Carolyn’s main form of delivery of the course material was through teacher presentation to the whole class. This mirrored her statement, “I teach whole group at the college level. I do this because I believe that I cannot work individually in this setting, and I feel that this is the most productive use of my time in a ten-week format” (POI-2; Lns 66-68). She went on to state that she demonstrates the strategies and then has them practice these strategies. This exemplifies a cognitive/constructivist theoretical framework.

I try to gauge what will work and what will not. Sometimes the personality of the group dictates what strategies I will use. A teacher can help a poor reader become a better reader by modeling and demonstrating the strategies that good readers use. It is up to the student to apply and try these strategies (POI-2; Lns 32-34).

Cognitive theory posits that the teacher’s role in direct instruction and modeling is reduced as students become more independent. Carolyn exemplifies this in her belief statements although not always in her practice. Students were not becoming more independent as Carolyn did not feel their skills were strong enough. Once example was already discussed when Carolyn decided not to give the class a paragraph to write on main

idea because she did not feel they were ready to write their own paragraphs (O2A-2; Lns 102-193).

There was limited group work in Carolyn's classroom which goes against her cognitive/constructivist beliefs.. Any that took place was handled more as an activity with a partner than collaborative learning. For example in the observations there were five instances of partner work and two of group work. These activities gave students time with each other to talk about what they were learning. For example, when Carolyn had the students working with prefixes and suffixes, having groups write on chart paper then putting them up around the room, they seemed very engaged in the activity.

Carolyn believes that students need to learn to read critically and they "need strategies to help them with comprehension" (POI-2; Lns 68-70). She believes that the best way to teach these students is through demonstrating the strategies to the whole class. This was consistent with what was observed in her classes and what was discussed in the previous paragraph. As she was presenting material, Carolyn was modeling the strategies and then having them practice using the text or a handout. Given that there was limited participation by students, the class became more teacher-directed.

In another area where observations supported that the class was teacher-directed was in the area of questioning. Carolyn made belief statements that her role as an instructor is to question students as to how they know they are right when answering a question. "I ask them why they think that. What lets you know that you are right? How do you know you are right?" (POI-2; Ln 44). She went on to state that because these students haven't always been successful, she wants to make them feel they are meeting success in this class. At this level

(college developmental), students have not always met success, so I try to tell them they are right, but then ask, how do you know you are right? She stated that she classifies a good response from a student as one that responds to the question and elaborates or connects to another source such as a book or a movie. A poor response would be one that would be off topic without a connection (POI-2; Lns 51-52). Carolyn's statement often did not mirror what was observed in her classroom instruction. I did not observe her ask students "how do you know you are right?" and only occasionally ask them "Why do you think that?" Most of the time Carolyn acknowledged the answer with an "okay" and went on to the next question. For example, Carolyn asked the class to write an answer to the question "What is reading?" Students were then partnered with a person seated next to them to discuss their answers and then have whole class discussion. "There is really no wrong answer," she stated a number of times in trying to get students to participate. When a student gave an answer, she would repeat it and say "okay," then ask for another student to respond. For example, one student answered the question, what is reading by saying, "Words and images to form a picture in your mind," and went on to give an example of a picture of Superman which let her know right away what the story was about. Carolyn responded, "Okay. So we have images with messages." Then went on to ask, "Who else? There's no wrong answer" (O1A-2; Lns 400-406). It seemed that this idea of image and reading could have been elaborated on further by asking some follow-up questions. However, often there were no students answering her questions, so she limited the questions that she asked.

The questioning seemed to be literal and few inferential questions were asked of students. Carolyn believes in critical thinking and higher level thinking as evidenced in her

statement, "...they (students) need to learn to read critically" (POI-2; Ln 69). However, the questions posed to students tended to be those that asked for literal answers such as "What were two questions Morrie asked himself?" (O2B-2; Lns 35-36).

At other times, a student would answer a question and then Carolyn would elaborate on it herself instead of asking the student or other students whether they could add more to the answer or the discussion. For example, in discussing a reading in the textbook, a student said that the person in the article, "...took a big jump" (O3A-2; Ln 470).

Carolyn responded, "It says in the third paragraph that she took a big jump and bought her first radio station. What does that mean?" The same student responded with, "She took a risk" (O3A-2; Ln 473). Carolyn said, "Right, I think so. I think that means that she took a risk. And she bought that first radio station with little or no money...." (O3A-2; Lns 474-477).

Carolyn then went on speaking for 25 lines of dialogue and did not ask additional questions of the class. This was a pattern throughout the observations where Carolyn tended to dominate the dialogue. However, this particular class did not participate much in discussion, and Carolyn made the comment after an observation that only about two students answer on a regular basis. In a later journal entry, Carolyn commented, "The students are a little more vocal (at this stage of the quarter), but I wish they were more vocal. I think they are reticent because most have not had a positive educational experience. They are afraid therefore to be wrong. I confirm most answers even if they are wrong" (J-2; Lns1-3). The lack of participation in Carolyn's class became a key component in the classroom learning environment.

Carolyn's belief that critical thinking is important, as is a questioning technique which

facilitates students elaborating on their answers and thinking about how they came up with the answer, might be hampered by the reluctance of these students to participate and resulted in a teacher-directed classroom. Carolyn commented in a journal entry that “It is a continual challenge to find material that the students can and will read....” (J-2; Lns 13-16). She stated, “I read the text to the students....It is because I do not believe that the text is at a level that most of the students can understand” (J-2; Lns 8-12). Carolyn’s dislike of the textbook was also discussed earlier in the vocabulary section. The textbook was an ongoing frustration for Carolyn. She stated that she plans to be part of the next system subcommittee reviewing textbooks for this course.

Carolyn believes that the institution’s new rule that students can retake the COMPASS test after some documented practice, “has given the Developmental Education department a new challenge. We are left with many more students with marginal skills and greater deficits. This is the first term that we have seen this. I think that this is why the students appear so needy and low” (J-2; Lns 17-20). Given the recent institution policy that students can retake the COMPASS entrance test, it resulted in students with lower skills than in the past. This was Carolyn’s first time teaching reading since this change.

Carolyn’s belief that she must confirm students’ answers even if they are wrong was observed and until she explained why she did this, it was puzzling. Also Carolyn’s belief that she uses a questioning technique to teach reading, was not observed to the extent that Carolyn stated in her interviews that she believes it should be. It seemed that the lack of student participation and engagement forced Carolyn into a more teacher-directed focus in the classroom.

Intrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic motivation is a characteristic of cognitivism and constructivism. Carolyn made statements regarding her belief in intrinsic motivation. She stated, “College developmental students have not always met success, so I try to tell them they are right” (POI-2; Ln 46). She believes in setting a purpose for reading, so that students are in charge of their own comprehension and have their own motivation for reading. Facilitating motivation in developmental students can be difficult, and Carolyn often discussed some external motivating strategies; but she was never sure she wanted to implement them. For example, the lateness of students arriving to class was an ongoing issue. Carolyn stated in her journal, “I do not know what to do about the late comers” (J2-2; Ln19). She went on to state, “I could give short quizzes at ten minutes past the hour. But then those that come in at fifteen after would still be able to take the quiz. I encourage them to come on time, since they miss my explanation” (J2-2; Lns 20-22). This type of thought process continued through out the observations. Carolyn was trying to find ways to help the students become intrinsically motivated instead of resorting to external motivation such as quizzes and losing points. At eight of the observations, Carolyn kept a student or two after class to discuss these behaviors. At the end of the second journal, Carolyn wrote, “I will have to work on this for the good of those students that come on time” (J2-2; Ln 24). Carolyn was often very frustrated that students seemed to lack an internal motivation to do well.

In Carolyn’s description of developmental students discussed earlier, her categories were focused on their motivations for being in college. Carolyn’s opinions, based on her teaching experience with developmental students, were that students who do well and often

succeed in the class and in college were those who were intrinsically motivated. Those who were in college for other reasons were often not successful. Carolyn's strong belief that intrinsic motivation is a factor in students' success was evidenced throughout the observations including Carolyn's frustration that many of her students were not intrinsically motivated. Yet Carolyn struggled with including extrinsic motivations such as quizzes at the beginning of class to get students there on time. Ultimately she did not resort to these strategies and instead kept a number of students after class to discuss issues with them individually, such as their tardiness or their leaving class to answer their cell phones.

Carolyn's belief statements regarding making connections; comprehension strategies; the author's voice and metacognition in the areas of reading and the role of the instructor; and intrinsic motivation in the area of teaching and learning reflect her whole language perspective within cognitivist and constructivist theories. Her instructional practice in making connections, the author's voice and metacognition mirror her belief statements. Her practice in the other areas, however, did not always mirror her stated beliefs. Carolyn did not teach comprehension strategies in context. She utilized the textbooks and skills' handouts for most strategies including vocabulary, main idea, tone, and inferencing.

Carolyn's teacher-centered classroom did not mirror the facilitator role characteristic of cognitive and constructivist theories. Carolyn taught the skills and then had students practice these skills. She believes, however, that the low skill levels of the students preclude her from reducing her instructor role as cognitivist theory posits. Carolyn also feels that the difficulty of the textbook hampers the student's ability to learn independently. As a result, when Carolyn's classroom instruction consisted of isolated skills exercises from the

textbook and handouts rather than in-context work, it mirrored a behaviorist instructional practice and was in contrast to her stated whole language beliefs.

Now that I have discussed themes within Carolyn's observations, interviews, and journal entries, it is important to look at the two surveys, the Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP) and the Literacy Orientation Survey (LOS), given before the observations began.

The Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP)

In the TORP survey, Carolyn's results reflected a skills' perspective in teaching reading. The range for this area was 66-110. Carolyn scored 110, so she was at the cut-off for the skills' perspective category bordering the whole language perspective. On the survey, the choices are one through five with one representing strong agreement and five representing strong disagreement. It might have been her answers to two questions with a noncommittal three that kept her in the skills' perspective category. For example, she marked statement eighteen which read, "Flashcard drill with sight words is an unnecessary form of practice in reading instruction" (TORP, p. 2) with a three. This is surprising as Carolyn never stated a belief in flashcard drill in reading instruction, nor displayed any classroom instruction with flashcards; so marking with a noncommittal three instead of a one or two might have kept her in the skills' perspective.

The second statement Carolyn marked with a three was number twenty-eight which read, "Some problems in reading are caused by readers dropping the inflectional endings from words (e.g. jumps, jumped)" (TORP, p. 2). This might be inconsistent with some of the other statements for which Carolyn strongly agreed such as number fifteen which read,

“When coming to a word that’s unknown, the reader should be encouraged to guess based upon meaning and go on” (TORP, p. 2). These two statements marked as a noncommittal three might also have kept Carolyn in the skills’ perspective category.

There were also some inconsistencies in the survey responses compared to classroom practice. In statement three, “Dividing words into syllables according to rules is a helpful instructional practice for reading new words” Carolyn marked strongly disagree. Also in statement six, “When children do not know a word, they should be instructed to sound out its parts” (TORP, p. 1) Carolyn disagreed. However, in class she had students work with prefixes and suffixes telling them that this will aid them in learning new words as they read.

Another discrepancy involved statement twenty-one “Formal instruction in reading is necessary to insure the adequate development of all skills used in reading” (TORP, p. 2), for which Carolyn strongly disagreed. However, formal instruction was evidenced in the observations. This might be due to the focus on the textbook and the institution’s curriculum.

As explained earlier, Carolyn stated that she teaches from a whole language perspective; but as evidenced in her instruction, she doesn’t always maintain a whole language approach. On the TORP survey, which reflects a theoretical orientation, Carolyn aligns with a skills perspective but only one point away from a whole language perspective. It is likely that Carolyn’s marking of a three on two items put her in the skills’ perspective category. This is opposed to Carolyn’s belief that she teaches from a whole language perspective. However, in her instructional practices, observational evidence shows skills and exercise work through Carolyn’s use of the textbook and the post-COMPASS test preparation.

Literacy Orientation Survey (LOS)

The LOS has thirty statements and respondents mark a range of 1 (disagree or never) through 5 (strongly agree or always). Carolyn's results from the LOS, with a score of 132, classified her within the range of a constructivist perspective (126-145) but on the low end of that range. It is interesting that on the LOS, Carolyn's practices' score (71) classified her as constructivist in her instructional practices and was higher than her beliefs' score (61) which classified her as having beliefs similar to an eclectic teacher. As stated earlier, according to the interpretation of the LOS score, "If your Practice Score is higher than your Beliefs Score, you need to think about why you make **the instructional** decisions that you do" (Lenski, Wham & Griffey, 1998, p. 10).

These scores are consistent with observational data which found that Carolyn's stated beliefs were not always consistent with her instructional practices. Carolyn's belief statements in her interviews and journal entries, seemed to classify her as having a cognitivist and constructivist perspective. This might be consistent with Carolyn's LOS classification as being eclectic in her beliefs. However, her LOS practices' score classification as a constructivist teacher was not always demonstrated in her instructional practices as Carolyn at times mirrored a behaviorist approach.

Carolyn strongly agreed with statement five, "Students should be treated as individual learners rather than as a group" (p.9). As evidenced in the observations, Carolyn taught the class as a whole group even stating that she does this at the college level because "I believe that I cannot work individually in this setting, and I feel that this is the most productive use of my time in a ten-week format" (POI-2; Lns 66-68). This is an instance where Carolyn's

statement on the LOS does not mirror her instructional practice in this course. However in statement nineteen, “Reading instruction should always be delivered to the whole class at the same time” (p. 10), Carolyn marked a four which demonstrates agreement. This does not match with her previous disagreement of statement five discussed above although it does mirror her classroom practice in teaching the whole class.

In addition to the two statements above, six of the thirty statements of literacy orientation for which Carolyn agreed were not evidenced in the observations (statements 4, 6, 11, 15, 23 and 24). Three of these (11, 15, and 24) referred to the importance of writing but most of the students in the developmental reading class also were placed into the developmental writing class. I believe this might be the reason that writing was not observed even though Carolyn stated at least once that she had students write paragraphs involving main idea and supporting details discussions. Two of the statements (4 and 6) referred to the importance of individual attention and time for self-directed reading. Neither of these were evidenced in the observations. Statement 23 for which Carolyn stated ‘always’ involved using a variety of grouping patterns. This was not observed in Carolyn’s practices as the two group activities and partnering activities involved grouping by the physical proximity of students.

Summary

Table 4.2 Carolyn's Beliefs and Practices

Theory Descriptions	Carolyn's Beliefs	Carolyn's Practices
<u>Behaviorism</u> : stimulus/response; information processed hierarchically; extrinsic motivation; student as passive learner; meaning in text; immediate feedback; skill mastery; sequential presentation; computer aided instruction; use of dictionary to determine meaning; isolated skills instruction; teacher directed	Not seen	Isolated skills' instruction Teacher directed
<u>Cognitivism</u> : stages of cognitive development; learning styles; intrinsic motivation; student as active learner; direct instruction; instructor as facilitator; active learning strategies; skills taught in context; schemata; meaning resides in what reader brings to text; whole to part instruction; whole to part instruction	Whole to part instruction Meaning resides in what reader brings to text Schemata/prior knowledge Skills taught in context Intrinsic motivation	<i>Tuesdays with Morrie</i> lessons Elicited background knowledge; reader connections to text Elicited prior knowledge before readings and discussed author's voice in text <i>Tuesdays with Morrie</i> vocabulary Tried not to motivate with quizzes at beginning of class
<u>Constructivism</u> : active construction of knowledge; intrinsic motivation; instructor as facilitator; solving problems; active student learner; build on prior experiences; whole to part instruction	Whole to part instruction Meaning resides in transaction with text; schemata Instructor as facilitator Intrinsic motivation	<i>Tuesdays with Morrie</i> lessons Elicited background knowledge; lessons on reader's connection to the text Some group activities Tried to motivate them to be good readers; tried not to motivate with quizzes at beginning of class

Table 4.2 above summarizes Carolyn's beliefs, practices, and the theories to which they align. Carolyn classifies herself as teaching from a whole language perspective, and Carolyn's belief statements place her within the cognitivist and constructivist categories of theoretical models. Her stated beliefs about reading focused on comprehension more than skills. She emphasized making connections, schema, prior knowledge, whole language instruction, comprehension strategies taught in context, metacognition, the role of the author and intrinsic motivation. Carolyn believes that intrinsic motivation is what separates developmental students who do well from those who don't, both in her reading class and in college. However, Carolyn's classroom practices did not always mirror her beliefs.

The mandated curriculum drove the class and it was this focus on the textbook which resulted in a more skills approach than Carolyn's belief statements reflected. The class was more teacher-centered than Carolyn belief statements which showed her as believing in the teacher as a facilitator. Carolyn's belief that the textbook was too hard for her students caused her to use skills' based handouts which were easier and required less classroom participation. This was especially true as the post-COMPASS test drew closer.

Carolyn's results on the TORP survey classified her as having a skills' perspective in teaching reading, but one point away from the whole language perspective. A skills' perspective is not consistent with Carolyn's belief statements. There were inconsistencies in Carolyn's TORP results. However, The results of the LOS classified Carolyn as having a constructivist perspective, but she was on the lower end of the range. Because her Practices' score was higher than her Beliefs' score, the survey states that Carolyn should think about why she makes the instructional decisions she does. There were also inconsistencies in Carolyn's answers on this survey compared to observational data. The institution's curriculum might affect her classroom instruction. This effect will be addressed in further detail when discussing research question three.

Research questions one and two addressed instructors' beliefs, to what extent these beliefs are mirrored in their instructional practice and to which theoretical model these beliefs and practices are linked. The goal was to interview instructors and then observe their instructional practices in order to discern their beliefs and if these beliefs were mirrored in their practices. The resulting data varied. Shelley's beliefs were actually mixed between constructivist and behaviorist whereas her practices were consistent reflecting a behaviorist

model. Carolyn's beliefs were consistently cognitive/constructivist but her practices were eclectic.

Table 4.3 below contrasts Shelley's and Carolyn's beliefs and practices. This table is a summary of Table 4.1 and 4.2 and provides a snapshot of each instructor and how they are in contrast. Shelley's beliefs and practices are concentrated in the behaviorist columns while Carolyn's are concentrated in the cognitive and constructivist columns as described in the data analysis earlier in the chapter.

Table 4.3 Comparison of Beliefs and Practices

		Shelley		Carolyn	
Theories	Beliefs	Practices	Beliefs	Practices	
Behaviorist	Stimulus response	Worksheets and go over answers in class	Not seen	Isolated skills instruction	
	Extrinsic motivation	Points for activities; pass the post test		Teacher directed	
	Information processed hierarchically	Moves through skills' lessons hierarchically			
	Student as passive learner	Few engaging activities			
	Meaning resides in text	One correct answer; low-level questions			
	Skill mastery	Exercises; MyReadingLab 70% mastery			
	Vocabulary essential to comprehension	Large percentage of time spent on vocabulary			
	Use of dictionary for word meaning	Activities using dictionaries for unknown words			
Cognitivist	Stage of cognitive development	Determine stage of learning	Whole to part	<i>Tuesdays w/Morrie</i> lessons	
	Learning styles	Lesson on learning styles	Meaning resides in what reader brings to text	Elicited background knowledge; reader connections to text	
	Intrinsic motivation	Not seen	Schemata/prior knowledge	Elicited background knowledge before reading & discussed author's voice in text	
	Whole to part	Vocabulary from <i>Tuesdays w/Morrie</i>	Skills taught in context	<i>Tuesdays w/Morrie</i> vocabulary	
	Direct Instruction	Throughout course	Intrinsic motivation	Tried not to motivate with quizzes at beg of class	
Constructivist	Instructor is facilitator	Not seen	Whole to part	<i>Tuesdays with Morrie</i> lessons	
			Meaning resides in transaction with text; schemata	Elicited background knowledge; lessons on reader's connection to text	
			Instructor as facilitator	Some group activities	
			Intrinsic motivation	Tried to motivate them to be good readers; tried not to motivate with quizzes	

It was important to discern what factors transacted to create these results. Through observations of classroom practice, interviews, and journal entries, the following factors were derived in addition to beliefs: the institution's curriculum, the instructors' training and teaching experience, and their perceptions of developmental students.

The two instructors teach at the same institution and were given the same curriculum to use, but the resulting classrooms were very different. The factors transacting were unique to each individual instructor, thus resulting in a unique learning environment. This will be the focus of the next section.

The Learning Environment

The final section addresses the findings for research question three: How do instructors' beliefs and instructional practices affect the learning environment of the developmental reading classroom?

As discussed there are many variables in a classroom setting. Questions one and two of this research study discussed the instructors' beliefs and how these beliefs were mirrored in their instructional practice. It is important now to discern how the variables including the instructors' beliefs, the mandated curriculum, instructors' training and teaching experience, and their perceptions of developmental reading students transacted to create a unique learning environment.

The term curriculum needs to be defined before discussing the learning environment of the two classrooms. Short and Burke (1991) describe curriculum in a traditional model as "content prescribed by the textbooks, teachers' guides, and school curriculum guides" (p.2). They go on to describe it as "something which experts outside the classroom develop, classroom teachers implement, and students receive" (p.3). For the purpose of discussion of the learning environment in each classroom, this is an accurate description of the curriculum mandated by this institution. It reflected a very traditional approach.

The classroom learning environment is a complex transaction of factors that combine to create this learning environment. Analyzing and describing a learning environment proved to be challenging. The factors derived from observations in this study were the same for both instructors, but the interaction of these factors within the classrooms resulted in different learning environments.

The learning environment was affected by the instructors' beliefs, the institution's curriculum, the instructors' training and teaching experience, and their perceptions of developmental students. The factors transacted in each instructors' classroom to create a unique learning environment.

Shelley's classroom was structured and cohesive. She accepted the curriculum as it mirrored her behaviorist beliefs. Shelley followed a set routine in the classroom and believed that students would pass the post-COMPASS test and ultimately the course if they did the work that was asked of them. The match between Shelley's beliefs and the curriculum transacted to create a learning environment that was routinized and in sync.

The focus was on skills improvement; there was minimal group work and most of the class time was spent on the exercises in the text (refer to Table 4.3). The class time spent on *Tuesdays with Morrie* was focused on answering study guide questions and one final group activity. There was not much focus on the memoir compared with the textbook itself because there was no formal institution-prepared guides to go with the memoir besides a final group poster based on some themes in the memoir. Because Shelley did not have much experience in teaching a novel, she did what was provided and only used a study guide and a group activity. She did not question herself as to whether this was enough or a good use of the memoir. She accepted it as appropriate.

Shelley's beliefs and curriculum were a match, but another factor that helped create the environment was Shelley's lack of experience and training in teaching reading. Shelley accepted the institution's curriculum and rationale that a skills' based approach was an appropriate way to teach developmental reading. She did not have training or experience

with which to compare it. Her prior teaching experience was substitute teaching and teaching summer school. It was this acceptance of a skill-based approach that helped create an environment that reflected this alignment of factors and helped create a learning environment that did not seem to have any divisiveness or tension.

The final factor transacting to create this environment was Shelley's perception of developmental students. As discussed earlier in the chapter, Shelley described these students by skill levels and by categorizing them as those able to decode words, those somewhat fluent when reading, and those who read well. This perception also aligned with her beliefs, the curriculum, and her training. She saw the goal was for students to master the reading skills so that they could pass the test. She also saw them as adults and was not concerned with their going in and out of the classroom to answer their cell phones. It was important to Shelley that she not interrupt the learning of the students in the class to address those students leaving the room. She believed that it was their responsibility to come to class and learn. Passing the test and the class should be their motivation, and she did not try to use any other strategies to have them come to class on time or to turn off their cell phones. When a student walked out or came in late, Shelley just kept on talking. Although the students leaving and entering the room received attention from the other students in the room, the disruption was minimized because Shelley did not address it.

In order to visualize this environment, I will describe one typical class session I observed (O2A-1). The students came into the classroom with a warm-up activity on the screen. This particular warm-up involved the word 'nostalgic' which was written in a sentence. Students had to decide on the meaning and then write a sentence using the word.

This was the type of warm-up given each week. After discussion of students' answers, Shelley moved into going over the textbook. She stated, "We are supposed to get through four chapters tonight; is that possible?" Students said "no" and then Shelley said, "No, you are right. We are going to get through chapters one and two and maybe 4." Shelley went through chapter one asking for answers and students responded. She gave a test after chapter one which she allowed to be open book. She collected the test and then said "Let's turn to chapter two." At the end of chapter two, students took another test. Shelley gave students an additional handout on "Blooms Taxonomy." With some of the exercises in the book, they could collaborate with a partner at their table. Students took a 20 minute break and returned to go over questions on the chapter two quiz and then moved on to answering questions on the memoir *Tuesdays with Morrie* study guide. Students became used to this routine as the class continued through the quarter. It was very structured. At times, Shelley might bring in an extra handout, but typically the textbook and the memoir were the focus of the class period. The class tended to be quiet and during this observation. Shelley said, "Don't be afraid to talk to each other" (FN 2).

As this typical observation demonstrates, Shelley's classroom was skills based. Exercises and quizzes were a staple in this classroom and the learning environment reflected a behaviorist practice. This was aligned with the institution's curriculum and Shelley's belief that developmental students could be classified by their skill levels. Shelley's beliefs, her lack of training/experience, her perception of developmental students, and the institution's curriculum were a good fit and the learning environment exemplified this.

The learning environment in Carolyn's classroom was different than Shelley's

classroom. The alignment and smooth transaction that was present in Shelley's was absent in Carolyn's. First, Carolyn's beliefs, which were whole language and did not align with the institution's behaviorist curriculum. She did not believe in the exercises/test format that was present in Shelley's classroom and which was exemplified in the curriculum. From the first class, Carolyn discussed such topics as prior knowledge, the author's voice, making connections to the reading, and metacognition. Carolyn followed the chapter topics in the textbook but did not have students complete each exercise and do it in rote fashion as did Shelley. Carolyn felt the textbook was too difficult and students did not have the background knowledge, so there was no alignment between Carolyn's beliefs and the curriculum. This disconnect with the textbook and curriculum, fueled Carolyn's belief that she needed to bring in extra material for the students. She often had cartoons related to reading on the screen to discuss. She referred back to the cartoons as they got further into the class. She did not have a set routine of how the class would proceed. For example, Carolyn did not have any kind of warm-up activity or 'bell work' that Shelley had at the beginning of each class session. She had some routines such as students would sign in at the front table when they walked in as a way to check attendance, but there were no set instructional practices that happened in the same sequence each class.

It was continually a struggle for Carolyn to work with this curriculum. She did not verbalize her negative feelings regarding the textbook to the students but she did so to me commenting, "The textbook is difficult for most of the students so I need to either help them read the text or supply easier material that they can read in order to scaffold the students and build strategies" (PTOI-2; Lns 79-81). The transaction between Carolyn's

beliefs and the curriculum resulted in a learning environment which addressed different topics each day and one that was a combination of teacher-created materials and standard institution curriculum. This seemed to provide a more diverse learning environment than the learning environment in Shelley's classroom.

Carolyn's beliefs and her training and experience in teaching reading did not match the institution's standard curriculum. These factors were not a fit, so the transaction resulted in misalignment. It was a continual struggle for Carolyn to follow the school's curriculum. Carolyn varied from the curriculum and the textbook when she focused on the author's voice, making connections, and background knowledge. However, when she taught other skills such as comprehension and vocabulary she used the textbook to guide her instruction. Also during the second half of the quarter, students started to hear Carolyn talk more about the Post-COMPASS test they would be taking at the end of the course. They received extra exercises from the ACT website to practice their reading skills. Although Carolyn did not believe in this type of instruction, the power of the institution's mandate that students failed the course if they did not pass this test, along with the students' lack of class participation, seemed to pressure Carolyn to focus on test-related skills.

The fourth factor transacting within this learning environment was Carolyn's perception of developmental students. Whereas Shelley categorized them according to skill levels, Carolyn categorized them according to motivation for attending college. This perception affected the learning environment in her classroom. As stated earlier in this chapter, Carolyn's categories includes those students who were 'newbies' fresh out of high school who were probably mad they tested into this course, those who were thrust into education

to be supported by funding, and the older learners who were re-entering the workforce or trying to improve their skills to get a job. Carolyn's class was mostly those students in the first category who were younger and probably did not want to be in the class. These she perceived as less motivated. Carolyn was upset by students coming late to class, leaving early or walking out to answer a cell phone. She did not have the numbers of students doing this that Shelley did because Carolyn addressed it in the classroom. Students knew from her comments that it was not an appropriate thing to do. This was in contrast to Shelley's classroom where she did not address it nor did she worry about it. There was a tension in the room when Carolyn did address these students. In one session she said, "I hope this is the last of the problems; I don't want people going in and out" (O4A-2; Lns 45-47). The students just looked up but didn't say anything. It was obvious that Carolyn was frustrated with these students.

In order to visualize the learning environment, I will describe a typical classroom observation during the first half of the quarter (O2A-2). Carolyn began the class with a question regarding vocabulary, "Why should we have a rich vocabulary?" Some students volunteered answers. Carolyn then gave a personal example of a word she did not know and how she handled it. She then put up a cartoon on the screen of a boy reading a book which she had been also discussed the week before. Carolyn had a discussion about what words helped students in the homework. She put up on the screen a diagram of the procedure students should follow if they come across a word they don't know: Is it an important word? If yes, then use a fix up strategy. If no, then skip it and move on; she had further directions from there. She referred to this graphic to reinforce what she

was discussing throughout this class session. The class continued with a group activity using prefixes. When a student's cellphone went off, Carolyn said, "That is bad" and the student turned it off. Students were quiet but some did answer questions. In class sessions throughout the quarter, Carolyn did lament the lack of participation. The transaction of factors including Carolyn's beliefs, experience/training, perception of developmental students and the institution's curriculum is evidenced in this brief observation. Because of Carolyn's beliefs and training teaching reading, she saw the need for outside material that showed students the strategies they could use in their reading. She had to do this because she felt the textbook was not what the students needed. She also tried to include group work to help make the class more engaging and to allow students to work together on reading topics such as prefixes. Discovering for themselves what these prefixes mean and allowing them as a group to decide how to use them, follows a more cognitive/constructivist practice as opposed to the skills' based exercises that Shelley had students complete. Carolyn's practices were eclectic in that she followed her cognitive/constructivist beliefs but also adhered to the institution's behaviorist curriculum.

The factors – beliefs, curriculum, training and experience and perceptions of developmental students were unique for each instructor. These factors transacted to create a unique learning environment in each instructor's classroom. One instructor accepted the curriculum; it mirrored her beliefs and training. The second instructor, however, did not believe that the curriculum was appropriate for the course, and it also did not reflect her training or beliefs. If one or more of the factors had been different, the learning environments in these classrooms might have been different. For example, if the institution

had adopted a less skills-centered curriculum Shelley's classroom might not have been as cohesive as it was. Carolyn might have felt more confident using the strategies she believed in and her practices more consistent if the institution's curriculum, including the post-test, had been more consistent with her beliefs. Another factor that might have looked different was the instructors' perception of developmental students. Shelley's night course consisted of older students who she saw as adults and categorized them according to skill levels. This aligned with the skills-based curriculum. But if Shelley's classification and perception were more along the lines of Carolyn's and motivation was an important factor, then the learning environment might have been different. Carolyn's perception of poor readers directly out of high school was that they were less motivated. Her classroom was composed of younger students and minimal participation. This factor reinforced her perception. However, if she had a class of older students, the learning environment might have been different. Given the unique role each single factor played in transacting with all factors, it is possible both classrooms would have different learning environments if any of the factors had been altered.

Adopting a curriculum does not insure teaching methods. Both instructors used the same curriculum, but the teaching methods were different. Their beliefs and training affected their teaching methods. Short and Burke (1991) state "No curriculum (actually no life experience) is free of the impact of our beliefs" (p.7). The learning environment is a result of an interaction of a number of factors which create a unique environment for each classroom. When colleges that offer developmental reading courses create curriculum, it is important to realize that individual instructors' beliefs affect the learning environment

and that curriculum alone does not ensure the same learning environment for each class. In studying two developmental reading instructors, factors that affected the learning environment were their beliefs, the institution's curriculum, the instructors' experiences and training, and their perceptions of developmental reading students. Each learning environment was unique.

CHAPTER FIVE

The purpose of this study was to add to the limited research on the connection of college-level developmental reading instructors' beliefs to their instructional practices and how these factors affected the learning environments in their classrooms. The following findings were a result of this investigation.

Findings

Finding One: Instructors' beliefs about teaching did not always match their practices.

I investigated how instructors' practices reflected their beliefs in the classroom and to what theoretical perspective they belonged. Data indicated that there was not a consistent relationship between beliefs and practices for either instructor. Belief statements generally identified a belief system but practices did not always match beliefs. These differences seem to be related to different factors for each instructor, suggesting that the factors that affect instructional practices are varied and complex. For example, Shelley's belief statements vacillated between constructivist/cognitivist and behaviorist philosophies while her practices consistently followed a behaviorist model. She focused on skills' improvement through exercises in the text and in MyReadingLab. Her behaviorist practices were at times in agreement with her beliefs and sometimes did not match her beliefs. Shelley did not have training as a reading teacher nor did she have much experience teaching reading outside of this institution. This might be a reason that sometimes her belief statements were inconsistent. Her inconsistencies between beliefs and practices may be due to this lack of consistency in her beliefs; however, that does not fully explain why she used practices that were not consistent with her beliefs.

Carolyn, on the other hand, was constructivist/cognitivist in her beliefs and considered herself a whole language reading teacher. She also demonstrated these beliefs in her practices. During this time she utilized handouts and various cartoons representing reading strategies such as hearing the author's voice, metacognition, prior knowledge, and making connections to the text. She focused on these skills but often used the textbook passages to show students her thinking as she read. However, Carolyn's pattern of instruction also included following the mandated curriculum and when teaching topics such as comprehension and vocabulary, she followed the textbook. Students read chapters and completed multiple choice exercises which were then corrected in class. This mirrored a more behaviorist practice, and these changes created a more behaviorist classroom. Carolyn's practices which were inconsistent are not explained by Carolyn's beliefs about teaching but are more likely linked to other factors that impacted her teaching and thus the learning environment in this classroom.

Finding Two: Multiple factors transact to create a classroom learning environment

A second aspect investigated was how instructors' beliefs and practices affect the learning environment of the classroom. Through constant comparative analysis of data, themes emerged and it became apparent that the factors transacting in the classroom went beyond a beliefs and practices description. Although an instructors' beliefs can impact any factor in teaching, I found that multiple factors in addition to beliefs need to be considered. Factors affecting instruction were varied and complex. Three additional factors which emerged in this study to affect the classroom learning environments were the institution's mandated curriculum, the instructors' experience and training, and the instructors'

perception of developmental students.

First, the curriculum quickly emerged as a key theme. Each instructor transacted with the mandated curriculum differently. Shelley's practices were a match with the curriculum whereas Carolyn had issues with the behaviorist design of the curriculum as it did not match her whole language beliefs. The post-COMPASS test, which was part of the curriculum, became a high stakes situation for the students and also the instructors as their students needed to pass the test in order to pass the class. The instructors' transaction with a set curriculum affected each learning environment differently. In Shelley's case it created a learning environment where the connections between curriculum and instructional practices were seamless, where everything seemed to fit together. However, in Carolyn's case it did not. Therefore, Carolyn's classroom practices were eclectic, part a whole language approach and part a skills' oriented approach.

Additionally, the training and experience of the instructors affected the learning environment. Shelley, who had limited experience and no training in teaching reading, accepted the more skills oriented curriculum. She did not question whether it was the correct approach as she did not have much experience with which to compare it. Carolyn, however, had training and experience in teaching reading; and she did not agree with the skills oriented approach. Some skills were taught in a constructivist/cognitivist manner reflecting a whole language perspective consistent with her training. Other skills were taught using a skills-oriented approach which did not match her whole language beliefs. Because of Carolyn's training and experience in whole language, it was an important factor in her classroom. If she had not been trained as a whole language teacher, then her classroom

practices may have looked different. Most likely given a change in the instructors' training and experience, the transaction with the other factors would have been different, resulting in an alternate learning environment.

Finally, the instructors' perceptions of developmental reading students affected the learning environment. Although this could be considered as part of overall beliefs, the perception of developmental reading students emerged as a strong theme in the classroom especially for Carolyn whose practices varied from behaviorist to cognitive/constructivism. Carolyn classified developmental reading students according to their motivation for being in college. She believed that students who were on a direct route from high school and tested into developmental reading were the least motivated. This belief impacted her instructional practice as the majority of her class were students directly out of high school. Carolyn commented on their lack of motivation and class participation, noting her frustration that only a few students answered questions and participated in class. Even though Carolyn believed a teacher's role was that of a facilitator, her classroom practices demonstrated a more teacher-directed approach. The lack of class participation combined with the high stakes nature of the post-COMASS test might explain her focus on exercises and practice tests as the end of the quarter got closer. If she did not perceive developmental reading students in this manner or if her class had been older adults, which she classified as the most motivated, her practices might not have been the same.

Shelley, on the other hand, was more comfortable with the student population in her course. She classified developmental reading students by their skill levels. Students in her class were adults who could be classified as nontraditional students. She did not worry

if they did not participate in class or if they left to answer a phone call. She saw them as adults who were in charge of their own actions. She saw her role as giving them the skills, which if they did as she told them, would enable them to pass the post-COMASS test. Shelley's classroom was teacher-directed. In these cases, student participation was less important. This attitude combined with a skills curriculum and Shelley's lack of training and experience made for a smooth fit and the learning environment reflected this. Shelley's perception of her students seemed to affirm what she was doing in the classroom and what the mandated curriculum supported. If she had been trained in teaching reading perhaps her practices would have been different.

It was evident through analysis of the data that these aforementioned factors affected the learning environments of the classrooms. Each factor was unique for each individual instructor; therefore, as they transacted with the other factors, it created a unique learning environment. If any one of the factors had been different, most likely the learning environments that I observed, would have looked different. These results suggest that multiple factors transact to help create a learning environment. In this study, three factors in addition to beliefs emerged as playing a major role in the environment: the institution's mandated curriculum, the instructors' training and experience, and the instructors' perception of developmental reading students. While determining an instructor's theoretical perspective may be helpful in understanding an individual's instructional practices, beliefs alone may not be the only factor to determine the learning environment in a classroom.

Discussion

Studies have shown that teachers' beliefs play a significant role in their classroom

practices (Addy, et.al., 2013; Grubb 1999; Kuzborska 2011; Maxson 1996; Meidl 2013; Pecore 2013; Ruddell and Unrau 2004;). Maxson (1996) found when studying teachers' beliefs on literacy instruction for at-risk first graders, that beliefs influence instructional practices more than instructional theory does and that "literacy instructional decisions are influenced by multiple factors" (p.2). Pecore (2013) had similar results. He studied "four teachers' alignment of classroom practice with constructivist principles after participating in a one-week problem-based learning (PBL) workshop" (p.7). He found that teachers' student-centered beliefs resulted in student-centered practices. Additionally faculty who held more traditional beliefs before attending the workshop taught the PBL method "with less alignment to constructivist principles (p. 7). They also modified the curriculum to fit their instruction (p. 25). Addy et.al (2013) in a study of higher education science faculty with educational specialties found that faculty "who espoused more student-centered beliefs also adopted more student-centered practices (p. 88). However, those who espoused more traditional teaching beliefs did not adopt the student-centered instructional practices preferred by the institution. My study found that beliefs impacted teachers' practices which supports these findings. It also found that other factors in addition to beliefs influenced instructional practices. These transactions created learning environments which were complex and unique to each classroom. For example, in my study, Shelley's beliefs were not always consistent with her practices, but her practices were always consistently behaviorist and followed the institution's curriculum. Carolyn's beliefs were consistently whole language but her practices were inconsistent. In analyzing both Shelley's and Carolyn's beliefs and practices, findings indicate that multiple factors contributed to the observed

learning environments. This aligns with Maxson's and Pecore's results which also indicate that factors outside of beliefs impact instructional decisions in the classroom.

Langer (2004) studied instructional practices of teachers in high achieving and more typical achieving middle and high school classes and focused on the "underlying principles, beliefs and approaches which are enacted in different ways in the context of each individual classroom" (p. 1059). She found that teachers acted on their beliefs whether it was a positive or negative consequence on student learning (p. 1042). Consistent with Langer, Shelley did not deviate from her belief that the mandated curriculum was the proper format for the reading course. Shelley was consistent in her practices and maintained this format regardless of the consequence on student learning. Kuzborska (2011) found that subjects' beliefs were "congruent with practices...and reflected a skills-based approach" (p. 102) even though such an approach is not supported by research "as most appropriate in academic contexts" (p. 102). This is consistent with Langer (2004) where teachers who believed in a skills' based approach in teaching English skills taught skills development separately from other literacy curriculum whereas teachers in high performing schools, who believed in an integrated approach, taught skills with literature instruction. This is similar to Shelley who focused on isolated skills throughout the course following the curriculum and did not integrate any of the skills with other literacy instruction, but it does not explain Carolyn's behavior. Carolyn followed her belief in whole language for many reading strategies, and her practices reflected an eclectic approach. However, she did not follow this format the entire quarter. Early in the course she taught using what Carolyn described as whole language strategies, but that changed later in the course when she

adopted a skills' approach. She might have abandoned her whole language practices and changed to a total skills' approach because it required less student participation, something Carolyn frequently mentioned, while also preparing students for the post-COMPASS test. This is not consistent with Langer's suggestion that practices remain consistent with beliefs nor does other research support such a decisive change made in practices by an instructor.

Based on my findings, it is my contention that multiple factors in a classroom environment transact and create complex and unique learning environments. Pecore (2013) suggests that "other possibilities besides beliefs as potential sources of interference with constructivist teaching practices" (p. 24). In his study classroom culture and accountability measures imposed by the administration interfered with classroom instruction. In my study the factors, in addition to beliefs, included the mandated curriculum, the training and experience of the instructors, and also their perceptions of developmental reading students, all of which created Shelley's and Carolyn's learning environments.

First, the mandated curriculum was a structure imposed on the instructors that influenced both of them but in different ways. Shelley was comfortable with the curriculum and followed it week by week. However, for Carolyn, the curriculum was not congruent with her whole language beliefs. Meidl (2013) studied third and fourth grade teachers' beliefs and instructional delivery in a small, urban elementary school and how teachers negotiated their beliefs about teaching and a district mandated curriculum. Results demonstrated a "pedagogical dissonance" or disparity between the teachers' beliefs, the mandated curriculum, and the importance of standard based testing (p.7). Many teachers "opted out" (p. 8) of practices prescribed by the mandated curriculum when they did not agree with

them. This is consistent with what Carolyn did at the beginning of the quarter when she practiced her whole language beliefs. She opted out of some of the skills-based curriculum and taught many strategies using a whole language approach. However, she changed her instructional practices to reflect the mandated curriculum's skills-based activities which resulted in a more eclectic mode of instruction. Her skills instruction expanded even farther into test preparation by the end of the course. Shelley, however, did not experience pedagogical dissonance because she believed in the curriculum.

The high stakes post-COMPASS test was an administrative mandate which had recently been incorporated into the curriculum. The pressure of this test might have caused the instructors to teach reading skills in a format consistent with what on the test and what was in the faculty guide, even when in the case of Carolyn, it went against her constructivist beliefs. This is consistent with Peabody (2007) who studied low-performing schools in Florida that were required to take the Florida state FCAT test. He found that the curriculum was teacher directed and explicitly tied to the benchmarks measured by the FCAT (p. 10). The post-COMPASS test was a factor in Carolyn's change in instructional methods. Carolyn felt pressured for her students to pass this test and by the end of the course, her practices were skills based, test preparation. However, Shelley believed in it and told students that if they did what she asked them of them, then they would pass the test and then the course.

Second, instructors' perceptions of developmental reading students was another factor transacting with beliefs in the learning environments of the two classrooms. Shelley and Carolyn had different perceptions of developmental reading students. Shelley categorized her students according to their skills levels which was congruent with the mandated

curriculum and Shelley's skill-based practices. She also saw them as adults who were responsible for their own learning. She did not feel responsible for them. Carolyn categorized developmental students according to their motivations for being in college. She characterized those students directly out of high school as being the least motivated, and a majority of her class was recent high school graduates whose low reading skills had required them to take a college developmental reading course. It was their motivation levels which resulted in her frustration at their lack of participation and their arriving late to class. Unlike Shelley, she did feel a responsibility for them. However, she did not seek out new ways to work with these students. Ultimately she gave in and "as a result, daily instruction mirrored test-prep" (Meidl, 2013, p. 7). Langer (2004) found in her study of middle and high school teachers that some teachers did not believe that students were capable of scoring well on the exam. These teachers "seemed to blame the students or the test, but not themselves" (p. 1065). This is consistent with Carolyn who blamed the students for their lack of participation. Except for looking at ways to extrinsically motivate students such as quizzes or to speak to them individually or in front of the class, she did not look for other methods to encourage more motivation and more class participation. In Shelley's case, she did not think it was her responsibility to do so.

Third, teacher training and experience were important factors in the classrooms and also relate to the instructors' perceptions of developmental reading students. In a study of community college developmental instructors, Grubb (1999) found that many instructors had no training and used a trial and error approach to teaching developmental classes beginning with a more skills-based approach and moving towards a constructivist

approach as they gained more experience. Grubb states, “Never did an instructor describe a journey in the opposite direction, from constructivist practices back to more didactic and teacher-centered practices” (p. 45). Shelley closely followed the mandated curriculum, but unlike Grubb’s instructors, Shelley did not switch to more constructivist practices. Since the institution provided a week by week faculty guide, Shelley might not have felt the need to complete as much trial and error teaching as did those in Grubb’s study. Roueche and Rouech (1993) in their study of college developmental instruction, found that developmental reading instructors were “unprepared for the specific courses they were teaching” (p. 107). Shelley did not have much training in teaching reading, especially training that focused on a constructivist approach; and she also had little experience teaching reading that might have exposed her to other approaches. It may have been this lack of training that allowed her to accept the skills-based curriculum. Although Shelley did not have training or experience, she was given a week by week faculty guide, and she followed it carefully. She did not have any concerns that this might not be the best approach to take in teaching developmental reading.

Carolyn, on the other hand, was an experienced reading teacher in the K-12 environment who held whole language beliefs, but moved away from constructivist practices and began focusing on isolated skills. Although lack of teacher training in reading was not the reason for her change, another factor, the lack of motivation of her students, was a factor in this change (in addition to the post-COMPASS test). She was bothered by this lack of motivation whereas Shelley was not. For Carolyn, training in teaching at-risk students might have been helpful in providing her with strategies to deal with their lack of class

participation, inappropriate behaviors such as arriving to class late and leaving to answer their cell phones, and overall lack of motivation. Developmental courses usually have a high number of at-risk students enrolled. Maxson (1996) found that “teachers must possess an understanding of the individual needs of at-risk children and address those needs” (p. 1). Even though Maxson’s study was with first graders, it is also true for those students populating developmental courses. Carolyn’s class was composed mainly of students directly out of high school. For Carolyn, her trial and error approach was not in teaching reading content but in her handling of the at-risk students in her class. She tried a few different approaches in dealing with their issues such as meeting with them individually and addressing the whole class when students walked in late. She also contemplated instructional repercussions for their late arrivals such as giving quizzes. If Carolyn had been trained in working with at-risk students, she might have been able to use alternate strategies which would have been more successful. These strategies might have allowed her to continue teaching using whole language approaches instead of opting out of them and focusing on teacher-directed skills which required much less student participation and also allowed for preparation for the high stakes post-COMPASS test.

Shelley also could have benefited from training in teaching at-risk students. She had a class of working adults with some younger students. None of these students had prior college experience. They constantly left early, arrived late, and walked out of class to answer phones. She did not address this because she felt they were adults and were responsible for themselves. However, if she had been given training in at-risk student behaviors, she would have learned that their behaviors are characteristic of at-risk students who have a lack of

experience in appropriate college behavior and usually do not have any models of success in their lives. As with Carolyn, Shelley could have benefitted from training in working with at-risk students.

In Chapter Two, I included Figure 2.5 which demonstrated my model of meaning construction as I envisioned it. This was based on Ruddell and Unrau's model of Reading as a Meaning-Construction process (see Figure 2.4). However, after conducting my study, observing instructors and analyzing data, it became clear that beliefs and practices had to be considered in relation to the other factors which had emerged. The revised figure (Figure 5.1) more closely represents the results of my study.

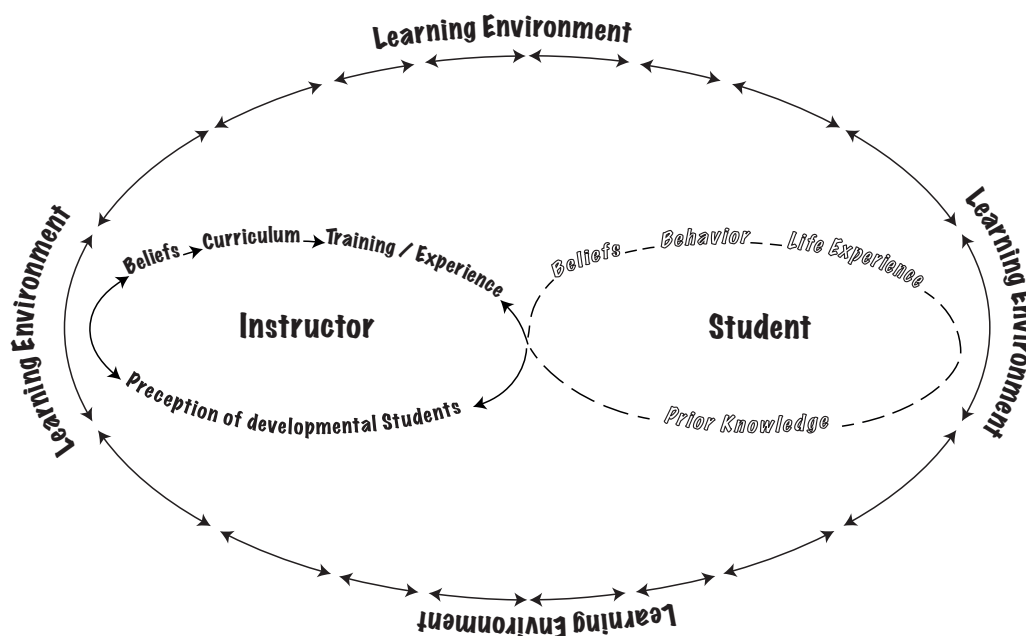


Figure 5.1: Classroom Learning Environment

Figure 5.1 demonstrates the learning environments in Shelley's and Carolyn's classrooms. The arrowed lines between the instructors' beliefs, curriculum, experience and

training and perceptions of developmental students are transacting in a continual motion. All four of these factors are based on the themes that emerged from the data and are the same for both instructors. However within these themes are characteristics which are unique to the individual instructor. The beliefs which were a focus of the study are different for each instructor as are the experiences and perceptions of developmental students. The institution's curriculum was the same for both instructors but the way they viewed this curriculum and interacted with it was very different. Ultimately the transactions of all four factors created a learning environment that was unique for each instructor. In this model which represents a learning environment, if any one of the factors changes or is different, then the resulting learning environment changes. For example, if Shelley had been given training in teaching reading how might her classroom instruction have changed? If Carolyn had been given a class of older adults students, would she have seen more motivation in her students? How might her classroom instruction have been different? There is an assumption that beliefs lead to practices which then leads to a learning environment. However this is not the case. Learning environments are created by multiple factors in addition to beliefs. This dynamic is complex, and the model above tries to capture how this is true for Shelley's and Carolyn's learning environment.

Implications for Instruction

The findings of this research study offer insights into developmental reading instruction at an open- admission college. Developmental education is a critical component of these institutions; and for many students, it is their only hope of gaining a college degree. Results highlight the need for instructor training in teaching reading and working with at-

risk students. Kuzborska (2011) highlighted the “importance of professional development directed toward helping the teachers learn about the process of reading, the learning of reading, and the teaching of reading...” (p. 122). Also Pecore (2013) cites the National Science Teacher Association’s position that a high quality science teacher “workforce requires meaningful, ongoing professional development (p. 25). For the instructors in this study, training would have improved the learning environments in their classrooms. This institution might consider training for all reading instructors but specifically for those whose experience in reading and with at-risk students is limited. Shelley did not have any training in teaching reading or at-risk students and although she mentioned in discussions with me that she was a facilitator, observational data demonstrated that her classroom was teacher directed. Shelley did not know how to be a facilitator in the classroom. She could have benefitted from understanding how to be less teacher directed. Other instructional characteristics she believed she used in the classroom such as facilitating critical thinking among her students was not evidenced in the classroom. Training would have allowed her to use critical thinking in her reading class. If Carolyn had been given training in teaching at-risk students, she would most likely have strategies for handling some of their behaviors. Institutional faculty training could be an eclectic mix and might include: teaching developmental reading; working with adults; working with at-risk traditional and nontraditional students; training with the institution’s mandated curriculum; and strategies to engage students.

Given the impact that the mandated curriculum including the high stakes post-COMPASS test had on these two instructors’ classrooms, it is important that this institution revisit the

behaviorist design of the curriculum. Research-based best practices in teaching reading and also practices advocated in adult learning theory (Knowles, Halton, Swanson, 2005, p. 70-75) do not utilize a skills-oriented approach used by this institution. If the curriculum and instructor training focused on a more constructivist approach and also incorporated experiential experiences of its adult learners, the classroom learning environment might be more engaging.

The textbook should be reviewed given the instructors' belief that it is too difficult for the skills levels of the students they are seeing in their classrooms. Also, if moving away from a behaviorist design, the institution could also look at using a mix of reading materials which are more authentic to the reading experience. These materials could be various reading levels but also address the diversity in the classroom (ethnicity, gender, culture, etc.). If the students in the classroom in this study had read passages for which they had more background knowledge and to which they could relate, they might have been more engaged.

The high stakes nature of the post-COMPASS test should be reconsidered. When instructors must fail students who do not achieve a 60 or higher on an exit exam even when they achieve passing grades in the class or pass students who have passed the test but turned in little or no work in the class, then the class itself becomes negligible. Instructors feel pressured to teach to the test. Powers, Zippay & Butler (2006) state that the instructors themselves should "serve as the most important assessment instrument of their students' literacy development" (p. 138). This was not the case for the instructors in this study as student achievement was measured solely by the exit test. The work done in the reading

course should be an important factor in determining whether students have achieved a reading level that is likely to promote success in college.

Limitations and Future Research

The number of instructors in this study was small as it focused on only two instructors from one institution. Thus additional developmental reading instructors in a variety of settings should be studied and compared with these instructors. It would be meaningful to have an increased number of institutions involved in studies so we can begin to understand the connection of beliefs and practices in a variety of settings.

Studying faculty who teach using a mandated curriculum and assessment and those in institutions that allow instructors to follow their own guidelines would provide information about the impact of the curriculum on practices. Comparing these two types of instructional formats, including instructors' beliefs and practices, would be beneficial.

Instructors' experience and training was also a factor in this study. Further studies investigating instructor training at open-admission institutions would help to ascertain best practices which can be used as guidelines for such institutions. Comparing these two types of instructional formats, including instructors' beliefs and practices, would be beneficial. It would also be meaningful to include comparisons of student performance in these courses.

Much of the research on curriculum and assessment; beliefs and practices; and high-stakes testing is based on studies completed at K-12 institutions or teacher preparation program at universities. Open-admission colleges may be the only avenue for many at-risk students to get a college degree, so it is important that researchers focus on meaningful data to inform the practices at these institutions.

In this study no data were collected on the students, and they are an important factor in the classroom. As shown in this study, teachers perceptions of the students affected their practices, but the students themselves do as well. Thus future research should include consideration of the students perceptions of reading, the teacher, the curriculum, and also themselves as students.

This study did not consider the success of students in the two classrooms; therefore, it is not known which of these teachers was actually more effective. Although research advocates for a student-centered classroom for adult learning (Grubb, 1999; Knowles, Halton, Swanson, 2005; Kuzborska, 2013; Pugh, et. al, 2000;). It would also be meaningful in future research to include comparisons of student performance in these courses so that connections can be made between practices and achievement. However, it would also be important to include in this students' perceptions of the course, reading, and themselves as students as these things also affect performance.

APPENDIX A

The DeFord Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile

Directions: Read the following statements, and circle one of the number responses that will indicate the relationship of the statement to your feelings about reading and reading instruction. SA 1 2 3 4 5 SD (select one best answer that reflects the strength of agreement or disagreement--SA is strong agreement, and SD is strong disagreement)

	SA
SD	
1. A child needs to be able to verbalize the rules of phonics in order to assure proficiency in processing new words. 3 4 5	1 2
2. An increase in reading errors is usually related to a decrease in comprehension. 3 4 5	1 2
3. Dividing words into syllables according to rules is a helpful instructional practice for reading new words. 3 4 5	1 2
4. Fluency and expression are necessary components of reading that indicate good comprehension. 3 4 5	1 2
5. Materials for early reading should be written in natural language without concern for short, simple words and sentences. 3 4 5	1 2
6. When children do not know a word, they should be instructed to sound out its parts. 3 4 5	1 2
7. It is a good practice to allow children to edit what is written into their own dialect when learning to read. 3 4 5	1 2
8. The use of a glossary or dictionary is necessary in determining the meaning and pronunciation of new words. 3 4 5	1 2
9. Reversals (e. g., saying “saw” for “was”) are significant problems in the teaching of reading. 3 4 5	1 2
10. It is good practice to correct a child as soon as an oral reading mistake is made. 3 4 5	1 2
11. It is important for a word to be repeated a number of times after it has been introduced to insure that it will become a part of sight vocabulary. 3 4 5	1 2

12. Paying close attention to punctuation marks is necessary to understanding story content. 1 2
3 4 5
13. It is a sign of an ineffective reader when words and phrases are repeated. 1 2
3 4 5
14. Being able to label words according to grammatical function (nouns, etc.) is useful in proficient reading. 1 2
3 4 5
15. When coming to a word that's unknown, the reader should be encouraged to guess based upon meaning and go on. 1 2
3 4 5
16. Young readers need to be introduced to the root form of words (run, long) before they are asked to read inflected forms (running, longest). 1 2
3 4 5
17. It is not necessary for a child to know the letters of the alphabet in order to learn to read. 1 2
3 4 5
- SA
- SD
18. Flashcard drill with sight words is an unnecessary form of practice in reading instruction. 1 2
3 4 5
19. Ability to use accent patterns in multi-syllable words (pho to graph, pho tog ra phy, and pho to graph ic) should be developed as a part of reading instruction. 1 2
3 4 5
20. Controlling text through consistent spelling patterns (The fat cat ran back. The fat cat sat on a hat.) is a means by which children can best learn to read. 1 2
3 4 5
21. Formal instruction in reading is necessary to insure the adequate development of all skills used in reading. 1 2
3 4 5
22. Phonic analysis is the most important form of analysis used when meeting new words. 1 2
3 4 5
23. Children's initial encounters with print should focus on meaning, not upon exact graphic representation. 1 2
3 4 5
24. Word shapes (word configuration, b i g) should be taught in reading to aid in word recognition. 1 2
3 4 5
25. It is important to teach skills in relation to other skills. 1 2

3 4 5

26. If a child says “house” for the written word “home,” the response should be left uncorrected. 1 2

3 4 5

27. It is not necessary to introduce new words before they appear in the reading text. 1 2

3 4 5

28. Some problems in reading are caused by readers dropping the inflectional endings from words (e.g., jumps, jumped). 1 2

3 4 5

Scoring Directions

1. Identify items 5, 7, 15, 17, 18, 23, 26 and 27.
2. Score all other items 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25 and 28 by giving the number of points corresponding to the number circled in each item, i.e., if a 4 is circled, give 4 points, etc. Do not score items 5, 7, 15, 17, 18, 23, 26 and 27 when doing this.
3. Now score items 5, 7, 15, 17, 18, 23, 26 and 27 by reversing the process. If a 1 is circled, give 5 points. If a 2 is circled, give 4 points, a 3 = 3 points, a 4 = 2 points, and a 5 = 1 point.
4. Add the total of the two scores for one total score and compare with the following scale.
 - 0 - 65 points indicates a decoding perspective.
 - 66 - 110 points indicates a skills perspective.
 - 111 - 140 points indicates a whole language perspective.

Note: A score in the 85 - 120 range would probably indicate the ability to learn to use a balanced approach to reading instruction.

This test was copyrighted by the International Reading Association in 1985.

APPENDIX B**Teacher Belief Questionnaire**Background:

How many years have you been teaching?

What grade levels have you taught?

Are you a certified teacher?

If so, where did you do your pre-service education?

Did you have any training in teaching reading in your pre-service education?

How did the cooperating teacher teach reading?

Any innovative instruction in his/her class?

Reading and Learning to Read:

When a student enters into college, what should that student be able to do in terms of reading?

What can a really good reader do?

When the student leaves college with an associate degree what should the student be able to do in terms of reading?

What accounts for the differences between a good and poor reader?

Is it possible for a teacher or other person to help a poor reader become a good reader?

How do you define reading comprehension?

What is included in that?

Reading Instruction:

Could you describe the way you teach reading comprehension?

 Ideas? Memorizing facts? Questioning students – why?

What is a good response?

What is a poor response?

What is a creative response?

Where did you learn to teach reading that way?

Have you ever had in-service/graduate courses on how to teach it?

Have you ever tried something different?

Why?

What happened?

Have you ever wanted to do something different?

Grouping: on what basis? Why?

Have you ever tried to teach the whole group?

Under what conditions would you do so?

Do you do different things in the different groups? Why?

What indicates to you that a lesson is going poorly?

How is teaching reading different from teaching math?

From teaching science or social studies?

From teaching writing?

Do you ever feel like you are getting behind in reading?

The Students:

Describe the students in your Eng 098B classes.

Do they have a pretty good chance of making it through school?

Describe a student who is having great difficulty in reading.

Describe a student who is just slightly behind – not terrific, but not a real problem.

Describe a student who is really doing well.

The School:

Do you feel that there is a characteristic way of teaching reading comprehension in this school?

So you know what the other teachers are doing? I mean sort of?

How do you know?

Do you ever observe in other classrooms?

Do you exchange materials, ideas, methods?

Communication with other teachers? Specialists?

Personal Reading:

What types of things do you read now? (When you have a chance)

(Adapted from Richardson, Anders, Tidwell and Lloyd, p.580, 1991)

APPENDIX C

Recruitment Script

Researcher: My name is Lynne Morgan-Bernard. I am conducting a study on developmental reading instruction, specifically looking at how or if instructors' beliefs guide their practices. I am talking to you today because you are scheduled to teach a reading class during the fall or winter quarter. I would like to choose two instructors to be part of this study who have taught ENG 098B for three quarters. If you participate here is what the study entails:

- You will sign an informed consent form which will detail your responsibilities if you agree to be a participant.
- You will complete two surveys regarding your beliefs on reading and teaching developmental reading.
- I will observe in your classroom five times during the quarter and take notes on the things that you do and say. Each observation will be planned by you and me. I will not enter your classroom to observe without your knowledge.
- I will digitally audio record you and, hopefully, you will wear a recording microphone on your lapel so that I capture your voice and lessen the chance of recording the students' voices. I will transcribe these recordings and let you review them for accuracy.
- After each observation I will ask you to respond to some questions through email or in person so that I can get follow-up information and ensure accuracy.
- No students are part of this study. I will tell students that I am in your classroom to observe teaching strategies.

I am conducting this study in my capacity as a doctoral student at Wayne State University and not as an employee of this institution. Your participation is voluntary, and it will not affect your employment in either a positive or a negative way. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout this study, and pseudonyms will be used in place of your names. No one including the Dean of Developmental Education or the Vice-President for Academics will know who is participating in this study. You will be able to read through my descriptions of your teaching before I complete the study. Do you have any questions about the study and your role in it if you decide to participate?

Answers to questions will follow.

APPENDIX D

Literacy Orientation Survey (LOS)

Name _____ Date _____

Directions: Read the following statements, and circle the response that indicates your feelings or behaviors regarding literacy and literacy instruction.

1. The purpose of reading instruction is to teach children to recognize words and to pronounce them correctly.

strongly disagree	strongly agree
1-----2-----3-----4-----5	

2. When students read text, I ask them questions such as "What does it mean?"

never	always
1-----2-----3-----4-----5	

3. Reading and writing are unrelated processes.

strongly disagree	strongly agree
1-----2-----3-----4-----5	

4. When planning instruction, I take into account the needs of children by including activities that meet their social, emotional, physical, and affective needs.

never	always
1-----2-----3-----4-----5	

5. Students should be treated as individual learners rather than as a group.

strongly disagree	strongly agree
1-----2-----3-----4-----5	

6. I schedule time every day for self-selected reading and writing experiences.

never	always
1-----2-----3-----4-----5	

7. Students should use "fix-up strategies" such as rereading when text meaning is unclear.

strongly disagree	strongly agree
1-----2-----3-----4-----5	

8. Teachers should read aloud to students on a daily basis.
- strongly disagree 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 strongly agree
9. I encourage my students to monitor their comprehension as they read.
- never 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 always
10. I use a variety of prereading strategies with my students.
- never 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 always
11. It is not necessary for students to write text on a daily basis.
- strongly disagree 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 strongly agree
12. Students should be encouraged to sound out all unknown words.
- strongly disagree 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 strongly agree
13. The purpose of reading is to understand print.
- strongly disagree 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 strongly agree
14. I hold parent workshops or send home newsletters with ideas about how parents can help their children with school.
- never 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 always
15. I organize my classroom so that my students have an opportunity to write in at least one subject every day.
- never 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 always
16. I ask the parents of my students to share their time, knowledge, and expertise in my classroom.
- never 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 always

17. Writers in my classroom generally move through the processes of prewriting, drafting, and revising.
- never
1-----2-----3-----4-----5
always
18. In my class, I organize reading, writing, speaking, and listening around key concepts.
- never
1-----2-----3-----4-----5
always
19. Reading instruction should always be delivered to the whole class at the same time.
- strongly disagree
1-----2-----3-----4-----5
strongly agree
20. I teach using themes or integrated units.
- never
1-----2-----3-----4-----5
always
21. Grouping for reading instruction should always be based on ability.
- strongly disagree
1-----2-----3-----4-----5
strongly agree
22. Subjects should be integrated across the curriculum.
- strongly disagree
1-----2-----3-----4-----5
strongly agree
23. I use a variety of grouping patterns to teach reading such as skill groups, interest groups, whole group, and individual instruction.
- never
1-----2-----3-----4-----5
always
24. Students need to write for a variety of purposes.
- strongly disagree
1-----2-----3-----4-----5
strongly agree
25. I take advantage of opportunities to learn about teaching by attending professional conferences and/or graduate classes and by reading professional journals.
- never
1-----2-----3-----4-----5
always

26. Parents attitudes toward literacy affect my students' progress.
- strongly disagree 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 strongly agree
27. The major purpose of reading assessment is to determine a student's placement in the basal reader.
- strongly disagree 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 strongly agree
28. I assess my students' reading progress primarily by teacher-made and/or book tests.
- never 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 always
29. Parental reading habits in the home affect their children's attitudes toward reading.
- strongly disagree 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 strongly agree
30. At the end of each day, I reflect on the effectiveness of my instructional decisions.
- never 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 always

Interpreting Your LOS Score

1. Plot your Total Score on the line.

90	95	100	105	110	115	120	125	130	135	140	145
traditional teacher				eclectic teacher				constructivist teacher			

2. If your score is in the 90-110 range, you are most likely a traditional teacher.
 If your score is in the 110-125 range, you are most likely an eclectic teacher.
 If your score is in the 125-145 range, you are most likely a constructivist teacher.

3. Plot your Beliefs Score on the line.

45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72
----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----

4. If your score is closest to 51, you have beliefs similar to a traditional teacher.
 If your score is closest to 61, you have beliefs similar to an eclectic teacher.
 If your score is closest to 69, you have beliefs similar to a constructivist teacher.

5. Plot your Practice Score on the line.

45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72
----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----

6. If your score is closest to 51, you have beliefs similar to a traditional teacher.
 If your score is closest to 56, you have beliefs similar to an eclectic teacher.
 If your score is closest to 63, you have beliefs similar to a constructivist teacher.

7. List your Beliefs Score _____ . List your Practice Score _____ .

8. If your Beliefs Score is higher than your Practice Score, you have not yet found a way to incorporate your constructivist beliefs in your classroom.

If your Practice Score is higher than your Beliefs Score, you need to think about why you make the instructional decisions that you do.

Definitions of teaching practices

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| Traditional teacher | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * uses traditional reading methods such as basal reading instruction * teaches using primarily direct instruction * thinks about students as being "blank slates" |
| Eclectic teacher | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * uses some traditional and some constructivist reading methods * uses conflicting instructional methods * unsure about how students learn |
| Constructivist teacher | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * <i>has</i> primarily <i>an</i> integrated instruction <i>curriculum</i> * practices holistic instruction * views students as using prior knowledge to construct meaning to learn |

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ABSTRACT**BELIEFS AND INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES OF TWO
DEVELOPMENTAL READING INSTRUCTORS AT
AN OPEN-ADMISSION COLLEGE**

by

LYNNE MORGAN-BERNARD**August 2015****Advisor:** Dr. Karen Feathers**Major:** Reading, Language, and Literature**Degree:** Doctor of Education

Given the changing demands of the 21st century workplace, it is important that all high school graduates have access to a college education, but many students do not have college-level reading skills. Thus, developmental education is an important component of open-admission institutions. It is important that instructors of developmental courses be effective in order to promote student success. However, we have little information about the factors that affect instructional practices in developmental classrooms. Therefore, this study examined the beliefs and instructional practices and the resulting learning environment of two developmental reading instructors in an open-admission college.

The study investigated three questions:

1) What are instructors' beliefs about teaching developmental reading and developmental reading students, and how do their instructional practices reflect these beliefs? 2) How do instructors' beliefs and practices about developmental reading and developmental reading students reflect behaviorist, cognitivist and/or constructivist theories? and 3) How do instructors' beliefs and instructional practices affect the learning environment of the developmental reading classroom?

The procedures included analyzing classroom observational data, interviews of subjects, their journals, and two beliefs' surveys. To address these questions, teachers completed a survey of their beliefs, they kept instructional journals that were read, they were observed across five complete classes, and they were interviewed at various times. Data were analyzed using the constant comparative method.

The results demonstrated that instructors' beliefs about teaching did not always match their practices, thus suggesting that beliefs alone do not explain instructional practices. In addition to beliefs, three additional factors emerged as playing a major role in creating the learning environment: the institution's mandated curriculum, the instructors' training and experience, and the instructors' perception of developmental reading students. These data indicate that multiple factors transact to create unique learning environments in each classroom.

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