


2016

Adult Learners' and Millennials' Preferred Methods of Instruction in the College Classroom

January Marie Baker
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Education

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January Baker

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Walden University

2016

Abstract

Adult Learners' and Millennials' Preferred Methods of Instruction in the College
Classroom

by

January Marie Baker

MA, La Salle University, 2005

BS, La Salle University, 2003

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Special Education

Walden University

April 2016

Abstract

Today's college students are diverse and include students who differ in chronological age and developmental learning levels. This recent shift in student demographics, including millennials and adult learners, has created a need for instructors to understand and address their students' learning preferences. Traditionally, student feedback has been collected from course evaluation forms after each term ended, thus preventing instructors from incorporating student feedback into their teaching. Accordingly, this narrative qualitative case study was conducted to explore what instructional methods students in a community college developmental reading course preferred to meet their learning preferences and classroom needs. Willingham's interpretation of informational processing theory that reinforced instructional reading comprehension strategies framed this study. Sampling was purposeful, and criterion-based logic was used to determine the participants. Participants ranged in age from 18-43 and were enrolled in 1 section of a developmental reading course. Data were collected through 8 student interviews, 3 classroom observations, and the participating instructor's lesson plans as an alternative to using course evaluation forms. Data were analyzed using open and axial coding. Findings indicated that students preferred when their instructor used active approaches to learning. Findings also indicated that students preferred receiving instruction that met the needs of their different learning styles. Findings contributed to social change as understanding students' learning preferences may assist instructors with incorporating teaching methods to promote improved support to students in developmental reading courses.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents. Thank you to my mother and father for always supporting me on my educational journey. I would have not been able to find the motivation to write about a topic in which I feel so passionate about without your continued support and love. Thank you for providing me with the tools I need to achieve my true purpose to make a difference in the lives of my future students, in addition to inspiring others to follow their own paths of teaching as a profession. Thank you for everything.

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Chapter 1: Foundation of the Study

Russell (2006) revealed that traditional students are those who enroll in college directly after they finish high school, are in their teenage years, and are mixed with nontraditional adult learners, which is creating a demographic shift in the classroom. This recent change in the college student population has created a need for instructors and higher education administrators to explore instructors' professional qualities and their effective instructional methods to better meet the learning preferences and classroom needs of the current college population. I used a case study design so that I could focus on college students who were enrolled in a community college developmental reading course. I designed this study to explore students' learning preferences and classroom needs by conducting individual student interviews and classroom observations. I conducted this study as an alternative to asking students to provide general course feedback on a course evaluation form that would not be returned to the instructor until after the semester had ended. In Chapter 1, I include a detailed description of the specific case, including the background information, problem statement, purpose of the study, central research questions, conceptual framework, nature of the study, assumptions, limitations and delimitations, and significance of the study.

Background

The current United States (U.S.) college student population has shifted from mostly a native-born population to a mixed population of many different nationalities, socioeconomic statuses, and cultural backgrounds (Black, 2010). This shift in the community college classroom has caused a need for instructors to reflect on their current

instructional methods to better fit their students' needs. In addition, this population of students includes millennials. Black (2010) described millennials, also known as Generation Y, as individuals who were born between 1981 and 2001. Black (2010) stated that these students

lacked basic skills, were collaborative, had parents who hovered and also took responsibility for their college age children, had family instability, were assertive, were confident, possessed a growing sense of spirituality and religion, and were more tolerant and accepting of diversity. (p. 94)

Black (2010) also focused on how students of this generation learn new material using their knowledge of technology and communication. Similarly, Crappell (2012) found that millennials possess a need to feel connected to others through collaboration, while also integrating technology into their lives. In addition, Crappell revealed that millennials prefer a more student-centered learning approach that satisfies their preference to interact and connect with each other.

Kenner and Weinerman (2011) described additional groups of college students other than those who enrolled in college directly after high school. These three groups include workers who have lost their jobs and are in need of refreshing their college level skills, veterans who have delayed their education while serving their country, and adults who have completed their general degree and are seeking higher education opportunities (Kenner & Weinerman, 2011). This shift has created a need for instructors to use teaching strategies based on the learning discipline of andragogy (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2011). Therefore, there was a need to gain a deeper understanding of this

nontraditional adult population's learning needs because these students have also become a part of the college population in addition to millennials, and both populations possess different learning needs (Kenner & Weinerman, 2011).

Russell (2006) described factors that need to be considered when instructing adults who return to the classroom after some time compared to instructing students who enter college immediately after high school. Russell identified: (a) a difference in the level of experience between adult students and millennial students, (b) higher motivational levels for adult students as opposed to millennial students, (c) increased interest in the learning process in adult learners as opposed to millennials, and (d) a difference in how both populations applied what they learned in the classroom. Russell focused on understanding adults' learning styles and their classroom preferences for learning to assist instructors with becoming more effective in meeting this population's needs. Russell also revealed that a mix of different instructional methods should be incorporated into teaching practices.

Next, current methods of course evaluations had to be considered. Guder and Malliaris (2010) found that colleges and universities use both paper and electronic teacher course evaluations to determine students' perspectives of effective college instruction. Guder and Malliaris also found that college instructors use completed course feedback from their students as a tool to improve their instructional methods. Guder and Malliaris identified a shift from paper evaluations to online evaluations so that feedback could be returned more quickly to instructors. However, online evaluations produce a lower response rate (Guder and Malliaris, 2010). Therefore, Guder and Malliaris (2010)

provided support about course evaluations to further explore alternative methods of collecting feedback from the current college population.

Problem Statement

Traditionally, course evaluation forms are not shared with instructors until after the end of the semester when students are no longer enrolled in the course. This practice has created a problem for instructors because they cannot incorporate feedback into their teaching or modify their instructional methods based on students' recommendations and needs during the semester in which the students were enrolled. According to Khandelwal (2009), identifying effective teaching methods for this college population is difficult to describe. Khandelwal considered self-ratings, peer ratings, student ratings, and research performance as criteria for evaluating teachers' performances. Khandelwal's results indicated that college instructors possess a high self-perception of their own teaching abilities, which sometimes differs from their students' perception of their teachers' instructional practices. Similarly, traditional course evaluation forms lack validity and reliability in terms of how feedback is shared with instructors because it is difficult to determine which students provide constructive feedback and which students use course evaluations to complain about their instructors after receiving a poor grade or because they have negative personal feelings towards their instructor. Therefore, there was a need to use an alternative method of collecting student feedback to gain a deeper understanding of this population's learning preferences so that instructors could better address students' classroom needs in a more timely and a more efficient manner.

Purpose Statement

This case study was qualitative in nature, and it was framed using social constructivism. Data were collected through student interviews, College Reading Success Strategies (READ 110) classroom observations, and the collection of the instructor's lesson plans used on the days of the observations. The participating population of community college developmental reading students possessed additional learning needs even though they differed in chronological age because READ 110 course was a required prerequisite for students who achieved a Level 2 on their reading placement test at the time of their enrollment. The purpose of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of community college developmental reading students' learning needs. Also, the purpose of this study was to produce results that could assist college instructors with developing effective instruction to better meet the needs of college students.

Research Questions

I developed the following questions in an attempt to gain a deeper understanding of the current community college developmental READ 110 students' needs using an alternative method of collecting feedback. The following questions guided the study:

Central question: What does the selected population of community college students need from their face-to-face instructors to be successful in their first-year READ 110 course that can be provided to their instructors through an alternative method of collecting course feedback?

Subquestion 1: What types of instructional methods are face-to-face community college instructors currently using that are similar and different from students' learning preferences and classroom needs?

Subquestion 2: What do community college developmental reading students feel are ineffective qualities of face-to-face instructors?

Subquestion 3: Are there additional qualities or traits aside from knowledge and practice of teaching methodology that community college students prefer from their face-to-face instructors that are shared in the alternative method of collecting feedback that are normally not provided as an opportunity to share on a traditional course evaluation form?

Subquestion 4: What instructional methods do developmental community college students prefer from their reading face-to-face community college instructor that they feel contributes to their success?

Conceptual Framework

I framed the study using information processing theory, as described by Willingham (2009). Information processing theory is based on the idea that all learners process information in a similar manner (Willingham, 2009). Willingham explained that a brain-based approach to instruction increases the amount of learning that occurs despite differences in students' learning styles or students' classroom needs. In addition, Willingham revealed that instructors who use brain-based teaching strategies have a better success rate with their students as opposed to using teaching strategies based on students' chronological, social, and emotional differences. Another major tenet of information processing theory, as described by Willingham (2009), included the idea that

humans do not think very often because the human brain is not designed for thought, but for the avoidance of thought. One way the mind prevents the need to think is through its reliance on memories to solve problems in addition to students' interactions with the classroom environment (Willingham, 2009).

Willingham (2009) suggested that the goal of teaching is to push students' understanding of basic skills to an automated level, so that there is more space in their working memory to focus on learning new concepts. Willingham identified classroom strategies to maximize learning regardless of students' differences: (a) reviewing each lesson plan in terms of what the student is likely to think about, (b) thinking carefully about attention grabbers, (c) using discovery learning with care, and (d) designing assignments so that students will unavoidably think about meaning (pp. 61-64).

Willingham argued that these strategies could help students transfer more information into long-term memory. Willingham also provided a foundation for this study's research questions because he explored effective teaching strategies that maximize student learning using a brain-based approach. I describe Willingham's classroom strategies based on information processing theory in further detail in Chapter 2.

Nature of the Study

I selected a narrative case study for two reasons. The first reason is that this type of qualitative design included student interviews and researcher observations, in which I produced valid and reliable results that were related to the study's conceptual framework and the central research question. I examined the data and categorized it into themes rather than reporting specific details (Creswell, 2007). The second reason I chose a case

study design is because I asked the participants to report their perspectives of effective teaching strategies. The participants personally reflected upon their effective and ineffective classroom experiences, and they shared their individual perspectives of an ideal learning environment during the student interviews. I successfully conducted eight READ 110 student interviews. In addition, I observed the selected READ 110 class for three 75-minute periods. Finally, the READ 110 instructor shared her intended lesson plans with me before each observation so that I could record this information for data analysis purposes.

Data were collected through three classroom observations, eight student interviews, and the collection of the instructor's three lesson plans for the class periods that I observed. I documented field notes during each of the classroom observations, and I created an audio recording immediately after each of the observations for my records. I briefly met with the instructor before each of the three classroom observations to review her anticipated lesson plans. I transcribed each interview (Appendix K). Then, I used open coding strategies to categorize the data so I could interpret themes that emerged from the participants' interviews. I used an open coding strategy because this process helped me identify words and patterns that were meaningful, and also related to the study's research questions. Next, I conducted exit interviews after I transcribed the audio recordings of each interview. I utilized this fact checking process to confirm that I correctly recorded each of the participant's responses. Finally, I summarized the themes that emerged from the interviews, and I describe my findings further in Chapter 4.

Definition of Terms

Adult learning: Kenner and Weinerman (2011) defined adult learning as an approach to learning that was developed to accommodate learners that are self-directed, motivated, possess experience, are ready to learn, and can take responsibility.

Andragogy: Minter (2011) defined andragogy as an approach to instruction in which teachers use different instructional methods based on the assumptions that students take responsibility to be self-directed, instructors take a student-centered approach to teaching, and students are self-motivated to learn.

Millennial: Crappell (2012) defined a millennial as an individual who is part of the Generation Y, born after 1980.

READ 110: A developmental reading and study skills course, which requires a Level 2 reading score on the community college's placement test. Time management skills, learning styles, note-taking skills, active reading strategies, understanding paragraphs, methods of organization, reading rates, and evaluating the author's techniques are studied in this course.

Assumptions

There were three assumptions related to this study. The first assumption was that the students would discuss their positive and negative learning experiences that occurred in their READ 110 course by not only discussing their experiences of how they were being taught, but also describing their perspectives of their instructor's professional traits. This assumption was necessary for the context of the study so that data could be collected

about students' preferred instructional strategies and students' perceptions of the professional qualities of an effective instructor.

The second assumption was that the participating READ 110 instructor would share her anticipated lesson plans with me before each observation. There were three lesson plans (Appendix E) that the instructor used during each of the scheduled observations. This assumption was necessary for the context of the study so that I could correlate my classroom observations with the instructor's anticipated plans and the actual implementation of the lessons. It was important to confirm the content the instructor taught in relation to what I observed so that I could avoid any misinterpretation of the instructor's intended planned activities while I recorded my field notes.

The final assumption of the study was that the participating instructor would be given an opportunity to incorporate the students' feedback they provided so that the instructor could modify classroom practices once I shared my findings and my interpretations. I could not confirm whether the instructor used the constructive feedback. However, I assumed that the instructor would consider using the results I produced from this study for best teaching practices. This assumption was necessary for the context of this study because my findings provided social change opportunities for the instructor so that she could have the opportunity to better understand the needs of her current developmental READ 110 students. In addition, the instructor could be given the opportunity to implement the strategies the students felt contributed to their success in a more efficient manner instead of receiving feedback from course evaluation forms after the end of the semester.

Scope and Delimitations

The specific problem that was addressed in this study was that traditional course evaluation forms that students complete are not returned to instructors until after the end of each semester. The data were collected through eight student interviews, three 75-minute classroom observations, and the collection of the instructor's lesson plans. This method of collecting data presented the instructor with an opportunity to use student feedback instead of waiting until the following semester when she instructed a new section of students.

The scope was chosen as the focus for the study because the selected READ 110 population included millennials and adult learners who needed college instruction that better met their individual needs. I focused on the selected READ 110 section in which a mix of millennials and adult learners were enrolled. The three classroom observations were conducted in a small classroom environment in which 15 students were registered. Eight of the 15 READ 110 students in the class willingly volunteered to participate in the study. The participating population was naturally small in nature because the college only allowed a maximum of 15 students to enroll in each READ 110 section. This smaller classroom population I studied created a potential weakness to the study because there was a threat to validity. However, I describe how I attempted to remedy a threat to validity in Chapter 3.

Finally, there was a potential transferability factor that existed within the study. Additional college administrators and faculty could use aspects of the study's design and findings to discover their own student population's learning preferences and classroom

needs in a more efficient manner. This could increase students' success in their future college courses when instructors are given the opportunity to reflect and incorporate students' preferences to learning using this alternative method of collecting feedback.

Limitations

There were three potential limitations to the study. The first limitation was that I attempted to gain a deeper understanding of one section of READ 110 students' classroom needs and learning preferences based on one college instructor who volunteered her section to participate in the study. Each of the student participants had the opportunity to share their experiences with the READ 110 course. The participants also briefly shared information about additional courses they were enrolled in during the fall 2014 semester. However, the instructors of those other courses did not participate in the study, which limited the amount of participants in the study. One way that I addressed this limitation was to recommend further action, which I describe in Chapter 5.

The second limitation was that this study was a single case that occurred over the course of three weeks of the fall 15-week semester. I triangulated the data I collected from the eight student interviews, the three classroom observations, and the instructor's lesson plans to ensure confirmability. I then analyzed and interpreted relationships, themes, and patterns that emerged from the data to ensure internal validity. There was a need to further explore this population's classroom preferences and learning needs at other colleges. Therefore, I address potential transferability factors by making a recommendation in Chapter 5 for additional studies to be designed and conducted on a larger scale.

The final limitation to this study was that I selected the participants using convenience sampling. Johnson and Christensen (2014) defined convenience sampling as “people who are available, volunteer, or can be easily recruited in the sample” (p. 263). The eight participants discussed their experiences they had with the READ 110 course and with their READ 110 instructor. There was a dependability issue because only eight of the 15 enrolled students participated, meaning that if there were additional students who participated, my findings may have been different. However, I addressed this potential dependability issue by using a case study design so I could focus on only one section of READ 110. Johnson and Christensen defined a case “as a bounded system” (p. 434). Therefore, I was able to study a small, specific population instead of using an ethnographic or grounded theory study design in which I would have needed to use a different sampling method to stay within the boundaries of the study to produce dependable results.

I also addressed a threat to quality by partaking in audio-recorded conversations with each of the eight participants. I provided an opportunity for each participant to have an open dialogue during the exit interviews when I asked the questions so that they could elaborate on any of their responses in case any clarification was needed. Also, at this time, each participant checked the interview transcripts to ensure they were accurately recorded, and I correctly interpreted each of the participant’s responses.

There could have been a potential bias to the study because I am an online college instructor. However, I was not the READ 110 instructor during the data collection process, which eliminated any possible bias that could have occurred during the

participants' interviews or during the classroom observations if I were instructing a section of READ 110. Also, I met the READ 110 instructor for the first time when she contacted me to explain that she was interested in volunteering to participate. It was then that we established an unbiased and professional relationship for the purpose of the study.

The READ 110 instructor gave me permission to hold a class meeting with her students in the beginning of the fall 2014 semester to review the consent form for interview participants (Appendix E), which stated that the students' participation in the study was voluntary, and their participation would have no effect on their individual READ 110 grades. I also included a statement in the consent form for interview participants (Appendix E) that the students' names would remain confidential throughout the duration of the study. I reviewed this statement again with each participant before I conducted individual student interviews in an attempt to avoid any potential biased responses due to the fact that the students were going to receive a grade for READ 110 from their instructor at the end of the fall 2014 semester.

Significance of Study

This study was significant to the field of education because I attempted to gain a deeper understanding of millennial and adult students' learning preferences and classroom needs. This study was also important because I created possibilities for instructors based on my findings and implications to successfully educate students so they could go on to be good citizens. The participants had the opportunity to share their learning preferences and classroom needs by describing their perspectives of what types of professional and personal qualities they believed were needed for effective instruction.

I provided the READ 110 instructor with an opportunity to incorporate the feedback the students provided so she could use their suggested classroom strategies during the same semester to better meet her students' needs.

I was able to fill the gap in research and add to the literature related to the traditional use of course evaluation forms and how instructors currently receive course feedback from their students. I also provided educators with information about the current college population's classroom needs. In addition, the results could be shared with higher education administrators so they can create another option of how to provide instructors with value-added course feedback so that other instructors can develop best teaching practices for their students. This study could also lead to the creation of new course evaluation tools for instructors who are interested in improving their teaching methods.

The second reason why this study was significant was because I suggested for instructors to consider potential new course practices and college teaching strategies based on my findings. The READ 110 instructor had the opportunity to receive practical and timely feedback to modify classroom instruction if she chose to use the feedback that the participants provided. The participants offered valuable information about best college teaching practices. The participants could benefit from instructional and classroom changes based on the feedback the students provided so that instructors could create more positive and effective learning experiences. The participants were given a voice in their learning process during this study. The participants identified their individual learning preferences and their classroom needs instead of identifying and

applying educational theorists' suggestions of effective learning strategies. The participating college was positively impacted because this alternative method of collecting feedback was a valuable tool that provided the READ 110 instructor with an opportunity to better accommodate her students' needs if she chose to do so.

On a larger scale, colleges could use this study's findings to examine their own programs if there was a need to conduct more research to better accommodate their specific student population's needs. Next, the results could be used to assist students with becoming more successful by providing them with opportunities to learn more effectively in classrooms from instructors who use their students' preferred methods of instruction while still upholding specific course requirements and standards.

Finally, the results could assist community college administrators with gaining a deeper understanding of their specific student populations, and could provide colleges with opportunities to make necessary short- and long-term changes to use best teaching practices for their specific population's classroom needs. I produced results that could be shared during professional development workshops at colleges so that other faculty and staff members could be informed about their student population's preferences for learning.

This study emphasized individual responsibility for college instructors to identify their own student population's needs. I conducted this study in an attempt to create additional opportunities for millennials and for adult students to have positive college classroom experiences, as well as to assist them with working to achieve their postsecondary goals. I contributed to social change because my findings added to current

literature related to this topic that provided colleges with feedback that could assist future instructors and college administrators with gaining a deeper understanding of best teaching practices that address millennials' and adult learners' classroom needs.

Summary

Chapter 1 included a detailed description of the case to gain a deeper understanding of this population's learning preferences and classroom needs. The topics that I described in Chapter 1 included the background information related to the problem statement, purpose of the study, research questions, nature of the study, definitions, assumptions, scope, delimitations and limitations, and significance of the study. The READ 110 students' learning preferences and classroom needs were explored through eight student interviews, three classroom observations, and the collection of the READ 110 instructor's lesson plans. I produced results in which I provided future social implications so that colleges could have opportunities to use students' feedback to help students be more successful in their courses. In the following chapter, I describe Willingham's (2009) approach to brain-based learning that framed the study. In addition, I review current literature related to effective instructional methods for teaching millennials and nontraditional adult students.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Course evaluation forms are traditionally distributed at the end of the semester after college courses had ended. Therefore, there was a need to gain a deeper understanding of the college population's classroom needs and learning preferences before the end of each semester so that instructors could have opportunities to reflect on and use students' feedback in a timely manner if they chose to do so. The purpose of this study was to explore the current community college population's learning preferences and classroom needs using classroom interviews and course observations to collect data as opposed to using traditional course evaluation forms that students anonymously and individually complete at the end of the semester. I conducted eight student interviews, three READ 110 classroom observations, and I collected the instructor's lesson plans to receive student feedback that was related to the selected READ 110 section.

This population possessed additional classroom needs because the READ 110 course was required for students who scored a Level 2 on the college's placement test before they were allowed to enroll in other college level courses. There was an increased need for higher education administrators to gain a deeper understanding of their students' learning preferences and classroom needs because it is important to use various instructional strategies in the classroom (Black, 2010). I conducted this study to produce findings that would provide instructors with students' recommendations about how to improve teaching practices to assist this population with better meeting course learning outcomes.

The following chapter includes a review of the literature in areas related to the study. I support the purpose of the study by describing current research based on evidence that related to the problem statement. I review Willingham's (2009) approach to information processing theory to provide evidence and support for the study's conceptual framework. I then explore community college classroom demographics to clarify millennials' and nontraditional adult students' learning preferences. Next, I describe current course evaluation methods and other feedback methods that colleges use. In addition, I review students' perspectives of effective instruction in the areas of communication, professional development practices, and personality traits. Finally, I review compared methods from previous studies related to this topic that support the design of the study's research questions.

Literature Search Strategy

I located recently published research from Walden University's EBSCOHOST database. I accessed the reviewed literature from the Academic Search Premiere research database. I also included research from Willingham's (2009) book, *Why Don't Students Like School*, because Willingham provided relevant information that relates to brain-based learning, which related to the study's framework. Also, *adult learning theory*, *millennial students*, *adult learners*, *effective instruction*, *students' perspectives of learning*, *effective college professors*, *course evaluations*, and *cognitive learning theories* were the key search terms entered into the database to locate the peer-reviewed research.

Conceptual Framework

Information Processing Theory

I chose Willingham's (2009) approach to information processing theory to frame the study because Willingham provided effective classroom strategies for all students even if individuals possess different abilities and different learning styles. I framed the study using a cognitive approach to learning because Willingham described cognitive processing that occurs among individuals in a similar manner instead of framing the study based on students' differences in their chronological age or differences in their developmental levels.

Willingham (2009) used information processing theory to develop practical learning strategies for learners of all ages and all developmental levels. I designed the research questions by using Willingham's approach to brain-based learning as a foundation because the purpose of the study was to identify students' perspectives of effective learning strategies. The READ 110 students differed in chronological age, and they also possessed different learning needs. However, Willingham provided effective classroom applications based on a cognitive approach to learning. Willingham's classroom applications were based on information processing theory, and he supported the idea that students could learn and retain information through brain-based strategies regardless of individual differences that they possessed.

Willingham (2009) provided classroom strategies to improve learning by using instructional techniques based on information processing theory. These classroom implications include the following: (a) respecting students' cognitive limits, (b) clarifying

problems to be solved, (c) reconsidering when to puzzle students, and (d) changing the pace (Willingham, 2009, pp. 15-17). Willingham contributed to the study's central research question because it was important to explore students' perspectives of how they prefer to learn because students may not possess knowledge of what current research suggests about effective teaching strategies, however, individuals cognitively process information in a similar manner. Therefore, Willingham's practical classroom applications could assist instructors with helping their students better process and retain information for long-term storage and also assist students with understanding their own capabilities of learning through the use of brain-based learning strategies.

In particular, Willingham (2009) addressed the importance of using familiar and concrete analogies to explain abstract topics as well as regularly practicing basic skills to increase students' learning of more advanced skills. Willingham stated that "humans understand new things in the context of things we already know, and most of what we know is concrete" (p. 67). This idea not only aids in respecting individuals' cognitive limits, but it also helps students make personal connections to new information and build upon what they already know. The participants preferred active approaches to learning, and for their instructors to use of a variety of different teaching methods, which I describe in Chapter 4. Strategies to gain the students' attention, retain information in long-term storage, and also retrieve course content from memory directly relates to Willingham's applications of information processing theory.

Willingham (2009) suggested that an increased number of tasks that the mind performs automatically allows for an increased capacity for individuals to perform higher

levels of cognitive skills such as analysis and synthesis. One application of this idea is that instructors could implement cognitive science into learning by understanding the idea that “people are naturally curious, but that curiosity is fragile” (Willingham, 2009, p. 7). Therefore, clarifying problems when they need to be solved and considering when to puzzle students maximizes cognitive brain functions in regards to cultivating students’ curiosity.

Finally, changing the pace can assist with keeping students’ attention to avoid the issue of students who “mentally check out” (Willingham, 2009, p. 17). Willingham meant that individuals are not inherently good at thinking even though they still enjoy it. It is this feeling of satisfaction or motivation that frames the way individuals think. Therefore, changing the pace helps to not only keep students engaged, but to also provide students with a feeling of engagement to motivate them to become involved in their learning process. Similarly, Willingham (2009) explained that students do not try to solve a problem that they feel it is too easy for them because they feel no fulfillment without a challenge. On the other hand, students are more likely to not think about a problem that they judge to be too difficult to solve because they do not believe they would be rewarded with a pleasurable feeling (Willingham, 2009, p. 8). Therefore, a practical classroom strategy would be to find a challenge that is stimulating to students, but not so difficult that students become frustrated and give up.

Similar Interpretations of Theory

I also included in the study the method in which content was delivered in classrooms. I observed and recorded the type of instruction that the instructor used during

the three classroom observations. According to Willingham (2009), one strategy that instructors could use in the college classroom is to plan a portion of the lesson to present the students with a big idea, and then allow time for students to explore the topic further. Instructors could also make changes in the classroom by using visual aids to help students internalize and understand big concepts. Willingham (2009) argued that instructors have the opportunity to pique students' interest, and instructors can achieve a higher level of success by helping students learn the content every time there is a change. These strategies for keeping students engaged also support the idea that some students work better independently, some students find group work more rewarding, and some students need a mental picture to bridge a disconnect in the information (Feden, 2008). The use of these various instructional strategies could help students transfer more content into their long-term memory and also keep their attention for longer periods of time (Feden, 2008).

Another major idea based on information processing theory is chunking unrelated pieces of information together into smaller amounts of related information to overcome the limitations of the working memory (Willingham, 2009). This is a critical skill to possess because humans can remember up to nine pieces of unrelated information in their working memory at any given time (Feden, 2008). According to Feden (2008), critical thinking becomes difficult if individuals cannot chunk multiple pieces of information together because critical thinking involves the linking together of information.

Students can produce positive results when they have the opportunity to critically think. A practical classroom application of this concept is to keep students active through the use of group work, the use of visuals, and the use of classroom discussions

(Willingham, 2009). In addition, it is important for instructors to be sensitive to students' developmental levels by breaking down more difficult problems for students who have the potential to solve them but need to see more simplified steps (Feden, 2008). Finally, Willingham (2009) suggested motivating students by showing them that they are capable of thinking critically. This is an important concept for instructors to understand so that they can foster a successful learning environment by providing critical thinking opportunities for their students.

Relationship to Research Questions

I based the research questions on Willingham's (2009) applications of brain-based learning. Some of the participants revealed that their READ 110 instructor's teaching strategies did not always bring them satisfaction. It is important for students to have the opportunity to become curious from information that they have not previously been exposed to before (Feden, 2008). Therefore, it is not only important for instructors to identify cognitive strategies to help students learn information, but it is the instructor's role to actively engage students with material that students would be more likely to retain.

In summary, Willingham (2009) contributed to this study's framework in two ways. First, Willingham provided information about the cognitive learning process instead of using a learning approach that only considers students' chronological age differences. Second, Willingham provided practical classroom applications with the goal of assisting learners in transferring more information into long-term memory. Finally, Willingham used a cognitive approach to learning by providing practical classroom

applications for instructors to help their students effectively retain information while also enjoying the learning process.

In the following section, I review literature that relates to the current college population and the adult learning process as interpreted by researchers. I also review evidence that supports the exploration of millennial and adult college students' needs to better assist them in the learning process.

Literature Review

Millennial Students' Characteristics

It is important to consider generational characteristics when determining what types of students are currently enrolled in college. Crappell (2012) explained that millennials possess several characteristics, which differ from previous generations. Crappell revealed that the most identifiable trait of this generation is that technology is integrated into their lives, including cell phones and social networking sites. This phenomenon is causing millennials to possess a greater need for a sense of constant connection (Crappell, 2012). Crappell also described positive qualities that millennial students exhibit: (a) confidence, (b) self-expression, (c) collaboration, (d) a sense of collectivity, (e) the ability to be liberal, and (f) the ability to be open to change.

In contrast, Payment (2008) presented an opposing view of millennials. Payment explained that this generation is the first to be neglected by parents, which is causing this generation to develop distrust and poor attitudes toward adults. Payment also suggested that millennial students possess little knowledge about the importance of career planning. This phenomenon is related to students who take college courses but do not understand

the reason why they are enrolled in school. Therefore, millennials need to learn how to make independent responsible decisions, which can lead to their success as they transition from the college classroom into the workforce (Payment, 2008). Payment's (2008) argument about how millennials communicate can contrasted to Crappell's (2012) view of this generation's characteristics because Payment (2008) explained how millennials possess a need for collaboration and collectivity, which leads to a different perspective of how millennials interact and communicate with adults and with each other.

Crappell (2012) did not reveal research about learning styles, learning theories, or teaching methods. However, Crappell provided a deeper understanding of the underlying characteristics that some college students possess by providing valuable information to instructors about millennials. Payment (2008) shared vital information about millennial traits, which can help instructors better understand their students' needs. However, Crappell and Payment did not include information about the intelligence level of the individuals they researched. Instead, Crappell and Payment described millennials' generational characteristics. Crappell (2012) provided background information about millennials by describing the positive qualities that this generation possesses. However, Crappell did not include any information about the negative qualities that this generation possesses that could impact classroom learning. On the contrary, Payment (2008) described traits that millennials possess as they begin to emerge into the job market. Most of the background information Payment provided included a description of the negative qualities or lack of personal traits that millennials possess.

Teaching Millennial Students

Roehling et al. (2011) discussed ways to engage millennial students through classroom discussion. Roehling et al. argued that engaging students through classroom discussion helps to meet this generation's need for collaboration. Roehling et al. also provided support for the need to conduct more research about the current college student population's classroom needs. Roehling et al. attempted to discover practices that could provide students with opportunities to be successful. Therefore, Roehling et al. contributed to the literature for this study because their findings can be used for professional growth and real-life application opportunities.

Finally, the lecture is a traditional teacher-centered instructional method that is used, which is not the most effective way to deliver information to this generation of students. Exley and Dennick (2009) explained that the lecture is a standard model of teaching in which information is presented to a large group of students in a classroom. A traditional approach to instruction is to use lecture as the primary method of delivering information, which can be viewed as a passive approach to learning, where more nontraditional approaches to instruction include active learning strategies such as questioning, problem solving, and discussion (Exley & Dennick, 2009). Crappell's (2012) research about millennials' characteristics supports the idea to explore whether or not lecture is an effective strategy to deliver instruction to this population of students. Instructors can plan alternative learning activities besides lecture to foster a learning community by utilizing a sense of collaboration and connectivity that Crappell (2012)

and Payment (2008) suggested, as opposed to a traditional teacher-centered approach to learning that Exley and Dennick (2009) described.

There is a possibility that college instructors will soon need to modify their instructional practices based on their students' generational needs including the phenomenon that some students in this population possess less individual responsibility and are increasingly codependent (Varallo, 2008). Varallo (2008) revealed the need for instructors to become more caring. This trend has recently emerged because there has been an increase in the number of millennials who enroll in college courses. Varallo discussed this generation's need to be constantly stimulated and entertained, stemming from their parents, which is causing this need to also be met in the classroom. Varallo also revealed that there is a developing need for college instructors to take on a mothering approach to instruction because students expect their instructors to care. Varallo explained this phenomenon, which is leading to more expectations and higher standards for instructors, not from the institutions, but from students. As a result, instructors could experience burn out as they continue to go more and more out of their way to care for their students.

Varallo (2008) did not discuss this population's intelligence levels in her review. Instead, Varallo focused on pressure that is being placed on college instructors to increase their level of caring. Payment (2008) also discussed the lack of individual student responsibility this generation possesses, which is causing instructors to work harder to teach their courses because of the increased expectation to meet students' individual needs. Varallo provided suggestions to assist instructors with addressing the issue of

students' relying on their teachers to foster individual responsibility within these students. Varallo suggested that (a) instructors could be less available for their students outside of office hours and outside of class, (b) they could deduct points when students ask questions in which the answer is on their syllabi, and (c) they could refuse to assist with advising when students arrive unprepared for an advising session. I readdress these strategies Varallo recommended in the interpretation section of Chapter 5 in which I interpret and also connect the participants' perspectives of their classroom needs to Varallo's research about and increased need for instructors to care.

Adult Learning: Previous Research in Relation to the Study

Merriam (2008) provided background information about effective teaching strategies for nontraditional students. Merriam discussed that in the early twentieth century, North America focused on the individual learner as an independent individual by using andragogical approaches to learning, which is also self-directed learning. Merriam explained that a complex approach to adult learning did not take place until the 1980s. Therefore, Merriam suggested that accommodating adult learners is a fairly new approach to learning as opposed to North America's previous educational approaches to educating adults. Merriam identified that adult learning is a cognitive process, argued that it takes place in various ways, and supported the idea to further explore the specific learning needs of the current college population who differs in chronological age.

Students with Disabilities

It is also important for individuals with disabilities to be successful in their college courses, and this needed to be addressed when identifying effective instructional

practices for the current community college population. The American Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) requires higher education institutes to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities including the areas of housing, instruction, and examinations (Barnard-Brak, Lechtenberger, & Lan, 2010). Therefore, appropriate accommodations are in place so that all students are provided an opportunity to be successful in their college courses. However, Foley (2006) revealed that there has recently been a major shift in students' individual responsibility from the K-12 classroom as they move into postsecondary schools. During students' K-12 years, parents and teachers monitor students' academic progress, however, college students must take individual responsibility on their own (Foley, 2006).

Students with disabilities “often encounter barriers that could impede their ability to access, participate in, and complete higher education” (Mamiseishvili & Koch, 2011, p. 93). Some of the challenges that students with disabilities encounter with postsecondary schools include financial burdens, a lack of school staffing, and lack of campus departments coordinating with each other (Mamiseishvili & Koch, 2011, p. 93). On the other hand, some colleges offer supportive academic programs for students with disabilities to help them become successful in college (Troiano, Liefeld, & Trachtenberg, 2010). Troiano et al. (2010) found that students who consistently use available academic support programs have higher success rates than those who do not.

A second option for adult students with learning disabilities who pursue higher education is to enroll in a first year university preparation course (Reed, Kennett, Lewis, Lund-Lucas, Stallberg, & Newbold, 2009). Reed et al. (2009) described a first year

preparation course for college students with learning disabilities that focused on teaching college success strategies to first year students. Kennett et al. (2009) found that there were higher gains in students' self-efficacy because students with disabilities had an increased confidence in the learning process than those students without learning disabilities who also took the preparation course.

Additional College Classroom Demographics

It was also necessary to examine the remaining population enrolled in college to identify students' classroom needs and learning preferences before placing the full responsibility of students' success on college instructors. Kenner and Weinerman (2011) described three types of adult learners: (a) workers who lost their job to the recession in 2008 looking to develop new skills, (b) veterans who delayed their education, and (c) adults who completed their high school equivalent, and took college courses.

In addition, Merriam (2008) stated "adult learning is a complex phenomenon that can never be reduced to one single explanation" (p. 94). Merriam revealed that adult learning is related to cognitive processing, it occurs in different contexts, and it is multidimensional. Merriam helped to increase awareness about the complexity of the adult learning process. Merriam's (2008) description of adult learning theory relates to Kenner and Weinerman's (2011) description of adult learners to assist instructors with gaining a deeper understanding of this population's needs to help increase students' success levels.

Similarly, Honigsfeld and Dunn (2006) used a learned style model to discover adult learning characteristics that focused on college students to discover practical

classroom applications. Honigsfeld and Dunn found that adult males and females have different learning style preferences, students with a higher grade point average have different learning styles than those with lower grade point averages, and a difference in age is also a contributing factor as well. Honigsfeld and Dunn (2006) used a learning style approach to understanding adults' classroom needs instead of using a theory-based approach such as Knowles' adult learning theory. Honigsfeld and Dunn revealed that no two individuals approach learning in the same way. This was an opposing view to Willingham's (2009) suggestions in which individuals share similar learning characteristics when using brain-based learning strategies. Learning styles were not included within the scope of this study because this approach to learning does not correlate with effective learning strategies using brain-based learning activities. However, it should be noted that there are several researchers such as Honigsfeld and Dunn (2006) who successfully incorporated learning style characteristics into the adult learning model to provide instructors with practical instructional strategies.

Kenner and Weinerman (2011) provided background information about the current college student population as well as providing instructors with a background of adult learning theory and how this learning theory applies to different student populations. Kenner and Weinerman (2011) shared their perspective of the current college population by discussing (a) reasons why students were in school, (b) their learning models, and (c) how learners process information differently.

As an extension of Kenner and Weinerman's (2011) study, Minter (2011) explored various types of learning theories college instructors need to understand. Kenner

and Weinerman (2011) explored learning assumptions so that college educators could develop knowledge in this area as they adapt their instructional methods to better meet the needs of an adult student population. Minter (2011) explored the issue of how college instructors acquire an instructional skill set to become effective by looking at both pedagogical and andragogical assumptions to the learning process. Finally, Minter suggested a self-survey tool in which instructors could use to adapt their teaching styles through an audience analysis along with incorporating communication and feedback from their students.

Minter (2011) contributed to the study in four ways. First, Minter emphasized the need for educators to be aware of their teaching practices along with possessing knowledge of learning theories to assist instructors with understanding effective instructional practices. Minter's self-awareness tool was helpful because instructors could become educated about the adult learning population and use self-evaluation tools and feedback from students to modify future courses. Minter suggested more individualized and smaller group learning so that instruction could be tailored to meet students' different learning needs. Second, Minter expressed the need for college instructors to communicate with each other and share their knowledge of effective teaching methods as traditional approaches to college teaching included little collaboration among teachers within their departments. Third, Minter stressed that instruction must be adapted to the audience. Finally, Minter suggested that traditional learning theories do not always apply to adult learners.

Similarly, Russell (2006) described an overview of the adult learning process, stating that the major difference between school aged children and adult learners is “the degree of motivation, the amount of previous experience, the level of engagement in the learning process, and how the learning is applied” (p. 349). Russell argued that instructors need to know how their students learn best. Russell also revealed that it is important for instructors to plan effective teaching strategies because adult learners have different classroom needs and learning preferences.

Next, McGrath (2009) reviewed Knowles’ adult learning theory, and she explained that adults need to know why they learn new information before they participate in the learning process. In addition, McGrath revealed that the level of experience that adults possessed could apply to a learning situation. In addition, adults’ concepts of themselves, in regards to their levels of confidence and self-esteem, are also a factor that contributes to adult learning (McGrath, 2009). McGrath’s (2009) review related to Minter’s (2011) and Russell’s (2006) research about adult learning theories because all three researchers discussed differences between adult learners and traditional post-secondary high school students. The researchers also stressed that instructors should have an awareness of the learning differences so they can better assist their students.

Luna and Cullen (2011) discussed alternative strategies to graduate level teaching by allowing instructors to use technology such as podcasting to complement the way adults prefer to learn because many students possess technological devices. In addition, another benefit of podcasting, besides its convenience, is that it is a more effective studying tool rather than only being able to review individual class notes after a lecture

(Luna & Cullen, 2011). Luna and Cullen (2011) revealed that the use of podcasting increases students' understanding of course material.

Similarly, Bustos and Nussbaum (2009) presented information on the use of technology as a teaching tool in higher education. Bustos and Nussbaum revealed that incorporating technology into instruction, such as using portable pocket personal computer devices, led to a higher level of student success. However, one issue with including technology in the classroom is that instructors are not motivated to incorporate the teaching tools into their lessons because these teaching tools take extra time and training to set up (Bustos & Nussbaum, 2009). Bustos and Nussbaum (2009) provided information about effective teaching tools for millennials and adult learners that were not available in the classroom just ten years ago. This study relates to my findings in which the participants shared that they enjoyed using the *My Reading Lab* as an online supplement to the READ 110 class.

Luna and Cullen (2011) described a relationship between the use of technology and how adults prefer to learn. Luna and Cullen supported the idea that students could use their life and work experiences for reflection during learning, find relevance to the material, and use their motivation to learn with podcasting as an added learning tool. Kenner and Weinerman's (2011) description of the adult population combined with Luna and Cullen's (2011) review of the benefits of technology provided current research in relation to this the study's research questions in terms of students' preferences to learning because it was suggested that instructors could utilize additional teaching tools in today's classrooms that could better assist students.

Attributes of an Effective Instructor

In Chapter 1, I include the problem statement in which I describe the need for an alternative method of collecting student feedback besides the use of course evaluation forms to provide instructors with information to help to improve their students' success rates. However, current course evaluations first had to be examined before the evaluation process could be modified or before an alternative method of collecting student feedback could be developed and implemented.

According to Dean, Lauer, and Urquhart (2005), successful schools possess a common factor which is that administrators and instructors at institutions constantly examine their work and focus on ways to improve their programs in an ongoing manner using data and evaluation to drive their improvement (Dean et al., 2005). Dean et al. (2005) implicated that schools should be progressive and make changes to improve so that students can achieve higher levels of success. According to Dean et al., the core value to reflect on one's teaching methods to make instruction more effective is instilled within educators early through teacher preparation programs. Dean et al. (2005) supported this study because the results created a need to gain a deeper understanding of what types of activities and interactions occur in effective instructors' classrooms. However, it was difficult to find a standard form of measurement to evaluate college instructors' effectiveness without bias. Therefore, although I considered this study's design, I used a case study approach to gain a deeper understanding of the participants' classroom needs, and I made a recommendation to conduct a study on a larger scale.

Lumpkin (2007) took a more specific approach to evaluating an effective instructor to discover if there was a correlation between teachers' effectiveness and students' outcomes. Lumpkin found that there are other factors besides instructional techniques that positively impacts students. Lumpkin described characteristics of teachers, which includes (a) personal qualities such as believing in their students' ability to achieve, (b) engaging their students actively in learning, and (c) reflecting on their teaching practices. This information about instructors' personal characteristics relates to other colleges that work to improve their individual academic programs.

Mageehorn (2006) examined a different classroom environment in which women in transition from prison to the community reflected on what characteristics they felt created an effective teacher. Mageehorn found that teachers who (a) encourage hands-on experimenting, (b) encourage the use of learning styles, (c) use individualized instruction, and (d) are understanding to students' needs, are helpful. Mageehorn's approach to effective teaching was slightly different from Lumpkin's (2007) research because Mageehorn examined a different type of learning environment that included adult women. Mageehorn (2006) found that adult students have similar learning needs, which were also described in Dean et al.'s (2005) study, providing support to further explore adult learners' needs.

Personal Characteristics

Hargrove (2005) described traits of effective instructors in which she found through Bain's (2004) study. Hargrove (2005) argued that instructors' personal characteristics, in addition to instructors' use of certain teaching methods, are another

factor that determined teachers' effectiveness. Bain's (2004) first trait of effective instructors is that teachers establish a comfortable learning environment, which allows students to think critically. Bain's second trait of effective instructors is that (a) instructors clearly communicate with their students, (b) offer support to students when they make mistakes, and (c) encourage students to try again. Bain's third trait is related to instructors who ask students probing questions to encourage thinking skills. Bain's fourth trait of effective teaching is instructors provide constant feedback to students. Finally, the fifth trait Bain described is that instructors could obtain their students' attention and keep their focus.

I reviewed Bain's (2004) study because it was important to discuss additional traits that effective instructors possess besides using theory-based instruction. I asked the participants if there were additional personal or professional traits that they preferred in an instructor. These humanistic approaches to effective teaching that Bain (2004) described are important because teachers are human beings, they possess human characteristics that emerge from their instruction, and they may not always follow traditional theory-based instruction in their teaching philosophies.

Bain (2004) supported the idea that there was a need for college instructors to receive feedback from students so they could work to improve upon their own methods of instruction. However, Bain shared general traits that could be interpreted differently by instructors. The valuable results from Bain's (2004) study, and the need for ongoing teacher evaluations that Dean et al. (2005) described, revealed that there were transferability factors in which community college instructors could also benefit from

receiving feedback from their students to reflect on their own teaching practices. The characteristics of effective instructors that were described in this section were a critical application to this study because Bain (2004) and Hargrove (2005) suggested that personal qualities of effective college instructors needed to be further explored. However, the one missing component in this section was that students were not directly asked what their specific needs were for a specific course. Therefore, Bain (2004) and Hargrove (2005) implicated the idea to explore students' preferences further by interviewing individual students. Effective instructors' characteristics that READ 110 students prefer are further described in Chapter 4.

Additional Research on Effective Instructors

Polk (2006) described ten characteristics of effective instructors. However, unlike Hargrove's (2005) research in the field of education, Polk collected data through individuals' personal experiences and professional relationships. Polk's (2006) characteristics include:

good prior academic performances, communication skills, creativity, professionalism, pedagogical knowledge, thorough and appropriate student evaluation and assessment, the self-development of lifelong learning, personality, possessing a talent or content area knowledge, and the ability to model concepts in their own areas. (p. 23)

Polk (2006) discussed how personality influences teaching, meaning that personality cannot be manipulated through professional development. Polk explained that it was almost impossible for students to leave out their teachers' personality and how it

impacts their learning experiences. However, Polk did not suggest for instructors to change their personalities. Instead, Polk stressed for teachers to be aware of their own personality strengths and weaknesses so instructors could adapt their instructional styles to better use their own natural strengths. Polk's research implicated that it is possible for college instructors to be able to identify their own strengths and weaknesses to better meet the needs of their students.

More evidence was needed about how instructors address students' individual needs. Polk (2006) provided information on possible validity and reliability issues that could arise when students evaluate instructors based on personality and likability factors rather than just evaluating their instructors based on their teaching methods. Therefore, I designed the study to allow participants to share some of the personal qualities of their instructor the students liked and disliked. I included information in this section about how different studies were conducted to describe and measure instructors' effectiveness. In the following pages, I discuss personality traits and additional attributes effective instructors possess.

Instructor Personality

Instructors' personalities were also a factor for students to consider when determining an effective instructor. Helterbran (2008) indicated that certain attitudes and behaviors of teachers determine an ideal professor, and these traits are presentation, personal, and professional. Polk (2006) argued that teachers could improve and enhance their communication skills through experience and professional development. However, according to Polk, personality is a trait that could be identified, but not necessarily

changed. Similarly, Helterbran (2008) stated that “students occasionally complain of not being compatible with their teachers or having personality conflicts” (p. 26). Therefore, Polk (2006) and Helterbran (2008) revealed a need to determine if students prefer some of the personal qualities that their instructors possess.

One way to identify if personality is a factor in determining an effective instructor is to conduct student evaluations annually so students can voice their opinions as to why some students are compatible or incompatible with their instructors. However, Helterbran (2008) argued that students’ evaluations could be biased because there is an issue with determining if a poor evaluation is because the student does not like the instructor’s personality, dislikes their instructor’s appearance, or if there are some major gaps or lack of effective instruction actually occurring. Helterbran (2008) did not suggest for instructors to change to become more likeable. Instead, Helterbran suggested that instructors could continue to gain experience and continue to professionally develop in their content areas as well as in their delivery methods.

Brown, Morehead, and Smith (2008) discussed the idea of changing potential teachers’ perceptions of the qualities of effective instructors. Brown et al. (2008) revealed that liking children is sufficient enough to become an effective teacher. This idea was practical, because Brown et al. shared information about teachers who enjoy working with students in classroom environments, which they feel contributes to instructors’ effectiveness. I considered these interpersonal skills to be part of the qualities of effective instructors to examine during the data collection process of this study. However, this was a separate study that should be conducted on its own. Therefore, I chose to study

students' perspectives of their classroom needs to be the primary focus. I also created an additional sub-question in which I asked students about their preferences of instructors' personal qualities.

Communication

Polk (2006) argued that students judge the level of clarity of the way information is delivered in class. Principals and administrators provide instructors with evaluations that suggest ways to improve students' comprehension. However, it was the students in the end that are able to delineate if their instructors effectively communicate through their teachings. Polk (2006) also indicated that oral communication during instruction is not the only trait that students observe, but also, nonverbal communication is important. Instructors who are able to communicate with their students in a nonverbal manner exhibit an increase in their effectiveness (Polk, 2006).

Similar to Polk's (2006) research on communication is the idea that instructors establish clear obtainable goals, plan, and then instruct their lessons based on the goals that they set for their students (Hargrove, 2005). In other words, instructors demonstrate higher levels of effectiveness when they have an understanding of their students' ability levels, which allows instructors to plan and implement their lessons based on what they know about their students. According to Hargrove (2005), instructors set high expectations for students and clearly explain content in detail during the communication process, and as a result, students have the opportunity to think on a more critical level. It was beneficial to discover that communication is a critical trait that students feel effective instructors should possess.

Professional Development

Polk (2006) revealed a need for instructors to professionally develop so they could adapt and evolve in a changing learning environment. Most schools provide instructors with training sessions during the school year. However, it should not only be the schools' responsibility to improve the success levels of their staff. Instead, Polk argued that instructors are life-long learners, and they need to share responsibility for personally and professionally growing in their field of practice. Therefore, personal and professional development in instructors' individual field of study should be ongoing during career development and also during instruction.

There was also a need for professional development opportunities for educators, which emerged from Schaffhauser's (2009) study. Schaffhauser described a generation of teachers that possess knowledge of technology more than any other previous teaching generation, and suggested ways how to incorporate technology in the educational process where educators partner with their administrators to incorporate the new program into their classrooms. Schaffhauser (2009) discussed a recent shift in the classroom in which there is more technology being used than ever before, and it is combined with a mixed population of learners who are familiar, and also those who are not familiar with technology. Schaffhauser provided valuable information about a classroom phenomenon in which experienced instructors need to continue to learn new strategies to better support their students' technological needs.

Students' Perspectives

Turanli (2009) analyzed students' perspectives on emotionally supportive teachers. Turanli found that students possess a high satisfaction level when teachers provide support. Turanli identified a need to examine students' perspectives and also suggested a need for a more in depth analysis of emotionally supportive teachers and their relationship with their students' success. I explored students' perspectives of their preferred methods of instruction, and I produced results that possess transferability factors that related to Turanli's study. On the other hand, Schidler (2009) stated that "children's behaviors are influenced by their teachers' behaviors and use of language" (p. 88). Schidler suggested strategies such as using conflict resolution, using a guidance approach, and most importantly, reflecting on actions to improve communication with students. Schidler argued that teachers need to be aware of their interactions with students. Schidler's research could also be applied to the higher education level because instructors could influence their students' levels of success at any age.

College Student Expectations and Responsibilities

It was important to understand students' expectations of college requirements before I could explore this population's learning preferences and classroom needs. Instructors are not the only individuals who possess the responsibility to determine the success or failure of their students. It was also important to consider the students' role in the learning process because students need to take individual responsibility to be successful. Collier and Morgan (2008) argued that instructors could contribute to students' success or failure, and found that students have to take individual accountability

for their own success. One of the beneficial outcomes of this study was that Collier and Morgan shared key factors in identifying the role of college students, meaning that there was an emphasis on the responsibility on students being in charge for their own success instead of putting this responsibility solely on staff and faculty members. Collier and Morgan also revealed that faculty expects students to work on assignments two to three hours outside of the college classroom for each hour in the classroom in addition to expecting that students set education as their primary goal. On the other hand, students' revealed they contributed an appropriate amount of time into their courses based on the actual amount of time they had available during the school week, because other factors affected this goal such as work or family commitments (Collier & Morgan, 2008).

One final study worthy of discussion about student responsibility was Price and Bradford's (2010) research about college students who enrolled in summer course offerings and identified examples of students taking individual responsibility for their own learning. Price and Bradford discovered the reason why students enrolled in summer courses was to graduate early, finish school on time, or because they needed a specific class for their major. Price and Bradford also identified that some students take individual responsibility in their learning, are motivated, and contribute additional time to their studies to pursue their professional goals.

Case Study Design

I used a structured approach to the research process because I was able to reduce the amount of data being analyzed, which simplified the process. However, one of the drawbacks to a structured approach was that the study had one single dimension. I

designed this study based on what best fit the research questions and the framework even though there were benefits and drawbacks to collecting qualitative data. Therefore, I chose a qualitative case study as the framework because of the design of the research questions. In addition, the philosophical assumption that I used was ontological. Creswell (2007) stated that ontological assumptions imply that reality is subjective, and can be seen differently through the participants' perspectives. Therefore, an ontological approach to the data collection and interpretation fit with a constructivist approach since the theme of the study derived from the results instead of through specific detailed reports. I chose a case study design after I reviewed literature from researchers who developed strong single designs for their studies.

Slate, LaPrairie, Onwuegbuzie, and Schulte (2009) used a mixed model study to examine the best and worst college professors. Slate et al. (2009) identified themes related to what students believe to be an effective instructor: (a) the ability to communicate, (b) the willingness to help students, (c) the ability to teach with different modalities, (d) the ability to build relationships, (e) is motivating, (f) is involved, (g) is caring, (h) challenges students, (i) is knowledgeable, and finally, (j) is respectful. Slate et al. also identified themes that emerged from what students felt an ineffective college instructor possessed: (a) lack of communication, (b) poor teaching, (c) no learning occurring, (d) often off task, (e) unpreparedness, (f) poor time management, (g) disrespect towards others, (h) boring instruction, (i) uncaring personality, (j) unprofessionalism, (k) lack of using multiple teaching modalities, and (l) talks off task instead of teaches. Slate et al. (2009) had a direct influence on this study for three

reasons. The first reason was that Slate et al.'s designed research questions that were specific enough to be used in a qualitative case study and not just in a mixed model study. Slate et al. influenced the way I designed the research questions, in which I focused on a smaller amount of students to promote social change at one specific community college. The second influence that Slate et al. (2009) had on this study was they provided information about a possible research method for the data collection process. Slate et al. used a mixed method analysis to discover 171 students' views of their professors. I originally considered a quantitative method approach for the study. Slate et al. revealed a need for a case study design so that I could further explore individual testimonies in depth at college on a smaller level, which limited the amount of participants. The final influence of the study was that Slate et al. generated a possible grounded theory because there were more aspects to an effective instructor than just teaching strategies. In addition, there were possible personal characteristics that played a part in determining qualities of an effective instructor.

Slate et al.'s (2009) results were similar to Polk's (2006) results of personality factors involved, and therefore, required additional research in this area. Personality factors of college instructors related to student achievement helped to generate a possible hypothesis or grounded theory for the study. However, this study was qualitative in nature. Therefore, there was no hypothesis. Slate et al. (2009) and Polk (2006) supported the idea of conducting a qualitative study instead of using a mixed method design or a quantitative design because there was a need to explore students' perspectives on an

individualized level rather than conducting a similar study on a larger scale with a larger participant pool.

On a similar note, Helterbran (2008) reviewed professors using a popular website, and chose three universities in Pennsylvania, based on “the reputation of the program and the quality of its graduates” (p.129). However, Helterbran did not provide an underlying basis as to why the participating schools were chosen. In addition, a description of the sample student population who participated in the study was not included, and this is because ratemyprofessor.com is a website in which students voluntarily post comments. Therefore, the only sampling procedures that Helterbran had control over was choosing the teachers who students evaluated online. Helterbran described the process of how he collected data from ratemyprofessor.com. However, there was no description of the process that Helterbran used to actually analyze the data. It appeared that this study used a narrative report as part of the data that were collected, in which themes were derived from the evaluations.

One concern about the validity of the results of this study was that Helterbran’s (2008) interpretation of the findings created a concern for potential bias. For example, Helterbran stated that certain comments on students’ evaluations were unclear, and they were not included in the study. Helterbran (2008) had positive intentions of omitting some students’ comments that appeared to be an attack on an instructor such as “she makes me not want to be a teacher” (p. 129). A threat to validity and reliability would have been reduced if a deeper description of the research procedures that Helterbran used were described. There was also a potential threat to validity because of the content that

students posted online. In other words, it was difficult to determine which students were giving honest feedback, and which students were venting through their posts on the website because they received a poor grade.

An alternative data collection method would have avoided a validity threat for the study because ratemyprofessor.com is a website in which anyone can post comments about an instructor (Helterbran, 2008). Helterbran suggested that there was a need for a more in depth approach to this topic. There was also a need for a clearly described section about the data collection process and the data analysis procedures for any future studies that would be conducted.

Finally, I used a constructivist approach to design this study. Gordon (2009) discussed ways to include a constructivist approach in the classroom not as a tool for instruction, but instead, the applications were developed for psychology, sociology, linguistics, and cultural studies. This study was important to review because most of the research that I review in Chapter 2 is related to practical suggestions for effective teaching strategies. However, Gordon took a perspective that was not the same as the theoretical applications to teaching that were described earlier in this review. Gordon's implications could be used as a different approach to learning in the bigger picture instead of suggesting specific teaching strategies for instructors. The researchers mentioned in this section provided support to successfully design and utilize a case study approach.

Research Questions

Kenner and Weinerman (2011) provided support for this study in two ways. First, Kenner and Weinerman described the different needs of adult learners by identifying characteristics of nontraditional college students. Second, Kenner and Weinerman identified a need to modify the college curriculum to the needs of nontraditional adult learners in their recommendations because adult learners have difficulty integrating with traditional students in college classrooms. Kenner and Weinerman recommended that understanding and addressing this populations' various needs could help students become better integrated with the mix of students enrolled in college courses.

Similarly, Merriam's (2008) review of adult learning theory included information that supported the study's research questions. Merriam revealed that there was a need to know more about adult learning so that college instructors could better structure learning activities for those students. Jackson (2009) also supported the idea to further investigate adult learning needs in detail as she shared her experience of being an adult learner after she reviewed a course textbook about learning in adulthood. Jackson reflected on her knowledge about adult learning, and she connected it to her personal learning experiences. This review provided information about adult learners' experiences, and support to further investigate additional adult learners' needs and experiences.

Finally, Meltzer and McNulty (2011) studied stereotypes that were revealed in students' evaluations of nurturing professors, and they found that nurturing male professors are evaluated higher than female professors of the same nurturing level. This study was an example of how different types of external influences affect student

evaluations that are beyond instructors' teaching methods. Therefore, the limitations and delimitations sections of this study defined the limits of what I included in the study and a description of potential bias, which could have affected the study.

Summary and Conclusions

In Chapter 2, I provide support for this case study by reviewing literature related to the conceptual framework, background, participating population, traits of an effective instructor, current teaching methods, current course evaluation methods, the study's design, and the research questions. The major themes of Chapter 2 are (a) millennial student characteristics, (b) effective classroom instructional strategies, (c) attributes of effective teachers, (d) instructor's personalities, (e) teaching adult learners, (f) case study design, and (g) support for the study's research questions. First, Willingham (2009) provided support for the conceptual framework. I review characteristics of the millennial generation and adult learners and effective classroom instruction relating to the research question. I present support for the gap in research and the problem statement in which a deeper understanding to this population's classroom needs. Also, I provide support for the research questions and the case study design. Finally, I discuss results and outcomes from previous studies, providing readers with current research of what qualities determined an effective instructor, which include communication and personality factors, in addition to providing students with a variety of different teaching methods.

In Chapter 2, I explore two areas that relate to effective instruction about teaching a mixed population of millennial age students and nontraditional adult learners. The first is if the READ 110 participants would produce similar results relating to previous

research. The second is if the READ 110 participants would produce alternative results about personality factors when looking beyond effective instructional methods. I describe the results of the study, and I include both of these factors in depth in Chapter 4. My goal for this study was to fill the gap in research using an alternative method of collecting course feedback, relating to what the current college population preferred in an instructor. I designed the research questions to provide the study's participants with open-ended questions so I could record answers and analyze the data to gain a deeper understanding of this population's preferred methods of instruction.

In Chapter 3, I revisit the problem statement, and I describe the methodology plan in detail. I designed the methodology plan based on my review of current literature relating to the central research question.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this case study was to explore, describe, and understand the current community college population's learning preferences and classroom needs. This group of developmental students could have possessed additional classroom needs because READ 110 is required for students who score a Level 2 on the college's placement test before they are permitted to enroll in other college level courses. The data collection methods that I used provided an opportunity for students to share their preferred methods of learning using an alternative approach to collecting feedback instead of the traditional course evaluation forms. I used the following methods to collect data: (a) I conducted eight student participant interviews, (b) I observed three 75-minute classroom observations of READ 110, and (c) I collected the instructor's lesson plans for each of the class periods that I observed. I used this method of data collection to gain a deeper understanding of what instructional needs this population of college students prefers from their instructors. In the following chapter, I describe the study's research design and rationale, my role as a researcher, the instrumentation process, the methodology plan, and issues of trustworthiness.

Research Design and Rationale

The following questions were designed to gain a deeper understanding of the current college population's classroom needs and learning preferences using an alternative method of data collection rather than collecting students' feedback from a traditional course evaluation form.

Central question: What does the selected population of community college students need from their face-to-face instructors to be successful in their first-year READ 110 course that can be provided to their instructors through an alternative method of collecting course feedback?

Subquestion 1: What types of instructional methods are face-to-face community college instructors currently using that are similar and different from students' learning preferences and classroom needs?

Subquestion 2: What do community college developmental reading students feel are ineffective qualities of face-to-face instructors?

Subquestion 3: Are there additional qualities or traits aside from knowledge and practice of teaching methodology that community college students prefer from their face-to-face instructors that are shared in the alternative method of collecting feedback that are normally not provided as an opportunity to share on a traditional course evaluation form?

Subquestion 4: What instructional methods do developmental community college students prefer from their reading face-to-face community college instructor that they feel contributes to their success?

There was a need to gain a deeper understanding of the current college student population to discover effective methods of educating millennials and nontraditional adults. This study was also conducted to help higher education administrators use this information to create or adapt course evaluation procedures so that future data about this changing population could be collected and applied to adult learning. The results of this study could provide instructors with valuable information so they could assist students

with successfully completing courses. The conceptual framework was based on Willingham's (2009) approach to information processing theory in terms of how individuals process and store information through brain-based learning. The framework was based on a cognitive approach to learning because the selected population included a diverse group of students who varied in chronological age, cultural backgrounds, and ability levels.

I chose a qualitative case study design for two reasons. First, the study was designed based on Creswell's (2007) recommendation that qualitative data could be collected through interviews, observations, and the collection of the other data. Creswell revealed that a case study design creates opportunities to examine the data and categorize the results into themes rather than only reporting specific details. Creswell's suggestions were compatible with the study's design because I focused on gaining a deeper understanding of a small population of students. I was able to identify themes that emerged from the data using the case study design instead of using an analyzed numerical survey that could lack validity and reliability because of the small participant pool.

A second reason why I chose a case study design was because I asked the students to construct their own definition of an effective instructor through informal evaluations. Yin (2009) suggested that case studies are helpful when a researcher evaluates a school program that may be too complex for a traditional survey. The participants reflected upon and shared their personal experiences and interactions they had with their READ 110 instructor during the scheduled interviews.

The case study was a better fit for the study's design because I could have used a multiple case study if I needed to collect additional data. I considered a grounded theory as the design for the study, but the study was not based on an existing learning theory (Creswell, 2007). I did not anticipate for a theory to develop from this study. Instead, I selected the case study design so that I could explore needs of this smaller population of students.

The philosophical assumption that I used in the study was ontological. Creswell (2007) stated that ontological assumptions imply that reality is subjective, and it can be seen differently in different perspectives from the participants of the study. Therefore, an ontological approach to the data collection corresponded with a case study design because themes derived from the data instead of specific detailed reports.

According to Yin (2009), the case study is used to illuminate a set of decisions as to when, why, and how information is taken and with what results that could emerge from a study. Yin described the four components of a case study: (a) the study's questions, (b) the study's propositions, (c) the study's unit of analysis, and (d) the criteria for interpreting the findings (p. 27). Yin stated that case studies rely on the direct observations of events being studied and interviews with the participants involved in the events. In addition, the case study allows the researcher to deal with various types of evidence including surveys, interviews, and observations (Yin, 2009). Case studies can include both single and multiple designs. However, I designed this study as a single case so that the results could explain, describe, illustrate, and enlighten others as to what types of learning preferences the current college population possesses (Yin, 2009).

Role of the Researcher

My role in this study was to collect data by interviewing eight READ 110 students, conducting three 75-minute READ 110 classroom observations, and collecting lesson plans from the instructor for each of the dates of the classroom observations. I was not the READ 110 instructor during the data collection process, which eliminated any possible bias that could have occurred during the participants' interviews or during classroom observations.

As an online college instructor, I chose to take on this role as the researcher because in my teaching experience, I have received valuable informal feedback from my students when I asked them about my teaching methods. I found I was using this informal feedback that the students provided. I incorporated this feedback into my instruction to better meet my students' needs. Therefore, I chose to explore this alternative method of collecting feedback in a face-to-face format so that I could interact directly with students. I designed the study to explore whether students could benefit from providing instructors with this type of feedback.

The ethical issue that emerged during the development of this study was a potential subjectivity threat to the students. Ethical issues could have developed during the study if a participating did not like their instructor in a personal way. I addressed this potential subjectivity threat by providing an exit option from the study. Eight students volunteered, and the instructor did not offer a requirement or extra credit to force students to participate in the study.

In addition, a threat to validity could have occurred if ethical issues were to develop. Therefore, I clearly described my data collection plan to the students during my initial classroom visit, and then again before I conducted each individual interview. In addition, I verbally stressed and I also included in the consent form for interview participants (Appendix E) that I, the researcher, would remain objective throughout the study. I kept all of the participants' names confidential by assigning a pseudonym to each participant. I also did not ask the participants about their expected grade in the class to prevent any additional potential threats to validity that may have occurred during their responses to the research questions.

The student participants signed the interview consent form (Appendix E) so that the feedback they provided could be used for data collection purposes only, and that it would not affect their final READ 110 grade. I provided a statement in the interview consent form (Appendix E), and I repeated during the interviews that my role as a researcher was in no way connected with the students' performances and their final grade in the READ 110 course to avoid a threat to validity. The data were collected through the use of an audio recorder during the participant interviews, and I transcribed each recording. There was a second concern of confidentiality when the participants discussed their instructor's teaching strategies and methods. Therefore, I assigned pseudonyms (Appendix A) to ensure the participants' confidentiality.

Methodology

Population

The participants in this study were enrolled in the same section of the READ 110 course at the participating community college. The participants' ages ranged from 18 to 43 years, and the participants possessed different ability levels and also different cultural backgrounds. The name of this college was not disclosed to protect the instructor's and the students' identities. I also assigned each participant a pseudonym to protect his or her identity. A total of eight students from this selected section of READ 110 volunteered to participate in the study.

Sampling

The sampling strategy was purposeful, and I used criterion-based logic to determine the participating population. I used convenience sampling in which the students were naturally grouped together in this course. The remaining students from the READ 110 section who did not wish to participate in the study remained enrolled in the course because the participants were selected on a volunteer basis. Therefore, the sample size for the case study was not affected, and the class size did not change during the fall 2014 semester.

Participant Selection Logic

The section of the READ 110 course was chosen because of convenience sampling. This population was also naturally clustered because this group of students was enrolled in the section with the same instructor, which was why criterion-based logic was

used to determine the participating population. The participating population size was drawn on a volunteer basis because students willingly chose to register for the course.

There were enough seats in all of the READ 110 courses during the fall 2014 semester to accommodate 150 students at the time that I collected data. The maximum classroom enrollment for each section was 15 students, which represented approximately 10% of the student population. The original number of READ 110 seats that were available for registration for fall 2014 was 150. However, some of the sections of READ 110 were cancelled due to low enrollment before the fall 2014 semester began.

In addition, there were a limited number of introductory courses offered each semester on the selected campus. These courses included basic content courses such as history or psychology, four levels of composition, and six levels of math. A natural phenomenon occurred because four of the participants had similar course schedules due to the limited blocked scheduling that occurred on this campus, which caused the students to be enrolled in more than one course together. This was a natural occurrence that some of the READ 110 students were grouped and enrolled together in more than one course because of limited scheduling, and it added to the convenience aspect of the data collection procedures for this study because the students mostly attended class on the satellite campus in which the data collection occurred.

The instructor was chosen ahead of time on a volunteer basis. She instructed two sections of the READ 110 course during the fall 2014 semester. One section had 15 students while the second section had 14 students, totaling 29 students who were enrolled in both of her sections. The section with 15 students registered was chosen because of

convenience sampling. I made this decision because of ethical issues, to allow those students who decided they did not want to participate in the study to remain in the same section of READ 110. In addition, I made this decision after reviewing the National Institute of Health (NIH) training, so that I would reduce as many risks as possible for the participants. Therefore, those students who did not wish to participate in the study were not penalized, and they were not asked to move to another READ 110 section. The rationale for selecting one section of READ 110 was that 10% of the 150 students enrolled in READ 110 would represent the college's developmental reading population.

This did not affect the students who did not wish to participate in the study because as an ethical researcher, I needed to make sure there were more benefits than risks to the students. The READ 110 instructor taught two sections of the course during the fall 2014 semester with plans to instruct the same course during the following semester in case the study needed to be postponed a few weeks due to any possible delays with gaining Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. Also, the instructor agreed to continue to participate in the study in the spring 2015 semester in case there was a delay in receiving the required signed documents from the college's research department that granted approval for me to collect data on campus.

Registration for the fall 2014 semester began in the summer of 2014, and students were able to enroll in the READ 110 course at that time. The students who were enrolled in this section met the requirements to take READ 110 because there were prerequisites for the class. These students were able to register for READ 110 once they passed the first developmental reading course or scored a Level 2 on the college's placement test.

The second criterion was that students were enrolled in the participating instructor's READ 110 section. The students were invited to participate in the study, and they were given the option to sign the consent form for interview participants (Appendix E) during the third week of class. The enrollment of the instructor's section included 15 students, and eight students willingly volunteered to participate.

Recruitment

I was invited by the instructor to enter the class during the third week of the semester to explain the research process to the students in person and to distribute the interview consent form (Appendix E) once the registration period ended, and once the add-drop period for the fall 2014 semester ended. Eight students volunteered to participate, and they each signed an interview consent form (Appendix E). I contacted each student using the information they provided to schedule an interview. The three observations took place on Wednesday evenings in the classroom from 5:00 p.m.-6:15 p.m., and student interviews were conducted in person during times that were convenient to each student. The participants were offered a thank you gift card of \$5.00 per student for being available to participate in the interviews outside of READ 110 class time. I distributed the gift cards individually once I conducted a follow up, fact-checking exit interview to confirm with each student that I correctly recorded my transcripts.

Instrumentation

I utilized three forms to collect data from the selected participants:

1. Copies of the instructor's READ 110 lesson plans (Appendix D)
2. Classroom observation form (Appendix B)

3. Student interview form (Appendix C)

I designed the classroom observation form and the student interview form. The participating instructor created her three READ 110 lesson plans. The instructor designed the first tool, which were the lesson plans (Appendix D) she provided for each observation. I met with the instructor before each classroom observation, and she shared with me her plans. I collected the plans, and then I emailed them to her after each class to confirm that I recorded her plans correctly. Johnson and Christensen (2014) defined peer review as “discussing one’s interpretations and conclusions with peers or colleagues” (p. 303). I discussed and confirmed that each lesson plan was accurately recorded, and I noted any modifications that were made to the plans after each observation. I used this method to produce internal validity, and to gain a deeper understanding of the instructor’s teaching philosophy and her lesson plans that coincided with the dates of my classroom observations.

Research Designed Tools

The second tool I used was the classroom observation form (Appendix B). Hatch (2002) stated that “the goal of observation is to understand the culture, setting, or social phenomenon being studied the perspectives of the participants” (p. 72). I developed this data collection tool to gain a deeper understanding of the single section of READ 110 students’ classroom environment based on the research questions to produce valid results. The classroom observation form (Appendix B) included statements to guide the observation so it would relate to the study’s research questions. Hatch stated that through observation, “the researcher has the opportunity to see things that are taken for granted by

the participants and would be less likely to come to the surface using interviewing or other data collection techniques” (p. 72). Therefore, I used this researcher-developed tool to gain a deeper understanding of any other factors that occurred in the classroom that related to the study’s research questions.

The third data collection tool that I used was the student interview form (Appendix C). Willingham (2009) stated that “getting informative feedback, seeking out other activities that can improve your skill, and consciously trying to improve your teaching” (p. 156), was important for teacher feedback. This data collection tool consisted of questions that elaborated on the study’s central question so I could gain a deeper understanding of the participants’ classroom needs and their preferred methods of instruction. I audio recorded the student interviews. The students observed their instructor teach their class for approximately three weeks before I began my scheduled interviews. Therefore, I designed the student interview form (Appendix C) so that I could ask participants specific questions about what types of learning preferences they observed in class and also, what types of classroom activities they preferred.

I considered content validity when I designed and when I conducted the study. Johnson and Christensen (2014) stated that when determining content validity, the research must ask if “the items appear to represent the thing you are trying to measure” (p. 174). I designed the student interview form (Appendix C) and the classroom observation form (Appendix B) to collect data in an objective manner. The questions that I asked during the interviews produced answers that were directly related to the study’s central research question. I eliminated a subjective threat because I notified all of the

students that their participation and feedback they provided during the study would not affect their grades in anyway. The participants discussed their current classroom experiences, and they compared and contrasted their experiences with the other courses they were enrolled in at the same time that they took READ 110.

Johnson and Christensen (2014) stated “if your test questions, items, and tasks are formatted appropriately and adequately represent the domain of information covered...then you will have good content-related evidence of validity” (p. 174). One way to address a threat to content validity was to use a case study design instead of using an ethnographic or grounded theory design. The purpose of the case study design was to explore a specific case of students in which participants directly responded to specific interview questions. A second way that I addressed a content validity threat was to correlate the lesson plans that the instructor provided with the actual implementation of the lessons during the dates of the classroom observations. I confirmed the lessons were delivered and implemented as the instructor intended during the observations. I also confirmed any modifications to the lessons that were made by the instructor after each observation, and I noted these changes in Appendix D.

The final way I avoided a content validity threat was to address the limitations to the study. Understanding that this single case study was only one example of college students’ needs helped to avoid a misunderstanding that this was a full representation of the college’s reading courses. The two data collection tools and the instructor’s lesson plans produced sufficient data that addressed the study’s research questions.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

I collected the data at the participating community college during Weeks 3 through 5 of the fall 2014 semester in which I scheduled and conducted interviews at the students' convenience. The three observations of READ 110 occurred on Wednesday evenings from 5:00 p.m.-6:15 p.m. I collected the instructor's lesson plans before each observation, and I documented if any plans that the instructor made were modified when she taught each lesson. The instructor had the opportunity to receive feedback to assist her students with finishing the course, which gave her an opportunity to incorporate feedback before the end of the semester if she chose to do so.

The frequency of the data collection process included three observations that took place during three weeks of the fall 2014 semester. I allotted extra time for this process in case additional observations needed to be rescheduled, which I would have described in the results section in Chapter 4 if necessary. The participant interviews took place at the students' convenience. I scheduled additional interview time slots during Weeks 5 through 7 in case any of the originally scheduled interviews were cancelled, if they needed to be rescheduled, or if additional information was needed from the participants. However, I conducted all of the originally scheduled interviews during the times that they were each originally scheduled to occur.

The duration of the data collection procedures included three 75-minute observations of the READ 110 that were conducted on Wednesday evenings during Weeks 3, 4, and 5 of the fall 2014 semester. The eight participant interviews were scheduled for 30-minutes each, which occurred during a 3-week period from Weeks 3

through 5 during the semester. I scheduled each interview during times that were convenient for the participants.

The data were collected and recorded in the following ways:

1. I collected the instructor's lesson plans before I conducted each observation.
2. I conducted three READ 110 observations and recorded field notes.
3. I went to a private office in the building and I audio recorded a narrative transcript of myself in which I orally reviewed my field notes and observations in detail immediately following each observation.
4. I emailed the instructor the typed lesson plans she shared with me. The instructor responded, confirmed, and noted if there were any changes in the lesson plans after each observation occurred.
5. I successfully conducted eight 30-minute participant interviews, which I audio recorded and I transcribed.
6. I scheduled and I also held exit interviews with each participant. I asked each student to check and confirm that my transcripts were properly recorded during each exit interview. The participants had a final opportunity to share their experience of the course up to that point of the semester, and submit any additional responses if they felt it was necessary.
7. I distributed the thank you gift cards during the exit interviews, and I formally exited each participant from the study.

There were also follow-up procedures in place to collect any additional data or to complete any missing information during the originally planned data collection procedure

timeline. The instructor granted me permission to conduct additional observations of the class during Week 11 of the fall 2014 semester if necessary.

Data Analysis Plan

I designed each of the survey tools to address the central research question. First, I collected the data, and then, I transcribed each interview. I met with the instructor to collect her lesson plans before I conducted each observation. I then conducted the three classroom observations, and I audio recorded my notes immediately following each observation. Next, I followed up with the instructor by emailing her copies of the lesson plans to confirm any changes that she made during the lesson were noted correctly in my documentation. Finally, I conducted exit interviews to fact check my transcripts to confirm the students' responses were accurately recorded.

Next, I openly coded the data. Johnson and Christensen (2014) defined coding as “marking segments of data with symbols, descriptive words, or category names” (p. 592). The coding helped me to identify words and patterns that were meaningful and that directly related to the research questions. I then used axial coding to categorize the relationships, repeated words, and phrases into more specific areas. I used the major themes that emerged from the coding process, and I discuss the results of each question in detail in Chapter 4.

One of the drawbacks to a structured approach was I examined the study through one single dimension. I designed this study based on what best fit the research questions and framework even though there were benefits and drawbacks to this approach to qualitative data. The types of instructional methods that I observed were included in the

data collection process to provide a deeper understanding of how instruction was delivered during class as opposed to what the students shared during the interviews.

I would have collected additional data in the event of any discrepancies. For example, multiple students could have withdrawn from the course early, which would have caused a smaller sample size. Also, if there were a threat to validity or to reliability, then I would have adjusted the data collection procedures accordingly after consulting with the dissertation committee. The original anticipated sample size was one section of READ 110 in which 15 students were enrolled. I would have conducted the study during the spring 2015 semester with the same instructor after I submitted any changes in dates to the IRB and after consulting with my committee in case the study needed to be extended for a longer period of time. I would have also resubmitted the appropriate changes in the documents. I also noted any discrepancies among the participants after I examined the data that I collected and the literature that I reviewed.

Issue of Trustworthiness

I designed this study to gain a deeper understanding of millennials and nontraditional adult learners preferred methods of instruction. The data were stored in a fireproof, locked cabinet in the college's second floor office. I had access to the data during the collection process before and after each of the classroom observations and after each interview. I triangulated the data. I then analyzed the transcripts of the interviews, the three classroom observations, and copies of the instructor's lesson plans of the dates of each observation.

Internal Validity

Yin (2009) stated:

A case study involves an inference every time an event cannot be directly observed...a research design that has anticipated these questions has begun to deal with the overall problem of making inferences and therefore the specific problem of internal validity. There are specific measures in place to address internal validity including pattern matching, explanation building, addressing rival explanations, and using logic models. (p. 43)

Internal validity is defined as “the ability to infer that a causal relationship exists between two variables” (Johnson & Christensen, 2014, p. 281). I used the following strategies to create internal validity: (a) the utilization of individual interviews to hold private conversations with each participant, (b) referring to literature including Crappell’s (2012) interpretation of millennials, and Willingham’s (2009) classroom implications based on information processing theory, and (c) the triangulation of data, which included the eight participant interviews, the three classroom observations, and the collection of the instructor’s lesson plans. Credibility existed within the participant interviews because each student had the opportunity to share his or her individual responses, which I describe in an anonymous and confidential manner in detail in Chapter 4.

External Validity

Johnson and Christensen (2014) described external validity as “the extent to which the study’s results can be generalized to and across populations of persons’ settings, times, outcomes, and treatment variations” (p. 291). External validity strategies

were limited because the participants were enrolled in the same section of READ 110. There were additional READ 110 sections that other instructors taught during the fall 2014 semester. It was expected that same course objectives were met in all of the READ 110 sections.

There were strategies in place to ensure internal validity. However, this caused a reduction in external validity because this study would not be able to be generalized in multiple settings or include the additional READ 110 sections. Therefore, only a single case study was utilized. However, this study could be conducted in other similar developmental course programs as single cases by utilizing transferability factors at other colleges if instructors and administrators would like to identify their students' needs using this alternative method of collecting feedback from students.

Dependability

Dependability is a counterpart of reliability in qualitative research meaning that reliability is “the consistency or stability of test scores” (Johnson & Christensen, 2014, p. 166). I used the following methods to create dependability: (a) I reviewed and confirmed the instructor's lesson plans for each observation was correctly recorded and interpreted in my field notes, (b) I triangulated data including the collection of the instructor's lesson plans, the classroom observations, and the participant interviews, (c) I asked each student the same set of questions to produce consistency during the interview process, and (d) I composed a narrative description of my interpretations that have social implications in Chapter 5.

Confirmability

Johnson and Christensen (2014) stated that researchers “assume that there is a reality to be observed and that rational observers who look at the same phenomenon will basically agree on its existence and its characteristics” (p. 36). Confirmability was considered during the data analysis process while I remained neutral and objective when I identified themes that emerged from the data confirming repeated relationships, themes, and patterns. I designed this study with confirmability in mind so that the same data collection tools could be used to produce similar results in an objective manner if additional studies were conducted. I applied the following strategies to address confirmability:

1. I formally reviewed the interview consent forms, (Appendix E) and I also reviewed the purpose of the study with each participant.
2. I used introduction questions to the participants for the first time during the interview to collect demographic information.
3. I read the student interview questions from the student interview form (Appendix C) verbatim in the order the questions were written, only asking follow up questions or to elaborate on unclear responses which I recorded in the transcripts.
4. I conducted exit interviews to confirm that I correctly recorded and transcribed the students’ responses, so they were recorded in an objective manner.
5. I emailed the READ 110 instructor to confirm that I correctly recorded the lesson plans so that they were not misinterpreted.

Ethical Procedures

I contacted the college's Institutional Research Department once the IRB was approved to submit paperwork to the college requesting approval to conduct the study on campus. The institutional research director requested that I submit my approved IRB, 07-30-14-0061314, a copy of my intended data collection plan, and copies of the consent forms I would utilize. The college's committee met, and approved my proposal on September 24, 2014. A copy of the school's signed letter of cooperation is located in Appendix G. I addressed an ethical issue of a potential subjectivity threat to the study during the recruitment process. Ethical issues could have developed if the participants did not like their instructor in a personal manner. In addition, a validity threat could have been added to the study if this occurred. Therefore, I clearly described the data collection plan to each participant before I conducted each interview. The participating students did not receive their grades until the end of the semester, and the responses that the students provided remained confidential. The other seven students remained enrolled in the course, and this study did not affect them in any way for choosing not to participate in the study.

My plan to address potential ethical issues would have been to allow for additional room for students enrolled in the READ 110 section in case students chose to not participate early in the data collection process, or in case there were students who withdrew from the course. An additional seven students would have been permitted to enroll in the course with the department's permission, and they would have been given the option to participate in the study so that an unanticipated smaller sample size than the

original planned size would have been addressed if needed. Those who wished to exit from the study early would have been asked to participate in a brief exit interview to explain any concerns or threats they may have felt while they participated. However, this issue did not arise during the data collection process and therefore, it was not utilized.

I also address the treatment of the data. All participants remained anonymous, and I assigned a pseudonym to each student as well as to the participating instructor to ensure their confidentiality (Appendix A). The name of the college was also given a pseudonym until the IRB application was approved, and until the college's institutional research department granted permission for me to collect data on campus. The data were stored in a fireproof locked container in the college's second floor locked office in which I had access to during the data collection and the data analysis process. The data will be kept for five years on a stored back up flash drive, and in December 2020, I will destroy the electronic copies and shred the paper copies.

Finally, the students who were enrolled in selected READ 110 were asked about their optional participation. I avoided a potential conflict of interest because the data was not collected to give attention to the instructor's performance levels. In addition, the data were not used for a formal assessment of the instructor's performances. All of the data that were collected was transcribed into electronic format, coded, and double-checked. The participants' individual responses were also listed in Appendix K to avoid making any accidental generalizations based on their responses.

Summary

In Chapter 3, I describe the research design and rationale, the methodology for the study, the instrumentation procedures, a description of the data collection procedures, the data analysis plan, a description of issues of trustworthiness, and a description of ethical concerns that could have developed during the duration of the study. In addition, I included the approved IRB number that I have saved on file. All of the additional documents that I used during the data collection process are included in the Appendix. In Chapter 4, I describe the study's setting, participant demographics, data collection procedures, an analysis of the data, evidence of trustworthiness, and the results that I interpreted from implementing the methodology research plan.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this case study was to gain a deeper understanding of the current community college population's learning preferences and classroom needs by using an alternative method to collect data rather than collecting students' feedback from a traditional course evaluation form. The following research questions guided the study:

Central question: What does the selected population of community college students need from their face-to-face instructors to be successful in their first-year READ 110 course that can be provided to their instructors through an alternative method of collecting course feedback?

Subquestion 1: What types of instructional methods are face-to-face community college instructors currently using that are similar and different from students' learning preferences and classroom needs?

Subquestion 2: What do community college developmental reading students feel are ineffective qualities of face-to-face instructors?

Subquestion 3: Are there additional qualities or traits aside from knowledge and practice of teaching methodology that community college students prefer from their face-to-face instructors that are shared in the alternative method of collecting feedback that are normally not provided as an opportunity to share on a traditional course evaluation form?

Subquestion 4: What instructional methods do developmental community college students prefer from their reading face-to-face community college instructor that they feel contributes to their success?

In Chapter 4, I describe information about the setting, demographics, and data collection process. I then describe my findings by sharing the five themes that emerged from the open coding process. Next, I analyze each research question, and I describe the responses in the order that the data were collected when I conducted the participant interviews. I then explain and analyze the results of each research question. Finally, I describe how I implemented trustworthiness including (a) validity, (b) transferability, (c) dependability, and (d) confirmability.

Setting

This study took place at a participating community college located in Southeastern Pennsylvania. I conducted three 75-minute READ 110 classroom observations in Room 107 one time per week over a 3-week period. The eight participant interviews were conducted in Room 213 in a private office that is located on the second floor of the building. I assigned a pseudonym for each of the participants (Appendix A). The classroom observations were conducted during Weeks 6 through 8, which was after the college's add/drop period ended for the fall 2014 semester. The college's institutional research director did not approve my request to collect data on campus until September 24, 2014. I then began the data collection process once this was approved. I observed the participating instructor during this time period.

The instructor taught her lessons as planned, and the topics included various college reading and study strategies during class periods that I observed. In addition, I observed the students during each lesson as they used some of the class time to work on the computers in the online reading program supplement that was paired with the course.

Demographics

The part-time READ 110 instructor who volunteered to participate taught evening courses at the community college. The additional participants were READ 110 students who were enrolled in the same section of the instructor's course. All of the eight READ 110 students willingly volunteered to participate. I assigned a pseudonym to each participant in the following Table 1.

Table 1

Demographic Information of Participants

Name	Age	Courses Enrolled	Other Courses	Major
David	19	4	MATH COMP SPRT HLTH	Sports Management
Marion	18	2	MATH	Liberal Arts
Kelly	19	4	SOCI COMP CHEM	Nursing
Anna	43	2	SOCI	Nursing
Mary	20	3	COMSCI HUMAN	Liberal Arts
Jamie	22	1	NA	Nursing
Emma	24	2	MATH	Liberal Arts
Molly	18	2	COMP	Education

Note. Participants were each assigned a pseudonym.

Seven female students and one male student participated in the study. Two of the eight participants were enrolled full-time, each taking a total of 12 credits. Next, one participant was registered for nine credits, which was considered part-time status. Four of the eight student participants were enrolled in only two courses at the satellite campus as part-time students. Also, one of the participants was enrolled in the READ 110 course only for the fall 2014 semester. Finally, two of the participants also took other courses at the college's main campus and online. All of the participants arrived on time and participated in the interviews as originally scheduled. Also, there were no changes in any of the follow-up exit interviews. I successfully conducted each of the participant exit interviews as they were originally scheduled to fact check the transcripts that I recorded during each initial interview.

Data Collection

I collected data from the eight participants in Room 213, a private office that was located on the second floor of the building. I read the same questions to each student from the student interview form (Appendix C). I scheduled interviews at times that were convenient to each student. The interviews were successfully completed in the time frame that was scheduled for the fall 2014 semester. I successfully conducted eight interviews with no interruptions. I began each interview by sharing the background of the study with each participant. I read the remaining interview questions verbatim from the student interview form (Appendix C). I did not previously ask the students any of these questions before I began recording the interview. I stated the date and time of the interview when I began each of the recordings. Next, I introduced each participant, and I assigned

pseudonyms (Appendix A) to protect the participants' identities. I needed to ask follow up questions during some of the interviews to clarify some brief, initial responses that the participants provided. I asked students to elaborate on some of the one-word answers that were provided. However, I always returned to the original interview questions (Appendix C) once I briefly deviated from the research questions for clarification purposes. All of the transcripts and relevant text from the follow-up questions that I asked each participant are included in Appendix K.

Next, I conducted three READ 110 observations during Wednesday evening class periods on campus. I used the classroom observation form (Appendix B) to record field notes. I entered the private office immediately following each observation and closed the door. Then, I audio recorded myself as I orally reviewed my field notes and my initial observations (Appendix J).

In addition, I met with the instructor before each scheduled observation, and she shared her lesson plans with me. I emailed her a typed copy of the lesson plans she provided me after each observation. I then noted in the emails if there were any changes to her initial plans that I observed. The instructor checked and approved all three lesson plans to confirm these were correct in how she planned and delivered the lesson. She returned all of the copies of the approved lesson plans and my notes to me after I completed the three observations (Appendix D). This procedure was in place because the college does not require instructors to write or submit formal lesson plans, but the instructor agreed to submit a schedule of plans, which I describe in the instructor consent form (Appendix F).

The observations took place on three consecutive Wednesday evenings during the middle of the fall 2014 semester. The first and third classroom observations lasted 75 minutes, and the second observation was approximately 60 minutes in length. This was because the instructor ended class early to attend a meeting for the department that was related to spring 2015 advising. The READ 110 class that I observed was normally held twice a week on Mondays and Wednesdays from 5:00 p.m.-6:15 p.m.

The instructor explained to me that the pacing of her course was to cover one chapter per week during the 15-week semester. Therefore, I observed a new chapter and a new topic being taught each week. I was not concerned about this phenomenon, except for my third observation, in which the topic for that evening was highlighting, and a new topic was not introduced. Instead, the final Wednesday lesson that I observed was a follow-up lesson and an application activity from when the “Note Taking and Highlighting” chapter was introduced in the previous class that I did not observe. However, I was able to speak with the instructor before this class period, and she gave me the lesson plans about what was covered in the previous class so I was able to understand in context how the lesson was being applied to the topic during my observations for that evening (Appendix J).

I made the decision to collect data one class period per week over a 3-week period on Wednesdays only because I did not feel that observing three consecutive class periods would reveal the course’s naturalistic setting or the students’ dynamics. Johnson and Christensen (2014) stated that a weakness to the observer as a participant is that “the participants might not behave naturally because they are aware that they are being

observed” (p. 240). If I observed three observations consecutively based on the course scheduling, my classroom observations would have lasted only one week, which could have affected my observations of the naturalistic setting. In addition, the instructor would have covered only one chapter of the course during that one week in which the three 75-minute class periods occurred. Johnson and Christensen (2014) also stated that “the problem usually disappears as the people begin to trust the researcher and adjust to his or her presence” (p. 240). I was able observe the students working through three chapters of the course, and I observed 20% of the 15-week semester instead of only 6%. I successfully conducted the classroom observations with one minor interruption. The classroom door frequently opened and closed during all three observations because several students entered the classroom late after the start of each class period. In addition, students’ cell phones made text and ringing noises most of the time during the third observation, which I also describe in detail in Appendix J.

The only variation was that I originally planned to have 15 students participate in the study. However, I conducted this study on a volunteer basis, and only eight students chose to participate. In addition, I could not predict the number of enrolled students. I understood that the minimum requirement to hold the class was 10 students, and the maximum allowed for each section was 15 students. However, this did not affect the data collection process because all of the participants were enrolled in the same section of READ 110 with the same instructor. In addition, I was able to conduct the single case study even though there were fewer participants than I originally anticipated.

Data Analysis

I conducted eight 15-minute exit interviews in which each of the participants checked the transcripts that I recorded from the original interviews that took place. I conducted the exit interviews as scheduled during the 3-week period after I completed the observations, and after the initial participant interviews were conducted in the original time period scheduled. Each of the eight participants successfully reviewed the transcripts that were audio recorded, and each student provided additional clarification when it was appropriate. I adjusted and clarified the transcripts as needed. Next, I distributed the thank-you gift cards after the fact checking was completed, and after I individually exited each student from the study. This fact checking process was successfully completed in the timeframe that I scheduled to complete the data collection during the fall of 2014.

I began analyzing the data using open coding to identify themes, patterns, and repeated words that emerged during each interview (Appendix K). I openly coded each research question in the order that it was listed on the student interview form (Appendix C). I used highlighting markers to color code the themes and repeated words that I found within each of the responses. In addition, I used the same colors to identify these themes, patterns, and repeated words in my observation notes for each of the repeated words that students discussed in their interviews and that I witnessed during my observations. I also used the same color for any repeated words that were listed in the instructor's lesson plans with the students' responses.

Kenner and Weinerman (2011) indicated a need to gain a deeper understanding of this population's preferences because millennials are part of the college population, and

possess different learning needs from nontraditional adult students. In addition, Crappell (2012) found that millennials possess a need to feel connected to others through collaboration and integration of technology into their lives. Crappell explained that these students prefer a more student-centered learning approach that fulfills their preference to interact and connect with each other. The participants had an opportunity to share their classroom needs that were not listed on a course evaluation form, and they were each given an opportunity to personally share, reflect upon, and connect their classroom experiences in a private, face-to-face interview. I identified five themes that emerged during the analysis process, as shown in Table 2:

Table 2

Students Preferences of an Effective College Instructor

Ineffective instructor qualities	Percentage of responses
An active approach to learning	62%
Use of different learning styles in lessons	100%
Instructors who utilize multiple methods of communication	87%
Instructors who possess personality	75%
Instructors who are flexible	62%

Note: These five themes are discussed further in the results section of Question 1.

Two of the five themes that emerged from the participant interviews were related to instruction including the need for an active approach to learning and the need to meet students' different learning styles. However, throughout the five research questions, the remaining three themes that emerged focused primarily towards the instructor in terms of

personal qualities that she possessed, and how students felt that instructor qualities in general would help them to be successful in their courses. One reason why the data emerged like this was because the way the central research question was worded.

I designed the central research question so that students could openly share their perspectives using this interview as an alternative method of providing instructors with feedback on their courses instead of utilizing a traditional course evaluation form. A course evaluation form did not always provide an opportunity for students to share their perspectives about what helped them to be successful in terms of an instructor's personal and professional qualities besides their evaluation of the instructor's teaching methods. I asked each participant what he or she needed in the READ 110 class to be successful. The participants focused on the characteristics of an ideal instructor who possessed the following qualities: (a) personality, (b) flexibility, and (c) methods of communication. In the following section, I address each of the five themes that emerged from the coding process in detail.

An Active Approach to Learning

In terms of the instructional needs of the classroom, 62% of the participants discussed this during the interviews that they preferred an active approach to learning. When discussing her instructor's methods, Marion shared that

she has a good idea about a teaching method, and I feel like what she does really works. I feel like she grabs the class, she gets the class hands on, and I feel that she's very good at making her point and teaching her lessons, and she has no problem to help anybody with a difficult problem in the class.

Similarly, Kelly provided a suggestion for instructors that she would want to see based on one of her experiences in READ 110. Kelly suggested to use

more activities, so like if we're taking a quiz or something, do something more interactive to help us learn for that quiz. I know we have Jeopardy or something that's interactive where you earn points. We did that one time in class where we had a PowerPoint and you picked the subject and then you got points. It's a competition, but it also helps you learn.

On the other hand, students appeared to view lecture as the opposite of an active approach to learning because students discussed lecture during the interviews without any prompts. However, I did not include this instructional method in the central research question of themes that emerged because the participants' consensus was that it was a method of instruction that was not preferred in the classroom. I discussed this phenomenon further in the results section where the question was asked about what the participants felt was an ineffective strategy to learning during Question 3. Students expressed their preferences of active approaches to learning by distinguishing the difference between lectures during class as opposed to other classroom activities that they felt contributed to the learning process.

The participants preferred active learning strategies, which I observed the instructor implementing. However, there were also students who chose not to participate in class. For example, during my third observation, two students used their smart phones instead of participating in the planned highlighting activity. The instructor monitored the activity by walking around the room. The instructor had to walk over to redirect one

student who was on the computer to go back on task. She also had to redirect another student who didn't start the assignment because she was texting on her phone. Although it was evident that the instructor utilized active approaches to learning during class, it was also the students' responsibility to choose if they would willingly become involved in the lesson or if they would choose not to participate.

The Utilization of Different Learning Styles

All of the participants used specific words that related to learning style strategies during the interviews, which inferred that they were knowledgeable about specific names of types of learning styles. David shared that he felt successful in learning when he received instruction that was "a mixture of auditory and independent, so when the teacher is reading and you have to take notes." Similarly, Marion revealed that she learned information because she is

the type of person that once I do it, I will remember it better. I feel like if it's more hands on, and we get to use this paper about this, or do something this way.

As soon as I see something and actually do it, I learn better hands on.

Kelly also shared that her teacher "changes it up. It fits to everyone's learning style, like if you are a visual learner, we do those activities too. If you prefer moving around, we take breaks because it's a long class."

This theme of learning styles also related to the participants' preference to an active approach to learning. Anna's preference to her instructor's teaching methods was that her instructor utilizes different activities. Anna shared that she felt her instructor helped her as a student because "she presents it like for everyone. If you're visual, you

get it. If you are hands on, you get it so that the different methods of teaching so everyone will benefit from it.” Also, Mary explained that she liked an instructor who “probably to learn, like to change up their style. Like one day do a visual and lecture, not like the whole entire class be a lecture, and just sitting there taking notes.”

Instructor Communication

Eighty-seven percent of the participants felt that two-way communication was important during class, and outside of class. David felt that it was important to

be accessible by email and by personally being able to contact teachers. Personal information is given, like phone numbers...I know it's the student's job to contact the teacher but I still feel like it's the teacher's job too. It would be out of line for a student to contact a teacher at three in the morning just because they're coming back from a party or something. It's on their own free time, but I feel it would be even worse for the teacher to respond a day late or something. It looks like spiting it seems sometimes.

Kelly revealed that her instructor “gets back to me on time, like if I ever need anything or have a question about anything with class, it's right away.” Finally, Mary liked that “if you send them an email, they get back to you as soon as possible and just don't ignore it.”

Instructor Personality

It was evident that the participants felt they were more successful when working with an instructor who they were able to establish a relationship with as 75% of the participants discussed personal qualities of an instructor that they preferred. Emma preferred an instructor who is “approachable, understanding, and even like more of a one-

on-one conversation getting to know the student and getting to know the teacher.”

Similarly, Jamie preferred “somebody you can ask a question and not be afraid of the answer. Somebody that you can text, and you know they’ll get back to you. You know they’ll help you if you’re failing.”

Finally, Marion shared that

if I was to picture the perfect instructor, I would want them to be fun and energetic in the classroom, make learning fun, and get them involved in what they’re learning, and being friendly and making yourself happy, and you know, easier to talk to.

Flexibility

The final theme that emerged from the data was that 62% of the participants preferred a flexible instructor. Emma shared that her instructor helped her learn because “she’s understanding. She’s easy to communicate with. If you don’t understand something she will reset on the computer, she will reset and let you do it again.”

Similarly, Molly shared that an instructor who helped her to be a more successful student was one who “respects students, and hears them out.” Finally, Jamie shared that

ones that like it this way, if it is not this way, then it is no way. I like the one’s that are open minded where I like to go to a certain way, and she even said that she’ll look at it, and if it counts, she’ll give me the points. Other people like it this way, it has to be this way, and if it’s not in this way, in this order, it’s not right. I don’t like that.

Discrepant Cases and Student Responsibility

One of the discrepancies in this case was that the students did not discuss what they felt they personally needed to bring to the classroom in terms of accountability or responsibility. The participants focused on the instructor's responsibility to ensure success of her students instead of a two-way partnership of sharing accountability and responsibilities with the instructor and the student.

It is important to examine students' responsibility, and the role students play in being accountable for their own learning as opposed to placing the full responsibility of their success on college instructors. Collier and Morgan (2008) argued that although instructors contribute to students' success or failure, students also have to be held individually accountable. Mary supported Collier and Morgan's (2008) statement by revealing she

likes college professors better than high school because they treat you like an adult and not a kid. They give you responsibility, they are not harping on you to get your work done, if you get it done, you get it done. If you don't you don't.

Just as instructors spend time outside of the classroom preparing for class, as the participating instructor demonstrated when she revealed her lesson plans that were carefully prepared, it was also important to hold the same expectations for students to spend an appropriate amount of time dedicated to their coursework. I observed the instructor actively attempted to engage the students in each lesson so they would participate. However, it appeared that the instructor did most of the work, while the students did not always appear to be fully focused or fully involved in class. It also

appeared that the students placed the responsibility of their learning on the instructor. These participants revealed in their interviews that they preferred active learning strategies, which I observed the instructor implementing. However, those students did not always choose to participate in the lessons.

For example, during my third observation, two students used their smart phones instead of participating in the planned highlighting activity. Another example of students who did not hold themselves accountable for the same expectations they held for their instructor was tardiness. Kelly shared that she felt that “instructors should not be late for class.” However, in all three of my observations, there were more than five students who arrived to class after the 5:00 p.m. start time, with some students arriving up to 20 minutes after class began. I described this phenomenon further in detail in my classroom observation notes in Appendix J.

The discrepancy that emerged from this case was that although students held high expectations for their instructors, they did not always uphold the same expectations for themselves as individual students. I further discuss the participants’ responses about their expectations of an instructor being flexible as opposed to the level of individual responsibility that students possess, and I connect this to current literature in my interpretation of the findings in Chapter 5.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

I audio recorded, transcribed, and fact-checked all of the interviews so that I accurately recorded students’ responses, avoiding any generalizations that the students

may have made as a whole towards their instructor. Next, I assigned a pseudonym to each participant (Appendix A) to ensure each participant's confidentiality, while I kept the true names of the participants secure. Finally, I locked the list of the participants' true identities that were matched with the pseudonyms in a fireproof cabinet for future reference if needed.

Validity and Transferability

Internal validity is defined as “the ability to infer that a causal relationship exists between two variables” (Johnson & Christensen, 2014, p. 281). I used three different strategies to create internal validity: (a) the use of individual interviews to hold private conversations with each participant, (b) referencing literature including Crappell's (2012) interpretation of millennial students and Willingham's (2009) interpretation of information processing theory, and (c) the triangulation of data including interviews, three classroom observations, and the instructor's lesson plans. There were no changes to the data collection plan that I describe in Chapter 3 and include in the approved IRB.

Johnson and Christensen (2014) described external validity as “the extent to which the study's results can be generalized to and across populations of persons' settings, times, outcomes, and treatment variations” (p. 291). External validity strategies were limited because the students were only enrolled in one section of READ 110. There were additional sections of READ 110 that other instructors taught at the college during the fall 2014 semester. It was expected that same course objectives were met in each READ 110 section. Therefore, I assumed that the results of this study might not have possessed validity to individuals outside of the READ 110 population. However, the

study could be adjusted accordingly to focus on the course or the instructor because I designed the research questions based on this specific developmental course.

A degree of transferability can be applied if the participants were enrolled in similar courses and classroom environments and individually examined through additional cases. There were strategies in place to ensure internal validity, which I discussed in Chapter 3. However, increasing the internal validity of the study caused there to be less external validity because this study would not be able to be used in multiple settings, and instead, only as a single case study.

Dependability

The strategies to form dependability during this study included (a) the triangulation of data through the examination of the student participant interviews, a follow-up exit interview for the eight participants, the lesson plans provided by the READ 110 instructor, and the field notes collected from the READ 110 classroom observations, (b) a description of the design and implementation of the study which could allow future researchers to duplicate the study, and (c) the sharing of the analysis and conclusions from the study of how there was a positive impact on social change.

There was an alternate option in place to collect data from more than one section of READ 110 that the same instructor taught during the fall 2014 semester if the study needed to be extended beyond one semester, or if I did not recruit enough participants in the selected READ 110 section. In addition, this plan was in place in case students who were enrolled in the study decided to withdraw from the course during the fall 2014 semester. It was not necessary to utilize this alternative plan because there were eight

students who volunteered to participate, which formed dependability for the study. I was able to collect enough data to address the research questions for analysis purposes. I successfully collected all of the data that I originally planned in Chapter 3 and in the approved IRB.

Confirmability

I attempted to ensure that the participants' responses and the instructor's lesson plans were recorded and transcribed in an objective manner. I applied the following strategies: (a) I formally reviewed the signed interview consent forms (Appendix E), and I reviewed the purpose of the study with each participant, (b) I asked introduction questions to each participant for the first time during the interview for demographic information, (c) I read the student interview questions from the student interview form (Appendix C) in the order the questions were written, only asking follow up questions or to elaborate on unclear responses, which I recorded in the transcripts, (d) I conducted exit interviews to ensure the correct responses were recorded and transcribed to confirm that each of the student's responses were accurate, and (e) I emailed the READ 110 instructor to confirm that I correctly recorded lesson plans for each lesson as she intended and not how I interpreted it.

I remained objective during the interviews by speaking in a formal manner when I asked each question. I also observed the students in class during the observations, and noted behaviors during each class period even though the individual observations needed to be interpreted individually. I then audio recorded my notes immediately following each observation into a narrative transcript. I used this strategy so that when I referred

back to my notes, my records would not be interpreted differently than how I originally observed the class on the dates that the data collection took place.

Research Results

I organized the data in this section in the order of the research questions that I list in Chapter 1 and in Chapter 3. Some of the research questions were similar in nature causing some of the participants' responses to overlap during the interviews. This repeated pattern is revealed in the transcripts (Appendix K). However, I list each question individually in this section. I describe the results from each of the research questions even though similar themes and results emerged from some of the research questions.

Question 1

What does the selected population of community college students need from their face-to-face instructors to be successful in their first year READ 110 course that can be provided to their instructors through an alternative method of collecting feedback?

Turanli (2009) analyzed students' perspectives of emotionally supportive teachers' behaviors, and he discovered that students feel satisfied in the classroom atmosphere when teachers support their students. Turanli identified a further need to examine students' perspectives about learning, and analyzed how teacher's relationships with students' relate to their level of success. I designed Question 1 so I could explore a deeper understanding of community college students' perspectives of what they felt they needed to be successful. The participants' revealed findings that were similar and different from Turanli's results. However, the results that emerged from Question 1 were general in nature as opposed to Turanli's more specific research about the relationship

teachers had with their students. I present the five repeated themes from the central research question that students felt they needed to be successful in their course in the following Table 3.

Table 3

Central Research Question Themes

Ineffective instructor qualities	Percentage of responses
An active approach to learning	62%
Use of different learning styles in lessons	100%
Instructors who utilize multiple methods of communication	87%
Instructors who possess personality	75%
Instructors who are flexible	62%

Note:

First, 62% of the participants preferred an active approach to learning in their college course. For example, as opposed to a more lectured-centered approach, Mary suggested to “maybe do a hands on activity that’s about a lecture.” Similarly, Anna revealed that she liked when her instructor “uses the board and she’s got the PowerPoint, and she gives examples, then gives you feedback, and then, we do the group exercise. It gets you involved.” Also in relation to teaching methods, all eight of the participants shared that the use of some type of different learning strategies was important even though they described their preferences in different ways. Kelly stated that

lecturing isn’t...I mean yeah it does help, appeal to some people, but some people have to appeal to the learning styles. Like for me, I am a visual learner, but

sometimes I need other things, not just like physical work doing it and repeating it, and sometimes verbalization does not do it, or visuals.

The first of the two themes that were similar to Turanli's (2009) results in terms of providing support to students was that students preferred an instructor who had multiple ways of being contacted, communicates, and responds to students in a timely manner. The second similarity to Turanli's study was that 75% of participants shared that they preferred an instructor that possessed personality. For example, Marion stated that her

math teacher is very quiet, shy, doesn't really talk much and honestly, it kind of makes it kind of difficult to learn from somebody that's so quiet because you want to feel comfortable with them. You want to be able to ask them questions, and sometimes if you don't have that friendly nature about you, you get kind of nervous asking questions because you don't want to, you know, bother anybody.

Next, 87% of the students discussed communication, and preferred an instructor who utilizes multiple methods to communicate. Kelly revealed that online communication was helpful by stating that

in my Sociology class, we have a print out. However, in Canvas, how it says week ten, we're doing such and such, but if something changes, or if we don't have class that day, that might the following class and we might not have it anymore, but on Canvas, they can go online and change it...we'll know about it before we get to class...they can tell us online, at least they can change it when we're not in class, and we'll still know about it.

David also wanted clear communication as he did not prefer those “that just tell you go back to the format. Go check the format. Oh, it’s already there. You have to look for it, but you need it to be clarified and they’re just stuck on that.”

The fourth theme of this research question was in relation to instructor personality. Seventy-five percent of the participants revealed that personality contributed to an effective instructor. I stated earlier that some of the questions produced overlapping themes, and this theme of the need for the instructor to possess personality also emerged again in Question 4. For example, Mary felt an instructor “should definitely be friendly, if you ask for help, or if you need to explain something, they don’t have an attitude or whatever about it.” Jamie revealed that her instructor was “patient...she takes time.” Also, Emma discussed that her instructor is “understanding.”

The final theme that emerged from Question 1 was that the participants also discussed in some way that flexibility was critical for students’ success. Sixty-two percent of the students preferred an instructor who is flexible. Molly revealed that if a student has a problem at home, rather than saying, oh you missed class, you get marked absent, you should probably explain it to her...she’ll be like, oh that’s okay, here’s what you missed, and here’s what to do next week and get it done and come in.

Question 2

What types of instructional methods are face-to-face community college instructors currently using that are similar and different from students’ preferences and classroom needs?

I compared and contrasted the READ 110 observations to the participants' responses Question 2 in terms of the similarities and differences they preferred in the classroom in relation to what actually occurred in the lessons that I observed. I present the repeated themes of similarities from the participants' responses and the classroom observations in Table 4.

Table 4

Participants' Responses to Research Question 2

Strategies the instructor is utilizing that are similar to students' preferences	Percentage of responses
Instructors who provide clear direction, communication, and announcements	87%
Use of visuals to compliment lessons	75%
Use of discussion and application activities	100%
Computer work	75%

Note: Analysis of participant responses from Question 2.

These four themes emerged from the student participant responses. I also observed this behavior during the three READ 110 class observations (Appendix J). The first theme that emerged from Question 2 was that the instructor began each lesson by providing announcements and directions. Similarly, 87% of the participants shared that they preferred an instructor who provides clear directions, communicates with her students, and makes announcements. Marion shared that her

math teacher is very quiet, shy, doesn't really talk much and honestly, it kind of makes it kind of difficult to learn from somebody that's so quiet because you want

to feel comfortable with them. You want to be able to ask them questions, and sometimes if you don't have that friendly like nature about you, you get kind of nervous asking questions because you don't want to, you know, bother anybody.

I confirmed that communication occurred between the students and the instructor when I observed the instructor speak individually to students during independent and application activity time. The instructor also monitored each student's individual responses by walking around the room in which she provided individual attention to students.

The second theme that emerged from this research question was that the students preferred visuals to compliment the lesson. Seventy-five percent of the students preferred a PowerPoint to support a lesson, and the remaining 25% of the participants spoke about modeling to support directions to an activity. David preferred "a PowerPoint and...notes on the board and reading rather than straight lecture" while Marion preferred when her instructor "talks about what we are doing, and then she'll have us go online and actually walk us through each step...she shows us in front of us."

Next, all eight participants revealed that they preferred discussion and application activities. In terms of discussion, Anna shared that "it should be open...open to the students. It should be like a two-way share, I mean extend ideas." As for application activities, Molly confirmed that she was assigned online application activities by stating that "it's weekly assignments you take...you do the review, do three practice sets and then take the actual test itself." I confirmed that discussion and application activities occurred during my second observation of the interpreting charts and reading bar graphs lesson. The students completed an application activity of a bar quest, which was followed

by a guided discussion. Then, most of the students participated in an active discussion about the percentages of the medication the instructor introduced on the bar chart. The students appeared actively engaged in the discussion and the comments related directly back to the lesson objective for that evening. I documented this information in Appendix J.

Finally, 75% of the participants preferred computer work during class not only as a supplement to the course, but also as an application to the content that was being covered in class. David confirmed “sometimes we submit assignments online. We mostly submit assignments online.” In addition, Anna confirmed that the students worked on application activities outside of class for homework, and she shared “in terms of the homework we get back to the class the next day or so and we go over what we did at home to see if we are right when we do the assignment.” Students also shared the differences they felt between their classroom needs as to what behaviors actually occurred in the READ 110 classroom in which I was able to confirm through my observations. I present these four themes in the following Table 5.

Table 5

Participants’ Responses to Research Question 2 Continued

Strategies the instructor utilized that were different to students’ preferences	Percentage of responses
Instructor reviewed prior lessons and activated prior knowledge before beginning a new lesson	NA
The use of lecture	75%

Class time started later than scheduled	50%
Lack of redirection or addressing interruptions and discussions	50%

Note: I continued my analysis of participant responses from Question 2.

First, I observed the instructor activating prior knowledge and reviewing previous course content during class in all three of my observations. The participants did not discuss these activities during the interviews. However, it was evident throughout each of the classroom observations that the instructor utilized a review in the beginning of each lesson. These activities were also listed on the instructor's planned sequence of events on the intended lesson plans that she submitted. Secondly, 75% of the students confirmed that they did not prefer the lecture portion of class. Each of the lessons I observed included a lecture of no more than ten minutes in length before the instructor switched to another activity that related to each course objective for that evening. Anna revealed that she "zones out" during lecture. Similarly, during lecture, Kelly "sits there for too long and I kind of get bored. I like more activities and doing creative things."

Burkill et al. (2008) found that many college instructors used a traditional approach to learning, the lecture, which is a teacher-centered approach that is used to transmit knowledge from the instructor to students. According to Burkill et al., this method was a common type of instruction that was utilized to teach a large amount of students. I confirmed with the instructor that only 15 students were enrolled in this READ 110 section. I would not identify this as a large group of students as opposed to a filled lecture hall of college students. It appeared that a portion of each of the three

observed lessons was orally delivered, and there was little or no student interaction during those lectures. David shared his opinion about lecture, and he stated

I honestly feel a teacher that just straight lectures... I mean if there's a PowerPoint and there's notes on the board, and then there's reading that rather than straight lecture after that. Lecturing doesn't help at all. It honestly makes me lose focus... not because I'm easily distracted, but because I try and focus on the key words or parts of what's being said, and I miss out on more details because it's just too hard to keep up, and then it's the pace at which teachers talk.

Eighty-seven percent of the participants responded that an instructor who primarily lectured in class was ineffective. This confirmed a relationship with the previous research question in which 75% of the students responded that they preferred an instructor who utilized a variety of different teaching methods and also met the needs of various learning styles. David followed up on this question by sharing that "a teacher that just straight lectures...it honestly makes me lose focus...I miss out on more details because it's just too hard to keep up, and then it's the pace at which teachers talk."

Anna shared that

when they are presenting or they are teaching, they should, one quality I think they should have is that they should get the class' attention. I mean sometimes some topics are so boring, you have to get us involved. I mean make it stand out.

Next, 50% percent of the participants acknowledged that there was lack of redirection from class interruptions and that class began later than the scheduled start time. I confirmed this behavior during all three observations in which there was a lack of

redirection to students who were off task, and to those who habitually arrived late to class. Jamie shared that her instructor

doesn't put her foot down a little bit...the cell phone thing is one... You should put it on vibrate. It's just courteous. How are you going to get a job and not be courteous? That's just ridiculous... and getting phone calls.

The similarities that occurred in the classroom that the students preferred and shared were more related to delivery of the content and how learning occurred. The differences were the additional methods that the instructor used, which included activating prior knowledge. Finally, the students did not prefer lecture, classroom distractions, or interruptions that occurred during my observations of READ 110.

Question 3

What do community college developmental reading students feel are ineffective qualities of face-to-face instructors?

I examined current research about students' perspectives of college instructors before asking the participants this question. There were additional studies that provided research about professional and personal qualities of teachers that went beyond classroom instructional strategies. For example, Halawah (2011) found that teachers' personalities, instructional methods, and classroom management strategies all contribute to students' motivation factors, which was similar to Turanli's (2009) study that I discuss in Question 2. I designed Question 3 so that it would be based on a similar framework to Halawah's (2011) study about students' preferences and motivations to learning. However, I designed this question more specifically so that I could explore personal, professional,

and unprofessional characteristics of instructors instead of focusing only on instructional methods as I did in Question 1. I gained a deeper understanding of the participants' perspectives of what qualities they did not prefer in an instructor by asking this interview question and by observing their behavior during the three classroom observations. The second theme that emerged from this research question was not related to classroom instruction. Instead, a majority of the students described the instructor's personal qualities, attitudes they possessed towards their instructors' teaching position and towards their students, and professional and unprofessional habits that their instructors' demonstrated. The participants' responses are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Participants' Responses to Qualities of an Ineffective Instructor

Ineffective instructor qualities	Percentage of responses
Instructors who do not care	50%
Instructors who are too rigid	50%
Poor appearance and lack of professionalism	38%
Instructors who think they are correct	50%
Instructors who are late for class	38%

Note: Analysis of participant responses from Question 3.

These qualities were personal traits that students shared in regards to ineffective qualities of an instructor. The participants did not describe their specific READ 110 instructor in this question. Seven of the eight participants (87%) were enrolled in other courses besides READ 110. There were some responses about another instructor during

the interview that went beyond READ 110, comparing and contrasting the instructor's qualities. However, I did not deviate from the original question. I did not observe the instructor demonstrate behaviors from the qualities the students shared in the responses from Question 3 during my READ 110 classroom observations. I observed: (a) a brief lecture in each lesson, (b) one-on-one interaction with students, (c) personal attention to students, (d) questions to specific answers, (e) a friendly attitude towards students, and (f) computer integration into the course lessons. Also, there was a habitual pattern of several students arriving late for class, which caused the class to start later than the scheduled time even though the students preferred that they did not want their teacher to be late for class.

The first theme that emerged from Question 3 was that 38% of the students revealed they did not prefer an instructor who lacks a professional appearance, and did not demonstrate professionalism in the classroom. David revealed that

I feel like it's a silhouette image. I feel as if each professor or teacher has to bring that image himself or herself. It really depends on the individual, but it's not straight by appearance though. Well I guess the way you first judge somebody should be. I don't even say what the first thing they say is but I mean I know there's always like first impressions and stuff but it's really like what the person like brings to the table.

The second theme that emerged from this research question is that 50% of the participants did not prefer instructors who always think they are correct. David did not prefer "sarcasm and stuff. The teachers who always think they're right, and they set out

rules for the course.” Finally, 38% of the participants did not want an instructor be late to class. David revealed that

showing up early is always a good thing...so there’s consistency in my teacher too which is something that’s always good to find in teachers. It’s not hard. I mean it’s pretty hard to find that in teachers as a consistent behavior and doesn’t let the outside world affect their working world. So that’s pretty professional.

Similarly, Kelly discussed that one of her other instructors “shows up late just about everyday to class. I mean, I understand it’s an eight o’clock class, but if I am there early.”

Question 4

Are there additional qualities or traits aside from knowledge and practice teaching methodology that community college students prefer from their face-to-face instructors that are shared in the alternative method of collecting feedback that are not normally provided as an opportunity to share on a traditional course evaluation form?

Roehling et al. (2011) discussed ways to engage millennial students in classroom discussion, and also shared how this generation of students was raised in an environment where individuality is valued, and there are classroom expectations from these students that differ from previous generations. Roehling et al. found that engaging students through classroom discussion helps to fit this generation’s need for collaboration that leads to successful learning. I designed Question 4 to gain a deeper understanding of what college students needed from their instructor in addition to teaching methods.

Helterbran’s (2008) research indicated that certain attitudes and behaviors of teachers determined an ideal professor, including presentation, personality, and

professionalism. The emerging themes from Question 4 primarily were about the instructor as an individual human being working in a position, and not the actual teaching profession. All of the eight participants appeared engaged and responsive to this question as they shared what they felt made their college experience more successful about an instructor who created the classroom environment's tone and setting.

These four repeated themes that emerged from Question 4 are presented in Table 7.

Table 7

Additional Personal Qualities an Instructor Should Possess to Be Effective

Effective qualities of an instructor	Percentage of responses
Personal accessibility (ex. phone, text message)	50%
Possess personality and people skills	63%
Relates to students	63%
Is caring	38%

Note: Analysis of participant responses from Question 4.

I discuss the results about communication and timely responses in Question 1, and as one of the central themes of this study. Fifty percent of the students also responded to Question 4 that they preferred an instructor who is personally accessible. Anna shared that her “instructor provides her with her cell phone number and communicates via text.” Anna also confirmed that there was communication that occurred inside and outside of the classroom. In terms of personality, 63% of the students revealed that personality was a factor that helped students to be successful. Molly shared that an instructor “should have a sense of humor...says that they’re not afraid to poke fun, not afraid to have fun in

the class rather than having a dull black and white class that you just go through a drone.” Similarly, Mary shared “that they can just be chill. It doesn’t matter what degree you have. You’re still teaching. I’m paying you to teach me you know.” Finally, Kelly responded that, in terms of instructors’ qualities,

they have to have people skills. Like they can’t be shy or not able to talk to them or anything, because you want somebody who you feel you can go up to and talk to or even outside of school stuff. If they’re talking about shows they’ve just watched and feel like they are more like you, and make it more relatable.

I asked Kelly to confirm what she meant when she said relatable. She followed up with the word “storytelling.” Kelly found that storytelling was helpful to an extent, but only when it was related to the subject matter. She then clarified her response to storytelling as

not talking about things that don’t relate to class when it’s time to get serious about stuff because I used to have teachers that would talk about their children or something when we were learning about a lesson...that wasn’t related to what we are doing...and that confuses me about everything.

In addition, during my observations, it was also evident that the instructor took material from class and related content to real life scenarios. This repeated occurrence was apparent in each of the application activities that I observed including (a) the bar graph quest of medications (b) the evaluation of a website of their choice, and (c) the comparing of notes and highlighting of the text.

The final theme from Question 4 was that 38% of the students felt that their instructor should be caring. Marion revealed that her instructor is

listening, and understanding, going over the notes and everything with the class as well. She helps to see how you're going over...she seems to be very easy to talk to and very open and not judgmental. She makes everyone in the class feel welcome and comfortable.

I also confirmed during my observations that the instructor gave individual attention to students during application. She addressed each student individually when the class worked on the evaluating website activity and also during individual computer work time. Overall, the students' responses to Question 4 related to their preference of personal qualities that an instructor should possess.

Question 5

What instructional methods do developmental community college students prefer from their reading face-to-face community college instructor that they feel contributes to their success?

In addition to the students preferring a variety of instructional methods and various use of learning styles while teaching, the participants also shared two additional instructional methods that they felt contributed to their success in the classroom.

The two themes that emerged from this question are presented in the following Table 8.

Table 8

Instructional Methods that Students Feel Contributes to Their Success

Effective instructional methods	Percentage of responses
Online supplements to the course	87%
An instructor who delivers content in an	50%

organized manner

Note: Analysis of participant responses from Question 5.

First, 87% of the students preferred online supplements to the course. I observed two online supplements to the READ 110 course. The first supplement was an online program that students worked on individually to increase their reading comprehension skills. Anna described that the reading comprehension component is a program where “we do the questions at home then she would elaborate where you got a problem.” Mary revealed that she thinks the program is “helping my reading get better like with the understanding of stories and actually being able to read faster.”

The second program that the instructor used was an online course space on Canvas. Kelly described Canvas as

an online program where you can see your weekly schedule, what you’re doing each week, and what you are learning. You can even see your grades up there when you are done with it. Most of it’s online testing, but once it’s posted, then you can get to go on and see the grade and...how it affected your overall grade too.

I asked Kelly to explain why she enjoyed the online supplement, and she responded: “I am very organized. I have to know what I’m doing next, like that’s just how I am, and most of my other classes don’t have that.”

This also supported the second theme from Question 5 in which 50% of the participants felt that an organized instructor was important. Anna liked it when her professor “planned the lesson.” I confirmed that although the instructor was not required

to submit lesson plans to the college, it was evident that she was prepared for each class. The complete lesson plans from the dates of the three observations are included in Appendix D. Similarly, Mary wanted an instructor that “utilizes as much time as possible. They’re not sitting there wasting time just talking about stories, and stuff like that.” Also in terms of organization, David revealed that attendance and showing up on time was a quality that related to an organized instructor. Overall, the participants’ responses helped to gain a deeper understanding about what the students felt contributed to their success. They preferred when instructors used online components, and when instructors were prepared to deliver content in an organized manner.

Summary

I conducted, openly coded, and analyzed the student interviews and the classroom observations to discover information that students would not normally have an opportunity to provide their classroom instructors with on a traditional course evaluation form. The most common method of instructional needs that students preferred was an active approach to learning and applying various teaching strategies to meet students’ different learning style needs. In addition, students mostly shared their personal and professional preferred qualities of an ideal instructor, preferring a more humanistic and flexible approach to teaching, and having an established relationship with open communication between the instructor and the student. I discuss the results of the data and how the data were collected in Chapter 4. In the final Chapter of this study, I interpret my findings, and I provide recommendations about how this study’s results can

be used to assist instructors with better meeting their students' needs as well as contributing to social change in the college classroom.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this case study was to gain a deeper understanding of the current college population's classroom preferences and learning needs. The data were collected through eight student interviews, three READ 110 classroom observations, and the instructor's lesson plans of the classes that were observed. I used this method of data collection as an alternative to course and instructor feedback from a traditional evaluation form. I designed and conducted this study to allow opportunities for students to share their experiences about college and about what they felt they needed to be successful in the learning process. The participants shared professional and personal qualities that they preferred in an instructor, as well as qualities that students felt were not beneficial.

The key findings of this study were that students prefer (a) an active approach to learning in the classroom, (b) instructors who address different learning style needs during instruction, (c) instructors who communicate and are personally available and accessible to students through various methods of contact, (d) instructors who possess personality, and (e) instructors who are flexible. In Chapter 5 I describe my interpretations of the findings, the limitations, and recommendations for further study.

Interpretations of the Findings

The purpose of this study was to explore the current college population's learning preferences and classroom needs. I was able to discover valuable information for instructors and for higher education administrators about students' preferences for learning through face-to-face interviews, three classroom observations, and the

instructor's lesson plans for each of the observations. In Chapter 2, I review literature related to the current college population's demographics, millennial generational characteristics, adult learners' needs, students' perspectives of effective instruction, and instructors' personal qualities. The results can be used to gain a deeper understanding of students' preferences for learning by using an alternative method of collecting feedback than the traditional course evaluation form. My findings were similar to other researchers' interpretations of millennial students' and adult learners' needs. In this chapter, I revisit the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 to confirm and disconfirm my findings based on the current literature. I also interpret the following themes: (a) an active approach to learning in the classroom, (b) instructors who address different learning style needs during instruction, (c) instructors who communicate and are personally available and accessible to students through various methods of contact, (d) instructors who possess personality, and (e) instructors who are flexible

Active Learning

The students' preferences to be actively engaged in class were evident during all of the participants' interviews. For example, participants discussed active learning, the use of different learning styles, and having fun in class. Mageehorn (2006) found that teachers who encourage hands-on experimenting, encourage the use of learning styles, use individualized instruction, and understanding to students' needs are helpful. One of the repeated themes that emerged in my findings was that several students made specific references as to what type of learning style they identified themselves as having, using words such as *auditory*, *visual*, *kinesthetic*, or *active learners* in their responses. For

example, David stated that he preferred “to try each different learning style. I feel like there’s always a bit of hands on, there’s visualizing, auditory learning, so there’s a lot of different types of learning.” Similarly, Marion preferred a more hands-on approach to learning. She stated “as soon as I see something and actually do it, I learn better hands on.” Another example of how these learning style words emerged from the students’ responses was when Anna discussed that her instructor “uses the board and she’s got the PowerPoint and gives examples, and they give feedback when we do group exercise. It gets you involved.”

Merriam (2008) recognized that adult learning is a cognitive process, and that it takes place in various ways. However, one of the discrepancies in my findings related to cognitive learning was Willingham’s (2009) approach to information processing theory. The word *cognitive* needed to be addressed because the participants did not discuss any cognitive strategies related to learning that they preferred such as Willingham’s (2009) powerful classroom applications even though I observed some of these strategies during the classroom observations and described them in the Question 3 section of Chapter 4. I also confirmed that the use of brain-based teaching strategies was noted on the instructor’s lesson plans. I observed the following classroom activities during my observations that correlated to Willingham’s suggested classroom applications, and these activities included (a) the instructor activated prior knowledge, (b) the instructor reviewed each exercise or activity to confirm the correct answers after students completed in-class activities, and (c) the instructor participated in follow-up questions to elaborate on unclear course content.

I was unclear about how the participants understood the concept of learning styles because participants appeared to be able to use learning style key words in their responses without any prompts. However, when I referred to the READ 110 course syllabus, one of the course objectives of READ 110 was that students would be able to understand and apply their learning styles to improve their study strategies. I discovered that during the second week of the semester, this content was covered in class and students practiced identifying their learning styles so that they could apply their own strengths to study more efficiently. I followed up with the instructor to confirm that this information was taught during the second week of the semester when the students spent a week taking a learning style inventory and reading about strategies that best fit their needs. It appeared that during the interviews, the participants labeled themselves as specific types of learners, and then they made a connection in their responses by sharing whether they felt that their instructor was or was not accommodating their learning styles in class.

This created a discrepancy in my findings because I did not include learning styles in my study. Instead, I used a framework based on information processing theory in which Willingham (2009) provided classroom applications that could benefit all learners. Willingham stated “children are more alike than different in terms of how they think and learn” (p. 113). However, Willingham based this statement on individual’s cognitive styles, and not learning styles. When examining millennials and nontraditional adult learners who differed in age, background, and ability levels, it was important to identify classroom strategies that instructors could use to address all learners in some way without having to plan specific activities to meet each learning style. However, the participants’

responses created reliability within the study because each participant was clearly able to explain how they preferred to learn in the college environment.

Instructor Communication

Slate et al. (2009) found that an effective instructor possesses the ability to communicate, the willingness to help students, the desire to be involved, and the capacity for caring. All of these qualities that Slate et al. found emerged from the participant interviews, which supported the theme that students felt that personal qualities of an instructor were important. Similarly, Bain (2004) noted that effective instructors clearly communicate with their students, offer support to students when they make mistakes, and encourage students to try again.

Crappell (2012) described positive qualities of millennials, and these include the ability to collaborate, to create a sense of collectivity, and to be open to change. I confirmed that the participants possessed millennial characteristics such as feeling comfortable communicating with the instructor, participating in two-way communication, and having an instructor who cares about the well being of students. Crappell (2012) also explained that millennials possess a need for connectivity, which confirmed my findings that students prefer communication with the instructor so that they can feel more connected. I noted in my observations the activities that the instructor implemented to meet this student preference including (a) answering students' individual questions, (b) monitoring students while walking around the room providing immediate feedback, and (c) participating in one-on-one discussions to assist students in the advising process. Also, the instructor's lesson plans included frequent announcements, which she delivered

at the beginning of each class. Finally, I observed the instructor communicate information about class content and upcoming events that students could benefit from during each class period.

Personality

Polk (2006) explained that it was almost impossible for students to leave out their teachers' personality and how it impacts their learning experiences. However, Polk did not suggest that instructors should change their personalities. Instead, Polk stressed that teachers should be aware of their personality strengths and weaknesses so that they could adapt their instructional styles to better use their own natural strengths. In addition, Helterbran (2008) stated "students occasionally complain of not being compatible with their teachers or having personality conflicts" (p. 26).

I observed relationships being built between the instructor and her students in the study setting, and it was evident that the instructor cared about her students' success and used her personal qualities through her instruction during the course. However, this creates an issue that the students' expectations of a caring instructor are slowly becoming an added job requirement in addition to meeting professional and course objective requirements. Varallo (2008) researched ways to meet the needs of millennial students. Varallo raised the concern that "some interaction with some students is not enough, that every student, like every child, ought to have one on one attention in order for him or her to develop to the fullest capacity" (p. 154). I confirmed Varallo's (2008) assertions that students prefer "caring teachers who spend time with them" (p. 154). This increased need for students to foster relationships and connections with their instructors suggests that the

role of college instructors is changing from being an expert in their content areas to having personality and playing the role of a guide to assist and mentor individual students.

Instructor Flexibility and Student Individual Responsibility

One of the final themes of the study was that students felt that an instructor should be flexible in terms of homework, classwork, grading, and late submissions. However, in Chapter 4 I introduced a discrepancy that emerged from the observations and from the student interviews. The discrepancy was that students did not discuss what they felt they personally needed to bring to the classroom in terms of being accountable or responsible as individual students. Black (2010) described millennials as those who

lacked basic skills, were collaborative, had parents who hovered and took responsibility for their college age children, had family instability, were assertive, were confident, possessed a growing sense of spirituality and religion, and were more tolerant and accepting of diversity. (p. 94)

My findings supported Black's research that millennials did not take responsibility because they focused on the instructor's responsibility to ensure success of her students during the interviews instead of taking individual responsibility for their own learning. Therefore, millennials need to learn how to make independent responsible decisions, which can lead to their success as they transition from the college classroom into the workforce (Payment, 2008).

Collier and Morgan (2008) suggested that although instructors contribute to students' success or failure, students also have to be held individually accountable.

During my observations, the instructor actively attempted to engage her students in each lesson by trying to encourage her students to respond and to participate. However, it appeared that the instructor did most of the work while the students did not always appear fully involved. I observed the students participating in some of the online supplements to the course on the computer during one observation. Bustos and Nussbaum (2009) presented information on the use of technology as a teaching tool in higher education. However, the READ 110 instructor had to walk over to redirect students who were working on the computer but not on classroom tasks. Bustos and Nussbaum provided information about effective teaching tools for millennials and adult learners that were not available in the classroom 10 years ago. I observed students who chose not to take individual accountability and use the technology to complete their coursework.

Within my interpretation of findings, I confirmed and disconfirmed my findings in the context of the reviewed literature. First, I observed that students were more likely to participate in class when an active learning activity was used, such as discussion or working through an interactive activity. Second, I confirmed that students preferred personal qualities of an instructor including one who communicates and one who is flexible. Finally, I observed that students did not always take responsibility for their learning even when the instructor used learning strategies that students preferred. I confirmed this when I observed students frequently check their phones, sit in class without taking books out of their schoolbags, or choose not to sit at the main table area with other students during class.

Limitations

My role as the researcher in this study was to collect data in an objective manner so that my teaching experience would not affect the results of the study. Therefore, I recorded all of my conversations with the participants for documentation purposes to ensure that I did not exceed the bounds of my role. I created trustworthiness by maintaining a strictly professional relationship with the participants. I also created trustworthiness by assigning a pseudonym to each participant. I then confirmed with each student during each interview that his or her participation in the study would remain confidential.

Johnson and Christensen (2014) described narrative inquiry as the process in which the researcher and the participants discuss experiences and stories understood by the participant and interpreted by the researcher. The participants shared their preferences for learning by describing their classroom experiences. The participants also provided examples and retold their lived experiences in READ 110. Although this study was limited to a small sample size of eight students, narrative inquiry allowed the participants to provide data that created a deeper understanding of their needs.

The study was limited to exploring and gaining a deeper understanding of the current college population's learning preferences as opposed to what educational theorists suggested to be effective learning strategies. I did not interview the instructor because I focused on college students' preferences to learning. Therefore, it was unknown if the instructor would reflect on her classroom practices based on students' recommendations after the course feedback would be returned to her. In addition, the study was limited to

my observations of only 20% of the fall 2014 semester even though the participants described their experiences in the classroom.

Johnson and Christensen (2014) revealed that in qualitative research, generating findings within a specific context is the goal instead of creating findings that would be applicable on a larger scale. I examined one section of READ 110 even though there were multiple sections of the course that were offered during the fall 2014 semester. Yin (1994) stated that case studies rely on the direct observations of events being studied and interviews of those involved. This case was limited to exploring students' preferences on a smaller scale to describe individual participant's experiences. According to Johnson and Christensen (2014), generalizing a case can be a weakness to the study. External validity was limited because the eight students were enrolled in the same section of the READ 110 course. I used convenience sampling while also remaining within the bounds of the case study where a specific experience was the focus, which were the participants' READ 110 experiences. I was able to collect sufficient data within the case to produce results that described this group of students' experiences in the context of the one section of READ 110, without having to extend the data collection process to study additional students.

I considered using a grounded theory as the original design for the study, but this study was not based on an existing learning theory (Creswell, 2007). An existing theory did not develop from this study. Instead, I used a case study design so that I could explore a deeper understanding of the needs of the population, and then relate my findings to current literature. In addition, I was limited to exploring the experiences of the READ

110 participants. I conducted the study as scheduled without any additional limitations. It is my assumption that the students responded honestly in their initial interviews, and I confirmed that I accurately recorded their responses by asking the participants to review the transcripts during the follow up exit interviews.

Recommendations

I made four recommendations so that I could contribute to social change among the current college classroom population based on my interpretations of the method in which I collected data by using face-to-face interviews, my findings on the students' preferences to active learning strategies, the preference of students to have instructors that possess personal qualities, and also, the importance of holding individual students accountable. I recommend the following: (a) to replicate this qualitative approach to collecting course feedback with other courses, (b) for colleges to offer their instructors with professional development opportunities related to active learning strategies and their findings of specific needs of their college's population, (c) for instructors to have open dialogues with their students each semester in regards to course expectations from each other, and (d) for instructors to hold college students more accountable for their responsibility to meet course objectives as they uphold certain expectations of their instructors.

My first recommendation relates to the process of collecting future course feedback from college students. It is important to communicate with the current student population through face-to-face interactions as Black (2010) discussed in his research about this generation and their preferences for connectivity. The college's department of

institutional research could collect data to share with faculty and staff within specific departments. The method in which I collected and analyzed data could be replicated and individualized so that other colleges and universities could duplicate the study to gain a deeper understanding of their students' specific needs. I recommend that higher education administrators focus on their specific student population to collect feedback from students using a qualitative method as an alternative to using a written online or course evaluation form to collect information about their instructors. It will be difficult to conduct this study on a larger scale because each interview will take additional time than having the students complete a paper or online evaluation. However, written words lack emotion, and they can be misinterpreted. Therefore, this data collection method should be used as opposed to using a large-scale data quantitative data collection survey tool. A qualitative approach will allow the researcher to receive valuable verbal and non-verbal feedback directly from participants.

It is also important to consider who will collect the data on a case-by-case basis. An issue of trustworthiness could develop if a higher education administrator who is superior to the instructor interviews students and observes the instructor. Students could feel uncomfortable speaking to a supervisor, and they may not be truly honest in their responses. This could also be more harmful than beneficial for the instructor if this type of feedback were used for permanent records. For example, some students may be biased if they provided inaccurate feedback because they received a poor grade in the class.

This study should be treated as a deep exploration of an individual class to ensure internal validity. I recommend that the researcher is equal in job status to the instructor,

such as having another instructor who teaches in the same department, complete the data collection. I recommend this type of data collection for instructors' professional growth and development only, instead of a means to evaluate their job performances. For example, each department chair could choose the sections an instructor teaches each semester that would be evaluated based on the instructors who express interest in participating for professional development purposes. The interested instructors could swap classes and interview each other's students. This practice increases the validity and trustworthiness, and it creates a comfortable environment for students without having instructors feel that they are being observed for job performance records.

Students could also willingly volunteer, or be offered an incentive that is funded by the department such as bookstore credit instead of extra credit for the course to avoid reliability issues. The data could be shared immediately with the instructor for personal and professional benefits once the instructors finish collecting data from each other's sections. I recommend for this study to be conducted one semester per year on all interested full-time and part-time faculty. Participant Kelly felt that "keeping up with the times" was important. Kelly's feedback was a constructive suggestion that both part-time and full-time faculty could benefit from immediate feedback as opposed to waiting until the course is over to receive this type of feedback. It is unknown whether the instructors will incorporate the feedback they receive from their students, but the more information that is available to instructors, the higher the chance is that instructors will reflect on their teaching. One way to address this is that instructors can complete reflective journal activities in which instructors share with their college's center for faculty support. These

journals would be for personal development purposes where faculty support teams could coach instructors and have individual conversations as to how they can be reflective upon their teaching practices.

My second recommendation is related to the active learning strategies that this population prefers. Instructional certificates are not always required to teach in higher education, but instead, it is expected for instructors to possess a mastery of the specific content area in the area in which they are hired. There are instructors teaching developmental reading, math, and writing courses that may be experts in their content field, but do not have instructional methods training or experience. I recommend that departments provide annual professional development opportunities by sharing information collected from specific course sections as continuing education to fellow staff and faculty members. For example, these professional development sessions about best teaching practices could include classroom implications based on Willingham (2009) that could address students' cognitive styles to help instructors think in terms of content and not in terms of students and modeling ways to use change in class to promote students' attention (p.127). Educating instructors on brain-based learning strategies could create opportunities for active learning strategies to occur in class. Willingham's applications could also promote deeper learning so that the current college population of students could better retain information and connect new information to existing knowledge that they possess.

My third recommendation is related to my findings that students prefer certain personal qualities in an instructor. It is important to understand that instructors are also

individual human beings, possess individual personalities, and have different background experiences as well. Crappell (2012) found that millennials complement those of previous generations and essentially can work with each other to discover their individual strengths. Therefore, it is important for students to communicate and establish professional relationships with their instructors. I recommend that instructors have open dialogues with their students about their likes and dislikes of how they prefer to learn in the classroom. This open method of communication could not only make a connection and establish a relationship with instructors, but it could also help instructors modify instructional methods to better meet requests while still upholding state standards and course objectives. Jamie shared that she communicates with her instructor through text message if needed. Open communication with students could meet this current generation's need to feel connected.

My final recommendation is related to the need for students to be held more accountable for their learning so that less responsibility is placed on instructors. I previously recommended professional development opportunities for instructors so that they could individually reflect upon their practices and choose to improve their methods if they wished. However, I recommend that the same standards be held for students to be responsible for completing course work, attending class, and meeting expectations based on the discrepancy I found in the case. Varallo (2008) provided suggestions to help students become more independent and rely less on their instructor, and these suggestions include deducting points when students ask questions in which the answer was on their syllabi and refusing to assist with advising when students arrive unprepared for an

advising session. Strategies like these could still cause instructors to treat college students as if they were in an elementary or in a high school environment. Mary revealed that she liked college because she enjoyed being treated like an adult. Mary stated “they give you responsibility, they are not harping on you to get your work done if you get it done, you get it done, if you don’t you don’t.”

I recommend that instructors create contracts for their students at the beginning of each semester, which includes all of the course requirements and expectations. After the instructor carefully reviews a statement of understanding with the students, they could sign the contract and be held more accountable for when assignments are not turned in, or when a student has not completed coursework. The instructor could include a written statement in the contract that says that students will be clearly aware of any penalties if any course expectations were not met. This could eliminate the instructor having to follow up with a student about work they missed in class, or take additional time to remind students about turning in missing assignments. The student could also be made aware of submission policies through a statement of understanding. It is also important to include a statement in the contract to let the students know that tutoring services, the writing center, or using the instructor by appointment during office hours is available if the student is struggling in the course. This strategy could hold students more accountable to successfully complete course outcomes, and also be held more accountable for their grades.

I made four recommendations in this section based on my interpretations of my findings and these recommendations include (a) colleges could replicate the study’s

design to continue to receive feedback from students using a qualitative approach, (b) colleges could offer professional development opportunities to instructors about effective instructional methods related to this student population, (c) instructors could have an open dialogue with their students in regards to establishing relationships and sharing classroom preferences, and (d) instructors could still meet students' preferred methods of learning while also holding individual accountability by having students sign statements of understanding so that that students could be aware that they would be expected to uphold any expectations described in the contract. In the next section, I discuss social change implications, and theoretical implications related to this study.

Implications

Social Change

This study contributes to social change because I produced results that are important for educators so that they can understand their student population to best meet their needs so that students can be more successful in their courses. Eight participants shared their perspectives of their classroom needs and learning preferences. One READ 110 instructor volunteered to participate and allowed for me to collect data that could be shared for her own reflective teaching practices in addition to sharing the feedback with other educators. The participants provided valuable information for other educators who instruct millennials and nontraditional adult learners to provide suggestions, strategies, and teaching methods that could contribute to students' success. This study will also add to current literature about understanding best practices for teaching millennial and adult

college students as well as teaching the increased population of developmental students who are entering the college who may not have done so in the past.

Theoretical Implications

The field of education is continuously evolving just as humans evolve and grow based on their individual experiences and their external influences. Best teaching practices must constantly change with the current times so that instructors can assist with meeting their students' needs to prepare students to graduate and be successful in their fields of study and in the work force. My findings suggest that students prefer active learning strategies in the classroom, as the traditional instructional method of the lecture did not benefit participants because they were not given opportunities to critically think or become active in retaining information. Willingham (2009) preferred that students think instead of memorize. Instructors could utilize a variety of methods to promote deeper learning and long-term storage if instructors utilize Willingham's classroom implications of information processing theory as an alternative to using lecture. This theoretical implication relates to the participants' preference to an active approach to learning, and their preference to instructors who utilize various teaching methods to best meet students' needs.

Students' prefer active instructional methods and a more personal approach to learning with the instructor, and these findings correlate with current literature such as Crappell's (2012) findings about teaching millennials. Merriam (2008) recognized that adult learning is a cognitive process, and that it takes place in various ways. Therefore, it is important to understand how millennials and adults process information so that

instructors can utilize best practices including a brain-based approach to learning. Willingham (2009) revealed that knowledge pays off when it is conceptual, and when the facts are related to one another. McGrath (2009) reviewed Knowles' adult learning theory and found that adults need to know why they learn new information before they participate in the learning process. Therefore, theoretical implications to this study include the idea that college instructors who teach millennials and the adult college population should use brain-based teaching strategies as well as strategies that make personal connections to students to make learning more meaningful.

Conclusion

I conducted this case study to gain a deeper understanding of millennials and adult college students' classroom preferences and learning needs from their perspectives. I studied eight developmental READ 110 students at a community college in Southeastern, PA to gain a deeper understanding of their classroom needs and preferences using an alternative method of collecting feedback from a traditional course evaluation form that is normally provided at the end of the semester. All of the participants were enrolled in the same section of the READ 110 class, and the data were collected during the fall 2014 semester. I utilized open coding methods to interpret and analyze the data that were collected. The participants shared their preferences to learning that they felt contributed to their success. The participants also expressed many personal qualities they would like to see in an instructor that they would not normally have the opportunity to share this with on a traditional evaluation form. The students were most responsive during this portion of each interview, and they shared characteristics based on

their previous experiences in college as some were first semester students, but were also enrolled in other courses.

The students were very clear in describing what type of comfortable learning environment they expected their instructor to create for students. The participants preferred (a) active learning strategies in the college classroom, (b) the use of different learning styles in regards to teaching methods, (c) an instructor who communicates, (d) an instructor who possesses personality, and (e) an instructor who is flexible. The participants provided information that not only benefited the individual instructor to reflect on teaching methods but also to share with other educators and higher education administrators that there are additional qualities that students prefer in an instructor besides a traditional teaching certification, a degree, or other job requirements.

Black (2010) revealed that the college population has shifted causing a need for instructors to better understand their students' learning needs. Therefore, I made four recommendations based on my findings: (a) colleges could replicate the study's design to continue to receive feedback from students using a qualitative approach, (b) colleges could offer professional development opportunities to instructors on effective instructional methods related to millennials and adult learners, (c) instructors could have open dialogues with their students in regards to establishing relationships and sharing classroom preferences, and (d) instructors could hold individual accountability of their students in relation to expectations students hold of their instructors.

Throughout the duration of study, I explored students' preferences to learning, and what types of personal and professional qualities millennials and nontraditional adult

learners prefer in a college instructor. However, it was important to recognize that millennial students and adult learners should also take initiative and individual responsibility as well in the learning process.

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Appendix A: Demographic Information of Student Participants

Name	Age	Courses Enrolled	Other Courses	Major
David	19	4	MATH COMP SPRT HLTH	Sports Management
Marion	18	2	MATH	Liberal Arts
Kelly	19	4	SOCI COMP CHEM	Nursing
Anna	43	2	SOCI	Nursing
Mary	20	3	COMSCI HUMAN	Liberal Arts
Jamie	22	1	NA	Nursing
Emma	24	2	MATH	Liberal Arts
Molly	18	2	COMP	Education

Note. Participants were each assigned a pseudonym.

Appendix B: READ 110 Classroom Observation Form

Date of Observation: _____

Class: _____ Time: _____ Instructor: _____

Activity	Observations	Comments
Content	What is the topic or content being delivered by the instructor during the READ 110 class? Describe the course objectives in question.	
Behavior	What observations can you make about the instructor's teaching methods and the course content being delivered? Describe the behavior of the others who are in the classroom during the teacher's instruction.	
Learning	Is there a measureable way to observe that learning is occurring? What types of behaviors and levels of engagement are the students involved in? Describe any feedback the instructor is receiving from the class.	
Assessment	Describe the types of oral and written assessments, both formal and informal that are occurring in the classroom to measure course-learning outcomes?	
Methodology	Describe the teaching method(s) that the instructor is using to deliver course content to the students.	
Feedback	Describe the students' responses that the instructor is receiving throughout the lesson.	
Other:	Include any other observations relative to this study.	

Appendix C: Student Interview Form

Student #	Date
Student Interview Form	
Questions	Comments/Observations
<p>A. What does the selected population of community college students need from their face-to-face instructors to be successful in their first year READ 110 course that can be provided to their instructors through an alternative method of collecting course and instructor feedback?</p> <p>a.1. Describe what you like about learning in the READ 110 course at the community college.</p> <p>a.2. Describe your least favorite learning activities that you participate in the READ 110 course.</p> <p>a.3. Explain what types of learning related activities in the course you think helps you to learn best? Please provide an example.</p> <p>B. What do community college students feel are ineffective methods and qualities of their current face-to-face instructor?</p> <p>b.1. Explain what learning activities conducted in the READ 110 course that helps you learn the least?</p> <p>b.2. Are there any types of learning activities that you think would help you learn better that are currently not being used in your class?</p> <p>b.3. What types of teaching methods does your instructor use in the READ 110 class that helps you learn best?</p>	

<p>C. Are there additional qualities or traits aside from knowledge and practice of teaching methodology that community college students prefer from their face-to-face instructor that are shared in the alternative method of collecting feedback that are normally not provided as an opportunity to share on a traditional course evaluation form?</p> <p>c.1. Describe the professional qualities you like about your instructor.</p> <p>c.2. Describe any qualities that you dislike.</p> <p>c.3. Explain how your reading instructor is different from other instructors? How is your instructor similar?</p> <p>c.4. Describe what you think are important qualities for college instructors to possess to be effective teachers.</p>	
<p>D. What are the preferred instructional methods that community college face-to-face instructors incorporate into their lessons that they feel contributes to their students' success?</p> <p>d.1. Explain what personal and professional qualities you think are important for college instructors to possess in order to be professional and effective.</p> <p>d.2. Describe what professional qualities you think college instructors possess that are ineffective.</p> <p>d.3. What qualities do you think a college instructor should not possess? Ex. lateness</p>	

Appendix D: READ 110 Lesson Plans

Date of observation one: Wednesday November 5th, 2014, 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Lesson Plans/Activities:

Reading 110 Course Objective: Students will evaluate online sources.

- Take attendance.
- Introduction/Overview of the textbook chapter. Question students/Activate prior knowledge of why it is important to evaluate online sources.
- Lecture/Visual presentation PPT of evaluating online sources.
- Provide directions for portfolio application activity. Then, distribute checklists on evaluating online sources.
- Thirty minutes –Independent portfolio application activity. Students visit website of their choice and work through the evaluation checklist.
- Closing comments and wrap up, discussion/thoughts about the independent activity.
- End class 15 minutes early due to a department meeting. Students will be invited to stay in the computer lab and finish their portfolio application assignment, and use the time to work in the *My Reading Lab*.

Date of observation two: Wednesday November 12th, 2014, 5:00 p.m. to 6:15 p.m.

Lesson Plans/Activities:

Reading 110 Course Objective: Students will interpret graphs and charts.

1. Take Attendance.
2. Make announcements about registration. Discuss signing up for advising for the spring 2015 registration.
3. Discussion of the use of visuals in reading. Introduce reading visuals and interpret graphs and charts.
4. PPT and lecture of visuals of various types of graphs and charts and what each type is used for.
5. Thirty minutes-portfolio application activity: Distribute worksheet and share guided questions. Students will answer questions about medicine nutritional labels by interpreting the charts that will be provided.
6. Questions and review the answers of the chart activity with the class. Closing comments and thoughts about students learning anything new about the product based on interpreting the medicine label.

7. Provide the remaining class time to work in *My Reading Lab* and check the bar graph chart to determine each student's current reading level.

Date of observation three: Wednesday November 19th, 2014, 5:00 p.m. to 6:15 p.m.

Lesson Plans/Activities:

Reading 110 Course Objective: Students will take effective notes.

1. Take attendance.
2. Review Monday's reading in textbook and highlighting activity.
3. Review the importance of highlighting. Introduction to transferring taking notes from textbook reading that students completed during the previous class.
4. Model PPT slides of different methods to take notes (a) concept maps (b) outlines, and (c) bulleted points.
5. Thirty-minute independent assignment, portfolio application activity. Transfer the highlighting that was completed from Monday's class into creating a set of notes.
6. Students will create a quiz on the textbook reading and swap notes to test the effectiveness of the notes taken. *A revision and adaptation was made in class, due to students who read different passages of their choice. The activity was modified to use the notes to take the quiz individually at the end of each textbook thematic reading*
7. Discussion of the assigned readings and the actual content of the thematic unit readings
8. SQ3R introduction/PPT. *Revised: Did not review, instead, moved this part of the assignment back to the next class' period due to time constraints.*
9. Closing, wrap of the preferred methods of marking text, highlighting, and taking effective notes.

Appendix E: Consent Form for Interview Participants

Dear Student,

My name is January Baker. You are invited to take part in a research study of the READ 110 course at [REDACTED]. I am inviting students enrolled in the READ 110 course at the [REDACTED] campus to participate in the study. I will be the researcher of this study, and I am enrolled as a doctoral student at Walden University. I invite you to participate in the study to contribute information about your learning preferences and classroom needs in order to assist in improving the instruction of future community college students.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to explore, describe, and understand students' preferred methods of college instruction from their community college reading instructors.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:

- Participate in one 30-minute interview that will take place at your convenience and/or during campus free periods in order to share your personal preferences about college learning. The interviews will be audio recorded for data collection and coding purposes.
- Participate in one 15-minute exit interview. This interview will occur after the initial 30-minute student interviews have been conducted. The purpose of this brief exit interview is to allow additional time for you to share any responses or experiences about your college learning preferences and classroom needs.
- Please note that by agreeing to participate in the study, in addition to participating in the interviews, I will be conducting three classroom observations of the READ 110 course throughout the duration of the study. The purpose of this study is to explore the classroom learning that is occurring in the READ 110 course by conducting three general observations of the class. I will be observing the students' participation in the course, the instructor's lesson, and the instructor's interactions with the students. Your identity and privacy will be kept confidential, and pseudonyms will be given to all participants.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

I am interesting in exploring your college experience in the READ 110 course at [REDACTED]. This study is voluntary. Everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you choose to be in the study. No one at the community college expects for you to participate in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may also stop at any time.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

Being in this type of study involves some risk of the minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life, such as sharing personal reactions about your learning experience. Participation in this study will not pose risk to your safety. As a student, you will benefit from the study because you will have the opportunity to share your learning preferences and classroom needs at the community college in order to improve future classroom instruction for community college students. Your identity will remain confidential. Any information about your personal identity will not be shared in the results of the study.

Payment:

As a thank you for participating in the study, you will receive a \$5.00 gift card to Starbucks.

Privacy:

Any information that you provide will be kept confidential. I will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, I will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports that will be submitted for final publication. All of the data that is collected during the study will be kept secure by being stored in a locked filing cabinet in Room 213 on the [REDACTED] campus. In addition, a back up copy will also be securely stored in the Institutional Research department at [REDACTED] college. Pseudonyms will be given in order to protect your privacy. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by Walden University.

Contacts and Questions:

You may ask any questions you have now. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is 612-312-1210. Walden University's approval number for this study is 07-30-14-0061314 and it expires on July 29, 2015. I will give you a copy of this form to keep.

If you would like to participate, please contact me through email at

january.baker@waldenu.edu by October 15th, 2014 from your secure [REDACTED] email account. I will then respond to you within 24 business hours with an electronic copy of the Invitation to Participate form to secure an electronic signature of your intent to participate.

Please provide your [REDACTED] email address and the best phone number you can be reached at. I will be contacting you during the week of October 16th, 2014 in order to schedule an interview. I will only communicate with you through your [REDACTED] email address to ensure your confidentiality. I will make initial contact with you through email, and if there is no response within 48 business hours, I will contact you by the phone number you listed to be reached at.

Thank you again for your time.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. By signing below, I understand that I am agreeing to the terms described above.

Signature Section

Printed Name of Participant:

Date of consent:

Participant's Signature:

Researcher's Signature:

[REDACTED] email address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Appendix F: Consent Form for Instructor Participant

Dear Instructor,

My name is January Baker. You are invited to take part in a research study of the READ 110 course at [REDACTED] community college. I am inviting instructors who teach the READ 110 course at the [REDACTED] campus to participate in the study. I will be the researcher of this study, and I am enrolled as a doctoral student at Walden University. I invite you to participate in the study to contribute information about your instructional methods and your teaching philosophy in order to assist in improving the instruction of future community college students.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to explore, describe, and understand students' preferred methods of college instruction from their community college reading instructors.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:

- Allow me, the researcher, to enter and observe you teaching READ 110 for three class periods. The purpose of the observations is to collect information about your teaching methods and practices in READ 110. Please note that you are not being evaluated as an instructor. These observations will be general in nature and for data collection purposes only. Written field notes will be recorded during the observation.
- Submit a hard copy of your lesson plans of the days that the classroom observations occur.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

I am interesting in exploring the instructional strategies you implement in the READ 110 course through observations of your classroom instruction. This study is voluntary. Everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you choose to be in the study. No one at the community college expects for you to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

Being in this type of study involves some risk of the minor discomforts that can be

encountered in daily life, such as sharing personal reactions about your instructional methods and your teaching philosophies. Participating in this study will not pose a risk to your safety. As an instructor, you will benefit from the study because you will have the opportunity to share your instructional methods and teaching practices, which will be used to improve future classroom instruction for developmental community college students. Any information about your personal identity will not be shared in order to ensure confidentiality of your participation in the study.

Payment:

As a thank you for participating in the study, you will receive a \$5.00 gift card to Starbucks.

Privacy:

Any information that you provide will be kept confidential. I will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, I will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports that will be submitted for final publication. All of the data that is collected during the study will be kept secure by being stored in a locked filing cabinet in Room 213 on the ██████████ campus. In addition, a back up copy will also be securely stored in the Institutional Research department at ██████████. Pseudonyms will be given in order to protect your privacy. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by Walden University.

Contacts and Questions:

You may ask any questions you have now. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is 612-312-1210. Walden University's approval number for this study is 07-30-14-0061314 and it expires on July 29, 2015. I will give you a copy of this form to keep.

If you would like to participate, please contact me through email at january.baker@waldenu.edu by October 7th, 2014 from your secure ██████████ email account. I will then respond to you within 24 business hours with an electronic copy of the Invitation to Participate form to secure an electronic signature of your intent to participate.

Please provide your ██████████ email address and the best phone number you can be reached at. I will be contacting you during the week of October 10th, 2014 in order to schedule an interview. I will only communicate with you through your ██████████ email address to ensure your confidentiality. I will make initial contact with you through email, and if there is no response within 48 business hours, I will contact you by the phone number you listed to

be reached at.

Thank you again for your time.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information, and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. By signing below, I understand that I am agreeing to the terms described above.

Signature Section:

Printed Name of Participant:

Date of consent:

Participant's Signature:

Researcher's Signature:

██████ email address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Appendix G: School Letter of Cooperation

[REDACTED]

Attention: [REDACTED], Ph.D.
Executive Director, Institutional Research and Assessment
Office of Institutional Research and Assessment

Dear January Baker and IRB committee,

Based on my review of your conditionally approved Institutional Review Board Application from Walden University and your research proposal, the IRC at [REDACTED] gives permission for you to conduct the study entitled *Adult learners' and millennials' preferred methods of instruction in the college classroom* at the [REDACTED] campus located in [REDACTED]. As part of this study, I authorize you to invite a section of READ 110 students and their instructor to participate in the data collection process through student interviews, three classroom observations of the instructor, and paper copies of the instructor's lesson plans pending that we receive a copy of the final approved IRB application from Walden University. I understand that individuals' participation in the study is voluntary in nature.

We understand that our organization's responsibilities include providing permission for you to interview students, observe the instructor for three READ 110 class periods, receive written copies of the instructor's lesson plans at the [REDACTED] and provide Walden University and the researcher, written permission to collect data. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change.

I understand that supervision is not needed during the data collection process.

I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting.

I understand that the data that will be collected will remain entirely confidential and will not be shared to anyone outside of the research team without permission from Walden University and the Institutional Review Board.

Sincerely,

Name: Andrew [REDACTED], Ph.D.

Signature: [REDACTED] Date: 9/30/2014

Appendix H: Electronic Invitation to Participate for Students

Dear Student,

Thank you for expressing your interest in participating in the READ 110 study that I am conducting at [REDACTED]. Please download the attached Invitation to Participate Form, electronically sign and date the form, and return to me as an electronic attachment through your secure [REDACTED] email account.

Once I have received a copy of your electronic signature that secures your participation in the study, I will contact you in order to schedule the interview.

Please sign and return the attached document to me by October 15th, 2014.
Thank you again for your time. In the meantime, please do not hesitate at all to contact me with any questions you may have.

Attachment: Invitation to Participate form

Sincerely,

January Baker
Walden University
Doctoral Candidate
January.baker@waldenu.edu

Appendix I: Electronic Invitation to Participate for Instructor

Dear Instructor,

Thank you for expressing your interest in participating in the READ 110 study that I am conducting at [REDACTED]. Please download the attached Invitation to Participate Form, electronically sign and date the form, and return to me as an electronic attachment through your secure [REDACTED] email account.

Once I have received a copy of your electronic signature that secures your participation in the study, I will contact you in order to schedule the READ 110 classroom observations.

Please sign and return the attached document to me by October 7th, 2014.

Thank you again for your time. In the meantime, please do not hesitate at all to contact me with any questions you may have.

Attachment: Invitation to Participate form

Sincerely,

January Baker
Walden University
Doctoral Candidate
January.baker@waldenu.edu

Appendix J: Classroom Observation Field Notes

Date of observation #1: Wednesday, November 5th, 2014

Time: 5:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m.

January: Hello, today is Wednesday, November 5th. The time is 6:45 p.m. I have just completed my first observation of the READ 110 class.

The opening behavior that I observed was that there were several students that arrived late to class. The instructor waited five minutes due to the low class attendance at 5:00 p.m., and she began class five minutes later than the expected start date. At five minutes after, there were still only seven students sitting in the classroom waiting for class to begin. An additional nine students entered the classroom between 5:05 p.m. and 5:30 p.m., bringing a total attendance for the evening to 15 students. The classroom door opened and closed multiple times as students arrived late to class, and this appeared to have made a distracting noise to other students.

The instructor began the evening's activity by describing what she was going to teach for the evening, which was to work on how to evaluate a website. She orally explained the directions to the class, and she began the lesson by orally asking questions to the students at about 5:05 p.m., while an additional three students entered the classroom.

The instructor introduced the activity and opened the lesson by asking the question to the class of why they thought it was important to evaluate websites. She elaborated on this question through an informal question and answer discussion in which she received some oral feedback from her students. She chose an activity to go through a checklist where the students would have the opportunity to evaluate a website of their choice as an application to the information that was shared in class.

However, before the instructor transitioned her lesson from the discussion into the application checklist activity, she shared a PowerPoint presentation with the class. The visual included about ten slides. The information on the slides focused on the subject of evaluating websites, and at that time, she orally shared the directions of the application activity of what exactly the assignment entailed. She also orally shared reasons why it was important to evaluate websites.

The instructor spent approximately five minutes sharing the visual for the presentation. There were two students playing on their cell phones while the instructor delivered the lecture. A majority of the students sat at the rectangular shaped table area that was located in the center of the classroom area that faced the front of the class. The classroom space was designed so the main tables were in the center facing the front of the room, and the computers were situated around the edges of the classroom. Three students sat in the back of the room at the computer desks, instead of at the main table with the rest of the students while the instructor taught the lesson.

Four students took notes while they sat at the main table area during the lecture. I observed the nonverbal behavior of the students' eyes. Most of the students gave their attention to the visual displayed on the board. However, there were three students sitting in the main area who did not have any books out on the table. Instead, they had their closed schoolbags placed on the table.

The instructor held a question and answer session with the class after she finished her brief lecture. The class discussion was very informal, and it related to the checklist application activity that the students were asked to complete. The instructor gave oral directions and described the application activity to go to the computer station and log onto the computers to complete. However, before that, she gave a brief review of her lesson. This was at about 5:30 p.m., while students still arrived late to class.

Next, the instructor prompted the students to go and log onto the computers after she delivered her brief lecture and held an informal discussion. She explained the evaluating website checklist and handed out worksheets for the application activity. The students used the checklists to apply the information about how to evaluate websites that they learned from the visual and from the lecture earlier that evening. The students were given this assignment as an independent application assignment that occurred during class time.

There was only one question asked, and this was how to go to the website without using www. The instructor answered the question by explaining how to get to a website of the student's choice by using Google, finding a topic they were interested in, and then choosing what site to evaluate from there.

The follow up directions that the instructor provided appeared to be clear, because there were no extra additional comments or questions. The

independent activity began at approximately 5:25 p.m. This was the application activity. This activity appeared to be an informal application and assessment of the information where the students logged online and began to work through the evaluating checklist on the website they chose. The instructor modeled how to evaluate a website from the teacher's computer station that projected the images on the board. She then held individual discussions with each student while she walked around the classroom.

The students seemed to be engaged in the website search while sitting at the computer area. The students did not appear to have any difficulties logging onto Canvas, logging onto the computers, or logging onto the college's website.

I overheard one question. A student whispered to another student to ask where they were supposed to go from here. However, the instructor went over to assist the student by answering the question. Another teacher entered the classroom to speak with the instructor. They spoke quietly to each other at the teacher's computer station. Students continued to be engaged in the activity while working independently. The activity went on for approximately 30 minutes.

It appeared that most of the students worked through the checklist individually. The instructor monitored the students by walking around the classroom while observing the sites that were on the computer screens approximately 15 minutes after the independent assignment began. She asked individual questions to each of the students, and individually worked to review and check on the websites that the students evaluated. She monitored the activity for the remaining of the duration.

A few of the students began laughing and talking to each other and with the instructor through small group conversations. Some of the students chatted with each other informally about the websites they chose. I observed two students not on task sitting at the computer area. These students texted on their phones while the instructor went around and spoke individually with the other students. However, once the instructor approached those students so she could be a little closer in proximity, they became actively involved in the website search as the other students that were already finished participated in small conversations with each other.

There were three students that quietly talked about advising, and what to do about their classes for the next semester. At approximately 5:40 p.m., a student from another course entered the classroom, and the instructor

answered a question about READ 090. The instructor spoke to this student in the front of the class at the teacher's computer station. This was not a current READ 110 student. The instructor asked her to come back at another time to give her the paperwork the student asked for, and then, the READ 090 student left the class. It appeared this interruption briefly took the instructor's attention away from monitoring the application activity.

Fourteen out of 15 students were on task after twenty minutes into the activity. They were engaged in evaluating a website of their choice of various activities, that included health, education, and informational websites.

One student was using a smart phone, and had not yet begun the activity.

There were several students drinking hot and cold beverages in the computer lab, but still active and independently working.

Two students finished early, approximately 15 minutes into the lesson. Before the instructor interjected, she suggested that the students begin to review and monitor their checklists. She asked the class to visit a second site and compare an evaluation of two websites. They were also given the option that they could work in the *My Reading Lab* so the students could continue to have an activity to work on to stay engaged if they finished early.

The students stayed on task by working in the *My Reading Lab* and working on their individual work. They still appeared to be engaged even though they finished the activity before the class ended for the evening.

The closing activity and wrap up was an informal assessment. The instructor asked the students:

- What did you think about the evaluation?
- Did you like the activity?

I observed students nodding yes and no, but I did not hear any verbal answers initially in response to the question that the instructor posed. The instructor elaborated on the question and asked the class if they saw something different that maybe they were not looking for before this lesson in terms of how they viewed a website.

Many of the students then agreed with the professor that they noticed different things about the websites they chose. There were three or four

oral responses, and then several students nodded their head in agreement. The instructor discussed what was going to happen over the next few class periods before she dismissed the students for the evening. She explained they were going to work on a portfolio assignment, and then, they were going to begin scheduling classes for spring semester. One student asked the instructor for an extra hand out of the website evaluation checklist so that they could give the paper to another student that was not in attendance that evening.

The methodology that the instructor used in this lesson was a brief lecture, which was followed by a class discussion. Then, an independent assignment was given, and the instructor guided the class with closing questions and answers. The instructor did not collect the checklists that the students completed. Instead, it was saved for the individual portfolio submissions. Overall, the students responded very quickly to the instructor's questions. Most of the questions the instructor asked were brief in length, or they were follow up questions to what the students shared about their findings.

Date of observation #2: Wednesday, November 12th, 2014

Time: 5:00 p.m.-6:15 p.m.

January: Today is November 12th. I listened to a conversation that occurred between two students just before the class started. They discussed which courses they thought they should register for the upcoming spring semester, and they spoke about checking ratemyprofessors.com to find some reviews of the instructor who taught the courses they were considering.

At 5:00 p.m., the instructor asked questions to the students who arrived to class on time, and she held an informal conversation with three of the students about the advising process. She asked them to think about why students chose the courses they picked. At 5:05 p.m., the instructor continued to answer questions about advising for the upcoming semester. She suggested that when instructors checked ratemyprofessor.com, they did it to work to take the feedback provided by the students and better themselves as instructors. However, she said that some of the reviews were not really helpful. She also mentioned that students used the site for other reasons. She did not suggest what she thought were the other reasons why students visited ratemyprofessors.com, but she stated that sometimes ratemyprofessor.com was used by students to post comments about

instructors who had had a really good class experience or a really poor class experience.

There were students who arrived to class ten minutes after the scheduled 5:00 p.m. start time. The students who arrived early and on time began to migrate to the main table area, away from the computers where they were looking up classes that were being offered for the upcoming semester. The instructor continued to work with those individual students, and she assisted them with advising. She made oral announcements about advising to those students in attendance. She mentioned that she began to discuss advising during the previous class period.

I observed two of the READ 110 students having a conversation before class started. They appeared to be enrolled in another class together because they spoke about an upcoming composition assignment that was due. The instructor made an announcement at 5:10 p.m. that the students should assume to pass READ110 with the exception of the final exit exam results. She explained that she was making this announcement to provide students with more guidance about being able to register for courses that required READ 110 as a prerequisite.

At 5:15 p.m., there were students engaged on their cell phones while the instructor individually advised students. One student sat in the back area of the room by the computers, while the others sat at the tables waiting for the class to begin. The instructor continued to answer advising related questions that the students asked.

Two students sat at the computers facing the wall instead of at the main table area, which faced the front of the classroom. It appeared that the students who were on time for class who were seated at the main table area were slightly annoyed that the class had not begun yet based on their facial expressions. Some of their attention went to looking at the clock on the wall.

At 5:15 p.m., the instructor transitioned from the advising questions and began the lesson. She displayed the PowerPoint visual to present the lesson from the teacher's computer station. She discussed the importance of making sense of graphs and charts, which was the chapter they were focusing on for this evening.

The students sitting in the main area put away their phones and took out their notebooks. They took notes on the lecture. I observed two students sitting next to each other. They whispered to each other at the main table

area. They were discussing advising, but the lecture on graphs and charts had already started. The instructor went through the PowerPoint slide in the beginning of the lesson by questioning students to activate their prior knowledge and to lead the students into the content.

For example, one of the questions that the instructor asked the class, based on the chart that was on display, was about what sports they would want to play. The students orally responded, and they answered questions to interpret the graphs that were being presented on the visual. It appeared that the instructor informally assessed the class using a questioning technique. A majority of the students responded to the questions about the slides with the correct answer. The PowerPoint slides began to automatically transition to the next slide, and they kept transitioning to the next slide about every ten seconds. The instructor had to manually go back to previous slides, which appeared to interrupt the lecture.

A few students continued to look down and remain engaged on their phones. It appeared that some of the students had difficulty paying attention to this lesson because they were not giving most of their attention to the instructor.

The instructor continued to elaborate on the topic of interpreting bars and graphs. Next, she transitioned into describing an application activity based on the lecture. The bar chart application activity was related to how interpreting bars and charts were used in everyday life. There were some questions displayed on the slides that the teacher skipped over. She explained that the chart graph quest would need to be included as part of the final portfolio submission at the end of the semester.

The lecture lasted approximately 15 minutes. The instructor stressed that this chapter was helpful for visual learners. She said that the PowerPoint had an interactive activity. However, she wanted to make an activity that was more of an application to do as class work. The worksheet activity she used was a bar graph about nutritional values of acetaminophen versus aspirin, and the students were assigned to complete the graph quest. The students were given about ten minutes to complete the application activity.

The instructor discussed the bar quest, and one student said that the questions on the paper activity were a little confusing. Two students actively participated in the oral discussion with the instructor about the questions on the paper assignment after they completed the independent activity. The students began to pair up together to work to check their answers. The instructor began a conversation with one student about

paperwork because the student was having trouble reading through the assignment. The instructor was helpful, and she gave extra attention to students who struggled with the assignment.

Next, the instructor asked the students to respond to the graph activity after she gave the class additional time to complete the assignment individually. A majority of the students orally responded with their answers. They answered the questions correctly. The instructor asked more follow up and extension questions about putting the information in order, and how this interpretation of reading charts applied to life.

The instructor reiterated the idea to the class that sometimes visuals were easier to read than reading print. She facilitated an interactive question and answer session in which about half of the class asked questions about the chart. The students naturally paired up to answer the questions on the paper together during the activity.

One student, who completed the assignment early, left her seat to go over to the three-hole punch to make holes in her paper to fit in her portfolio, and she filed the assignment in her folder. At 5:35 p.m., one student had a concern about communication, and asked a question about the application activity. The instructor went over to monitor the situation about the questions that the student asked. There was a lot of noise of papers flipping back and forth because the activity was a stapled sheet. The students answered the questions and referred back to the nutritional labels for aspirin and acetaminophen to answer the remaining questions from the assignment.

The instructor held a closing conversation of the application activity at about 5:40 p.m. At that time, there were three students sitting near the computer area who did not participate in the lesson or in the activity. One student was playing with her nails, another student had his head looking down away from the front of the class, and the third student was texting on her cell phone. These students did not sit in the main area of the square tables. Instead, they sat along the classroom edges at the computer stations.

The instructor began speaking to the class, and she asked the students to share their reactions from their findings of the two medications that they interpreted. She asked them why it was important to interpret the medicine charts, and which sections of the labels were useful to know. She asked the class again why they should know how to read labels and interpret these types of graphs and charts that are used in everyday life.

Some of the responses included that the students felt it was important to interpret the labels in case anyone had allergies, were diabetics, had gluten allergies, or had a peanut allergy, so they could avoid taking the medication. The instructor also announced that there would be questions about bars and charts on the end of the semester READ 110 exit exam.

At about 5:45 p.m., the instructor directed the students to go over to the computers to work in the *My Reading Lab*. Students made comments as they slowly moved their way from the main table over to the computers to log into the program. One student said quietly to another student that she was behind in the *My Reading Lab*. Another student asked the instructor if she could reset some of her scores on the *My Reading Lab*. Two of the students continued to have a conversation with each other about being behind on their online assignments.

There were two students who never went over to the computers to work online. Instead, they remained at the table area, and one student guided the other student about work she missed in the previous class. I observed the two students as they worked in their textbooks and caught up on a previous READ 110 assignment. I also heard an informal conversation between two students who talked about advising. They asked each other what courses and which sections they were going to enroll in for the spring term. There were informal conversations occurring in pairs and in also in small groups. Most of the students were on task working in the *My Reading Lab*.

At this point, all of the students, except for the two students that were at the table area catching up on the assignments, moved to the computer area to work online. I observed several computer screens, and the students were on task working in the computer program. The instructor monitored the students by walking around to each computer. She reset some scores for students in the *My Reading Lab*. This activity was the planned activity for the second half of class for this period after the bar graph and interpreting chart application activity. I overheard some chatter about one student having difficulty with a password login information to get online.

The instructor worked her way around the room and helped individual students log into the *My Reading Lab*. The instructor answered questions and readdressed the importance about the amount of work the students needed to complete in the *My Reading Lab*, and announced that the students should be in the 1000s by the end of the course.

She also announced that the class needed to catch up on any of the online program's outstanding work. Other students printed out their current scores from *My Reading Lab* to file in their portfolios. The class ended at 6:15 p.m. There was no official closure to this class period. However, the instructor made an announcement that there were only a few weeks of the course that remained. She asked them to keep working on their learning goals in the *My Reading Lab* at home.

Date of observation #3: Wednesday, November 19th, 2014
Time: 5:00 p.m.-6:15 p.m.

January: My third observation of the READ 110 class occurred at [REDACTED] on November 19th, 2014. The topic that the instructor covered in class was about highlighting text. The class met earlier this week during their normal 75-minute period, and they began working on the chapter during the previous class. I asked the instructor what she covered during Monday's class. She explained to me that they read an article from the READ 110 textbook, and the students highlighted the main ideas and details after she delivered a brief lesson about highlighting. This evening's class was a follow up lesson from the previous lesson to allow time for the application portion of this chapter.

There were only seven students in attendance five minutes after when the class was scheduled to begin. Five of the seven students were looking down at their cell phones. The instructor observed the students on their phone and made a general comment to the class. She posed the question of what would happen if we took their cell phones away for a day. However, she did not directly make a comment that the cell phones were distracting her teaching and the other students in the class.

At this point, two of the students were not sitting at the main table area. Instead, they sat near the computer area in the back of the classroom. The instructor spoke to the class in a friendly manner. There were ten students in attendance at 5:10 p.m. The instructor briefly reviewed the previous lesson. She prompted the students by activating their prior knowledge. She asked questions about what would they do in various situations. The students in attendance summarized the previous lesson by orally responding, which led the instructor to ask additional questions about highlighting. One student shared with the class that she felt that sometimes, highlighting was cumbersome.

The instructor referred back the lesson she taught during the previous class. There were still two students looking down at their cell phones while she spoke to the students. It appeared that a majority of the students listened to the instructor because they took notes on the instructor's lecture. I observed most of the students pull papers out of their school bags. The papers appeared to be the articles they reviewed during the previous class. The instructor then transitioned from talking about highlighting to modeling how to write notes using an organizer. The instructor modeled a visual to complete the graphic organizer with the students. Eventually, most of the students in the class took out their notes to record the new information that the instructor shared. She made connections to the notes the students took from the article that they highlighted during the previous class.

The instructor modeled note-taking skills through the use of the visuals and the use of outlines from the notes. Two students looked away from the instructor, and they had their hands placed on their chin. It appeared that they were not paying attention to the lesson. The students wore heavy clothes. The temperature was below freezing outside, and the classroom felt chilly. Three of the students kept their schoolbags on the desk without taking out any books or notes. One male student had his eyes closed, and another student reached out to yawn, and he expanded his arms to stretch.

The instructor referred back to the memory chapter her students studied earlier in the semester. She explained how much percentage of knowledge was lost from Monday's class due to humans' short-term memory loss. One student doodled on her notebook, and another student continuously texted with the sound activated on her phone. There were ten students in attendance. At about 5:20 p.m., the lecture ended so the application portion of the class could begin. The instructor provided oral directions about how to apply notes from what was highlighted in the articles they reviewed. She reviewed the thematic unit that was located in the back of the textbook. She assisted the students who did not attend the previous class, which took time away from the rest of the class to help one student catch up on what was completed during the previous class meeting.

The same two students continued to use their smart phones, and the instructor did not redirect them to go back on task to the application activity. These were the same two students I observed partaking in the same behavior during previous class observations. Eventually, the students, who had not done so already, went back and pulled out their textbook highlighting they completed from the previous class. There was a brief oral discussion on how to highlight, but this lesson focused on

turning the highlighting they did on the articles into notes that summarized the content.

The students slowly began to take more notes from the work they completed previously. One student did not participate in the lesson at all, and he sat in class with his hooded sweatshirt covering his head. Another instructor entered the class. She appeared to forget her book so the instructor gave her a copy to borrow. Another student typed on the computers in the back of the class, and also did not participate in the activity. It appeared as if that student was registering for a class online instead of working on the highlighting assignment.

At about 5:30 p.m., I observed the same two students continuing to text on their cell phones. The classroom environment was very quiet while the students gradually began reviewing the content they highlighted. The instructor monitored the activity by walking around the room, and she quietly answered students' individual questions. Students also asked questions that were not related to the task the instructor prepared for class. For example, one student asked about what kinds of arrangements she could make for when she was going to miss a future class. The instructor walked over to redirect the student who was on the computer to go back on task. She refocused and redirected the student. She also redirected the other student that didn't start the assignment who was texting on her cell phone. The directions for the application activity were not posted. However, the instructor used a visual of the graphic organizer to model the sample notes from the article. This information was displayed as a visual.

Next, the instructor politely redirected the student who was working on the computer for a second time, and asked her to refocus on the assignment.

At one point, the instructor stepped out of the classroom to check her voicemail. She decided to adapt the plans for the rest of the class because of time constraints at 5:40 p.m. She announced that she planned to discuss a reading comprehension strategy. She also explained there was not enough time to finish the lesson, so she asked the class to shift the focus of the rest of the evening instead of her original plan, which was to have everyone create notes and take a quiz on each other's topics.

The instructor provided new directions for the testing challenge and instead, the students answered the questions from the thematic units, while the instructor provided an answer key. One of the students shouted out that she had the correct answers, and shared why because she felt that she took effective notes. There were a few other students who completed the

assignment slightly early. One male student used his smart phone for most of this activity's duration. Text message alert noises began again at this point in the class from the same student's phone. The text message sounds came from the student who was sitting at the computer area where the other student who was not participating sat. There were text messages going off with the noise for at least ten minutes, and I heard between 20 and 30 text alerts. The instructor continued to hold the class conversation and ignored this distraction. It was evident that the text message noises were distracting the students, but the instructor did not intervene. At 5:45 p.m., the students appeared to be fairly finished with the assignment, and they focused on their phones while other students finished up their questions. Some of the students who finished the assignment walked over to the three-hole punch machine, and walked around the classroom to store the documents in their portfolios. One student mentioned that he missed a question from the answer key, and just realized that he did not take the correct notes from what he read. This confirmed the testing activity was an informal assessment, and the students were able to complete the correct answers by connecting their notes to the answer key.

The instructor asked questions about the content of the articles the students read, which began a conversation about how to stay on task and pay attention to what they read. However, there were only three students who participated in the discussion. These three individuals held an extended discussion about the cultural body adornment from one of the readings in the textbook.

During that time of the class, the student whose phone was actively making text tones began orally sharing her thoughts with the class. She made the comment "not to interrupt or anything," but asked a question about the content of the article. The instructor addressed the question but still did not ask this student to turn off the distracting text message noises.

The teacher reminded the students at the close of class to check on their financial aid so they could register for the spring semester, to make sure that they were prepared to go over the final exam review, and also, to finish out the portfolio assignments.

Overall, the class did not seem very engaged in this evening's lesson. I did not see a connection to the content, and if the lecture application short activity was connected to the lesson objectives. However, it appeared that students were very engaged on their smart phones. It was also very cold outside, and the fall semester was ending in three weeks from tonight's observation.

Appendix K: Student Interview Transcripts

Participant #1 Interview

- January: It is Wednesday November 5th, and the time is 4:15 p.m. I'm David here. Welcome David. I'm just going to get started here and ask if you are familiar with a little bit about the background of the study?
- David: Yeah.
- January: Just to make sure, before we continue, how many classes are you taking?
- David: Four.
- January: So you are a full time student then. Okay. Do you have four different professors?
- David: Yes. (nods to confirm)
- January: Okay. Are you having a positive experience so far?
- David: Yeah. Some of the teaching is kind of rough though.
- January: Can you elaborate?
- David: The way the information is (pause) displayed I guess, not really displayed, but the way the teachers teach.
- January: Are you just talking about your first semester experience as a whole here?
- David: Yeah.
- January: To confirm, when you are saying rough, and the way it's displayed, could you give me some examples?
- David: As far as lectures go, when you go into a course and you see the syllabus, you're expecting other things but some things tend to overlap more. So like lectures compared to like hands on activities

and stuff, but there's more lecturing than the syllabus said there would be. Things like that kind of throw me off.

January: Okay, so just to make this clear, looking at your syllabus, are you expecting a more active approach to learning? Are you receiving most of your instruction through (pause) lecture?

David: Mostly, yeah.

January: Anything you want to add to that? Are you just focusing on friendliness or in general? For example, your other experiences with your classmates or anything?

David: It's better than high school.

January: Really? How so?

David: A higher level of maturity. Just a better understanding of responsibility. Better communication.

January: Do you feel that you have established some relationships in your classes? Have your professors allowed you to have some kind of communication in your class with your classmates or is this happening outside of your class?

David: A little bit of both. It's harder to talk to people though, because it's kind of off schedule, but a little bit of both.

January: What do you think you need to be successful (pause) in your first year here that we could provide to teachers to help improve our instructors? What kind of feedback would you give to your instructors that you think would make you have a better learning experience?

David: Well personally, I feel as if motivation derives from the student.

January: Do you think you can see that through your experiences in your interactions with your instructors?

David: In some more than others.

January: Do you mean the level of motivation?

- David: Right. (long pause)
- January: Do you think there would be a better way to give some feedback to an instructor about what they're doing right, or what you think you need them to be doing?
- David: I feel like ways of going about that are being accessible by email and by personally being able to contact teachers. Personal information is given, like phone numbers. I don't know if all teachers do that, but for an overall evaluation of the course, I feel as if a student does have an issue, they should tell the teacher before that point of an overall grading of the course. That does help. I mean it's the students' responsibility to speak up to you know.
- January: Do you feel that students should take on more of a role to get involved and getting the instructor some informal feedback?
- David: Yeah.
- January: I just wanted to clarify what you are saying, instead of the formal evaluation at the end of the year. Is there anything else that you like about your READ 110 course?
- David: Well I feel like the difference between this course and the other courses I have is some people are the different learning styles. It gives you a chance to try each different learning style. I feel like there's always a little bit of hands on, there's visualizing, auditory learning, so there's a lot of all the different types of learning, but not all courses provide that, so I feel like that's beneficiary.
- January: What is your least favorite activity that you participate in your READ 110 course?
- David: I never really like to talk to people so public speaking in there, but I kind of just got used to that. I don't know what I wouldn't like as the least favorite. I guess like... not understanding an assignment, but then I really don't know. I mean, I grew to like people. Like, not like I don't like people, but like talking to people in the class. I don't know.
- January: You established some different types of activities that you do. Why don't we back up a little? What are some things that are occurring

in your classroom in READ 110 specifically? We talked a little general about lecturing, but just focusing in on your reading class. What kinds of activities are occurring?

- David: We do. We are working on a project where we get a subject or a topic we have to teach to the class. I always liked assignments like that because whether or not you know it, you're going to teach about it. It gives you the chance to learn about the subject too. So you learn, and you make it a learning experience for everybody else.
- January: Is there a least favorite learning activity you have?
- David: I don't think I do. We'll dabble a little bit in like auditory and visual. I mean none seem harder than more difficult than any others. I just feel like I'm getting well rounded, I guess for learning styles.
- January: It sounds like what you're saying is that you're not bored in the class?
- David: Yeah. I mean it always keeps my interest. There's never really any cause to stray away from what's being taught from the lesson.
- January: Do you think because that's because of the different types of activities that are rotated around, or do you think it's just really more of an instructor thing?
- David: I feel like the instructor brings personality to the teaching but along with the things that we do in the class. So it's a little bit of both.
- January: We're going to go outside of READ 110 for a minute. You mentioned these words like auditory and visual. Are there any activities that you feel that you learn best?
- David: I feel like a mixture of auditory and independent, so like when the teacher's reading and you have to take notes.
- January: What do you think are some ineffective methods of teaching that have been here in your first year? You can go in general that really maybe wouldn't really be so effective in your opinion.

- David: I honestly feel a teacher that just straight lectures. I mean if there's a PowerPoint and there's notes on the board, and then there's reading rather than straight lecture after that. Lecturing doesn't help at all. It honestly makes me lose focus, not because I'm easily distracted, but because I try and focus on the key words or parts of what's being said, and I miss out on more details because it's just too hard to keep up, and then it's the pace at which teachers talk.
- January: Do you think that there's anything that's not going on in READ 110 right now you feel you would be benefiting from as a learner?
- David: I feel like notes. More notes, even though they are online too.
- January: So electronic notes or handouts?
- David: Yeah, just like ones that you have to copy or take or just some form of notes in class. I understand, it's one of the things that college is about. It's your responsibility to fulfill the obligations as a student but I guess a little bit of assistance would help. You know instead of always having to contact the teacher.
- January: What other subjects are you taking right now in addition to READ110?
- David: My other three courses are Math, Pre-Algebra, U.S. History ████, and Composition Rhetorical skills.
- January: Is there anything that you feel, would be helpful that you wouldn't normally have a chance to tell your instructor on a course evaluation? Is there anything that an effective instructor looks like in terms of professional or personality traits?
- David: I feel like it's a silhouette image. I feel as if each professor or teacher has to bring that image himself or herself. It really depends on the individual, but it's not straight by appearance though. I guess the way you first judge somebody should be. I don't even say what the first thing they say is but I mean I know there's always like first impressions and stuff but it's really like what the person like brings to the table I guess.
- January: When you mention silhouette, can you define that? This is a question that normally would not be on a course evaluation. Is there anything else that you think a professor should possess?

- David: I'd just say methods of teaching, the way you present the material to the students, and it's kind of like how you obtain the material yourself too so the teacher, how he or she obtains it also makes a big difference. I feel that really reflects on their teaching. Students can tell when a teacher like, if a teacher doesn't care I guess.
- January: About the students or about the content?
- David: Both kind of. If they care about the content, and they're only doing it because it's their job, but if they do it professionally I guess.
- January: So a level of caring about their actual content and both student as well?
- David: Yeah.
- January: Can you could describe the professional qualities of your professor?
- David: Attendance.
- January: High or low?
- David: High. Showing up early is always a good thing. There's always the same positive attitude, so there's consistency in my teacher too, which is something that's always good to find in teachers. It's not hard. I mean it's pretty hard to find that in teachers as a consistent behavior and doesn't let the outside world affect their working world. So that's pretty professional.
- January: So a level of focus on the content in the class?
- David: Right, and just the organization of work and material being displayed. It's always on time. It's just a high level, and it's a matter of consistency that plays in.
- January: How is information distributed? I want to confirm when you discussed consistency.
- David: There's always the things online, so *My Reading Lab* and *My Pearson Lab*. Those things there are always online, always on

time. You can always go there if you don't show up to class one day or if you miss that you can always email. It's easier.

January: Are there any qualities that you dislike?

David: I feel like the only things in any of my teachers I don't like would be the way they teach, but personally, there's nothing. I mean I really like the class. It's a course I would honestly recommend.

January: Do you think your reading instructor is different from any of your other instructors? Anything similar or different?

David: I'd say charisma.

January: So more of a personality there?

David: Yeah. (Confirming)

January: Any similarities?

David: A serious attitude when it comes to things like the classroom. Just important fundamental learning.

January: What do you think those professors need to possess? It can be professional, teaching related, or personal.

David: I feel it takes a little bit of all those things to make up one big thing, which is overall a person, but in the field of choice as a teacher. I like a little bit of both. You want somebody that's smart, so obviously they're qualified if they come here to work. It takes more than that too though. I mean you don't learn from somebody that's kind of unresponsive. They have to have personality too.

January: What are some things that really get on your nerves that would be an ineffective way for an instructor to carry out their position?

David: I feel sarcasm and stuff. The teachers who always think they're right, and they set out rules for the course. Say they have a syllabus for the overall course, and there's something that isn't really as clear as they thought it would be, and they just tell you to go back to the format or go check the format. It's already there. You have to look for it, but you need it to be clarified and they're just stuck on that.

- January: What about flexibility?
- David: I'd say contacting people. I know it's the student's job to contact the teacher, but I still feel as if it's the teacher's job too. It would be out of line for a student to contact a teacher at three in the morning just because they're coming back from a party or something. It's on their own free time, but I feel it would be even worse for the teacher to respond a day late or something. Stuff like that is important.
- January: Do you feel that an ineffective method would be someone who is not timely with responses to students?
- David: It looks like spiting it seems like sometimes. You have to understand the teacher, where they come from. So if they say they won't do this and they won't do that for the students. I see more of an effort from the student trying to respond to the teacher about a question about an assignment the day before it's due rather than the kid that comes in and makes excuses of why he didn't do it the day of it being due. I mean it's kind of annoying, but they're still making the effort. So you're just not going to respond?
- January: Are you talking about ignoring an email? An instructor ignoring an email? I'm not clear on what you're trying to say.
- David: Well kind of like that too, but also, just answers that don't help that just kind of run in circles of the same of the questions. So it's almost like redirecting the question.
- January: Is there an example of what you think an instructor should not possess?
- David: I don't really like to judge appearance, but I mean it's nice when you see somebody that's, I don't mean to like straight down to like ironing clothes and stuff. I mean dressing professionally, not even like nice, but it's like it doesn't matter where you get your clothes from as long as you look professional so if you're a teacher, you should.
- January: Thank you so much. Is there anything you want to add about your experience in READ 110, or your semester here at the college?

David: I guess it was just kind of a test run kind of, because it's your first year so for me, for a first year's experience, I don't have complaints, like some other people.

January: I want to thank you for your time.

David: No problem.

-----END OF INTERVIEW-----

Participant #2 Interview

January: Hello today is November 10th, and it is 6:30 p.m. I just want to start by asking a couple of questions. Could you tell me a little bit about your semester so far here at the college?

Marion: I would say that I learned a lot in the past, you know the time that I have spent here. I mean it is only the beginning. I feel like I've gained a lot of information, a lot of stuff that I wasn't aware of, so that's good.

January: How many classes are you taking?

Marion: I'm only part-time, because I work full time, so I'm only taking two classes.

January: What are your two classes?

Marion: It is Math and Reading.

January: I'm going to focus specifically for a few minutes on the READ 110 course you are enrolled in. Can you tell me what do you like about learning in the READ 110 course?

Marion: I think what I enjoy most about the reading class is it's different, doing the Lexi labs, reading comprehension. I like the idea of knowing the meanings of new words and looking closer at certain parts of paragraphs that I normally would just scan over and not even pay attention to. I think that really helps me in the long run. I feel like now when I read, I pay more attention to what I'm reading.

- January: Can you explain briefly, when you mention “Lexi,” could you talk about what that activity is you do with learning?
- Marion: What we do is read a passage, and then we answer questions to every paragraph in the passage to reflect on the questions to see if our reading comprehension is up to speed.
- January: Are there any other learning related activities you think that happens in the course that helps you learn better besides the Lexi?
- Marion: I would say probably the projects actually. The chapters we have read. I seem to pick up a lot on everything that we have to for the reading and flexibility and comprehension. It’s one of the chapters that I’m reading, and I feel like there’s a lot of information there, that a lot of people could use, and would help you in the long run.
- January: What your least favorite activity is that you participate in the reading course?
- Marion: I do a lot of stuff over the computer, and I seem like I have some problems with the computer, and that’s not my best. I just feel like I get kind of confused on how to find things, and everything of that nature.
- January: So the online component then?
- Marion: It’s kind of finding certain things. How to find certain work, like logging on. I don’t know. I have a big problem.
- January: How does the instructor deliver the information to you? Is it, as a group, through lecture, individual assignments, assessments, or like tests or quizzes?
- Marion: My teacher normally goes, and she’ll talk about what we are doing, and then she’ll have us go online and actually walk us through each step. She doesn’t really normally give us too much work to do on our own. We normally have the work that she shows us, and then we do the work at the end of the class.
- January: Is there anything in your READ 110 class that’s not going on that you think would help you learn better?

- Marion: I would probably say more hands on. I'm the type of person that can speak for myself. I won't speak for anybody else, but I'm the type of person that once I do it, I will remember it better. I feel like if it's more hands on, and we get to use this paper about this, or do something this way. As soon as I see something and actually do it, I learn better hands on.
- January: In terms of professionalism, are there any qualities that you like about your instructor, the work environment, or the school environment?
- Marion: I do. There's one thing I do like about my teacher. She seems to be very easy to talk to and very open and not judgmental, and it seems that it's easy to learn from her because she makes everyone in the class feel welcome and comfortable.
- January: Anything else in terms of professionalism?
- Marion: One thing I do like about my teacher is that she is able to help anybody out any time as long as she's available. She's more than happy to help out, and she's understanding when people have certain things going on, and I like that also.
- January: Are there any qualities that you dislike about your instructor?
- Marion: I can't say that I have anything that I don't like. I feel like my teacher is very appropriate when it comes to teaching. I feel like she has a good idea about a teaching method, and I feel like what she does really works. I feel like she grabs the class, she gets the class involved hands on, and I feel like she's very good at making her point and teaching her lessons, and she has no problem to help anybody with a difficult problem in the class.
- January: Is your teacher different from your math instructor? Is your instructor similar or different in any way in general?
- Marion: My math teacher is very quiet, shy, doesn't really talk much and honestly, it kind of makes it kind of difficult to learn from somebody that's so quiet because you want to feel comfortable with them. You want to be able to ask them questions, and sometimes if you don't have that friendly nature about you, you get kind of nervous asking questions because you don't want to, you know, bother anybody.

- January: Is there anything else that you didn't mention already you think a college instructor needs to possess to be effective for their students?
- Marion: If I was to picture the perfect instructor, I would want them to be fun and energetic up in the classroom, make learning fun, and get them involved in what their learning, being friendly and making yourself happy, and you know, easier to talk to.
- January: Are there any qualities in general that you really think a college instructor should just not possess at all?
- Marion: I don't think that they should put them down or say that they are not trying hard enough. I think that's probably not a good idea at all. It's just going to stress the student out more, and it's going to make them, kind of, not be a help at all with the classwork.
- January: Anything else that you would not want to see in one of your teachers?
- Marion: Probably anger, because it gives off a negative vibe and that's also not good for people to be around, especially it's not a studying environment you want to be in the learning atmosphere. It's not okay.
- January: Thank you. Is there anything else you want to add about your college instructors?
- Marion: I think we pretty much covered everything here.
- January: Okay. Thank you for your time.

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Participant #3 Interview

- January: Today is Wednesday November 12th. Can you give me a general overview of what types of classes you are taking right now, and how your experience has been overall this semester?
- Kelly: I am taking Sociology. I think it's Comp, and then I have READ 110. I have classes at the other campus too. I have Chemistry on

the other campus but I think that here, the classes are smaller. I don't want to say intimate, but, you get more time with the teacher on this campus because they take more time out to communicate with you where as the main campus is such a large campus, and there's such a large class, that they don't really get to have time to make sure they understand as here does with the smaller classes. I mean an even smaller campus.

January: I'm going to focus in on your reading class just for a few minutes. What do you like learning in your reading class?

Kelly: We are learning different strategies for classes, like study strategies. I think they are really helpful, that you can apply them to different classes and how you study, and just using them for other things, not even classes, just how you learn.

January: Anything specific that you like?

Kelly: The teacher changes up. It fits to everyone's learning styles, like if you are a visual learner, we do those activities too. If you prefer moving around, we take breaks because it's a long class, so that helps you take a minute to relax and then get back to whatever we're doing.

January: What do you think is your least favorite learning activity in the reading class?

Kelly: I think lectures are. We barely do lectures, but I think just me, having my attention span for so long sometimes. I'd sit there for too long, and I get bored kind of but I like more activities and doing creative things.

January: What types of learning related activities in that course you feel would help you learn best?

Kelly: More activities. If we're taking a quiz or something, do something more interactive to help us learn for that quiz. I know we have Jeopardy. That's interactive where you earn points. We did that one time in class where we had a PowerPoint, and you picked the subject and then you got points for it. It helps you. It's a competition, but it also helps you learn.

- January: What kind of professional qualities do you like about your reading instructor?
- Kelly: Relatable.
- January: What kind of professional work related qualities do you like about your current instructor?
- Kelly: Gets back to me on time, like if I ever need anything or have a question about anything with class. It's right away. Very, easy to talk to. If I ever need something, instead of being afraid to talk to somebody. Sometimes you get those instructors where you're kind of scared of, or you are intimidated to go up to them, ask them and you're afraid they're going to yell at you for not paying attention, but my reading teacher doesn't do that. She encourages.
- January: Are there any qualities that you dislike about your instructor?
- Kelly: No. Not really. Not anything I can think of.
- January: Is your reading instructor different from any of your other teachers?
- Kelly: More organized, I'd have to say, because even with Canvas, I like Canvas a lot. It shows you what's due. I'm very organized. I have to know what I'm doing next, like that's just how I am, and most of my classes don't have that.
- January: Can you just describe briefly what Canvas is?
- Kelly: Canvas is an online program where you can see your weekly schedule, what you're doing each week, and the stuff you're learning.
- January: How about your grades?
- Kelly: You can even see your grades up there when you're done with it. Most of it's online testing and stuff, but once it's posted, then you can get to go on and see the grade, and see what you got and your overall grade. How it affected your overall grade too.
- January: What do you think are important qualities for college instructors to possess to be effective?

- Kelly: They have to have people skills. Like they can't be shy or not able to talk to them or anything, because you want somebody who you feel you can go up to and talk to or even about outside of school stuff. If they're talking about shows they've just watched and feel like they are more like you, and make more relatable.
- January: So people skills? Anything else that can be ideal?
- Kelly: Professional.
- January: Can you describe what you mean by professional?
- Kelly: Not talking about things that don't relate to the class when it's time to get serious about stuff because I used to have teachers that would talk about their children or something when we were learning about a lesson, relating it to their kids, or something that wasn't really related to what we were doing, and confused me about everything.
- January: Storytelling?
- Kelly: Yes.
- January: Anything else you want?
- Kelly: Just organized I guess overall, because Canvas helps a lot. We get syllabus for other classes, and they do tell us, but sometimes that changes, and once we have the paper, they can't go back and change it. They can tell us, but online, at least they can change it when we're not in class, and we'll still know about it.
- January: Are you talking about a hard copy of expectations?
- Kelly: Yes. Like in my other class, we have a print out, kind of like Canvas, how it says week ten, we're doing such and such, but if something changes, or if we don't have class that day, that might change the following class and we might not have it anymore, but on Canvas, they can go online and change it, and say, and if we go on and check it, we'll know about it before we get to class. I think Canvas helps a lot.

- January: If you were to prefer an instructor to not possess certain skills, what do you think skills are professional and personal that would make them ineffective?
- Kelly: Not professional? I mean keeping up with the times. Technology is a big part of everyday life. I mean we have our cell phones. Most people carry them everywhere they go, and if I'm stuck at main campus, and I have my class, then I can go online and check on what next week's work is due, and I can go online and catch up and stuff whether I don't have my stuff it's at home, then I can't really go back and look at it.
- January: So you're saying, a professional quality that would be ineffective is not using technology?
- Kelly: Yes, not using. Correct.
- January: Any other qualities, for example, lateness or anything, that you feel an instructor should not possess?
- Kelly: Oh yes, being late. Definitely. One of my instructors shows up late just about everyday to class. I mean I understand it's an eight o'clock class, but I am there early.
- January: Anything else you would like to add about your ideal instructor?
- Kelly: They should understand that lecturing isn't. I mean yeah it does help, appeal to some people, but some people have to appeal to the learning styles. Like for me, I am a visual learner, but sometimes I need other things, not just like physical work doing it and repeating it, and sometimes verbalization does not do it, or visuals.
- January: Thank you Kelly for the time.

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Participant #4 Interview

- January: The time is approximately 6:30 p.m. Today is November 13th.
- Anna: Hello. Hi.
- January: Could tell me about your overall experience from college so far?
- Anna: Yes. I am just in my first semester. I have been out of school so long. It's been 15 years since I have been out of school and getting back, I was so nervous. I didn't know what to expect, and again, it was my first experience. I didn't know I was going to be ready for it. In my mind, I was thinking that I am going, they're high school students, but I will be the dumb one there. It's not as bad as I thought it was going to be though. So for the first semester, I'm at almost the end of the first semester, I am really proud of myself for now.
- January: Great. It sounds like you are having a positive experience. Are you a full-time student or a part-time student?
- Anna: I'm part-time.
- January: How many classes are you taking this semester?
- Anna: I've started with two.
- January: Okay, and is one of your classes the READ 110 class?
- Anna: I have READ 110 and Sociology.
- January: Could you tell me a little bit about what you like learning about in the READ 110 course?
- Anna: In READ 110, it touches everything, a little bit of everything. We have a lot about composition, essays, how do you get what the writer, the message that the writer is trying to convey. How to read an article, like when you are reading an article on a magazine, newspaper, whatever article it is.
- January: Any of these topics that you like learning in READ 110?

- Anna: Yeah. The one that really caught my attention was the strategies they use when reading. The active strategies you use when reading so that you get a lot of lines but to pick up the main, focus the main important points in the whole lot of thing that you have. So, big points, important ideas in the section in reading.
- January: Thank you. Is there anything that is your least favorite learning activity in READ 110?
- Anna: My least favorite one that I have is the methods of organization. How to organize a passage.
- January: Why do you think that was your least favorite? What didn't you like about it?
- Anna: For me, personally, I think the problem, was too long and there was a lot and it was in just a day.
- January: What types of activities are you doing in the class, that you feel is helping you learn better?
- Anna: Oh it's the visual learning. The way the instructor uses the board.
- January: She uses visuals?
- Anna: Yeah. She uses the board and she's got the PowerPoint, and she gives examples, and they give feedback and then we do group exercise. It gets you involved.
- January: Are there any activities in READ 110 that you participate in that maybe is not helping you learn the best?
- Anna: No.
- January: Is there anything that you think that is not happening in your class that will help you learn better?
- Anna: No. I think everything that supposed to be done I think is being done. For me personally, just a matter of time to catch up, but I think it's being done. Everything is being done that would help me get there.

- January: Are there any professional qualities about your instructor that you like?
- Anna: Yes. One is her presentation. She presents it for everyone. Everyone in the class will benefit from it because she uses not one method of teaching. If you are visual, you get it. If you are hands on, you get it so that the different methods of teaching so everyone will benefit from it.
- January: Okay. Are there any qualities you dislike about your instructor?
- Anna: I haven't seen one yet.
- January: Is she different or similar in any way from your other instructors in your other course that you are taking in terms of professional qualities or personal qualities?
- Anna: They have some similarities, and they have some differences.
- January: Could you elaborate a little bit?
- Anna: Similarities in terms of the PowerPoint.
- January: Do they both use PowerPoint presentations?
- Anna: Yeah, and the difference is in terms of the homework, which is whatever we have to do for her is the *My Reading Lab*. We get on it, and we get back to class the next day or so and we go over what we did at home to see if we are right when we do the assignment. We do the questions at home. Then she would elaborate where you got a problem.
- January: Okay, so your other instructor does something else?
- Anna: We don't do that.
- January: What do you think is an important quality for an instructor college instructor to possess?
- Anna: I think one of the qualities I think she has is the approach.
- January: What kind of approach?

- Anna: Approach to the subject matter to whatever that they are presenting, the way of presentation that some teaching them the way that it teaches.
- January: Is there anything else you would like to see in an effective instructor?
- Anna: It should be open. Open to the students. It should be like a two-way share. I mean extend ideas.
- January: Are there any personal or professional qualities that you think is important that an instructor should not possess at all?
- Anna: An instructor should not be biased. I think that one is important, and they should be encouraging because it is a lot. Being in school is a lot especially for some of us from here. It can be very frustrating at times. I think that an instructor should have to try and encourage us to stay in school, to stay and continue, because I have days I think about quitting. That this, it's not working stop working, but I think an instructor should be encouraging.
- January: Is there anything else you think and instructor should not have in terms of qualities?
- Anna: I was just thinking about the two that I have. Right now, that's why, we just both of them always on time. An instructor cannot be running late to class. I mean being late is okay, but fortunately for me, I didn't have that experience.
- January: Is there anything before we close the interview, you would like to add about what you think is important for a college instructor to possess or not to possess in order to be effective in college?
- Anna: When they are presenting or they are teaching, one quality I think they should have is that they should get the class' attention. Get the class involved. Make them. I mean catchy. I mean sometimes, some topics are so boring. You have to get us involved. I mean make it stand out.
- January: I want to thank you for your time. I'm going to go ahead and stop the recording here. Thank you for your answers.

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Participant #5 Interview

- January: Hello. I'm going to start off by asking you a few questions about college. Before we begin, if you can tell me a little bit about your experience this semester in general.
- Mary: In general, it's pretty fun. I'm actually learning a lot in my classes. So it's not a huge waste of time and money like going to a big university, stuff like that. I still get the same experience.
- January: Is this your first semester in college?
- Mary: Yes.
- January: How many courses are you taking?
- Mary: Three all together. READ 110, Computer Science, and a Humanities class.
- January: We can focus in a little bit on the READ 110 course that you are taking in your first semester here. Can you start off by telling me what you like about the class?
- Mary: I like that it's helping my reading get better like with the understanding of stories, and actually being able to read faster.
- January: Is there anything that you dislike learning, your least favorite learning activity that you participate in in the READ 110 course?
- Mary: Not really, but we are supposed to be writing a paper soon. So Yeah. The writing portion of it. It's not really fun.
- January: Is there anything that's going on in the course that's helping you learn best?
- Mary: Probably the *Lexile* readings, because it gives me practice on understanding more than like the vocabulary.
- January: Can you share what types of teaching methods, like what does your instructor use in READ 110 that helps you learn best?

- Mary: I like the visual teachings like being able to see how things are done so basically like visual learning like PowerPoint and demonstrations.
- January: One of the things that I wanted to ask you is if you can just tell me a little bit or describe a little bit about the personal and professional qualities that you like about your READ 110 instructor?
- Mary: I like that they are on time for class, and they utilize as much time as possible. They're not sitting there wasting class time just talking about random things, and sharing stories and stuff like that.
- January: Anything else?
- Mary: The way they present the information about the class like whether it's PowerPoint, and videos, like stuff they show in class about the content.
- January: Do you actually enjoy the actual delivery of the instruction?
- Mary: Yeah.
- January: Are there any qualities that you dislike about the instructor?
- Mary: Not really. No.
- January: Is your READ 110 instructor any different from your other current instructors?
- Mary: My one instructor, he likes us to call him by his first name, and he gives out his home phone number and work phone number if we have any questions about projects.
- January: Okay, and anything else that's different?
- Mary: The whole time during class was basically a lecture.
- January: Not from your READ 110 instructor? In another course?
- Mary: Yeah the other course.
- January: What's different going on in the reading course that's not lecture?

- Mary: There are more visuals in the reading course and more hands on activities.
- January: Are there any similarities between your READ 110 instructor and maybe your other teachers right now?
- Mary: They are really down to earth teachers. If you need help they will help you, and if you turn something in late, because you don't understand what's going on, they'll help you and they won't criticize you about it. They want you to actually learn.
- January: What kind of qualities do you think a college instructor should possess to be an effective teacher?
- Mary: They should definitely be friendly, if you ask for help, or if you need to explain something, they don't have an attitude or whatever about it, and if you really don't understand something. They'll be hands on with you.
- January: Anything else you would want in a professor?
- Mary: Probably to learn, like to change up their style. Like one day maybe do a visual and lecture, not like the whole entire class be a lecture, and just sitting their taking notes.
- January: When you are saying change up the style, is there anything specific you would that like to see instead of a lecture?
- Mary: Yeah. I would like to get, maybe do a hands on activity that's about the lecture.
- January: What kind of personal and professional qualities you think are important?
- Mary: That they are on time to class, and that if you send them an email, they get back to you as soon as possible and just don't ignore it.
- January: Are there any kind of professional qualities that you think some teachers have that's just ineffective?
- Mary: I think there are some maybe too professional. They have their nose up in the air and think they are higher or better than someone

else because they have a doctor degree whatever. I really don't like that.

January: Why do you think that is?

Mary: I don't know. I guess probably they are teaching at a higher level in education and, they spent so many years in school they think that they deserve respect automatically.

January: If you can change that, what would you like to see to make? What would those professors do to make them effective?

Mary: They can just be chill. It doesn't matter what degree you have. You're still teaching. I'm paying you teaching me you know.

January: Is there anything else that you feel an instructor should not possess?

Mary: Favoritism. I'm in this Computer Science course, and I've never taken it before. Not saying this teacher does it, but some kids in the class had experience with it, and I don't. The teacher may favor them more, and talk more to them because more about the course and stuff like that.

January: I want to give you an opportunity that if there is anything else in general about you would like to add about what we just chatted about in terms your experience in READ110. What you like about college professors, or dislike?

Mary: I like college professors better than high school because they treat you more like an adult and not a kid. They give you responsibility, they are not harping to get your work done if you get it done, you get it done. If you don't you don't.

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Participant #6 Interview

January: Hello, today is Wednesday, November 19th. I just wanted to start off by asking you a little background information. Are you a first time student here? Is this your first semester on campus?

Jamie: Yeah.

- January: What classes are you currently enrolled in?
- Jamie: Just READ 110.
- January: Can you tell me a little bit about what you like about that community? Describe what you like about learning in the READ 110 course.
- Jamie: She's patient. She explains well. You are talking about the professor right?
- January: The course in general. What do you like learning about it? Since this is your first class?
- Jamie: I honestly don't like the course.
- January: That's fine.
- Jamie: I think it's boring.
- January: What's boring about it?
- Jamie: It's just stuff I already know. Pretty much.
- January: Could you give me some examples?
- Jamie: I already know about highlighting. I already know about summary. I already know about, pretty much, the main ideas and how to find things in paragraphs. I know how to do all that. It's kind of boring. My attention span does not last, but I like her, so that's why I show up.
- January: Is there anything at all you like in the READ 110 course?
- Jamie: I like her. I just like knowing I am accomplishing something.
- January: And your least favorite learning part of the READ 110 course?
- Jamie: I guess the people in the classroom.
- January: How would you feel about the actual learning community of the course in general? The students, you feel that they're more?

- Jamie: Being more organized. Raising hands instead of just yelling out and stuff.
- January: So they are kind of more individualized?
- Jamie: Yeah. It's mainly just me and three other people that actually talk in that class.
- January: So the actual students in the classroom are your least favorite?
- Jamie: Yes. It's too quiet. There's no interactive, nobody really cares, they're just there. I don't like that. If you are going to do it, you might as well do it correct. Come to class and give it. Give it somewhat, even if you know it. It's easier then just get it done.
- January: Is there anything going on in the class that maybe would help you learn best? Any of these strategies would help you learn best better in some future courses?
- Jamie: Not that I am aware of. Not that I can think of off hand. No.
- January: I want to focus in on the reading the actual activities that you do instead of the content for a moment, so if there's types of learning activities that happen from the professor that occur that help you learn the least.
- Jamie: I guess the lecture. I zone out.
- January: Is there anything that's not happening in the course that you think should be utilized?
- Jamie: No she's doing pretty good with that. It's just my attention span. It's not her. It's me.
- January: We're just focusing on the course for a moment, just thinking if there's anything?
- Jamie: More on the computer, I guess I would like to work more in *My Reading Lab* than myself so.

- January: We can just focus in on your READ 110 instructor just for a minute. Are there any professional qualities that you like about your teacher?
- Jamie: She takes time.
- January: What kind of time?
- Jamie: Personal. If you need help with registering, or anything like that, she answers your questions and she does it thoroughly. She gets back to you. She gets back to you with reasonable timing.
- January: How do you stay in contact with her?
- Jamie: Text message.
- January: She gives you her phone number?
- Jamie: Yeah, she gives you her cell.
- January: Are there any kind of qualities that you dislike about your instructor?
- Jamie: No, because all of her good qualities override if there is any. I just, well maybe I don't like that she doesn't put her foot down a little bit to some of the people, but that's the only thing I can think of. I feel that she gets walked all over. I think she is stricter on the younger and not as strict on us. I don't get it.
- January: When you say that she's getting walked over? What types of things are going on in the class that you feel should be addressed?
- Jamie: Well the cell phone thing is one. Texting. You should put it on vibrate. It's just courteous. How are you going to get a job and not be courteous? That's just ridiculous.
- January: I just want to clarify; people are texting like or?
- Jamie: And getting phone calls.
- January: There's actual noise going off? I know you don't have any other current instructors right now, but one of the questions I would ask.

- Jamie: I had one in the summer time but I had an emergency, and I had dropped out of that course. I was there for a good three weeks. I hated it. It was math.
- January: Were you able to pick up on any differences between the instructor that they maybe had?
- Jamie: Yeah, the one now is more patient. The other one was kind. She's very nice but it was more, I needed help in math, and she couldn't give it to me.
- January: If you were to pick your ideal instructor, what kind of qualities do you think, personal and professional should possess could be effective teachers?
- Jamie: Kind, stern, easygoing, sense of humor, caring. Pretty much I have now in her, but just more stern. Knows when to say all right let's listen up, and knows when to say, okay they're under a little bit of pressure, we'll let it slide a bit. The difference between getting walked all over on, and just being nice.
- January: Is it kind of a professional quality that maybe you think an instructor possesses that would be ineffective?
- Jamie: Well personal and professional, they go hand in hand.
- January: If there were anything in general, like you will go onto to future courses and you would not like to see in an instructor that would be ineffective?
- Jamie: Not caring. Mean. I don't like people that follow the book. Like too, I guess rigid yeah. Ones that like it this way, if it's not this way then it's not no way. I like one's that are open minded where I like to go a certain way, and she even said that she'll look at it and if its correct, she'll give me the points. Other people like it this way it has to be this way, and if it's not in this way, order it's not right. I don't like that.
- January: It sounds like you are looking at the word flexibility.
- Jamie: Flexibility. Perfect. I couldn't get the word.

- January: Is there anything that you would think that a teacher who instructs college should not possess?
- Jamie: What they should not possess? They should be always on time because they expect us to be. I guess not dress completely, I don't really care how people dress. I feel that if you can provide what I need, then I don't care.
- January: Thank you. The reason behind this study is you know if you're experiencing college at the end of the semester, you provide the instructor with a course evaluation form. You give the feedback anonymously. They receive it the semester after you are no longer the student, so grades aren't affected.
- Jamie: I don't like it. I don't think they should have it. I don't think it's fair.
- January: What? The evaluation?
- Jamie: I think it's dumb. I think it's hurtful. Yeah because people who get a bad grade are going to, it's dumb. I don't know. I don't like it.
- January: If you had a phenomenal experience, would you want to share?
- Jamie: That's different, but yeah. I would let her know personally that I had phenomenal experience. I don't think through texts or anything that's personal. I don't like it.
- January: There are definitely ways to provide constructive criticism but maybe they don't know how to do it.
- Jamie: People are just hurtful. They are just mean. "I enjoyed taking your time to see me, however I'd like to see more computer work," but nobody would write that. They'd be like I don't like the fact they didn't, they just point out everybody's flaws instead of their positive. I never go on them things because I don't think it's fair.
- January: Are you referring to ratemyprofessors.com?
- Jamie: I'm referring to everything in general.
- January: Those are reviewed for the department, and they don't do the every semester here I believe.

- Jamie: I'm like you're going to get what you get so who cares.
- January: Because they either had a really bad experience or a really good experience?
- Jamie: Thank you. It's mean. Why do they need criticism? Obviously they did something right to graduate college and become what they are. I don't think they need my opinion.
- January: How would you view an ideal student-teacher relationship between a college student and an instructor?
- Jamie: Somebody that you can ask a question and not be afraid of the answer. Somebody that you can text, and you know they'll get back to you. You know they'll help you if you're failing. I don't know, it's not a friend, but someone.
- January: Thank you about your first year experience. Is there anything you want to add about your first experience here?
- Jamie: No not yet, everything seems to be quite pleasant.

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Participant #7 Interview

- January: Hi, today is November 22nd. I am here with Emma. Welcome.
- Emma: Hi.
- January: Are you a full time or a part time student?
- Emma: I'm a part-time student.
- January: How many classes total are you taking?
- Emma: Just two.
- January: What classes are they if you don't mind me asking?
- Emma: READ 110 and the Math.

- January: That's helpful because you have had time that we can talk about your semester. Is this your first semester here?
- Emma: Yes. It's my first semester.
- January: Can describe for me what you like about learning in the READ 110 course?
- Emma: What I like about learning in the READ 110 class? I feel like it is very easy. It doesn't require a lot of work, which isn't always a good thing when you are trying to learn.
- January: Can you give me an example of what you mean by easy?
- Emma: Like soon as the class had started, we've had no in class quizzes or anything to really be graded on. I believe the only thing the teacher looks at as long as our reading level is going up, in *My Reading Lab*. That's basically all we're getting graded on.
- January: Is there anything that maybe your least favorite learning activity that you participate in that's occurring in the READ 110 course?
- Emma: My least favorite would some of the readings on *My Reading Lab*. I feel that a lot of it is self-taught. I feel like it can almost be a self-taught class. On the *My Reading Lab*. I don't really feel like what we learn in class matches or it's not the same speed. I don't know. I'm always confused about where I am at in *My Reading Lab*, and where we are at in class.
- January: Is it a separate activity and then you are talking about a different topic in class that different day?
- Emma: Yeah, like I couldn't tell you what chapter we are on we have a calendar in *My Reading Lab* that we just keep going and going, but, I don't really know. I find *My Reading Lab* kind of is complicated. It's not really easy to understand.
- January: When you say your least favorite learning activities, you're talking about specifically the readings in *My Reading Lab*?
- Emma: Yeah. I don't enjoy the content. Like there's some that we can pick, I'm in the psychology seeing stuff like that so I did all that, but I think there's only like two readings on psychology, and then I

did a reading on like nature and but all the other ones, it's not stuff I would be quite interested in, and they are kind of hard to understand. I guess the diagnostics that we do.

January: Is there anything learning related that's going on in READ 110 that you think is helping you learn best?

Emma: Maybe just participating in class, like showing holding myself accountable for showing up for class. Trying to get a rapport with the other students. Me and the girl I sit next to, we exchanged phone numbers so we've communicated. Building a rapport with the teacher. Just trying to participate and get good grades.

January: Is there anything that maybe you think would help you learn better in the course that's maybe not being currently utilized in your class or by your instructor?

Emma: Almost if we were doing *My Reading Lab* but doing it out of a textbook like in class.

January: Could you just explain that a little more for me? I just want to make sure just a little bit clearer.

Emma: Yeah, like a connection like were being graded on *My Reading Lab*.

January: What are you not doing in class that you could be doing?

Emma: Yeah, like wherever we are at in the *My Reading Lab*. We could be at book, which we don't use the textbook often at all. It doesn't really match up. Like the textbook to the *My Reading Lab*, to the discussions in class. I don't see like a pattern of it.

Emma: My math class is extremely different.

January: So that follows a pattern more of an itinerary?

Emma: Yeah.

January: Is there anything that your instructor is doing in your reading class that's helping you learn?

- Emma: Yeah. I mean she's approachable. Anything that you ask her to help. It was nice like she helped us, like even she helped us get on the computer, and shows us where you know we find our advisor and she does really helpful stuff. It seems like she really wants all of us to succeed. I don't really see her as a hard college teacher, like she's very easy. Like almost as if she was still teaching children a little bit, but she's nice. I mean anything like if I were to email or text her, she's understanding, she's easy to communicate with. If you don't understand something or you need something reset on *My Reading Lab*, she will reset it and let you do it again.
- January: Are there any professional qualities that you like about your READ 110 instructor?
- Emma: Professional?
- January: What normally do you feel she does a good job at, that you enjoy?
- Emma: She's there every class.
- January: Is there anything that you dislike? Any qualities?
- Emma: Not really. I mean I guess I can't really notice how good I'm doing until I step into the next level class. I don't know if I feel one hundred percent fully confident in my reading by this class but I guess we'll see. I don't know what my grade is right now. I really don't know like I have no idea.
- January: I can see, so that can be a quality that you don't like?
- Emma: Like in my math, I get tests back that say 100, 105, or 91 so I kind of have an idea so when I get my grade for my class, it will be completely a shock. I think it should probably be an A, but it will probably be a C. I don't know where I stand.
- January: Are there any similarities you see between two of your instructors right now?
- Emma: Not really.
- January: Anything different from your instructors? From the two of them?
- Emma: My math teacher is really hard.

- January: Do you mean the content or the actual teaching of it?
- Emma: The content, well she's not hard. I'm doing really good, but it's a lot of work.
- January: So the instructor is providing you with more work to do? Is that inside or outside of the course?
- Emma: Outside and inside.
- January: What kind of professional or personal qualities do you think a college instructor should possess to be not only professional, but also effective?
- Emma: Generally, it would be approachable, understanding, maybe even like a more of a one on one conversation getting to know the student and getting to know the teacher. I said the computer work and the classwork matching up to the chapter and homework.
- January: So a connection? More of a challenge?
- Emma: Yeah, I think I learn better that way. The more work I do, the more I learn I feel.
- January: Any other professional or personal qualities you feel would make a really good effective college instructor?
- Emma: I mean I always do enjoy, I like when teachers drop the lowest test grade of the class, or it's always helpful if they hand back a test and let you kind of make it up or redo the test. Like you know help you to get a better grade on the assignment on the test.
- January: Could you tell me and describe what kind of personal or professional qualities you think an ineffective instructor would possess?
- Emma: Yeah, that could be one, being late for class or bringing outside life into class.
- January: If you had a class that you did not want to go to because it was because of the teacher, what kind of qualities would that instructor have that would make you, whether it's professional or personal,

would make you not want to go to that class? That you think would be an ineffective teacher?

Emma: The teacher being rude, or not helpful, or not hands on.

January: Is there anything else you want to add to about what we talked about so far like professional or personal you like, dislike things in the reading course you like or dislike? Things you would like to see in the course?

Emma: Nah. I look at my math class, and I look at my reading class, and there are two completely different, but I find that in my math class, like I go home and have, like if were on chapter one, we have to do chapter 1.1 1.2 1.3 1.4, and we have computer work and we have textbook work and we have notes we have to do. So it only lines up every week where we are. Another thing is our teacher, every time we have a test, which is every two/three weeks, we have to hand in our notebooks, and she kind of goes over and makes sure everything is organized.

January: That's your math teacher right?

Emma: That's my math teacher. I know it's a little extreme, like a lot of the boys in the class are kind of struggling with organizing but me. Organization is one of my strong points, like I'm very organized. It's helpful to me. She gives a lot of homework like twelve hours of homework a week. I guess that's what college is supposed to be like.

January: Thank you for your time. I am going to stop the recording.

-----END OF INTERVIEW-----

Participant #8 Interview

January: Today is Wednesday November 12th. I'm here with Molly, and we're going to talk to begin our interview. I would like to ask you first, so I can get a little background information. If you could tell me a little bit about your experience here. My first question for you is, are you a part-time or full-time student?

Molly: I'm a part-time student.

- January: What classes are you enrolled in?
- Molly: I take Comp and READ 110 currently.
- January: I'm going to focus in on the READ 110 course just for a few minutes. How is your experience in general this semester so far here?
- Molly: It's been a good one so far. You know. It's just class. You go there, participate, see what's good, see what's bad, and you know, all that good stuff.
- January: Can you tell me what you like about the READ 110 course?
- Molly: She's a little goofy, like funny goofy. She doesn't know how to do a lot on the computer so she fiddles with it, and messes around a lot, and she's not afraid to speak out about her problems, because she told us about her niece's kid that passed away, regrettably. She shares information that most teachers would keep to themselves you know. I like her honesty. I like the instruction. I like the way she teaches.
- January: Is there anything that is your least favorite learning activity in the READ 110 course?
- Molly: I hate the computer work.
- January: Could you be specific on what computer work you are required to do?
- Molly: It's just a lot of reading, and I'm not a reader.
- January: Could you tell me a little bit about what types of assignments you're required to do on that? Like how many hours?
- Molly: It's weekly assignments. You take, I guess, sections. So far we're at 3.2, I believe. You look through the review, do the reviews, do three practice sets, and take the actual test itself, but then me, I'm not going to lie. I just skip straight to the post-test. I don't like reading so I pass so I think I'm doing pretty good so far about it.
- January: So for this being your least favorite activity, are you assessed on hours in the system or actual grade?

- Molly: Grade mostly.
- January: The grade of the results of the test?
- Molly: Yeah. If you get a good grade, she will just let it pass. You know.
- January: That's your least?
- Molly: Of course if it's like five minutes, she'll say something but you gotta actually put in the time, read each question, and try.
- January: Is there anything else going on in class that you think helps you learn best?
- Molly: I actually knew everything she talked about this year, but I wasn't going to be one of the guys that said I already know that, I don't need to know this. I'll just sit there and listen if there is something new, I'd learn it. If there isn't, you know, I'm just there then. Yeah. So far, it has not been that much new stuff.
- January: Is there anything that's going on that really helps you learn the least? That does not benefit you?
- Molly: Not really. I mean she does literally everything. I mean she covers all the stuff.
- January: If there is something that is not being utilized, and you were able to design the READ 110 class, what do you think you would add in? Maybe that would help you learn or help your classmates a little better?
- Molly: Probably a little more classwork. It's a lot of talking in class.
- January: In class work?
- Molly: Like at least an assignment every now and then, but she probably gives us one assignment every three or four classes and it kind of, it slows down the class a lot. I'm not going to lie.
- January: Would you define that as a lecture or talking and lecture.
- Molly: Probably talking and lecture. Yeah.

- January: Do you feel a majority of the class right now is more lecture based?
- Molly: Yeah.
- January: In terms of professionalism, can you describe any qualities that are professional about your READ 110 instructor that you like?
- Molly: She cares a lot about her students. I'm not going to lie. She cares a lot. She answers every single question that everyone may have, and she takes timeout to help everybody if they need help on an assignment on the computer, or just questions in general, even about school work, other classes she helps too. I like that. That's a good quality.
- January: So personality?
- Molly: Personality. She's funny.
- January: Any other professional qualities? I just want to give you an example like returning assignments on time. If there's anything you like about your instructor that you feel she does?
- Molly: She will reply to any phone calls you give her about class, which I like.
- January: Phone calls. Is that the primary method that she uses?
- Molly: Phone calls, texting, whatever you feel comfortable doing, she will answer it.
- January: Are there any qualities that you dislike?
- Molly: Just not really. No. It hasn't been a bad experience so far.
- January: Do you see your READ 110 instructor being different in anyway from your other instructor?
- Molly: That guy talks even longer. He literally goes on for about two hours and just explains something. That is a lecture course. I'll tell you that much. She talks less, so let's just go with that.

- January: Any similarities between the two?
- Molly: They are energetic. Very energetic. They will help you out. They are fun to listen to sometimes. My Composition teacher just goes off about stories of his personal life, and so does my READ 110 teacher.
- January: Do you think that there are any other qualities that are really important for a teacher to have to be a good teacher?
- Molly: Respects the students and hears them out.
- January: What do you mean by that?
- Molly: Like, if a student has a problem at home, rather than saying, you missed class, you get marked absent, you should probably you explain it to her. She'll be like, "that's okay. Here's what you missed, and here's what to do next week and get it done and come in."
- January: How about any qualities in general that you think a teacher should just not possess?
- Molly: Being very rude. I've seen professors that are very rude to students. I heard stories about a teacher that would start a PowerPoint, and as the students are in the middle of the PowerPoint writing notes. He just skips the PowerPoint. He says "no it's in your textbook, you figure out then." I think that is completely rude because they are paying you to be there. They are paying you to teach, and if you do that to them, you don't deserve to be there. Disrespect with teacher? There's a good amount of them I believe. Which like come on, we are paying you to teach us. We don't have to be here. We are literally your paycheck. You know.
- January: Anything else you think they should not possess?
- Molly: A tad bit more leniency with assignments. My Comp teacher, if you don't turn something in, when he asks for it, you are not getting graded for it whatsoever. More leniency.
- January: So the instructor should not possess a strict no tolerant policy?

Molly: To an extent. They should, but not a little more flexible. If you actually have a problem and can't turn it in, that's an excuse, but if you just didn't do it, that's no excuse.

January: Anything you want to add about teachers in general?

Molly: I think good teachers should have a sense of humor. Says that they're not afraid to poke fun, not afraid to have fun in class rather than having that dull black and white class that you just go through like a drone you know.

January: Before I close, I just wanted to give you a chance if you have any other final comments.

Molly: No, I guess that's pretty much it.

January: Thank you for your time.

-----*END OF INTERVIEW*-----

Appendix L: Open Coding and Axial Notes

Open Coding	Axial Coding
<p>Q1. What does the selected population of community college students need from their face-to-face instructors to be successful in their first year READ 110 course that can be provided to their instructors through an alternative method of collecting course feedback?</p>	
An active approach to learning	An active approach to learning
Instructor who motivates students	Instructor who utilizes different learning style needs during instruction and through presentation
Instructor who utilizes different learning style needs during instruction and through presentation	Instructor who possesses personality
Use of projects as assignments	Instructor who has multiple ways of being contacted, communicates, and responds to students in a timely manner
Instructor who keeps students' interest	Instructor who is flexible
Instructor who possesses personality	
Note taking opportunities	
Instructor who is caring	
Instructor with high attendance	
Instructor who has a positive attitude	
Instructor who is professional	
Stability in class and knows what to expect in course	
Instructor who is flexible	
Instructor who has multiple ways of being	

contacted, communicates, and responds to students in a timely manner

Instructor who treats students like an adult (holds responsible)

Instructor who is helpful

Instructor who makes students feel comfortable

Instructor who makes learning fun

Instructor who is organized

Allows opportunities for class participation

Utilizes the *My Reading Lab* software program

Q2. What types of instructional methods are face-to-face community college instructors currently using that are similar and different from students' preferences and classroom needs?

Instructor who takes attendance and holds students accountable

Instructor who provides clear directions, communicates, and provides announcements to students

Instructor who provides clear directions

A variety of different teaching methods are utilized

Instructor who communicates, and provides announcements to students

Instructor who is helpful and guides

Connection of the course content to the textbook

Starts class time later than scheduled start time

Feedback provided from instructor and two way communication

Lack of redirecting or addressing class interruptions and distractions

A variety of different teaching methods are utilized

Lecture, lessons orally delivered

Instructor who is helpful and guides

Independent activities

Instructor who utilizes a variety of teaching methods, and switches up lessons

Use of visuals to compliment lessons

Monitoring of students' progress and informal assessments

Takes short breaks

Starts class time later than scheduled start time

Lack of redirecting or addressing class interruptions

Lecture, lessons orally delivered

Instructor reviews content prior to beginning next lesson

Homework

Lack of reference to syllabus for schedule

Lack of direction for *My Reading Lab*, or *Canvas* work

Close proximity of students

Q3. What do community college developmental reading students feel are ineffective qualities of face-to-face instructors?

Instructor who primarily lectures

Poor appearance and lack of professionalism

Instructor who always thinks they are correct

Instructors who think they are correct

Unclear course assignments and guidelines for students Instructors who are late for class

Poor appearance and nonprofessional dress

Lack of communication with students

Instructor who is unapproachable and lacking a friendly nature

Instructor who puts students down publicly and privately

Instructor who goes off topic and tells stories

Disorganized

Instructor who is not technologically savvy

Instructor who is too rigid and not flexible

Instructor who is boring

Instructor who is late for class

Q4. Are there additional qualities or traits aside from knowledge and practice teaching methodology that community college students prefer from their face-to-face instructors that are shared in the alternative method of collecting feedback that are normally not provided as an opportunity to share on a traditional course evaluation form?

The expectation of students to possess a higher level of maturity

Personal accessibility to communicate with instructors (ex. phone, text message)

Established relationships with teacher and classmates

Instructors who possess personality and people skills

Personal accessibility to communicate with instructors (ex. phone, text message)

Instructors who hold students accountable, but also are flexible

Instructors who possess personality and people skills

Instructors who possess a professional image

Instructors who enjoy helping students

Instructors who hold students accountable, but also are flexible

Instructors who are caring

Instructors who make the class feel comfortable

Instructors who enjoy helping students

Instructors who are fun and not boring

Instructors who are relatable

Instructors that utilize most, or all class time

Course content is organized

Instructors who are “chill”, and do not have an attitude or ego because of their degree or position.

Instructors who are caring

Textbook connection to coursework is evident

Q5. What instructional methods do developmental community college students prefer from their reading face-to-face community college instructor that they feel contributes to their success?

An active approach to learning

An active approach to learning

Use of different approaches to learning and different instructional methods

Use of different approaches to learning and different instructional methods

If an instructor is lecturing, the lecture is supported with visuals

Instructors who are prepared for class

Instructors who are prepared for class

Instructor who provides feedback and two-way communication

Classwork is organized

Instructor who makes learning fun

Instructor who is flexible

Instructor who provides feedback and two-way communication

Instructors who keep students' attention

Instructor who is flexible

Instructors who update content of the course

Instructors who are hands on to help students

Connections to course objective and course assignments

Storytelling that relates to subject matter

Instructors who are stern and holds students accountable

High level and challenging coursework

Note.